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“Waha ehsa tha, idhar ehsa hai” (It was like that back home, but it is like this here): Family violence experiences of Indian and Pakistani immigrant women in the Greater Toronto Area

By

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

There is a paucity of qualitative scholarship on Indian and Pakistani immigrant women's experiences of family violence. Further, existing scholarship on this topic seldom explores the unique experiences of distinct South Asian groups such as Indian and Pakistani immigrant women. This thesis addressed this gap in the literature by qualitatively examining family violence among immigrant Indian and Pakistani women in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). A case study methodology was used to explore two research questions: 1) What are the cultural specificities of family violence as experienced by Indian and Pakistani immigrant women in the GTA? and 2) How are their experiences situated within an immigration context? Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with three women with lived experiences of family violence and six service providers who serve this population. By drawing on multiple theoretical frameworks of feminism, postcolonialism, resilience and immigration, a thematic analysis of the narratives revealed three major themes: 1) Specificities of violence through a cultural lens, 2) Barriers to service and 3) Resiliency: From victimhood to survivorship. Finally, significant implications and recommendations are offered to incorporate these findings within the practice, research and educational arenas of social work.

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Land Acknowledgements

I acknowledge that this land (Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and Brantford) including the Haldimand Tract is the traditional territory of the Anishnawbe, Haudenosaunee and Neutral Nations.

In keeping with the regional context of this thesis, I would also like to acknowledge that the land of Toronto is the Ancestral Traditional Territories of the Ojibway, the Anishnabe and, in particular, the Mississauga's of the New Credit. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.

I also acknowledge that the Peel region (Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon) is the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), Ojibway/Chippewa peoples and home to the Métis. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the Study

In 2012, mass protests ensued along with media outcry on a national and international level following the gang rape and murder of 23 year old Jyoti Singh in Delhi, India (Mandhana & Trivedi, 2012). Although, this incident was worthy of the attention it received, several scholars (Livne, 2015; Butalia, 2015; Roychowdhury, 2013) queried as to why this incident drew mass attention as violence against women has been a pervasive issue in India of epidemic proportions (Kalokhe et al., 2017). For example, Butalia (2015) argues that rape is just one facet of a multitude of violence perpetrated towards women. He submits that a disproportionate majority of the violence occurs within the victim's home perpetrated by someone known to them.

Current scholarship on violence against women in South Asian communities is substantial, but often quantitative in nature (Alhabib et al., 2010). In a socio-cultural context that silences the plight of South Asian women, quantitative research further dilutes their voices and as such, it is of paramount concern to give voice to these women. Further, the literature on violence against women constructs South Asians as a homogenous entity thereby, erasing the unique experiences of diverse sub-cultural groups in India. More importantly, it becomes relevant to examine how culturally constructed ideologies are exercised by these communities in the context of familial violence (Vishwanath & Palakonda, 2011), without casting a racist gaze towards South Asian cultures and, situating it within a historical and colonial praxis.

Several scholars have cautioned against problematizing and politicizing culture as the sole force in propagating violence against women (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005; Razack, 2003; Mann & Grimes, 2001). For instance, Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) remind us that "Sexual and

other violence against women in Native communities and communities of color must be understood in the context of White supremacy, patriarchy, colonialism, and economic exploitation of marginalized communities, not as if such violence is inherent in the culture.” (p. 47). As a South Asian woman from India now living in Canada, this assertion resonates with me as I have become increasingly aware of the dominant colonial constructs of my community as hyper-traditional, overly patriarchal and inherently violent. Further, having worked in the Violence against Women sector, I became aware of the gaps in services that are limited in providing culturally safe supports to South Asian women who have endured family abuse. I encountered numerous South Asian women who endured insurmountable difficulties such as accessing resources, coping with immigration stressors, remaining safe in an abusive situation as well as coping with the aftermath of abuse. As such, I sought to understand through this qualitative thesis, the cultural specificities of family violence among South Asian immigrant women without victimizing my own community through propagating negative stereotypes. Given that South Asian victims of family violence are portrayed as passive, submissive and helpless victims of violence (Puwar & Raghuram, 2003), their unique resilience strategies were also explored in this thesis.

All of the aforementioned considerations fuelled my interest in a case study exploration of family violence among South Asian immigrant women in Canada, particularly the Greater Toronto Area as it is the largest urban recipient of immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2016). Canada has seen a significant presence of South Asian communities particularly in metropolitan areas of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), especially those from the sub-continent of India and Pakistan (Statistics Canada, 2016). This complicates the dynamics of South Asian women’s lives in Canada as “women bear the major burden of settlement and integration of their families in

western host countries” (Naidoo, 2003, p. 51), which creates further impetus to situate familial violence within an immigration context.

In order to remedy the aforementioned gap in the literature, the purpose of this thesis was twofold: 1) What are the cultural specificities of family violence as experienced by Indian and Pakistani immigrant women in the GTA? and 2) How are their experiences situated in an immigration context? These questions were examined through a case study exploration of semi-structured interviews with three South Asian immigrant women who have survived family abuse and six service providers who work in both management and front-line capacity with this population in the GTA. Of the six service providers, two identified as male and four as female.

Although this thesis initially sought to focus on South Asian women, it should be noted that all of the nine participants identified India or Pakistan as their country of origin (seven from India and two from Pakistan). Consequently, the analysis of the interviews was foregrounded within the socio-cultural, historical and political contexts of these two countries. By drawing on feminist, anti-colonial, immigration and resilience theories, a thematic analysis was conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of family violence experienced by Indian and Pakistani immigrant women in the Greater Toronto Area.

1.2 Overview and scope of the thesis

This thesis commences with an introductory chapter where I disclose my reflexive self and the navigation of my insider-outsider status throughout my research endeavour. The second chapter explores the current literature on domestic and familial violence within the broader South Asian population as a backdrop to situate the analysis of current findings. A theoretical stance of feminism integrated with viewpoints of Indian and Pakistani feminisms is delineated to frame the findings of this thesis. In chapter 3, I outline the methodological architecture of this study

including the research design and qualitative nature of investigation being undertaken. Recruitment challenges and data collection procedures are also outlined. Chapter 4 introduces the research participants and provides an overview and analysis of the findings from the qualitative interviews. Finally, chapter 5 merges the thematic findings from this thesis with previous literature and provides new insights not present in the current body of knowledge. The significant implications for future research, practice as well as social work education are described with hope that this research contributes to our understanding of familial violence within Indian and Pakistani immigrant communities in the Greater Toronto Area.

1.3 Researcher location

“The world knows us by our faces, the most naked, most vulnerable, exposed and significant topography of the body.” (Anzaldúa, 1990, p. xv). As such, I first identify myself as a South Asian woman from India. I deliberately mention my race and gender first, not only because they are my visible markers that denote my membership to marginalized racial and gender groups, but because they foreground the complexities of other dimensions of my social location. Sexist and racist prejudices in society towards my “South Asianess” and womanhood have rendered me marginalized and excluded me from full participation in society.

From a very young age, it became apparent to me that there was a significant power differential between men and women. South Asian cultural values are embodied by oppressive gender roles whereby women are subject to gendered oppression due to being viewed as subordinate and inferior to men. I quickly learned that my mother was never allowed to work outside the home and had to set reproductive labour in the home as work such as raising children, cooking and cleaning while my father was expected to be the primary bread winner and the decision maker of the house. The messages I received both implicitly and explicitly were that I

was not allowed to do what the boys did and that I had to be the “good girl” by learning to engage in “properly feminine” activities and behaviors that women did. These behaviors included engaging in domestic chores, knowing how to make perfectly round *rotis*, dressing modestly as well as avoiding pre-marital dating. By disclosing this, I do not wish to reinforce hegemonic representations of my community as hyper-traditional or barbaric. Instead, I use this space to illustrate how domesticity within my community is in fact, a microcosm of colonialism, and I as an individual bear its’ complexities. As Blunt (1999) writes, “...only the presence of British women as wives and home-makers in India could help to alleviate the domestic nostalgia of their husbands...” (p. 422), that in turn led to the proliferation of oppressive gender relations and imperial domesticity within the colonized household. Therefore, my disclosed social location as well as my professional front row seat to domestic and family violence in the South Asian community serve as the impetus for the thesis you are about to read.

Prior to conducting the research interviews, I had automatically presumed an insider status by virtue of my South Asian and female identities. However, my multiple subjectivities began to emerge during the interviews as a young, unmarried Hindu woman from India, who embodies eurocentrism through choice of clothing and spoken accent. This urged me to engage in a more nuanced reflection of my positionality, as I began to realize that my insider-outsider status uniquely characterized my interactions with the participants as follows.

1.3.1 “You’re 29, Hindu and not married?!” On being an “acceptable” insider

A consistent accusation I received both implicitly and explicitly from participants is that I engender a distance from the traditions of my home culture. The saliency of this became evident when a self-identified Indian service provider noted to me “You’re 29, Hindu and not married?!”. Suddenly, I no longer felt like an insider and became uncomfortably aware of a unique aspect of

my social location. I am an Indian citizen and came to Canada as a student at the age of 18. Recently, I was granted a permanent resident status in Canada and as a beneficiary of Canadian colonialism and privileges, I eventually came to rethink my social position as I began to identify with North American culture, particularly the value of individualism. This value along with my positionality as a Master's student in a western academic setting allowed me to speak of, analyze and articulate my experiences of being South Asian to individuals and groups outside of my family. As such, my Canadian identity became impressed upon me and my Indian identity, more dormant.

Further, I speak in a North American accent and I identify this as part of my social location since accents in my opinion, are attributable to ethnicity, culture and class, thereby used in society as vestiges of marginalization or domination (Lippi-Green, 2012). However, this also urges me to question whether I developed a North American accent as a result of internalized oppression. Perhaps, I have done so as a means to become more palatable to the dominant Canadian culture. The service provider's comment also made me cognizant that I embody "whiteness" through various aspects of my identity and appearances such as wearing an eyebrow piercing or having short hair. Therefore, despite my insider status as a South Asian woman, I navigated through my discomfort by engaging in a culturally humble reflection of my Indian identity and gently validated any suspicions of my lack of 'cultural loyalty'.

1.3.2 Research-participant relationship: navigating age differentials

My upbringing in India bestowed upon me the values of respecting your elders and adhering to hierarchy and authority based on age differentials. Growing up, I was exposed to parenting styles that did not encourage children and adolescents with autonomy. In fact, I remember our independence and decision-making abilities were undermined while our parents

strictly monitored our schoolwork, extra-curricular activities and dictated our future aspirations with little room to negotiate. Admittedly, I took these cues and developed the assumption that those in the younger age range are not autonomous and are incapable of exercising their decision-making and problem-solving skills.

This dynamic became apparent as I encountered several participants who were notably older than me and, challenged my position as a knowledgeable researcher and student. For example, in attempting to build rapport with one service provider, I gently noted that she could stop and withdraw from the research interview at any point in time if she became uncomfortable. To this, she defensively responded “You think I will be uncomfortable?! You are the younger one, you should be uncomfortable with me!”. Once again, I became mindful of my insider-outsider discomfort and humbly agreed with her by reflexively engaging with my South Asian identity.

1.3.3 Mitigating sub-cultural tensions

Given the legacy of colonialism, political and religious tensions between sub-cultural groups surfaced on a communal scale (between Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs) and on a national scale (between Indians and Pakistanis). I was immediately reminded of the political struggles between Hindu and Muslim groups in India that were created after the British partition of India into two separate states, one with a Muslim majority and the other a Hindu majority. Growing up in a Hindu household, what looms large in my mind are the Hindu-Muslim tensions in India. I recall the tension, the terror and the heart wrenching fear when we heard the bombs explode during the 2006 Mumbai train blasts, and I remembered those in my community repeatedly saying, “It’s those Muslims”. In placing an empathetic lens, I actively engaged with my knowledge of India and Pakistan’s colonial history and, rather than becoming mired with

discomfort I reflectively generated a sense of “culturally humble” intellectual curiosity on participants’ subjectivities of aforementioned tensions by suspending any pre-conceived beliefs (Fisher-Borne, Cain & Martin, 2015).

Although my disclosed reflexivity can be a useful source of information in understanding family violence among Indian and Pakistani immigrant women, it is also imperative to draw upon current empirical understandings of family violence within these communities. The next chapter presents the current literature on family violence experienced by South Asian immigrant women. The social, cultural and political underpinnings of violence within South Asian communities are also examined. In addition, the chapter also broadens the theoretical scope to include the feminist and colonial roots of violence in the sub-continent of India and Pakistan.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 (Un) Defining 'South Asian'

Historically and within the academic sphere, the term 'South Asian' has been a contested term, as it collapses the social, economic, political, historical and geographical representations of South Asian sub-continent (Mohammad-Arif, 2014). Although the sub-continent includes India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Maldives and Nepal, empirical knowledge from a variety of disciplines have utilized the term 'South Asian' synonymously with the sub-continent India and by proxy Pakistan, given their historical lineage associated with British colonization (Mohammad-Arif, 2014). As such, the constructions of the term 'South Asian' are flawed and distorted, as they cast primary foci on two of the larger sub-continent of India and Pakistan, while neglecting the remainder. Within the context of violence against women research, the perils of doing so can result in a production of knowledge that homogenizes the plight of South Asian women with lived experiences of violence. In other words, knowledge becomes 'India-centric' (Mohammad-Arif, 2014).

Carsignol (2014) points to the ambiguous terms '*desi*' imagined by immigrant South Asians themselves, a Hindi/Urdu word to signify those with cultures and traditions originating from South Asian countries. However, Hansen (2006) argued that the term '*desi*' is often used to denote those exclusively from the Indian sub-continent, once again creating a hegemonic sentiment that leaves behind other South Asians. Further, a few researchers have also pointed to the term 'brown' as an emerging category of immigrants, particularly in a multicultural context such as Canada (Sumartojo, 2012; Carsignol, 2014), and purport that this could be a means to escape the Black-White dichotomy. As such, the complexities of terms such as 'South Asian',

'*desi*' and 'brown' need to be taken into consideration within the context of this research, particularly due to their primary reference to those from the sub-continent of India and Pakistan.

Notwithstanding their commonalities and shared history which will be further outlined in the subsequent sub-chapter, there are rich diversities that exist along the axes of caste, class, religion, socio-economic status etc. Although this thesis will present against a backdrop of literature on domestic and familial violence among the broader South Asian population, every effort has been made to situate this thesis within a narrowed lens of Pakistani and Indian socio-cultural specificities.

2.1.1 India and Pakistan: A shared history

Although the attainment of independence from the British colonial rule in 1947 marked a liberating period in India's history, what ensued in the aftermath was a tragic partition of India and Pakistan, which resulted in a legacy of tensions on a national and communal scale. The rupture of the sub-continent into Hindu-majority Republic of India and Muslim-majority Islamic Republic of Pakistan involved the geographical separation of the states of Punjab, Bengal and Assam along religious lines which displaced the cultural, political, national and religious identities of South Asians amidst the migration and to current day, continues to plague the relationship between India and Pakistan (AbrarZahoor, 2015).

From the Kargil war, to the Indian Airlines hijacking of 1999 to the dispute over Jammu-Kashmir, there are numerous examples of how India and Pakistan continue to live in the shadows of the British imperial rule and subsequent partitioning. The powered dynamics between Hindu and Sikh Indians versus Muslim Indians can be traced back to this historical event. As identities were being reconstructed and crystallised amongst Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in the state of Punjab, Hindus in Pakistan came to live under the constant threat of persecution and violence inflicted upon them (Jamal, 2016), as they are seen as agents of Indian nationalism whereas the

social exclusion of Muslim communities in India exists in the form of residential segregations, lack of formal employment and religiously-motivated violence (Hasan, 2017).

2.2 South Asians in Canada: Immigration patterns

The statistical assertions of Statistics Canada (2016) revealed that Canada comprises 7.5 million foreign-born individuals of which India and Pakistan consists of 668,570 and 202,255 respectively. As such, India and Pakistan occupy the highest visible minority population of the overall Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2016). Although immigration patterns of South Asian individuals span back to the 1800s, their immigration history is in fact marred with discriminatory attitudes and societal exclusion (Naidoo, 2003). Notwithstanding current day microaggressions and systemic racism, Canada officially introduced its multiculturalism policy in 1971 and saw a reduction of institutional racism particularly through more lenient immigration policies facilitated by the government and human rights organizations. Beginning in the 1980s to present day, "...the federal government encouraged professional and business-class migration, while the family reunification programme enabled earlier immigrants to sponsor their families' migration into Canada." (Ghosh, 2013, p. 41).

2.2.1 South Asians in the Greater Toronto Area

Ontario has seen the heaviest proportion of South Asian immigrants with a notable influx in the metropolitan city of Toronto (Haq, 2009), with spatial segregations across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) which comprises four regional municipalities namely Peel, Halton, Durham and York regions. In 2001, the government introduced the month of May as 'South Asian Heritage month' following which, Toronto saw an emergence of vibrant festivities such as Bollywood award shows, film premiers as well as music concerts (Ghosh, 2013). However, despite this recognition, the socio-economic success of South Asian immigrants in Toronto is stymied despite having advanced educational and professional skills as well as a strong

command of the English language (Haq, 2009). In fact, Toronto has been likened to India's wide segregations of wealthy and low-income neighborhoods, with some immigrants thriving on Bay street of Toronto whereas others occupy more isolated and economically marginalized communities of the city (Gee, 2018).

2.3 Cultural Humility

Given that this thesis is anchored in unfolding the cultural specificities of family violence within a historically marginalized population, it became relevant to navigate this research from a "culturally humble" stance (Fisher-Borne, Cain & Martin, 2015). Fisher-Borne et al., (2015) offer a conceptual framework of cultural humility whereby it "...takes into account the fluidity and subjectivity of culture and challenges both individuals and institutions to address inequalities" (p. 171). Indeed, my insider status as a South Asian woman from India can be a useful in generating insights, unique subjectivities and implicit culturally-specific meanings when conducting research in my own community (Hamdan, 2009). However, the complexity of my insider-outsider status as discussed in Chapter 1 necessitated deep self-reflection on my part and engaging with this research in a culturally safe manner.

Cultural humility shifts away from the concept of cultural competence, a concept that has long been heralded in the field of social work as a tenet in providing effective care to marginalized communities. Instead, cultural humility acknowledges the changing and fluid dynamics of culture, which are interpreted uniquely by individuals. Much emphasis is placed on not only understanding and being curious about the 'other' but also understanding ourselves in our interactions with them (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015). As such, this thesis was not aimed at generating 'competent' knowledge on the experiences of family violence among South Asian immigrant women, nor does it provide a scripted approach to social work practice with this

population. Rather, I would urge the reader to engage with my thesis from a culturally humble lens and remain mindful of the wider systemic barriers faced by this population instead of deeming the South Asian culture as faulty, demonic or backwards.

2.4 Deconstructing 'family violence'

Family violence has been cited as a global health issue of epidemic proportions and manifests itself through multiple forms such as physical and sexual violence, verbal threats and coercion, psychological abuse, neglect as well as financial abuse (Tolan, Gorman-Smith & Henry, 2006). Tolan et al., (2006) purport that family violence research warrants a unique focus in comparison to other forms of violence as it "... presents a paradox in that harm is purposely inflicted by those who are supposed to care for or depend on one another." (p. 559). This becomes particularly relevant within the context of this research as several scholars have noted that abuse sustained by South Asian women is not only perpetrated by their marital partners but also their extended family members (Bandan, 2009; Rew, Gangoli & Gill, 2013; Mirza, 2017).

For example, Mirza (2017) critiques current literature on violence in South Asian communities as being limited to the domestic nature of abuse between the woman and her partner. According to Stark (as cited in Mirza, 2017), domestic violence is "... a strategic course of self-interested behavior designed to secure and expand gender-based privilege by establishing a regime of domination in personal life." (p. 397). Mirza (2017) however, draws focus towards violence in South Asian households that are characterized not only by the marital relationships but by complex family structures, such as tensions between mothers and daughters-in-law in Pakistani families. Consequently, this thesis refers to both the literature on domestic violence as well as family abuse to capture the specificities of violence experienced by South Asian women in the GTA.

2.4.1 Cultural dynamics and family structure

The institution of family, including marital bonds and relationships with extended family members is deeply rooted into the socio-cultural fabric of South Asian countries such as India and Pakistan, and forms a core source of influence for individuals within the family. Decisions of educational pursuits, career prospects as well as selecting a marriage partner are made with consideration for the maintenance of family harmony and cooperation. In other words, the needs and interests of the collective family supersede those of the individual (Chadda & Debb, 2013). It is important to note that this joint family system originated during the colonial era as Denault (2009) historicizes this family structure by stating that “The joint family was held up as the chief domain in which oppressive and restrictive patriarchal control over individuals was exercised...” (p. 30). Thus, the heteropatriarchal order of British colonialism trickled into other systems of governance such as the Hindu and Muslim family systems in India (Denault, 2009).

As such, a hallmark of family functioning in South Asian communities is the clear power structure of the family, resulting in a hierarchy of authority. For instance, Chadda and Deb (2013) submit that “While women are expected to accept a position subservient to males, and to subordinate their personal preferences to the needs of other, males are expected to accept responsibility for meeting the needs of others.” (para. 11), whereas “...earning males are expected to support the old; take care of widows, never-married adults and the disabled; assist members during periods of unemployment and illness; and provide security to women and children” (para. 11). In turn, such rules of conduct and responsibility serve to maintain family cohesion, harmony and interdependency (Chadda & Deb, 2013). Tracing back to the colonial era, Chitnis and Wright (2007) posit that in fact, these rules of conduct emerged from Victorian ideals of womanhood such as domesticity that in turn, reshaped the social structure of Indian families. As British women attempted to set up homes in India, they influenced power relations

within Indian households by asserting imperial domesticity among colonized women as a means to mitigate domestic nostalgia of their own British husbands (Chitnis and Wright, 2007).

Of particular significance, are the social relations of patriarchy that are deeply embedded in the familial hierarchical structure, that in turn underscores gender-based hierarchies that serve to elevate men in a position of power, privilege and domination. As discussed earlier, the phenomenon of patriarchy is deeply rooted in colonialist agenda and presents uniquely within South Asian family structures. For instance, extending beyond the gendered relationship between partnered men and women in the family, patriarchal social arrangements also stretch into various relationships between women in the family themselves (Bhandari & Titzmann, 2017). In addition, the husband's parents (wife's in-laws) in both Indian and Pakistani households, are placed often in a relatively elevated position, including the mother in-law who has greater agency and authority over the daughter in-law, thus resulting in power distribution even among women themselves (Allendorf, 2012; Rew, Gangoli & Gill 2013; Hadi, 2017).

Inherent in patriarchal ideologies, particularly in South Asian cultures are concepts of honour ("*izzat*") and shame ("*sharam*"). Gilligan and Akhtar (2006) assert that although the concepts of honour and shame are prevalent in cultures around the world, there are variations in how they are defined and exercised in different regions. Within the South Asian culture, honour or "*izzat*" is closely associated with a family's reputation in the wider community and is critical to the social status and prestige, not only of the individuals but also their families in the South Asian community. Shame or "*sharam*" is linked to "*izzat*" in that, when an individual's or the family's honour is compromised, it can subsequently lead to "*sharam*". As a result, "*sharam*" can be used as a silencing force towards women who have experienced sexualized violence, as their disclosure could otherwise bring shame to their family (Gilligan & Akhtar, 2006).

Given that honour is a gendered notion in South Asian cultures, it is experienced by men and women in different ways. Whereas “honour” is known to be vested in female sexuality and reproductive organs, a man’s honour is tied to his ability to control the sexual conduct of the women in his family, particularly his spouse (Vishwanath &Palakonda, 2011). Thus, all decisions regarding a female body are mainly made by the male members of the family. When a female member of the family violates this code of honour, she is subject to punitive repercussions as her entire family has been dishonored and is subject to shame from the community (Zafar, 2015; Vishwanath &Palakonda, 2011).

However, in sharing these assertions I do not intend to present patriarchy as solely a South Asian phenomenon, nor am I suggesting that it is a component of a problematized culture. Indeed, concepts of patriarchy and honour have created ethnocultural panic within immigrant-receiving countries, whereby these concepts have come to be associated with racialized groups or the ‘other’. However, it is crucial to note that patriarchy also has a significant presence in western cultures which can be manifested through practices of slut-shaming and policing of women’s bodies in the United States (Meharchand, 2016), or through chivalric traditions in Europe such as acts of door-opening and hand-kissing by men (Graff, 2003).

Grewal (2013) astutely argues that this notion of patriarchy has been “...outsourced from the USA and Europe to do its messy work elsewhere.” (p. 2), that in turn permits these countries to claim that patriarchy no longer exists in their own culture. She further asserts that patriarchy has been essentialized to communities migrating from the Global South to western cultures. Therefore, concepts of patriarchy and traditional gender roles are in fact, anchored in colonial influences with unique manifestations in the Global North and the Global South. And although it is important to examine the patriarchal landscape in India and Pakistan, it is not to be used as a

template against which to compare and stereotype South Asian immigrant women's experiences of familial abuse. Rather, it is important to discern the socio-cultural, political and historical dynamics that create unique manifestations of these concepts in Indian and Pakistani cultures.

2.4.2 Experiences of South Asian diaspora communities

A small but growing body of literature has documented South Asian women's narratives of gender-based violence within the context of immigration. Studies examining the discourses of British South Asians reveal that the cultural constructs of honour ("*izzat*") and shame ("*sharam*") are at complex interplay with South Asian women's experiences of violence (Gill, 2004; Gill 2009; Ahmed, Reavey & Majumdar, 2009; Ahmad, Driver, McNally & Stewart, 2009). For example, in a study of immigrant South Asian women in Britain one participant stated that rather than understanding what domestic violence was, her denial of this experience was based on shame as she stated that "I was ashamed to be called a battered woman" (Gill, 2004, p.474). Another interviewee echoed similar feelings stating that "It's a question of maintaining an honorable appearance and saying to people that the marriage is good" (Gill, 2004, p.474). Women's experiences of shame or "*sharam*" are also found to be associated with the social stigma of disclosure (Ahmad et al., 2009). As expressed by one participant in this study, "One of the biggest reasons is shame, we consider this situation (partner abuse) very shameful. In one way, it's even worse than cancer" (Ahmad et al., 2009, p. 617).

Similarly, Gill (2009) asserts that the cultural element that most shaped the way in which women responded to rape by their partners was the notion of honour. One interviewee in this study indicated that she felt frightened to disclose the abuse to her family members because of "the question of *izzat*" (Gill, 2009, p. 165). She feared that her disclosure would lead to her being cut off from her family and subsequently her primary support system in the country. Gill (2009) also notes the complexities of language that shape the way gendered violence is perceived among

these communities as the most common phrase used to refer to rape in Hindi and Urdu speaking communities is “*meri izzat lut gayi*” (My honour has been stolen). The author contends that such discourse re-affirms the patriarchal ideologies of honour and shame. Linguistically speaking, Gill (2009) also asserts that a man “*luts*” (steals) a woman’s “*izzat*” (honour) thereby implying that the victim is at fault for losing her honour instead of the man surrendering his own honour.

Moreover, the patriarchal discourse of honour is not simply contained within the partnered relationship of the woman with her husband; rather, it permeates well into the dynamics of their relationships with their families as well as their in-laws (Ahmed et al., 2009; Zafar, 2015). In their role as a daughter, women drew on discourses of additional pressure to preserve the integrity of family honour and reputation. The pressure exerted from their families to stay in the relationship takes precedence over the pressures and demands from their husbands. This pressure is embedded within the ideas of honour and maintaining family reputation within the community which in turn, places the onus of responsibility on these women to preserve family honour (Ahmed et al., 2009; Zafar, 2015). Consequently, it becomes evident that the concept of maintaining family honour and preserving it from shame is a hindrance to disclosure of violence.

Intertwined with the concepts of honour (“*izzat*”) and shame (“*sharam*”), women’s discussions also reflected the construct of strict gender roles that were described as a hindrance to seeking help and maintaining silence. Whereas the rigid gender role dictates toughness and masculinity of males, the role of the woman emphasizes modesty, avoiding behaviors that may violate the reputation of the family and subsequently bring shame to the family unit (Ahmad et al., 2009; Gill, 2009; Zafar, 2015). Within these traditional gender roles, women believed that

they were obligated to assume responsibilities of being good wives and good mothers by looking after their children.

In turn, this subservient role of being a “good woman” ensures that women remain trapped in these abusive relationships. Women have expressed feeling responsible for maintaining the unity of the family for their children’s emotional and economic well-being (Ahmad et al.,2009). They contemplated the concerns of their children in single-parent families wherein the woman did not make sufficient income to support their children and did not have close ties with family members to babysit their children. Furthermore, a U.S based study revealed that given that motherhood is a significant part of the fabric of their culture, women felt that fulfilling their role as a mother surpasses their own individual suffering (Kallivayalil, 2010).

Though limited, the aforementioned literature illuminates the complexities of *izzat* and *sharam* within South Asian communities in their accounts of gender-based violence. The salience of the culturally constructed ideologies of honour and shame become evident in this literature and offer insights into how gendered violence can be perceived among the South Asian communities. However, a significant gap within this literature is that South Asian immigrant women are treated as a homogenous group. Within these communities, there is rich ethnic, linguistic, cultural and caste-based heterogeneity which can shape the way that these women experience gendered violence. In addition, the length of stay in western countries as well as language expertise varied across participants in each of these studies (Gill, 2004; Gill, 2009; Ahmed et al., 2009; Ahmad et al., 2009) which could significantly influence their experiences of gendered violence. Therefore, future research should be aimed at taking these sub-cultural identities into account when exploring survivor’s accounts of violence. As such, my thesis was

informed by this limitation and sought to examine experiences of family violence unique to Indian and Pakistani immigrant communities in the GTA.

2.4.3 Challenges and barriers to service

Limited knowledge and awareness

The limited knowledge and myths of domestic violence also surfaced in the literature. One woman in Gill's study (2004) identified that she did not know the term for domestic violence in Punjabi and described her experience of violence as simply "fighting between two people" (Gill, 2004, p.470). A Toronto study revealed that women identified the need for community awareness and education on partner abuse as they were not aware themselves of this form of violence (Ahmad et al., 2009). Additionally, women also attributed partner abuse and violence as culturally sanctioned acts or attributed it to their partner's "bad blood" or genetic causes for perpetrating violence (Ahmad et al., 2009; Gill, 2004). These findings implicate the dire need to raise education, awareness and social action within these communities to fight gender inequality and violence against women.

The context of immigration

Within the context of migration, researchers assert that women are subject to oppressive forces from patriarchal social relations that are reinforced in the broader structural environment in which they reside (Zafar, 2015; Gill, 2004; Gill, 2009; Kallivayalil, 2010). Thus, the women are likely to be victimized by oppressive social relations that are reinforced not only by their families but also by larger social systems embedded in their experiences of violence (Gill, 2004).

The narratives of South Asian women in the scholarship discussed above echo these findings in their accounts of lived experience of gendered violence. The interviews of women illustrated that factors associated with immigration such as arranged marriages wherein an enormous level of faith was placed in the idea of moving to a new country with a relatively

unknown man exacerbated their experiences of violence. They expressed feeling a sense of betrayal and isolation resulting from the loss of social support from extended family members after immigration (Ahmad et al., 2009). Further, the lack of independent immigration status also accentuated their delay in help-seeking due to fear of deportation of themselves or their families. A study of Toronto South Asian women also revealed that the lack of familiarity with the host country coupled with limited fluency in English also added to their barriers of accessing support. For example, a participant stated that “But here, even Wal-Mart little, little things I don’t know even about them... I did not know a single word of English at that time” (Zafar, 2015, p.63).

The perceptions of South Asian women are reflections of institutional racism wherein the power of the immigration laws to keep them in violent situations in turn, provides men with coercive mechanisms to abuse them. For example, Alaggia, Regehr and Rishchynski (2009) explain that in Canada, an application can be made to Citizenship and Immigration Canada by the individual facing abuse perpetrated by the sponsor. However, they point to several immigration policies and practices that can prevent the sponsored woman from leaving an abusive situation such as high cost of application fees, cases being denied based on the immigration officer’s subjective discretion, no right of appeal following denial of the application as well as non-refundability of fees in cases where the application is denied (Alaggia, Regehr and Rishchynski, 2009). Therefore, as immigration laws make women reliant on their partners as sponsors for a legal immigration status, these findings have implications for refining immigration policies so as to protect women looking to escape their abusive situations (Joshi, 2003).

2.4.4 Resilience strategies

Resilience theory facilitates a strengths-based understanding of individual and contextual variables that can mediate adverse life circumstances (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). These can

include adaptive coping, emotional regulation, sense of agency and self-efficacy, social connectedness as well as the ability to make meaning of the adverse circumstance (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Fernando, 2012). Research also indicates that resiliency must be understood not simply as an innate ability within an individual, but also within the context of their social environment (Greene & Conrad, 2002). For example, Fernando (2012) argues that that limited consideration has been given to the dimension of culture in the resiliency literature, as the cultural context can also mediate the way individuals cope in their environment.

Some examples of coping that have emerged in the dearth of literature examining resiliency in South Asian women include mental strength and will to adapt to the circumstance, self-confidence, not ruminating, good physical health, fulfilling one's duty and obligation in familial relationships, living in harmony with family members, and relying on religious beliefs and practices (Fernando, 2012). In addition, research on resilience strategies in Canadian immigrant women from South Asian countries suggests that coping for them involved social-network building, becoming acquainted with their new environment, learning job-search and language skills as well as forging friendships with other immigrant women (Martins & Reid, 2007).

Consequently, within the context of this thesis it is important to note that the process of coping and resiliency could exhibit differently for South Asian immigrant women compared to their Canadian counterparts. Western perspectives on coping may vary significantly (Fernando, 2012) and thus, it becomes relevant to consider the complex cultural and migration processes when examining resiliency in immigrant populations.

2.5 Feminist theories: Global North and South Asian feminisms

In seeking to understand Indian and Pakistani women's experiences of familial violence, I draw on feminist theoretical framework folded with perspectives from feminist movements in

India as well as in Pakistan. As mentioned in Chapter 1, all of the participants in this study identified India or Pakistan as their country of origin and as such, this thesis narrows its focus on the specificities of Indian and Pakistani immigrant women's experiences of violence.

2.5.1 Feminism in the Global North

At its fundamental core, feminism is concerned with oppressive manifestations of gender asymmetry whereby men's superior status transcends both the private and public spheres, and eviscerates women's lives as a result of oppressive heteropatriarchal social relations (DeKeseredy, 2011). Historically the feminist theses maintained that explanations of violence against women rested in gender-based power imbalances and patriarchal structures. In the early 1990s however, this framework evolved to steer feminist thinking from monolithic constructions of patriarchy. This movement, also known as third-wave feminism asserted that victimization of women is bound up by intersections of other dimensions of hierarchies such as race, age, class and religion that are also sustained in power arrangements (Hunnicut, 2009).

However, Hunnicutt (2009) attempts to revive patriarchy and re-centralizes it as a theoretical tool to explain gender-based violence. Although historically, the concept of patriarchy has been criticized for being far too simplistic and simply sustained within gendered power arrangements, Hunnicutt (2009) attempts to restructure the concept. She claims that men's violent behaviors towards women are a result of oppressive systemic structures and that when examining male dominance, it is important to consider how men themselves are located "... in their own scheme of domination relative to males and other groups not defined by gender." (p. 560). Although patriarchal systems are anchored in gendered power differentials, Hunnicutt (2009) posits that these systems are also interpolated by oppressive social relations along the lines of age, race, class, nationality and historical location. Put simply, she claims that patriarchal

behavior is determined by “pathological social arrangements” (p. 560) resulting from power relations in bureaucracies, governments, organizations as well as family systems.

2.5.1.1 Immigration through a feminist lens

In keeping with the context of this thesis, immigration is one such ‘pathological arrangement’ that has been explored by a few feminist scholars (Erez, Adelman & Gregory, 2009; Nawyn, 2010). Feminist scholarship on migration reveals that following immigration, gender relations are dramatically transformed owing to a downgrade in socio-economic status, such that it becomes a significant source of conflict between the marital couple. To complicate this, women could be further disadvantaged with reduced employment competence as some may have lacked access to sufficient education in their home country. Altogether, these ‘pathological arrangements’ challenge men’s patriarchal authority “... while simultaneously reaffirming patriarchal capitalism in the labour market” (Nawyn, 2010, p. 757). The operationalization of patriarchal capitalism lies in its core assertion that men are to achieve the breadwinner status in the family (Hunnicut, 2009), and when they are unable to fulfill this role, “social pressure and loss of hierarchical gains may mean that as men suffer unemployment and economic hardship, tensions between intimates increase” (Hunnicut, 2009, p. 560). In turn, men are likely to engage in violent behaviors towards women as a means to re-establish their sense of patriarchal order (Nawyn, 2010; Hunnicutt, 2009).

Feminist migration perspectives also share that the impact of immigration not only contributes to men’s perpetration of violence, but also the community responses to violence against women (Erez et al., 2009). For instance, in their study on immigrant women from 35 different countries in the United States, Erez et al., (2009) found that women received conflicting messages from their own communities in their host country as to the inappropriateness of

disclosing domestic violence outside of their family. Although the women were aware of the intolerance and legal ramifications of domestic abuse in their host country, they remained silent in fear of losing their social status and supports within their own communities.

2.5.1.2 Intersectional views on feminism

Within the context of violence against women, feminists have also made significant strides in encompassing the nexus of multiple social relations as they shape women's issues and lived experiences, as a result of third-wave feminist contributions (DeKeseredy, 2011). In other words, the term 'intersectionality' gained momentum within the feminist enterprise to refer to "...the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power." (Davis, 2008, p. 68).

Abundant feminist writings subsequently focused attention on the micropolitics and intersectionalities of women's issues, albeit produced by white western scholars (Davis, 2009; Liska, 2015). In doing so, Liska (2015) asserts that intersectional feminism has become a weapon for white, western feminists to speak for women of visible minorities. Despite the integration of intersectionality in feminist discourse, the feminist waves continue to exclude the activist efforts of women of color (Lawrence, 2017). The contributions of racialized women to the feminist movement and scholarship continue to be appropriated by white, western-centric feminists. In discussing the representations of South Asian women by white feminists, Puwar (2000) juxtaposes it to colonialism as South Asian women are "...pathologized as passive, ruthlessly oppressed creatures who must be saved by western discourses, representing the white man's burden or indeed the white woman's burden." (p. 132). Thus, this fallacy of western

notions of feminism is to the detriment of understanding South Asian women's lives, particularly in the context of Canada, a country that is a beacon for immigration of South Asian communities.

Although the fresh new fourth-wave of feminism in Canada has seen impressive progress in bringing issues of gendered violence to the fore such as workplace sexual harassment, campus rape culture, #MeToo movement etc., Gilchrist (2010) submits that "...physical and sexual violence committed in the home, by acquaintances... tends to fall at the bottom of the hierarchy of crime and is left off the news agenda." (p. 3). Consequently, western notions of feminism remain diluted in their approach to attain social justice for women experiencing violence in their private domestic sphere (Gilchrist, 2010).

While Davis (2008) acknowledges the success of intersectionality by acknowledging multiple social relations in feminist inquiry, she also brings forth the ambiguity that lies in the concept whereby, a fundamental concern is whether intersectionality is simply a convergence of identities, or a more complex process that is contingent on the broader socio-cultural context of the individual. Although intersectionality addresses the issue of diversity and difference among women, some feminist critiques have pointed to the monolithic conceptualisations of identities, and instead demand focus on the dynamic manifestations of various positionalities of the woman (Davis, 2008). In response to this, Davis (2008) claims that in fact, the strength of intersectionality lies in its very complexity and loose parameters. As such, she encourages feminist inquiry to critically engage in and embrace the uncertainties of understanding intersectionality. To this end, this thesis also focuses on the voices of feminists from India and Pakistan in the subsequent sub-sections to solidify the theorization of the experiences shared by the participants in this study.

2.5.2 Feminism in South Asia: Voices from India

Notwithstanding the aforementioned contentions, feminism in India calls for a rethinking of diversity and differences within the strains of mainstream feminist thought (Parashar, 2013). Given the rampant rates of violence perpetrated towards women in South Asian communities in the form of child marriages, honour killings, female foeticide, sexual violence as well as intimate partner violence (Butalia, 2012), it becomes relevant to foreground feminist understandings of violence within a broader socio-cultural milieu. One of the consistent strategies of feminists in India has been to press for the legal protection of women experiencing violence not only within their marriages, but also in other forms of family and partnered relationships, in turn making it possible for these women to report their experience of violence. The public outrage that erupted from the 2012 gang rape incident raised important questions about violence against women and Parashar (2013) argues that necessitates a fresh perspective on third wave feminism.

She cautions that western feminism leaned towards self-censorship and silencing on the matter of the 2012 rape incident and contends that western feminists avoided casting a racist gaze on this issue in calling on the Indian state to do more to protect their women. She offers an explanation for violence against women in India within the realm of identity politics and points to the misogynistic and victim blaming culture in India particularly in regard to the gang rape incident. Parashar (2013) also notes the lack of regard towards the women and an inclination to favor perpetrators within the criminal justice system in India to offer an understanding of the endemic violence faced by South Asian women.

In addition, the discussion of religion has also entered South Asian feminist scholarship whereby women's activism is examined in the context of religious representations, beliefs and traditions (Hasan, 2010). For instance, the Sikh feminist framework highlights the significance of examining violence against women in relation to gender and religion (Kaur, 2012). Enshrined

within the Guru Grant (holy book for Sikhism) are assertions of equal treatment of men and women (Brar, 2013; Badyal, 2003; Kaur, 2012). However, despite the rejections of gender-based discrimination, tensions prevail between the religion and the culture in which it is practised. Kaur (2012) maintains that the practice of placing women sub-ordinate to men is still prevalent within Sikh communities in Canada (and elsewhere) despite the entrenchment of gender equality within Sikhism. She posits that during the British colonization period, patriarchal values seeped through and contaminated the religion with patriarchal values, thereby dissolving the egalitarian norms dictated by Sikhism (Kaur, 2012). These postcolonial views are further elaborated later on in the next sub-section.

Feminist scholars have also offered understandings of Hindu goddesses in depicting the ideals of femininity and wifehood in India (Goel, 2005; Lama, 2001). For instance, Goel (2005) describes the depiction of Sita, a mythical Hindu goddess as a devoted, self-sacrificing wife to her husband who is her sole source of support. Goel (2005) puts forth the assertion that “for Indian women, power is attained through devotion and self-sacrifice rather than self-expression. Role adherence is a more respectable route to fame and admiration than speaking one’s mind or breaking the mold.” (p. 653). Another example provided is that of Durga, a goddess recognized as a symbol of power and strength, portrayed as a ten-armed warrior with images of riding a lion (Lama, 2001). Despite her furor, Durga is also represented as a “suffering mother” (Lama, 2001, p.8) who places self-sacrifice above all else which in turn propagates a narrative of subordination in women who sacrifice their selfhood and agency (Naidoo, 2018), thereby sustaining male hegemony.

2.5.2.1 Postcolonial understandings

As mentioned earlier, the partition of India in 1947 following the British rule resulted in a long-lasting legacy of cross-border politics and religious conflicts between India and Pakistan, and between Hindu and Muslim groups in India. During this time, women became symbols of religious and national pride whereby Dey (2016) draws attention to two forms of gender-based violence that ensued as a result. One form was violence perpetrated towards women from men of the opposing religious group such as rape, kidnapping and genital mutilation, and the other form of violence against women was perpetrated by their own family members (Dey, 2016). During the postcolonial period, India came to be known as *Bharatmata* or ‘Mother India’ whereby the women in the country came to be seen as “metaphorical mothers”. They symbolized purity, chastity and honour not only within their families but also as representatives of the nation. As such, when they were raped and violated by the opposing religious and national groups, they became even more susceptible to violence within their own families since they were now considered impure and dishonoured symbols of the nation (Dey, 2016). Therefore, Indian feminist historians offer nuanced and multi-layered explanations of violence perpetrated against South Asian women, rather than a singular, monolithic truth (Menon 2004; Butalia, 2002; Dey, 2016; Dasgupta, 2015).

2.5.3 Feminism in South Asia: Voices from Pakistan

Zia (2009) articulates feminist movements in Islamic Republic of Pakistan as anchored in Islamic discourse and the religious identities of Pakistan women. She posits that Islamic feminists revere the Qur’an and that women’s movements in Pakistan are aimed at upholding women’s rights and freedoms as outlined in the Qur’an, namely justice, equal rights and treatment of individuals, egalitarianism, fairness and compassion (Zia, 2009; Mirza, 2008; Weiss, 2003). By challenging the power of masculinist interpretations of the Qur’an, Islamic feminists

contend that the Islamic ethos was bent in the favor of masculine assumptions of gendered power differentials. According to Mirza (2008), women who were the original creators of the scriptures within the Qur'an were eventually rendered invisible. As such, Islamic feminists are beginning to gain impetus in reviving and resuscitating the original meanings of their religious scriptures to attain gender-based equality (Mirza, 2008; Weiss, 2003).

However, another strand of Pakistani feminism documented in the literature is secular feminism; one that is likened to western or liberal notions of feminism, and in fact, a betrayal to Muslimness (Zia, 2017; Ahmed-Ghosh, 2008). The secular feminist framework is aimed at liberating women outside of Islam and proposes the separation of religion with equal rights by stating that women's rights in Pakistan must be embedded in human rights and secularist discourses (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2008). Whereas secular feminists in Pakistan strive to attain equal treatment of men and women, Muslim feminists regard this agenda as paternalistic. Instead, the latter propose blame being directed towards men and patriarchy, rather than the Islamic religion itself (Zia, 2017).

2.5.3.1 Postcolonial understandings

Notwithstanding the tensions between the two strands of feminism in Pakistan, Ahmed (2009) also points to the communal Hindu-Islamic violence following the partition whereby women's sexuality was symbolized and controlled as an apparatus to re-gain power. She concludes that "The postcolonial men re-colonized the bodies and minds of their women as a reaction and in an effort to preserve their cultural values" (p. 92). Just like their Hindu sisters, Muslim women faced similar atrocities involving abduction and violence of various forms, though compounded with added political stressors of navigating a new national identity, a new

nation and disconnection from their original homeland of India (Yusin, 2009; Ahmed, 2009; Narasimhan-Madhavan, 2006).

Islamic feminist scholars have also drawn attention to the racializing discourses towards Muslim communities post-9/11 and the resulting War on Terror (WoT) (Zia, 2017) whereby veiled Muslim women became targets of violent acts. With an increase in the distorted association between Islam and terrorist acts, Muslim diasporic women became subject to discrimination and violence within their public spheres. Central to the War on Terror are Islamophobic ideologies, that according to Gidaris (2018) results in Muslim immigrant men experiencing misplaced identities and societal emasculation, thereby causing them to resort to gendered violence to re-assert their masculinity and patriarchal social relations.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

3.1 Chosen methodology

This thesis was guided by the methodology of case study and qualitative research methods to investigate the experiences of family violence among self-identified South Asian women in the Greater Toronto Area, particularly against a backdrop of immigration-specific challenges. Inherent in qualitative research paradigms, is the fundamental tenet that it can evoke a rich comprehensiveness of broad perspectives (Choy, 2014). Qualitative research methodologies depart from the traditional quantitative paradigms that are heavily rooted in numerical data and statistical analysis. For the purpose of this research, it is argued that the sufferings of Indian and Pakistani women who have experienced familial abuse cannot be numerically comprehended. The unique identities, beliefs, perceptions and experiences of the population to be studied cannot be quantified, nor can it be adequately understood without reference to broader socio-cultural forces. Qualitative research within this context allowed me to gauge the nuances of human experience that might otherwise escape a quantitative researcher (Choy, 2014). By illuminating rich and thick descriptions of the women in the proposed study, a qualitative investigation deepened the discerning into the unique, lived realities of immigrant South Asian women who have experienced family violence.

Furthermore, some scholars have ascertained that qualitative research is closely aligned with feminist theoretical stances and viewpoints (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1995). Given the chosen theoretical framework for this research, a qualitative inquiry is fitting with the philosophical underpinnings of feminist theory, particularly in this research, to minimize power differentials between the researcher and the researched (Karnielli-Miller, Strier & Pessach, 2009). The gendered nature of the current topic being studied warrants a methodological approach that

departs from the androcentric basis of quantitative research, which according to several feminist scholars favors “masculine” ways of knowing through positivism, scientific inquiry and objectivity (Henwood & Pidgeon, 1995). As such, a qualitative means to investigate the experiences of familial abuse not only creates a suitable space for participant empowerment, but also lends itself to an emic, interpretivist way of knowing.

3.2 Research Design

A case study approach

A hallmark of case study methodology to qualitative studies is that it allows researchers the opportunity to elucidate multiple features of a phenomenon, within a specific context (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Starman, 2013). The specific context within this research study is the Greater Toronto Area of Ontario, Canada, and as such it is joined into the methodological architecture of this thesis. Case studies also allow for the investigation of a phenomenon through multiple sources of evidence (Noor, 2008) and so, the data was derived from both immigrant South Asian women who were able to share their lived narratives of familial abuse as well as service providers who provided their perspectives on said matter against a background of socio-cultural landscape of the GTA.

Although case study approaches to research can utilize either quantitative or qualitative data as well as a combination of both, Starman (2013) indicates that case studies were one of the first types of research design utilized in the field of qualitative research. In fact, she states that the features of a case study approach are intricately tied to “the interpretative paradigm, phenomenological approach, and constructivism” (Starman, 2013, p. 30) of qualitative methodologies. Significant strengths of a case study approach are that they elucidate well-rounded views of the phenomenon being studied given that multiple sources of evidence are

being used, and that they allow for generalizations (Noor, 2008). However, case studies have also been critiqued for lacking in rigour and reliability (Noor, 2008). In order to mitigate these limitations, Starman (2013) recommends including comprehensive accounts of researcher reflexivity as well as data collection procedures, both of which are included in this thesis in chapter 1 and the current chapter respectively.

Furthermore, Starman (2013) describes case studies as “a comprehensive description of an individual case and its analysis; i.e., the characterization of the case and the events, as well as a description of the discovery process of these features that is the process of research itself.” (p. 31). In keeping with this, I also provided a description of this “discovery process” in the next section of this chapter through describing the challenges encountered during the recruitment aspect of my research journey. Doing so allowed me to add further depth to this case study and add richness to our understandings of family-based violence in Indian and Pakistani immigrant communities of the GTA.

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Recruitment procedures and challenges

The beginnings of the data collection journey proved remarkably challenging, as I embarked upon defensiveness and reluctance from what McAreavy and Das (2013) refer to as ‘community gatekeepers’. Purposive sampling technique was intended, and as such I approached the recruitment process as one traditionally would; through the avenues of agencies that worked specifically or more broadly with the population being studied. Thus, I networked into agencies that worked either specifically or more broadly with the population being studied. Numerous organizations were contacted which included newcomer and immigrant populations, violence

against women sectors as well as agencies providing general mental health-specific services in the Greater Toronto Area.

At first glance, this approach was seemingly simple and promising, however my efforts in recruiting participants were far from fruitful. Intense challenges awaited me as I was met with skepticism and a dubious gaze when describing my research topic when approaching both front-line and management staff at these agencies. Frequent concerns expressed amongst the community agencies were “where are the real changes?” referring to concrete and practical changes in the community such as increase in effective resources, support and service provision for South Asian immigrant women, or I was met with comments such as “Abuse problems? In the South Asian community? How original!” followed by an eye roll. Notwithstanding my frustrations in this process, it also became apparent to me that perhaps, the gatekeepers were acting as protective agents to safeguard their own community from research fatigue and further burn-out. As such, I felt that this was a legitimate and reasonable response from the gatekeepers albeit compromising my ability to “get in” and conduct my research.

In revisiting the scholarship on help-seeking behaviors among South Asian women who have experienced family violence, Mahapatra and DiNitto (2013) note that women from the South Asian communities are more likely to seek informal sources of support such as relatives, friends in the community as well as community temples. Consequently, I skillfully pivoted my data collection approaches to non-traditional avenues such as through word of mouth, outreach to Indian and Pakistani grocery stores, South Asian restaurants, traditional South Asian clothing stores (such as saree shops), religious institutions such as local Gurudwaras and Mosques as well as online ‘desi’ meet up groups. Regardless of my innovative and unique approach towards recruiting participants however, my efforts remained futile.

Of particular significance was a conversation that I had with a self-identified man from India who was the organizer of a South Asian based meet-up group in the Greater Toronto Area. Upon iterating the scope and dimensions of my research, particularly the participant pool being sought, his immediate response was – “Ok but why aren’t you researching men?... our men in the community also suffer at the hands of these women...”. The researcher in me was piqued, and when prompted to elaborate, he justified South Asian men’s behaviors as an appropriate punitive response to women who talked back or did not comply with what they were told to do. Although I gracefully thanked him for his time and terminated the conversation, his patriarchal undertone begged further demand into my research foray.

McAreavy and Das (2013) assert that community gatekeepers can be significantly influential in identifying potential participants and allowing route of access, which in turn, can be mitigated by exercising *phronesis* or situational judgement. They note that *phronesis* involves an assessment of the power differentials between researcher’s positionality and that of the gatekeepers. My exercise of *phronesis* during this process involved carefully decentralizing my identity as a western social work researcher and re-connecting with my positionality as a South Asian woman from India, which had initially generated my interest in this topic. Consequently, I began to humbly engage in healthy self-disclosures of my aforementioned identity, particularly my challenges as an immigrant to Canada and connected it to my personal (rather than academic) investment in this research topic. As a result, a few but supportive agencies became agreeable to assisting with participant recruitment which resulted in a total of nine participants; six service providers and three women survivors of familial abuse. Table 1 in the following section outlines the socio-demographic characteristics of the nine participants.

3.3.2 Socio-demographic characteristics of participants

Table 1. Socio-demographic representation of women survivors and service providers

Table 1. Participant Demographics				
Women with lived experience:				
	Marital Status	No. of years in Canada	Immigration status	Country of origin
P1	Married	11	Permanent residence	India
P2	Divorced	13	Permanent residence	India
P3	Separated	2	Spousal sponsorship	Pakistan
Service providers:				
	No. of years of experience	Self-identified gender	Educational background	Country of origin
S1	20	Female	Postsecondary education	India
S2	20	Male	Postsecondary education	India
S3	28	Male	Postsecondary education	India
S4	17	Female	Postsecondary education	Canada (born to Indian immigrant parents)
S5	11	Female	Postsecondary education	Pakistan
S6	20	Female	Unknown	India

Table 1 provides the socio-demographic characteristics of the three women survivors and six service providers that participated in this study, as well as their assigned participant numbers. Extensive demographic information was not included so as to preserve the confidentiality and safety of both survivors and service providers that participated.

Three survivors of family violence volunteered to participate in this study and all of the women were over the age of 18. Their length of stay in Canada varied between 2 to 13 years. Two of the women identified India as their country of origin and both held a Canadian permanent resident status. One woman identified Pakistan as her country of origin and arrived in

Canada under a spousal sponsorship status. Finally, their marital statuses varied with one woman who was divorced, one who was separated and one who was married.

Of the six service providers that participated in the study, four identified as female and two as male. Their work experiences over the course of their profession varied and included position titles such as counsellor, therapist in a private practice, case manager, group facilitator, program developer, director as well as CEO. These titles have not been specifically indicated next to each provider in Table 1 in order to protect their anonymity. Their work experience in number of years also varied from 11 years to 28 years. Five of the service providers held various post secondary educational degrees relevant to their field of work however, their specific educational qualifications have not been listed to further preserve their anonymity. One service provider did not wish to indicate her educational background. Finally, four of the service providers identified their countries of origin as India and one was from Pakistan. However, one service provider indicated Canada as her country of origin with familial and ethno-cultural roots from India.

3.3.3 Data collection procedures

An advertisement poster outlining the details of the study (Appendix B) was emailed or handed out in person to various organizations explaining the background of my research and inviting participants who met the selection criteria to contact me if they were willing to participate in the study. In addition, I provided these organizations with a copy of the informed consent form for women with lived experience (Appendix B) and for service providers (Appendix A), as well as an agency script (Appendix D) so that potential participants were well-informed of their role in the study, including voluntary participation. Every effort was made through follow-up phone calls and in-person meetings with these organizations to ensure

continued rapport and maintain open lines of communication for further questions or clarifications regarding my research.

During the initial contact, participants were asked questions to ensure their eligibility for the study as advertised on the research poster (Appendix C). Prior to conducting research interviews, any concerns or questions that participants had were addressed, and they were reminded that their participation was strictly voluntary, and they could withdraw at any point without penalty. The research setting was selected with careful consideration for the convenience and safety of the participants, particularly for those who were actively in an abusive relationship such as community centres, libraries, their residences as well as the agency they were recruited from. Interviews with four of the service providers took place at their respective community agencies whereas the remaining two interviews were conducted over the phone as per their preferences.

Informed consent was explained, and a signed copy of the consent form was provided to the participants. In several of the cases however, verbal consent was obtained as two service provider interviews were conducted over the phone due to time constraints and three of the women interviewed either lacked fluency in English or had limited reading literacy in English. This was mitigated by reviewing the form with participants verbally and inviting them to ask questions or seek clarification on the contents of the consent form. Permission was sought for audio-recording the interviews, and three of the participants granted permission whereas handwritten notes were taken for the remainder of interviews. The participants were also reminded that interview recordings, notes, transcriptions as well as informed consent forms would be kept in a secure location only accessible to myself, and that the original interviews including the field notes would be destroyed following electronic transcription into password-protected files.

The initial stages of the interview began with casual and light conversations as a means to build rapport with the participants, followed by informal but semi-structured interviews (Appendix E) to facilitate the participants' narratives of familial violence. Although the interviews were conducted in English, a few of the participants inserted Hindi words and phrases in their narratives. In order to avoid implicit assumptions as to what they meant, I interjected the interview and invited them to explain the words or phrases in their own words in English. Throughout the interviews, I maintained active vigilance for body language and non-verbal gestures that indicated signs of emotional distress so as to offer them a break if needed. A copy of resource listings in the Greater Toronto Area offering a broad range of services such as counselling, newcomer information, shelter and crisis support as well as housing and food banks resources (Appendix F), was kept on my person at all times, and offered to women upon their request. The interviews lasted 60 to 90 minutes in total and breaks were taken as needed.

3.4 Data analysis

Braun and Clarke (2009) submit that thematic analysis is a foundational method for analysis in qualitative studies, with additional research citing that this form of data analysis can yield rich, insightful and trustworthy results (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017). As such, a thematic analysis of the narrative data was conducted to code for any emergent themes, patterns and unique meanings that arose in participants' discourses of family violence.

Although the theoretical framework outlined earlier will anchor the initial orientation to the analytic themes within this thesis, I argue for an intermediate position between inductive and deductive approaches to thematic analysis. A deductive approach enabled me to generate themes and codes based on previous scholarship as well as on the research questions. However, a

combined approach allowed for flexibility and space to study unexpected features of participants' discourses as outlined in the subsequent chapter of this thesis (Gale et al., 2013).

The audio-recorded data was transcribed verbatim by myself, and field notes were entered into electronic word file documents, following which the original interviews were destroyed. The thematic analysis was conducted in accordance with the six phases of analysis outlined by Braun and Clarke (2009). During phase 1, I actively engaged with familiarizing myself with the data as well as the observational field notes to discern any meanings or patterns that might emerge. In immersing myself in the transcribed data, I acquainted myself with the depths and breadths of the narrative accounts, while simultaneously remaining cognizant of my own pre-conceived perceptions, assumptions and beliefs about the topic being researched. Notes and ideas were jotted down at this juncture of analysis for potential emerging patterns, prior to the formal coding process.

Utilizing the notes made in phase 1, I then began to scan the entire data set systematically to identify interesting features and as many potential themes as possible. Consistent revisiting of the transcripts as well as field notes ensured full and careful attention to the data in its' entirety. Each data extract selected was named and tagged based on broad themes identified (Braun & Clarke, 2009), with emerging trends and impressions duly recorded alongside each general category (Nowell et al., 2017).

Following phase 2, I organized the codes identified into broader, overarching themes, and subsequently refined into main themes. During phase 3 and 4, I reviewed each of the themes to ensure that the data set within each theme was consistent in its' patterns, and the validity of the individual themes were examined to ensure that they fit with the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2009). Some of the initial codes were formed into global themes whereas others collapsed into

sub-themes either deductively based on prior scholarship and theoretical conceptualizations on familial abuse, or inductively where it bore minimal significance to the interview questions asked of the research interviewees.

In phase 5 and 6, key features of the data set within the themes were noted so as to refine the thematic categories and sub-categories, which were then defined and titled accordingly. At this stage, I debriefed with the members of the thesis committee to ensure the credibility, clarity and comprehensiveness of the finalized themes. After consensus was reached, the final phase of this analytic process involved the write-up of the finalized themes in a logical and coherent manner (Braun and Clarke, 2009; Nowell et al., 2017). Here, the global themes, underlying sub-themes as well as exemplar extracts were discussed as both within the scope of prior literature and theorizations, as well as deviating from and contrasting prior findings.

Finally, given my active involvement in the data analysis procedure, there was potential for researcher subjectivity in selecting the narratives and subsequent themes to fit the research questions (Mason, 2002). Therefore, in order to mitigate this subjectivity, I invited participants to provide feedback in checking and confirming the research findings. However, one service provider and all three of the survivors did not wish to be contacted following the research interviews. As such, quotes selected within the context of the research findings were only emailed to the remaining service providers to confirm or provide feedback. Since several of those service providers had expressed that they may not be able to provide feedback due to busy schedules and workloads, only one service provider confirmed the findings.

As a result, I branched out to several other service providers and activists in the community working with this population and shared my research findings with them. All of them affirmed that the findings resonated with their experiences of working with South Asian women

who have faced family violence. This not only verified the trustworthiness of the study, but it was also in alignment with feminist approaches to research in mitigating power differentials between the researcher and the researched (Doucet, 2006).

3.5 Ethical considerations

Psychological and emotional distress

Given the vulnerable population that was studied in this research and the nature of their lived experiences, it was anticipated that the women might experience varying levels of emotional distress during the course of the research interviews. In order to minimize this risk, I consistently checked in with both service provider participants and participants with lived experiences of familial abuse as to how they were feeling and encouraged them to take breaks if necessary. More importantly, I had networked and familiarized myself with resources in the GTA, to provide these women with information on services for therapeutic support with their emotional distress. For those women in particular who were actively in an abusive familial environment, I additionally offered resources for emergency shelters as well as local police phone numbers.

Mitigating dual social worker-researcher role

As a practicing concurrent disorders social worker in the community, with previous professional experience in the violence against women sector, it became imperative for me to mitigate the therapeutic encounters infused within the qualitative interview process. Maintaining critical awareness of my 'knee-jerk' reactions to respond as a practitioner rather than a researcher, a critical awareness of my preconceived beliefs as well as overall self-reflexivity were key in navigating this dual role. Borrowing from Nelson, Onwuegbuzie, Wines and Frels (2013), "...interviews in qualitative research can be beneficial and curative for researchers and

participants alike.” (p. 3). Further, during several of the interviews where other service providers offered views on family violence that contradicted with western social work values and principles, rejecting their views would be unethical. As such, I was mindful to remain intellectually curious rather than intellectually prescribed and provided participants with a non-judgemental space to provide their unique thoughts and opinions.

Confidentiality

Notwithstanding the confidential nature of the vulnerable information being shared by the participants, silence within South Asian communities is particularly rife (Ahmad et al., 2009; Gill, 2009; Zafar, 2015). As such, it was of paramount concern to preserve the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants; no less significant, their physical and psychological safety. Any identifying information of all participants was erased from all transcribed data and only the informed consent forms contained their names, which were kept in a locked facility accessed only by me. In addition, participants were assigned numbers rather than pseudonyms, to minimize risks of being identified by others in the community who may associate the pseudonym with a particular participant.

Minimizing stereotyped representations

Thirdly, an ethical risk within this research was that by choosing to study family violence within a specific sub-group of South Asian communities, the research could be viewed as perpetuating the stereotypical view that violence is inherent within Indian and Pakistani communities. As such, it was of significant concern to avoid casting a stereotypical gaze into these communities by inaccurately portraying these women as downtrodden and submissive victims of violence. Therefore, as an ending section to the research interviews, questions

surrounding the women's strengths, resourcefulness and overall resilience were emphasized so as to illuminate their courageousness in facing insurmountable challenges of family violence.

3.6 Establishing trustworthiness of the study

The assurance of rigor in qualitative research endeavors can be attained by adherence to four criteria outlined by Guba (1981) namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. In accordance with these criteria, this thesis sought to preserve the integrity and worth of its' findings as follows:

Credibility

Merriam (1998) described credibility as internal consistency of qualitative data, and how truthful the findings are to realistic representations of human experiences. As such, iterative questioning techniques such as probing and rephrasing questions were used to verify credibility so that the data collected truly mirrored South Asian women's accounts of family abuse experiences. Credibility was also established by inviting participants to be privy to the data analysis process in this thesis, to ensure that the findings accurately reflect their experiences of family abuse. In addition, ongoing efforts were made to guard against imposing any preconceived assumptions based on theory, prior literature or personal experiences, by actively engaging in self-reflexivity. This process involved having honest internal conversations with myself both before and after the interviews as to 1) how did my body language and mannerisms come across to the participants? 2) what were some assumptions I had going into the interviews 3) did I notice any discomfort or unease in myself during the interviews and if so, why? Having these introspective conversations allowed me to skillfully challenge and reflect on any bias, judgement or pre-established agenda I may have had throughout the interviews. For example, in Chapter 1 I outlined my embodiment of 'whiteness' through my short hair, clothing choices and

wearing an eyebrow piercing. In becoming mindful of this, I opted to remove my piercing and dressed appropriately during each of the research interviews.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which qualitative findings can be extrapolated from one context into another (Krefting, 1990; Merriam, 1998). Morrow (2005) suggests that “This is achieved when the researcher provides sufficient information about the self (the researcher as instrument) and the research context, processes, participants, and researcher– participant relationships to enable the reader to decide how the findings may transfer.” (p. 252).

Consequently, sufficient descriptions of researcher reflexivity, methodological processes as well as context information of the Greater Toronto Area have been provided to allow the reader to ascertain whether findings from this research are transferable to other settings. On this note, it is also important to re-assert that the aim of this research is not to generalize the subjective meanings of violence in this study to those of the general Indian, Pakistani or wider South Asian populations. Rather, it is aimed at bringing to light, the unique and complex realities of each of the participants interviewed.

Dependability

Dependability is likened to reliability in quantitative research and is concerned with the generation of consistent findings when the same methodological procedures are repeated in the same context with the same participants. As such, this was achieved by inviting participants to view the findings of this research (as mentioned earlier). All of the service providers who participated in this study were emailed electronic copies of their interview transcripts as well as a list of quotes selected from their interviews for the purpose of this thesis. However, the women with lived experience did not feel comfortable with any further contact following the research

interview. In fact, one woman laughed stating that “I do not want to hear my story again and again!”. Nevertheless, I welcomed all of them to contact me in case they changed their decision to view their electronic interview transcripts. It is also important to note that I invited all participants to view my field notes as I wrote them to maintain transparency and dependability throughout the interview process.

Further, the operationalization of data collection and analysis techniques were described in detail so that the readers and future researchers can ascertain the rigor of methodological processes. In turn, this will lay the foundation for future research to repeat the work without necessarily obtaining the same results, as variability is to be expected in qualitative studies (Krefting, 1990; Shenton 2004).

Confirmability

Confirmability is concerned with the acknowledgement that researcher bias is inevitable in qualitative investigations such as within this thesis, and that researcher objectivity is foreseeable (Morrow, 2005; Shenton 2004). As discussed earlier, confirmability was attained in this study through the researcher’s commentary on reflexivity, social location and researcher bias. This was done to ensure that the findings were a truthful reflection of the narratives of family violence among Indian and Pakistani immigrant women, with minimal intrusion of researcher bias in the study.

CHAPTER 4

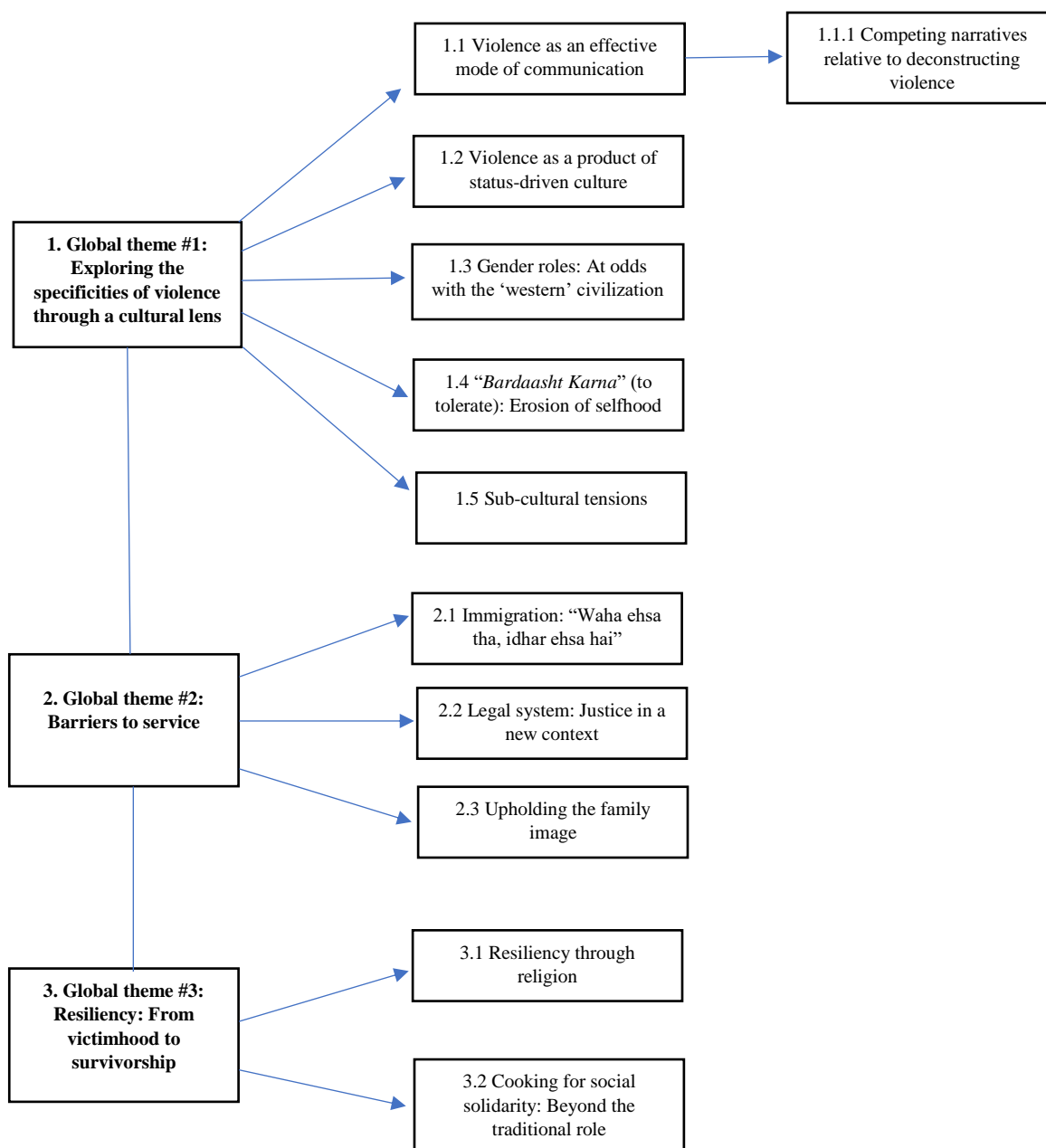
FINDINGS

This chapter addresses the research questions that were outlined in Chapter 1 and are reiterated below:

- 1) What are the cultural specificities of family violence as experienced by Indian and Pakistani immigrant women in the GTA?
- 2) How are their experiences situated within an immigration context?

In response to these questions, this chapter presents thematically organized texts from the narrative accounts of both survivors and service providers to illuminate our understanding of the experiences of Indian and Pakistani immigrant women in the Greater Toronto Area who have survived family violence. Although their narratives underpinned the complexities of their experiences, it is important to note that their accounts do not serve to represent all Indian and Pakistani women who have survived family abuse. While their voices offer rich insights into their lived experiences of abuse, I urge the readers to engage in cultural humility (Fisher-Borne, Cain & Martin, 2015) as outlined in Chapter 3 by bearing in mind the colonial constructs of culture and the unique intersectionalities of all South Asian women who have endured family violence.

By thematically analysing the narratives from the research interviews, I organized the findings into three overarching themes 1) Exploring the specificities of violence through a cultural lens, 2) Barriers to service and 3) Resiliency: From victimhood to survivorship. The three categories were further refined to yield sub-themes under each of the categories. In order to supplement our understanding of these research findings, the categories were organized into a thematic map as represented in the graph below:



Graph 1. Thematic chart showing the three main themes with further sub-categorizations

4.1 Study findings

1. Global theme #1: Exploring the specificities of violence through a cultural lens

This theme developed from the myriad of beliefs and understandings of family violence that emerged as a common thread across all respondents. By noting the meaning-makings of familial violence from a cultural praxis, I am not intending to utilize the domain of ‘culture’ from a simplistic stance. In doing otherwise, would be investing Indian and Pakistani cultures as

problematic, and reifying negative stereotypes attached to these communities. Rather, this thematic category as well as the lower order sub-categories illustrate the complex subjectivities of violence that are informed by the various geometries of social, political, historical and colonial contexts of so-called ‘culture’.

1.1 Violence as an effective mode of communication

Several of the narratives from both women survivors as well as service providers treated violence as an effective mode of communication; a language that is “understood” within the familial sphere. For instance, one service provider S1 informed:

“See, violence is when two people not agree on one thing, like not agree for going out, not agree for buying house, like that... it happens when they are not able to communicate properly, they don’t have capacity to talk, don’t have proper communication skill, don’t listen properly with anyone... then one disagreement adds to another... then creates violence you know.”

She went on to reiterate communication-skills as the basis for “violence” and emphasized her disengagement with the said term:

“Actually, I don’t believe in this word... violence... if I should be able to talk things, put assumptions and expectation aside, and start communicating... see if couples are staying together with communication skills, they will start management situations”

Corroborating this view was another service provider S3 who provided a further context and explanation of how faulty communication lies within the male perpetrators of family abuse:

“...men, generally have a... skills-deficit about communication. They are unable to express their feelings, they are unable to articulate what they want in a meaningful manner with their life partners. So as a result, the only thing that they have been trained in, that as men they should be whatever they say, should be listened to and kind of ... “

He went on to reiterate this skills-deficit as the precursor that leads to the development of violent behavior among men in the Indian and Pakistani communities. The following extract from his interview illustrates the means used by perpetrators of violence to convey and assert dominance within the patriarchal landscape:

“So there is a skill-deficit which leads to anger, which then subsequently leads to violence and that is a particular phenomena within South Asian men and especially the ones that become violent is that they are... their self-esteem takes a hit when a child or a wife asks them questions, as to why she should do it, why is it not right for you to wash the dishes, why are you this? Well because I say so, ... but that’s not good enough. So that skills deficit, is another reason where anger is generated, and men don’t know how to deal with it now.”

S3’s narrative also calls attention to internalized essentialist notions of family violence as resulting from a “...*particular phenomena within South Asian men...*”. This narrative is consistent with dominant discourses of culture as the sole force of violence against women (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005; Razack, 2003; Mann & Grimes, 2001) and thus, it is likely that his response was an “...individual inculcation of the racist stereotypes, values, images, and ideologies perpetuated by the White dominant society about one’s racial group, leading to feelings of self-doubt, disgust, and disrespect for one’s race and/or oneself” (Pyke, 2010, p. 553).

Coinciding with S3’s views, one survivor P1 shared her experience of deciding to leave her home to seek solace in a shelter, when her mother-in-law’s verbal abuse towards her escalated. She shared that when her husband and his brother payed her a visit at the shelter, they complacently stated that she must learn to effectively “*communicate with my mother-in-law*”. She added that “*he said I have to listen to him (my husband) and he has to listen to me... then I came back (home).*” She went on to state that when her mother-in-law uses “*bad words*” towards her, “*my husband got angry with me because I am not talking... and communicating... so they benefit of my weakness*”. While P1 attempted to seek refuge from her mother in-law, she was reeled back into the confines of her abusive household by being told she had a ‘communicative’ part to play in her abusive relationship. Her narrative marks her internalization of blame towards herself as she was led to believe that her “weakness” of not being able to communicate was the source of her abusive circumstance.

1.1.1 Competing narratives relative to deconstructing violence

Contradicting the explanations provided by service providers and survivors in the comments above, S4 offered an alternative account of why violence takes place in immigrant families:

“... I think the biggest thing at the heart of it all, is power and control. It doesn't matter if you are a woman or a man, or what your age is. Abuse essentially is, you know people wanting to feel in control especially if they don't feel they're in control of their life. And newcomers are susceptible to this, because you know a lot of stuff they can't control, how they'll get a job, how they'll settle, there's just a lot of like stresses. And stress doesn't always lead to violence but stress is definitely a huge risk factors for people becoming violent.”

As outlined in the socio-demographic profile of participants in Table 1, it is important to note that unlike all other participants, S4 identified her country of origin as Canada with familial roots from India. Unlike other service providers and survivors in this study, S4 attributes power and control dynamics as the root cause of violence. Although, she acknowledges the increased vulnerability of newcomer women, her narrative does not denote immigration and acculturative stressors as the ultimate sources of family violence. Her explanation for family violence is rooted in traditional understandings of violence as a power and control issue (Kaur & Garg 2008) rather than a communicative issue between the woman and her family as shared by other participants.

1.2 Violence: A product of a status-driven culture

This theme underpins violence within the family as a product of a broader status-conscious society whereby women are pitted against one another, particularly in the context of domestic responsibilities. One service provider S4 draws attention to the importance of maintaining social status within various realms in the broader South Asian community:

“...you know they care what society says, what the community is gonna say and this is just what people are concerned about. And there's a lot of competition I should say, I feel in the South Asian community... But you know we're taught growing up as girls you know- look at her daughter, look how pretty she is, or how much education my kid has, or how much... you

know, it's just the competitive culture. And so people don't air their dirty laundry, people don't talk about what's really going on..."

Similarly, two of the women survivors P1 and P2 further this notion of “*competitive culture*” by utilizing a culture-specific idiom “*proudy*”; an Indian slang for someone who is egotistic or arrogant:

Participant: My father in law uses bad words to me... mother in law and father in law have so much proud... they are prouddy you know?

Researcher: Can you explain what you mean by prouddy?

Participant: ...like they are prouddy, if I cook any vegetables or pulses... he says “see how your mother in law is cooking vegetables” ... maybe I am a little bit slow for work compare to her...

Researcher: Why do you think your husband Why do you think he bullied you?

Participant: Jealousy and I think sick people... maybe he have mental problem... because nice good man no feel jealousy right? ... I think he is prouddy man... and lots of prouddy... and I am very shy lady and I am not prouddy... but he is so jealous... jealous of my family, because they are rich... he don't like me...

Both these women alluded to their experiences of violence stemming from a status-oriented and hierarchical dynamics within their families. In a society that values masculinity and renders women as subordinate to men, the above extracts highlight women being pitted against one another to compete for value within their family systems. Once again, it is important to note that these narratives trace back to imperial domesticity and oppressive gendered social relations introduced during the British colonization of India (Blunt, 1999; Stevenson, 2013). The responses of the participants are further reflective of patriarchal capitalism whereby men are to maintain the breadwinner status, thus relegating domestic responsibilities onto the women of the family. Shouldering the burden to uphold family reputation, the women carry the colonial weight of not only competing against other women in the family but also women in the wider community. Their narratives further tie into the challenges of the divide between prescribed gender roles in their home country and those within the western landscape of Canada as described in the following sub-section.

1.3 Gender roles: At odds with the ‘western civilization’

Many of the respondents acknowledged that tensions between traditionally prescribed gender roles during the colonial period and those within the western landscape as the root of abusive behaviors among men. One of the male service providers S3 explicitly described this disruption in gender roles as a source of significant unease among men in the family:

“So this whole, role kind of... role realignment- who is going to do what, is a source of contention, and is a source of inability to find the right medium as to who should do what, and that in many of the couples, men are unable to become flexible. They are ... their self-esteem takes a hit when they have to do the dishes, they do not think that that is their job, or change the diaper of a child, or give child a bath, or uhm... whatever other things the wife wants them to do, I think that that is one... the problem lies predominantly in the inability of men to come to terms with the increasing equity demands of women in our community.”

He went on to highlight how the traditional space of gender roles within South Asian communities are disturbed in the western context of Canada. The following text from S3’s interview explains that following migration, men resort to violence in an attempt to denigrate and re-set themselves as distinct, in the uncharted waters of the west:

“So this whole discussion between rights and roles is a source of serious contention, and men are having difficulty. It’s not that our women are having difficulty, women do not have difficulty. It’s that... in India, misogyny and toxic masculinity is grounded in our culture. And so men are having greater difficulty in Canada, then South Asian women, South Asian women are just saying ‘hey look, this is human rights, these are our rights, and you should respect the Canadian laws. We are living here, we are not living back home. So stop beating me, stop yelling at me, stop sexually abusing me’. So she is not doing anything illegal, the guys on the other hand are saying, ‘you have change, you are misusing your newly acquired knowledge to put me in my place’ Now he perceives it to be an unjust. So,... the difficulty that South Asian men are having is the fact that the... uh, for the first time women in Canada, South Asian women in Canada are able to challenge them on equal footing. And men don’t know how to answer back. So the only answer back is, by using violence to put them in their place.”

S3’s response offered a critical and nuanced view of shifting gender roles within the context of immigration. Rather than the women struggling with changes in prescribed gender norms, he claimed that it is the immigrant men who are grappling with the disruption of their gender-based ideals. Upon immigrating to and settling in Canada, South Asian men are

fraught with a sense of emasculation as women have come to possess new power by way of knowing their rights in their new homeland. In turn, South Asian women are now equipped to challenge abusive and violent behaviors from their partners. In order to counter this perceived threat towards their sense of manhood, South Asian men resort to violence as a means to re-establish their ideals of gender-based power relations. It should also be noted that S3's contention that "...in India, misogyny and toxic masculinity is grounded in our culture." could once again be an exemplification of internalized oppression and a misconstrued understanding of South Asian culture, as previous research has asserted that misogyny and toxic masculinity are in fact, prevalent in western cultures as well (Meharchand, 2016; Graff, 2003).

Adherence to these prescribed gender roles were traced back to early socialization of children in South Asian contexts. The narratives below iterated the early socialization of children in India and Pakistan to comply with imbalanced gender norms as well as restrictions and expectations placed on opposite-sex interactions. The comments highlighted an attempt to uphold the social constructions of masculinity and femininity, as well as to propagate the patriarchal social relations and subsequent gender division amongst younger generations. The narratives below from S2 reflected on how South Asian immigrant women resist gender-based boundaries, particularly within the context of interacting with members of the opposite sex:

"Like, especially in the women girls, sometimes their parents have certain restriction- you can't go with your boyfriend on Friday evening after sometime, and you have to be there. And there might be discussion- hey dad or mom, why you are not telling this thing to my brother? He is always outside and you never said like this? This kind of, ... they feel offended for that."

"They are... saying this is a male (holds one hand above) this is a female (holds other hand below)... girl or boy, from the very beginning, the boy (indicates hand placed above)... If, a person, a father has 18 year old boy and 18 year old girl. He can easily say to that boy- hey you have girlfriend? Now you are 18! How often he is asking his daughter, hey you are 18, do

you have boyfriend? They are not comfortable, they are not used to this kind of talk. Right? So here is the gender equality thing we are seeing..."

Another interview from service provider S4 further departed from the homogenous and static views of Indian and Pakistani women as vested in traditional roles. In fact, the narrative from S4 below reflects on how these women are caught between colonially sanctioned gender norms from their home countries and those in their host country of Canada:

"... so there is a lot of confusion. Women don't really want to prescribe to the traditional thing, but at the same time they want to be you know valued by their community and their parents... they want their parents to be proud of them, or you know getting married and having kids and doing all of the traditional stuff too right? So I think our generation wants to fit into both worlds like we wanna be of our culture, but we wanna be western almost and be seen as the more progressive way."

The above narratives from service providers resisted the homogenous views of gender roles in India and Pakistan as static, and instead shifted towards a nuanced and complex territory of gender role socialization within this population. The comments above casted a unique perspective on gender roles in South Asian contexts as tenuous and women being caught between the tradition-modernity dichotomy. Notably, these narratives are important as they signified a departure from the hegemonic discourses of women in India and Pakistan as traditional, submissive and compliant with prescribed gender norms (Puwar, 2000). Rather, they illuminated the attempts of South Asian women to challenge male-dominated agendas and unsettle the tradition-modernity paradigm as it relates to gender roles.

1.4 "*Bardaasht Karna*" (to tolerate): Erosion of selfhood

In this thematic sub-category, service provider S1 further laid out the gender distinction whereby women are expected to adjust, even in the face of dire circumstances such as abuse and violence. She characterized the unique role of women as self-sacrificing and her duty as a wife to "*bardaasht karna*" (to tolerate). The following excerpt from her interview exemplified her

characterization of women as adhering to servility, so as to uphold the sanctity of their marriage and larger family units. In other words, the “power” to avoid violence according to this service provider, lies within the woman’s ability to adjust, and not simply the man.

“You see, parents always teach them (the women) to adjust. When women don’t understand- why my parents are saying to adjust?... god made lots of power in a woman, the power to adjust... if one person is not in state of mind, the other should understand... women got a power that is not in a male... male and female have different qualities... equal comes to their mind, then comes pride, then this starts violence at home... you have to take care of and respect together”

Another service provider S2 echoed this stance indicating that one way to mediate violence within the families is through “accommodating”:

P: One (mechanism) is accommodating of the family members or something, the piece of like, you can see if the conflict is there, the conflict resolution is accommodating that person along.

R: Like their solution is to accommodate that person?

P: Accommodating- yes so if there’s hope, no if he did some mistake he will improve the next time but without any effort- you cannot see any change right? So if somebody is doing something wrong with you and you are accommodating or avoiding that up to some extent...

As a means to preserve the sanctity of the marriage and family cohesion, these views trickle into the consciousness of women survivors of family abuse. P3’s narrative exemplified the responsibility and burden of adjusting as borne by the women in the family, while sacrificing their own needs and more importantly, their safety:

“When this all happening with me, all my family asked that I compromise, women have to do compromise, so don’t say something, you stay with him, I ask why? I’m not like middle class, I have engineering degree, why I live under my mother-in-law?”

Thereby, the above extracts were illustrative of the women’s diminishing sense of self, autonomy and independence whereby the onus is placed on the women to accommodate rather than the abusive family members making changes to their controlling behaviors. This sub-theme reflects against Goel’s (2005) assertion that the women in the family must uphold the ideal virtues of Indian femininity through self-sacrifice at the personal cost of losing their agency. By accepting the harshness of their reality and maintaining the image of an ideal wife and daughter

in-law, self-sacrifice becomes an embodiment and a significant marker of a loving, devoted wife to the husband within South Asian households (Goel, 2005).

1.5 Sub-cultural tensions

Strong stances and various assumptions emerged that were specific to the participants' national and religious identities. In particular, tensions between self-identified Indian Punjabi-Sikhs, Pakistani Punjabi-Sikhs and Pakistani-Muslims emerged within the context of family violence. Important to note, is that this thematic sub-category is not meant to cast a negative gaze upon India or Pakistan as bigoted or partaking in radicalism. Rather, this category highlights the manifestation of social tensions arising from a bleak time in their shared history of British colonialism.

For instance, two of the self-identified Punjabi-Sikh service providers S2 and S3 from India voiced their sentiments of family dynamics within Muslim communities in the GTA:

“Suppose, I’m not asking about one religion... but they won’t allow smoking, right? Restrictions are there, the partner.. if the partner in the family if they are smoking, the second partner from the religious aspect, they have rigid thoughts. He might be ok person or she might be ok person, for the functioning, for the family responsibility, for the relationship... but that piece, it might affect on their relationship because now thoughts, core values... it affect... right? So the family have discussion, so she said- “my daughter is married, I’m happy, but the only thing is my son in law sometime he take alcohol.” So I said- “what’s wrong with this?” she said “No, no, no... in our family, in my family, or my husbands family, nobody even touch alcohol. So that’s bad thing, that’s that”

“Have you seen in the South Asian community, the particular regions, if ...? I’m not saying any specific culture, honour killing. If, like that honour basically they are focusing on their daughter, they are focusing on their female members of the family. If somebody asks something to them, then there might be fight, there might be you can say... violence. It does involve. And second thing is, they are supposed, where the man domination is there, they are thinking we are here to protect our women. We are here to control our women. They’re not allowing to take some decisions if somebody from their own within family member, if they take their own decisions- they feel dishonored in that. Like, marriage of choice right? If somebody do the choice marriage, dating concept, love marriages, still stigma is there. Not allowed to, and there is honour involved. So you have seen so many cases here, the murders, due to this. Recently, and from the past you can see if you are seeing the basic underlying issue, this is their very much rooted with their honour.”

On the contrary, self-identified Pakistani-Muslim service provider S5 described her sentiments around Punjabi and larger Indian communities:

“...the Punjabi and Indian guys, they are very much controlling... that the money should go to joint account... they make sure she doesn't know the password of her account, and only gives her little amount, like for TTC... and as soon as it is reported to the police, as soon as he comes out of jail or bail, then first thing he goes to the bank and empty the joint account...”

Another service provider S4 acknowledged the long lineage of religious and regional conflicts, and reflected on how the traces of these conflicts prevail even within immigrant communities:

“...like you do something that is culturally or socially taboo, like for example my brother married a Muslim girl and in our particular family, because we're from ... we're Punjabi and we're originally from Pakistan side. And a lot of our family was unfortunately killed by Muslims, but there was... violence happened on both sides. But it was still like, oh my god that's the worst thing and the people in the community talked for a while now- oh my god, their family is so dishonourable (laughs). Like, he married a Muslim girl, people are just concerned about that kind of stuff right?”

A major aspect of this sub-thematic category is the sentiment of the collective identities expressed by the participants along religious and national lines. Their narratives exhibited the long lineage of communal discrimination, prejudice and violence that date back to the post-partition tensions between Hindus and Muslims, and India and Pakistan. Patel and Nath (2013) remind us that sub-cultural tensions are heightened during the acculturative processes as immigrants experience rootlessness and loss of collectivity from their countries of origin. To mitigate these feelings, diasporic communities may form a stronger sense of cohesion and loyalty towards their respective sub-groups following immigration, a context which is further explored in the following thematic category.

2. Global theme #2: Barriers to service

This thematic category focuses on the vulnerabilities of South Asian immigrant women due to the simultaneity of systemic oppressions outlined in the sub-categories below.

2.1 Immigration: “Waha ehsha tha, idhar ehsha hai” (it was like that there, it is like this here)

The complexities brought about by immigration-related challenges were reflected by several of the participants, which then seep into the family unit and subsequently disrupt their patriarchal social relation:

“The worse part in this country is... the picture they are looking over there, like back home... is not the correct picture. They come here as doctor and engineer, and they never get a job... and they are running taxis, butcher shop, convenience store, laundry, bakery etc. South Asian population are really educated, and they are coming in this country and its not like they don't know ABC ... they have so many years British rule so everybody knows how to talk in English... even uneducated people know how to manage a few words, they are looking for women who know they... you know, they don't have “Canadian experience”... Canadian experience is what kills you.” (S6)

Here, “Canadian experience” refers to technical skills and workplace knowledge required by Citizenship and Immigration Canada from immigrants seeking employment in Canada (Sakamoto, Chin & Young, 2010). The interpolation of patriarchy, colonialism and racism as reinforced by immigration becomes evident in this narrative. Immigration requirements are structured in a way that continues to exclude racialized individuals such as South Asian immigrants by dehumanizing their skills under the guise of “Canadian experience” and in turn, by perpetuating their economic insecurity.

Commenting on the liminality of various dimensions of identity such as education and class faced by South Asian women and their families post-immigration, the following narrative from S5 exemplified how these women are faced with multiple jeopardies as a result:

“... even those with PhD cannot find a job! So there is financial stress... then they have to go to survival jobs, like taxi drivers or factory jobs. Even with drivers, they have to pass license G test etc. And the money they bring is spent very very quickly, because of the dollar. It is different from rupees. Then there is a health problem... health card is not issued right away. And they are comparing vegetables and fruits prices, like here and back home. They cannot even eat balanced diet. Even the rich people there in Pakistan cannot buy things easily here because they are financially very very tight...”

S3 offered another explanation as to the interlocking challenges of immigrant and violence in the home, by citing intergenerational conflict between immigrant parents and their children born in Canada:

“...whenever immigrants come to Canada, when they come from South Asian sub-continent, they come to a country which is governed on the principles of democracy, independence and freedom. So the responsibilities of the individual is grounded in their education system. If one does not have, did not go to school here and then subsequently to universities here, their preferences, their lifestyle, values, will still be heavily grounded in the way they were brought up back home, but those individuals who went to school here and went to university here, they are much more liberal in their viewpoints, they are much more thinking like, uh.... People... uh from the western society and civilization. I think that is another kind of disconnect between immigrants and their children who were born and raised in Canada. So the parents have a different set of ideas, values, preferences, and children born and raised in Canada, have open way of living, values and their lifestyles. And that disconnect produces enormous amount of stress on family cohesion, their relationship with their children, and their relationship between themselves, between husband and wife relationships. So, that is a ... stress, that is another source of tension that generates uh, violence which I call stress-induced violence within couples or within families.”

Not only do the women and their families endure a downward shift in their socio-economic status owing to educational and professional credentials that are unrecognized in Canada, they also arrive bereft of knowledge on Canadian values, principles and lifestyle. As a consequence, S3 pointed to the discord in the socio-cultural landscape between their home and native countries as a source of tension in immigrant families. He attributed this disconnect as the source of “stress-induced violence” (S3) within South Asian families.

2.2 Legal system: Justice in a new context

Several of the participants described the lack of legal literacy within the Canadian context, particularly in regard to police responses to domestic violence. For instance, S2 pointed to the differences in South Asian immigrants’ knowledge of law enforcement from their ancestral countries and the realities of policing in Canada:

“It’s different... so some of them, because a lot of them they are from this perspective, the police come and do some kind of de-escalate the situation, do counselling, not exactly

counselling piece, to separate those persons. Sometimes those persons from uh... from the society, they will uh intervene that conversation, the conversation will end up without any charges. So different society, different norms, so sometimes they don't fully know how the system work here. So most of women, I've seen if the 911 call is there, and they called the police, and police lay charges, and they restrict that husband or the person, to at least for the further order from the court, if the restrictions are there, they cannot even come to the home. They are not aware of this fact. So now, some of them are no, no it's now 4 months or 6 months, how can I handle the house, how can I pay the mortgage of the house, how can I handle the children, so everything is now a mess-up.... They say "what's going on, it's a family matter, not big deal, why they are dragging us here and there, why they are sending to so many services?"

In addition, the above extract pointed to the repercussions faced thereafter, by South Asian immigrant women who are economically and financially dependent on their husbands. This sentiment was further amplified by S5:

"Most of the time when they are calling the police, he is criminally charged. And even if he is guilty, then he does PAR program... but now he knows how to get the revenge from the woman. He goes back to the house, because when the woman is dependent on the husband... and husband is taken away, they have no contact orders. Then what they do- they plead guilty and the woman, as she doesn't have any money or has to take children to school or doesn't know English, then faces so many problems without husband. Then she says I want to get back with my husband, she writes a letter for victim witness and tries to get him back. But now the husband becomes revengeful... they are good until the whole case is finished, then they take her to India or Pakistan, then apply for certificate of divorce which catches them off guard."

Further, one survivor P3 voiced her frustrations with police response and the legal system at large, during her attempt to leave an abusive environment. In her narrative below, she compared the police response to her situation in Canada to policing in Pakistan:

"...police, what the police doing? When I called Brampton police, he asked you know Hindi? He speak Hindi, we did not go inside your in laws house because it is not in your husbands name, if it is in his name then we can go in..., my in-laws told the police that I was the one who was running away with another man...I filed case February for divorce but now October is my next date... too much big duration! In Pakistan it will take 4 months... In Pakistan it is like she is your wife so you have to give her things..."

The differences in the criminal justice system responses to family-based violence in Canada and that of the women's native countries were highlighted in the above comments.

Without knowledge of Canadian policing and legal procedures the women become more vulnerable to the hurdles of the loss of financial dependency following mandatory arrests of their perpetrators. The women become even more susceptible to escalated levels of violence when their husbands are released back to their homes, thus keeping them stuck in vicious cycle of violence.

2.3 Upholding the family image

This theme revolves around the complexities of family dynamics within South Asian culture, particularly in reference to preserving family integrity in the wider community. One of the women P1 indicated that she refrained from disclosing her abusive situation outside of her family in order to avoid jeopardizing their reputation:

R: Have you shared this with anyone else in your life? Anyone outside of the family?

P: I told my counsellor... one of my friends, I did tell a little bit... but these matters are confidential

R: I see... what stops you from telling anyone else? Any reasons?

P: Only respect for our family... these things are family matters... it is confidential ...even I don't know anyone here... don't have many friends...

Several of the service providers echoed a similar sentiment and emphasized the importance of protecting family image within South Asian communities. They pointed to the private sphere of the family system, even in the face of dire situations such as violence and abuse:

"...if we are seeing some family norms or family dynamics, most of the people, if they have some problem in relationship, like between husband and wife, they think- this is our personal matter. Nobody can help us, we are the person who can solve... and their problem-solution model could be different. They might accommodate each other, they might avoid the situation and they might compete. But when they apply these skills, doesn't work, again they minimize the risk. They don't want to tell anybody. Again, this is our family matter." (S2)

The role of the joint family system as well as the extended family was also noted by one service provider. The upkeep of family status within their larger community was seen as more

valuable than the interests of the individual woman who has to bear the consequences of her abuse, at the cost of preserving a respectable familial status:

“Well, they are worried about what other people will say about their family, about their daughter, so it’s the whole idea that our community is closely connected and that within the village system, or within the family, the external extended family system, everybody will kind of know that there is something bad has happened in the family. And so the parents, the girl’s parents are so rigidly grounded in this kind of, backward thinking, that they are rather than looking at the best interests of their own daughter, they are looking at the best interests of themselves as to what their image is out in the community. So they are supposed to project an image, that everything is hunky dory while everything inside is collapsing. So that is the kind of issues that perpetuate women to stay in the abusive relationships as well.” (S3)

Here, gendered hierarchy as well as the broader hierarchical nature of the family structure becomes prominent as women are treated as the repositories of family image. Much emphasis is placed on how the women are expected to keep silent about their abuse and thus refrain from seeking outside help. Faced with demands from their husbands, parents and extended family members, it becomes the women’s duty to unquestioningly remain silent about the abuse, while elevating the importance of maintaining family reputation in their wider community.

Thus, upholding a positive family image loomed large in these narratives and women evidently shouldered the burden of preserving this image as they fell at the bottom of the family hierarchy. The narratives further illustrated the components of family as an institution that reinforces patriarchy whereby the women had to forego their individual interest of protecting themselves from abuse, rather than the men owning up to their abusive behaviors. It became evident that this patriarchal structure caused them to remain silent about the abuse that in turn, served to minimize if not legitimize violence perpetrated towards women within their familial context.

3. Global theme #3 Resiliency: From victimhood to survivorship

This thematic category arose from the participants’ narrative accounts of reclaiming personal agency and nurturing their inner strength through diverse means. Two of the means

through which these women achieved a sense of hope, empowerment and resiliency formed into sub-categories below.

3.1 Resiliency through religion

One woman P1 described deriving a sense of comfort and positivity from listening to faith-based songs as exemplified in the narrative below:

P: "...listen songs, religious (Sikh) songs also..."

R: Religious songs help you feel better? Is your religion important to you?

P: Yes... they give positive vibes... religious songs throw positive vibes...always see the bright you know...

Another woman P2 mirrored this discourse by identifying prayer as a source of respite from her memories of abuse by stating that *"...my story is very sad... only this centre and god help me... I pray to Shiva..."*. She repeated her belief and faith in God during her tumultuous experience of abuse throughout the interview and proudly presented her Rudraksha beads during the interview indicating that *"...this Rudraksha always helps me."* Rudraksha beads are traditionally used prayer beads in various religions including Hinduism as rosaries to sanctify the mind, body and soul (Naresh, Mukesh & Vivek, 2013).

Several of the service providers S3 and S4 also attested to religion as a personal resource for these women, so as to achieve a sense of safety and solace in the face of insurmountable challenges:

"I think they take a little bit of guidance and support from their own religious background, so they pray a lot, they try to kind of, take... some spiritual aspects of their religion to kind of, re-charge their batteries..."

"But people who actually endure abuse for a longer period of time, they're actually very religious too. And part of that reason is because religion helps them to cope, so they get through the pain and all of that, and say that- it's God's will, it's God's will you know whatever."

Offering a sense of respite, empowerment and a renewed sense of vitality, religion was highlighted as a useful construct for coping with violence. As discussed in Chapter 2, South

Asian women are often portrayed as passive and helpless in the face of violence (Puwar, 2000). However, the above narratives demystify such portrayal by illuminating the innate ability of Indian and Pakistani women to seek support through religion and highlighting their overall resiliency.

Engaging in religious activities such as praying or listening to religious songs provided survivors with an emotional way out, at least temporarily, from their abusive circumstances. The narratives of both service providers and women survivors exemplified that religion offered a sense of direction, purpose and fulfillment in the face of uncertainty. By attributing their dire circumstances to “God’s will” the women attempted to make sense of and assign meaning to the abuse they had faced (or in some cases continuing to face). In seeking “positive vibes” from religion, the women generated a sense of hope and emotional upliftment that in turn, allowed them to reframe their outlook on life.

3.2 Cooking for social solidarity: Beyond the traditional role

Women of Indian and Pakistani descent are ever so often characterized in mainstream media, pop culture and even academic literature as engaging with food and cooking, solely as a domestic duty or as adhering to their traditional roles (Puwar & Raghuram, 2003). Quite the contrary, the findings in the present study found food and cooking to elicit a sense of belonging, worth and empowerment amongst survivors of family abuse:

“Yea like something like cooking is a communal activity, going for picnics, you know and again it’s like the traditional role of the female which is about you know, cooking for her family, nurturing, her children, you know it’s a very natural thing for them and they feel like they’re helping and they’re doing something for them. And it’s... yea I think people bond through that.” (S4)

“They cook here, and we give them a free food... I think they trust their people more than other, because culture is very strong. They are curry people. They love the curry.” (S6)

“This place is like their home. Yes they are not comfortable in other counselling places, because the culture is different. They don’t ask, you want Daal Chawal (lentils and rice)... that is just for business.” (S6)

My humbling experience with one of the interviewees P3 in her home further exemplified food as a bonding agent. When I probed her as to what helped her cope through her hardships from experiencing family abuse, she spoke at length of finding solace in cooking. After being prompted to elaborate, she excitedly showed me her display of cooking spices and beamed with pride as she spoke of cooking biryani and “*salan*” (curry) for her neighbors in the building. She further displayed her warmth and hospitality by generously preparing a plate of fruit salad for me, which I felt was a true testament to her reclaim of individuality and resilience. Even though she had endured a tumultuous journey immigrating to Canada and subsequently facing abuse perpetrated by her husband and in-laws, she turned to food and cooking as a means to reclaim autonomy and a sense of empowerment.

In addition to generating a sense of solidarity, the above narratives also illustrated how food from their country of origin such as curry and *daal chawal* (lentils and rice) is of significance in maintaining connections to their homeland. It serves as a catalyst in building rapport, trust and developing a helping alliance with Indian and Pakistani women who have experienced family violence. Ever so often, South Asian women are represented as engaging in cooking solely as part of their traditional female role or as duty towards their husbands and families (Puwar & Raghuram, 2003). However, the above narratives emphasize Indian and Pakistani women’s agency in choosing to engage in the activity of cooking to reclaim their womanhood, their sense of self and as a way to care for themselves.

To summarize, this chapter presented the thematic findings from the semi-structured interviews with Indian and Pakistani women who have experienced family violence as well as service providers who have worked with this population. The findings were first presented in

graph 1 in a web-like diagram to first provide a visual representation of the themes and sub-themes. The three main themes that were identified were 1) Exploring the specificities of violence through a cultural lens, 2) Barriers to service and 3) From victimhood to survivorship. Under each of these themes, further sub-thematic categories were formed to detail our understandings of family violence experienced by South Asian immigrant women in the Greater Toronto Area. These findings were illustrated by excerpts from the women survivors as well as service providers to bring their voices to the fore and to corroborate each of the thematic categories. In the following chapter, I will present the interpretations of these findings in the context of feminist, anti-colonial, immigration and resilience theories as well as current literature on violence against South Asian women. In addition, the limitations of my research as well as its' implications for future social work research, practice and education are also discussed.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary of the study

As stated at the outset, this thesis ruminated with current understandings of South Asian immigrant women's experiences with familial violence as limited due to the homogenization of 'South Asian' as well as the problematizing of 'culture'. As such, this thesis qualitatively analysed the narrative accounts of Indian and Pakistani immigrant women who experienced familial abuse within the Greater Toronto Area of Canada as well as service providers serving this community. The feminist theoretical frame integrated South Asian feminisms in India and Pakistan and the pedagogy of 'culture' was expanded to include a historical and colonial lens which draws unique attention to this thesis. The voices of the women as well as service providers were analysed against this backdrop and elucidated three overarching themes: 1) Specificities of violence through a cultural lens, 2) Barriers to service and 3) Resiliency: From victimhood to survivorship. These findings were then discussed and compared with current literature on violence against South Asian immigrant women.

5.2 Discussion of the findings

5.2.1 Understanding reluctance and defensiveness from South Asian communities to gender-based research

Perhaps the most emotionally depleting aspect of my research journey was the recruitment process as outlined in chapter 3. Yet, it was academically unearthing, as it unfolded the complexities of reflexivity and insider-outsider status in qualitative research. On immigrant researchers, researching their own communities Hamdan (2009) posits that "...the integration of reflexivity of discomfort into insider-outsider research is indispensable for transcending the

distortions introduced by the various lenses through which researchers and research subjects view the world in general and the matters being researched in particular.” (p. 378). Upon approaching South Asian communities in the GTA at grocery stores, Indian/Pakistani restaurants as well as South Asian clothing retail stores, the resistance and defensiveness I was met with, could undoubtedly be due to my powered positionality as a western academic researcher who embodies ‘whiteness’. As suggested by Hamdan (2009), I navigated through the discomfort of my insider-outsider status by maintaining an active awareness and critical understanding of my multiple positionalities during my research endeavours. In turn, I assert that my insider-outsider odyssey throughout the process became a testament to how reflexivity emerges as a significant component of qualitative research, and in fact enriches the ultimate results. Given my positionality as a Hindu woman from India, my interviews with participants generated insightful responses in regard to sub-cultural tensions between Hindus and Muslims as well as India and Pakistan (further discussed in section 5.2.2). On the contrary, my insider identities as a woman who immigrated from India and who was recently granted a permanent resident status in Canada generated rich conversations on the difficulties of immigrating to Canada. In addition, my embodiment of ‘whiteness’ through western appearances such as having short hair and an eyebrow piercing as well as my North American spoken accent afforded me the opportunity to understand reluctance from my own community in engaging with me for the purpose of my research. By engaging in cultural humility and remaining mindful of my appearances (such as removing my facial piercings before interviews), I was able to facilitate my rapport-building with both South Asian women as well as South Asian service providers, and mitigate potential reluctance from them during my research interviews.

Considerable social stigma within South Asian communities around various types of violence (Ahmad et al., 2009) as well as adherence to patriarchal norms amongst both men and women (Ahmad, Riaz, Barata & Stewart, 2004) also explains the reluctance encountered within the South Asian communities in the Greater Toronto Area. Their hesitations to assist me with participant recruitment fits with the body of literature that outlines the silencing and privatization of ‘family matters’ within the community, including familial violence.

Furthermore, the reluctance I experienced from service providers and community agencies to participate in my research extends McAreavey and Das’s (2013) assertions that ethical concerns are exacerbated when researching racialized communities. They explain that the imperialistic and pathologizing nature of researching marginalized communities add to the “...sites of struggle for marginalised or vulnerable groups who have little control or ownership of the research process.” (p. 115). As such, the recruitment process in this thesis further unfolded the complexities and unique ethical considerations to take into account, and remaining mindful of imperialist agendas when researching vulnerable communities such as South Asian immigrant women.

Lastly, another component that informs the defensiveness and reluctance experienced from South Asian communities, is research fatigue. Within the context of qualitative research, Clark (2008) attributes research fatigue to over-researching of specific communities, lack of perceived change including supports received, as well as practical reasons such as cost and time. Consequently, the reluctance to research engagement and the remarks I received such as “Where are the real changes?” (referring to immediate social change) makes sense within current scholarship on over-researched communities (Clark, 2008; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2012; Koen,

Wassenaar & Mamotte, 2017), as it potentially contributes to the fatigue they already experience in their daily realities as immigrant women.

Clark (2008) notes that "...research fatigue can be said to occur when individuals and groups become tired of engaging with research and it can be identified by a demonstration of reluctance toward continuing engagement with an existing project, or a refusal to engage with any further research." (p. 955). As such, the reluctance of South Asian community in the GTA can be attributed to fatigue from being over-researched as several service providers alluded to participating in similar areas of research conducted by students from other schools. Clark (2008) further discusses how vulnerable groups are having to respond to the same questions during multiple different research interviews and do not see any concrete outcomes in their social environment. Thus, the lack of perceived value from participating in my research such as through discernable reduction in the incidences of violence in South Asian communities, increased responsiveness from community stakeholders to provide adequate support to survivors of violence as well as increase in resources, could have resulted in the lack of engagement from both the gatekeepers as well as the group being researched (Clark, 2008).

5.2.2 Cultural specificities: Expanding the rubric of culture

Embedded in the narratives of South Asian immigrant women and service providers were the cultural specificities and assigned meanings of family violence, which gave rise to this thematic domain. Within this domain, violence as a 'communication tool' emerged as a sub-category and draws unique attention to this thesis whereby women with lived experiences of familial violence as well as service providers unanimously emphasized a skills-deficit in communication between both parties as the precursor to violence in the home. These findings complicate the current understanding of the limited knowledge and education South Asian

immigrant women may have around dynamics of violent relationships. For example, it was mentioned in Chapter 2 that one woman in Gill's (2004) study on British South Asian immigrant women, identified her abuse as simply "fighting between two people" (p. 470).

Further, the participants' normalizing discourse of familial violence as a communication strategy rather than a power-control dynamic, underpins their reductionist conceptualisations of familial violence. Within the South Asian feminist frames delineated earlier, such conceptualisations make sense within the pronounced patriarchal order in both Indian and Pakistani communities. The normalcy of patriarchy in their daily realities complements the narratives of both South Asian immigrant women as well as self-identified South Asian service providers.

Indeed, my positionality as a social worker practicing in the Canadian context, along with education from a western academic institution initially leads me to extrapolate narratives of violence as a communication matter, as generated from a site of ignorance. From the gaze of a western social work student and practitioner, it is easy to interpret these findings as emanating from a fundamental lack of awareness of power and control dynamics, or simply from stigma towards the issue of family violence. However, in repositioning myself as a culturally humble researcher, I delved back into the literature on South Asian immigrant women's experiences of family violence.

A significant commonality that emerged in the current scholarship was South Asian immigrant women's financial and economic dependency on their husbands as well as in-laws, which is further exacerbated by loss of social supports following immigration (Zafar, 2015; Alaggia, Regehr & Rishchynski, 2009; Chaze & Medhekar, 2017; Bandan, 2009). Aware of these complex realities that render Indian and Pakistani women vulnerable to staying in abusive

families, it is likely that service providers are drawing on discourses of enhancing communication strategies between the women and their families as alternative ways of empowerment. Rather than relying on popular discourses of power and control in the context of abusive relationships (Pence & Paymar, 1993), both service providers as well as survivors of family violence likely resort to alternative measures to help mitigate abusive circumstances.

However, one service S4 provider differed in her explanations of family-based violence and rooted it's causes to power and control dynamics. Unlike other service providers as well as survivors who participated in this study, she attributed misuse of power to attain control as the ultimate cause of violence perpetrated towards women. As noted in chapter 3, S4 identified Canada as her country of birth with ethnic roots from India. As such, her traditional explanations of violence against women are rooted in western discourses of power (Tew, 2006). Tew (2006) problematizes modern conceptualisations of power stating that western notions of power "...fit with a dominant Western masculine vision of individual competition and achievement, it may have less resonance with those who lack privileged access to social and economic resources." (p. 35). As such, S4's narrative can be said to fit within this western framework of power that departs from the views of other participants in this study.

Interestingly, another finding that emerged in this thesis was that unlike previous research that revealed constructs of honour (*izzat*) in South Asian women's narratives (Gill, 2004; Ahmad et al., 2009; Zafar, 2015), the participants' narratives in the current study were void of this construct. In fact, when asked whether honour or *izzat* was significant to them, I was either met with puzzled looks or simply told 'no'. Grewal (2013) explains that honour has been conceptualized in mainstream media with the 'other' or 'third world' cultures and essentialized as something belonging outside the 'West'. Given the proliferation of media coverage on

honour-killings within Muslim and the broader South Asian culture, Grewal (2013) asserts that the construct of honour has been used as an oppressive tool to retain hegemonic discourses of the 'other' and to maintain the image of the 'West' as liberalized or modern. Consequently, the participants in this study may have inadvertently rejected the notion of honour as embedded in South Asian immigrant women's experiences of family violence.

In addition, the discursive powers of South Asian women's experiences familial violence serve to further uphold the prescriptive gender roles and demarcations within their communities. Participants in this study spoke of expectations placed upon them from early socialization into adulthood to embody acceptable femininity and their subservient position as women. As anticipated from previous research (Zafar, 2015; Gill 2004), their narratives elucidated early socialization of the gender divide that is particularly pronounced in Indian and Pakistani cultures. For example, numerous scholars have ascertained that rigid gender roles and expectations exacerbate South Asian women's vulnerability to violence, particularly after immigration (Fikree & Pasha, 2005; Chaudhuri, Morash & Yingling, 2014; Gerwal, Bottorff & Hilton, 2005).

However, the findings in this thesis also illustrated a departure from strict adherence to gender roles within their host countries to fluidity in gender role expressions. Several of the participants articulated being caught between expectations of gendered social relations from their home countries of India or Pakistan and those in their host country of Canada. As women expressed their attempts to reclaim their autonomy through seeking employment, dating practices and asserting their rights as women within the household, the findings in this thesis challenge the monolithic views of South Asian women as invested in traditional gender roles from previous studies (Ahmad et al., 2009; Gill, 2009; Zafar, 2015). The pull between the conflicting expectations of gendered social relations is supported by previous research that postulates shifts

in cultural identity and congruity among immigrant populations (Bhugra & Becker, 2005), that allows them to acculturate and assimilate in their host countries to elicit a sense of belonging. Furthermore, the progress made by Indian and Pakistani feminists in achieving liberation for women in both private and public spaces through legal, religious and cultural emancipation in both sub-continent in recent years (Parashar, 2013; Zia, 2009; Mirza, 2008) could have further contributed to South Asian women rejecting expectations of gendered social relations that were introduced to India and Pakistan during the colonial era.

However, South Asian immigrant women in the GTA continue to remain vulnerable to familial abuse as men attempt to re-assert their masculinity. Several of the service providers highlighted the gender role re-alignment following immigration to Canada that penetrates cultural boundaries and threatens their patriarchal lineage, one that affords them power. These findings reinforce the contentions of both Indian and Pakistani feminist frameworks that foreground South Asian men's abuse as reassertions of masculinity and patriarchy within an imperialist society. For instance, Cruz and Buchanan-Oliver (2015) explain that upon migration, men experience emasculation resulting from reduced socio-economic status as well as gender egalitarianism promoted in the West and as such, attempt to reassert hegemonic masculinities rooted in the patriarchal fabric of South Asian cultural milieu.

Congruent with previous studies exploring the impact of family image within South Asian communities, particularly as it intersects with familial abuse (Ahmad et al., 2009; Gill, 2009; Zafar, 2015), the narrative accounts of immigrant women and service providers in this study also underscored similar notions. The sub-category of '*Upholding the family image*' emerged as a result of this, as women articulated their reluctance to disclose family abuse to prevent tainting their family reputation in the wider South Asian community. Participants in this

study articulated the burden of upholding family reputation as vested within the women, even when familial abuse was involved which emphasizes previous research on concepts of familial honour and prestige (Vishwanath & Palakonda, 2011; Gilligan & Akhtar, 2006).

However, the articulations within this thesis clarify this one step further within the sub-category of violence as a product of a status-driven culture. The findings in this study invoke Indian and Pakistani women as repositories of family image in their community as measured through appropriate domesticity and respectable femininity. Arguably, this carves out space within the academic sphere for further investigation as there is no current literature exploring the peculiarities and specificities of domesticity as a marker and determinant of family reputation. Indeed as discussed earlier, a few studies have pointed to the colonial contingencies that brought hegemonic discourses of domesticity in South Asian sub-continent (Stevenson, 2013; Fernando & Cohen, 2014; Hussein, 2017). Imperial ideologies of women's respectability within domestic spaces were in fact British practices during the Victorian era, which were then extended to women in colonial India (prior to partition) whereby the domestic sphere became a site for constraint and reinforcing gender roles (Stevenson, 2013).

Also rooted in imperialist and colonial legacies was the sub-theme that illustrated narratives of sub-cultural tensions whereby participants pitted the opposing religious or national group as inherently more violent than the other. For instance, self-identified Punjabi service providers pointed to Muslim families whereas self-identified Muslim and Pakistani service providers placed blame on Punjabi men, for perpetrating higher rates of violence. The religiopolitical subtexts of these narratives underpinned the discursive powers derived from their shared history of colonialism and subsequent partitioning. As outlined in earlier chapters, the

partitioning of India saw a legacy of unrest between religio-national groups in India and Pakistan (Jamal, 2016; Hasan, 2017), which are manifested in the findings of this thesis.

To further complicate our understanding of the sub-cultural cleavages in South Asian communities, I also draw upon popular discourses that propagate racial discrimination, stigmatization and homogenization of South Asian identities in diasporic contexts. Mohammad-Arif (2007) argues that inter-ethnic animosity is exacerbated in immigrant communities due to loss of cultural identity and is mitigated by (re) construction of identities through building spaces for prayer (e.g. mosques and temples) to achieve community reformation, or through creation of ethnic and religio-specific student groups on university campuses.

Indeed, this analysis expands the theoretical space of culture to include political, historical and migration forces that shape the realities of South Asian diasporic women. Simply gendering and culturizing this analysis would be pernicious at the expense of reifying misconstrued assumptions of South Asian communities as inherently violent. Unsurprisingly then, participants in this study also endorsed narratives of accommodating familial abuse-*“bardaasht karna”* (to tolerate). Given the legacy of violence against Indian and Pakistani women from the partitioning to current day incidences, it became apparent in this study’s findings that women are shouldering the burdens of this legacy. The voices of the women exemplify the harshness of their realities of becoming further buried under the layers of multiple oppressions that they endure on a daily basis. Furthermore, the concept of *“bardaasht karna”* fits with feminist understandings of the goddesses of Hindu religion as described in Chapter 2. Goddesses such as Durga and Sita are viewed as emblems of self-sacrificing and devoted wives who forego their sense of personal agency to elevate the interests of others, including their husbands (Goel, 2005). In other words, their power is attained through fulfilling wifely and

motherly duties. Thus, it is possible that the women in this study are attempting to reclaim their sense of personal power through subordination of their personal interests and autonomy.

5.2.3 Immigration: Navigating the unchartered territory

Reflecting upon the dynamics of immigration-specific stressors, particularly in the context of employment success upon coming to Canada, the participants in the study discussed the socio-economic vulnerabilities of South Asian families as fuelling violence perpetrated towards women. Although previous research has illustrated numerous acculturative stressors such as mental health concerns, lack of social support, loss of cultural identity and adapting to a vastly different socio-cultural landscape (Samuel, 2009), participants in this study voiced their focus on reduced employment prospects despite higher educational background and work experience. Without employment security and subsequently, unsustainable income South Asian immigrant women are then faced with double jeopardy of violence and lack of job security.

This confirms previous findings in the literature that indicate employer's reservations in recognizing foreign credentials including work and educational experience, that in turn result in immigrants facing lowered earning potential (Adamuti-Trache & Sweet, 2010). In addition, research on immigrant skills in the Canadian labour market indicate that educational credentials as well as language fluency are higher than those of their Canadian-born counterparts (Reitz, 2005). Moreover, Reitz (2005) also notes that the vast majority of underutilized immigrants in the Canadian economy also identify as racialized minorities, hence pointing to the intersections of institutional racism and discrimination. Not only do these practices overwhelmingly impact immigrant socio-economic status, but also contribute towards emasculating immigrant men's identities (Donaldson & Howson, 2009), that in turn becomes a precursor to familial violence.

The resulting vulnerabilities of South Asian immigrant women are further encapsulated within the criminal justice system, particularly in the context of police responses (Vatuk, 2013; Viridi, 2013). The challenges of maneuvering the criminal justice responses were gleaned from the narrative accounts as participants discussed their lack of legal literacy and the contrast between policing in their home and host countries. A few service providers were poignant in noting women's lack of awareness of the mandatory criminal prosecution for domestic violence in Canadian settings and did not equate calling the police with mandatory charges. These findings compliment current understandings of the judicial system in India where jurisprudential thought does not trespass private family matters including various forms of violence. Instead, women in India are afforded an alternative means for domestic dispute-resolution through the 'women's court' or *mahila adalat* which encourages women to resort to informal means of resolving domestic issues such as familial violence (Vatuk, 2013).

Similarly, Viridi (2013) delineates barriers faced by South Asian immigrant women seeking criminal justice within the Canadian context, as they transplant Indian conceptualizations of the legal repercussions of domestic violence without being aware of the rights and freedoms afforded to them in their host country. She distinguishes between the criminalization of rape within the public sphere in India and non-criminalization of rape perpetrated by a woman's husband in their private sphere whereby certain forms of sexual acts become culturally acceptable and legitimized within the familial domain (Viridi, 2013). She further explains that when a woman who has been abused by her husband comes forward, the Indian state law disregards the normative standards of right and wrong by drawing a strict divide between the private and public spaces.

The differences in legality in regard to family-based violence as it pertains to the Pakistani legal context are also noted by Hajjar (2004). She explains that when a domestic violence case is presented before a criminal court, the judges treat it as a private family matter rather than a criminal matter, to be resolved in a civil court instead of a criminal court. For example, she points to a case whereby a man faced trial for the killing of his daughter however, the Lahore high courts condoned his actions as his daughter was "...engaging in immoral behavior that could not be tolerated in an Islamic state such as Pakistan." (Hajjar, 2004, p. 30). As such, this research could further explain immigrant women's understandings of policing and criminal justice responses within the Canadian context.

5.2.4 Reclaiming agency: Exemplars of courage and survival

Challenging current notions of South Asian victims of familial violence as passive, helpless and downtrodden, the saliency of resiliency became apparent in the voices of women in this study. Two sub-categories surfaced that patterned the women's coping abilities, strengths and resiliency in face of insurmountable challenges. First, several of the women as well as service providers spoke of women deriving a sense of inner strength and soothing from faith-based engagements such as prayers, religious accessories such as the Rudraksha as well as religious songs. A study by Zakar, Zakar and Krämer (2012) resonated with these findings whereby they examined Pakistani women's coping mechanisms in the face of spousal abuse and purport that they utilize religion to "...expect and solicit support from supernatural forces to resist and confront unjust and oppressive situations and individuals" (p. 3271). Their in-depth interviews with survivors of spousal violence garnered attention towards women's faith in Allah and his benevolence provided them with a sense of courage, emotional resourcefulness and a sense of hope in navigating abusive situations (Zakar, Zakar and Krämer, 2012). In addition,

Bhandari's (2018) examination of coping strategies for domestic violence among the broader South Asian population in the United States revealed women's beliefs about religion as well as spiritual practices such as yoga as a means to cope by reinvigorating their inner strength and reframing their outlook on life.

Going back to the literature on feminist interpretations of Hinduism particularly through discussions of Sita and Durga who are revered in the Hindu religion as powerful goddesses, it makes sense that the women being researched in this study turned to faith-based resilience strategies. Even though these two goddesses are symbolized as ideals of Indian femininity through self-sacrifice of their personal selves in order to uphold their wifely and motherly duties, perhaps South Asian women engage in religious activities to make meaning of their abusive circumstances. As mentioned earlier, resorting to religion as a means to cope might be useful in reframing their personal sense of power and agency.

Another feature of this thematic category was the reclaiming of the domestic space, particularly the kitchen as a site of power. The women's voices in this thesis inscribed a sentiment of solidarity and belonging when engaging in cooking activities either with friends or through programs at their local community agencies. A poignant exemplification of this was after the completion of the interview with one woman, she eagerly showed this researcher her collection of spices and beamed with pride as she prepared a plate of Indian-style fruit salad in the interest of time constraints.

In support of current empirical assertions with western contexts, it became evident that participants sought solace from the kitchen as a site that offered women "...power which they may be unable to exercise in other domains." (Meah & Jackson, 2013, p. 3). Although there is limited empirical knowledge on domestic spaces as a site of sanctuary for South Asian women,

Vallianatos and Raine (2008) affirm the importance of food among South Asian immigrants in Canada as a source of maintaining connections to their traditional culture and reasserting their ethnic affiliations in an unfamiliar country. They further explain that preparing ethnic cuisines can be a significant form of maintaining communal and cultural affiliations to their native countries as well as maintaining their central identities as women (Vallianatos & Raine, 2008). Puwar and Raghuram (2003) further explain this by dismantling the dichotomy of tradition and modernity with respect to South Asian women contending that women are often portrayed as consuming agents of traditional roles such as reproduction, taking care of their husbands and supporting their children. However, they argue that in fact, South Asian immigrant women engage in these activities to move beyond their traditional roles, and to take care of themselves or for self-pleasure (Puwar & Raghuram, 2003). These findings provide new insights and research potential for future investigations into domesticity and servitude as a means to cope, rather than a constraining traditional expectation.

5.3 Limitations of the study

Despite every effort to maintain narrowed foci on Indian and Pakistani immigrant women, a significant shortcoming of this thesis is the lack of heterogeneity taken into account. As discussed in earlier chapters, South Asian cultures including India and Pakistan comprise a rich diversity in national, religious, linguistic, socio-economic and caste-based dimensions, and it can be anticipated that the experiences of each of the unique sub-groups could significantly vary in the context of familial violence. Although the findings enrich out understandings of Indian and Pakistani women's experiences of family abuse and immigration stressors, they cannot be extrapolated to the entirety of both populations. In addition, the small sample size further deters the generalizability of the results to the larger population.

Second, the richness of the data was compromised in that, several of the women were constrained with time either due to actively being in an abusive relationship and having to go home, or having to leave for other counselling or health-related appointments. The depth and breadth of data from service providers interviewed were also constrained due to time limitations and having to attend to other agency related priorities. On some occasions, the interview was consistently interrupted due to service providers being called to attend to program-related needs. Although this sheds some light on the realities of NGOs working with immigrants and South Asian women, their narratives were limited in capturing the full essence of familial abuse.

In addition, current literature has cited the higher likelihood of South Asian women seeking informal sources of support rather than formal sources for receiving support with domestic violence circumstances (Mahapatra & Dinitto, 2013). Informal sources include family and friends as well as social, cultural or religious groups. As such, the data derived in this thesis was limited to those who had sought formal sources of support and disclosed their abuse to a helping professional. In turn, this limits the sample composition and does not capture the perspectives of informal sources such as religious leaders or makeshift counsellors in cultural centres.

Class, income and socio-economic status as part of intersectional identities were also not examined during the research interviews or data analysis. Previous research (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005) has cited that the experiences of domestic violence can vary and be influenced based on socio-economic status of the women. For instance, Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) assert that women from low socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to leave abusive situations due to economic dependency and require a different set of resources compared to their middle- or

upper-class counterparts. Thus, this thesis is limited in its' analysis of how family violence intersects with the socio-economic status of Indian and Pakistani immigrant women.

Furthermore, although this thesis drew upon postcolonial theory to situate the family violence experiences of South Asian immigrant women within the context of British colonization, it did not integrate an understanding of the immigrant women's experiences on Indigenous lands. Lawrence and Dua (2005) assert that in Canada, the decolonization struggles of Indigenous peoples are relegated to the peripheries of antiracist discourses whereas racialized immigrants are brought to the center under the guise of 'multiculturalism policies'. As such, this thesis is limited in its' exploration of South Asian immigrant women's experiences of violence as influenced by their positionalities as settlers and occupants on Indigenous lands.

Finally, as discussed in earlier chapters this thesis carries the risk of staining the image of the broader South Asian community as inherently violent. Although claims were made earlier on in ensuring that these communities are not cast in a negative light, the nature of the findings still carry the likelihood of tainting views of South Asian communities as violent or bigoted towards their counterparts from other national or religious backgrounds. Although the core topic of this thesis represents a much broader problem, it's roots in the socio-cultural and historical fabric of South Asia could impact how outsiders extrapolate these findings based on a dominant praxis.

5.4 Implications for social work practice

This thesis maintains the momentum of current body of knowledge on South Asian women's experiences of familial violence, particularly within an immigration context. The narrative accounts complicate our understandings of nuances rooted in the social, cultural, historical and political milieu of India and Pakistan. In turn, these results can enrich helping professionals' knowledge of this issue as well as it's complexities and equip them with culturally

safe approaches to provide appropriate services to this population. Given the increased influx of South Asian immigrants to the Greater Toronto Area, this knowledge becomes imperative in reaching out to and providing these communities with better quality service.

Furthermore, the resilience strategies identified from the participants' narratives in this study highlight the importance of religion and food as sources of survival. These findings call for an attention to non-traditional forms of service provision to Indian and Pakistani immigrant women and indigenizing treatment to better serve this population. Ögtem-Young (2018) states that doing otherwise would result in a "...general lack of focus on the fluid and subjective nature of resilience..." (p.2) and a significant oversight in "...recognising the multiple ways and specific cultural contexts in which resilience is realised and constructed by individuals." (p. 2).

5.5 Implications for social work research

The integration of socio-cultural and historical lens into the feminist theoretical framework allows for the fluidity of understanding the issue of family violence and elevates the knowledge base for future research. The incorporation of India and Pakistan's colonial history as well as current political tensions among sub-groups shapes the direction of future research to remain cautious in claiming culture as the sole factor to incite familial violence within these communities. The cultural specificities in the findings of this thesis lay the foundation for future research to set a broader focus on culturally situated meaning-makings of violence as well as the role of faith and spirituality that provide comfort to women enduring abuse. Research investigations can include service providers' views on this issue, who self-identify as South Asian immigrants themselves, and to examine how their positionality can impede or augment services provided to women with lived experiences of violence. Finally, this thesis also demonstrated the utility of incorporating both inductive and deductive approaches to thematic

analysis, as combining both techniques are not typically associated with qualitative research methodologies (Gale et al., 2013). Thus, future qualitative investigations can benefit from a balancing of both deductive and inductive analyses to identify themes based on preliminary theories but also allow new understandings to emerge.

5.6 Implications for social work education

Assertions of potential misconceptions and myths in the current literature on South Asian communities were discussed in earlier sections. For instance, Gambrill (2014) discusses “avoidable ignorance” in social work education and submits that “education has been commodified to serve purposes such as getting a job or correcting injustices.” (p. 402). As such, social work education is plagued with misconceptions and misconstrued understandings of women in the Global South such as in India and Pakistan. However, the complexity of analysis within this thesis to include the political and historical seeds of violence against South Asian women, particularly from the lens of feminist movements in both countries, demystify potential misconceptions. The foundations of this thesis equip social work pedagogy and social work students with an expanded understanding of ‘culture’ with “A historical perspective... to recognize old functions in new guises...” (Gambrill, 2014, p. 401).

The findings of this thesis promote nuanced understandings of how family violence is experienced in Indian and Pakistani immigrant communities, and offers multiple subjectivities of violence within the social, political, historical and immigration-specific contexts. This thesis contributes to social work education by potentially enhancing competencies of students in advocating for and providing effective responses when serving this population. The educational contributions of this research can enable students to approach marginalized communities such as South Asians from a culturally humble stance rather than an expert stance. The multiple

theoretical frameworks offered in this thesis including feminist, immigration, resilience and postcolonial stances equip social work students to apply a multidisciplinary lens when delivering culturally safe services. By utilizing the knowledge generated from this thesis, social work education can prepare students to approach South Asian immigrant communities at the individual level for effective service provision, at the community level to advocate for community-based programs and overall increase in resources, and finally at the macro level for effective policy development and implementation. Social work curricula can incorporate the knowledge acquired from this thesis and equip students with appropriate skills, attitudes and self-awareness to become culturally humble rather than culturally competent practitioners.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Although violence against South Asian women is beginning to gain currency in the literature, it has largely focused on domestic abuse and ignored the complexities of abuse from various other family members such as in-laws. The literature presented in this thesis explains that Indian and Pakistani households traditionally comprise of, though not always, extended family units that include in-laws. This unwittingly ignores the complexities of abuse faced by Indian and Pakistani immigrant women that is perpetrated by their extended family members. As such, I argued for the use of the term ‘family violence’ in my research to encompass the intricacies of violence perpetrated by multiple family members in the lives of Indian and Pakistani women.

Further, the conflation of the term ‘South Asian’ has led to the homogenization of the sub-cultural diversities from the various countries it encompasses such as India and Pakistan. South Asia is not monocultural and as such, the term ‘South Asian’ is contested as it conflates the experiences of South Asian women by ignoring the specificities of the unique South Asian identities on a national level. Even more concerning is the representation of ‘culture’ as the problematic force which serves to reify negative stereotypes of South Asian communities.

Although the current literature has advanced our understandings of violence faced by Indian and Pakistani women, it has simultaneously pathologized subaltern cultures as inherently violent. Thus, all of the aforementioned concerns led me to search critically for alternative understandings of family abuse faced by Indian and Pakistani immigrant women; understandings that are rooted in the complexities of historical, political, colonial as well as immigration-specific factors that shape ‘culture’.

In this qualitative research, I purposefully opted to explore family violence in Indian and Pakistani immigrant communities through a case study approach in the Greater Toronto Area from postcolonial perspectives combined with feminist, immigration and resilience theories. Canada, particularly the Greater Toronto Area has seen a significant influx of immigrants from South Asian countries with the highest proportions from India and Pakistan (Statistics Canada, 2016). As such, it also became imperative to situate the experiences of Indian and Pakistani women within an immigration context. A thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with both survivors and service providers revealed the cultural specificities that shaped how Indian and Pakistani immigrant women understand violence.

Particularly, the participants discussed understandings of violence as a communication tool and as a product of a status-oriented culture. According to most participants, violence in the family stemmed from a discord in communication between the woman and her husband as well as her family. The participants' perspectives also revealed that violence perpetrated towards women was contingent on their domestic abilities and servitude. Contradicting these narratives however, was one service provider's view of family violence as inherently a matter of power and control rather than a communication issue. Even more surprising was that despite empirical evidence of honour-based constructs in prior studies on South Asian women's experiences of violence, none of the participants in my research made references to honour or *izzat* in their narratives of family violence. In addition, the pull between gender-roles prescribed in their native country and their host country was also cited as a source of family-based violence. Interestingly, sub-cultural tensions between India and Pakistan as well as Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities also emerged in participants' narratives.

These cultural peculiarities were rooted not only in gender-based understandings of patriarchy but also structures of male domination that trace back to the colonial legacies of the British colonization of India. As such, the competing narrative of violence as rooted in power and control rather than faulty communication, was explained by noting that this service provider was the only participant who identified Canada as her country of origin. Therefore, it is likely that her narratives were rooted in western discourses of power and control, rather than discourses arising from the historical underpinnings of India and Pakistan. Furthermore, the absence of honour or *izzat* in the participants' narratives was attributed to their possible resistance to the stigma and 'othering' associated with the term honour in mainstream media, particularly in the context of honour-based killings. The findings on cultural specificities were also connected to the current literature on migration-specific stressors that emasculate immigrant men through economic and financial hardships, as well as institutional racism. Rather than conceptualizing Indian and Pakistani cultures as backwards or rife with violence, these findings allowed for the broadening of the rubric of 'culture' to include postcolonial, immigration-specific as well as historical underpinnings family violence as experienced by Indian and Pakistani women in the Greater Toronto Area.

Barriers to service and seeking help were also discussed by a number of participants which included immigration-specific stressors, particularly economic and financial as well as loss of social supports. Attaining employment was described as overwhelmingly challenging and replicated findings from prior literature that cites the difficulties immigrants faced in meeting the demands of the Canadian labour market. This ties back to the emasculation and racialization of immigrant men who are unable to sustain meaningful employment, and thus utilize violence as a means to re-assert their power and control. An additional barrier that was also discussed was

navigating the Canadian legal context whereby the service providers and survivors described the legal systems in India and Pakistan as responding to abuse as a private family matter rather than enforcing mandatory charges and arrests as seen in Canada. While criminal justice is afforded to Indian and Pakistani women facing violence, the Canadian legal system fails to take into account the complexities of taking the women's husbands away, that is, their sole source of financial and economic support.

Notwithstanding the insurmountable difficulties faced by Indian and Pakistani immigrant women who have experienced family violence, their resilience strategies also emerged in the interviews. These strategies primarily involved faith-based resilience as well as engaging in cooking and sharing of food. Their resiliency challenged mainstream portrayals of South Asian women as meek, passive or downtrodden, and instead illuminated their innate ability to reclaim themselves through these strategies. Prior literature on resilience as well as feminist interpretations of Hindu, Sikh and Islamic religions enhanced our understandings of why religion and food were considered important sources of resiliency.

Progressing through this research both as an insider and an outsider was a humbling journey, as I unearthed new insights about myself as a researcher, practitioner and a student. A significant skill that I honed throughout this research was staying grounded in cultural humility and solidified my ability to be a culturally humble researcher, rather than an all-knowing expert on this topic. My personal and academic investment in this research project elicited the complex interplay of cultural, political, historical and colonial traces in shaping the lived realities of violence against South Asian immigrant women. It is my hope that this research has provided new insights for social work practitioners and researchers in situating the experiences of Indian and Pakistani women within their multiple contexts. It is also my hope that this research will

complement both micro and macro level social work education to equip students with the competencies required for effective service provision with and advocacy for this population.

At this point, I will reassert that this thesis does not seek to conclude that violence is endemic in Indian and Pakistani communities, nor does it claim that the West has absolved itself of all forms of violence against women. To the extent that current contentions have foregrounded violence against women as a gendered issue, they have often eclipsed the nuanced convergence of broader patriarchal systems such as colonialism, capitalism and immigration. Extrapolating the findings of this thesis as simply a ‘cultural’ issue or a way of life among South Asian communities would perpetuate the othering of Indian and Pakistani communities. In concluding this thesis, I urge the reader to consider this: Is it enough to simply help these women cope with gender inequality? Or is there a need to engage in an activist role to challenge the broader, more dominant social systems that are oppressing racially marginalized men themselves which in turn, coerce them into perpetrating violence towards women in their communities? After all, Hunnicutt (2009) reminds us that “Understanding male violence means exposing how those men who use violence against women are victims of their own culture. It also means exploring men’s power as well as powerlessness” (p. 569).

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent

Research title: Experiences of family violence among South Asian immigrant women in the Greater Toronto Area of Ontario, Canada

Researcher: Dhvani Joshi, Graduate student (Master's level), Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University

Supervisory Committee members:

Ginette Lafreniere, M.A., MSW., Ph.D.
Associate professor, Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University
Director, Social Innovation Research Group (SIRG).
Director, Manulife Centre for Community Health Research (MCCHR)

Eliana Suarez, MSW, Ph.D
Associate Professor
Associate Dean, MSW program
Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University

Purpose of the research: To understand South Asian women's perceptions of their experience of family violence within their culture-specific context as well as the contribution of immigration-related issues towards their experiences of abuse and violence

What you will be asked to do in the research: If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed on a one-on-one basis by me, the researcher. You will be asked to share your perspectives as service providers, on the experiences of family violence among South Asian immigrant women in the Greater Toronto region. You will also be interviewed about their immigration-related experiences as well as your sense of how culture shapes their perspectives of family violence.

You do not have to answer any questions that you may find uncomfortable. The time required to complete this interview will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time and you will be compensated for your involvement regardless of your withdrawal. You may also refuse to answer a question if you so decide. The interview will be tape recorded so as to keep an accurate record of our interview and so that I, the researcher can transcribe and analyze it at a later date.

Risks and benefits: There are no known risks to participating in the study. Your participation in this study will help enhance our understanding of the unique experiences of family violence among South Asian immigrant women. We also hope that your involvement in the study will help improve service provision to South Asian communities who have experiences with family violence.

Compensation: You will be compensated with a \$10 Tim Horton's gift card as a token of appreciation for your participation, even if you chose to withdraw from the study at any point.

Withdrawal from the study: You may choose to withdraw from the study at any point and your withdrawal will not affect your relationship with the researcher, the research supervisors, Wilfrid Laurier University or any organizations associated with this study. Should you choose to withdraw from the study, any data collected at that point will be destroyed immediately.

Confidentiality: If you consent to be interviewed for the purpose of this study, it will be tape-recorded. All the information collected will be held in confidence and your name or any identifying information will not appear in any report or publication of the study. The data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only research staff will have access to this information. Digital tape recordings will be erased after being transcribed. All data collected will be deleted after the researcher's completion of the MSW program at Wilfrid Laurier University. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent where possible by law.

Please note that direct quotations from the research interview will be used for the final write-up or presentations of the study. You will be invited to review the quotations selected prior to any write-up or presentations of the report to ensure that the quotations selected do not trace back to your individual identity or those of your clients.

Questions about the research: If you have any questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me either by telephone at (647) 830 2449 or by email at josh0850@mylaurier.ca. You may also contact the supervisory committee members Ginette Lafreniere at glafreniere@wlu.ca or Eliana Suarez at esuarez@wlu.ca.

This research has also been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Wilfrid Laurier University and confirms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Jayne Kalmar, PhD, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 3131 or REBChair@wlu.ca.

Legal rights and signatures:

I _____ confirm that I have read and understood the information consent sheet for the study, Experiences of family violence among South Asian women in the Greater Toronto Area of Ontario, Canada. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I can withdraw from the study at any time. I am aware that my interview will be tape-recorded, and I give permission that it can be used for the purpose of this research. I am not waiving my legal rights by signing this form and I give full consent to take part in this research.

Signature
Participant _____

Date _____

Signature
Principle Investigator _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

Research title: Experiences of family violence among South Asian immigrant women in the Greater Toronto Area of Ontario, Canada

Researcher: Dhvani Joshi, Graduate student (Master's level), Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University

Supervisory Committee members:

Ginette Lafreniere, M.A., MSW., Ph.D.
Associate professor, Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University
Director, Social Innovation Research Group (SIRG).
Director, Manulife Centre for Community Health Research (MCCHR)

Eliana Suarez, MSW, Ph.D
Associate Professor
Associate Dean, MSW program
Faculty of Social Work, Wilfrid Laurier University

Purpose of the research: To understand South Asian women's perceptions of their experience of family violence within their culture-specific context as well as the contribution of immigration-related issues towards their experiences of abuse and violence

What you will be asked to do in the research: If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to share your experiences of violence and abuse within your family. You will also be interviewed on your sense of how your experience of immigration could be related to your experience of violence as well as your sense of how you think your culture plays a role in your experiences.

You will be interviewed by me, the researcher and you are free to stop at any point. You do not have to answer any questions that you may find uncomfortable. The time required to complete this interview will be approximately 60 to 90 minutes.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time and you will be compensated for your involvement regardless of your withdrawal. You may also refuse to answer a question if you so decide. The interview will be tape recorded so as to keep an accurate record of our interview and so that I, the researcher can transcribe and analyze it at a later date.

Risks and discomforts: You may experience some discomfort in discussing your experiences of abuse and violence as I understand that this is a difficult topic. Should you feel that you require support in addressing this discomfort, I will provide you with a list of resources that you can access in order to seek this support.

Benefits of the research: Your participation in this study will help enhance our understanding of the unique experiences of family violence among South Asian immigrant women. We also hope that your

involvement in the study will help improve service provision to South Asian communities who have experiences with family violence.

Compensation: You will be compensated with a \$20 grocery gift card and bus tickets for your transportation for participation, even if you chose to withdraw from the study at any point.

Withdrawal from the study: You may choose to withdraw from the study at any point and your withdrawal will not affect your relationship with the researcher, the research supervisors, Wilfrid Laurier University or any organizations associated with this study. Should you choose to withdraw from the study, any data collected at that point will be destroyed immediately.

Confidentiality: If you consent to be interviewed for the purpose of this study, it will be tape-recorded. All the information collected will be held in confidence and your name will not appear in any report or publication of the study. The data will be safely stored in a locked facility and only research staff will have access to this information. Digital tape recordings will be erased after being transcribed. All data collected will be deleted after the researcher's completion of the MSW program at Wilfrid Laurier University. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent where possible by law.

Please note that direct quotations from the research interview will be used for the final write-up or presentations of the study. You will be invited to review the quotations selected prior to any write-up or presentations of the report to ensure that the quotations selected do not trace back to your individual identity.

Questions about the research: If you have any questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me either by telephone at (647) 830 2449 or by email at josh0850@mylaurier.ca. You may also contact the supervisory committee members Ginette Lafreniere at glafreniere@wlu.ca or Eliana Suarez at esuarez@wlu.ca.

This research has also been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee at Wilfrid Laurier University and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Jayne Kalmar, PhD, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 3131 or REBChair@wlu.ca.

Legal rights and signatures:

I _____ confirm that I have read and understood the information consent sheet for the study, Experiences of family violence among South Asian women in the Greater Toronto Region of Ontario, Canada. I understand that my participation is voluntary and I can withdraw from the study at any time. I am aware that my interview will be tape-recorded, and I give permission that it can be used for the purpose of this research. I am not waiving my legal rights by signing this form and I give full consent to take part in this research.

Signature _____
Participant

Date _____

Signature _____
Principle Investigator

Date _____

APPENDIX C

CALLING ALL SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN!!!

- *Are you an immigrant woman living in the Greater Toronto Area (0-30 years residency)?*
- *Do identify yourself as South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan)?*
- *Have you experienced abuse or violence within your family?*
- *Are you fluent or comfortable with conversing in English?*

If yes, then you are invited to participate in our study '*Experiences of family violence among South Asian immigrant women in the Greater Toronto Area of Ontario, Canada*'.

Your voluntary participation would involve an interview between 60 to 90 minutes with the researcher: a Social Work graduate student with the Wilfrid Laurier University.

You may withdraw from the study at any time! Any public transportation costs will be covered and you will receive a **\$20 grocery gift card** for your participation.

For more information, or to volunteer in this study please contact:

Dhwani Joshi

Faculty of Social Work

Wilfrid Laurier University

Email: josh0850@mylaurier.ca

Phone: (647) 830 2449

This study has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance by the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board (REB # 5210)

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APPENDIX D

Hello,

I am contacting you because I have been approached by Dhvani Joshi, a graduate student within the Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University. She is conducting a study as part of her program that investigates self-identified South Asian women's perceptions of their experience of family violence within their culture-specific context as well as the contribution of immigration-related issues towards their experiences of abuse and violence. She is seeking participants to interview for this study, and is willing to provide further information if needed.

If you are interested in participating in this study, you may either contact her directly at josh0850@mylaurier.ca or you can contact me as well and with your consent, I can provide her with your contact information. Your participation in this study will be voluntary and would involve a 60-90 minute interview with the researcher. You will be compensated with a \$20 grocery gift card. Any public transportation costs for the study will be covered and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Please note that your decision to participate, not participate or withdraw from the study will not affect your ability to access your resources at [insert agency name] or your relationship with your counsellors/social workers/case managers at this agency or your ability to access service in the future.

I have attached/Here is the poster advertising the research study for you to view. If you have any questions regarding this study prior to deciding to participate, you can either inquire directly with Dhvani Joshi at the contact information provided above. Alternatively you can forward your questions to me at [insert contact information] and I can inquire with her on your behalf.

APPENDIX E

Rapport building

- 1) Can you please tell me a little bit about yourself?
- 2) How do you spend your typical day?
- 3) What was your experience of immigrating to Canada? What are some things that have been difficult in your experience of immigration?
- 4) What are some things you like about living in Canada? What do you miss about home?

Family violence experience

- 1) When I say 'family violence', what comes to mind?
- 2) What has been your experience of family violence?
- 3) What types of things happened that led you to believe that those in your family were being violent towards you?
- 4) What is your understanding of why your husband/father/mother/in-laws/sibling were abusive towards you?
- 5) What influenced your decision to stay in your marriage/family? Can you explain why?
- 6) What types of things have been helpful for you to cope with your experience of violence? What made you feel better? What are some things that made it more difficult?
- 7) Were there any people/services/activities that helped you cope with your experience of violence and abuse? Can you please elaborate on that?

Themes of honour and shame

- 1) Sometimes when women talk about domestic violence or abuse, the idea of honour comes up. Is that significant in your world?
- 2) Do you feel that honour has been violated when you experience violence within your family? If yes, what happens when you violate this honour?
- 3) What does honour mean in your family? In your community?

Conclusion of interview

- 1) Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about your experience of violence?
- 2) Do you have any questions about our interview together?
- 3) Would you be interested in learning about services that might provide support to women who have experience violence?

APPENDIX F

Resource information for violence against women community services-

- 1) Assaulted women's helpline: (416) 863 0511 or 1 (866) 863 0511
- 2) Caledon Dufferin Victim Services: (519) 942 1452 or 1 (888) 743 6496
- 3) Hope 24/7 (formerly Sexual Assault/Rape Crisis Centre of Peel): 1 (800) 810 0180
- 4) Victim Services of Peel: (905) 568 1068 and info@vsp.org
- 5) Catholic Cross-Cultural Services: Violence against women support through individual counselling and group support (905) 457 7740 or rbynoe@ccspeel.org
- 6) Family Services of Peel: (905) 270 2250 or (905) 453 7890
- 7) India Rainbow Community Services: (905) 454 9070 or (905) 275 2369
- 8) Punjabi Community Health Centre: (905) 790 0808
- 9) Interim Place (South): Shelter for women and children fleeing abuse (905) 403 0864 or womensadvocatesouth@interimplace.com
- 10) Interim Place (North): Shelter for women and children fleeing abuse (905) 676 8515 or womensadvocatenorth@interimplace.com
- 11) Peel Children's Aid Society: (905) 363 6131
- 12) Peel Regional Police: (905) 453 3311 (non-emergency) or 911 (emergency)