



Honour, Violence and Heteronormativity

Nicole Asquith

University of Western Sydney

Abstract

Popular representations of Honour Based Violence (HBV) and honour killings construct this violence as an artefact of an uncivilised code of morality. Here *ird*, *sharaf* or *izzat* and shame are adhered to particular moral codes that are more likely to be found in the Quran. This clichéd version of HBV frames Muslim women's sexual autonomy as exceptionally regulated, most commonly by male family members with the complicity of female relatives. In its most extreme (and publicly known) form, HBV is epitomised by the 'honour' killings that come to the attention of the criminal justice system and, as a consequence, the media. Yet emerging research shows that HBV unfolds through increasingly punitive systems of social punishment, which is neither unique to Islam, nor religious communities more generally. In this paper, it is argued that the construction of HBV as a matter of deviant and antiquated Muslim honour codes is Islamophobic and that a more productive lens through which to understand collective familial violence may lie in the conceptual framework of heteronormativity.

Keywords

Honour-based violence; Islamophobia; violence against women; heteronormativity; heterosexist violence; intimate partner violence.

Introduction

Popular representations of Honour Based Violence (HBV) and honour killings construct this violence as an artefact of an uncivilised code of morality, often conflated with Islamic codes of honour. Here *ird*, *sharaf* or *izzat*¹ and the shame of transgressing these codes are adhered to particular normative values that most align to those in the Quran. This clichéd version of HBV frames Muslim women's sexual autonomy as exceptionally regulated, most commonly by male family members with the complicity of female relatives. In its most extreme and public forms, HBV is epitomised by the honour killings that come to the attention of the criminal justice system and, as a consequence, the media. Knowledge of these violent crimes is limited in Australia, with only the murder of Mohd Shah Saemin coming to the attention of Australian courts and media as an 'honour killing' (Souter 2012).² Yet this type of violence has received growing scholarly and popular attention in other Western nations such as the UK, USA and Canada.³ This increased Western scrutiny of HBV, particularly in the UK, has led to a growing body of knowledge about the antecedents and characteristics of this type of interpersonal

violence. This emerging research is beginning to highlight that HBV is not unique to Muslim communities. In particular, apart from the increased likelihood of the violence to occur in the honour cultures of southern- and western-Asia and northern-Africa, collective punishment is used to police transgressions in gender and sexuality in other 'moral' communities including Catholic, Hindu, Sikh, and Traveller/Roma communities (Araji 2000; Crown Prosecution Service 2013).

Likewise, research is emerging on the use of violence to police other types of closed communities such as criminal enterprises – in the case of contemporary Australia, Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs being an ideal exemplar (Salter 2014) – and Indigenous Australian communities, where domestic violence and intimate-partner violence are reconceptualised as family violence to account for the collective familial and social punishment that often accommodates this violence (Daly and Stubbs 2006). Salter's (2014) research identifies that, as with the cultural violence commonly considered in relation to honour based violence, multi-perpetrator domestic violence emerges out of socio-economic deprivation, and that the violence is a technique for a collective re-affirmation of masculine control. Daly and Stubbs (2006), in their consideration of restorative justice approaches to domestic violence, argue that, whilst these approaches may be effective in mediating the binary relationships of conventional intimate partner violence, this approach is more difficult to adopt with Indigenous Australian communities. They suggest that this is because of the broader understanding of this violence as collective, familial and encapsulating a greater range of '... harmful, exploitative, violent and aggressive practices' (Blagg 2002: 193, cited in Daly and Stubbs 2006: 21) than are considered in domestic violence (including the violence of the colonial state in destroying Indigenous familial relationships). Similarly, in earlier research, the author identified collective familial violence in a dataset of hate crimes (Asquith 2012a; discussed in more detail below). These outlier cases to the conventional hate crime incidents were intrafamilial and clearly aimed at regulating and controlling sexual and gendered behaviours that transgress heterosexual norms.

Contrary to popular representations, these examples of collective violence point to factors that exceed the normative values of Islam and of religious or cultural honour codes more generally. The continuing use of cultural models to explain honour based violence (for example, Dogan 2014), and the increased surveillance of this violence in Muslim communities have combined to create a public perception that HBV is a matter of deviant and antiquated Muslim belief systems.⁴ Explanatory frameworks that seek motivational factors in HBV primarily through a cultural lens are dangerous in an era when Muslim women's experiences have been so thoroughly politicised and demonised, and linked with those of annihilationist versions of Islam. This is epitomised most recently in the Australian debate about Muslim women's clothing and terrorism (Aly and Walker 2007; Hussein 2014).

In contrast, when considered through the conceptual lens of heteronormativity, the violent policing of transgressive gender and sexuality at the centre of HBV becomes intelligible across cultures and is less able to be used in a politics of exclusion. As a framework, heteronormativity makes clear the social, familial and individual imperatives shared across extreme, organised heterosexist and intrafamilial violence against people who identify as LGBTIQ,⁵ individualised and habituated intimate partner violence of Western nuclear families, and the collective familial conspiracy at the heart of honour based violence. Seen through the lens of heteronormativity, each of these forms of interpersonal violence exists along a continuum of practices that aim to punish perceived breaches of collective norms relating to sexual, sexuality and gender performances.

Heteronormativity

The concept of heteronormativity lies at the centre of the arguments made in this paper. Coined in the early 1990s by Warner in his work on *Fear of a Queer Planet*, but with a theoretical legacy

dating back to Rich's (1983) 'compulsory heterosexuality', the concept of heteronormativity captures the codes of conduct that normalise, privilege and reward acceptable performances of heterosexuality and cisgender. Lloyd (2013: 819) suggests that heteronormative violence is best understood as that which 'constitutes and regulates bodies according to normative notions of sex, gender and sexuality'. In the 'straight mind' (Wittig 1992), anatomical and hormonal sex proceeds in a straight line to specific gendered behaviours, which in turn line up with a compulsory heterosexuality. In addition to the identification of violence as gendered and sexualised, Lloyd (2013) also argues that the modalities of heteronormative violence are multiple.

While Lloyd's work is focussed on the heteronormative order of violence against transgender people, and the concept has been more readily adopted in research on heterosexism and hate crimes against gay men and lesbians, the multiple modalities of heteronormativity can and do extend to subordinated heterosexualities and failed cisgender performances (Pitt and Fox 2012, 2013). For both men and women, in Western individualised nuclear units or extended patrilineal households in 'honour' cultures, the embodiment of sex, cultural performance of gender and libidinal desires of sexuality underlie a wide repertoire of violence 'on, through, and against bodies' (Lloyd 2013: 820). As a dominant trope through which all else is considered, heteronormativity is not just a norm but a normative principle, which Todd Weiss (2001: 124) suggests is an enculturated line-in-the-sand: 'a standard to be met, below which people are not permitted by society to deviate'. The power of heteronormativity is such that it is capable of compelling a particular sexualised and gendered order that is as much about those who comply with gender and sexuality norms as it is about those who deviate from those same norms (Lloyd 2013).

The problems with 'honour'

Just as there has been an extended and sustained critique of the motivational impulse of 'hate' in hate crimes,⁶ the use of 'honour' as an explanatory or taxonomic device in HBV has emerged as a critical point of debate in this newly-emerging field of enquiry (Baker et al. 1999; Cooney 2014; Gill 2008; Gill and Brah 2014; Payton 2014; Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd 2014). Honour can be a positive individual attribute and a negative social resource but, in discussions of HBV, a primary distinction is made between the 'status' crimes of individualised interpersonal violence (such as intimate partner violence) and the 'honour' crimes of collective familial violence (such as HBV). As symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991), honour in HBV is constructed as a form of wealth that can secure the success of the family – which means all members have a stake in its maintenance – and, when damaged and families are dishonoured, can destroy the real life chances of the familial collective. In HBV, honour is not constructed as an individual asset to be bought, sold or exchanged: it is collective and gains meaning only in its social circulation and punishment (Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd 2014). The cultural model of HBV rests on the belief that, whilst a universal human characteristic, when presenting as a collective control, honour is a normative framework unique to some 'honour cultures' (Dogan 2014; Vandello and Cohen 2004; Vandello et al. 2009). These 'honour cultures' extend across the globe including Mediterranean and South American 'machismo' cultures, southern frontier cultures of the USA and religious cultures worldwide (Baker et al. 1999). Yet it is the subset of pathological collective violence exhibited by communities from southern- and western-Asia and northern-Africa that are demarcated as an exceptional case study of collective familial violence.

Scholars and practitioners working within the field of HBV often go to great lengths to critique the language of 'honour' in HBV, stating that there is no honour in the crime of honour based violence. For example, Meeto and Mirza (2011) entitle their paper around the claim that '[t]here is nothing "honourable" about honour killings'. Likewise, the Association of Chief Police Officers' (ACPO) (2012: 5) in their HBV strategy suggest: 'There is, of course, no honour in the abuse of individuals, including children's human rights or the exertion of power and control by

some over other'. Negating the honour value appropriated by offenders in HBV is an important normative statement about the abhorrence of this type of violence. However, this construction of HBV as 'dishonour' relies on an appropriation of 'honour'; an act without symbolic power unless it is underwritten by a normative value that abhors violence against women and children (VicHealth 2014). While rhetoric from Western governments and their commitments via UN declarations and conventions have shifted violence against women from the margins to the public sphere, it is contestable that the elimination of violence against women has been normalised even in the most civilised of Western democracies. As a device to illuminate a particular set of practices, the focus on honour is problematic as it is only those expressions of 'honour' that are explicitly collective and generated within mechanical familial communities to which the label is affixed. In this sense, the meanings attached to 'honour' and 'dishonour' are fundamentally orientalist. Yet, simultaneously, in the appropriation of the term 'honour' to 'dishonour' HBV, non-collectivist – in fact, universal *individual* – human rights are invoked, which further problematises the cultural based attributions of honour in HBV.

Just as researchers are compelled to appropriate honour to dishonour HBV, the conceptualisation of HBV is also reliant upon acknowledging that it is committed by individuals who imagine they act with honour. The offenders' motivation is conceived as honourable when the honour code becomes part of self-identity, and when the offender receives symbolic and normative support for their violent response to transgressive sexual and gender performance (Baker et al. 1999; Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd 2014). As with the appropriation of honour to dishonour HBV, ACPO (2012: 5) also exemplifies the secondary move of acknowledging the endurance of offenders' motivation to uphold an honour code: 'However unacceptable in their interpretation, the motivation of offenders is honour'. No matter how cacodoxical⁷ (Pitts and Fox 2012, 2013) this adherence to a pathological honour code may appear from the perspective of human rights, as with other heteronormative violence, it finds purchase within a wide variety of cultural and religious contexts including those of annihilationist Christianity that seeks to eliminate gay men and lesbians (see for example the Westboro Baptist Church's (2014) website, www.godhatesfags.com).

Within the context of these two components – the appropriation of 'honour' to dishonour violence and the foregrounding of offenders' motivational 'honour' – and in line with the emerging research, ACPO (2012: 5) defines HBV as: 'a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. This collective control of sexual and gender codes is epitomised by 'honour killings', though it is largely accepted that even the most restrictive definitions of honour violence includes a range of criminal behaviours such as acidification, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and sex-selective forced abortion (ACPO 2012; Belfrage et al. 2012; Gill 2014; Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd 2014). Drawing on the work of Sen (2003) and Welchman and Hossain (2005), Gill suggests that HBV varies from other forms of violence against women by the fact that it:

1. occurs within the framework of *collective family structures*, communities and societies
2. involves a *premeditated act* [emphasis added], designed to *restore a societal construction of honour* as a value system, norm or tradition
3. is based on *men's putative right to control women's sexual and social choices*, with a concomitant perception of women as the property of men [emphases added]. (Gill 2008: 246)

In the second half of this article, this definition of honour based violence is interrogated in terms of its proximity to existing feminist interpretation of violence against women, the existence of crime data that clearly demonstrate that these conditions are not unique to an orientalist account of violence in Muslim communities, and the consequences that stem from exceptionalising honour based violence.

A study in outliers

As is so often the case, outliers have the ability to fundamentally disturb established models for understanding a given problem. Honour based violence is no different. Honour based violence appears in many respects to complement other forms of violence against women, especially Western constructions of intimate partner violence and/or domestic violence. Yet HBV also exceeds the conventional Western boundaries used to demarcate intimate partner violence and domestic violence from other forms of interpersonal violence (such as the relationship – and level of intimacy – between victim and offender, number of offenders, and motivation attributed to and by offenders). As ‘societal constructions of honour’ and ‘men’s putative control [of] women’s sexual and social choices’ (Gill 2008: 246) are not unique to HBV, in effect, what is left of Gill’s definition and what differentiates HBV from intimate forms of familial violence, is the collective conspiracy of family and community (Gill 2008; Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd 2014).

The most extreme form of HBV – honour killings – has come to represent the category of HBV as a whole, perhaps as a consequence of a data vacuum of its sub-lethal varieties. Yet, as with domestic homicide, honour killings are an outlier to the outlier of HBV. The United Nations (2000) has estimated that over 5 000 women and girls are murdered each year in the name of ‘honour’ but, as with other intimate and familial violence, it is expected that this is a gross underestimation of the problem (Gill 2009), with some suggesting that this figure is more indicative of honour violence in Pakistan alone (Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd 2014). Aligning with those arguments made by Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd (2014) in relation to the situational variables of familial homicide, Lee (2011: 324-5) posits: ‘That one may end up the victim of a homicide is but one outcome of many possibilities, depending on what resources both actors bring to the table’. Further, as Cooney (2014) argues, many more women, girls, boys and men are warned, persuaded, suppressed, banished, and controlled in other non-lethal means that rarely come to the attention of the media, police, governments or researchers and are rarely considered as constitutive of HBV in the same way that honour killings have been privileged. As an outlier of HBV, honour killings may not be an ideal case example from which to develop an explanatory model, even if this knowledge is essential to the assessment of risk of lethal collective violence. Homicide – even in the spontaneous violence of ‘crimes of passion’ or crimes of shame (Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd 2014) – is often preceded by a regime of incrementally more controlling and harmful punishments, leading in its criminal forms to grievous bodily harm such as acidification, infibulation or rape in marriage. Each of these punishments is designed to reinstate a sexual and gender order (Cooney 2014; Payton 2014).

In addition to the outliers of HBV and honour killings, for this commentary, the outlier data of collective familial violence identified in a database of nearly 100 000 UK hate crime complaints (Asquith 2012a) has also been instrumental to a reconsideration of the current explanatory models which pivot between culture and violence against women. While this research was focussed primarily on the role of verbal-textual hostility in hate crime, in a small but significant set of outliers (6.7 per cent of 27 164 complaint files from 2003 and 2007), faith-based and sexuality-based incidents of hate crime were uncharacteristically familial. Unlike racist hate crimes, these outlier cases of familial hate crimes were 1.6 times more likely than other incidents with known offenders to result in violence against the person. Further, unlike conventional domestic, intimate-partner or family violence (and the majority of hate crimes reported to the London Metropolitan Police Service), these cases of intrafamilial hate crimes were also slightly more likely than racist hate crimes to include two or more offenders. These incidents – and arguably all hate crimes against gay men and lesbians – represent a form of collective (or social) punishment that mirrors the violence meted out to remedy a (perceived) transgression in sexual or gender codes of conduct in HBV cases (Asquith 2012a; Cooney 2014). When considered through these conceptual and empirical outliers, the efficacy of HBV exceptionalism is questionable, especially in light of its Islamophobic construction as a predominantly Muslim practice (Gill and Brah 2014).

Partial views on honour and violence

What we know about HBV – and of honour in violence more generally – is shaped by the available data, and the conceptual and disciplinary lens through which these data are considered. Throughout the literature on HBV, researchers lament the lack of a shared language of HBV and reliable victimisation and offending data, particularly of the sub-lethal varieties of HBV. Large scale, transnational attitude and perception studies have been undertaken on honour and shame (see Rodriguez Mosquera's (2013) special edition of *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* for a detailed discussion of these), which is increasingly used to contextualise the results from smaller qualitative studies of HBV victimisation (such as Payton's (2014) study of intimate partner violence and HBV case files opened with a UK advocacy organisation for women, IKWRO) and forensic studies of offenders' motivational drives (Dogan 2014). Yet the central term, honour, continues to be contested and operationalised in research in various ways, including as individual and community pathology, universal set of norms or values guiding men's violence against women, and culturally-specific honour codes. Most commonly, though, HBV is understood as a cultural artefact of some cultural expressions of men's violence or as the artefact of a pathologised offender's adherence to a culturally-specific and violent code of honour (Dogan 2014).

Gill's (2008) definition cited above links and differentiates this violence from the existing wealth of knowledge about violence against women already integrated into policies and practices and, at least, partially recognised by the criminal justice system. But two critical problems arise when HBV is seen as a variant of violence against women alone, and both relate to the 'who' of honour violence. As Roberts (2014) identifies, labelling HBV as a variant of 'violence against women' – as opposed to more contemporary feminist analyses that conceptualise this as *gendered* violence (Carrington 2014) – elides women's violence against men and other women, and conversely men's violence against other men in the name of 'honour'.

Western research on gendered violence is more likely to consider the outlier experiences of violence against men, particularly honour quests in the night-time economy and homophobic violence (Tomsen 2002, 2009; Tomsen and Crofts 2012). Yet, in the extant HBV research, these experiences are conventionally reduced to a single paragraph acknowledging – and quickly dismissing – the existence of honour based violence against men (Gill 2014; Meeto and Mirza 2011; Welchman and Hossain 2005).⁸ Within the honour cultures stereotypically aligned to HBV, men and boys are also victims of collective violence, and women are instrumental in the lethal violence inflicted on some male and female victims. An explanatory model that excludes the significant minority of cases of male victims and the consistent presence, if not participation, of female offenders in HBV only partially captures this violence's aetiology. Additionally, without linking HBV to other forms of interpersonal violence that share similar victimisation *processes* (such as multiple offenders and premeditation), policing responses only partially capture the knowledge necessary to regulate and respond to all forms of collective familial violence.

A feminist analysis of gender is critical in understanding honour based violence (Gill 2011). However, in viewing HBV solely through *men's* violence, without the integration of a much richer understanding of the normative power of gender and sexuality for both men and women in the existing research on HBV, the outcome is the exceptionalising of HBV as a distinct cultural practice. Irrespective of the intent of the explanatory model – in Gill's case (2008, 2011; Gill and Brah 2014) the use of 'violence against women' is strategically deployed to minimise the cultural imperative aligned with HBV and in Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd (2014) to posit a situational theory of planned behaviour – the outcome is the same. Even though Roberts (2014) attempts to account for violence against men in his conceptual framework, as with Gill's (2008, 2011) conceptualisation, religious or ethnic culture ultimately delineates who is perceived at risk of victimisation and who are 'seen' by frontline officers as victims of honour violence.

What we know of HBV from the institutional knowledge of Roberts and colleagues from the London Metropolitan Police Service is generated from a rich source of case files, investigations and frontline policing encounters. Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd (2014) provide a framework that facilitates the identification of increased risks of honour based violence, especially in its extreme manifestations. But who is policed – and police gatekeeping at the point of complaint-making – can fundamentally skew what is known about HBV. By its very nature, the criminal justice system is deployed by the state and victims when the behaviour under question is understood by both as sufficiently deviant or harmful to warrant more than social punishment (Cooney 2014). Who is recognised and thus subject to a specific set of risk assessments and service enhancements is shaped by not only the policy and practice contests within policing services (who counts in resource allocation), but also the shifting relationships between policing services and the communities of interest that move through the policing process (Asquith 2012b). Under- and over-policing can bring some experiences of victimisation to the forefront of innovative policing, or it can obscure shared experiences in an increasingly siloed set of practices based on a normative categorisation of victims and offenders (Bartkowiak-Théron and Asquith 2012). In the case of HBV, this normative categorisation of ‘who counts’ too readily moves from a generalisable discussion of the individual and collective norms that regulate sex and gender transgressions – which exceed Muslim honour codes linked to HBV – to a practice framework that privileges specific cultural expressions of this violence. While this account of HBV may assist in identifying some forms of collective familial violence, as with the ‘violence against women’ approach advocated by Gill (2008), the focus on the adherence to particular pathological types of collective norms obscures how similar normative imperatives lie at the heart of Western intimate partner violence and heterosexist violence against gay men and lesbians.

Heteronormative violence

Rather than a culturally distinct form of violence against women or the result of a pathological integration of collective norms of honour in an individual’s identity, the violence captured in the category of HBV is a case study of lethal heteronormative violence (Lloyd 2013). This heteronormative violence can be understood as a continuum of violent practices, from the inculcation of gender and sexuality norms through a compulsory socialisation in pink and blue, to prohibitions on some male or female behaviour, to violence ‘on, through, and against bodies’ (Lloyd 2013: 820). Additionally, the responsibility for reinscribing heteronormativity is widely dispersed, from the individual curfews imposed by a parent or home detention imposed by an intimate partner, to the public harassment – wolf-whistles and abuse – from strangers for (in)appropriate attire, to the imposition of punishment by collective or institutional actors. While cultural variations exist in the way heteronormativity is integrated into individual, social and institutional life, in most respects heteronormative violence is lived ‘on, through, and against bodies’ (Lloyd 2013: 820) in similar ways.

Heteronormativity is *doxa* in its purest form (Bourdieu 1977). It is a normative type of power that is so taken-for-granted that it is unrecognised as a form of discipline of individuals’ actions and perceptions. Heteronormativity, in this sense, is integrated as a habituated performance of perception and praxis that is durable yet mutable. The mutability of the heteronormative *doxa* lies in the social space between a normative code of conduct and an individual way of being in the world. The individual imperative to violently police transgressions of heteronormativity is variably taken up depending on the support received for their views and the individual and collective rewards that can be expected for acting as a delegate empowered with the authority to police transgressions of heteronormativity. What can be known of gender and sexuality – what can be accommodated within the heteronormative *doxa* – is socially constituted and institutionally embodied but it is given life in the minds and bodies of individuals who differentially wrestle with transgressions and reinscribe hetero-norms (Todd Weiss 2001). Punishments for breaches in the heteronormative order are as likely to be punitive and corporal

as they are to be lethal. Further, as these norms are the result of a continual social contestation, the collective pressure for violent action can be and is most often rejected (Cooney 2014), irrespective of differences in cultural expressions of heteronormativity.

The social circulation of heteronormativity may be more visible in, and appear more endemic to, the control of some collectivities such as LGBTIQ communities and relationships. But the orientalist and Islamophobic conceptualisation of honour based violence as a product primarily of deviant cultural and religious practices obscures the heteronormative violence underlying honour based violence, and the links between HBV and other interpersonal violence. Honour based violence as a cultural artefact misses the collective familial exile – and subsequent homelessness and criminalisation (Robinson et al. 2014) – imposed as a form punishment against those who come out as non-heterosexual and non-cisgender. It also misses the explosive group and individual violence of heteronormative honour contests in the code of the streets of US cities (Anderson 1999), the favelas of South American cities (Dietrich and Schuett 2013) and the night-time economy in most Australian cities. It also misses similar cultural advance and panic defences made to justify the social imposition of heteronormative violence (De Pasquale 2002; Lloyd 2013; Tomsen and Crofts 2012; Westbrook and Schilt 2014). These expressions of heteronormative violence are produced in and through collective understandings of sexuality and gender irrespective of whether the violence unfolds as multiple-perpetrator domestic violence (Salter 2014), intrafamilial hate crime against gay men and lesbians (Asquith 2012a) or collective honour based violence.

While policing services and criminal justice agencies are attempting to embed intelligence- and research-led practices into their repertoire, too often exceptional violence shapes the policies developed to remedy a perceived problem. To date, however, criminal justice responses to honour based violence have been stalled by policy contestations shaped by popular misrepresentations of both honour, and the violence perceived to be adhered to some forms of collective honour. When the gaze shifts beyond the aggrandised accounts of families killing their daughters, and the underlying normative frameworks are considered separate from the cultural expressions of those norms, it has been argued in this paper that honour based violence may be more productively considered through the lens of heteronormativity. This shift allows researchers to consider that the regulation and control of sexuality and gender is a communal act requiring collective maintenance irrespective of the specific cultural norms of any given society. Shifting the debate to practices of heteronormativity also enables us to make links between different forms of interpersonal violence and ensures we do not get mired in a particularly dangerous form of cultural relativism that feeds into and reinscribes Islamophobic and orientalist constructions of intrafamilial violence.

Correspondence: Dr Nicole Asquith, Associate Professor in Policing and Criminal Justice, Policing, Peace and Development Studies (SSAP), University of Western Sydney (Bankstown), Cnr Horsley Road and Bullecourt Avenue, Milperra NSW 2155, Australia. Email: n.asquith@uws.edu.au

¹ *Ird* is the Muslim honour code for women, while *sharaf* is a more generalised, though largely, masculine code of honour. While a woman can lose her *ird* permanently, *sharaf* is repairable. It is in the space between the restoration of *sharaf* and the loss of *ird* that violence may be promoted and accepted as a necessary shame-avoidance strategy. *Izzat* is related to both *ird* and *sharaf*, but is a regional – rather than religious – code, and is shared by Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities in northern India and Pakistan.

² Ironically, given the issues raised in this paper, in this case, it was Nita Iskander's lover who was killed by her husband and son. The only other Australian case where the term 'honour killing' was used in reporting related to

the domestic homicide of Julie Ramage by her husband, James Ramage (Kissane 2004). All other Australian media reports of honour based violence and honour killings relate to these types of incidents in other countries.

³ See, for example: Araji 2000; Belfrage et al. 2012; Gill 2008, 2011, 2014; Gill and Brah 2014; Meeto and Mirza, 2011; Payton 2014; Roberts 2014; Roberts, Campbell and Lloyd 2014; Welchman and Hossain 2005.

⁴ See for example, Gill's (2009) study of English media reports of honour based violence, and Jiwani's (2006) consideration of the ways in which Canadian media recognise certain expressions of violence and ignore others.

⁵ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, or queer or questioning.

⁶ See for example, Levin's (2009) volume 1 of Perry's five-volume *Hate Crime* series, which is devoted entirely to the issues of defining and measuring 'hate'.

⁷ The concept of cacodoxy (and cacodoxic masculinities) was developed by Pitt in her honours thesis and expanded in her later work with Fox to demarcate presentations of masculinity that are neither heterodox nor orthodox. Pitt and Fox (2012, 2013) critique Connell's dualistic categorisation of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities, and argue that, for some gay men, their masculine identity neither conforms to a normative order nor subordinates itself to that order.

⁸ For example, in Gill's introductory chapter to *'Honour' Killing and Violence* (2014), she states: 'Meanwhile, although most victims of HBV are female, there is also evidence for victimisation among young men ... Nevertheless, the fact remains that the majority of victims are female and the majority of perpetrators male'. Between these excerpts she provides examples of two studies which identify male victims (with one study citing a figure of 43 per cent of all HBV victims), but does not return to this critical issue again at any point to outlining the conceptual issues relating to HBV.

Please cite this article as:

Asquith N (2015) Honour, violence and heteronormativity. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 4(3): 73-84. doi: 10.5204/ijcjsd.v3i2.191.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence. As an open access journal, articles are free to use, with proper attribution, in educational and other non-commercial settings. ISSN: 2202-8005

References

- Aly A and Walker D (2007) Veiled threats: Recurrent cultural anxieties in Australia. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 27(2): 203-14
- Anderson E (1999) *Code of the Street: Decency, Violence and the Moral Life of the Inner City*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Araji SK (2000) Crimes of honor and shame: Violence against women in non-Western and Western societies. *Journal of Postmodern Criminology* 8: 1-15.
- Asquith NL (2012a) *The Role of Verbal-Textual Hostility in the Regulation of Hate Crime*. London: Metropolitan Police Service.
- Asquith NL (2012b) Vulnerability and the art of complaint making. In Bartkowiak-Théron I and Asquith NL (eds) *Policing Vulnerability*: 147-162. Annandale, New South Wales: Federation Press.
- Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) (2012) *Honour Based Violence Strategy*. London: Association of Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- Baker NV, Gregware PR and Cassidy MA (1999) Family killing fields: Honor rationales in the murder of women. *Violence Against Women* 5(2): 164-184.
- Bartkowiak-Théron I and Asquith NL (2012) Vulnerable people policing: A preparatory framework for operationalising vulnerability. In Bartkowiak-Théron I and Asquith NL (eds) *Policing Vulnerability*: 278-292. Annandale, New South Wales: Federation Press.

- Belfrage H, Strand S, Ekman L and Hasselborg A-K (2012) Assessing risk of patriarchal violence with honour as a motive: Six years' experience using the PATRIARCH checklist. *International Journal of Police Science and Management* 14(12): 20-29.
- Bourdieu P (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu P (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power* (G Raymond and M Adamson, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Carrington K (2014) *Feminism and Global Justice*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Cooney M (2014) Death by family: Honor violence as punishment. *Punishment and Society* 16(4): 406-427.
- Crown Prosecution Service (2013) *Violence against Women and Girls Crime Report*. London: UK Director of Public Prosecutions.
- Daly K and Stubbs J (2006) A feminist engagement with restorative justice. *Theoretical Criminology* 10(1): 9-28.
- De Pasquale S (2002). Provocation and the homosexual advance defence: The deployment of culture as a defence strategy. *Melbourne University Law Review* 26(1): 110-143.
- Dietrich DM and Schuett JM (2013) Culture of honor and attitudes toward intimate partner violence in Latinos. *SAGE Open*, April/June: 1-11.
- Dogan R (2014) Different cultural understandings of honor that inspire killing: An inquiry into the defendant's perspective. *Homicide Studies* 18(4): 363-388.
- Gill AK (2008) 'Crimes of honour' and violence against women in the UK. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 32(2): 243-263.
- Gill AK (2009) Honour killings and the quest for justice in black and minority ethnic communities in the United Kingdom. *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 20(4): 475-494.
- Gill AK (2011) Reconfiguring 'honour'-based violence as a form of gendered violence. In Idriss MM and Abbas T (eds) *Honour, Violence, Women and Islam*: 218-230. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- Gill AK (2014) Introduction: 'Honour' and 'honour'-based violence: Challenging common assumptions. In Gill AK, Strange C and Roberts KA (eds) *'Honour' Killing and Violence*: 1-26. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gill A and Brah A (2014) Interrogating cultural narratives about 'honour'-based violence. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21(1): 72-86.
- Hussein S (2014) Lifting the veil on the real reason for banning the burqa in parliament. *Crikey*, 2 October. Available at www.crikey.com.au/2014/10/02/lifting-the-veil-on-the-real-reason-for-banning-the-niqab-in-parliament/ (accessed 2 October 2014).
- Jiwani Y (2007) *Discourses of Denial: Mediations of Race, Gender, and Violence*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Kissane K (2004) Honour killing in the suburbs, *The Age*: 6. Available at www.theage.com.au/news/National/Honour-killing-in-the-suburbs/2004/11/05/1099547388469.html%E2%80%9D (accessed 2 October 2014).
- Lee MR (2011) Reconsidering culture and homicide. *Homicide Studies* 15(4): 319-340.
- Levin B (ed) *Hate Crimes: Understanding and Defining Hate Crime, Volume 1*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger.
- Lloyd M (2013) Heteronormativity and/as violence: The 'sexing' of Gwen Araujo. *Hypatia* 28(4): 818-834.
- Meetoo V and Mirza S (2011) 'There is nothing "honourable" about honour killings': Gender, violence and the limits of multiculturalism. In Idriss MM and Abbas T (eds) *Honour, Violence, Women and Islam*: 42-66. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

- Payton J (2014) 'Honor', collectivity, and agnation: Emerging risk factors in 'honor'-based violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 29(16): 2863-2883.
- Pitt SL and Fox CA (2012) Performative masculinity: A new theory on masculinity. In Cereda A and Ross J (eds) *Masculinity/Femininity: Re-Framing a Fragmented Debate*: 37-46. Oxford, UK: Inter-Disciplinary Net.
- Pitt SL and Fox CA (2013) Revisiting Connell's masculinities: Performative masculinity – a new approach. In Gregersdotter K and Hallen N (eds) *Femininities and Masculinities in Action: On Theory and Practice in a Moving Field*: 155-174. Freeland, Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press.
- Rich A (1983) Compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence. In Snitnow A, Stansell C and Thompson S (eds) *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*: 177-205. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Roberts KA (2014) Towards a psychologically oriented motivational model of honour-based violence. In Gill AK, Strange C and Roberts KA (eds) *'Honour' Killing and Violence*: 69-88. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Roberts KA, Campbell G and Lloyd G (2014) *Honor-Based Violence: Policing and Prevention*. Florida: CRC Press.
- Robinson K, Bansel P, Denson N, Ovenden G and Davies C (2014) *Growing Up Queer: Issues Facing Young Australians Who Are Gender Variant and Sexuality Diverse*. Melbourne: Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre.
- Rodriguez Mosquera PM (2013) In the name of honor: On virtue, reputation and violence. *Group Processes Intergroup Relations* 16(3): 271-278.
- Salter M (2014) Multi-perpetrator domestic violence. *Trauma, Violence and Abuse* 15(2): 102-112.
- Sen P (2003) Successes and challenges: Understanding the global movement to end violence against women. In Kaldor M, Anheier HK and Glasius M (eds) *Global Civil Society*: 119-150. London: Oxford University Press.
- Souter F (2012) Death and dishonour. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 July. Available at www.smh.com.au/nsw/death-and-dishonour-20120715-225q8.html (accessed 24 October 2014).
- Todd Weiss J (2001) The gender caste system: Identity, privacy and heteronormativity. *Law and Sexuality* 10: 123-186.
- Tomsen S (2002) *Hatred, Murder and Male Honour: Anti-Homosexual Homicides in New South Wales, 1980-2000* (Research and Public Policy Series, No. 43). Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.
- Tomsen S (2009) *Violence, Prejudice and Sexuality*. New York: Routledge.
- Tomsen S and Crofts T (2012) Social and cultural meanings of legal responses to homicide among men: Masculine honour, sexual advances and accidents. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology* 45(3): 423-437.
- United Nations (2000) *Ending Violence against Women and Girls*. New York: United Nations.
- Vandello JA and Cohen D (2004) When believing is seeing: Sustaining norms of violence in culture of honour. In Schaller M and Crandall C (eds) *The Psychological Foundations of Culture*: 281-304. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Vandello JA, Cohen D, Grandon R and Franiuk R (2009) Stand by your man: Indirect prescriptions for honorable violence and feminine loyalty in Canada, Chile, and the United States. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 40(1): 81-104.
- VicHealth (2014) *Australians' Attitudes to Violence against Women. Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence against Women Survey (NCAS)*. Melbourne, Victoria: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.

- Warner M (ed.) *Fear of a Queer Planet – Queer Politics and Social Theory*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Welchman L and Hossain S (2005) Introduction: 'Honour', rights and wrongs. In Welchman L and Hossain S (eds) *'Honour' Crimes, Paradigms and Violence against Women*: 1-20. London and New York: Zed Books.
- Westbrook L and Schilt K (2014) Doing gender, determining gender: Transgender people, gender panics, and the maintenance of the sex/gender/sexuality system. *Gender & Society* 28(1): 32-57.
- Wittig M (1992) *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press.