



Conseil du statut de la

femme

Opinion

Honour crime:
from indignation to action

Québec 

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from indignation to action

December 2013

The Conseil du statut de la femme is a consultation and research body that since 1973 has worked to promote and defend the rights and interests of Québec women. It advises the Minister and the Government on any subject related to equality and the respect of the rights and status of women. The members' assembly of the Conseil is composed of the President and ten women drawn from women's associations, university circles, socio-economic groups and unions.

This opinion was adopted by the members of the Conseil du statut de la femme on September 27, 2013.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACPO	Association of Chief Police Officers
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CDPDJ	Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
CSSS	Centre de santé et de services sociaux
DPJ	Direction de la protection de la jeunesse
FGM	Female genital mutilation
FMU	Forced Marriage Unit
HBV	Honour-based violence
HRCF	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
ICAHK	International Campaign Against Honour Killings
IKWRO	Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organization
KMEWO	Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organization
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MSSS	Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
NGO	Non governmental organization
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
SBS	Southall Black Sisters
SOGC	Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada
SPVM	Service de police de la Ville de Montréal
UN	United Nations

Foreword

Over the last two decades, Western countries have come face to face with the reality of honour crime¹. In 2009, Québec was shaken by a quadruple honour killing, that of the three Shafia sisters and their father's first wife. Though certainly not the first such crime committed in Canada, it was the catalyst for a public realization that such things were happening and must not be ignored. Months before the murder, social workers knew about the girls and the oppression they were under. This raised questions about the ability of our institutions to protect the vulnerable.

In November 2011, the Conseil du statut de la femme was given a mandate by the Minister responsible for the Status of Women to produce an opinion on violence committed in the name of honour. The aim was to document the scope of the problem, examine attempts in Canada and abroad to counter such violence, and make recommendations on the basis of best practices. The Conseil therefore set out to understand the context behind honour-based violence, and to explore potential avenues for action. The Conseil is well aware that this is a sensitive topic. Especially in the context of immigration, there is a risk of stigmatizing the communities concerned. But honour-based violence affects many communities, of different cultures and different religions, and to have any hope of ending it we must hold the subject to the light. Honour-based violence cannot be ignored, but the subject requires care, respect for those who are affected by it. A superior or disparaging attitude would be counter-productive, fuelling racism in some quarters while provoking defensive reactions in the communities concerned.

As we will see, the concept of honour as being inextricably linked to women's sexuality is not exclusive to non-Western cultures. In Québec as elsewhere it used to be that unwed mothers were ostracized. They had to hide their pregnancy, were forced to abandon their child unless they married an older man who would pretend to be the father in order to save the family honor. However, this ostracism did not go as far as murder. To this day, thousands of women are abused or murdered by jealous spouses. In the West, the rights and freedoms of women are almost taken for granted now, but getting there took decades of struggle by feminists, and the achievement is in fact quite recent.

The Conseil considers that women in cultural minorities are an integral part of our society, that they deserve the same respect for their rights and dignity as every other citizen. Respecting cultural diversity cannot mean condoning practices that are discriminatory or harmful to women, even when supported by culture and religion. The fight against violence against women, in all

¹ There is controversy over the use of the term "honour crime". Some authors place it in quotation marks, or write "so-called honour crimes", to make explicit their rejection of the idea that "honour" can possibly justify such crimes. Like other authors however, and since we obviously share that rejection, we have chosen to use the first term without quotation marks, for the sake of readability.

its forms, concerns each one of us, for this is about our collective future. Ignoring the issue of honour crime because it is sensitive, because it is challenging, would be irresponsible and unworthy of a pluralistic, egalitarian and democratic society that intends to stay that way.

Methodology

This opinion is based on a rich combination of analysis and experience, including: a synthesis of recent studies on honour crime; testimony from Québec women whose lives have been affected by the concept of honour; a review of the circumstances surrounding honour crimes in Canada; and an analysis of the intervention model adopted in the United Kingdom.

In reviewing the literature, we found that most studies and reports on honour crime are based on evidence from police and judicial inquiries, along with newspaper articles. Empirical studies, based on data obtained through field surveys, are rare. The present document is therefore exceptional, for we have gathered and compiled personal testimony from people directly concerned by honour-based violence.

As a first step, we selected three distinct groups in Québec, to help us understand the complexities of living under the honour code here. First, immigrant women from various countries where social behaviours are governed by the concept of honour; next, community workers involved with women who are vulnerable to honour-based violence; and last, researchers and professionals with expertise on the subject. In total thirty-eight people were interviewed, from December 2011 to March 2012, using a discussion guide for consistency. (In the French version of this text online, see Appendix I: Profile of Immigrant Women Interviewed; Appendix II: Discussion Guide; and Appendix III: List of People Interviewed or Consulted).

As a second step, since the United Kingdom is recognized as a front-runner in this matter, we went there on an exploratory mission from March 16 to 23, 2013. During our visit, we met people in a variety of settings whose work forms part of the UK's national action plan against honour-based violence. And last, we held meetings and telephone discussions with professionals and community workers in Québec and other provinces who are directly involved with efforts there. (In the website version of this text, see Appendix III: List of People Interviewed or Consulted).

We are grateful to everyone we consulted for generously sharing their thoughts and experience. Their contribution was precious, enriching this opinion with a vast amount of practical experience. That said, the Conseil du statut de la femme is solely responsible for the analysis and opinions expressed in this report.

Introduction

According to the UN, honour crime is on the increase throughout the world, with some 5000 estimated victims each year (Commission on Human Rights, 2000). That figure is widely considered to be far too low. In reality, there are no reliable statistics on honour crime, since it is a hidden phenomenon that often is simply ignored by authorities. For one thing, murders committed in the name of honour are often not reported as such; for another, many honour crimes are disguised as accidents, suicides or disappearances by the families of the victims. Estimates therefore vary considerably, depending on whether they are from official sources or independent researchers and women's organizations.

Honour crimes are not limited to a single culture or religion. They occur in a great number of countries, of very different cultures, including Afghanistan, Albania, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, India, Indonesia, Irak, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey and Yemen (Fondation Surgir, 2012: 11). Some observers note that most honour crimes are committed in South Asia and the Middle East, but other regions (Africa, Latin America and Europe) are also affected.

The numbers are particularly alarming in areas torn by armed conflict or political crisis, where civil security is uncertain, especially for women. In Iraqi Kurdistan, in the last few years over 5000 women have been killed in the name of honour (Houzan², cited in IKWRO-ICAHK, 2006). In Pakistan, the country's Human Rights Commission identified over 600 honour crimes in 2008, yet considers that to be a fraction of the real number, the situation being particularly grave in areas under Taliban control (HRCP, 2009: 119). In the Indian Punjab, 1261 honour crimes were reported in 2007 (Latif, cited in Chesler, 2009). In Afghanistan, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission identified 1500 cases of aggression against women in 2006, including 200 cases of forced marriage (Husseini, 2009: 116). Non governmental organizations (NGOs) in that country report that violence against women has reached epidemic proportions, as in recent years the social and legal status of women has badly deteriorated.

Due to growing immigration from these areas, countries in the West are increasingly confronted with the phenomenon of honour crime. For example, Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden and France have recorded dozens of honour crimes involving families from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Turkey, Afghanistan, etc. In Germany alone, from 1996 to 2006 some sixty trials were held for honour crime, primarily involving Turkish families and Kurds (Petermann, 2011). Canada is not immune to the problem, though the numbers are more modest: two dozen victims of honour crime have been identified here in the last two decades.

² Mahmoud Houzan is foreign representative for the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), an NGO. See also: <http://bataillesocialiste.files.wordpress.com/2007/04/conference-sur-les-crimes.pdf> (accessed March 5, 2013).

Perhaps to reduce the panicky reaction over the issue, some point out that in Western countries honour crimes are a tiny fraction of the spousal homicides committed. And indeed, there were 738 spousal homicides in Canada in a single decade, from 2000 to 2009 (Statistics Canada, 2011). In comparison, the number of honour crimes has been relatively low. But it would be wrong to take that as a reason to avoid what is a sensitive issue. The truth is, honour killings are just the tip of the iceberg, the rest being other forms of honour-related violence that are far more common, including forced marriage, excessive control, physical and psychological abuse, and so on. Such violence is rarely reported to authorities, but ignoring it would mean refusing to provide assistance to vulnerable women.

Several European countries have begun to develop policies, strategies and programs to combat honour-based violence and to protect the women and girls affected, many of whom were born or grew up in the host country. As will be seen, the United Kingdom is a leader in this regard.

Organization of this document

This report is presented in three main parts. Part 1 explores the problem of honour-based violence through a review of the literature. Chapter 1 examines issues related to honour crime, the controversy over terminology, and legitimate apprehensions about the topic itself, since a misguided approach could encourage racism and stigmatize the communities affected. Chapter 2 presents a summary of previous writing and further reflection about the phenomenon, to situate honour crime in a broader context. We dissect the internal logic of honour, the moral justifications behind honour-based violence, and the cultural, social and political factors that contribute to its expansion.

Part 2 presents perceptions and implications of the concept of honour in the context of immigration. Chapter 3 presents an analytical summary of the interviews we held with immigrant women and with experts and community workers in Québec. It illustrates concretely how the honour code affects the lives of women. Chapter 4 examines the honour crimes that are known to have been committed in Canada over the last two decades. Based on the actual cases, as reported in the media and in legal records, we show how the various elements of the process that leads to honour-based violence (presented in Chapter 2) came into play in these crimes. Concluding the case studies, the Shafia affair is presented in greater detail, to demonstrate the process of escalation by which honour-related violence can end in murder.

Part 3 explores prospects for action in the political, legal and social spheres. Chapter 5 reports on interesting Canadian and Québec initiatives toward addressing honour-based violence. Chapter 6 presents the approach adopted by the United Kingdom to combat and respond to honour-based violence, including forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Since the British model is clearly in the vanguard in this matter, it is all the more relevant inasmuch as Canada's legal system has the same foundation as that of all Commonwealth countries. Our discussion here is largely based on the fruitful exchanges we had with people working in community organizations and state bodies, on our exploratory mission to the UK from March 16 to 23, 2013.

Lastly, on the basis of all the information and analysis presented, Chapter 7 proposes avenues for action to combat honour crime in a comprehensive and coherent manner. We conclude with a series of recommendations for specific measures to deter honour-based violence and to protect those who are vulnerable.

Appended to the French version of this document online, readers will find: a profile of the immigrant women who were interviewed (Appendix I); the discussion guide used for conducting those interviews (Appendix II); and a list of those who were interviewed or consulted, including the community workers and experts with whom we met in Québec and the UK for the purposes of our research (Appendix III). The Bibliography at the end of this report is by no means exhaustive; it primarily lists the websites consulted in preparing this opinion.

Part 1

THE PROBLEM OF HONOUR-BASED VIOLENCE

We begin by highlighting an assortment of issues related to honour crime, including the difficulty of tackling the subject in the context of immigration, given the risk of stigmatizing the minorities concerned (Chapter 1). We emphasize the necessity of avoiding two traps – racism at one extreme, cultural relativism at the other – by taking a position that is at once anti-racist and feminist. We make it clear that in order to fight honour-based violence, we must name it as such, understanding how it is different from other forms of family violence.

Chapter 2 begins with a historical overview of the concept of honour in different cultures and at different times in the past, elucidating how religion can reinforce the phenomenon. We then examine honour and its corollary, shame or dishonour, as structural components of social status and sexual identity in traditional societies. We present the moral justifications so often invoked after honour crimes, with examples to illustrate how social pressure can be a contributing factor. We explore the functional dimension of honour, and the social factors that influence the degree of importance it is given, its weight as a determinant of women's lives. Finally, we discuss forced marriage as a form of honour-based violence, distinguishing it from arranged marriage.

Chapter 1

Issues Related to Honour Crime

Of course there's no honour in murder, but to fight this phenomenon we have to use that word, because there are people who say they kill for "honour": of course it's murder, and a disgrace, not an honour. [Trans.]

(Diana Nammi³, in IKWRO-ICAHK, 2006)

1.1 Definition and controversy

The first question about honour crime is how to define it. The term itself is controversial.

Many people, including women in communities affected by honour crime, are opposed to the term, for fear that labelling it will feed into racism by tying it to an exotic, foreign culture. That is the position of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, which rejects the term, arguing that it is inappropriate to designate a crime by the justification used by its perpetrators (Hogben, 2012). Some feminists suggest instead either "femicide" or "feminicide", depending on the writer, avoiding any reference to the motive for such crimes (Abu-Odeh, 1997; Razack, 2008; Amiraux, Blouin and Prud'homme, 2012).

But other feminists reject that position, saying that what is not named cannot be changed. These feminists consider that honour-based crimes are different from other forms of violence against women, and refusing to admit this would be a strategic error (Keeping, Wiseman, Papp, in MacIntosh and Shapiro, 2012; Mojab, 2012). They therefore insist on saying honour crime, often putting "honour" in quotation marks or using a qualifier (*so-called* honour crime) to preclude any acceptance of a justification for such acts. In an attempt to reconcile these positions, still others employ the terms "honour femicide" (Paré, 2009), "crimes without honour"⁴ or even "murders of shame", to emphasize that there is no honour in perpetrating such crimes.

Besides the controversy over terminology, there is no universally recognized definition of honour crime. UN Women⁵ recommends the adoption of a definition broad enough to encompass multiple forms of honour-based violence.

³ Diana Nammi, an Iranian Kurd refugee living in Great Britain, is the founder and director of the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organization (IKWRO) and the initiator of the International Campaign Against Honour Killings (ICAHK).

⁴ Title of a documentary by Raymonde Provencher, "Crimes Without Honour".

⁵ UN Women is the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. See also: <http://www.unwomen.org/en> (accessed November 1, 2012).

A definition must be broad enough to encompass “honour”-based violence in all its forms, such as murder, driving to suicide, rape, gang rape, torture, assault, virginity testing, kidnapping, forced marriage, forced eviction, stove burnings, acid attacks and maimings⁶.

The same source also states that any definition of honour-based violence should include three key elements:

- 1) control over a woman’s behaviour;
- 2) a male’s feeling of shame over his loss of control of the behaviour; and
- 3) community or familial involvement in augmenting and addressing this shame.

The Council of Europe, recognizing the urgent need to combat honour crimes, has adopted the following definition:

the concept of so-called “honour crimes” covers any form of violence against girls and women (and more rarely men and boys), in the name of traditional codes of honour, carried out by members of the family, hired criminals or by the victims themselves. So-called “honour crimes” are a serious violation of the rights of the person subjected to them. (Council of Europe, 2009, paragraph 13)

This broad definition is the one we have adopted for the present report. However, like many authors we have chosen to use the term “honour crimes” without quotation marks, and without “so-called”, both for simplicity and because it is obvious that we do not in any way endorse the moral justification of such crimes. Thus, we will use the term to designate a continuum of violence based on the notion of honour, with murder being just one extreme of that continuum. We will also use “honour-based violence” (HBV)⁷, the common term in the United Kingdom and other countries, which allows us to distinguish between murder (*honour killing*) and all the other forms of violence related to honour (*honour-based violence*), including forced marriage, aggression, harassment, excessive control and female genital mutilation (FGM). As this report makes clear, honour crime is not restricted to murder.

⁶ Source: <http://www.endvawnow.org/en/articles/731-definition-des-crimes-dhonneur.html> (accessed November 1, 2012).

⁷ In the United Kingdom, the abbreviation HBV (for *honour-based violence*) is used in official texts to facilitate reading. We will occasionally do the same.

1.2 Between racism and cultural relativism

The controversy over terminology is not just semantic. It reflects anxieties over issues of racism and stigmatization that deserve consideration. Given that these crimes primarily involve immigrant communities, how can we address the problem, in a Western context, without fomenting racism and stigmatizing minorities?

There are two competing positions on the subject. By one school of thought, honour crimes are really no different from family violence, and the exaggerated attention they receive simply expresses and reinforces racism. This position is held in various circles in Québec, including women's groups and social workers, who are uncomfortable with public denunciations of honour-based violence. The media sensationalism around these crimes does indeed seem to justify such apprehensions. However, another school of thought holds that honour crime, though part of the broader context of violence against women, is *different* from other forms of family violence. This view sees a need for government intervention to counter these crimes and to protect vulnerable women. That is the position in the policy adopted by the United Kingdom, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

According to Shahrzad Mojab⁸ (2012), though the first school of thought is well intentioned, its position is based on cultural relativism, and can neither protect women nor defend their interests over the longer term.

While racist and cultural relativist positions are worlds apart, their point of departure is the same: They do not start from the interests of women, i.e. dismantling the regime of male violence, and are more interested in safeguarding the status of race, nation, or culture. (Mojab, 2012: 126)

Cultural relativism arose in the last century in opposition to ethnocentrism, an intellectual posture that places one's own culture above all others, which can lead to racism. In contrast, cultural relativism supposes that there is no universal moral law, that values are peculiar to individual cultures, and that therefore we cannot criticize or make moral judgments about the cultural practices of others. This position is widely held in Québec, and across Canada, in the name of tolerance. It is invoked whenever a minority cultural practice offends the dominant values of the host society, as in the public reaction to "reasonable accommodation" decisions on religious face coverings, hidjab, gender segregation, and so on.

⁸ Shahrzad Mojab is a professor of Iranian origin teaching in the Department of Adult Education at the University of Toronto. She has served as an expert witness in trials involving honour crimes in Canada, including the Shafia affair and the Sadiqi case.

In keeping with cultural relativism, the policy of multiculturalism adopted by Canada and other countries, in various forms, was intended to prevent racism toward immigrants from former colonies. With praiseworthy intentions, the policy promotes cultural diversity and rejects the idea that social cohesion requires integration into the host culture. However, by upholding the right of minority groups to preserve their ancestral customs, multiculturalism has the perverse effect of fostering ghettoization.

Increasingly, multiculturalism is being called into question in the countries where it was adopted, such as the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, because of its failure with respect to integration. By encouraging immigrants to preserve their ways of life, multiculturalism has deepened the gulf between minority communities and the host society, giving rise to growing social tensions. Feminists too are criticizing multiculturalism, pointing out that it reinforces patriarchal traditions to the detriment of respect for the equality and rights of women (Okin, 1999). Some even argue that cultural relativism, by rejecting the application of universal rights in the name of cultural differences, "in the end is just a particularly pernicious form of racism", because it tends to see minority individuals as not having the same aspirations and legitimate need for freedom as their Western fellow citizens (Boudjak, 2007: 9).

These criticisms reflect the acute tension, indeed the profound contradiction between cultural relativism and the universality of human rights. In wishing to display tolerance and respect for cultural diversity, we ignore or legitimize oppressive practices. This is the case with clitoral excision, a mutilation to which the countries of emigration perennially turned a blind eye, on the grounds of it being a cultural practice.

To resolve this moral dilemma, without betraying the ideal of universal rights, Mojab argues that honour crime has to be approached from a dual perspective, at once feminist and anti-racist. To that end, she suggests that we bear in mind that honour-based violence is a product of patriarchy, which is far from exclusive to any culture or religion, contrary to those who would attribute these crimes to Islam and Arab culture. Furthermore, we should recognize that even in patriarchal societies where honour crime is frequent, there are forces of internal change that are strongly opposed to it, and that can be drawn upon to counter the violence. Lastly, we should admit that by staying silent, or avoiding the issue of honour crime, we only reinforce misogynous behaviours and fail to defend the rights and legitimate aspirations of women in the communities concerned (Mojab, 2012: 124).

Therefore, we must reject the false dilemma that would have us choose between racism and sexism. Though racism and cultural relativism are seemingly polar opposites, deep down they both lead to the same trap, reinforcing patriarchal practices that are detrimental to women. To avoid the trap, a coherent, comprehensive approach is needed, one that is both feminist and anti-racist, so that we can focus on defending the human rights of women and girls in the minor-

ities concerned. Clearly, we have no other choice than to challenge the value system based on gender hierarchy that is advocated by some, both men and women, in the name of their culture or religion.

1.3 The necessary distinction between honour crime and family violence

Many people in the communities concerned, actively involved in trying to end violence against women, believe it is crucial that we make a distinction between honour crimes and other forms of family violence, since otherwise we will never take effective action. According to Dr. Purna Sen⁹ (2006), what distinguishes honour crime from domestic violence is that it involves much more than one man's desire for control over a woman. Honour crime involves the imposition of social norms by an entire community, through punishments and restrictions that deny women's rights and can go as far as murder. In the countries of origin, not only custom but legislation and jurisprudence uphold such acts, while being lenient toward those who carry them out.

Dr. Sen identifies six key elements that characterize honour crime:

- gender relations that problematise and control women's behaviours, shaping and controlling women's sexuality in particular;
- the role of women in policing and monitoring women's behaviour;
- collective decisions regarding punishment, or in upholding the actions considered appropriate, for transgressions of these boundaries;
- the potential for women's participation in killings;
- the ability to reclaim honour through enforced compliance or killings;
- state sanction of such killings through recognition of honour as a motivation and mitigation.

(Sen, 2006: 50)

Typically, the decision to commit an honour crime is discussed at a family meeting, to determine who will carry it out and how it will be done. Sometimes the youngest son is chosen to commit the crime, to benefit from the clemency of the court in the event of a trial.

In other words, unlike domestic violence, consisting of acts by an individual that usually are condemned by family and friends and are the result of dysfunction in the relationship, in an honour crime there is premeditated aggression, conducted with the complicity of other members

⁹ Until 2011, Dr. Purna Sen was Director of the Human Rights Unit of the Commonwealth Secretariat in Great Britain. She has also served as Director of the Asia-Pacific section of Amnesty International.

of the family, and motivated by a highly moral ethic that is widely shared by the community. Honour crimes, then, not only have an individual dimension but also a collective dimension, and neither can be ignored in addressing the phenomenon. As we will see, the issue at the heart of honour-based violence is control over women's sexuality.

Chapter 2

The Concept of Honour and its Social Function

There are lots of young girls with broken ribs, broken arms, lashes on their back, their head hurt... Once you are beaten really badly, then, you don't have to be beaten again, because the threat is there...¹⁰

(Aruna Papp, from the documentary
Crimes Without Honour, by Raymonde Provencher)

To fight honour-based violence effectively, we need a better understanding of honour and its corollary, shame or dishonour. We begin with a survey of the concept of honour at different times and in different cultures, then examine how it determines and orients gender and class relations in a given society, potentially legitimizing violence.

2.1 Honour in different cultures

Historically, honour has often been used to justify violence. King Henry VIII had two of his wives decapitated after they were accused of adultery, while in Greek mythology the Trojan War was launched to avenge the theft of Helen from Menelaus, thus avenging a king's honour. In medieval Europe, the honour code required that if a man's honour is offended, he must challenge the offender to a duel. Honour duels were common occurrences, often resulting in death.

Even today, honour suicides are well known in Japan. In countries like Italy, Spain, Greece and Brazil, the culture of *machismo* can drive a jealous husband or rejected lover to kill their beloved. Such murders are always called crimes of passion, but honour is clearly part of the mix.

In many traditional patriarchal societies, proof of virginity is expected on the wedding night. This requires that a blood-stained bedsheet be presented as proof that the bride's hymen was only broken that night. Without it, the husband can annul the marriage, casting dishonour on the woman's family. This ancient custom, far from being unique to Islamic countries, goes back to Biblical times (Deuteronomy 22:13-21). It is also seen in parts of Latin America, rooted in Christian traditions, as described by Gabriel Garcia Marquez¹¹ in his novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981).

¹⁰ See also: <http://www.reduitnational.com/?p=20482>.

¹¹ Journalist, political activist and internationally renowned Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982.

History teaches us that the three great monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), which arose in the Middle East before reaching around the world, made a strong connection between honour and female chastity and purity. In the Catholic church, virginity is sacralized in the cult of the Virgin Mary.

Religious morality, whether Christian, Jewish or Muslim, condemns male homosexuality as being contrary to nature and against the divine order. Often associated with feminine sexual behaviour and attributed to a lack of virility, in many countries homosexuality (whether open or suspected) is seen as an offence against family honour and at worst, punishable by imprisonment or death.

Rape also is often considered an offence against the honour of the victim's family, rather than as a violation of the victim's rights. In many countries in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, a rapist is exonerated if he marries his victim, who can only save her family's honour by marrying her rapist.

Clearly then, honour-based violence is not unique to a single culture or religion. These crimes affect people of a great variety of cultures and religions. Still, it would be hard to deny that today, most honour crimes seem to occur in Muslim countries, or places with a high proportion of Muslims. It would be a mistake to blame this on Islam; but how do we explain the fact that most of the victims, though of highly varied origins, are Muslim? Though the very question is offensive to many, it deserves clarification. Ignoring it would give free rein to the racist interpretations propagated by some writings.

2.2 Is there a connection between honour crime and certain interpretations of Islam?

The sacred texts of Islam (the Koran and the hadiths¹²) make no reference to honour crimes, nor do they justify in any way the killing of rebellious women or those who refuse an arranged marriage. Like other religions, Islam requires the consent of both spouses for a marriage to be valid. Furthermore, the life of the Prophet shows that he never raised a hand against his wives, striving instead to protect women from tribal traditions that harmed them, such as femicide and the exclusion of women and girls from inheritance.

According to the reformist current of Islam, the inferior status of women in Muslim societies is due to tribal and patriarchal customs that have been sacralized, wrongly bound up with Islam by

¹² The hadiths relate the deeds and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad and comprise the Tradition (*Sunna*) that should guide the behaviour of the faithful.

centuries of misogynistic interpretation. For example, the laws of sharia¹³, which date from the first centuries of Islam, have incorporated pre-Islamic customary laws under which, for example, women accused of *zina* (extramarital sexual relations) are sentenced to death by stoning. As for the Koran, it does prescribe corporal punishment, including a hundred lashes (not death) for both men and women who commit adultery (v. 2, XXIV). But it also prescribes eighty lashes “for those who unjustly accuse a virtuous woman, without providing four witnesses” (v. 4, XXIV, Kasimirski, 1970). That last requirement is intended to make proof extremely difficult, to restrain such accusations.

When Islam arose in the 7th century, corporal punishment and execution for criminal acts were common practice in all countries. Islam did not introduce stoning, a form of execution dating from the pre-Christian era, as shown by the sacred texts of Judaism (the Torah and Talmud), which authorize the stoning of an adulterous woman and her partner. And in ancient Rome, Roman law gave the head of the family absolute power over his wife, children and slaves. An adulterous wife or a daughter who lost her virginity out of wedlock could be killed with impunity by the *pater familias*. These practices, which we now call “barbaric” – which originally meant anyone who was neither Greek nor Roman – have gradually been abandoned in most Western countries. Why then have they persisted in so many Muslim countries? The discrepancy is partly related to the history of colonization.

Around the middle of the 20th century, following decolonization, many Muslim countries adopted legal reforms, ending the application of corporal punishments prescribed by sharia. Ironically, the national codes adopted in the newly independent Muslim countries were often inspired, not by sharia, but by the penal codes of their former colonizers, or by the Ottoman Code of 1863, itself inspired by the Napoleonic Code (Abu-Odeh, 2011). Thus, section 324 of the French Penal Code of 1810, which was only repealed in 1975 (by section 17, Act 617/75), read as follows:

Sec. 324: Absolute discharge may be granted to anyone who, having caught his wife, his sister or one of his ascendants or descendants in the act of adultery or illegitimate sexual relations with another, is found guilty of non-premeditated homicide or injury upon the person of any of the latter.

The author of the homicide or injury may be given a reduced penalty if he has caught his wife, sister or one of his ascendants or descendants in a compromising position with another¹⁴.

¹³ Sharia is a vast ensemble of norms and laws, varying from country to country, written by Muslim jurists attempting to codify the precepts of Islam while preserving the customary laws of their countries.

¹⁴ Source: http://ledroitcriminel.free.fr/la_legislation_criminelle/anciens_textes/code_penal_1810/code_penal_1810_3.htm (accessed May 27, 2012).

The legal codes of other European countries, such as Spain, Portugal and Italy (repealed in 1979), allowed for attenuating circumstances (such as provocation) in cases of crimes of passion (Abu-Odeh, 2011). In other words, the permissive laws on honour crime that we condemn today in Muslim countries are based on the codes of Western countries, where similar laws were still in force right up to the 1970s.

In most Muslim countries, corporal punishment was largely abandoned in the wake of decolonization. However, since the late 1980s there has been a return to these practices, driven by fundamentalist movements insisting on the rigorous application of sharia law. Thus, execution by stoning is now applied in a number of countries, including Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan and Iraqi Kurdistan. Despite the fact that the Koran and sharia set strict conditions for accusations of adultery (four men must testify to having witnessed the sexual intercourse), the requirement for such proof is being ignored by judges. Moreover, some now consider that a rape victim who denounces her aggressor may herself be accused of *zina* (unlawful sexual intercourse), unless she can produce four male witnesses to the rape – a clear contradiction of the spirit of the Koran.

For example, in 2013 a young Norwegian woman who was raped in Dubai was sentenced to prison in that country after filing a complaint, and was only released thanks to international pressure¹⁵. Cases have also been reported in which women and girls who became pregnant after being raped were accused of *zina* and stoned to death when their bellies revealed their “offence”¹⁶. Such aberrations reinforce negative stereotypes about Islam.

In most Muslim countries, current legislation tends to legitimize violence against women. For example, in various countries the penal code prescribes light sentences, from six months to three years of prison, if the author of a crime invokes the obligation to defend his honour. In other words, the “honour defence” is accepted in court. From one country to the next there are variations in the level of impunity, in the reduction of penalties, and the degree of protection accorded to perpetrators. In cases of adultery by the wife, some countries restrict clemency to the husband only, while others extend it to other relatives, including the father, brother, uncle or cousin of the victim (Abu-Odeh, 2011). The lenient sentences handed out for such crimes contribute to making them socially acceptable.

¹⁵ See also: http://www.lemonde.fr/proche-orient/article/2013/07/22/la-norvegienne-condamnee-apres-avoir-ete-violee-a-dubai-a-ete-graciee_3451012_3218.html (accessed July 27, 2013).

¹⁶ Two websites that report such cases are: <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/4034> and <http://sisyphe.org/spip.php?article3130> (accessed May 27, 2012).

Sometimes the police simply omit the circumstances of a death involving honour, reporting it as a suicide or unfortunate accident. And often the victim's family, complicit in or cognizant of the circumstances, refuses to bear witness for fear of reprisal, or because they think the victim deserved her fate, or to avoid being dishonoured in other's eyes.

Divergent currents of Islam

In response to the deteriorating status of women, driven or exacerbated by religious fundamentalism, women's associations and human rights groups have mobilized in all countries to try to change laws and misogynistic customs that encourage violence against women.

A good example is the campaign launched in Jordan in 1999 under the slogan "*Right of life and the right for fair trial*". The campaign denounced honour crimes, demanding the amendment of laws allowing reduced penalties for perpetrators. In her book *Murder in the Name of Honor* (2009), Rana Husseini, a world-famous Jordanian journalist and activist, reports on the popular mobilization carried out over a period of years through public awareness tours, petitions, television and radio broadcasts, and so forth. The campaign was supported by thousands of Jordanians from all walks of life, including members of the royal family. Yet the reforms were blocked by conservative members of Jordan's Parliament. At least the Jordan campaign succeeded in sparking public debate and calling into question the moral justification for such crimes.

For decades, calls for legal reform in many Muslim countries have been blocked by fierce opposition from fundamentalist religious leaders.

Other examples of mobilization against honour crimes¹⁷

The global campaign "*Violence is not our culture*", launched in 2007 with support from the United Nations Special Rapporteur, rejects all forms of "culturally justified" violence against women, including honour crimes, stoning for adultery and female genital mutilation.

In Pakistan, campaigns against honour crimes have run since the 1980s under the slogan "*There is no honour in killing*", an initiative of the Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre.

In Nigeria, a women's rights defence group, BAOBAB, succeeded in overturning stoning sentences against women. The group organizes awareness workshops that denounce the manipulation of religious texts to justify violence against women and girls.

In Iran, a campaign sponsored by women's groups, "*Stop Stoning Forever*", has for years demanded the abolition of the harsh penalties for women accused of illicit relations.

In Sudan, the Salmmah Women's Resource Center has launched a campaign with other organizations to reform the penal code of Northern Sudan, which treats rape as a crime of adultery.

In Indonesia, under a campaign launched in 2007, human rights defence groups hold village meetings to discuss the danger of allowing culture or religion to justify violence against women. Women's groups are also contesting the Islamic penal code, which in 2009 introduced stoning as legal punishment for adultery.

Despite the failure of calls for reform, these demands, often supported by enlightened religious leaders, have the merit of exposing the internal contradictions in Islamic religious texts, which can be used just as easily to condemn such crimes as to support them.

This paradox reflects the existence of totally divergent currents of thought that instrumentalize Islam to serve their social and political vision. On one side is the fundamentalist current, which since the 1980s has become very powerful: it upholds a literalist reading of religious texts that appear to justify violence against women and unbelievers. On the other side is the reformist current, dating from the late 19th century and continuing to this day, including several Muslim thinkers and theologians who refute misogynistic interpretations of Islam, proposing instead an emphasis on the liberating spirit of the initial message, which respects human rights (Chebel,

¹⁷ These examples were drawn from a website run by the international network *Women Living Under Muslim Laws*: <http://www.violenceisnotourculture.org> (accessed February 24, 2013).

2013; Benzine, 2004; Hourani, 1983). These two currents of thought have long coexisted in Islam, but increasingly the opposition between them is bursting into flame amidst the political struggles dividing Muslim countries.

Today, women and men from all walks of life, especially young people, are organizing to oppose the religious fanaticism that fuels and legitimizes violence. Yet attacks on intellectuals, artists and free-thinkers who dare to criticize the abuses of Islamists have created a climate of fear, perpetuating the confusion and prejudices of those in the West. It is important that we recognize these internal differences and avoid stigmatizing Islam and Muslims. In their many diverse cultures, the positions of individuals as well as whole groups are spread across a broad ideological spectrum, from the most conservative to the most liberal.

Heightened sensitivities

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, xenophobic and racist sentiments toward Muslims reached new heights. That context makes it difficult to make any critique of traditional practices that are harmful to women and are associated, rightly or wrongly, with Islamic religion or culture. It is all the more important then that we proceed with care, both to avoid inflaming emotions and so as not to provoke defensive reactions that would be contrary to the interests of women. We must not forget that many people of Muslim faith who are now living in the West had to leave their countries to escape the violence of fundamentalist groups.

What emerges from our analysis is that Islam lends itself to contradictory interpretations. However, honour as justification for violence against women is a notion generated by a patriarchal culture that transcends ethnicity and religion. This type of violence happens just as much in Christian, Sikh and Hindu communities as it does in Muslim societies. One thing is clear: religion is often instrumentalized, as are laws, to maintain a system of power that distorts and rigidifies relations between the sexes and between classes.

In Québec, most citizens of Muslim faith were as horrified as anyone by the Shafia affair. In its wake, thirty-four Canadian and American imams issued a fatwa, categorically condemning honour killing and declaring that such crimes are totally contrary to Islam¹⁸. When the trial concluded, many in the minorities concerned were uncomfortable with the wording of the judgment against the perpetrators. By referring to “barbaric” customs that are “contrary to Canadian values”, it seemed to stigmatize Muslim communities, accentuating the opposition between “them” and “us”.

¹⁸ See also: www.radio-canada.ca/regions/Ontario/2012/02/04/003-imams-crimes-fatwa-toronto.shtml.

To avoid the trap of a simplistic dichotomy between Western and non-Western, between “them” and “us”, we should look at cultural differences in terms of degree of separation from the patriarchal values common to many civilizations. While those values are still ubiquitous in some societies, in others they are in decline, largely thanks to a long struggle for gender equality and greater social justice. As we will see further on, not everything can be explained by culture or religion. Other factors (social, economic, political) influence the evolution of habits and customs, which are not immutable. We must stop essentializing cultures that in fact are in the midst of tremendous upheaval, as shown by the outbreak of popular uprisings in several parts of the world.

2.3 Honour and social status

The concept of honour has been subtly analyzed by Julian Pitt-Rivers, a British anthropologist who drew attention to its importance (Pitt-Rivers, 1966, 1992). He defines honour as follows:

Honour is the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his *claim* to pride, but it is also the acknowledgement of that claim, his excellence recognized by society, his *right* to pride. [...] The right to pride is the right to status (in the popular as well as the anthropological sense of the word), and status is established through the recognition of a certain social identity. (Pitt-Rivers, 1966: 21-22)

In other words, honour has to do with self-esteem and society’s recognition of one’s social status, which is part of one’s identity. It therefore has both an individual and a collective dimension.

Though we may think of honour as an archaic notion, it is essential to any social organization. According to Pitt-Rivers, every society, ancient or modern, depends on a code of honour and shame that governs social relations (and power structures) in both the family and the community. In his view, honour reflects a society’s moral values, which political authority claims to incarnate, taking on itself the right to dictate right and wrong, to bestow honour or inflict dishonour depending on whether desired behaviours are performed or contravened (Pitt-Rivers, 1966: 22).

Thus we must distinguish between *ascribed* honour and *acquired* honour.

- *Ascribed* honour has to do with belonging to a particular social group. It is the honour attached to a person’s rank in society, conferring precedence over others (e.g. being an executive or a member of the upper middle class).
- *Acquired* honour is earned by virtue, heroic deeds or achievements valued by society. It has to do with personal qualities, conformity with behaviours of which society approves.

The author adds that the meaning attached to honour and dishonour (or shame) is complex and changing. Varying in time and space as well as with gender, class and social environment (urban, rural, tribal, etc.), it determines codes of conduct. Honour is therefore ambiguous, giving rise to divergent interpretations depending on context. Furthermore, honour is sometimes contested in a society, associated with power struggles, a subject of negotiation and compromise. For example, normally a person's honour is only harmed if the offending word or deed is made public.

Honour also gives rise to interpersonal discord. In the past such conflicts were settled by a duel, but in modern societies we generally agree to delegate matters to the courts. Western criminal and civil codes do in fact include provisions for conflicts of honour, for example when defamation damages a person's reputation. However, in deeply traditional societies the duty to defend honour, whether individual or collective, usually falls on the family patriarch, religious authority or influential members of the community.

Sexual honour

Some scholars have extended the analysis of honour even further, exploring its sexual dimension and role in gender differentiation (Abu-Lughod, 1986; Tersigni, 2001; Osiek, 2008; Moxnes, 2010). Their writings show that in every society, honour is closely linked with the power relationships between women and men.

While *ascribed* honour (based on class) can be similar for men and women, *acquired* honour (associated with virtue and expected social and sexual behaviour) tends to be differentiated by gender. For example, though traditional societies may view unmarried sex as shameful for both sexes, on the man's side it has no effect on family honour. Also, the upper classes have a certain indulgence toward sexual misconduct by both sexes, since their honour is primarily based on social rank.

A man's honour usually depends on his probity (honesty, respect for others, etc.), bravery and virility (both being associated with masculinity), and ability to protect his family. A woman's honour, in contrast, is bound up with her sexual virtue and devotion to family (attributes associated with femininity). An honourable woman is expected to behave with modesty and decency, preserving her chastity by avoiding contact with men outside her family. For a man to preserve his honour, he must ensure the virtue of the women under his protection or authority (his mother, daughters, sisters, and his wife or wives).

In the logic of honour, by which girls and women are always a potential source of dishonour, controlling them sexually and socially is a duty incumbent on all males in the family, as well as older women. Thus, the *duty of protection* assigned to men gives them a right of control over all the women in their family, the corollary of which is a *duty of submission* on the part of girls and

women. As we can see then, the code of honour and shame is intimately linked to the gender-based division of social roles, to separation of the sexes and to gender hierarchy – fundamental principles of the patriarchal system that religions tend to sacralize. It's not that the women have no social power, but it is limited to particular areas. Mothers and older women often have an indirect power over the men and younger women. It is often they who incite their men to defend the family's honour.

The sexual revolution and the emancipation of women, which only came about in the latter half of the 20th century, have seriously challenged the code of honour and shame in its sexual dimension. In the modern context, social organization in democratic systems is based on new principles that are considered universal, including gender equality, respect for individual liberties (including sexual freedom), and secularism. This is a radical break with the patriarchal values that once were the norm, but are less and less so now, thanks to globalization and the speed of migration. So it is not surprising that today, especially in pluralistic societies where groups from very different cultures are living side by side, honour-related conflict is intensified.

This is the context in which honour crimes are taking place today: a period of profound and almost inevitable transformation of the moral values associated with honour. To address the problem in a given social group, we must understand the internal dynamics of honour and dishonour, identifying how it is composed and driven.

The functional dimension of honour

One way to analyze honour is from the angle of its function as a regulator of social behaviours. The complex functioning of an honour-based value system is described as follows by a representative of Al Muntada, a Palestinian organization that fights violence against women:

Informal structures like kinship, patriarchy and the traditional tribal system, all go into defining the physical and social borders within which women and men may move and act. They are the first forms of regulation of social behaviour, of the roles, responsibilities and relationships among the members of society in general. They work by ensuring the maintenance of social norms and codes of "honour", defining mobility, acceptable marriage partners, type and level of education, dress code, profession, sexual behaviour and so on. [...] Maintaining the "honour" system maintains the power of the informal structures, serving the material and social interests of those who depend on them. Even though the coexistence of formal and informal structures could be a source of conflict, when their interests coincide their attitudes and practices tend to do so as well. [Trans.]

(Cited in Boudjak, 2007: 29-30)

This reflection shows the complex role of honour: while one of its functions is to confer identity, ensuring group cohesion, another is prescriptive, defining what is lawful, tolerable or unacceptable in a given social context. Consequently, the code of honour and shame serves to keep in place hierarchical power relationships between the sexes and between social classes.

Honour, then, has two functions in patriarchal societies. It is a structural element of social status, as shown above, while also being the structural core of sexual identity.

In the modern context of a society based on the principles of equal rights and freedoms, each person assumes full responsibility for his or her acts before the law, and honour is no longer tied to social or sexual norms imposed by religious morality. Conversely, in a traditional patriarchal system, rights have less to do with the individual and more with belonging to a social group, and honour is closely tied to conformity with roles and behaviours that are valued by the community, and that differ depending on gender and social rank.

In societies with a tribal or clan-based structure, social behaviours are governed by a stringent honour code. Identity is largely defined by one's family and group, loyalty to the group being all-important since exclusion means social death. In this system, at once patriarchal and tribal or clan-based, honour depends on masculine behaviour (virile and aggressive), while dishonour, or the threat of it, is above all tied to women's sexual virtue. Deviation from established social norms causes shame and dishonour, not only to the family but the entire community.

Thus, "misconduct" by a woman creates a deep sense of shame throughout her family, spilling over onto the group. And since a family's power and influence in the community depend on its reputation, damaging that reputation raises the threat of social and economic ostracism, potentially ruining and driving its members into exile. A woman's "impure" behaviour also sullies her sisters and cousins, crushing their chances of honourable marriage. Moreover, any form of female disobedience means that the males of the family are incapable of exercising the control expected of them, gravely impairing their virile image in the eyes of the community (Boudjak, 2007: 27).

In this value system, what we have is not just one man's control over wife and children, as in ordinary patriarchy. Instead, control is exercised by all the men of the extended family (including brothers, uncles, cousins, grandfathers) over all the women, for the system is both patriarchal and tribal or clan-based. This crucial element, not present in ordinary domestic violence, is specific to honour crimes. As we will see, it demands an approach that takes into account the potential presence of multiple aggressors.

Starting when they are very young, boys are taught that it is their duty to monitor and sanction the behaviour of female members of the family. They are encouraged (often by their mother) to adopt a virile attitude, aggressively displaying authority over even their older sisters. In parallel,

they are also taught to protect them from any aggression that might come from other men. This dual function of the male role toward women – protection as well as sanction – explains why some women support the system. On the one hand it restricts their freedom, but on the other hand it protects them from external danger, in principle at least.

As a structural component of sexual identity, honour governs the behaviour of both men and women. Women have so assimilated these patriarchal values that they even act as the guardians of them. It is not surprising then that women collaborate in honour crimes against their own daughters, sometimes even instigating them. Since the daughter's morality reflects on her mother, the latter is often the first to be blamed for a daughter's misconduct. This is why the victims of honour crime may include an errant girl's mother. Even sisters or aunts can be targets if they take her side. This means that one honour crime may target multiple victims.

2.4 Moral justifications and social pressures

The motives invoked for honour crime are varied, and may seem futile to Western eyes. Many girls are killed for losing their virginity, falling in love with a boy or behaving in some way (through clothing, makeup, outings, social interactions, etc.) that is considered immodest in their community. Many honour crimes arise from a girl's opposition to her parents' will, often with respect to marriage: refusing an arranged marriage or choosing a husband of whom the parents disapprove (because he is of a different religion, a different cultural community or an inferior social class). Other motives include adultery or suspicions of infidelity, refusing sexual relations with the husband, disobeying him or leaving the house without permission, or indeed wanting a divorce.

One of the mechanisms that work to maintain an honour-based social order is public scrutiny and gossip. A woman leaving her home is spied on by neighbours and others in the community, who will report her words and actions to her family. Fear of gossip, which can stain a woman's reputation unjustly, is an effective barrier that restricts women's freedom (Boudjak, 2007: 60-61). The community arrogates the right to act as judge and jury, which is particularly stifling in places (both rural and urban) where everyone knows everyone else. This control mechanism has been observed in immigrant communities in the West, including Québec.

The following examples illustrate the motives commonly invoked for honour crime, and the social pressures behind them.

Du'a Khalil Aswad, victim of a rumour

Du'a Khalil Aswad, a 17 years old Kurdish Iraqi, was a student at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Iraq. On April 7, 2007 she was stoned to death in her village. Du'a had fallen in love with a young Muslim she wanted to marry, though she and her community belonged to the Yazidi religion¹⁹. Her execution, filmed with a cell phone and posted online by a witness to the scene, shocked public opinion around the world²⁰. The event fed into sectarian tensions between Muslims and Yazidis in the region. Iraqi police who were present at the scene refrained from intervening, considering it a private affair. It is worth noting that the instigators of this collective execution were the victim's uncles and cousins, whereas her father tried to protect her. An autopsy revealed that Du'a was a virgin.

As this case shows, an accusation need not be true to result in murder. Mere suspicion about a girl's chastity is often all it takes. This example also illustrates the complicity of the police, who often turn a blind eye to such crimes. And it shows how social pressure to commit an honour crime can emanate from the extended family or influential members of the community.

Two other cases of honour crime, in Jordan, illustrate the capital importance attached to virginity. Rana Hussein interviewed the perpetrators in a Jordanian prison, to try to understand what drove them to such lengths. She concludes that patriarchal traditions can turn decent men into murderers, not only ruining the lives of victims but also of their loved ones, who have difficulty recovering after such tragedies (Hussein, 2009: 10-17).

Yasmin, victim of rape

Sirhan, a young Jordanian of 29, killed his sister Yasmin because she had been raped by her brother-in-law, thus losing her virginity. Sirhan told the journalist that he loved his sister and didn't want to kill her, but people in the village were turning their backs on him and his father, saying they had to cleanse their honour. Death was the only solution, he said, to stop the gossip and restore the family's honour. During a second meeting with the journalist, after his release from prison, Sirhan said he was unable to find a wife because no man in the village wanted him to marry his daughter.

¹⁹ Yazidi: an ancient, syncretic religion combining local Kurdish beliefs with Zoroastrian elements and Islamic Sufi doctrine.

²⁰ *Stoning of Du'a Khalil Aswad* on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUI1wuB3YIU (accessed February 28, 2013).

Kifaya, victim of incest

Khalid, a father in his thirties, killed his 16-year-old sister Kifaya because she had been raped by another brother. After completing his sentence of five years in prison (comparatively severe for this country), Khalid told the journalist that the years in prison had ruined his family life, depriving him of seeing his children grow up. Khalid said that he did not regret his act, but it would have been better for him if he had tied up his sister in the house like a goat, until she died or someone wanted to marry her.

The cases of Yasmin and Kifaya demonstrate the power of the social pressures that can drive a man to kill his daughter or sister, even though he loves her, regardless of whether she was responsible for the act that caused the dishonour. For honour to be restored, it is not the sexual predator who must be punished, but the victim. Concretely, this means that women who are raped or are victims of incest cannot denounce their aggressors without risking their lives.

Typically, the perpetrator of an honour crime feels no remorse, and to restore family honour will proclaim the act publically instead of trying to conceal it. He is often seen as a hero by his community, which admires his courage in sacrificing the victim to save his family's honour. But the case of Sirhan, who can't find a wife because he killed his sister, shows that the perpetrator too can be stigmatized.

The next example reveals that divorce can be a woman's worst option, even in cases of domestic violence.

Samia Sarwar, victim for wanting a divorce

Samia Sarwar²¹, daughter of a wealthy businessman who was head of the Peshawar Chamber of Commerce in Pakistan, was shot dead in Lahore in April 1999. She had been separated for three years from her husband (a cousin), who had subjected her to physical abuse. Having fallen in love with another man whom she wanted to marry, she needed the separation to be official. She was killed in the office of her lawyer, Hina Jilani²², as she was completing procedures for a divorce. The murder was organized by her mother, father and uncle.

²¹ *Licence to kill*, a film produced for the BBC. BBC News, September 4, 2000.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programs/correspondent/909948.stm> (accessed February 28, 2013).

²² Hina Jilani is a lawyer with the Supreme Court of Pakistan and a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

As this case shows, a woman who wants a divorce can't count on support from her family. Even in situations of domestic violence, they will often pressure her to stay with her husband. If it is a marriage between cousins, which is far from uncommon, there is added pressure because a divorce would affect everyone's honour throughout the extended family.

There is an old formula about "cleansing the shame in blood". The poem below, in translation, is by an Iraqi poet, Nazik Al-Malaika, considered one of the most important contemporary poets of the Arab world. It gives voice to a profound indignation over the absurd injustices of the honour system, an indignation that is even felt in societies ruled by that system.

Wash Away Shame²³

By Nazik Al-Malaïka, Iraqi poet

(Baghdad 1923 – Cairo 2007)

“Mother”, and then the moan, the sob, the black.
The blood still flows a little,
the stabbed body shivers a little still.
The curly hair becomes thick with mud
“Mother!”, but that, only the executioner heard it.
Tomorrow, at dawn, with roses waking,
We will hear the crying of twenty young years,
of hope enchanted.
Then the meadow and the flowers will say:
– She who left us, left us so that shame
can be washed away.

In the village, the savage executioner will return.
“Shame?” he’ll say – wiping off his knife –
“We’ve ripped up shame into a thousand pieces!
Here we are again, without stain, heads high, free.
Waiter! A glass! Wine!
Call the whore, the languid
one with perfume breath.
To ransom her eyes I give the Koran,
and God knows what fates!”
– Fill your glass, executioner.
Shame, only the victim can erase it!

Dawn will come. The girls will ask:
“Where is she?” The beast of blood will reply:
“We killed her.
That stain, on our foreheads,
we have washed it away.”
The neighbours will tell her story.
Also the local palm-trees.
Not one wooden door will forget,
The stones will repeat:
– Wash away shame,
Wash away shame.

O neighbours, village girls,
We can only knead the bread with our tears.
We will cut our tresses, scrub our hands raw,
For the manly tunic to stay pure and white.
Not a smile, nor gladness, nor glance: the knife
Awaits us in the hands of our fathers, our brothers.
– Who knows what deserts, tomorrow,
to wash away shame,
would bury us?

²³ Source: http://libertewomanpalestine.chez-alice.fr/Laver_la_honte.html.

Though honour crimes may be few in number compared to other serious crimes, they have a structuring effect on communities. They punish the transgression of social norms, prevent insubordination toward patriarchal authority. They are perceived and presented as warnings to other women, cautioning them to conform. This has the effect of restricting their horizons, orienting their behaviour toward submission to the men in their families and to tradition. The honour code is a formidable tool for social control, maintaining and reinforcing a patriarchal system that oppresses women and denies their rights and autonomy.

But honour killings are just the tip of the iceberg. Before getting there, to restore honour that a woman has tarnished the men of her family will try various ways of pressuring her to submit to established norms. For instance, if she ends the unacceptable relationship, or accepts an arranged marriage, honour will be restored. So a murder for the sake of honour doesn't happen all at once. It is usually preceded by various degrees of coercion to compel the victim to renounce whatever behaviour is deemed dishonourable. Coercive measures range from threats and verbal violence to corporal punishment, blackmail, emotional and financial pressure, the silent treatment, forcible confinement, constant surveillance, or forced marriage. All such acts are forms of honour-based violence.

To guard against rebellion or misconduct by a daughter, parents will marry her off as soon as they can. But child marriage and early marriage, which are considered forms of forced marriage, are also honour-based violence. So too is excision, which is supposed to prevent dishonourable behaviour by reducing women's sexual desire. Other practices like gender segregation and forbidding women to have social interactions outside of the family, are also ways of controlling women to preserve family honour.

Though the vast majority of honour crime victims are women, they can also be men. This can occur if they are closely tied to a woman's dishonouring behaviour, or transgress the ideal of virility by being openly homosexual (Paré, 2009: 18). Men suspected of being homosexual may be forced to marry for the sake of family honour. So while honour-based violence may not always be an expression of gender inequality, it contributes actively to reinforcing it.

There are also suicides based on honour. Girls and women can be driven to commit suicide by their own family, when extramarital relations or an illicit pregnancy are discovered. In some countries, the adoption of more stringent legislation against the perpetrators of honour crime has been followed by an increase in reported suicides by young women. Sometimes they are murders disguised as suicide, or familial harassment has driven the victim to the ultimate escape. In some communities female suicides are unusually high, as a result of psychological distress at the prospect of a forced marriage or because of being denied autonomy.

But sometimes, murder in the name of honour conceals another motive: greed for an inheritance or dowry, or a decision to get rid of a wife who has become undesirable. By invoking honour as their motive, the authors of such crimes seek lighter sentences and moral approval by their community.

2.5 Contributing factors

Various factors can determine the extent to which a given community is governed by the honour code. Honour generally weighs more heavily in the lives of women in rural areas. The anonymity of large cities, exposure to other ways of thinking, better access to education, all are factors that can promote a critical distance from suffocating traditions. Conversely, the tensions between modernity and ancestral tradition can be an aggravating factor, inflaming resentments and giving rise to fundamentalism.

Like several other countries, India has seen an unprecedented wave of sexual violence against women. In Delhi, now the “rape capital of India”, women are becoming more and more educated, entering the job market, going to the cinema with friends and so on, yet still they must do daily battle with profoundly misogynistic ways of thinking. As one writer points out, instead of changing with the new freedoms the old ways of thinking are being taken to extremes, in reaction to them (Taillefer, 2013). Wherever societies are governed by the honour code, the response to women’s emancipation has been a sharp increase in sexual aggression and harassment. As highlighted by Ruchira Gupta²⁴ (2012), rape culture is based on norms, attitudes and practices that trivialize, tolerate or even approve of violence against women, violence that is normalized by the impunity granted to those who exert it.

Thus the concept of honour and shame give some men the power to inflict dishonour on other men, setting up conditions that are conducive to violence against women. The situation is even worse where the rule of law is absent, amplifying the incidence of rape and honour-based violence in countries undergoing armed conflict. This is the case in Afghanistan, along with Irak and occupied Palestine. Humanitarian organizations in these countries report that many women there endure rape or incest, or engage in prostitution just to survive, only to be killed in the name of honour (IRIN, 2007).

In the context of migration to the West, in each family the degree of importance attached to honour depends on both internal and external factors: not only family and community values, but also the conditions of insertion into the host society.

²⁴ Ruchira Gupta is a renowned Indian militant and the founder of APNE AAP, a women’s movement against sex trafficking. See also: <http://apneap.org/founder/founder-profile/profile-ruchira-gupta>.

In the United Kingdom, where a dozen honour crimes are reported each year, some observers attribute the phenomenon to Islamic fundamentalists in exile. Nazir Afzal, the head of the Crown Prosecution Service for North West England, says that many honour crimes in the UK are due to the growing influence of fundamentalist groups, which constantly harp on the importance of female purity and virginity while emphasizing men's right to sanction women's behaviour (*Daily Mail*, March 26, 2007).

The same analysis could be applied in Canada. As will be seen in Part 2, immigrant men whose way of life in their country of origin was actually very permissive, suddenly embrace more traditional values in the host country. This change can be explained in various ways. In Mojab's view (2012), immigrant minorities often seek refuge in tradition to preserve their cultural identity, which is threatened by assimilation. As we saw earlier, one of the functions of the honour code is to reinforce the bond between individuals and the group from which they derive their identity.

Beyond the desire to assert identity, which can be heightened by the ideological influence of conservative religious groups, economic factors also play a significant role. The migration experience is fraught with difficulties, of which poverty is not least. The loss of social and economic status, the obstacles to obtaining suitable employment (non-recognition of diplomas, language and colour barriers, etc.), combined with the loss of social networks and the difficulty of creating new ones, lead to feelings of rejection and humiliation. The result can be a withdrawal into the minority ghetto (cultural isolationism) and a dependence on ancestral traditions.

2.6 Arranged marriage and forced marriage

In honour-based value systems, refusing an arranged marriage or backing out later is dishonouring to the family. So there is a close connection between honour crime and forced marriage.

Consent is the crucial element distinguishing arranged marriage from forced marriage. In a forced marriage, at least one of the intended (usually the woman) has no possibility of getting out, while in an arranged marriage the families play a central role leading up to the agreement, but the final choice is up to the intending spouses (Garcia & collab., 2004). It can be said then that all forced marriages are arranged marriages, but not all arranged marriages are forced.

Historically, arranged marriage was the norm in all societies. The idea that marriage should be a personal choice, motivated by the mutual attraction or love of two individuals, is relatively recent. Marriage was above all an arrangement between families, a way of strengthening alliances or consolidating fortunes. Marriage has evolved through the ages, at different rates in different cultures. Arranged marriage is still widespread in traditional societies, where sometimes it has an

endogamous aspect. In South Asia, arranged marriage is still the norm, and in the Middle East, marriages between first cousins are still common and even encouraged, whereas the practice is discouraged in most Western societies²⁵.

Forced marriage is now considered to be a form of violence, both physical and symbolic. It is condemned internationally as a violation of human rights. The right to choose one's spouse is recognized in international conventions, including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (article 16.2), the *International Convention on Civil and Political Rights* (article 23.3), the *Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW, article 16), and the *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages*²⁶.

There are no reliable statistics on forced marriage. The subject is taboo, and rarely studied. Forced marriages occur in a wide variety of cultures and faiths (Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu, etc.). But it is a cultural practice, not a religious one. All religions require, in principle, the consent of both spouses. The reasons for forced marriage are often economic, such as the poverty or cupidity of parents wanting the dowry they receive in exchange for their daughter, or to obtain a loan or erase a debt.

Child marriage (sometimes at birth) and early marriage (at puberty) are common practice in a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. UNICEF estimates that in Bangladesh, thousands of young girls are married at puberty, sometimes as the third or fourth wife of a much older man, while in India, 47% of girls under 18 are already married, and 40% of the world's child marriages are in that country (World News, 2012). Though child marriage is illegal, including in India where efforts have been made to stop it, the practice persists in poor and rural areas, where it is sustained by strong economic and social pressures (Niles, 2010). Since a child cannot give its informed consent, all early marriages are considered to be forced marriages.

Madeline Lamboley has studied forced marriage in Québec²⁷. She says it can be difficult to distinguish arranged marriages from forced marriages, because the line between them can be very thin: "it all depends on the degree of freedom when consent is given" (cited in Verville, 2012). Many young women, and occasionally young men, are put under considerable pressure to consent to a marriage arranged by their parents. Various sorts of familial, social and economic control can be exerted, from psychological pressure to emotional blackmail, or deceit as to the character or status of the intended spouse, who may be already married, unemployed or less well-off than

²⁵ The Catholic church requires papal dispensation to authorize a marriage between first cousins.

²⁶ The text of the Convention can be read at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/MinimumAgeForMarriage.aspx>.

²⁷ Madeline Lamboley is a doctoral student in Criminology at the Université de Montréal. For her thesis, on forced marriage in Québec, she interviewed a dozen women who had undergone or been threatened with forced marriage. Publication of her thesis is expected in 2014.

he pretends. Thus, she says, consent is often extracted as opposed to being the result of free, informed choice. Forced marriage happens in all countries, including Canada, where as Lamboley points out, it occurs not only among immigrant groups but in Mormon communities. Young homosexuals, she notes, can also be forced into a heterosexual marriage.

In Europe, studies have found that forced marriage primarily affects girls in immigrant communities (Garcia & collab., 2005). A study in the United Kingdom discovered forced marriages in communities of diverse origins (Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe), noting that the motivations varied depending on the group but were often economic, social or ideological, including a desire to control girls' sexuality (Hester & collab., 2007: 36).

Forced marriage can have devastating effects on women. Many compare their wedding night to a rape, and some continue to experience conjugal relations as repeated rape, the reassertion of an unequal relationship that denies their autonomy and freedom of choice. Besides ending their education and dreams of a career, forced marriage is often followed by domestic violence. Since divorce would be dishonouring for the family, especially if initiated by the wife, many women resign themselves to living with the husband imposed on them. Others are driven to suicide, or bravely move toward separation, taking the risk of reprisal.

The case of Jaspritt shows that suicide to escape forced marriage can even happen in Québec. Media reports of this case included the television program *Enjeux* on Radio-Canada (March 5, 2007).

Jaspritt, driven to suicide to escape forced marriage

Jaspritt was a 16 year old girl who grew up in Montréal and fell in love with a 19-year-old boy at her school. Though both were of Indian origin, her parents vigorously opposed the relationship because the boy was from a lower caste; plus, they had promised her to a man in India when she was a child. The parents forbade their daughter from pursuing the romance and placed her under strict control, accompanied her daily to school to prevent her from seeing the boy. Desperate, Jaspritt confided in the counsellor at school, agreeing to let her report the physical and psychological violence to the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ - youth protection bureau). Though the parents were warned and told to respect certain conditions to allow their daughter a bit more freedom, the threats and other pressure only grew worse. Less than a week later, on December 11, 2001 Jaspritt and her boyfriend threw themselves in front of a metro train at Frontenac station, leaving their school bags on the platform with a letter of explanation to their parents.

With an arranged marriage, where either prospective spouse may accept or reject the union, the outcome depends on the relationship that develops between them. Lamboley says there is an implicit rule in some communities that a person who has succeeded in immigrating to Canada must choose a spouse from the country of origin, to give him or her the same chance. Sometimes it is only a paper marriage (a marriage of convenience), whose sole reason is to facilitate immigration for the sponsored spouse. Another reason for arranged marriage can be to control women's social and sexual behaviour. Quickly marrying off a rebellious daughter is a practical way for parents to ensure that she does not impair the family's honour. In such cases, the parents look to their country of origin to choose a son-in-law from their own community. As will be seen in Part 2, whatever the rationale, this type of marriage entails a great risk of abuse for women.

Conclusion of Part I

There are two key points that should be emphasized here. First, honour crime is a complex issue that affects communities of different origins and faiths. Those communities are in a process of change, particularly in response to the demands of modern life. By having access to education and employment opportunities, and by engaging in social and political change, women are gradually transforming gender relations. Consequently, we cannot presuppose that people in certain communities will behave in certain ways on the basis of their ethnic origin.

Second, the honour crimes that arouse our indignation are not a new phenomenon. History teaches us that they are the product of a patriarchal culture common to many civilizations, and that they are modulated by social, economic and ideological factors that combine to create either the conditions for such crimes to continue, or the conditions for them to gradually disappear. In other words, honour crime is not an immutable reality of "other" cultures. Rather, they result from the interaction of multiple factors that must be taken into account for honour-based violence to be fought effectively. Immigration itself is a significant source of factors that can provoke and perpetuate honour-based violence. This will be explored in Part 2.

Part 2

HONOUR IN THE CONTEXT OF IMMIGRATION

In Part 2, we present perceptions and experiences related to the honour code in the Québec and Canadian contexts, to gain a better grasp of how it interacts with the context of immigration.

Chapter 3 presents what was learned from interviews we conducted in Québec with three distinct groups: immigrant women affected by the honour code (designated here as respondents); community workers involved with women victims of honour-based violence; and professionals with direct experience of the problem. Though it is impossible to generalize from the data collected, our sample of thirty-eight interviews was enough to reveal a common understanding of honour among our respondents (section 3.2); to identify how the honour code is transmitted in immigrant communities (section 3.3); and to assess the influence of honour in our respondents' lives (section 3.4). We noted both similarities and differences in individual attitudes toward the honour code, as well as in the degree to which it affects their lives. We also found connections between different cultural practices, such as arranged marriage, the overvaluation of virginity, and gender segregation in public places, all of which stem from the honour code.

In Chapter 4, we examine the circumstances of honour crimes committed in Canada. After a few observations about such crimes and the families affected (section 4.1), we present a summary of the salient facts of all these tragedies. This is followed by an analysis of the honour-related behaviours involved (section 4.2). Lastly, we present a detailed case study, based on the Shafia affair, to illustrate the complexity and interaction of the various factors that can lead to murder (section 4.3).

The observations and analysis below demonstrate that honour-related behaviours are complex, a product of intersecting social, economic, cultural and ideological factors. The conclusion of Part 2 outlines the challenges we face in seeking to address this phenomenon.

Chapter 3

Perceptions and Practices around Honour

There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, never tolerable.

Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN, 2008)

In this chapter we present a summary of the findings of a survey conducted in Québec, between December 2011 and March 2012, as part of our research for this report. Interviews were held with people directly concerned by the realities of the honour system. Before discussing the results of our survey, we note how dramatically the face of immigration has changed in Canada over the last few decades.

3.1 Context

According to the National Household Survey, in 2011 Canada had the highest proportion of foreign-born people of all G8 countries: 6.8 million people, representing 20.6% of the population²⁸.

The share of recent immigrants from Asia (including the Middle East) has gradually increased, rising from 12.1% in 1971 to 58.3% in 2006, while that of recent immigrants from Africa has risen to 3.2% from 10.6% over the same period²⁹. This means that Canada now receives more immigrants from countries where honour-based violence, including forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), is common practice. It is now estimated that 26% of Canada's immigrant population comes from sub-Saharan Africa, where FGM is very widespread. As for Québec, from 2007 to 2011 it received 65 633 immigrants from Asia (including the Middle East) and 81 781 from Africa, including countries where FGM is a widely accepted custom³⁰.

The largest group of visible minorities in Canada consists of immigrants from South Asia, most of whom live in Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2011). Among the top ten birth countries for recent

²⁸ Source: Statistics Canada, "2011 National Household Survey: Immigration, place of birth, citizenship, ethnic origin, visible minorities, language and religion", in *The Daily*, May 8, 2013. See also: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/130508/dq130508b-eng.pdf> (accessed June 10, 2013).

²⁹ Source: Statistics Canada, Figure 2, Region of birth of recent immigrants to Canada, 1971 to 2006, 2006 Census Analysis Series. See also: <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/figures/c2-eng.cfm> (accessed June 10, 2013).

³⁰ Source: Tableau 10a, Immigrants admis au Québec selon le pays de naissance, 2007-2011, Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles, Direction de la recherche et de l'analyse prospective. See also: <http://www.micc.gouv.qc.ca/publications/fr/recherches-statistiques/Immigration-Quebec-2007-2011.pdf> (accessed June 10, 2013).

immigrants to Canada, we find India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka³¹, countries in which honour-based violence is particularly frequent. It is hardly surprising then that over the last twenty years, most of the honour crimes recorded in Canada were in families from those three countries, plus Afghanistan, from which the main flow of immigrants is more recent (section 4.1). This does not mean that honour-based violence only involves immigrants from those countries, but it does tell us that women in those communities are among the most vulnerable.

Methodology

As a first step, thirty-eight people were interviewed in Québec between December 2011 and March 2012, to help us identify how the honour code manifests itself here. The interviews were held with three distinct groups:

- women from different immigrant communities in which the honour code governs social behaviours (14 people);
- community workers involved with women affected by honour-based violence (11 people);
- researchers and professionals considered knowledgeable about the issue (13 people).

The interviews were conducted with the aid of a discussion guide (see Appendix II in the French version online), inspired by a tool developed for a Master's thesis in social work on honour crimes in Lebanon (Paré, 2009).

To compose our sample of immigrant women to be interviewed (referred to here as respondents), we contacted organizations that work with immigrant communities or provide assistance to victims of domestic violence. The organizations we chose are based in three cities: Montréal, Québec and Sherbrooke. This choice was dictated by the fact that the vast majority of new arrivals to Québec choose one of those cities as their first place of residence. We asked the organizations to refer us to women from cultural communities affected by the honour code, who had been in Québec for at least two years, and who had experienced situations of honour-related violence either personally or through relatives or friends. With our first contacts we then applied the "snowball" method, well known in the social sciences, which consists of asking respondents to recruit others they know who correspond to the required criteria (Beaud, 1996). This technique was well suited to the needs of our research. Without pretending to be representative, our sample allowed us to shed an interesting light on the perceptions and realities of honour-based violence among immigrants to Québec.

³¹ Source: Statistics Canada, Table 1, Top 10 countries of birth of recent immigrants, 1981 to 2006. See also: <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-557/table/t1-eng.cfm> (accessed June 10, 2013).

To analyze interview content, we used a qualitative method of the semantic type, which identified similarities and differences between recording units, providing analysis categories to use in interpreting the results.

To respect the privacy of the women we interviewed, we only mention their region of origin, since it is important to know the cultural context for their perceptions of honour and their experiences with it. For the community workers and experts interviewed (see list in Appendix III of the French version online), we only indicate their title or function, to provide a context for what they say. From their interviews we only present what adds to our understanding of the situations experienced by our immigrant respondents, who are the heart of our analysis. Finally, it is worth mentioning that all statements reported in this chapter result from our translation, since the interviews were conducted in French.

3.2 Profile and characteristics of respondents

The women we interviewed had a few things in common (see Appendix I of the French version online). First, they were women from cultural communities in which social behaviours are governed by a code of honour. Next, they had lived in Canada for at least two years. Of the remaining elements, note the following:

- Immigration status: most were Canadian citizens (9 of 14), while 2 were permanent residents and 3 were waiting to obtain that status.
- Age: the average age was 32.6, most being in their thirties (9 of 14), while four were under 30 and one was 51.
- Education: over half the respondents (8 of 14) said they had a university degree, either from a Canadian university or from one in their country of origin.
- Religion: over half said they were Muslim (8 of 14), while 3 were Catholic, 1 was Hindu, and the 2 youngest said they were atheists.
- Civil status and maternity: over half the respondents were married (8 of 14), while 2 were separated, 1 was a widow, 2 were single and 1 was engaged to be married. Most of them (9 of 14) had one to three children, while 5 were childless.
- Region and country of origin: as shown in the table below, there were several countries of origin. Half the sample (7 of 14) was from South Asia, while the other half was from the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa.

Region and country of origin of respondents

South and South-East Asia		Sub-Saharan Africa		Middle East		Total
Afghanistan	1	Cameroon	1	Egypt	1	
Bangladesh	2	Senegal	1	Tunisia	2	
Pakistan	2	Togo	1	Morocco	1	
Philippines*	1					
Sri Lanka	1					
	7		3		4	14

* The only South-East Asian country is the Philippines, the others in this category being in the region referred to as South Asia.

3.3 Sense of honour

As might be expected, our respondents' statements about honour and dishonour reflect the dominant values in their country of origin, indicating that they are well aware of the code of honour and shame in their community – whether or not they agree with it. As will be seen, there are areas of both convergence and divergence, as well as grey areas.

Behaviours that preserve honour

The following elements were mentioned by several respondents regarding the concrete meaning of honour in their community:

- For a single girl: staying a virgin until marriage, obeying her parents, not marrying against their will, not going out without permission, coming right home after school or work, avoiding romantic relationships, dressing and behaving with modesty.
- For a married woman: being faithful, respecting and obeying her husband, being a good wife and mother.
- For a boy or man: shouldering family responsibilities (protecting his family and providing for its needs), respecting the traditions and values of his community (showing respect to elders, speaking respectfully to others, etc.), acting honestly (not lying or stealing, etc.), not taking drugs or alcohol, not overstepping the bounds accepted by society, succeeding at school and choosing an honourable profession.

Behaviours that cause dishonour

As for the concrete meaning of dishonour, the qualities cited above are mentioned negatively, with particular emphasis on women's chastity:

- For a single girl: getting pregnant before marriage, having a love relationship, changing partners frequently, refusing to marry the man chosen by her parents, marrying against their will.
- For a married woman: having an extramarital relationship, denouncing a violent husband, deciding to divorce.
- For a boy or man: behaving in a way associated with criminality, drug addiction or homosexuality; failing in school, professionally or socially (job, marriage, way of life, etc.); being unable to provide for the needs of his family.

Reservations expressed

Not all the respondents were in agreement with all the elements listed above. Some dissociated themselves from what honour means to their family or community, while others seemed to have integrated, at least partly, the values underlying the code of honour and shame. The difference is illustrated by the two excerpts below.

A respondent from South Asia who says she is an atheist said:

For my community, dishonour means going against the teachings of Islam and very traditional values. ...Dishonour means making choices that a woman wants to make and not doing what men want. ...[Whereas honour] is also about respecting adults, not dressing sloppily, not going out whenever you want, not having sexual relations before marriage.

To me, the way my community interprets the word honour, that's not my understanding... It's primarily a way for men to have control over women. It's evolving, but very very slowly, the next Afghan generation here in Québec will be different. ...My family is more educated. My father grew up in countries other than Afghanistan, he travelled a lot, he's more open-minded. But my community definitely isn't... Because of my family, I can see the difference.

A respondent born in Canada to parents from the Middle East (now divorced), and who affirms her religious identity, said:

Dishonour is really something that will make the family ashamed. ...In another family, going out with a guy is extremely dishonouring. But for me, in my family, it's a dishonour if I say, I'm leaving home and renting an apart-

ment. That would show the community that there are problems and that I can't stand my mother. ...The second thing, if I get pregnant before marriage, that's horrible. For my mother and the community, it's really frowned upon. ...Knowing my mother, she wouldn't stand for it, she'd definitely throw me out, she'd be very angry, but after, I think she would support me. ...She'd never want to lose her children, the fact that she doesn't have my father in her life or any another man, so she cares a lot about us.

The first respondent shows that in every community, even the most traditional, opinions can range from extreme conservatism to liberalism. The second respondent shows that even parents with traditional values can be open to compromise, overcoming the shame associated with a child's misconduct to avoid tearing the family apart. There is every reason to believe that openness to compromise is more common than we think in immigrant families from traditional communities, even though it is rarely reported or studied.

3.4 Socialization of the concept of honour

When asked about the principal agents of socialization that transmit the values associated with honour, all respondents agreed that the most important is the family, followed by the community, then school and society. However, in an immigration context, in the absence of a critical mass of people from the same community, a private religious school can play the predominant role in transmitting the social norms of the community of origin. This was expressed by a respondent from the Middle East:

For primary school, I went to the public normal school, but for high school I went to the private Muslim school. Almost all the girls of my community went to that private school, so we all knew each other. I especially learned my values in terms of honour there. My parents also had a great influence on me, but I would say mostly my school.

Although honour generally weighs less heavily on immigrants, as is the case in Québec where sexual freedoms are widely accepted, this is not always the case. Restrictions imposed by the code of honour and shame may be upheld and strengthened by religious education and the social pressures exerted in immigrant communities. Fear of being judged can restrict women's freedom of movement and action, especially in neighbourhoods with a strong concentration of one ethnic group. The fear is justified since rumours and gossip can destroy a girl's reputation, spoiling her chances of honourable marriage in her community.

This reality is illustrated by the following anecdote, reported by the respondent cited above, who specified that she lives in a part of Montréal with a high concentration of immigrants from

the Maghreb and Egypt. "For us", she said, "it's like a separate city"; if someone gets married, "everyone has to know", and "everybody talks about everybody". She described the reaction of a woman from her community who saw her in a public place with the boy she planned to marry, which her mother knew about:

When she saw me, she was super shocked. She went to tell my mother she's seen me with a boy, what's going on? Is she going to marry him or is it just like that? A whole story started. ...So that set off a lot of rumours and my mother got mad. My mother, she knew already, but she didn't want other people to know. My mother said to me, why do you do that, when I let you go out and do what you want, at least be a bit subtle. She didn't want the image to deteriorate, so that caused me a lot of problems. So it's very suffocating.

That example illustrates the fact that in an immigrant context, social pressure can play a decisive role in reinforcing the norms dictated by honour. It also shows that a behaviour accepted and tolerated by the parents can be dishonouring if it is revealed publically. In other words, the collective dimension of honour can take precedence over its individual dimension and lesser importance within a family. Even in exile, a woman's reputation depends on how she is seen and judged by other members of the community. And even open-minded parents can be driven to adopt more rigid attitudes toward their children, for fear of being negatively judged and shunned by their community.

Another respondent, also from the Middle East, told of how some of her compatriots, after immigrating to Canada, become far more conservative than they were before.

What I'm about to say will astonish you, but I find that those who come here... I don't know why, they become stricter than when they were back home. ...For example, I know this couple, back home he was very cool, but after he came here, he let his beard grow, he goes to the mosque for every prayer, and he makes his wife wear the veil. He doesn't want her to study, whereas back home she was in university, he doesn't want her to wear high heels, he doesn't want her to wear clothes that are a little tight. He has really become very very strict. ...I find that it's a big problem. It's as if he himself isn't convinced, but because of his friends' influence, he has to follow the community. He's afraid of people having a bad impression of him or rejecting him. ...Some of the ones who have just arrived, it's as if in order to integrate they have to follow the others. ...They [the couple] talked about it at first and she would tell him why she didn't want to wear the veil. But for him, the only excuse was: all my friend's wives wear the veil, so you're going to wear the veil!

This illustrates what many Muslim women know already, that the Islamic veil (or hijab³²), which some insist is a symbol of their religion or identity, is often imposed by force or moral pressure. Though the hijab is sacralized by certain strains of Islam, it has long been the subject of controversy in Muslim countries (Geadah, 2001). We should also realize that the dress code advocated in the name of religion varies from community to community, even from family to family. One Muslim respondent told us that in Québec's Afghan community the veil is not required, even though its members share the same code of honour as other Muslim groups.

Community workers involved with immigrant families confirm that some men change into religious conservatives after immigrating. This can be explained by the combined effect of at least two factors. First, there is a conservative religious discourse that is disseminated throughout immigrant communities, partly to preserve cultural and religious identity; it insists on female purity and virginity, urging the maintenance of traditional practices. Second, immigrants from traditional societies often experience a malaise when faced with the more permissive ways of the host country; they withdraw into their roots to get a sense of solid ground, constricting into cultural and religious identity. That same malaise is shared by both men and women when it comes to their children's education, as will be seen later.

Several respondents, despite being very religious, spoke of their reluctance to attend places of worship, so as not to be subjected to pressure by other members of their community. A respondent from South Asia illustrated the phallogocratic character of the dominant religious stance in her community:

The Muslim religion gives a lot of rights to women, but they aren't applied, because in the mosques there are primarily men. The imam always gives advice, sermons, against the rights of women. I don't like that. ...Religion never said to keep girls at home like prisoners. Because they [the imams] don't want women going out and learning things, learning about their rights, that's why they always want to keep women at home. That's the excuse in my opinion. ...I don't like the imams, they always give a lot of rights to men. ...And they always ask women to accept bad things because they say it's better for them, for the family. They never say to men, don't do that.

A social worker pointed out that the situation was hardly any better in the Catholic church, where certain priests have no hesitation in condemning a woman who wants to leave a violent husband, urging her instead to submit. This takes us back to the fact that all religions have served

³² The hijab or so called "Islamic veil" is a garment that covers the hair along with the ears and neck, leaving the face uncovered. The terms *niqab* and *burqa* refer to a garment that covers the entire body, including the head and face, leaving only a slit or grill for the eyes.

as bulwarks for the patriarchal system. The question arises as to whether religious leaders can be persuaded to play a more positive role, to help end violence against women.

3.5 Degree of influence on respondents' lives

The interviews revealed both similarities and differences in the influence of honour on the lives of our respondents. Their adherence to the code of honour and shame, and whether it is applied in the education of their children, is largely affected by their life trajectories and the nature of their ties to the country of origin.

We chose four indicators to account for the influence of honour on the lives of our respondents: the value placed on virginity; the justification of arranged marriage; excessive control to preserve honour; and the acceptance of sanctions for dishonour.

3.5.1 Value placed on virginity

A large majority of respondents agreed on the importance of virginity before marriage, but for some it was acceptable for girls to go out with boys and to have boyfriends. Several respondents downplayed the importance of virginity in their own eyes, as shown by the next two excerpts. First, a respondent from sub-Saharan Africa:

As for virginity, I don't share that idea. For me it's not important, because the world has changed so much now, you can't respect that principle anymore. ...It's because of the media, Internet and television. Before, mothers didn't go to school, they stayed at home and got married at 16 or 17. They didn't have time to go and do things. Now, women want to study and have a nice future, and get married later. There's also the Western influence, all that makes it more difficult today for young people to really respect that rule.

For another respondent from the Middle East, habits have changed in her country of origin:

It does happen in our country that a woman loses her virginity, or goes out with friends and everything. They don't punish her, they talk with her, they say it's not good, you have to have a husband. A husband means protection for the woman and the man. Look at cervical diseases, HIV... If the man stays with just one woman and the woman stays with just one man, it's better than having multiple partners. ...And if a woman gets pregnant out of wedlock, they can arrange it and get them married, for themselves yes, but for the child too.

Another respondent reported the reaction when a schoolmate from the Middle East got pregnant:

[Her parents] tried to hide it and she got married super fast, with a big religious marriage and everything. But everyone knew, because her belly started to show. ...It's true that it's a dishonour. When I found out, I was shocked and felt bad. Why did she have sex before marriage? I was disappointed.

These statements show that virginity can be put into perspective, even in the country of origin. They also show that parents' first reflex is to conceal their daughter's behaviour, not kill her. When a quick marriage with the father is impossible or unwanted, an alternative is to have a marriage of convenience, sometimes immediately followed by divorce. The important thing is to legitimize the pregnancy in the eyes of the community, to "save face". Occasionally abortion is practised if the option is available.

To fulfill the obligation of virginity on the wedding night, plastic surgery to repair the hymen (hymenoplasty) has become common practice in many Middle Eastern countries, sometimes with the complicity of the girl's mother. Since the operation is costly, only well-to-do families can afford it.

What all this comes down to is that loss of virginity is not necessarily dishonouring, if it can be camouflaged to avoid dishonour in others' eyes. This suggests that individual practices around sexual mores are changing faster than the collective morality that, publically at least, is still upheld and promoted. Social rules are evolving everywhere, though at different rates in different contexts, and young people of all origins are negotiating new areas of freedom.

3.5.2 Justification of arranged marriage

As explained earlier, there is an important distinction between forced marriage, in which at least one partner has no possibility of refusing the union, and arranged marriage, which is considered the norm in South-Asian and other communities³³. Sometimes, however, the line between them is thin indeed.

This usually hidden reality is reflected in the lives of our respondents. Three of the fourteen had experienced a forced marriage. A fourth sought asylum in Canada to escape the forced marriage planned by her father in their country of origin. Having promised her as a child to a friend twice her age who already had two other wives, her father would have been dishonoured if he failed to keep his promise. Six other respondents agreed to a marriage arranged by their parents. Three were married in their country of origin before emigrating with their husbands, and said they were

³³ The term South-Asian refers to populations originating from the Indian sub-continent, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, sometimes Afghanistan, along with Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives Islands.

reasonably satisfied with the marriage. Three others agreed to marry a man they didn't know from their country of origin. Their experiences of abuse will be recounted shortly.

When asked about their intentions for their own children, most respondents condemned forced marriage, saying they wanted their children to be free to choose. Marriage with someone of the same origin was clearly preferred however. Some respondents expressed deep concern at the idea of their children, of either sex, choosing a spouse from outside their community. They explained this by saying that sharing the same values and language would make it easier to communicate and maintain ties with other members of the family.

This legitimate desire of parents is only a problem when it becomes an absolute constraint imposed on their children. The opposition between the parents' desire to preserve their culture, and the no less legitimate desire of their children (especially daughters) to choose their own spouse by whatever criteria, is the source of countless family conflicts. We should remember that many of the honour crimes committed in Canada and elsewhere resulted from a daughter's refusal to submit to forced marriage, or her determination to marry a man she chose herself, from outside her community or social class.

In our exchanges with our respondents, we learned what motivates some young women, though born or raised in Canada, to agree voluntarily to an arranged marriage with someone they barely know, or don't know at all, sometimes living in their country of origin. According to a respondent from the Middle East:

There are some women here who go back to their country to marry someone. ...Maybe they haven't found a husband or partner here. Plus, they speak the same language, they have the same tradition. Maybe they'll be more comfortable. Here, men don't get married. They're with one woman today, another one tomorrow. For a Muslim woman, she wants stability, she wants to have children, she wants a home. For me and other Muslim women, we don't want a new boyfriend every day. ...They're not against marrying a Québécois, but maybe they haven't found a man here that they love or who loves them. ...But here, it's rare for a man to stay with a woman, he stays a month, two months, then he goes and looks elsewhere.

I know two Lebanese women, who were born here and got married with men in their country. I asked one of them, is it your dad and mum who want you to marry back there? She said no, here, I went to school, I went to university, I haven't found a man who wants to live with me a long time and have children. I've met men, but all they want is pleasure, they want to live with me, one month, two months and that's all. Right off the bat, they say they don't want children. But that girl wanted to have children, a family, a house...

This account, corroborated by those of other respondents, reveals that a prime motivation for accepting an arranged marriage can be the desire to start a family in a lasting relationship. This suggests that women in some immigrant communities are faced with a reduced pool of potential husbands, reduced in terms of the required criteria: being of the same ethnic origin, belonging to the same religion, being of equal or higher social class, and especially, wanting to start a family. Though this hypothesis has yet to be confirmed, two elements could explain this situation. First, many men from the same communities want a traditional wife, and will look for one in their country of origin. Second, the men enjoy greater freedom of movement, and are less subject to pressure to have an endogamous marriage. Since men have more opportunities to choose a spouse from outside their community, this reduces the acceptable marriage options for women.

Risks associated with sponsorship

Whether they themselves sponsored, or were sponsored by, a spouse from their country of origin, this type of arranged marriage carries great risks for women. Three respondents, all from South Asian countries, had bitter experience of this.

The first married a man she didn't know, in a marriage arranged by her uncle. The groom lived in Canada, while she was in their country of origin. After sponsoring her he turned out to be a violent husband, and after six years of marriage he divorced her, leaving her alone with three children. At the time of the marriage, she says, she had no choice in the matter, and now she can't return to her country or even remarry, because her family would be dishonoured.

The other two respondents also suffered abuse after arranged marriages, both to men that they had sponsored, and whose only reason for marrying was immigration. With one, the husband had lied about his civil status. He was already married, with a child from his first wife. After finally collecting all the proof required, she was able to have the marriage annulled by Canadian authorities. When the husband's visa expired he had to return to their country of origin.

The third respondent's case was more complex. She had two unfortunate experiences, the first being a forced marriage, the second an arranged marriage. We present below a summary of what she went through, an accumulation of abuses tied in with the honour code. Her account is an example of kidnapping and rape being instrumentalized for the purpose of forced marriage, while also showing how the honour code burdens the lives of women, forcing them to "consent" to things they don't want, to avoid dishonouring their families.

A case of multiple abuses: kidnapping, rape, forced marriage, arranged marriage

This is the case of a woman of 28 who came to Canada as a child, and whose life drastically changed at 18 during a visit with her parents to their country of origin in South Asia. While at the market with a relative, she was kidnapped and raped by a man she didn't know, who subsequently threatened her parents if they refused to let him marry her. She therefore "consented" to this forced marriage, and her husband confiscated her papers to prevent her from leaving the country. After becoming pregnant, she convinced her husband to let her return to Canada to give birth, promising to sponsor him. Once back in Canada however, she told her story to Canadian authorities and was able to have the marriage annulled.

Three years later, single and with a child, she consented to a marriage arranged by her uncle, to a man she didn't know in their country of origin. Her family sang the praises of the future husband, arguing that in her situation she had little chance of finding someone to marry in Canada. Trusting them, and since the man had agreed to emigrate, she went back to her country of origin to marry, then returned to Canada and began procedures to sponsor him. He kept asking for money, and she sent him a total of \$26 000. After the husband rejoined her in Canada, the couple lived in harmony until he obtained his residence permit. Then she said, little by little,

His character changed. He became kind of mean, he spoke to me in a nasty way, called me a prostitute, didn't respect me. He went out and came home late, smoked, drank, then at night he hit me... just to have sex. ...I got pregnant, but he went on hitting me. ...I had bruises all over my body. But I never talked to people, never called the police. ...I always thought, since it's my second marriage ... I don't want people to know, it's really frowned on. It's an arranged marriage and everything, if the community finds out, they'll say you're not from a good family. ...I should have called the police when he hit me, afterwards it was too late. It was he who went to the police, he went and said it was us who hit him, that we were mean, didn't give him anything to eat, tried to poison him, and since he worked for our family, that we were taking all his money ... and had confiscated his papers.

It was indeed the husband who laid charges of assault against his wife and in-laws, but he was unable to convince the judge and the charges were dropped. She still wasn't out of the woods however. The husband disappeared, leaving her with another child to take care of alone. As she sees it, when he accused them of confiscating his papers he was hoping to obtain a second set of documents to help his brother come illegally. Also, since she didn't

lay charges against him, he is free to start a new life in Canada, whereas for her, there's no question of getting married again, because it would be looked on very badly in her community.

People would say: look at that girl, she married three times. She's like a prostitute. It's really frowned on, and honestly, I don't want to. The guy can remarry because he's a guy, but the girl, she can't. ...I don't want to do it, because everyone knows it's my second marriage.

This example is a striking illustration of how the honour code can lead to multiple abuses. Curiously, even someone whose human rights are flagrantly violated in the name of honour will not necessarily question the honour code. Despite all the abuse she suffered, our respondent does not seem at all inclined to question the meaning of honour, no more than she bears resentment toward her parents, since they supported her throughout. It's true that given the culture of honour, the events that led to the first marriage could have ended in an honour killing. Some might say, at least her parents had the merit of preferring the avoidance strategy, marrying their daughter to her rapist instead of killing her.

Looking at the facts objectively however, we can make a different assessment of the situation. First, when their daughter was kidnapped and raped her parents failed to protect her, giving in to the rapist's blackmail to "save face" before their community. Second, the parents are responsible for that abusive second marriage. Third, despite the domestic violence, which they knew about, there is no evidence that the parents did anything but encourage her to put up with it in silence, so as not to dishonour the family. The honour code dictates that the other two options, getting a divorce or laying charges, would have been too dishonourable to contemplate.

This case shows how the intertwining of honour, family loyalty and sociocultural factors can keep women in a state of resignation despite flagrant violations of their rights. It shows how the internal forces of an immigrant community determine social behaviours. Though the parents were undoubtedly affectionate in supporting their daughter through all her troubles, they felt obliged to respect the norms of their community, to the detriment of her well-being. This example highlights the need for an in-depth questioning within such communities of the concept of honour and how it affects people's lives.

3.5.3 Excessive control

The control imposed on women and girls in the name of honour depends on the family, and can vary considerably. The parents' level of education, their ideology, how open-minded they are, and whether they came from a rural or urban environment, all are important factors. Several respondents told of situations in which girls and even married women living in Québec had to respect a curfew, strict or negotiable depending on the family.

A respondent from South Asia said that in her community, some women aren't allowed out of the house without their husband: "aren't allowed to go to the convenience store, aren't allowed to visit their mother, or their family". Another respondent told of a 16-year-old friend of Iranian origin, whose father placed severe restrictions on her, forbidding all outings and beating her if she disobeyed. When the girl complained at school, she said, the principal simply called the father to say he wasn't allowed to hit his daughter, otherwise he would report him to the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ – youth protection bureau). Then, she added, "when her father learned she had talked at school, he hit her even more". This brief example points up the fact that a superficial intervention, with no follow-up and no understanding of the honour culture, can make the victim's situation far worse.

These reports are echoed by community workers, who confirmed to us that many immigrant women are extremely isolated, not only because of the language barrier, but because husbands forbid them to go out in their absence for fear they will be influenced by the Western way of life. That is one of the main reasons why some immigrant men, even if they have integrated well, return to their country of origin to find a wife. They want to replicate the traditional family model, where their masculine privileges will be preserved. The wives they sponsor, cut off from the social and familial networks they had back home and perhaps doubly isolated by the language barrier, are terribly vulnerable to honour-based violence.

The school counsellors we interviewed said that some girls are closely watched by a sister or brother at the same school, who quickly reports everything to the parents. As mentioned in the previous chapter, boys raised under the honour code are trained by their parents, including the mother, to be macho, aggressive and controlling toward their sisters. This kind of behaviour tends to be transposed into marital relationships later on, perpetuating the cycle of honour-based violence.

The next case, reported by a woman from a multi-ethnic part of Montréal, concerns a girl whose parents subjected her to excessive control³⁴.

³⁴ To protect the family's privacy, we have not given the name of the school. Unlike the other cases in this chapter, this was taken from a later interview.

A case of excessive parental control and fear of a forced marriage

This is the case of a 15-year-old from South Asia who had been in Montréal for about ten years. At school, she revealed that she was terrified of having to go through with a marriage arranged by her parents. Her father was often absent for work, but her mother kept a close watch to make sure she came directly home after classes finished, timing how long it should take. If she was ten minutes late she was severely reprimanded. Never satisfied with their daughter's grades, the parents were extremely demanding. Though she did her best to succeed, they were constantly pushing her to do better. She was also forbidden to talk with boys. She became distrustful toward her classmates, thinking they were being aggressive when they were simply teasing. It took a long time for the school counsellor to teach her how to decode exchanges with her classmates.

In the fall of 2011, women from the South-Asian community centre were giving workshops at the school (discussion groups where girls could discuss their problems). She wanted to go, but her parents refused to let her take part in any after-school activities. Only after the school counsellor intervened was she allowed to participate. Subsequently, she started taking a dance course at the community centre. She loved it, but her mother was opposed, considering dance a vulgar activity, contrary to the modesty expected of a girl. The mother demanded that she study all the time and do nothing else. Increasingly desperate, she had suicidal thoughts.

Taking no chances after the Shafia affair, the school counsellor called the DPJ and the parents were summoned. A meeting was quickly arranged at school. The girl cried a lot, as did her mother, who spoke neither French nor English and required an interpreter. She was in a state of shock over being summoned by the DPJ. After negotiations, the parents agreed to let their daughter take the dance course, but on certain conditions: that she devote more hours to schoolwork, do more household chores and obtain better grades. The girl dropped out of the dance course, unable to take more pressure.

The following year, in the fall of 2012, the girl was still under intense pressure from her family. They reproached her for getting the DPJ involved, making her feel guilty. To the school counsellor she seemed resigned, but afraid she would have to accept a marriage arranged by her parents. She found it unjust, especially since her parents had married for love, alienating part of the family by standing up to their own parents, who had other plans for them. The girl found her parents' position incomprehensible, saying "Why do they want to impose an arranged marriage on me, when they themselves refused?"

By the summer of 2013 the girl had completed her 3rd year of secondary school, and seemed to have a bit more freedom. For the first time, she was allowed to invite girl friends home and go out with them. But when a boy from her class showed interest, the parents firmly reprimanded her. Asked by the counsellor how she saw her future, she answered with resignation and detachment, saying she would “obviously have an arranged marriage” and it was better that way, since if things went wrong she could blame her parents and count on their support, otherwise she couldn’t. The counsellor was worried because the girl seemed at risk.

The situation described above is far from unique. School counsellors have observed that some immigrant parents exercise severe control over their children, regarding friends, schoolwork and choice of career. Many parents insist that their children go into a liberal profession, such as doctor or engineer, to enhance their social status and standing in the community. Young people in some communities are under considerable family pressure.

Apprehensions of immigrant parents

Several respondents spoke spontaneously of their concerns about educating their children in Québec. One problem was the conflict between Canadian standards on children’s rights and their traditional values, by which children should obey their parents and parents should exercise their authority. As a respondent from the Middle East said:

They say it’s hard to raise children here. There are rules you have to respect that we don’t have back home. ...Punishment for example, here you can’t hit a child, whereas back home you can give a spanking so it won’t do certain things. Everyone talks about that. You can’t give a little spanking. What else? When they’re a bit older, the influence of friends. Their friends can do such and such, but we can’t. For example, girls are allowed to have boyfriends ... even when they’re 8 or 11, but for us that’s too soon, she’s too young to have a boyfriend, whereas here it’s allowed, it’s normal.

This last expresses a common sentiment among immigrant parents from traditional communities, who are shocked by the way young people dress – the girls wearing clothes that are far too sexy, the boys looking like pimps – and by the sexual freedoms accepted, even at puberty. Other behaviours also collide with their moral values, like smoking and drinking alcohol (associated with prostitution in some countries) or going out clubbing (associated with flirting and easy sexual relations).

This element deserves further study, because it is a frequent source of tension between immigrant parents and their children, who were born or grew up here and aspire to the same freedoms as

their classmates. When ignored too long or badly handled, these conflicts can degenerate and end in murder, as shown by the case of Aqsa Parvez, who was strangled in an Ontario honour killing in 2007, and that of the Shafia girls in 2009.

As a child psychiatrist pointed out, while it is true that some immigrant parents impose severe restrictions on their children, on the other hand the hypersexualization of girls in Québec society exposes adolescents to significant risks³⁵.

3.5.4 Sanctions for dishonour

As mentioned earlier, excessive parental control to preserve honour tends to begin in adolescence, usually with the imposition of a dress code: nothing revealing and no makeup. To avoid relationships that could compromise a girl's reputation or virginity, she may be forbidden to talk to boys or take part in social activities. Repeatedly opposing such restrictions can lead to sanctions, including threats, blows, confinement, isolation, even forced marriage to tame a rebellious daughter.

We were told by one school counsellor that when parents are warned that they aren't allowed to beat their children, they may resort to psychological violence, which is just as damaging though it leaves no physical marks. Some respondents acknowledged that to punish their daughter or son, they may decide to give them the silent treatment until they change their behaviour. When applied strictly, this technique means that the entire family systematically ignores the one who is the target, to break her rebellious spirit. As the counsellor underlined, affective isolation is a form of psychological violence that can drive the victim, whether girl or boy, to despair and even suicide. This points up the need for more time to be spent following up with parents in situations of conflict, beyond a simple warning against striking their child.

A respondent from the Middle East evoked the resistance to denouncing domestic violence, since in her community it is dishonouring to do so:

I have a friend who was battered, but she didn't want to talk about it. ...When the neighbours heard cries, they went to her door and asked if everything was okay and every time, she said yes, everything's okay. Because for us, denouncing your husband, it's like you're dishonouring him, as well as the whole family. ...Especially when there are children. ...Keeping the family together, that's more important than denouncing the violence. ...Even if she's being beaten, a woman should preserve her family, that's

³⁵ The hypersexualization of girls was explored in the *Gazette des femmes* (Sept.-Oct. 2005) and in an opinion published by the Conseil du statut de la femme (May 2008).

the most important thing. ...But for me, I would rather divorce and raise my child properly by myself, instead of staying in an environment like that and educating the children with quarrels all the time. The child who sees his mother being subjected to violence, he's not going to be balanced. So it's better to be divorced than to put up with violence every day.

Of course, the shame associated with domestic violence is not exclusive to any particular community. The well-known battered woman syndrome shows how hard it can be to denounce or leave a violent spouse, especially when there are no acceptable alternatives. That difficulty is magnified for immigrant women, due to their isolation and the loss of social and familial networks.

A young respondent of South-Asian origin said that when her family lived in their country of origin, she saw her mother being beaten by the uncles of her father if she didn't behave "correctly". It could be something as innocuous as a way of speaking, or serving food without being sufficiently deferential. "My father didn't dare say anything, because he was the youngest of the family and under the influence of his uncles." It was only in hindsight, she said, that he realized it was unacceptable to behave that way, and "he never again raised his hand against my mother". This account corroborates an important observation in Part 1: that the concept of honour derives from a patriarchal, tribal culture that gives men the collective right to police and punish the behaviour of any female in the family.

It is worth noting that even though all the respondents condemned honour-based murder, not all rejected the imposition of sanctions for behaviour considered dishonourable. For example, one considered that "the Shafia girls went too far", and that "girls should understand that there has to be a fair balance".

Other respondents felt that when girls are raised to think in terms of honour, they consider it "normal" to be beaten by their father or brother if they do something considered dishonourable. One reported that some of her girl friends, who like her had grown up in Québec, are regularly beaten by their father or brother if they go out with boys. They do it anyway, she said, because they want to have fun, but they know what to expect when they get home. "In my best friend's case, she finds it normal to get beaten, because it's the same with everyone else". When they go out, she said, "they pretend to adopt the Québec way of life, but at home it's like hard anarchy".

Paradoxically, despite being relatively emancipated and seemingly free, these young women must constantly switch between their parents' culture and that of the host society. Some display great ingenuity in going out with two sets of clothes on, putting their makeup on before rejoining their friends. Others adopt totally different behaviours depending on the context. They can be bubbly and outgoing with their friends, but serious and reserved in the presence of family or people from the community.

In a radio interview on Radio-Canada³⁶, a 22-year-old woman from the Middle East spoke of the duality she was living:

I have two personalities. I can't be 100% myself when I'm at home. ...It's not because I don't trust my parents or that I don't love them, but I don't want to offend them. I don't want them to think they brought me up badly, that everything they did for us ended up in the trash, so in a certain way I prefer to reassure them.

On the same program, Dr. Cécile Rousseau (a psychiatrist) said that the clash of values between generations is common in society as a whole, and may be more so within immigrant families. For social workers, she said, the tough question is how to help young people from immigrant communities keep both of their identities, instead of having to break off ties with their family or community. For that reason, she added,

we must be very careful to remind ourselves that these young people are in revolt, are questioning things, and absolutely have the right to choose the cultural references they prefer. We should support them, but wisely, so they don't lose things that later on they'll discover are essential, like their family or community. Without however restricting their right to be full-fledged Québécois.

Though very perceptive in a general way, this analysis leaves out the higher level of risk in contexts where the honour code is involved. While it is true that there are generational conflicts in any society, adolescents living under the code of honour and shame run a greater risk of being subjected to violence. Unless the parents are relatively open-minded, there can be little room for negotiation when it comes to refusing an arranged marriage or choosing a spouse oneself. The honour crimes reported in the next chapter make it clear that for some girls, even though they love their family, there is no other choice than to break off family ties completely if they want to stay alive, otherwise they must submit to abuse.

³⁶ Report by Dorothée Giroux on the culture clash experienced by immigrant families, aired on Radio-Canada Première on February 2012 (5:37 p.m.).

Also, experience shows that honour-based punishment does not only target the person whose behaviour is considered dishonorable, but can also fall on anyone who supported her, or who might be tempted to follow her example. Thus the fear expressed by an African respondent, who fled to Canada to escape a forced marriage: that her mother and younger sister, who stayed behind, will pay the price.

In my case, if my father becomes even more furious, he could even kill my mother or my little sister, and the problem wouldn't be resolved. That's a burden I'll have to bear for the rest of my life. Since I'm the one who dishonoured my family, and that's what would have caused my mother's death. I could kill myself for that.

Sanctions for dishonour include a wide range of acts, all with long-lasting negative effects. The social, economic and human costs of honour-based violence are enormous.

Issues of gender segregation: the social control of women

Gender segregation in the public space, advocated by a small minority in certain communities, is intimately linked to honour-based violence. Keeping the sexes separate, enforcing a strict dress code, exerting excessive control by refusing to allow outings or socializing, all contribute to isolating women who are at risk of honour-based violence. Girls who are brought up with minimal social contact with boys of their own age are more vulnerable to forced marriage or arranged marriage to someone they don't know. The right to choose a spouse, recognized in multiple international conventions, is a major emancipation factor that will echo throughout a person's later life. Negating that right locks away a girl's future, depriving her of all possibility of deciding her own destiny – while at the same time exposing her to abuse.

Demands for "reasonable accommodation" aimed at gender segregation often require a modification of the public space. Giving in to such demands, even on a limited scale, means contributing to the conditions for ever-increasing social control over women and girls by the men of their families. That is the crucial point behind the principle of gender segregation in the honour code. Even when assessed on a case by case basis, such provisions have profound and long-lasting collective effects, because they establish new norms. They make it easier to impose honour-based restrictions on women and girls in minorities. The longer the list of social prohibitions, the greater the risk of transgression, and with it the threat of honour-based violence to punish those transgressions. The result is a chain of freedom-killing consequences for women, especially during their reproductive lives.

The multicultural approach, as adopted throughout Canada, has been to approve accommodation requests³⁷ out of a desire to respect cultural diversity. But when such requests are based on a patriarchal culture linked to the honour code, they raise an important ethical dilemma. Respect cultural diversity, or protect the rights and interests of girls and women aspiring to the same freedoms as other citizens?

³⁷ Such requests have generally been approved in Québec and Canada, to avoid discrimination under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (RSC 1985, c 24, 4th Suppl.).

Chapter 4

Honour Crimes in Canada: Case Studies

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost,
something is lost;
when honour is lost, everything is lost.

Pakistani proverb

A closer look at honour crimes committed in Canada will provide some insight into the the complexity of the family situations involved, and will suggest some lessons to be drawn. We surveyed the cases reported by consulting multiple sources, including the media, Canadian jurisprudence and research on the topic (Dick, 2009; Fournier, 2012; Robert, 2012). Four trials are currently underway concerning the most recent cases. We included them in our survey because the circumstances point to honour crime. We also included cases where the victims were subjected to honour-based aggression and survived.

One of the first difficulties we encountered was how to determine whether or not a crime involved the honour code. Should every intrafamilial homicide in certain communities be attributed to honour? Or should we qualify as honour crime, independently of the aggressor's ethnic origin, any conjugal homicide involving separation or infidelity, since honour is in play there too? There are nuances to consider, but some distinctions can be made.

Some honour crimes may well resemble other cases of marital drama due to jealousy or wounded male honour. There are grey areas, making watertight categories impossible. Our solution, combined with the characteristics specific to honour crimes (see section 1.3), was to use two criteria: the accused himself invoking honour in his defence; and the importance of the concept of honour in the eyes of his community.

Since honour crime is not defined under Canadian law, the margin of error as to the link between the crime and honour has no significant impact here. Also, Canadian law allows no clemency for the perpetrators of such crimes; on the contrary, judges tend to be severe in such cases. For that reason, in the most recent Canadian cases the defence has abstained from invoking honour, as was seen in the Shafia trial.

A second difficulty we encountered was that the available information regarding each crime is just a fragment of a complex reality. Those who died took with them the greater part of their story, while those who survived have held back to spare the rest of their family. Our analysis is therefore based on the known circumstances surrounding these crimes, combined with the conceptual framework presented in Part 1. Our analysis tries to pull apart the interwoven threads of honour crime in Canada, so that we may draw useful lessons toward future prevention.

4.1 Findings and characteristics of crimes recorded

The table below lists the 20 known cases of honour crime in Canada. Some cases had more than one victim, the total number of victims being 29, of whom 5 survived. Since honour crime used to be unknown to police authorities, it is highly possible that other cases classified as homicides, accidents or suicides were in fact disguised honour crimes.

Number of cases and victims of honour crime recorded in Canada

Period	Number of cases	Number of victims
1954 to 1983	3	3
1991 to 2000	4	7
2001 to 2010	10	16
2011–2012	3	3
Total	20	29
Total since 1991	17	26

For our analysis, we limited ourselves to honour crimes from 1991 on. Prior to that only 3 cases were recorded in Canada³⁸. The 17 cases from 1991 to 2012 had 26 victims, of whom 21 were killed while 5 survived. Based on the 17 cases analyzed, the following observations can be made:

Rising trend

First, we note an increase in the number of cases of honour crime starting in 2001, confirming the worldwide trend.

Distribution by gender

The victims included 20 women and 6 men. Some crimes involved several members of the family; thus there were 22 aggressors, including 18 men and 4 women. As might be expected, women comprised most of the victims (20 women: 6 men), while men comprised most of the aggressors (18 men: 4 women). Among the 5 survivors, 3 were men associated with the woman who was the primary target (cases 4 and 7 below).

Role of women among aggressors

Of the four women identified as aggressors, only one was accused of committing the aggression herself (case 2). The other three were accomplices (cases 4, 15 and 17).

³⁸ The oldest case dates from 1954 (R. v. Tripoli), the second oldest from 1972 (R. v. Tatlay) and the third oldest from 1983 (R. v. Ly).

Distribution of victims by age

The victims included:

- 7 minors (under 18), including a 5-year-old girl;
- 14 adults (10 women and 4 men) aged 19 to 29;
- 4 women over 30;
- 1 male victim of unknown age.

As can be seen, most of the victims were under 30 (21 of the 26), confirming that honour crimes primarily affect young women of reproductive age. In the logic of patriarchy, that is when the need to exercise social and sexual control over women is at its peak.

Distribution by country of origin and province of residence In Canada

The 17 crimes primarily involved families of South-Asian origin, with one exception:

- Afghanistan: 4 cases, 8 victims;
- India: 6 cases, 9 victims;
- Pakistan: 3 cases, 3 victims;
- Sri Lanka: 3 cases, 5 victims;
- United Arab Emirates: 1 case, 1 victim.

The aggressors lived in four different provinces:

- Ontario: 9 cases, 12 victims;
- British Columbia: 4 cases, 5 victims (including case 4, planned in Vancouver but carried out in the country of origin);
- Québec: 3 cases, 6 victims;
- Alberta: 1 case, 3 victims.

The province most affected was clearly Ontario, with nearly half the cases and victims (9 cases out of 17, and 12 victims out of 26).

Examining the dates, we note that the honour crimes committed in Québec are more recent (case 2 in 2010; case 13 in 2012; and case 17 in 2009). In Ontario the oldest cases date back to 1999 (cases 14 and 15), while in Alberta the only case was in 1991 (case 3).

Distribution of aggressors by relation to the victim

Among the 22 aggressors, their relation to the victim was as follows:

- 7 were the victim's husband;
- 5 were the victim's father;
- 4 were the victim's brother;
- 3 were the victim's mother;
- 1 was the victim's mother-in-law;
- 1 was the victim's uncle;
- 1 was the victim's father-in-law.

In 13 cases there was a single aggressor, which does not exclude the possibility that the crime was planned in collusion with other members of the family. Only in 4 cases were there multiple aggressors (cases 1, 4, 15 and 17).

4.2 Analysis of the principal underlying motives

Based on what is known about the circumstances surrounding these crimes, four main underlying motives can be identified, without denying that in some cases there were several motives involved. The apparent motives include: the victim's desire for autonomy from parental control; her desire to choose her own husband; her desire to divorce; and being suspected of infidelity. Though the last two share certain elements with spousal homicides in general, in the cases reported here the aggressors' attachment to honour is beyond question. Since multiple motives were involved in the Shafia affair, it is analyzed separately at the end.

4.2.1 Desire for autonomy from parental control

The cases with unmarried victims primarily involved young women who had begun to exercise their autonomy and were refusing to submit to excessive parental control. We illustrate this with two examples, but it also applies to the Shafia girls.

CASE #1	
DATE OF CRIME	December 2007
NAME OF VICTIM	Aqsa Parvez (16)
NAMES OF AGGRESSOR	Muhammad Parvez (57) Waqas Parvez (26)
RELATIONSHIP	Father and brother
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Pakistan
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Mississauga, Ontario
CIRCUMSTANCES	Strangled in the family home by the father and brother

Aqsa Parvez was known at school as an intelligent girl, sociable yet serious. She was in conflict with her family because (among other things) she refused to wear the hijab and wanted to socialize with her girl friends. Her behaviour and rebellious spirit were considered dishonourable by her family. Aqsa complained at school about her parents' excessive control, the pressure and violence she was subjected to at home, where she lived with a dozen family members who gave her no privacy. One wall of her room was half open, to let the others keep constant watch on her. As things got worse she feared for her safety, and left home to take refuge in the home of a friend, whose parents had agreed to take her in for a while. Aqsa hoped to find a part-time job to support herself while pursuing her studies. On her way to school one day, her brother pulled up in his car and offered to take her home so she could get her belongings. When she got home, Aqsa was strangled in her room by her father and brother. Both men were sentenced to life in prison.

CASE #2	
DATE OF CRIME	June 12, 2010
NAME OF VICTIM	Bahar Brahimi (19) – survivor
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Johra Kaleki (40)
RELATIONSHIP	Mother
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Afghanistan
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Dorval (Montréal), Québec
CIRCUMSTANCES	Stabbed by her mother in the basement of the family home

Bahar Brahimi refused to submit to the restrictions imposed by her family. Like other young people her age, she wanted to go out with friends, go dancing, smoke and drink alcohol. The evening before the stabbing, she had met up with friends at a club and didn't return home until morning. The mother suspected her daughter of prostituting herself, and was afraid her bad example would lead her three younger sisters down the same path. When she got home, the parents reprimanded her, but she refused to comply with their expectations. The mother asked

the father to leave them alone in the basement, then invited her daughter to lie down for a massage. Then she stabbed her in the back with a kitchen knife. Bahar was able to get away, and ran to hide in her bedroom where she called for help. At the mother's trial, Bahar testified in her favour, and the defence pleaded temporary insanity at the time of the aggression. The media reported that when she was arrested, the mother told the police:

I know I committed a crime, yes. But even if the law says it was wrong, for myself, I know I did the right thing. When I go to jail, when I spend the rest of my life in jail for this crime, I want to go as a proud, honest person, not as a coward. (Hamilton, 2012a)

Bahar survived the stabbing, and subsequently agreed to a marriage arranged by her mother, who was released pending trial (2013).

Analysis

This case highlights two elements. First, the mother's statement at the time of her arrest expresses a sense of duty accomplished, with no remorse; this is typical of aggressors motivated by the honour code. Second, the attitude of the victim, who not only testified in her mother's favour but later agreed to a marriage arranged by her, illustrates the guilt feelings that are so common among victims of honour-based violence. Though wanting to free themselves from the control and violence, usually they do not want to see their loved ones punished. To avoid falling back into domination relationships, honour crime survivors need psychological support. Since they love their parents no matter what, there is a powerful temptation to agree to anything, including an arranged marriage, to redeem themselves in their eyes.

The case of Aqsa Parvez goes along the testimonies we heard from our respondents and the school counsellors. Some immigrant parents exert excessive control over their children, especially daughters (see section 3.3.3). Without adequate support and follow-up, these situations can degenerate, with tragic consequences. Even when they don't end in murder, they can drive young people into depression, to commit suicide or to accept an arranged marriage they really don't want, opening the door to still further abuses.

4.2.2 Desire to choose her own spouse

Out of all the honour crimes identified, nearly a third (5 out of 17) involved a victim who wanted to choose for herself, and refused to give up a love relationship of which her parents disapproved.

CASE #3	
DATE OF CRIME	March 19, 1991
NAMES OF VICTIMS	Kalwinder Dulay (20) Gurdawr Singh Dulay (28), her husband Mukesh Sharma (28), a friend of the couple
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Daljit Singh Dulay
RELATIONSHIP	Brother of Kalwinder
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	India (Sikh)
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Calgary, Alberta (the couple lived in Calgary, but the girl's family lived in Vancouver)
CIRCUMSTANCES	The victim's brother shot the couple dead, along with their friend, in a parking lot.

Kalwinder Dulay had fallen in love with Gurdawr Singh Dulay, but her family was opposed to their marriage plans. In 1990 the couple married in secret, fleeing to Calgary with the help of a friend, Mukesh Sharma. The brother of the victim hired a private detective to find his sister, then went after the couple. Finding them in a parking lot, he shot his sister and her husband repeatedly, before shooting down their friend Mukesh, who was trying to get away. At the trial, the accused maintained that his father was so overwhelmed with shame about his daughter's marriage that he no longer left the house and was unable to go to the Sikh temple to fulfill his religious duty. The brother thought it was up to him, as the eldest son, to restore the honour of the family by killing his sister and her husband. He was sentenced to life in prison for premeditated murder.

CASE #4	
DATE OF CRIME	June 2000
NAMES OF VICTIMS	Jaswinder Kaur Sidhu (25) Mithu Sidhu (age unknown), her husband – survivor
NAMES OF AGGRESSORS	Malkit Kaur Sidhu (63) Surjit Singh Badesha (67)
RELATIONSHIP	Mother and uncle of Jaswinder (the instigators of her murder)
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	India
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Vancouver, British Columbia (the murder was committed in Punjab, India, but was arranged by the family in Vancouver)
CIRCUMSTANCES	The couple were ambushed and Jaswinder was killed, but her husband survived his injuries.

The case of **Jaswinder Kaur Sidhu** (known as Jassi) is complex. It received extensive media coverage and led to a book, a movie and a website³⁹. Jassi was born in Vancouver where she grew up in Maple Ridge, in a wealthy family with considerable influence in their country of origin. In 1995 at age 19, on a visit to Punjab with her family, Jassi fell in love with a poor young man named Mithu Sidhu. For the next four years they exchanged love letters. In 1999 the family returned to Punjab for three months, intending to marry off Jassi. Rejecting all the suitors presented by her family, she arranged to marry Mithu in secret. When her family discovered this secret marriage, they pressured her to have a divorce, but she refused. Back in Canada, Jassi undertook the procedures to sponsor her husband, but Jassi's uncle arranged to have Mithu arrested in Punjab, where he was falsely accused of kidnapping and forced marriage. In April 2000, Jassi returned to Punjab to have Mithu released. The couple lived in hiding until they could come to Canada, but Jassi's family used a subterfuge to find out where they were. Caught in an ambush, Jassi was killed but her husband survived his injuries. Seven people in Punjab were tried for this murder, which was planned in Vancouver by Jassi's mother and uncle. Both went on living freely in Vancouver, and not until 2012, eleven years later, were they arrested and brought to justice. Their trial is currently underway.

CASE #5	
DATE OF CRIME	July 30, 2003
NAME OF VICTIM	Amandeep Atwal (17)
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Rajinder Singh Atwal (47)
RELATIONSHIP	Father
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	India (Sikh)
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Vancouver, British Columbia
CIRCUMSTANCES	Amandeep was stabbed by her father while sitting in the family car.

Amandeep Atwal was 15 when she fell in love with a classmate, who unlike her was not Sikh. Her father forbade her to go out with the boy, but the couple saw each other in secret for two years. When Amandeep's father found out, he was furious and demanded that she break off the relationship, but she refused. A little while later, having just finished college, Amandeep announced to her parents that she was moving with her boyfriend to Prince George, where they would live together and look for work. This was a month before the crime. Seeing her determination, the father pretended to accept her decision, but made her promise to join the family

³⁹ See also: www.justiceforjassi.com.

on their annual trip, which had already been planned. Amandeep went for a holiday with her family, but after a few days wanted to return to Prince George so she could settle in. The father offered to accompany her. Along the way, he stopped the car beside the road and stabbed his daughter while she sat in the car, held captive by her seat belt. Then he drove to the hospital, where he pretended that she had inflicted the wounds on herself. The father had been living in Canada for some thirty years, having emigrated when he was 17. He had worked for years at the same company and was highly appreciated by his colleagues. He was very involved in the Sikh community, where he was known and respected. During his trial, the father received dozens of letters of support from friends, emphasizing his honesty and great morality. He was sentenced to life in prison.

CASE #6	
DATE OF CRIME	September 18, 2006
NAMES OF VICTIMS	Khatera Sadiqi (20) Feroz Mangal (23), her fiancé
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Hasibullah Sadiqi (23)
RELATIONSHIP	Brother of Khatera
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Afghanistan
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Ottawa, Ontario
CIRCUMSTANCES	The couple was gunned down by Khatera's brother, in a parking lot.

Khatera Sadiqi had fallen in love with Feroz Mangal, and decided to marry him despite her father's opposition. Defying her family, and to escape the tension, Khatera left the family home to live with her fiancé's family until they could get married. Under Afghan tradition her behaviour was doubly dishonourable. After an evening with a group of friends, in which Khatera's brother took part, the latter met them in the parking lot, where he shot the couple. In 2009 he was sentenced to life in prison for premeditated murder. The accused appealed in March 2011 to have the sentence reduced, arguing that the murder was not premeditated but the result of provocation by Feroz (appeal underway).

CASE #7	
DATE OF CRIME	June 2007
NAMES OF VICTIMS	Anitha Selvanayagam (16) – survivor Prashanna Anadarajah (17), her boyfriend – survivor Lenin Sandrasingam (21), brother-in-law of Anitha – survivor
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Selvanayagam Selladurai (47)
RELATIONSHIP	Father of Anitha
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Sri Lanka
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Scarborough, Ontario
CIRCUMSTANCES	The father deliberately drove his car into the victims, injuring all three: Anitha was dragged under the car for 5 metres, and had head injuries; her boyfriend got away with a sprained ankle, while the brother-in-law's hip was fractured.

Anitha Selvanayagam had fallen in love with Prashanna Anadarajah. Her father was opposed because the young man's family belonged to a lower caste. He was afraid their relationship would spoil her chances of an honourable marriage and tarnish the family's reputation. Three days before the attack, Anitha ran away with her boyfriend, aggravating the father's feelings of being dishonoured. As the three victims stood near the house, the father drove into them with his car, injuring all three. The father then pursued the boyfriend, who had fled, threatening him with death. The family of the accused pleaded for a light sentence, arguing that he had been suffering from depression for a year, had tried to commit suicide and was off his medication at the time of the attack. Initially accused of attempted murder, the father was sentenced to five years in prison for aggravated assault. The Crown Prosecutor called it an honour crime.

Analysis

In all five of these cases, the family patriarch felt a deep sense of dishonour when his daughter refused his authority, affirming her autonomy by choosing her own spouse. The dishonour is even greater when the one she chooses is from another community, another religion or has a lower social status.

These cases also show that men too can be victims of honour crime, if they are linked to the dishonouring behaviour of the (female) prime target. This is the case with four of the six male victims. The other two men were only there by chance, but had shown solidarity with the fated couple (the friend of the Dulays and the brother-in-law of Anitha Selvanayagam). The case of Amandeep Atwal is eerily reminiscent of the Shafia affair, where the father took the family on vacation in a plot to kill the victims.

A CBC documentary⁴⁰ on the Jassi story deplored the failure of Canadian authorities to pursue the people responsible for this crime, who went on living in Vancouver for years before finally being arrested. It was thanks to the perseverance of Jassi's friends, demanding justice, that public opinion was aroused in Canada, finally driving authorities to lay charges against Jassi's mother and uncle eleven years after the murder. It seems likely that after the other crimes committed in Canada, a heightened sensitivity to honour crimes contributed to changing the attitude of legal authorities.

4.2.3 Desire to divorce

Of the 17 honour crimes recorded, a third (6) involved separation initiated by the wife. Though divorce generally brings dishonour on the wife and her family, a wife's refusal to remain in a marriage is also considered a dishonour for the husband.

CASE #8	
DATE OF CRIME	May 19, 2001
NAME OF VICTIM	Kanwaljeet Kaur Nahar (22)
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Dilbag Singh Nahar (24)
RELATIONSHIP	Husband
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	India (Sikh)
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Surrey, British Columbia
CIRCUMSTANCES	Stabbed to death by her husband in her own apartment

Kanwaljeet Kaur Nahar was married in Punjab, India, in a marriage arranged by her parents. The husband was a man of the same origin whom she didn't know, who had been living in Canada for three years. After he sponsored her she came to Canada, and the couple lived with the husband's family. They had a tense relationship. More than once she complained of domestic violence and the husband was arrested. Kanwaljeet quickly fell pregnant, and shortly after giving birth she fled with her baby to a shelter for battered women. She was hospitalized for several days, apparently for post-partum depression, then moved with her child into an apartment of her own that the shelter had helped her find. Her husband joined her and they lived together for nearly a year, but still had a rocky relationship. The husband blamed her for being disobedient, disrespectful and doing things like receiving telephone calls from men, smoking and drinking alcohol. A few weeks before the murder, the couple separated again. At his trial, the husband

⁴⁰ See the CBC program *The Fifth Estate* on the Jassi case: <http://www.cbc.ca/fifth/murderedbride/video.html>.

said that on the evening of the crime he had gone to his wife's place to try to reason with her, but she told him he no longer had any authority over her, and she could now do as she pleased. He pleaded provocation, arguing that in the Sikh culture his wife's attitude had dishonoured him. He was found guilty of unpremeditated murder.

CASE #9	
DATE OF CRIME	March 18, 2008
NAME OF VICTIM	Ranjida Khairi (53)
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Peer Mohammad Khairi (65)
RELATIONSHIP	Husband
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Afghanistan
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Toronto, Ontario
CIRCUMSTANCES	The victim had her throat cut and was almost decapitated, then was stabbed repeatedly to finish her off.

Ranjida Khairi was the mother of six children. Her husband was angry that she supported their daughter's refusal to marry her cousin, and there were other tensions between them as well. Wanting to leave her husband, two days before the murder Ranjida asked for help from the Afghan Women's Organization in Toronto. According to a counsellor who had followed the family since their arrival in Canada, the husband was dissatisfied with his life here. Unable to speak English, he was unemployed and often criticized the children for their clothing and behaviour, which weren't in line with Afghan ways. He also criticized his wife for her desire for emancipation and her support for the children against his paternal authority. He was sentenced to life in prison.

CASE #10	
DATE OF CRIME	January 1, 2009
NAME OF VICTIM	Amandeep Kaur Dhillon (22)
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Kamilar Singh Dhillon (47)
RELATIONSHIP	Father-in-law
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	India (Sikh)
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Mississauga, Ontario
CIRCUMSTANCES	Stabbed in the basement of the family grocery store by her father-in-law

Amandeep Dhillon married a man she didn't know, in a marriage arranged by her parents in Punjab. The man was from their village but lived in Canada. The husband sponsored her and she came to Canada, where the couple lived with the husband's parents. Almost from the moment of her arrival in Canada, Amandeep endured violence and abuse from her husband and in-laws. According to friends of the family, the father-in-law had arranged the marriage for his son, who was mentally ill. Amandeep was put to work in the grocery store, working long hours every day beside her father-in-law. Amandeep's family, which remained in India, later reported that the in-laws kept asking for more and more money, which they didn't have. When the mother-in-law separated from her husband she returned to India, taking Amandeep's 18-month-old son with her. Amandeep didn't dare complain to Canadian authorities, about the abuse and the loss of her son, because she hoped to obtain permanent residence status so that she in turn could sponsor her parents. Weeks before she was killed, having at last received her papers, she informed her father-in-law that she was going to move into a place of her own where she would live with her parents. The father-in-law stabbed her to death in the basement of the grocery, then inflicted a few wounds on himself to make it look as if both had been attacked by someone else. Eventually he confessed to the murder, saying in his defence that if Amandeep left his son the family would be dishonoured. He was sentenced to life in prison.

CASE #11	
DATE OF CRIME	July 22, 2011
NAME OF VICTIM	Shaher Bano Shahdady (21)
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Abdul Malik Rustam
RELATIONSHIP	Husband
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Pakistan
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Toronto, Ontario
CIRCUMSTANCES	Strangled by her husband in her own home

Shaher Bano Shahdady emigrated to Canada with her family when she was a child. At 18 she married a cousin in Pakistan, in a marriage arranged by her father, and had to remain in Pakistan with her husband. She was only able to return to Toronto because of complications in her pregnancy, and after giving birth extended her stay because her baby needed a heart operation. She therefore sponsored her husband, who joined her in Toronto, but their relationship became increasingly strained. Shaher wanted to go back to school and have a career, but her husband demanded that she wear a niqab and renounce such ideas. She had just moved into an apartment of her own with her 2-year-old son, and was preparing to divorce, when her husband strangled her in the presence of the child. The case is still before the courts, but everything points to an honour crime.

CASE #12	
DATE OF CRIME	July 28, 2011
NAME OF VICTIM	Ravinder Bhangu (24)
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Manmeet Singh (26)
RELATIONSHIP	Husband
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	India
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Vancouver, British Columbia
CIRCUMSTANCES	Stabbed by her husband at her place of work

Ravinder Bhangu worked as a translator and secretary for a weekly newspaper in Vancouver, published in English and Punjabi. Married for two years and with a 1-year-old daughter, Ravinder had left her husband a few months earlier, taking her daughter with her and moved in with an aunt. A colleague who tried to rescue Ravinder was wounded during the assault. In 2013 the husband was sentenced to life in prison, in what many observers have called an honour crime.

CASE #13	
DATE OF CRIME	August 11, 2012
NAME OF VICTIM	Anuja Baskaran (21)
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Sivaloganathan Thanabalasingham (27)
RELATIONSHIP	Husband
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Sri Lanka (Tamil)
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Montréal, Québec
CIRCUMSTANCES	Throat cut by her husband

Anuja Baskaran agreed in April 2011 to a marriage arranged by her father, who had obtained a loan of \$50 000 from the family of the future husband. The latter turned out to be violent, and Anuja filed complaints against him three times. The third time, the husband (who still hadn't obtained Canadian citizenship) was arrested for domestic violence. During the arrest, Anuja's father supported his son-in-law, telling police officers he was harmless. Weeks before she was killed, Anuja went before a Québec court to ask for her husband's release.

Analysis

These cases highlight the fact that many victims of honour crimes in which the perpetrator is the husband, were married in an arranged marriage, often to a man they didn't know, with one spouse sponsoring the other. As discussed in Part 1, arranged marriage is still the norm in some parts of the world (especially South Asia), and women often have no say in the matter. Refusing

an arranged marriage, or wanting a divorce later, is considered dishonourable and subject to sanctions that can go as far as death. Arranged marriages of this sort are very close to being forced marriages, and everything suggests that such was the case for some of the victims above.

Several clues corroborate this hypothesis in the case of Anuja Baskaran: her father had received a \$50 000 loan from his son-in-law's family, and supported him when he was arrested for domestic violence. We can assume that Anuja was pressured to ask for her husband's release, just before he killed her, since her father was beholden to him.

The case of Randjida Khairi confirms that mothers are held responsible for their daughters' behaviour when deemed dishonourable, and risk paying the price. This very real threat may be part of the reason why some mothers collaborate in honour crimes against their children.

In Amandeep Dhillon's case there was an accumulation of abuses: harassment over the amount of the dowry; economic exploitation in having to work long hours for her father-in-law; being deprived of her child, probably so she could spend all her time working; and sexual exploitation in being tricked into an arranged marriage with a mentally ill man.

Dowry-related conflicts are extremely frequent in India, where thousands of wives are burned to death each year in fake domestic accidents, a practice so common it is called *sari burning* or *dowry burning*. In 2010 alone in India, 8391 cases were reported of wives being killed in this manner, all so the in-laws could obtain a new dowry by remarrying their son (Bedi, 2012). This monetary motive comes on top of the honour code, which maintains and reinforces the conditions for negating the rights of women.

4.2.4 Being suspected of infidelity

CASE #14	
DATE OF CRIME	October 14, 1999
NAME OF VICTIM	Aysar Abbas (46)
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Adi Abdel Humaid
RELATIONSHIP	Husband
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	United Arab Emirates
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Ottawa, Ontario (the crime took place on a visit to Ottawa, but the couple lived in Dubai for work)
CIRCUMSTANCES	Stabbed to death by her husband

Aysar Abbas was suspected of infidelity by her husband. The couple were both engineers and Canadian citizens, but were living in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) because of their jobs. On a business trip to Ottawa with a colleague, Aysar unexpectedly met her husband. She was murdered after a quarrel in which he accused her of having an extramarital relationship with her colleague, which she did not deny. The husband was sentenced to life in prison for premeditated murder. The defence sought a more lenient sentence on grounds of provocation, arguing that in Islamic culture a wife's infidelity is an offence against the husband's honour. The Supreme Court of Canada denied the appeal.

CASE #15	
DATE OF CRIME	December 6, 1999
NAME OF VICTIM	Farah Khan (5)
NAMES OF AGGRESSORS	Muhammad Khan and Fatima Khan
RELATIONSHIP	Father and step-mother
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Pakistan
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Toronto, Ontario
CIRCUMSTANCES	The girl was beaten and slaughtered by her father, with the help of his new wife.

Farah Khan's father had doubts about the paternity of his 5-year-old daughter from his first marriage, over whom he had obtained custody in Pakistan. After he came to Canada, he planned to kill the child to restore his honour and bought surgical instruments. After the murder, he and his second wife dismembered the body, placing the parts into garbage bags that they dispersed at different locations in a park. The father and step-mother were sentenced to life in prison.

CASE #16	
DATE OF CRIME	November 4, 2006
NAME OF VICTIM	Thayalini Subramaniam (31)
NAME OF AGGRESSOR	Sugirthanraj Kailayapillai (41)
RELATIONSHIP	Husband
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Sri Lanka (Tamil)
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Markham, Ontario
CIRCUMSTANCES	The victim was struck on the head with an iron bar, then hung in the garage of the family home by her husband.

Thayalini Subramaniam, married for thirteen years and the mother of three children, was suspected of infidelity by her husband. During the trial after the murder, her sister and mother testified that they felt ashamed and were excluded from their Tamil community, which blamed the victim for bad morals. They were worried for the victim's children, since the entire family was now ostracized. The husband was sentenced to life in prison for unpremeditated murder.

Analysis

In the case of Aysar Abbas, evidence at the trial revealed that she was more successful in her career than her husband, who at the time of the murder had been unemployed for a year. Also, it was she who controlled the couple's finances. The couple apparently led an emancipated way of life in Dubai, which is hardly surprising, considering that in such societies the wealthy often adopt the sexual mores and other liberties associated with the West. It seems then that this murder had little to do with the honour code, despite the defence's argument, and more to do with jealousy and greed, since the husband hoped to claim his wife's fortune.

The case of 5-year-old Farah Kahn is atypical. Usually when a wife is accused of adultery it is she who will be the victim of honour crime. Small children are rarely accused of dishonouring behaviour. Nonetheless, the fact that the father killed his daughter because he doubted his paternity confirms that this was an honour-based murder.

In the case of Thayalini Subramaniam, testimony by her mother and sister confirms that dishonouring behaviour by one person (whether genuine or merely suspected) can lead to ostracism for other members of the family even in an immigration context.

4.2.5 Overall analysis of the cases presented

Certain elements stand out in the cases presented above. First, almost all the victims were far from being submissive women. Except in the case of little Farah Khan, they were girls or women who refused to bow to their father's or husband's authority, wanting instead to make their own

choices. That is the point: it is women of character who are most at risk, because daring to contest or transgress their traditional role is what makes them most likely to become victims. Concretely, this means that we must exercise caution when attempting to help those who are at risk of honour crime. Social workers must make sure that their clients can receive protection before encouraging them to assert themselves. This highlights the importance of training that goes beyond cultural diversity to focus on the risks and realities of honour crime.

Second, honour crimes can occur not only in families that immigrated recently, but in those that have had time to become established in Canada. This confirms our observation that the weight of the honour code, how important it is as a determinant of women's lives, can depend on ties with others in the community, whether in exile or in the country of origin. In the case of Amandeep Atwal, whose father had been in Canada for some thirty years, attachment to his Sikh community clearly made his daughter's behaviour even more intolerable, since she transgressed the behavioural norms of his culture. The support he received from friends and colleagues, despite his crime, shows that those who commit honour crimes can be decent people with a genuine moral sense unlike other criminals. But the ostracism inflicted on the *victim's* family (as in the case of Thayalini) shows that the community's moral support tends to go to the *perpetrator* of an honour crime, considering he simply did his duty.

Third, though the causal factors for some honour crimes include elements comparable to domestic violence, for example in cases of divorce or suspected infidelity, there should be no confusion between the two. Unlike domestic violence, which is condemned socially, honour-based violence is seen as morally justified, blame being cast on the victim while the aggressor is excused. Consequently, the woman who leaves a violent husband is not at the end of her troubles. She may lose her social and familial networks, or be pressured to return to her husband despite the violence. Ostracism in the name of honour is yet another obstacle, one that should be considered when seeking solutions to victims' needs.

Fourth, sometimes other motives, monetary or other, also come into play in honour crimes, making them harder to decode. Women are often hostage to family interests, and submitted to pressure when they try to get out of a marriage they don't want. For that reason, the risk of honour-based violence is just as great in well-to-do circles as it is among the poor. Jassi's case and others show that women in wealthy or influential families are not free to ignore their family's social status, and can become honour victims if they insist on marrying someone who is less well-off or from the wrong community. This goes to show how the honour-based value system is interwoven with multiple factors involving gender, ethnic and class inequalities.

4.3 Case study: the Shafia affair

CASE #17	
DATE OF CRIME	June 30, 2009
NAMES OF VICTIMS	Zainab Shafia (19) Sahar Shafia (17), sister Geeti Shafia (13), sister Rona Amir Mohammad (50), their father's 1 st wife
NAMES OF AGGRESSORS	Mohammad Shafia (58) Touba Yahia (41) Ahmed Shafia (19)
RELATIONSHIP	Father, mother and brother of the three sisters
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Afghanistan
PLACE OF RESIDENCE	Montréal, Québec (crime committed in Ontario)
CIRCUMSTANCES	The four victims were discovered drowned in a car at the bottom of a canal, at Kingston Mills.

The Shafia affair is beyond question the best-known honour crime in Québec. Involving an Afghan family residing in Saint-Léonard (Montréal), it was a collective eye-opener. Initially presented by the father as an unfortunate accident, a meticulous police investigation revealed that it was a quadruple murder, carefully planned and executed to seem like an accident. Late in January 2012, after two and a half months of a sensational trial, the father, mother and their son Ahmed were found guilty and sentenced to life in prison. Three other children survived the tragedy: two girls of 9 and 17, and a boy of 16 (their ages at the time of the murder).

The outline below illustrates the complexity of the contextual factors that may be woven into an honour crime. All these elements are publically known given the extensive media coverage of the trial. The Shafia affair has already inspired two books: *Without Honour* by Rob Tripp (2012), the source of several elements below, and *Honour on Trial* by Paul Schliesmann (2012).

Family history

The Shafia family fled Afghanistan in 1992 because of the war, settling for a few years in Pakistan, then Dubai, before emigrating to Canada in 2007. Despite having little education, Mohammad Shafia was a prosperous businessman, building a successful import-export business. His first marriage was to Rona Amir in 1978. Unable to conceive, Rona agreed to let her husband take a second wife, Touba Yahia, who would give him seven children. As is customary in Afghan tradition, Rona continued to be part of the family, living with her husband, his new wife and their children.

For the first few years the two women got along reasonably well. Rona did her best to help Touba raise the children, loving them as if they were her own while they saw her as a second mother. When Sahar was born, Touba gave her to Rona to raise as her own. The bond between Rona and Sahar was therefore especially strong.

Since polygamy is illegal in Canada, when Shafia decided to emigrate he registered Touba as his legitimate wife while passing off Rona as a cousin. This meant that when they arrived in Canada, Rona immediately lost her status as first wife, and relations between the two women became strained. With the children growing up, Touba had less and less need of Rona and began to see her as an inconvenient rival.

When the father decided that the children would attend public school in Saint-Léonard, the Shafia girls must have gone through culture shock. Until then they had always gone to private school in Dubai, an establishment reserved for girls from wealthy families. Now they were plunged into a radically different environment, a coeducational school with hundreds of new immigrants of all origins. The Shafia girls were surrounded by boys and teenagers, cool and casual, who had no compunctions about flirting with their classmates. As underlined by Tripp, for girls who till then had only known the protective family cocoon, this permissive atmosphere must have been electrifying. Zeinab and Sahar were especially affected, for they were pretty and drew admiring looks from the boys.

Transgression of cultural norms, escalating sanctions

As might be expected, the two girls fell in love: Zeinab with a young Pakistani, Sahar with a young Latin-American who happened to be a Christian. Fearing for their virtue, the father (who was often away on business) delegated paternal authority to his son, Ahmed, who was charged with controlling the sisters in his absence. Ahmed went to the same school as Zeinab and kept a close watch on her. The same was done to Sahar by a younger sister. Everything they did was regularly reported to their father, fueling tensions against the girls. The family atmosphere swiftly deteriorated.

Zeinab and Sahar were repeatedly subjected to physical and verbal violence, including death threats, by both the brother and their father. But they went on ignoring the family prohibitions, dressing and behaving like other Québec teens, meeting their boyfriends in secret. Wanting to be like their classmates, they had even taken photos with their cell phones where they were scantily dressed or with their boyfriends. One day Ahmed took Sahar's cell phone and printed the compromising photos to show them to their father.

Rona repeatedly attempted to protect the girls from their father's anger. In her diary, discovered after her death, Rona wrote of the family tensions and her daily humiliations at the hands of Touba. Ever since arriving in Canada, Touba had treated her like a servant while scheming to sow

discord between her and her husband. She criticized Rona's clothes and makeup, sowing doubt in her husband's mind by reporting that Rona often went out alone without saying where she was going. Touba even managed to convince Shafia to suspend his efforts to obtain permanent residence for Rona, hoping that she would have to leave Canada when her temporary permit expired.

In desperation, Rona made repeated calls for help to her sister and brother, who lived in France. She also called a woman friend in the United States, confiding in her about the harassment at home. To escape the incessant spying, Rona always made these calls from a public telephone – thus the frequent outings that Touba reported to make the husband suspicious. On several occasions Rona asked him for a divorce, but he refused. Since the husband had Rona's passport and marriage certificate, and Touba had taken her marriage photos, Rona had no proof of her marital status. She was trapped, at the mercy of Mohammed Shafia and his second wife. Rona's friends and siblings tried to calm her apprehensions, assuring her that she was safe in Canada.

Meanwhile, Zeinab and Sahar continued to nourish hopes of marrying their sweethearts as soon as possible, to escape the suffocating atmosphere at home. Sahar patiently waited to turn 18, promising Rona to take her away with her. Both girls underwent ever more physical and psychological violence, including blows, threats and affective isolation. Sahar was even pulled out of school for several weeks to punish her.

Fearing for their lives, the girls timidly sought help at school. Sahar confided in a teacher, expressing her anxiety and describing the abuse at home. She reported her brother's repeated aggression, and complained of getting the silent treatment for weeks. She was also under pressure to wear the hijab at school, and did so for a while. Sahar told her teacher that her family life had become unbearable, that she was depressed and felt rejected by her parents. She said she wanted to die, that she had attempted suicide and Rona had saved her, while her own mother didn't seem to care. Worried for Sahar, the teacher notified the school administration, which called the Batshaw Youth and Family Centre. The councillor there met with Sahar, warning her that the law required her to contact the parents and inform them of the complaint. Terrified at the thought of her father's reaction, Sahar recanted. The file was closed after the councillor met with Touba, Shafia and older brother Ahmed, all of whom denied the allegations.

On April 17, 2009 Zeinab fled the family home to a shelter for young women (Passages). Her desertion alarmed her sisters and youngest brother. Worried that they would be the targets of their father's rage, they alerted the police. Geeti, who was fond of her older sisters and was afraid of being at her parents' mercy when they were gone, had the temerity to ask the police to place her in another family. Unfortunately, since there was no tangible proof of violence and the children recanted before their father, their complaint wasn't taken seriously. In the final months before the murder, the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ) also got involved with the Shafia children, again without result.

During her brief stay in the shelter, Zeinab, who had never been separated from her family before, felt nostalgia and telephoned her mother. Touba begged her to return home, assuring her that her father would be going on a business trip for weeks, and even promising to help her marry her Pakistani sweetheart. Relenting, Zeinab returned home on May 1, 2009.

It seems that at that point, Shafia was already planning the girls' murder with Ahmed (Tripp, 2012: 80-96). Zeinab was given some slack and allowed to see her boyfriend whenever she wanted. Before leaving on his business trip, Mohammad Shafia told Ahmed to organize Zeinab's marriage while he was away. Ahmed told Zeinab's fiancé to prepare for the marriage. Taken aback, the fiancé told Ahmed that his parents disapproved of him getting married so soon, since he was still in school and financially dependent on them. He warned Ahmed that his parents would refuse to attend the wedding. But Ahmed kept this secret so that he could spring the surprise on his family, including all the uncles, aunts and cousins who had come to celebrate Zeinab's wedding.

On the day of the wedding, on May 18, 2009, the absence of the fiancé's family was perceived as a devastating insult. Zeinab became the focus of the extended family's general disapproval. Shaken, she agreed to have the marriage annulled the day after the wedding. This disaster further provoked Mohammad Shafia's rage. He called Zeinab from Dubai to try to convince her to marry a cousin she didn't know in Afghanistan, but she refused.

After returning from Dubai, on June 23, 2009 the father took the family on a holiday trip to Niagara Falls. The investigation uncovered a plot by Mohammad Shafia, Touba and Ahmed to pull off the murder while disguising it as an accident.

Analysis of the Shafia case

The foregoing outline contains all the motives so frequently invoked to justify honour killing; the purpose is always to wash away the shame of the victims' dishonouring behaviour.

Zeinab and Sahar refused to respect the cultural norms of their country of origin, despite physical and psychological violence to make them comply. They defied the strictures imposed by honour, dressing like regular teenagers, dating, daring to choose husbands on their own. They even dared to discuss their family problems with outsiders. Furthermore, the boys they wanted to marry were unacceptable. Sahar's sweetheart was a Latin-American of Christian faith⁴¹, while Zeinab's fiancé, though Muslim, was completely contrary to the family's standards. He was Pakistani, not Afghan; he was a Sunnite, while they were Shiite; and his family's social status was below that of the Shafias. Also, since he was still in school he wasn't financially independent. All of this would have added to Shafia's humiliation when the fiancé's family rejected the marriage with his daughter.

⁴¹ Islam allows a man to marry a non-Muslim, but it is forbidden for a Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim, unless he converts to Islam.

Even his last-ditch effort to save his honour, by marrying Zeinab to her cousin in Afghanistan, was refused by her.

Also worth noting is that Sahar, like Aqsa Parvez and Shaher Shahdady, was pressured to wear the veil against her will. This was meant to discourage love relationships and even friendships with people from outside of their community.

Though Geeti was too young to have a boyfriend, apparently she was complicit in her sisters' dating. Sahar was her favourite, and in her fear of losing her Geeti spoke out to the police, asking them to place her with a different family. This revealed her rebellious character and lesser attachment to her parents. No doubt the father thought it best to sacrifice her as well.

As for Rona, she had committed no offense against Shafia's honour. However, one reason for killing her was surely that she was so close to the children and had tried to protect them; she would have been a troublesome witness. Also, she had fallen from grace in Shafia's eyes, thanks to Toub'a's work at making him suspicious. Fed up with the constant harassment and vexations, Rona wanted a divorce. But her request could only be satisfied by revealing her husband's bigamy, which would have embarrassed him and endangered his status in Canada as a permanent resident.

Conflicts between co-wives in polygamous households are a painful reality for women in some communities⁴². This aspect of the Shafia tragedy was completely ignored by the media.

During the trial, Zeinab's uncle reported a conversation he'd had with Mohammad Shafia a little before the murder. Shafia, he said, accused his eldest daughter of wanting to dishonour him, of being "a whore... a dirty curse... a dirty woman"⁴³ (cited in Tripp, 2012: 83). These harsh and irreverent words, especially from a father about his own daughter, are the ultimate expression of the honour code's underside. They were echoed by another conversation, secretly recorded by the police not long after the suspicious accident. Speaking to his son, Shafia said:

There is nothing more valuable than my honour. I am telling you now and I was telling you before that, whoever plays with my honour, my answer is the same... There is no value of life without honour. (cited in Schliesmann, 2012: 108)

⁴² The detrimental effects of polygamy were explored in another opinion by the Conseil du statut de la femme, *Polygamy and the Rights of Women*, 2010.

⁴³ The full statement reads: "She wants to dishonour me. She is a whore. She is a dirty curse to me. She is a dirty woman. [...] She is a prostitute."

Though the accused refused to admit their guilt and the defence avoided any reference to honour, there can be no doubt that honour was the principal motive for this quadruple murder.

Conclusion of Part 2

The foregoing analysis indicates, first, that the motives for honour-based violence, whether in the host country or the country of origin, are very similar. Thus, the situations described by women immigrants (Chapter 3), like those that have led to honour crimes here (Chapter 4), bear striking similarities to the examples presented in Part 1. Where there is a difference, it is because the context of immigration offers greater opportunity for emancipation, while also creating heightened tensions due to conflicting models of family dynamics and social behaviour.

Second, the fact that honour-based violence is so often associated with arranged marriage suggests that if in the past such marriages had a certain chance of succeeding, that is less so today. Immigration adds to the difficulty when an arranged marriage involves sponsoring a spouse who grew up in a different sociocultural context even when both parties share the same country of origin. The resulting conflicts increase the risk of honour-based violence.

Third, we must face the fact that women and girls enduring honour-based violence face far more obstacles than those in situations of domestic violence. With both, economic and affective dependence can keep women captive in violent situations. But immigration deepens their captivity through the absence of supportive networks. Immigrant women who seek emancipation from parental or conjugal authority risk not only an escalation of violence but ostracism by their family and community. A bid for empowerment can also result in reprisals against anyone who supports the victim or is too close to her (mother, sisters, children).

The cultural factor is therefore crucial when assessing risks. Wherever the honour code might be involved, the risks are far greater, which must be considered in any intervention. This makes it essential that a comprehensive approach be developed to ensure the safety of those most directly at risk as well as other members of the family. Also, there is an urgent need for effective measures to facilitate the sociocultural integration of minorities, to guide families toward conflict resolution instead of sliding fatally toward honour crime.

At the same time, we must not forget that economic integration is the major factor in developing personal autonomy and transforming power relations within the family. It is wishful thinking to suppose that exhorting new immigrants to change their values will accomplish anything, without genuine efforts to open the labor market to minority workers and ensure better access to employment.

Part 3

PROSPECTS FOR ACTION

Part 3 of this report describes efforts that are being made to address the problem of honour-based violence (HBV) in Canada and the United Kingdom. Chapter 5 presents Canadian initiatives, both federal and provincial. Though nothing has been done in terms of an action plan or policy specifically on HBV, there are certain initiatives by institutional and other actors that deserve mention. As will be seen, in 1997 Canada adopted legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation (FGM), but it has rarely or never been applied.

Chapter 6 presents the British model, which is recognized as showing the way forward. In 2010 the United Kingdom adopted an ambitious national action plan to eradicate all forms of HBV. Forced marriage is seen as the crucial factor around which cluster other risks of HBV, both before and after such marriages. The British action plan contains a hundred concrete measures through which an array of social actors work together toward the common objective of ending HBV.

Chapter 5

Canadian Initiatives

Only when we know what to look for can we see the signs of honour-based violence and make a proper risk assessment. [Trans.]

(Statement by a Calgary police officer
at a round table in September 2012)

Without pretending to offer a complete portrait, we present here a few examples of recent initiatives to address the phenomenon of honour-based violence (HBV).

5.1 Institutional initiatives

There is no comprehensive policy on combating HBV, but efforts have been made by many actors to try to understand and address the problem. Here are some recent public events that have focused on forced marriage and other forms of HBV:

- the International Symposium on Forced/Non-consensual Marriage, organized by the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO⁴⁴), in June 2008 in Toronto;
- the first annual conference on domestic violence, from a South-Asian perspective, organized jointly by the Social Service Network and the Toronto Police Service, with support from other regional police services, in May 2011, followed by two other conferences in 2012 and 2013⁴⁵;
- a round table on strategies against honour crime, attended by police officers, social workers and community groups, in September 2012 in Calgary;
- the symposium *Colloque sur les victimes au nom de l'honneur*⁴⁶ (symposium on victims in the name of honour), organized by the team *Victimologie et justice réparatrice* (victimology and restorative justice) at the *Centre international de criminologie comparée* (international centre for comparative criminology), on April 22, 2013 in Montréal;
- a forum on “Honour crimes in Canada” organized by the Calgary-based Sheldon Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership⁴⁷, on May 2, 2013 in Montréal;

⁴⁴ To learn more about the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO), go to: <http://www.salc.on.ca>.

⁴⁵ The report of the 3rd conference held by the network in 2013 is available at: <http://www.socialservicesnetwork.org/Portals/0/Documents/Family%20Violence%20Conference%202013%20-%20Sponsorship%20Package.pdf>.

⁴⁶ To learn more about this event, go to: <http://www.calendrier.umontreal.ca/?com=detail&eID=219680> (accessed June 10, 2013).

⁴⁷ To learn more about the foundation, go to: http://www.chumirethicsfoundation.ca/main/page.php?page_id=2 (accessed June 10, 2013).

- a campaign by Amnistie internationale against the forced marriage of children and adolescents, entitled *J'aime mon corps, j'aime mes droits* (I love my body, I love my rights)⁴⁸, launched on March 8, 2013 in Montréal.

These events demonstrate the growing recognition among the public, professionals and community workers that action must be taken to end HBV.

Studies, media reports and documentaries⁴⁹ confirm that forced marriage is just as much a reality here as it is in other countries. A national study by SALCO found 219 cases of forced marriage reported from January 2010 to November 2012 in Ontario, Québec and British Columbia⁵⁰. The study confirmed that forced marriage affects people from very different cultures and religions, not only recent immigrants and not only women (6% of those forced into marriage were men). It also affects different age groups: primarily the young and occasionally minors, but also adults (5% were aged 12 to 15; 25% were 16 to 18; 31% were 19 to 24; 25% were 25 to 34; and 13% were over 35).

The study's authors emphasized that the reported cases only reflect a fraction of the reality. The bodies surveyed for the study recognized that they are ill-equipped to identify and track the increasingly frequent cases they observe. SALCO has urged the federal government to intervene before forced marriage reaches epidemic proportions (Radio-Canada, 2012b, 2013).

5.1.1 Foreign Affairs

Though Canadian law does not explicitly prohibit forced marriage, it is considered illegal under international conventions. Thus, the federal government warns travellers against forced marriage, stating:

Forced marriage is a human rights violation under international law. It is a form of violence against women and men, child abuse when it affects children and abuse of vulnerable people when it affects those with disabilities⁵¹.

The same source advises travellers who believe they are at risk of being forced to marry abroad, to contact provincial social welfare authorities, local police or a community legal clinic, or to seek

⁴⁸ For more information on this campaign, go to: <http://amnistie.ca/site/droitssexuels/index.php>.

⁴⁹ See the documentary by Raymonde Provencher, *Crimes Without Honour*: <http://www.cescrimessanshonneur.com>. See also the March 5, 2007 broadcast of the television program *Enjeux* (Radio-Canada), on forced marriage.

⁵⁰ The preliminary results of the study were reported in the media and at a conference held on April 22, 2013 in Montréal. See also: <http://www.radio-canada.ca/regions/ontario/2013/02/23/007-conference-esclavage-toronto.shtml>. The study itself is now available at: <http://www.salco.on.ca/SALCO%20-%20Who,%20If,%20When%20to%20Marry%20-%20The%20Incidence%20of%20Forced%20Marriage%20in%20Ontario%20%28Sep%202013%29.pdf>

⁵¹ See: <http://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info/forced-marriage> (accessed June 10, 2013).

help from their embassy. The Department of Foreign Affairs is increasingly being asked to help citizens threatened with forced marriage. For example, the High Commission of Canada in the United Kingdom collaborates regularly with British authorities to help citizens travelling through London who are in just this situation. In 2012, 14 cases of forced marriage were reported to the Department of Foreign Affairs, and as of April 19, 2013 there were 28 cases under study⁵². These figures may seem modest compared to the number of cases reported to British authorities, but they only reflect those who sought help, and thus are no indication of the scope of the phenomenon.

Contrary to the United Kingdom, Canada's embassies do not conduct rescue operations. Officials only help Canadian citizens who seek help in person at an embassy or consulate. Also, in the absence of rules to the contrary, a victim of forced marriage who is being made to sponsor her spouse, but doesn't want to, could be under double jeopardy. If she initiated sponsorship without declaring that it was a forced marriage, she could be accused of misrepresentation.

5.1.2 Justice Canada

As part of its initiative against family violence, the federal government has set up an interdepartmental work group on forced marriage and honour-related violence. The work group⁵³ supports projects in which multiple departments collaborate, and provides liaison with community organizations and other workers in the legal system.

Justice Canada has worked with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to develop instructional materials on forced marriage and HBV for use in RCMP training modules on family violence. Through this collaboration, the RCMP has developed a training standard on family violence that now includes elements specifically dealing with forced marriage and HBV. The course will be offered online to all RCMP employees and frontline officers.

Also, since 2009 Justice Canada has organized a series of workshops on forced marriage and HBV, bringing together stakeholder groups from across the country. Presenters at the workshops have included experts from the United Kingdom and Canada, while participants have included police officers, Crown prosecutors, frontline service providers and child protection officials.

Finally, in 2013 a booklet was produced for new arrivals, entitled *Abuse is Wrong in Any Language*. Available in twelve languages, it deals explicitly with honour-based violence and forced marriage⁵⁴.

⁵² Source: Personal communication with a consular officer at the High Commission of Canada in London.

⁵³ The work group is co-chaired by the Department of Justice Canada and Status of Women Canada, and includes representatives from fifteen federal departments.

⁵⁴ These publications are available from the Government of Canada: <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/fe-fa/index.html>.

5.1.3 Citizenship and Immigration Canada

In a new guide for immigrants, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) emphasizes the principle of gender equality, stating:

Canada's openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, honour killings, female genital mutilation, forced marriage or other gender-based violence. Those guilty of these crimes are severely punished under Canada's criminal laws. (CIC, 2013: 36)

Some critics find the term "barbaric cultural practices" offensive. To others however, this paragraph has the merit of clearly listing cultural practices that are considered reprehensible in Canada, and of saying in no uncertain terms that they are unacceptable –despite the tolerance advocated under multiculturalism.

Canadian authorities are also concerned about marriages of convenience, which are sometimes for purposes of immigration. Measures have been taken to verify, when a spouse is sponsored, that the marriage is not fraudulent. This creates delays that are seen as unfair to couples of good faith.

To discourage marriages of convenience, in October 2012 CIC introduced a two-year period of conditional permanent residence for certain sponsored spouses. The amended rules apply to spouses in a relationship of two years or less with their sponsor and with no children in common. If the sponsored spouse does not cohabit in a legitimate relationship with the sponsor – for two years from the day on which permanent resident status was received – that status could be revoked, and the person deported, unless proof of violence or negligence perpetrated by the sponsoring party is provided.

The new policy was severely criticized by several organizations, on fears that there was insufficient protection for sponsored spouses who were abused or abandoned. Even after changes were made to strengthen protections, providing an exemption so that newly sponsored spouses could come forward without fear of enforcement action, the Canadian Council for Refugees remained firmly opposed, insisting that the exemption was not enough. (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2012)

More and more cases are being seen of women who were married in a forced or arranged marriage, and who then sponsored their spouse, being abandoned when their husband obtains his permanent residence status (see section 3.5.2). Community workers dealing with this reality recognize the need for preventive measures to protect women from fraudulent marriages. The situations are so diverse that it is difficult for a single rule to be fair for all.

5.1.4 Direction de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ – youth protection bureau)

After the Shafia affair, in which three levels of authority failed to protect the victims, efforts were made to understand how the tragedy could have been avoided. Subsequently, the DPJ revised its procedures for reception and processing when abuse is reported. Nonetheless, a quick examination of the changes suggests that DPJ officials did not question either their approach to risk assessment or the protection measures offered.

Under the *Youth Protection Act*, which governs DPJ interventions, grounds for intervention include: parental neglect (the most common cases), abandonment, sexual abuse and physical or psychological abuse. Risk assessment is done by considering four categories of criteria: the nature, gravity, persistence and frequency of the facts reported; the child's age and personal characteristics; the capacity and will of the parents to put an end to the situation in which the security or development of the child is in danger; and the community resources available to help the child and the child's parents. Section 2.3 of the Act encourages the active participation of the parents in decisions concerning their child, while section 4 advocates keeping the child in the family environment.

In light of the analysis in parts 1 and 2 of this report, it is clear that in their present form, the *Youth Protection Act* and the DPJ's intervention criteria are inadequate. The following example illustrates the inherent limits of the current approach in addressing honour-based violence.

Case of Fatou (a pseudonym), 16

The DPJ received a report about a 16-year-old girl we'll call Fatou. The report indicated that the family, originally from Pakistan, was living by the ways and customs of their country. Discovering that their daughter had a boyfriend and was seeing him in secret, the parents cut her hair and made her wear the veil, controlling her comings and goings. They also threatened to shave her head and force her to marry someone in Pakistan if she went on seeing the boy. The girl did so nonetheless. Fatou's older brother spied on her to make sure she wore the veil when out of the house, and said she would soon be leaving for Pakistan. The school confirmed that she had been absent for several days, describing her as rather submissive.

For the assessment, Fatou was interviewed by the DPJ in the company of a family member. She categorically denied the statements in the report. When she was alone with the councillor however, she confirmed everything, adding that one of her sisters went through her things to make sure she did as she was told. Fatou was afraid her parents were going to take her to Pakistan for a forced marriage. Her parents had said that her godmother was seriously ill.

When the DPJ met with the father, he completely denied the allegations, including those about a forced marriage. He did confirm their upcoming trip to Pakistan, saying that it was only to visit the godmother. To make sure Fatou was safe, the DPJ did a thorough follow-up with the girl and her parents. Subsequently, Fatou said the threats had stopped and she was no longer afraid to be at home. The school confirmed that now she was going to school every day.

In light of all this, the DPJ believes the report was justified, but that Fatou's safety and development are not in danger within the meaning of the *Youth Protection Act*. She and her parents were met and informed that the file was being closed.

The decision by the DPJ to close this file is worrisome. There are many reasons to suspect a real and imminent threat of forced marriage for Fatou. First, the pretext of visiting a sick relative is a common strategy of immigrant parents who are planning a forced marriage. Second, the psychological harassment, the threats, the excessive control and constant surveillance are undeniable signs of honour-based violence. Third, as in the Shafia drama and many others, experience shows that a period of calm to take the pressure off is no guarantee of the victim's safety. It is a strategy to get the victim to lower her guard, and to lure social workers off the case.

The decision to close Fatou's file, just months after receiving a report concerning a threat of forced marriage and HBV, ignored the serious risks in the situation. All the signs suggest that once she is out of the country, Fatou will run a very high risk of being pressured to marry someone chosen by her parents. Once she is married, Fatou could then be abandoned in Pakistan to live with her husband, or made to sponsor him when she returns. Aside from the harmful consequences of such a marriage (education aborted, economic dependence, early and unwanted pregnancies, etc.), she could also be dragged into the domestic violence that so often accompanies forced marriage.

Though it respects the letter of the law, and the criteria set out in the Act, the DPJ's intervention badly underestimates the risks to Fatou. But as underlined by Aruna Papp, a pioneer and specialist on HBV, we cannot blame the social workers if they have not been trained to take into consideration the full implications of such situations.

The training currently offered to social workers is intended to allow them to assess risks that could justify intervention, while leaving room for cultural differences. That goal is praiseworthy, but an approach based on cultural relativism can trivialize social behaviours like excessive family control, blinding officials to the seriousness of situations involving forced marriage and HBV. Fatou's case illustrates the limitations of this approach. A better assessment of the risks, with full awareness of the realities of HBV, would have required counselling and follow-up over the longer term to ensure her safety.

Avoidable crimes like the tragedy of the Shafia girls show the urgent need for a comprehensive revision of the existing approach, especially in youth protection centres. They highlight the critical importance of training on HBV, the need for a risk analysis grid with appropriate follow-up measures. All these elements are sorely lacking.

5.1.5 Regional police services

In the wake of the Shafia affair, some police services undertook to ensure that their officers were better informed about HBV. In Québec, the Montréal police service (SPVM) included this in its 2013-2017 strategic action plan on conjugal and family violence. The SPVM has set out to evaluate the scope of the problem, train police officers and develop tools to better identify and assess the risks of HBV. It will also create "linkways" between the police and organizations like Shield of Athena, to overcome the linguistic, economic and other barriers that prevent the vulnerable from accessing services (SPVM, 2013: 16-17). We can only hope that concrete measures will be implemented soon toward these objectives.

In Alberta, the Calgary police service seems to be one step ahead. The following example demonstrates how officer training can make all the difference in ensuring the safety of a victim of HBV.

Case of Leila (a pseudonym), 16: intercepted at Calgary airport⁵⁵

“If you let that girl get onto the plane, she’s dead!” That was how Sergeant Simon Watts sounded the alarm to his superiors, launching a rescue operation by Calgary police that was without precedent in Canada.

A 16-year-old girl we’ll call Leila had grown up in Fort McMurray, Alberta, in a family that had come from Libya. Leila had a sweetheart and had become increasingly rebellious against her family’s strict rules. Worried for the girl, a family friend (of the same origin) called the police one day, warning them that Leila’s parents were about to return her to Libya by force, to punish her.

Sergeant Watts took the call very seriously. From his experience in Britain, he knew what must be done to try to save the girl. First he contacted social services in the area where the family lived. From them he learned that she had been beaten by her parents and kept in isolation, and on occasion had run away to seek help from social services. But as with the Shafia girls, the social workers knew nothing about HBV, and concluding that she was not particularly at risk, had always sent her back to her family.

Since Leila was a minor, Sergeant Watts next turned to Calgary’s child protection service. It was reluctant to intervene, since a different agency had already assessed her case and concluded that the risks were low. The Sergeant had to insist to convince them of the urgency of preventing the teenager’s departure, the only way of ensuring her safety.

Minutes before the plane was to take off, Calgary police and an official from the child protection service intercepted Leila just before she entered the boarding area. Questioned apart from her family, she confirmed her reluctance to leave and her fears for her life. A family member had threatened her with death if she contacted the police. Sergeant Watts immediately asked the court for an emergency protection order and warned the girl’s father not to contact her to avoid retaliation.

After Leila was brought to the Calgary police station, the next question was what to do with her. Being a minor, she could not go to a women’s shelter, and a youth detention centre would have been inappropriate. The solution came from the family friend who had alerted the police, offering to take Leila in for a year. Negotiations were conducted with the father to convince him to let his daughter finish school in Canada. Today, Leila has obtained her college diploma, has found work and says she is happy to have escaped the fate her parents were planning for her.

⁵⁵ The details of this case are from a private telephone conversation with Sergeant Watts on May 29, 2013.

This successful intervention was entirely contingent on the determination of Sergeant Simon Watts, who had the benefit of British experience and had just taken a workshop on HBV in Calgary, presented by Aruna Papp. He was well equipped to make a proper risk assessment, and knew what had to be done to save the girl's life. Also, the event coincided with the Shafia trial (2010) when it was in the media spotlight. This meant that the Calgary police were especially sensitive to the risks of honour crime, even in Alberta.

The foregoing example again points up the importance of proper training on the realities of HBV, not only for social workers but for police and other professionals. In the words of a police officer at a round table in Calgary,

We've been getting cultural diversity training for 32 years, but knew nothing about honour-based violence. It's only when you know what to look for that you can see the signs of HBV. [Trans.]

Another officer pointed out that proper risk assessment requires a knowledge of the family history. Concretely, he said, this means that when you suspect a case of HBV, you should dig deeper to find out if there have been other such incidents, whether with the victim or other members of the family. Taken alone, a given incident may seem trivial or low-risk. Only when you connect the dots does a complete picture emerge from which to make a genuine risk assessment, and evaluate the necessary action to prevent escalation.

Following his successful rescue intervention, in 2011 Sergeant Watts created a workshop for Calgary police on detecting the signs of HBV, asking the right questions and being prepared to intervene swiftly. Within a few months, Calgary police had succeeded in identifying forty cases of violence that appeared to be related to honour.

Since September 2012, the training received by new recruits to the Calgary police includes a session specifically on HBV, as well as instruction on cultural diversity. For the sake of prevention, the new course on HBV is being offered to all officers.

Drawing on the British model, the Calgary police are working to build relationships with the communities concerned, to overcome their distrust of the police. The hope is that victims and witnesses of HBV and other forms of violence will be encouraged to contact police, knowing that they will be taken seriously and given assistance. This is a long-term project, led by a special unit of ten officers of different origins. Though there is still much to be done, this is a step in the right direction to combat HBV.

5.1.6 Health and social services

Health professionals in Québec, as elsewhere, are confronted with practices that are the offspring of the honour code's obsession with women's chastity. These include female genital mutilation (FGM), requests for hymenoplasty (reconstruction of the hymen) and requests for certificates of virginity.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

There is controversy around the terminology used when discussing excision and infibulation. To some, the term "female genital mutilation" carries an implicit moral condemnation, stigmatizing the cultures that practise it and the women who are subjected to it. For this reason, some groups prefer "excision" as more neutral, or "female circumcision". This last however is problematic: it suggests an equivalence with male circumcision, which does not bear scrutiny⁵⁶. In any case, the term "female genital mutilation" has been adopted by the UN and is the term recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Definitions

The WHO gives the following definition for the practice of excision and infibulation, also referred to as female genital mutilation:

all procedures that involve total or partial removal of the external female genitalia, or injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons⁵⁷.

Excision, which has several variants depending on country and region, involves totally or partially removing the clitoris and inner labia, and sometimes the outer labia. Infibulation, practised in 10% to 15% of excisions, consists of fusing the remaining tissue and the outer labia to create a covering seal over the vulva, leaving a small hole for the passage of urine and menstrual blood. Infibulation requires that an incision be made on the wedding night to enlarge the opening, with reinfibulation after each birth.

⁵⁶ To learn more about this controversy, read Vissandjée & collab. (2013).

⁵⁷ See also: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/index.html> (accessed June 5, 2013).

Scope of the problem; logic behind female genital mutilation (FGM)

The WHO estimates that around the world, 100 to 140 million women and girls are living with the consequences of FGM, with nearly 3 million new victims every year among girls aged 4 to 12. Some sources claim these numbers are far below the reality, given the taboo around FGM and the fact that it is not on census questionnaires (Vallette, 2013).

The WHO underlines that FGM is common practice in some 28 countries in Africa, and to a lesser extent in the Middle East and Asia. In the West, it is increasingly encountered due to immigration from those countries. The harmful effects of FGM are amply documented⁵⁸. It causes severe injuries that impair the physical and psychological health of girls and women, and can put their lives in danger.

Pursued in the name of tradition and culture, FGM is often treated as a rite of passage or a mark of identity. But no matter what cultural rationale may be used to justify this practice, the fundamental objective of FGM is to control the sexuality and chastity of women and girls, in the name of honour, by diminishing their sexual drive (Vissandjée & collab., 2013; Firmin, 2013; IKWRO, 2012). Indeed, infibulation is done to physically prevent sexual relations. Hence FGM is now recognized as a form of honour-based violence.

Considering the practice as a violation of the human rights of women and girls, since 1952 the UN has repeatedly raised the issue of FGM. At the first Study Conference on Genital Mutilation of Girls in Europe, which led to the *London Declaration* in 1992, a broad international consensus was reached in favour of concerted action to end this patriarchal practice, and to reject its medicalization (Vissandjée & collab., 2013: 195).

Efforts toward those objectives have reduced the practice in certain parts of Africa. Elsewhere however, especially Indonesia and Malaysia, FGM is apparently on the increase due to active promotion by Islamists (Vallette, 2013). Though this archaic custom has nothing to do with religion and is practised in cultures of very different faiths (including Christians, Ethiopian Jews and animist tribes), certain Islamist groups vigorously oppose prohibiting it, invoking traditional values.

In Canada, there are reports that girls in immigrant families are sometimes excised here or while visiting their country of origin. Physicians report being asked to perform excisions, to repair the

⁵⁸ FGM has several negative effects on health. Its long-term consequences include recurrent bladder and urinary tract infections, urinary incontinence, childbirth complications, and increased risk of fistulas and AIDS transmission, not to mention impairing conjugal relations. To learn more, go to: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en>.

damage after childbirth, and to deal with infections and hemorrhaging caused by FGM. Though no statistics are available, it is clear that health professionals here are being confronted with FGM and its consequences, without being prepared to face this reality.

Starting in the 1990s, as immigration to Canada became more diverse, health professionals and other workers began raising the issue of FGM. At the federal level, an interdepartmental work group was formed to examine the implications of the practice in Canada⁵⁹. In February and March 1995, consultations were held in Montréal and Ottawa with people from the communities concerned, followed by a national consultation with various organizations in September 1999, to seek agreement on prevention strategies. The consultations highlighted the need for education and better communications between health professionals and excised women (Hussein, 1995; Huston, n.d.).

Starting in 1992, the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) took a stand against FGM, calling on its members to refuse to take part in it, while treating women and girls who had undergone the procedure with dignity and compassion, offering the care appropriate for their condition (Lalonde, 1995). In a 2012 position statement, the SOGC advises its members that “reporting to appropriate child welfare protection services is mandatory when it is suspected that a female child has been subjected to female genital cutting/mutilation or is at risk of being subjected to the practice” (SOGC, 2012). It is not known to what extent this guideline is followed.

In Québec, in 2004 a work group was formed comprising four branches of the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) to determine how best to provide services for excised women. In 2006 a brochure was produced on FGM awareness⁶⁰ for health professionals, followed in 2007 by an intervention guide⁶¹ for health and social service workers on providing support to excised women (MSSS, 2007: 33-35). Yet another document, produced in 2010 for senior management and planners in the health and social services network, explores optimal approaches toward meeting the needs of women affected by FGM⁶².

Both the 2010-2013 action plan of the MSSS⁶³ and the Québec Government's 2011-2015 action plan for equality between women and men⁶⁴ emphasize the necessity of tailoring health

⁵⁹ The group included representatives from Health Canada, Justice, Citizenship and Immigration, and Status of Women Canada.

⁶⁰ *Les mutilations génitales féminines. Qu'en savez-vous?* http://msssa4.msss.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/publication_nsf/4b1768b3f849519c852568fd0061480d/bb402879a8f25d7e852571400056f029?OpenDocument.

⁶¹ *Guide d'intervention auprès des familles d'immigration récente. Naître ici et venir d'ailleurs.* <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/acrobat/f/documentation/2006/06-836-01.pdf>.

⁶² “Agir au Québec auprès des gens touchés par les pratiques d'excision et d'infibulation ou à risque de l'être: État de situation et recommandations”. This internal document is not available electronically.

⁶³ *Plan d'action 2010-2013, Au féminin... À l'écoute de nos besoins.*

⁶⁴ *Plan d'action 2011-2015, Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait.*

and social services to the needs of the women concerned. Finally, the departmental guidelines adopted by the MSSS in 2012 provide for training on FGM to be offered to all workers in the system, within the broader context of intercultural training.

At this point, in all the documents and action plans mentioned, what stands out is the emphasis placed on improving services to excised women, not on eradicating FGM. So far, nothing has been done toward ending FGM in Québec. We also note that the MSSS brochure on FGM awareness states that “any person who suspects that a girl is at risk of being subjected to this practice is entitled to file a report with the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse”. That way of putting it – that they are *entitled* to file a report – is far less forceful than the SOGC’s position statement, which expresses a clear obligation to do so. To our knowledge, not one case has been reported or led to the protective removal of a child. On the other hand, there are legal precedents in Canada for granting refugee status to women who are under threat of forced genital mutilation in their home country.

Clearly, “harm reduction” has been the preferred approach in the health and social services arena. This consists of adapting services to the needs of vulnerable groups, in this case women affected by FGM. While efforts to assist them are of course welcome, they make no attempt to put an end to these harmful practices, on the pretext that we shouldn’t judge. In line with this pragmatic approach, which forbids making any value judgments, some health professionals have expressed concerns about the ethical implications of a ban on FGM, not only with regard to women who have undergone excision, but on their daughters, who could be ostracized and unable to find a husband if they are not excised (Vissandjée & collab. 2013).

An approach based solely on “harm reduction” ends up subordinating a fundamental priority – ending harmful practices that impair the health of women and girls – to the demands of cultural relativism: avoiding at all costs the stigmatization of groups and individuals. Must one always be sacrificed for the other? The danger of cultural relativism here is that it trivializes FGM, preventing the adoption of more effective measures toward eradication over the longer term. In our view, the problem should be tackled from both ends: treating excised women with dignity, *and* devoting the resources needed to stop FGM. And surely it is health professionals who are in the best position, when dealing with excised women who are pregnant or have problems due to FGM, to raise their awareness about why the practice should be abandoned.

It is a basic principle of medicine that treating symptoms is not enough; you must treat the source of the problem. Though the challenges are daunting, it is wrong to believe that ancestral customs cannot be changed. This is demonstrated by the inspiring examples below.

Two inspiring examples from Senegal

In the remote Senegalese village of Malicounda Bambara, women themselves made a public commitment to never again allow their daughters to be excised. In her book *Ascent of Women*, journalist Sally Armstrong (2013) describes how this awakening took place. It was all thanks to an educational program baptized *Tostan*, which teaches African women how to act collectively to avoid being shunned by their community, as would happen to anyone who dared contest a custom on her own. Some thirty villages have followed their example and forbidden FGM.

Educating girls is another way to combat harmful customs, including child marriage. In the village of Polel Diawbé, youths rebelled when a 10-year-old student, Khadia, was withdrawn from school to be married to a 22-year-old cousin. Khadia's friends protested before the office of the village chief, denouncing all forced marriages. The demonstration grew, and 48 hours later the marriage plans were abandoned.

Hymenoplasty: reconstruction of the hymen

The logic of honour gives capital importance to virginity, whence the phenomenon of young women having hymenoplasty before their wedding night. Once a marginal practice, reconstruction of the hymen has become popular in the Middle East. It is a minor procedure, but very lucrative for doctors who perform it, and demand has grown in Europe and Canada.

In Québec, there are clinics in Montréal and Laval whose websites openly promote hymenoplasty⁶⁵. Despite the relatively high cost (around \$3000), the effectiveness of the operation is not guaranteed; bleeding from the ruptured hymen, to prove that the bride was a virgin on her wedding night, doesn't always happen.

Hymenoplasty has stirred up controversy in Europe, raising an ethical dilemma: is it better to give patients what they want, or to refuse and urge them to question the whole idea? Critics of the practice argue that when physicians offer the procedure, they are complicit in violating women's freedom and integrity, perpetuating the rule of patriarchal honour.

It is interesting to note that hymenoplasty is just one of a vast array of plastic surgeries to reshape women's bodies, offered on the basis of esthetic criteria dictated by fashion and the market. Preceded by nose jobs, breast remodeling and thigh reduction, vaginal plastic surgery

⁶⁵ See for example: <http://www.estheticon.com/surgeons/hymenoplasty-hymen-reconstruction-surgery;>
<http://hymenoplastie.ca/?lang=en> (accessed June 22, 2013).

(first performed in the United States) will now remodel the outer and inner labia, the vagina and the clitoris to conform to criteria popularized by the pornographic industry. Between controlling women's bodies in the name of honour, and controlling them in the name of personal freedom, women's integrity is under jeopardy.

Virginity certificates

As with requests for excision and hymenoplasty, health professionals face insistent demands by some parents to confirm their daughter's virginity. Though it may seem harmless, such a request could have disastrous consequences if it turned out the girl was no longer a virgin. Uncomfortable with such requests, one group of health professionals submitted the question to a clinical ethics committee.

After examining the question from different angles, including scientific, legal and social, the ethics committee of the Laval CSSS recently produced a judicious, balanced opinion that recognizes the underlying issues related to the culture of honour. The committee concluded that physicians should abstain from delivering certificates of virginity, and that such requests by parents should prompt a verification of the girl's safety, followed by protective measures if necessary. The committee also recommended that clear lines of conduct prohibiting virginity certificates be set out by the Québec College of Physicians and the Association of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Québec, and widely disseminated to all healthcare workers.

Drawing on those conclusions, on February 20, 2013 the Conseil des médecins, dentistes et pharmaciens (CMDP – council of physicians, dentists and pharmacists) of the CSSS Saint-Léonard & Saint-Michel adopted a resolution along the same lines. The Québec College of Physicians also believes that issuing certificates of virginity would breach multiple articles of Québec's *Code of Ethics of Physicians*⁶⁶.

In one respect only, requests for hymenoplasty differ from those for virginity certificates. The first come from women in a vulnerable position who seek hymenoplasty as a form of short-term protection. The second usually comes from parents, with an implicit threat of punishment if the result is negative. Both are dictated by the patriarchal logic of honour, and both should result in measures being taken to ensure protection for the vulnerable.

5.1.7 School

As described earlier, school counsellors in some centres are having to deal with girls who are under excessive parental control and who may be threatened with forced marriage. It is generally

⁶⁶ See note by Dr. Charles Bernard, dated October 10, 2013: <http://blog.cmq.org> (accessed October 10, 2013).

in adolescence (thus in secondary school) that honour-based conflicts arise. Starting at puberty, some girls are no longer allowed to take part in extracurricular activities, or to socialize with friends after school. This impedes their social integration, isolating them and increasing their vulnerability to HBV. Due to the stress they are under they can experience learning difficulties, emotional problems, interpersonal conflicts and so forth. Some become depressive or suddenly lose interest in their studies, knowing that they will soon have to leave everything behind for a marriage imposed by their parents.

When such girls find the courage to confide in someone at school, too often their teachers and counsellors don't know what to do or how to help. At the end of each academic year, school authorities have apprehension as they know some girls who have been under honour-related pressure may never return. After the summer holidays, many schools note the "disappearance" of girls who they suspect were forced to marry. There are no statistics, since there is no way of identifying and keeping track of such cases. But the phenomenon exists and deserves attention.

Of course, it's not always easy to distinguish the ordinary sort of parent/teenager conflict from serious cases of HBV. Unlike the former, which can usually be resolved through negotiation, tensions related to honour can get out of hand and lead to tragedy. Thus the importance of all staff members receiving training about HBV, especially in multi-ethnic districts where such violence is most common.

Example: La Voie secondary school

In this secondary school in the multi-ethnic district of Côte-des-Neiges (Montreal), there are students from over 80 countries. The principal sees this diversity as an enormous wealth, but one that demands cultural sensitivity and genuine efforts to facilitate the harmonious integration of all. He is surrounded by a team of dedicated professionals and psychosocial counsellors who listen to the kids, pay attention to their problems and help them to overcome obstacles.

The La Voie school has gained recognition for the psychosocial approach it has developed. At weekly thematic meetings in small groups, students are encouraged to express themselves about personal or family problems, and to help each other out. They learn how to negotiate with their parents, whose desire to preserve their values can cause them to be too controlling. Coaching and regular follow-ups with students, and occasionally with their parents when necessary, have been effective in defusing crises and finding solutions to problems. Since resources are limited however, the counsellors aren't always able to give each case the attention it deserves.

This inspiring example should be taken further and extended to other schools with similar challenges. The principal at La Voie insists however that trying to reproduce what they have done is not the way to go. Cultural diversity implies multiple realities, so the solution can't be to work from a single model. Imagination and innovation are needed to meet the needs of individual schools.

5.2 Legislative initiatives

Until fairly recently, female genital mutilation (FGM) was implicitly prohibited under the Criminal Code of Canada, specifically by section 267 (on armed aggression and inflicting bodily injury) and section 268 (on aggravated assault). Nevertheless, in 1997 the Criminal Code was amended, explicitly prohibiting the practices of excision and infibulation (section 268). The prohibition also covered committing such acts abroad on any person "who is ordinarily resident in Canada" (section 273.3). This amendment, tabled in September 1994 and defended in Parliament in March 1995 by a member from Québec, was the subject of vigorous debate⁶⁷.

It is interesting to explore why opinions diverged on the necessity of specific legislation prohibiting FGM. Opponents of the bill, including the Minister of Justice, thought that other provisions in force (on assault and bodily injury) could be invoked against the practice, though this had never occurred. They also argued that education was preferable to formal prohibition, since criminalizing the practice could drive it further underground.

In defending the bill (C-277), the Québec member argued that the bill had a dual objective, to protect victims and to punish those who engage in the practice. It would send a clear message to people in the communities concerned that excision and infibulation violate the rights and integrity of women and girls, and are unacceptable by Canadian values. In her words:

In addition to this need for judicial precision, adopting a bill would meet another need which the government rarely addresses: defining the social policy of multiculturalism. [...] To correct this problem we must formally define the limits of government policy by clearly stating which cultural practices are not acceptable and are against the principles of our society⁶⁸.

Bill C-27 prohibiting excision and infibulation in Canada was finally adopted in 1997. Canada's position thus converges with that of the United Kingdom and other countries, including some in Africa, that have prohibited the practice of FGM. It is a position supported by many Canadian

⁶⁷ The proponent of the amendment was Christiane Gagnon (Bloc québécois). Her speech can be read here: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?pub=Hansard&doc=212&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=35&Ses=1#13350>.

⁶⁸ See also: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?pub=Hansard&doc=212&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=35&Ses=1#13352>.

bodies, including the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC, 2012), the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse au Québec (CDPDJ, 1994 – Québec human rights and youth rights commission) and the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC, 1996). It is also in line with principles enshrined in international conventions to which Canada is a signatory, such as the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which urges nations to protect children “from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse” (article 19) and to take effective and appropriate measures “with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children” (article 24 (3)).

The next example is one of the rare cases, if not the only one, of charges being brought against FGM under Canadian law.

Case of an 11-year-old girl excised in Ontario

In 2002, a Sudanese family living in St. Catharines, Ontario was accused of having had their 11-year-old daughter excised. The parents were taken into custody and the children placed in the care of social services. The charges were dropped when it was found that the procedure had taken place before the bill came into force. (Owens, 2002)

In the aftermath of this affair, critics said that police and judicial actions had caused the family and their community great emotional turmoil (Vissandjée, 2013: 196). When women’s groups from some communities (in whose countries of origin excision is practised) were questioned by the media, they admitted that it is difficult to broach the subject with their members because they are reluctant to talk about it (Owens, 2002).

These reactions illustrate the challenge of prohibiting practices that are bound up with deep-rooted beliefs among people who adhere to them for many different reasons. This does not mean that the law is useless, but that it will take more than legislation to put an end to FGM. It will require sustained resources over the long term, to raise awareness about the damaging effects of FGM on the health of girls and women. This is where there are obvious gaps, and they are due to the lack of a comprehensive action plan: one that would seek not only to meet the needs of excised women – the “harm reduction” approach – but to combat the practice actively so that future generations will not have to endure it.

5.3 Community initiatives

One positive result of the media frenzy over the Shafia affair was that Québec community groups and other bodies are no longer ignoring the problem. This collective awakening has led many to make serious efforts to understand and address the realities of HBV, including the needs of victims and potential victims.

From 2006 to 2013, some fifteen community projects on HBV and harmful cultural practices were funded by Status of Women Canada (a federal agency), for a total of \$2 865 378. Among them were three carried out in Québec by community organizations: Shield of Athena, the *Centre social d'aide aux immigrants* (social centre for immigrant assistance) and the *Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes* (working table of organizations serving refugees and immigrants). The last two projects were just getting started in 2013, while the first, discussed next, was launched over a year ago.

Created in 1991, Shield of Athena⁶⁹ is a non-profit organization based in the multi-ethnic district of Parc-Extension in Montreal. It offers support, intervention and prevention services, culturally and linguistically tailored to its clientele, to victims of family violence. It also has an emergency shelter for women and their children. Over the years, Shield of Athena has helped thousands of women and children to rebuild their lives. Recognized as a leader in community outreach, in March 2012 the organization received federal funding for a three-year project to combat honour crime in five high-risk communities: Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Indian, Bangladeshi and Afghan.

One component of the project focuses on information, training and networking. Its first objective is to facilitate the early detection of situations at risk by training volunteers to serve as a network of watchers. Second, it works at breaking down the wall of silence, empowering women at risk by teaching them about their rights and giving them the support they need to denounce their aggressors. Third, it is creating a forum where people from multiple institutions and community partners can explore solutions toward prevention and intervention. For this last objective, a multi-sectoral working committee was set up to develop a screening tool, based on a common definition of HBV, for identifying cases in different settings. This collective enterprise is aimed at getting a better grasp of the scale of the phenomenon and defining concrete intervention measures.

A major obstacle discovered by the working committee is the lack of shelter resources for girls threatened by forced marriage or HBV. Though existing resources can take them in, most specialize in victims of domestic violence. Girls in situations of honour-based violence need a specific type of assistance, sometimes requiring extended intervention both during and after their stay at the shelter. As for youth centres, their clientele tends to include young victims of

⁶⁹ To learn more about this organization, see: <http://shieldofathena.com/en> (accessed June 25, 2013).

parental neglect, sexual abuse, or having problems like drug addiction, prostitution and so on. Everyone recognizes that girls who have fled from excessively restrictive family environments need shelter resources specifically tailored to their situation.

In other words, at present there do not exist appropriate services for people threatened with forced marriage or HBV, significantly limiting the ability of police, school and social workers to protect them. Besides the importance of all such workers having training on HBV, it is crucial to establish adequate services tailored to the needs of HBV victims.

Private initiatives

It is worth noting that initiatives to combat HBV are often led by former victims. Aruna Papp⁷⁰, considered a pioneer and expert on the subject, is a Canadian of Indian origin living in Toronto. Born in India, forced to marry a much older man at age 17, Aruna survived that abusive marriage. She has since founded three organizations that provide assistance to women victims of HBV. Her extensive writings on the subject include *Unworthy Creature: A Punjabi Daughter's Memoir of Honour, Shame and Love* (2012), which recounts her life story⁷¹.

For some thirty years, Aruna has worked as a therapeutic counsellor with families affected by HBV. She also offers training workshops to police officers, social workers and other professionals in a variety of settings: legal, hospital, school and so on. Aruna often serves as a mediator between parents and their children, since a brutal rupture with family can be worse in the long run than the immediate harm at issue. She says:

Those who choose independence over cultural obligations are amongst the loneliest in the world. That's why so many go back to their abuser, thinking I will tolerate the abuse, so I won't be alone.

(Aruna Papp, on CBC/Radio-Canada, 2 012)

She therefore maintains that we should help parents to improve their parenting skills, encouraging both parties to make reasonable compromises. Her position is based on child abuse studies suggesting that the best way to prevent family violence is to support the parents and find better ways of meeting their needs. It is an approach worth exploring, though one that the British model, presented in the next chapter, seems to reject. To ensure the safety of the vulnerable, a support system would have to be set up to follow such families over the longer term, with sustained efforts to encourage a questioning of the concept of honour and patriarchal ways of thinking.

⁷⁰ To learn more about Aruna Papp, her workshops and other activities, go to: <http://www.preventhonorbasedviolence.com/index.html> (accessed March 6, 2013).

⁷¹ Available from the publisher at: <http://www.freedompress.ca/Unworthy-Creature.php> (accessed October 28, 2013).

CHAPTER 6

The British Model

*Multicultural sensitivity is no excuse for moral blindness*⁷².
(Mike O'Brien, Home Office Minister, BBC, 2000)

Around a dozen honour crimes are reported each year in the United Kingdom. For the past decade, British authorities have made a great effort to combat forced marriage and honour-based violence (HBV). Below we present the principal elements of the British action plan adopted in 2010, with some examples of concrete measures and the experience of stakeholders involved in applying them.

6.1 Context

The largest cultural minority in the UK consists of 4.2 million people of South-Asian origin, primarily from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, representing about 7.5% of the population. In London, an estimated 55% of the population is non-white, with up to 35% in some boroughs being of South-Asian origin. A large portion of the honour crimes committed in the UK thus involve South-Asian (including Afghan) families, along with those from Turkey, Iran, the Kurdish communities of Irak, other Middle Eastern countries, and so on.

British authorities recognize that honour-based murder is just one component of HBV. For a better understanding of the whole, a system was designed that allows authorities to track all forms of honour-based violence, facilitating strategies against it. These efforts have enabled the police to record nearly 3000 incidents of HBV per year. Even so, civil society organizations say that thousands of women endure HBV in silence, only reaching out when it becomes intolerable. Consequently, the reality is thought to be of far greater magnitude than the incidents actually reported.

6.2 The catalyst

As with the Shafia affair in Québec, in many European countries the catalyst for raising public awareness, and mobilizing authorities to take action, has been the one honour crime that first received extensive media coverage. In Sweden it was the murder of Fadime Sahindal (2002); in Germany, the murder of Hatun Sürücü (2005); in Denmark, the murder of Ghazala Khan (2005).

⁷² Statement by Minister O'Brien on the subject of forced marriage, on the BBC radio program "4's Today" (August 4, 2000). See http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/865419.stm (accessed March 26, 2013).

In the UK, the 1998 murder of Rukshana Naz galvanized the attention of both the media and authorities. In reaction, a work group was formed in 1999 to study the issue of forced marriage. The major turning point toward effective action, however, came with two other murders a few years later. They are presented below.

Case of Heshu Yunes – October 2002

Heshu, an Iraqi Kurd of 16, was stabbed by her father because he disapproved of her boyfriend. When Heshu's father discovered the relationship, he subjected his daughter to a virginity test and forbade her to see him. Subsequently, on a trip to Iraq, he tried to push her into marrying a cousin. Backing down before her pleadings, he made her promise not to see her boyfriend again. Back in London though, Heshu resumed going out with him, despite being under increasing pressure to stop. When she told a teacher about the abuse at home, the teacher sent her to an organization that helps women victims of violence. A family counsellor met with her, but underestimated the risks in the situation. Heshu was killed by her father a few weeks later.

Following the murder, to deflect suspicion from himself the father claimed that political opponents belonging to Al-Qaeda had broken into the house and killed his daughter. The police were fooled and focused their investigation outside the family. Heshu's friends were well aware that her father had threatened to kill her, but no one dared speak to the police. Finally, the allegations reached the ears of the director of the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organization (IKWRO), who knew about honour crimes and took the matter seriously. She immediately contacted the person in charge of the investigation. At first, she said, the police were skeptical; but when investigators looked into the allegations against the father, incriminating evidence turned up. The father confessed to his daughter's murder and presented a defence on grounds of honour. The trial (in 2003) received extensive media coverage, contributing greatly to a new public awareness about honour crime in the United Kingdom.

In the wake of this murder, the IKWRO, along with organizations like KMEWO⁷³, launched a public awareness campaign (*Remember Heshu*) to break the silence around honour crimes. Heshu's case impelled the London police to work harder at informing officers about HBV, collaborating with community organizations familiar with the problem. But less than three years later, another murder showed that there were still significant gaps in the ability of police to protect potential victims from honour crime.

⁷³ See also: Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organization (KMEWO): <http://www.kmewo.org/Remember%20Heshu.html>.

Case of Banaz Mahmud – January 2006

Banaz Mahmud, like Heshu a woman of Iraqi Kurd origin, was killed at the age of 20. After freeing herself from a forced marriage imposed by her parents when she was 17, she had begun a relationship with a man she chose herself. Knowing that she was in danger because her family disapproved, Banaz asked the police for protection for both of them. She told the police she was being followed by people in her community, even providing a list of those who were likely to kill her.

When Banaz disappeared, it was her boyfriend who alerted the police, not her family. For three months the investigation went nowhere, because there was no evidence of wrongdoing. Finally, the victim's sister revealed that Banaz had been murdered, her body buried in a suitcase in the garden of the family's Birmingham home. The autopsy showed that Banaz had been raped and beaten before being strangled by her aggressors. Commissioned by the father and uncle, the murder was performed by two cousins, who returned to Iraq to escape British justice. Finally, in October 2009 the father and uncle along with the two cousins, who were extradited from Iraq to be tried in the UK, were sentenced to life in prison. Banaz's sister and boyfriend live in hiding, their lives threatened for reporting the crime.

We should note here that the cousins' extradition was achieved thanks to the campaign *Justice for Banaz*, launched by the IKWRO with support from Karma Nirvana⁷⁴ and other organizations. It was a first for this type of crime.

The examples above highlight the crucial role of civil society organizations in raising public awareness and prompting authorities to take action. Their advocacy work led to the adoption of Britain's national policy on combating honour-based violence, which until then had been lumped in with ordinary domestic violence. Incomprehension and a lack of specific strategies had obscured the fact that with HBV the risks are greater, making customary protective measures ineffective.

6.3 Institutions and public policies

To fight HBV without stigmatizing the cultural communities in which it occurs, the British government framed the problem within a national action plan with a broader purpose: to end violence against women and girls. For HBV as with conjugal violence, the plan advocates a holistic

⁷⁴ Karma Nirvana was created in 1993 specifically to combat honour-based violence. For more information, see: <http://www.karmanirvana.org.uk>.

approach, combining prevention, the protection of victims and the punishment of aggressors. Strategies developed toward those ends emphasize collaboration among multiple players, in both state and civil society organizations, creating a synergy that amplifies the impact of all the measures adopted.

Titled *A Call to End Violence against Women and Girls*, the national action plan was adopted in 2010 and updated in March 2013⁷⁵. Placed under the authority of the Home Office⁷⁶, it calls for several departments, including Health and Justice, to participate in the implementation of its one hundred concrete measures. Also, the plan has received funding of almost 40 million pounds sterling per year until 2015, for specialist services for women and girls subjected to domestic and sexual violence. Such services must take into account the special vulnerabilities of people in situations of HBV.

We should mention here that to account for the particular characteristics of HBV, the plan's definition of domestic violence was expanded to include excessive control and victims as young as 16 and 17. Also, since forced marriage is the crux of a great deal of HBV (both before and after marriage), the action plan puts special emphasis on eradicating forced marriage. Forced marriage is estimated to coincide with nearly half of all HBV cases, which include excessive control, confinement, harassment, threats, physical, psychological and emotional abuse, financial and sexual violence, and female genital mutilation.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Excision has long been prohibited in the UK, but a law adopted in 2003 prohibits the practice abroad on any British resident, even in countries where excision is legal. No cases have yet been brought under the law.

A recent study estimated that 66 000 women in the UK had undergone genital mutilation, while 20 000 girls were at risk of being excised (Dorkenoo, Morison and MacFarlane, 2007). In another disturbing indicator, in June 2013 the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) revealed that over the previous two years 1700 victims of FGM had been sent for treatment to specialist clinics, this being only a fraction of those affected (Topping, 2013). The youngest victim was 7 years old.

Among other measures to try to stop FGM, the Home Office set up a helpline and produced a brochure on FGM for distribution to youth. It warns that FGM is illegal even if performed abroad, and urges victims and their loved ones to denounce the practice. Also, guidelines have been sent

⁷⁵ Available at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/call-end-violence-women-girls/vawg-action-plan-2013.

⁷⁶ For more information about the Home Office, go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organizations/home-office/about>.

to school, medical and other professionals encouraging them to report cases of girls suspected of being real or potential victims of FGM. Yet still, only a handful of cases are reported each year for prevention.

UK authorities have noted that FGM is neither identified nor recognized as a serious problem. One obstacle to applying the law is that social and medical professionals are reluctant to act, for fear of being accused of racism. The head of the *Violence Against Women* (VAW) team at the Home Office denounces this attitude, declaring: "FGM is child abuse and must be treated as such!". Firm intervention is essential to ensure that young girls are protected.

Recently, at the 57th UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York (March 2013), the British government announced the allocation of 35 million pounds sterling toward ending FGM worldwide "in one generation!". That is the highest amount ever directed by any country to that purpose, showing a serious desire to attack the problem. Women's groups throughout the UK hope the money will allow new, effective strategies to be implemented, not only abroad but also nationally. British authorities recognize that they still have a lot of work to do, and that eradicating FGM should be a priority in the years to come.

6.3.1 The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU)

In 2005, the British government created the *Forced Marriage Unit* (FMU), a special unit launched jointly by the Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. With seven members, the unit provides concrete support to people who have been forced into a marriage or are afraid they may be, while offering guidance to third parties wishing to help them.

The FMU uses the following definition of forced marriage: "A forced marriage is a marriage where one or both people do not (or in the case of some people with learning or physical disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used."⁷⁷ It goes on to explain that different sorts of pressure are used to make people "consent" to a marriage, including threats, physical and sexual violence, emotional and psychological pressure, and financial abuse.

The FMU has set three priorities for action: concrete support for anyone who has been or may be forced into marriage; public outreach and awareness raising among professionals; and furthering the development of public policy.

⁷⁷ Source: Brochure published by the Forced Marriage Unit, entitled *What is a forced marriage?*

Concrete support for those who have been or may be forced into marriage

The FMU has three contexts for intervention: domestic cases, where a forced marriage takes place on British territory; foreign cases, where a citizen aged 16 or older is at risk of a forced marriage abroad; and cases involving the sponsoring of a spouse after a forced marriage. In the third type of case, the FMU works closely with British embassies and High Commissions, and is empowered to have the spouse's visa revoked.

The FMU offers a helpline for anyone who is threatened with forced marriage at home or abroad, and for friends and relatives wishing to help. In domestic cases (i.e. on British soil), the police can intervene swiftly to rescue the victim and ensure her safety. If the person is a minor (under 16), the authorities notify social services, which intervene accordingly. To reach youth more effectively (since they are the most at risk), a mobile app was launched in March 2013 by Freedom Charity⁷⁸, an organization dedicated to protecting children from forced marriage, in collaboration with the Forced Marriage Unit⁷⁹. The app provides a way for children and young adults at risk of forced marriage to enter into direct contact with the police to obtain help quickly.

Public outreach and awareness raising for professionals

Through this component, the FMU goes into schools to inform children about forced marriage and how to get help, and offers training for professionals across the public sector, including teachers, medical staff and social workers. A national campaign to raise awareness about forced marriage was launched in summer 2012, offering a website, posters and brochures⁸⁰.

Practical guides have also been produced for specific audiences, including survivors of forced marriage⁸¹, victims and third parties⁸², Members of Parliament and constituency offices⁸³, and frontline professionals⁸⁴ facing a victim or potential victim. The guides give precise guidelines, tailored to each specific readership, on how to proceed in dealing with the matter.

⁷⁸ To learn more about this organization, go to: www.freedomcharity.org.uk/.

⁷⁹ See also: <http://www.sourcewire.com/news/76658/freedom-charity-launch-forced-marriage-smartphone-app-as-new-government>.

⁸⁰ See also: <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage#forced-marriage-unit> and *Dealing with forced marriage*: <https://www.fmelearning.co.uk/login/index.php>.

⁸¹ *Forced Marriage, a Survivors Handbook*: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/149854/FM_Survivors6.pdf.

⁸² *Guidance for victims and potential victims of forced marriage and for their friends and families*: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/partners-families/forced-marriage/forcedmarriageunit/victims>.

⁸³ *Guidance for Members of Parliament and constituency offices*: <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage#guidance-for-members-of-parliament-and-constituency-offices>.

⁸⁴ *Multi-agency practical guidelines for professionals*: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/35530/forced-marriage-guidelines09.pdf.

Public policy

The FMU also plays a central role in the development of public policy on forced marriage. Members of the team serve as expert advisors with legal, consular, police and other bodies, helping them to develop policies and strategies toward stopping forced marriage.

One achievement of the British approach is to have inspired the development of effective tools for identifying and tracking honour-based violence. Such tools are essential to discovering the real scope of the problem, evaluating the success of measures against it, and guiding future actions. They enable police and the FMU to detail the number of victims helped and their socio-demographic characteristics.

Statistics on FMU interventions in 2012⁸⁵:

- Number of interventions: 1485 cases of victims or potential victims of forced marriage over the course of the year.
 - Distribution by age: 13% of victims were under 15; 22% were 16 to 17; 30% were 18 to 21; 19% were 22 to 25; 8% were 26 to 30; and 8% were over 30.
 - Distribution by sex: 82% were women, 18% were men.
 - Distribution by origin: Cases requiring intervention involved people from 60 different countries, including 47.1% from Pakistan, 11% from Bangladesh, 8% from India and 2.1% from Afghanistan.
 - 114 cases involved victims with a physical or learning disability.
 - 22 cases involved victims who self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.
-

These statistics reveal, first, that the victims of forced marriage are very young: over a third were minors (35%), and nearly half were 18 to 25 (49%). Second, the numbers show that men are not spared, since they accounted for 267 cases (18%), and that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons can also be targeted (22 cases).

⁸⁵ Statistics presented at: <http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed112192>.

Youth opinions about forced marriage

Consider the opinions of a group of young men (17 to 24 years old) of South-Asian origin. They were met at a South-Asian community centre in Blackburn, a city in Lancashire with a large Indian/Pakistani minority (nearly 30% of the population) concentrated in a single district. As they tell it, boys in their community have more freedom of movement than girls, but must still marry someone of whom their parents approve – often a cousin.

Though born on British soil, these youths consider it essential that girls remain virgin until marriage, and that parents do whatever is necessary to protect their daughters' chastity. One young man reported that six years earlier he agreed to marry a 17-year-old girl chosen by his parents in Pakistan. His young, sponsored wife doesn't speak English very well, he said, but "she knows the rules, she follows them and she takes care of our two children".

So it seems that these traditions are perpetuated even among second- and third-generation immigrants. In 2012, BBC Panorama surveyed 500 youth of South-Asian origin (in the UK) on their attitudes toward honour. Over two thirds said they agreed with the idea that families should live by the honour code, or *izzat* (an Urdu word commonly used in India and Pakistan in referring to honour). 18% of respondents said that some dishonourable acts by a girl or woman, such as disobeying her father, marrying the "wrong" person or wanting to divorce, could justify physical coercion.

As noted in the statistics on FMU interventions in 2012, there were 114 cases involving someone with a physical or learning disability. On this topic, the co-director of the FMU said that sometimes people return to their country of origin to find a wife for their disabled son, without warning the girl of the groom's condition. When such cases are reported, she said, the FMU has the disabled person tested to see if he or she is capable of giving consent; if not, the marriage is annulled. She adds however that sometimes the spouse can't be sent back to their home country because their life would be in danger.

As for sponsored spouses, in July 2012 the probation period was extended from two to five years before permanent residence can be granted. If the marriage falls apart before the end of probation, the sponsored person is returned to their country of origin, unless they have suffered domestic violence (as documented by a police or medical report). Some organizations deplore this requirement, arguing that many sponsored wives (especially from South-Asian countries) live like slaves and are subjected to violence by their husband or mother-in-law. They don't dare complain for fear of reprisal or being returned to their country of origin (Bano, 2010).

This argument is supported by Home Office statistics, which confirm that in 2008 and 2009, over half the residence applications from sponsored South-Asian women who said they had suffered domestic violence (over 500 cases) were rejected. Since they were unable to supply proof of their mistreatment, the women were deported (Bano, 2010). Protests have been raised against this oversight by victim assistance organizations like IMKAAN⁸⁶ and the Women's Aid Forum⁸⁷, which are demanding corrective measures.

Collaboration with the Canadian embassy

The FMU also maintains close links with the Canadian embassy in London. Political advisors regularly work in the offices of the FMU to study the British intervention model and discuss shared cases: those of Canadian citizens passing through London who fear they may be forced to marry in their country of origin.

6.3.2 British High Commissions

In countries where the practice is common, British consular staff receive special training on forced marriage. The High Commissions have a mandate to assist any British citizen of 16 or older who asks for help to escape a forced marriage abroad.

In recent years, rescue operations have taken place in many countries. Citizens being forced into marriage have been successfully freed with the help of local police authorities, who escort them to the British embassy. While awaiting repatriation to Britain, the victims are sheltered in a safe place with the help of a local NGO, if one is present. Sometimes they must be given a new passport and identity papers, since these are often confiscated by parents or relatives. Back in the UK, the rescued victims are sent to a local NGO that can ensure their safety. Since they are usually very young, it is generally accepted that they will need long-term support to help them take their lives in hand, continue their studies or find work, so they can become independent.

Every year the FMU and the High Commissions perform 150 to 200 interventions to interrupt forced marriages abroad. In Pakistan alone they happen almost every week. Due to the frequency of cases in that country, the High Commission in Islamabad has made an attempt at local prevention, commissioning three short animated films⁸⁸. Released in 2010 in the local language with English subtitles, the films inform Pakistanis about the harsh reality of forced marriage and the fact that it violates women's rights.

⁸⁶ To learn more about IMKAAN, which defines itself as a "black feminist organization dedicated to addressing violence against women and girls", go to <http://imkaan.org.uk>.

⁸⁷ To learn more about the Women's Aid Forum, go to <http://www.womensaid.org.uk>.

⁸⁸ The films can be seen on YouTube: *Forced marriage – Sara's story*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uh8F-XYBSfy>; *Farzana's Story*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PibJQ5el9Y>; *Shazia's Story*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=620D5VhEf94>.

The next two cases concern successful interventions by the British High Commissions.

Case of a 15-year-old Pakistani girl “repatriated” to Britain to escape a forced marriage⁸⁹

In 2008, a family court agreed to “repatriate” from Pakistan a 15-year-old girl with dual citizenship. The case was exceptional because she had never actually lived in the UK, but had a British passport. Born in Pakistan to a British father and Pakistani mother, the girl wanted to marry her to a much older man (apparently an alcoholic), the girl sought protection at the High Commission in Islamabad. The High Commission contacted the FMU, which sought and obtained permission from a British court to intervene. The judge agreed that the marriage was doubly illegal, for not only was it against the girl’s wishes, she was under the legal age for marriage in the UK (16). Her half-brother in Scotland agreed to take her in, and the girl was brought to the UK to escape the forced marriage planned by her mother.

Case of an 11-year-old girl forced to marry in Bangladesh⁹⁰

On a visit to Bangladesh, the 11-year-old daughter of a family living in the UK was married to a man of 20. After the marriage her mother abandoned her with the new husband, returning with her other children to live in the UK. Alerted to the case, the FMU intervened. On the grounds that the marriage had no legal value, the girl (who was a British citizen) was placed under the protection of the court. Once repatriated, she was placed with an aunt who also lived in the UK. However, after turning 12 the girl expressed a desire to live with her mother, and to have the man she’d been married to come to the UK. Her British case workers were certain she would be in danger if she returned to live with her mother. The judge ruled that it was in the girl’s best interest to remain with her aunt, and the request was denied.

Rescue interventions like these are all the more delicate when minors are concerned. Also, conducting such operations abroad is costly. For that reason, British authorities encourage people who believe they may be forced into marriage abroad to seek help before leaving the country, and if the risk is too great, to refuse to leave.

⁸⁹ To protect the victim’s identity, only the case number is given: B; RB v FB and MA (2008) EWHC 1436 (Fam), Hogg J., April 15, 2008.

⁹⁰ Case number: SB v RB (2008) EWHC 938 (Fam), Sumner J., April 23, 2008.

6.3.3 The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)

The ACPO's members are drawn from the forty-three independent police services that cover all the regions of Britain. Its purpose is to harmonize the strategies of different services to increase their efficiency. The ACPO plays an important role in pursuing a shared objective: to end violence against women and girls, including HBV.

One measure adopted by the ACPO, in 2008, was to offer police officers a training course on assessing the risks of HBV. So far, 130 000 officers have taken the course, and each police service has one or more specialists that can intervene swiftly, especially when there are threats of a forced marriage. Speed of intervention is considered crucial to saving lives.

A practical guide for frontline police officers was also produced, with a risk assessment checklist for domestic violence cases that covers the possibility of HBV⁹¹. The checklist looks for various types of pressure, control and harassment related to honour, whether by the extended family or the community, while also considering the risk of depression or suicide.

Studies have found that in the UK, South-Asian women commit suicide at a rate three times higher than the national average (Ineichen, 2008). Many community groups attribute this to HBV.

The risk assessment checklist for HBV has had very encouraging results. In 2012, British police caught 344 cases of honour-based violence and 166 cases of forced marriage. Police in London reviewed 178 murders committed in recent years, identifying 22 cases of honour-related murder. The ACPO recognizes that efforts to train police officers must be continued, so that more such cases can be identified in time and the appropriate interventions carried out.

According to the Commissioner of London's Metropolitan Police, one of the challenges raised by intervention against forced marriage and other forms of HBV is the fact that many victims (estimated at 60% to 80%) refuse such intervention to avoid charges being laid against family members. Often, he says, they are very young women with little in the way of resources. There is also resistance in the communities concerned, which refuse to do anything because such situations are part of their culture. It is a double challenge, he adds, because on the one hand we need to change ways of thinking until such practices are no longer accepted, and on the other hand we must give victims the confidence they need to come to the police.

Training officers about HBV has also enabled close collaboration with groups and individuals in communities affected by the problem. In Lancashire for example, a police service hired an independent consultant of South-Asian origin, Saima Afzal (herself a survivor of HBV) to help them adapt their interventions to victims' needs. Below is the illuminating story of Saima's early life.

⁹¹ *Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour-based Violence (DASH, 2009) Risk Model:*
<http://www.dashriskchecklist.co.uk/index.php?page=dash-2009-model-for-practitioners>.

Case of Saima Afzal: from victim to community counsellor

Saima Afzal is 42 and of Pakistani origin. Now a consultant to the police, she speaks openly in training sessions about her own forced marriage and the violence it led to.

Saima was the eldest daughter of an immigrant family of eleven children. She was a gifted student, yet at the age of 22 she resigned herself to a forced marriage: her father threatened to kill her mother and sisters if she refused to marry a relative in Pakistan. The marriage was motivated by her father's desire to assemble land and property there. "You no longer belong to us!" her mother told her, before abandoning her to a man she had never seen before. On her wedding night Saima was raped by her husband, and back in Great Britain the sexual violence continued.

Saima's parents had emigrated to the UK when she was 4 years old. Settling in the city of Blackburn, Lancashire, the family lived in the South-Asian ghetto. Her childhood was spent between school, the mosque and home. She wasn't allowed to play outdoors or have any contact with boys. Even swimming was forbidden by her father, who exercised abusive control over his daughters to protect his honour. From time to time she got around the rules with her mother's complicity. But this life eventually led to a forced marriage, sexual violence endured in silence, then the birth of her son. Two years into the marriage, however, when her father witnessed the violent sexual behaviour of Saima's husband, he kicked him out of the house. Saima's ordeal ended when she obtained a divorce. This horrible episode in her life, she says, at least saved her eight sisters from the same fate. In light of what she had been through, her father subsequently gave up on the idea of imposing husbands on his other daughters.

The collaboration of Saima Afzal and other people in South-Asian communities has made a tremendous difference to the police, explains a sergeant in the Lancashire force. Now, he says, we're seeing women and girls who have no hesitation in coming to our station to report HBV or forced marriage. That means they trust us, that our credibility in the community has gone up, he concludes.

Giving concrete form to this closer relationship with cultural communities, Lancashire police now have access, at all times, to interpreters fluent in multiple languages who can offer immediate translation over the phone. Whenever someone calls to report an abuse, an interpreter can be called immediately to help officer and victim understand each other. This department has set the standard for community intervention, and new recruits are sent there for on-the-job training.

Learning from past mistakes, the police have developed comprehensive strategies for dealing with HBV.

Police strategies

- Always give priority to the victim's safety, keeping everything confidential. That means questioning the victim in a separate room, not in the presence of other family members. In the past, for the sake of cultural sensitivity the police would accede when a husband or parents insisted on being present, which implied that the victims had to testify in front of their aggressors. Also, now the police use anonymous interpreters instead of the victim's children, thanks to the telephone interpreter service.
- Inform victims separately about their rights and the services available; put them in touch with local groups that can help and let them proceed at their own pace, making their own choices.
- Following a report, regularly but discretely keep in touch with the victim, to discuss her needs and assess whether the risks are changing.
- If a complainant is subsequently killed or assaulted, all bodies who were involved with the victim must thoroughly review what procedures were followed, and remedy any shortcomings.
- Encourage media coverage of trials involving honour crimes, while cautioning against sensationalism. This is helping to break down the wall of silence around HBV, encouraging victims and others in their communities to denounce such acts.
- Officials are also attempting to make legal proceedings more victim-friendly, for example by having interpreters and women judges.

Police interventions cover a wide range of actions, from simply giving advice to providing victims with a new identity so they can rebuild their lives elsewhere, in another city or even another country, far from their aggressors. Even then there is no guarantee that a victim will ever be completely safe. Some must live as fugitives while their families relentlessly pursue them. The following example gives a glimpse of the impact this can have on a person's social, affective and professional life.

Case of Jack and Zena, forced to live as fugitives

A few years ago there was a high-profile case involving a white British man and the British-born daughter of a Pakistani family. Their case reveals a lesser-known aspect of HBV (Rawstone, 2009). Promised since childhood to a cousin, at 21 Zena fell in love with Jack and defied her family to marry him. Fearing for their lives, the couple fled with the help of police, changing identities and cities. For fifteen years Jack and Zena lived like fugitives, constantly on the lookout, moving thirty times. Sorely tested by the stress and instability, the couple ended up separating in 2009. Ironically, that was not enough to erase the threat, especially in Zena's case, since her family believes its honour has been sullied and can only be restored with blood.

No matter how much is done to save lives in the short term, we cannot stint on long-term measures to attack the problem at the root. Education is essential to change ways of thinking, particularly with regard to the notion of honour being contingent on controlling women's sexuality.

6.3.4 The medical community

In principle, all health professionals are responsible for the protection of children, and must be vigilant to detect and report abuse. In the UK, each hospital has a Safeguarding Team whose purpose is to protect vulnerable children. Also, women who give birth in a hospital are entitled to the services of a midwife. In practice, hospitals depend on midwives and nurses to report cases of domestic violence, including female genital mutilation (FGM). Midwives therefore play a crucial role with excised women. In the name of protecting the unborn child, they must inform the mother that FGM is illegal in the UK, and that parents who have their daughters excised, even abroad, are liable to prosecution.

To combat FGM more effectively, the British Ministry of Health is examining the possibility of requiring hospitals to compile all reported cases of FGM, from which to create a database in order to assess the scope of the problem, identify girls who may be at risk, and ensure their protection (Boseley, 2013). At the same time, the Royal College of Midwives has asked for a clear protocol on how to proceed with women who have been excised or infibulated, for example if they should offer them reconstructive surgery or psychological help.

At Burnley General Hospital in Lancashire, where there is a large South-Asian community, the administration is considering a policy on the handling of HBV cases, otherwise ignored since there is nothing specific in the general policy. Midwives and frontline staff are being offered training to enable them to detect HBV. According to a nurse on the Safeguarding Team, the protocol is that whenever a woman presents, medical staff must try to meet with her alone, especially if there are signs of domestic violence. Generally, she says, domestic violence increases by 30% during pregnancies. But women in communities that are prone to HBV (which often practise consanguineous marriage) run other risks as well, such as congenital malformation in infants.

To hospital administrators, the benefits of special training on HBV are beyond question. For example, one reported that medical staff had noted several cases of South-Asian women brought in with kerosene burns. In the past such cases were considered accidental. It took time, she said, for us to realize that it was in fact a criminal act. Some men punished their wife for disobedience by locking her in the kitchen and setting fire to it with lighter fluid. It was much like sari burning, a frequent crime in India as mentioned in section 4.2.3: to get rid of an unwanted wife, the husband or in-laws douse her with kerosene and set fire to her sari, pretending later that it was an accident (Bedi, 2012).

6.3.5 Schools

As in other European countries, every year in the UK there are reports of children from immigrant families disappearing from the system after the holidays, probably because they were forced into marriage (Tickle, 2012). Under Britain's national action plan, school authorities are encouraged to inform students about the risks of forced marriage. They are also urged to be more proactive, by making use of the *Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act*, which will be discussed below. Since teachers are trusted by their pupils, they are seen as frontline workers who are in the best position to detect potential victims of forced marriage. Too often however, the school community is reluctant to intervene actively in this area (Stobart, 2008).

6.3.6 Multi-sectoral collaboration

In response to the realization that a comprehensive approach is necessary to deal with HBV, a new body called the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)⁹² was created. Its purpose is to provide liaison among all the different sectors that may be called to intervene, including police, health and social services, and community groups.

MARAC meets once a month to discuss cases of violence that have been reported (including HBV), fostering an exchange of information among the various actors. MARAC participants sign a protocol agreement to keep all information about victims confidential. The monthly discussions look at each case in terms of risk assessment and the services required, outlining an intervention plan to ensure the victim's safety. All the victim's needs are taken into account (health, lodging, etc.), along with the well-being of children. MARAC is coordinated by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), a committee of representatives from local police and community organizations that assist the victims of violence. The CSP offers a two-day training course on domestic violence for new participants in MARAC.

6.4 Legislative initiatives

The British authorities have conducted a wide public consultation in the communities concerned, including organizations that work with victims, to examine the desirability of a law prohibiting forced marriage. Many feared that if forced marriage were made a criminal offence, victims would be less likely to go to the police, out of a reluctance to have family members sent to jail. Accordingly, the prohibition was enacted under civil as opposed to criminal law, and in parallel the marriage age for sponsoring a spouse was raised from 18 to 21. (This last measure was repealed in 2011, after being deemed discriminatory by the British Supreme Court.)

⁹² To learn more about MARAC, go to: http://www.richmond.gov.uk/domestic_abuse_multi-agency_risk_assessment_conference.

In 2007, the British Parliament adopted the civil law mentioned above: the *Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act*⁹³, which came into force in 2008. The Act affords protection to both children and adults against forced marriage, including one that has already taken place, without however criminalizing those responsible. When a person is under threat of forced marriage, the law provides for a protection order to be issued, instructing the parents to cease and desist, and if the marriage was to be abroad, obliging them to return the victim to the UK. Violation of a forced marriage protection order is considered contempt of court and can lead to various penalties including arrest.

In the first year after the *Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act* came into force, 500 protection orders were issued. How effective is it? According to the lawyers we met, most people who receive a protection order respect it, to avoid getting into trouble with British justice.

Jurists involved with victims of forced marriage appreciate the flexibility and broad powers of the Act. It allows a protection order to include multiple elements, such as providing transportation to a person threatened with forced marriage abroad, from point A to point B, by a specific date. The Act also recognizes the possibility of multiple aggressors and/or victims in the same case. For example, in the case of Saima Afzal (section 6.3.3), Saima's father threatened to kill her mother and sisters if she refused to go along with the arranged marriage. Sometimes several people are behind the forced marriage: not only the victim's parents but her brothers, uncles, cousins (as in the case of Banaz Mahmood in section 6.2), or powerful members of the community. Consequently, a protection order may cover a number of people, whether victims or aggressors, without being limited to the immediate family. It also allows third parties to obtain such an order if they believe someone is being forced into a marriage. To aid professionals in making use of those provisions, a guide was produced on the criteria to consider and how to proceed⁹⁴. Finally, legal assistance is offered to victims to make the law more accessible.

Though clearly necessary, the *Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act* cannot by itself ensure the protection of victims, as demonstrated by the case of Jack and Zena. Both judicial authorities and the police acknowledge the essential role of civil society organizations in giving concrete support to victims. Their role is all the more important in that victims are often shunned by friends and relatives after a protection order is issued.

Lawyer Anne-Marie Hutchinson is a partner in a private firm based in London. Accustomed to handling some fifty forced marriage cases per year, she says that nearly 60% of the rescued victims choose to return to their parents, sometimes even agreeing to the marriage for the

⁹³ See the text of the Act at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/20/pdfs/ukpga_20070020_en.pdf.

⁹⁴ The guide is entitled *The Right to Choose* and can be consulted at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/35532/fmu-right-to-choose.pdf.

sake of family ties. Significantly, almost half the protection orders issued in the last two years concerned children under 17 (Tickle, 2012).

Case of Karima (a pseudonym): conflicts of loyalty

“Karima”, whose real name must be concealed for her safety, was 25 and had a law degree. She was born in the UK to parents from Irak, both of whom were doctors. For months, Karima was beaten by her parents and older brother because she had fallen in love with a British man, and refused to agree to what her parents wanted: marriage to a cousin in Irak. Forcibly confined in the family home for an entire month, one night she escaped, at 4 in the morning, and ran to a police station for help. In 2011 she obtained a forced marriage protection order. Now living under a false identity, Karima is preparing to marry her sweetheart. To escape the threat hanging over both of them, they plan to emigrate to another country.

It is worth noting that Karima was extremely reluctant to use the *Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act*, because she didn’t want to hurt her family. In a statement to her lawyer in March 2012, she wrote:

I have gone against my culture and have forever lost my family.
While we will never see eye to eye, they are still my family and I
love them very much. (Photocopied document)

This illustrates the conflicts of loyalty that often beset victims of HBV. Despite the undeniable benefits of the Act, the negative repercussions of a protection order can be profound. When victims report abuse they are rejected by their loved ones, deprived of their affection, and often treated like pariahs by the community. Being shunned because you have reported abuse can be worse than the abuse itself, and makes victims vulnerable to further abuse later.

Recently, having concluded that civil protection is not always enough, British authorities have announced new legislation to make forced marriage a criminal offence (Travis, 2012). The draft legislation, which should be adopted by late 2013 or early the next year, does not have unanimous approval. Some support it while others are opposed, fearing that victims will be dissuaded from going to the police. The new legislation will strengthen protections, but is expected to give victims a choice: to either take the civil route, as before, or file a complaint that could lead to criminal prosecution⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ As reported in The Guardian on June 8, 2012: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/201068/Fact_sheet_Forced_marriage.pdf (accessed October 10, 2013).

6.5 Community initiatives

Before the state got involved in the battle, civil society groups across Britain were offering help to women victims of violence. Since so many are of South-Asian origin, community associations have arisen to meet the specific needs of women from these communities. British authorities recognize the role and expertise of the community sector, seeing its work as essential and complementary to state intervention.

Today it is estimated that nearly 200 civil society associations in the UK, scattered across the various regions, are working to end forced marriage while helping the victims of HBV. We met with three based in London, and present them below to convey the crucial role they play. As recognized charitable organizations, all three can receive private donations on top of public funding from the various levels of government (municipal, regional or national) that support them.

Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organization (IKWRO)

Founded in 2002, IKWRO⁹⁶ is the youngest of the organizations we met with. Its primary objective is to assist the victims of honour-based violence. Initially a volunteer group, IKWRO has grown quickly and now has a team of fourteen employees. It receives funding from numerous sources including the Home Office.

Unlike the other two organizations, which are older and primarily serve South-Asian communities, IKWRO serves women and girls from the Iranian, Kurdish, Turkish, Afghan and Iraqi communities, in their own language, as well as from other Middle Eastern countries. Since its creation, IKWRO has been a pioneer in dismantling the wall of silence around honour crimes, for example through the campaigns it launched after the murders of Heshu Yunes and Banaz Mahmood, which raised its public profile.

Diana Nammi, founder and director of IKWRO, reports that she initially faced hostility in her own community, where some accused her of dishonouring them by exposing honour crime to the public. There was a fear that talking about honour crimes would encourage racist reactions. Diana was threatened and accused of being a traitor by extremists whose main concern was to preserve their public image. Some considered that the women who were killed deserved their fate because they set a bad example. Another challenge, she says, was that some organizations insist that honour crime should be treated simply as a form of domestic violence.

To all her detractors, Diana Nammi replies firmly: first, that killing women is dishonourable, not defending their rights. Second, that lumping in honour crime with other kinds of domestic

⁹⁶ To learn more about this organization, go to <http://ikwro.org.uk>.

violence endangers women's lives, because it ignores the greater risks when "honour" is involved, and the need for more extensive protection.

Thanks to media attention and greater public recognition, IKWRO has gained credibility among the women it serves. In 2009 IKWRO responded to 1700 calls from people threatened with violence, 500 of whom required intensive help. The organization does not run a shelter, but directs urgent cases to those that do, as well as to the police.

IKWRO operates on multiple levels. Besides assisting victims directly, the organization divides its efforts among advocacy, awareness raising, training and international networking to extend its influence abroad. IKWRO's intensive advocacy has helped to change public policies in favour of the victims of honour-based violence. Its calls for the criminalization of forced marriage provided support for the new legislation in Britain. It offers training for professionals in the public sector and other groups, while providing expertise to assist police in HBV risk assessment. It also organizes events and campaigns to raise public awareness, such as its international campaign *Stop Honour Killings*, launched in 2005. IKWRO has received many awards for the work it does.

Southall Black Sisters (SBS)

Founded in 1979, SBS⁹⁷ is dedicated to meeting the needs of black (Asian and African-Caribbean) and minority ethnic women. The SBS team consists of five to six full-time staff, four part-time workers, and many volunteers.

With more than thirty years of achievement to its credit and the recipient of many awards, SBS came to public notice in the early 1990s with its defence of Kiranjit Ahluwalia, a victim of domestic abuse who was sentenced to life for killing her violent husband. Launching a campaign in protest⁹⁸, SBS got the case appealed, and the woman was set free. This celebrated case helped to raise public awareness about bias in the legal system against battered women who kill their abusers.

More recent advocacy work by SBS includes two campaigns worthy of note: *Abolish No Recourse to Public Funds*⁹⁹, on the plight of women trapped in domestic violence due to their insecure immigration status; and its Nosheen Azam campaign¹⁰⁰. After months of abuse by her in-laws, Azam tried to commit suicide by setting fire to herself; she was left brain-dead with burns to 60% of her body. The Home Office estimates that around ten women per week are driven to suicide in the UK, due to abuse in their own family. At present there are no provisions in the

⁹⁷ To learn more about this organization, go to: <http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk>.

⁹⁸ Further details may be found at: <http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk/campaigns/kiranjit-ahluwalia>.

⁹⁹ See also: <http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk/campaigns/abolish-no-recourse-to-public-funds>.

¹⁰⁰ See also: <http://www.southallblacksisters.org.uk/campaigns/nosheen-azam> (accessed April 17, 2013).

law for prosecuting those who cause others to commit suicide. Since the victims were too afraid to denounce their abusers, the latter enjoy complete impunity. In the campaign it launched in March 2012 around the case of Nosheen Azam, SBS calls for special legislation that would hold criminally responsible any person who, through harassment or violence, drives another to commit suicide. Such a law would also cover cyber bullying and other forms of harassment that sometimes end in suicide. Given the breadth of their proposal, opinions are divided among groups concerned by domestic and other violence.

Unlike IKWRO, SBS is opposed to criminalizing forced marriage, on the grounds that doing so would discourage victims from lodging complaints. Other organizations with the same goals are also divided on the matter, reflecting the complexity of such situations and the occasionally perverse effects of punitive measures.

Besides its advocacy work, SBS offers an array of services to women victims of violence, including a telephone helpline, counselling and legal advice. SBS receives some 3500 calls for help each year, of which almost 20% are from girls under 18. The majority of cases involve domestic violence, sexual abuse and dowry abuse, along with HBV and forced marriage. Many cases are referred to them by other organizations and institutions.

SBS provides expertise to various governmental agencies (the Forced Marriage Unit, the police and so on), for example by producing expert reports in cases involving honour crime or when a suicide is suspected to have been caused by abuse. SBS also offers training courses, such as seminars on forced marriage. It also performs outreach in two schools where a *whole school approach* has been adopted, offering sessions to teachers, parents and students in class.

The following notes are from a seminar on forced marriage that was given by SBS on March 19, 2013, in which we participated. They outline the DO's and DON'Ts on which there is a general consensus: best practices and practices to avoid.

Best practices (Do):

- Take the victim seriously if she feels threatened, putting the priority on her safety;
- Adopt an approach that is centered on the victim and her empowerment;
- Hold the interview in a place that is safe and secure for the victim, ensuring her confidentiality;
- If need be, call on an independent and trustworthy interpreter;
- Learn to recognize the signs of honour-based violence and harassment;
- Document the abuse, including any history of violence, and keep this detailed information in a safe and confidential manner;
- Conduct a risk assessment not only for the victim, but for those close to her (boyfriend, brothers, sisters, etc.);
- Evaluate the victim's needs;
- Direct the victim to an appropriate resource, keeping cultural sensitivities in mind, e.g. an organization that helps women of the same origin;
- Apply the *one chance rule*: consider that the person asking for help may not have another chance, because later could be too late. Swift intervention could be needed, or steering to the right resource.

Practices to avoid (Don't):

- Sending the victim away without intervention is never a good option;
 - Racial discrimination, through stereotypes or harassment, e.g. by focusing on her immigration status instead of her abuse report;
 - Violating confidentiality by reporting a victim's statements to her husband or other members of the family or community, including community or religious leaders, or by letting them see the abuse report, even accidentally;
 - Using the husband, a child or other member of the family or community as an interpreter, or allowing them to be present while you question the victim;
 - Leaving messages for the victim that could alert her husband, family or members of the community about her allegations, putting the victim or others in a risk situation;
 - Attempting or supporting mediation, reconciliation or religious arbitration; this must be avoided, since it could aggravate the situation and lead to greater abuse.
-

Asha

Founded in 1984, Asha (which means “hope”)¹⁰¹ has a lower profile than the previous two organizations. Asha began as a South-Asian women’s group focused on issues like racism and immigration. It grew in response to a need for shelters to allow South-Asian women and children to escape from domestic violence. At other shelters, women from their community felt isolated, encountering racism together with linguistic, cultural and religious barriers.

Asha helps over 500 women and girls annually, half of them escaping forced marriage. This high proportion is not representative, and is due to other shelters sending forced marriage cases to them.

Asha offers frontline services: personal advice and information, and three shelters (which it calls “refuges”) with a capacity of nineteen beds, specifically for South-Asian women and their children. One shelter is reserved for girls of 16 to 25 threatened with forced marriage. If the girl is a minor, Asha notifies the parents that their daughter is safe, without giving any other details. Asha never attempts mediation with the parents.

When a woman arrives at a shelter she is assigned a “key worker” who will support her throughout her stay, creating a bond of trust. One such worker reports that women come for various reasons, and only after awhile, discussing things with other women, do they realize that they have been victims of HBV.

Visits with family members pose a major challenge, since the abusers may include other women: the mother, sister, aunt or mother-in-law. Each visit is therefore potentially dangerous. Without wanting to prevent girls from having contact with their family, the workers try to ensure that family meetings take place in safe conditions, though not at the shelter, whose location is kept secret. If the girl does not return within 48 hours after a visit, the police are notified to make sure she is not in danger.

At the personal level, Asha offers one-on-one support and guidance. At the group level, weekly sessions provide practical advice and information about resources. Workers occasionally act as intermediaries, facilitating interactions with police, school, social services, courts, medical establishments, and so on.

Stays at an Asha shelter generally range from six to nine months, though budget restrictions due to the recent recession have reduced the organization’s ability to do as much as it would like. As soon as residents are past their state of crisis, the workers help them plan their lives for the long term, especially in terms of finding employment and housing. After they leave the shelter, Asha

¹⁰¹ To learn more about Asha, go to <http://www.ashaprojects.org.uk>.

continues to offer advice and follow-up. Regular meetings are organized between residents and those who have left. These exchanges give hope to those who are in crisis, while allowing former residents to feel useful.

Asha also engages in advocacy activities, going into schools to build awareness about forced marriage and other forms of HBV. The workers believe that the subject of forced marriage should be made a part of sex education, which should not only focus on technical and medical matters but explore relational aspects, the importance of mutual consent.

Though the British model is not perfect, it is very inspiring. We can only hope that the shortcomings observed, such as diminished resources for civil society organizations, will be corrected in future. More active intervention by the police and courts has increased the demand on organizations that help HBV victims, yet they are unable to meet all the needs due to a lack of adequate funding. Social actors play an essential role in helping victims to overcome the traumas caused by HBV and to get their lives back on track. A limiting factor is that not enough emphasis is placed on changing ways of thinking about patriarchal honour. Civil society organizations are simply too busy responding to emergencies and helping victims. For change over the longer term, government support is needed.

Conclusion of Part 3

As seen in Chapter 5, though Canadian and Québec initiatives to combat honour-based violence are worthy in themselves, their impact would be far greater if they were part of a comprehensive policy and action plan. There are a number of serious shortcomings. First, frontline workers are not getting the training they need about the dangers and complexities of situations in which honour is involved. Second, too often there is a disconnection between social services, the DPJ and the police, resulting in a failure to provide adequate protection to victims.

Also, as many minority women have discovered to their chagrin, there is a serious lack of resources that are tailored to their needs. For example, most women's shelters are for cases of domestic violence, and most youth centres are for people whose problems are due to parental neglect, sexual abuse, drug addiction, etc. They are not suitable for cases of honour-related abuse, where a structured environment and long-term follow-up are needed. Too often, victims of HBV have nowhere to go to escape from the abuse. Finally, despite the interesting but scattered initiatives undertaken so far, there is clearly a need for a comprehensive policy and national action plan to deal with the problem effectively.

The British model, presented in Chapter 6, is groundbreaking in many respects. By framing HBV as one target within a broader effort to end all forms of violence against women, it avoids stigmatizing minorities. By developing complementary measures like providing training to police, social workers, teachers and health professionals in how to recognize the signs of HBV and

make proper risk assessments, it activates the potential of many players to take effective action. By building on the penal justice system, allowing charges to be laid for forced marriage, it gives teeth to prevention efforts. Above all, the British model shows the way forward by weaving together multiple strategies in which actors from both state institutions and civil society can work toward the same ends.

Nonetheless, despite the considerable progress achieved in the UK, it has generally been limited in taking into account the sociocultural dimension. More work and resources are needed in this direction, in order to change ways of thinking and behaving. It isn't enough to punish aggressors and offer services to victims. When people who are rescued from forced marriage or other HBV must change their identity and live like fugitives to escape a constant threat from their family, clearly a fundamental problem is not being dealt with. We must be proactive, taking a thoroughgoing preventive approach that by utterly deflating its moral pretensions, would make honour-based violence clearly unacceptable to all.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Avenues for Action

As amply demonstrated by the foregoing chapters, forced marriage and other forms of honour-based violence have become a reality, in Québec as elsewhere. There are some who optimistically suppose that the problem will go away by itself, as egalitarian values are gradually taken up by the descendants of immigrants from the affected communities. But change won't happen alone. In the words of one clear-sighted social worker who works with victims of HBV in London,

Unless we all unite to take an honest and strong, intelligent and open stance on this issue now, you are likely to see a backlash of traditionalism by young people, particularly young men, as a defence against Western values that threaten them and their traditional position. (Shamshad Hussain, cited in Burke, 2000)

7.1 Canada's international obligations

Under the international conventions to which Canada is a signatory, and which also bind Québec, states have a responsibility to protect the vulnerable from honour-based violence, and to ensure that their rights are respected.

Article 5 (a) of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) calls on the signatory states to:

modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

Article 4 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*¹⁰² stipulates that:

States should condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination. States should pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence toward women and, to this end, should:

¹⁰² Resolution 48/104 of the General Assembly of December 20, 1993. <http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/%28Symbol%29/A.RES.48.104.en> (accessed November 12, 2012).

d) Develop penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions in domestic legislation to punish and redress the wrongs caused to women who are subjected to violence; women who are subjected to violence should be provided with access to the mechanisms of justice and, as provided for by national legislation, to just and effective remedies for the harm that they have suffered; States should also inform women of their rights in seeking redress through such mechanisms;

e) Consider the possibility of developing national plans of action to promote the protection of women against any form of violence, or to include provisions for that purpose in plans already existing, taking into account, as appropriate, such cooperation as can be provided by non-governmental organizations, particularly those concerned with the issue of violence against women;

f) Develop, in a comprehensive way, preventive approaches and all those measures of a legal, political, administrative and cultural nature that promote the protection of women against any form of violence, and ensure that the re-victimization of women does not occur because of laws insensitive to gender considerations, enforcement practices or other interventions.

Furthermore, a 2002 resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations underlines that honour crimes “are incompatible with all religious and cultural values”, specifying:

that crimes against women committed in the name of honour are a human rights issue and that States have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish the perpetrators of such crimes and to provide protection to the victims, and that not doing so violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms¹⁰³.

As for forced marriage, it is condemned in multiple international conventions and declarations, including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (article 16.2); the *International Pact on Civil and Political Rights* (article 23.3); the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (article 16); and the *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages*. Although Canada is not a signatory to this last convention, the federal government recognizes that forced marriage is prohibited under international law¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰³ Resolution 57/179 adopted by the General Assembly on December 18, 2002, entitled *Working towards the elimination of of crimes against women committed in the name of honour*, 3rd paragraph.
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/57/179&referer=/english/&Lang=E (accessed February 28, 2013).

¹⁰⁴ See: <http://voyage.gc.ca/assistance/info-d-urgence/marriage-force> (accessed June 10, 2013).

The lack of a Canadian or Québec policy aimed at fighting HBV, the lack of training for those who should have it (police, social workers, teachers, health professionals, etc.), and the lack of tools and strategies for concerted action, add up to a terrible failure to act. If nothing is done, forced marriage and other forms of HBV will continue to spread in the communities affected, until they are endemic. Apart from the human costs of letting that happen, the price to pay will be greater when we finally face up to the fact that the problem must be addressed.

7.2 A few strategies and ethical guidelines

Before presenting our recommendations, some ethical guidelines are needed to ensure that the strategies and avenues for action chosen are implemented in the best manner.

First, we must name the phenomenon we aim to combat, since otherwise we can neither understand what we are fighting nor do so effectively. But to avoid stigmatizing the communities affected, we should adopt a position that is both feminist and anti-racist.

- We must therefore contextualize honour crimes, placing them in the broader context of all forms of violence against women, without however denying their specific characteristics. We must remind ourselves that cultures are not static but evolve over time, and that in each community there are people with different positions, from the most liberal to the most conservative. Therefore, we cannot prejudge the behaviour of all members of a community, on the basis of their ethnic origin.
- We must adopt an approach that respects individuals, without however trivializing harmful behaviours under the pretext of cultural diversity. Our choices should be guided by respect for human rights and the principle of gender equality. Concretely, this means that priority must be given to protecting the vulnerable and respecting their rights, rather than protecting harmful patriarchal customs that do not deserve respect.

Second, we must invest in training frontline workers on the signs and dangers of HBV. The intercultural training currently offered is clearly inadequate, as proven by the Shafia affair and other avoidable tragedies.

- Training on HBV should enable workers in all settings (police, courts, DPJ, school, women's groups, etc.) to recognize the signs of violence, to make adequate risk assessments, and to offer victims the support they need while ensuring their safety and the confidentiality of information about them, even in the case of minors. The training program instituted by the Calgary police is a worthwhile model that should be evaluated and adapted by other police force.
- Procedures at the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse must be revised to take into account the dangers of HBV. A comprehensive approach is needed, one that considers all the victim's needs, in terms of safety, finances, health, housing and so on.

- School officials must become involved, notifying authorities of the prolonged absence or unexplained disappearance of students who are vulnerable to forced marriage or other forms of HBV. When necessary, they should inform parents of their obligations under the *Education Act*, which makes school attendance mandatory from the age of 6 to the age of 16¹⁰⁵.
- Better coordination is needed among all sectors that could be called upon to assist a victim or potential victim of HBV: schools, the DPJ, police, shelters, community organizations, etc.
- Tools development is needed to enable professionals in various settings – police, health workers, school counsellors – to record and keep track of acts of HBV in a coordinated manner. This would make it possible to understand the scale of the problem and to measure the effectiveness of measures against it. As in the United Kingdom, a national database kept in a secure and confidential manner, and which could be accessed by police, social workers, etc., would be a precious asset in working toward prevention while improving the protection of victims.

Third, in view of the particular nature of HBV, whose moral defence is rooted in culture and tradition, it is essential that we intervene upstream, taking proactive action to induce a calling into question of the patriarchal notion of honour in the communities concerned.

- Before anything else, prospective immigrants must be informed, before they come to Canada, that violence in the name of honour is a crime here, and that equality between women and men is a widely shared value in society.
- The wall of silence around HBV must be broken down. Those who are best equipped to do so are former victims, but they will need support from respected figures in their community.
- Power relations within communities must be realigned, to strengthen forces for change that would foster more egalitarian relationships. This means paying greater attention to the voices of those who are most oppressed: the women and youth who aspire to emancipation, as opposed to traditional leaders whose greatest wish is to preserve archaic customs.
- We must work with women's groups in minority communities, collaborating with them to develop strategies for countering the community pressures that aggravate HBV, feelings of shame, and lead to shunning.

Finally, state initiatives must be based on partnership, on active participation by groups and individuals in the minorities concerned, which must be seen as part of the solution, not just the problem.

¹⁰⁵ More specifically: "from the first day of the school calendar in the school year following that in which [the child] attains 6 years of age until the last day of the school calendar in the school year in which he attains 16 years of age". *Education Act*, c. I-13.3, s. 14.

More generally, we should keep in mind that ways of thinking change more easily when immigrants can get good jobs and are able to integrate into the host society.

7.3 Recommendations and avenues for action

Action must be taken now to combat honour-based violence. There are some who would rather sidestep the issue, to avoid stigmatization; others only wish to preserve old ways, at the price of violating the rights and freedoms of women and youth. To move forward, we must give precedence to protecting the vulnerable.

7.3.1 Political and institutional component

Québec already has a domestic violence intervention policy¹⁰⁶, which was updated in the 2012-2017 Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence¹⁰⁷. The policy was developed through the work of a committee composed of people from several departments of the government¹⁰⁸, based on a broad consultation of women's associations and community groups. Such cross-cutting collaboration should be the model for developing a policy and action plan on honour-based violence, a problematic that up till now has been ignored.

The Conseil therefore recommends:

- 1. That the Minister responsible for the Status of Women mandate the Secrétariat à la condition féminine to develop a national policy against honour-based violence, by consulting with the departments, women's groups and community organizations concerned.**

Concerning the training of social workers

Honour crimes committed in recent years have revealed a major gap in the training of social workers with respect to honour-based violence. The psychosocial training currently offered, geared toward cultural diversity, is gravely inadequate in its failure to convey the seriousness of situations involving HBV. Cultural diversity training cannot replace training specifically on honour-based violence, since the two have different objectives. The first promotes tolerance and understanding, a respectful openness toward cultural minorities, while the second focuses on recog-

¹⁰⁶ Preventing, detecting, ending domestic violence. Available in French only: <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/acrobat/f/documentation/2000/00-807/95-842.pdf>

¹⁰⁷ Available in English at: http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/publications/Violence/Plan_d_action_2012-2017_version_anglaise.pdf

¹⁰⁸ The *Comité interministériel de coordination en matière de violence conjugale, familiale et sexuelle* (interdepartmental coordination committee on domestic, family and sexual violence) brought together people from ten departments of the Québec Government, including: Education, Employment and Social Solidarity; Immigration and Cultural Communities; Justice; Health and Social Services; and Public Security.

nizing the signs of acts that are related to honour-based violence, in order to protect the victims and prevent escalation. Frontline workers need both: sensitivity to cultural differences, and the ability to assess risks accurately in cases of honour-based violence.

To properly equip those who work with the victims of honour-based violence, and to ensure the effectiveness of a national policy as implemented on the ground, the Conseil recommends:

2. That an action plan include the following measures:

- a) The training of all social workers who may be called on to interact with persons at risk of honour-based violence – including forced marriage and female genital mutilation – be they professionals in the DPJ, in the police or in judicial, school or medical settings;**
- b) The development of tools to enable such workers to detect the signs of honour-based violence and to properly assess the risks to the primary victim and others who may be vulnerable including friends and family members;**
- c) Efforts to ensure that women in minorities where honour-based violence occurs understand their rights and know about the resources available to help them;**
- d) Increased funding for organizations that help women faced with honour-based violence, so that such women may receive long-term assistance and appropriate shelter.**
- e) The preparation of materials particularly aimed at youth, such as a guide on preventing honour crimes, or a guide on human and youth rights in Canada.**

Concerning female genital mutilation (FGM)

The current approach in the medical community is limited to “harm reduction”. Focused on serving the medical needs of excised women, it does nothing to counter the practice of female genital mutilation, which is being perpetuated in certain communities. For the next generation of girls to be spared, preventive action is crucial. Therefore, the Conseil recommends:

3. That the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux change its approach, actively working to end the practice of female genital mutilation by the following means:

- a) When health professionals encounter excised women, they should be required to inform them that female genital mutilation is a danger to health, and that if they subject their own daughters to it they will be committing an illegal act;**
- b) An awareness campaign on female genital mutilation should be launched to inform people in the communities concerned of its many negative health consequences and the fact that the practice is illegal.**

Concerning fraudulent or abusive marriage in association with spouse sponsoring

In certain communities, arranged or even forced marriage is often combined with the sponsoring of a spouse from the country of origin. Since this combination tends to be associated with honour-based violence, measures must be taken to protect women against fraudulent and abusive marriages.

Here we emphasize that there is nothing reprehensible in sponsoring a spouse. In most cases, two people of good faith simply wish to marry and be united to a person originating from their country of origin. However, when the spouses scarcely know each other the risks of fraudulent or abusive marriage are considerable. This is demonstrated by the increasingly frequent cases of women abused by a sponsored spouse, particularly one whose only motive for marrying was immigration (see section 3.5.2). In other cases, a sponsored wife is subjected to domestic violence, and is too afraid of being deported to report the abuse. Sponsored and sponsoring women are both in a more vulnerable position than others. No single measure, like the two-year period of conditional permanent residence, can be fair and just in all situations. Therefore, policy in this matter should be applied with flexibility and discernment, with a priority on protecting the vulnerable and the best interests of children. Accordingly, the Conseil recommends:

- 4. That the Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles put in place a flexible mechanism for protecting women in situations of spousal sponsoring, and for informing them of their rights and the remedies available in the event of fraud or violence. Also, that personalized assistance be made available to sponsored women until they obtain their citizenship, to ensure their safety and the respect of their rights.**

7.3.2 Legal component

Honour crime is not explicitly defined as an infraction in Canada's Criminal Code, nor is there any need for an amendment to change that. Canada's judicial system does not accord clemency to the perpetrators of such crimes; on the contrary, 78% of our honour crime cases have resulted in the maximum penalty (Robert, 2012). Nevertheless, studies and personal accounts indicate that one form of honour-based violence, forced marriage, is a growing problem (Radio-Canada, 2012b, 2013). Therefore, it would make sense to have a specific legal instrument that would help reverse that trend.

Concerning forced marriage

People who are threatened with forced marriage are generally reluctant to report their abusers, particularly young girls (and even boys), for fear of sending their parents to prison. The civil law adopted in the United Kingdom, the *Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act*, is a tried and proven model that has been in force since 2008. The Conseil du statut de la femme therefore recommends:

- 5. That the Ministère de la Justice, drawing upon the British model, examine our laws to ensure that children and adults threatened with forced marriage are equally well protected by our legislation, and if necessary, that it ask the federal government to amend its own legislation toward that objective.**

Concerning the intervention framework of the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ)

Cases like the Shafia affair, and others linked to “honour” which endangered the lives of youth, have revealed shortcomings in the intervention framework defined by the *Youth Protection Act*. Neither the risk assessment criteria nor the framework take into account the heightened risks associated with honour. It is crucial that youth threatened with forced marriage or other forms of honour-based violence be the subject of long-term follow-up to ensure their safety. Therefore, the Conseil recommends:

- 6. That the Ministère de la Justice and the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux revise the *Youth Protection Act*, and in particular the DPJ’s assessment and intervention criteria, to take into account the particular risks of honour-based violence, so as to improve the protection of those who are most vulnerable.**

7.3.3 Social component

Take preventive action to change ways of thinking

It is not enough to improve interventions and resources for victims of honour-based violence. We must also endeavour to put an end to abuses morally justified by “honour”. Ways of thinking can only be changed through a long-term process of relentless education. Those who are in the best position to speak may be found in the communities concerned. Therefore, the Conseil recommends:

- 7. That the Secrétariat à la Condition féminine, in collaboration with the Ministère de l’Immigration et des Communautés culturelles, coordinate the implementation of a public awareness and outreach strategy in the communities concerned, to challenge the patriarchal concept of honour and to actively promote equality between women and men.**

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