A Woman’s Truth

-Four Women's Personal Stories of Being Victims of Honor-Related Violence

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First and foremost I would like to thank the incredibly brave women who were strong enough to tell their stories with such detail so that this paper would be possible. Because of you I have received a much greater understanding of the phenomenon of honor related violence. Hopefully we will together be able to save one person from this tragic life. Thank you!

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Abstract

Honor related violence has become a recognized abuse all over the world and violence against women carried out by the men in their families is and has always been a resurfacing problem in all societies. This paper will focus on the problems which relate to cultures where honor related violence is a more common practice and will depart from societies where men can take violent actions against women in the name of family honor and hide behind cultural exemptions.

This paper is written to create a deeper insight to the needs and wants of subjected women and to understand their own perception of this type of violence and its underlying causes.

This paper takes on the view solely of the subjected women and is a direct presentation of their stories and their lives. Instead of using outside observers this paper goes directly to the women living in these types of situations and represents the women based on their own wants and needs from society and authority.

The methodological framework for this paper is through an inductive process of writing and is through observations and unstructured interviews trying to build a systematic description revolving around the victims of honor related violence. The interviews, biographic narratives, will ask the participants to tell a story about their lives, a biographic narrative where they will freely speak and this will be facilitated during eight in-depth interviews with four different women who during many years lived under abuse carried out in the name of honor by two husband, a father, and several uncles.

The results of these interviews lead to the conclusions that women often are ignored and forgotten by outside forces such as police and organizations until a crime is committed.

Keywords; violence, women, honor crimes, culture, patriarchy.
List of Abbreviations

KC- Kvinnocentrum, Women’s Center

ROKS - Swedish Organization for Women and Girl Shelters

SFI – Svenska för Invandrar, Swedish for Immigrants
# Table of Content

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ... 2  
ABSTRACT ... 3  
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ... 4  
TABLE OF CONTENT ... 5  

1. INTRODUCTION ... 6  
1.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM FORMULATION ... 6  
1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTION ... 8  
1.3 DEFINITIONS ... 9  
1.4 STRUCTURE ... 10  

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK ... 12  
2.1 METHODOLOGY ... 12  
2.1.1 INDUCTIVE REASONING ... 12  
2.1.2 INTERVIEW APPROACH AND TECHNIQUE ... 12  
2.2 SAMPLE SELECTION ... 13  
2.3 METHOD ... 14  
2.4 BEFORE MATERIAL COLLECTION ... 14  
2.5 DURING THE MATERIAL COLLECTION ... 15  
2.6 AFTER MATERIAL COLLECTION ... 15  
2.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION ... 16  
2.8 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS ... 17  

3. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION ... 19  
3.1 LITTERATEEUR REVIEW ... 19  

4. RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS ... 22  
4.1 DIANA, 25 ... 22  
4.2 LARA, 23 AND KHADIDJA, 46 ... 27  
4.3 IMANI, 45 ... 34  

5. FINDINGS ... 38  
5.1 RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT DO THE VICTIMS THEMSELVES PERCEIVE TO BE THE REASON BEHIND HONOR RELATED VIOLENCE? ... 38  
5.2 RESEARCH QUESTION 2: HOW DO THE VICTIMS OF HONOR RELATED VIOLENCE PERCEIVE THAT THE ALLEGATIONS THEY PRESENT TO AUTHORITIES, SUCH AS POLICE AND SOCIAL WORKERS, WHEN WANTING HELP, IS RECEIVED AND HANDLED? WHAT IS THE RESPONSE THEY HAVE RECEIVED WHEN ASKING FOR HELP? ... 39  

6. ANALYSIS ... 42  

7. CONCLUSION ... 45  
7.1 DISCUSSION AND REFLECTIONS ... 45  
7.2 FURTHER RESEARCH ... 46  

LIST OF REFERENCES ... 47
1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Problem Formulation

Honor related violence has become a recognized abuse against women all over the world and according to the United Nations there are annually about 5000 honor killings worldwide (UN, 2013). Violence against women carried out by the men in their families is and has always been a resurfacing problem in all societies, however, this paper will focus on the problems which relate to cultures where honor related violence is a more common practice and will depart from societies where men can take violent actions against women in the name of family honor and hide behind cultural exemptions (Amnesty, 2013).

The phenomenon of honor related violence and honor killings has become a reoccurring headline in Swedish media and is receiving an increasing amount of attention and some of the most covered cases in the Swedish media in the last years include the murder of Fadime Sahindal and Pela Atroshi which were the two of the first honor killings who received very much coverage in the Swedish media (GAPF 2012-13). As the murders of Fadime Sahindal and Pela Atroshi now reach over the 10-year mark, the phenomenon seems to see no end and the reports of young women being murdered by family members because of their desire to live independent lives, where they themselves decide upon their own lives in regards to partners, friends and education, seems never ending.

In Sweden a perception of honor related violence is that of girls being murdered when stepping out of honor codes put on them by, for example family, patriarchal structures and/or cultural beliefs. Cases involving this type of violence are increasingly receiving more and more attention in the media and are today a subject that the average person is somewhat aware of. However, comparing the media coverage from almost 15 years ago, which is when the Pela and Fadime's murders where broadcasted, the news of a woman being murdered because of patriarchal and cultural norms was a phenomenon many had not heard of. Today, however, this seems to be a headline not to foreign.
It is estimated that 70,000 people with foreign backgrounds in Sweden between the ages of 16-25 feel that their parents' beliefs, religion and culture put up limits to whom they choose to marry. 8500 of these people are actually worried about not having a say in who they marry. The lack of allowance for governing oneself in decisions such as marriage goes hand in hand with honor related violence and the fact that 8500 young men and women in Sweden live with this concern only points to the continuation of honor related violence unless right measures are taken. (Regeringen, 2009)

The exact number of cases involving honor violence in Sweden is a number which is non-existent because there is no statistic kept of this sort (Terrafem, 2013) and since it is impossible to calculate a number because of the large amount of unrecorded cases. However, it is clear to see that this is a phenomenon which daily is affecting women and girls subjecting them to danger and preventing them from living full meaningful lives.

From researching into the topic of honor related violence, a trend that becomes much apparent is that most of the sources are outside observers and not actual women with the experience of this type of violence. Much of the litterature available is taking a point of departure of the western mentality where little attention is given the actual victims of this phenomenon. Instead, well meaning politicians and organizations take on the part of representing the exposed women even before having any type of contact with them. Instead, they base the arguments collected on contact with staff from sheltered housings, staff from organizations focusing on honor related violence and other authority figures. Hence, the observers become the representation of the women exposed to honor related violence, instead of the women themselves being the basis for knowledge and understanding.

A problem arising from this observer point of departure is that the actual victims and their own needs are left to what the outsiders deem important, and does not rightfully take into consideration the most important views in the cases of honor related violence, the subjected women themselves.

Therefore the problem in today's handling of honor related violence and its victims is that no one seems to speak directly to the women living in these situations, to
understand their lives and their own perception of their situations. Instead women involved in this subject sometimes form a perception of what western women who have been brought up in a liberal and free country want and how they feel in regards to this type of violence. It is often presumed that the perception of western women and the subjected women from foreign countries is the same, and little time is put into understanding the differences that may lie a head and between the different mindsets and mentalities. One should always go directly to the source of the ones who organizations and politicians want to help, the women, and there carefully listen and understand how they themselves perceive their situation and how they feel would be the correct way in guiding them in their traumatic experiences.

Hence, the main problem I see here is that the actual victims of this type of violence are forgotten and thought to be represented by staff and politicians, while in reality their own desires and needs are put aside and many times ignored

1.2 Purpose of the study and research question

The objective and aim of this paper is to create a deeper insight to the actual needs and wants of subjected women and to understand their own perception of this type of violence and its underlying causes. The goal is to go directly to the source, the victims, and not solely relying on outside observers for information.

The purpose of this his paper takes on the view solely of the subjected women and is a direct presentation of their stories and their lives. Instead of using outside observers this paper goes directly to the women living in these types of situations and represents the women based on their own wants and needs from society and authority. The participating women were encouraged to freely tell their personal stories so that I as the author could understand their experiences of living under this type of violence. The goal of this study is also to create an understanding for the subjected women and to respect and accommodate their wishes to the best of ones ability without turning them away putting them in harms way.
Research questions

• What do the victims of this type of violence perceive to be the reason behind honor related violence?

• How do the victims of honor related violence perceive that the allegations they present to authorities, such as police and social workers, when wanting help, is received and handled? What is the response they have received when asking for help?

1.3 Definitions

To steer away from misunderstanding it is important to mention that words such as culture and patriarchy are used according to textbook definitions and will only briefly be explained since a common language exist within the current debate and its thinkers. Culture for example will be based on the sociology definition of human culture, which says that culture is “the total inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge which constitutes the shared bases of social action” (The Free Dictionary, 2013), in the case of this paper, societies which live under socio-cultural norms which excuse and condone honor-related violence. Another often-used term in this paper is patriarchy, which will take on the global meaning which rotate around a social system where the males in the family, often the father, is the head of the family with authority over the women in the family (The Free Dictionary, 2013).

To continue, in this paper concepts used in the current debate will be used and it is therefore important to explain and clarify those concept. The concept honor societies and honor related violence and honor will be clarified below.

The first concept to clarify is honor societies which in this paper will point to the societies where honor based violence is mostly evident and in this case will be middle eastern Muslim societies which are societies where men can hide behind cultural justification when acting out honor violence (Islamist Watch, 2013 & Plant 2013).

The second concept is honor related violence which in Sweden many times is thought to be only physical violence practiced by the men of a family towards the women of the family as a result of them breaking the honor of the family. Honor related violence
is not only physical abuse, such as beatings, but also equally much mental abuse such as threats, ostracism, being a social prisoner where the women are not allowed to have a social life and/or leave the home. Another form of honor related violence is also sexual abuse.

Honor related violence is often carried out in societies where women are considered to be the carrier of the whole family's reputation. The view that women are property with no rights is a view deeply rooted in Islamic societies. Women are looked upon as property of the males; brothers, fathers and later the husbands, and they have the right to decide the fate of the their property. What causes honor related violence and killings vary widely and can be something as minor as a suspicion of flirting to any type of extramarital relations, even the perception that some has become to 'westernized' in her ways is cause enough for carrying out honor violence. (Amnesty, 2013)

The last concept is honor and in this paper honor is the most important in honor societies and in those the families' honor is directly linked with the woman's sexuality. Which in terms mean that a virgin brings honor whilst a non-virgin brings shame. In these honor societies a women is expected to remain a virgin until the night of her wedding and she is also expected to act properly in public so that the family's honor will not be threatened. However, as mentioned earlier the honor does not solely lie in a woman’s virginity since it only requires a suspicion of flirting, for the act of honor violence to be carried out. Also if one disregards from the notions of a woman’s sexuality these acts of violence can also be carried out if a woman is considered too liberal in her way of thinking and also if the men find her becoming to outspoken and to 'westernized' for their liking. So one can break the norms of honor in many ways aside from the sexual rules. (Amnesty, 2013)

1.4 Structure

This study is divided into seven parts or chapters. The first part of the paper is the Introduction, which consists of some general background information and a problem formulation. The first part hence the introduction, also includes the purpose of the study and its formulated research question. Here the importance and relevance of this study is also a focus. The last part of this chapter includes the delimitations and
limitations of this study. A review of often used terms such as culture, patriarchy, honor, honor violence and honor society is also described in this chapter to make the text more easily followed by readers.

In the second chapter, the Methodological Framework, the methodology and method being used in writing this paper is carefully described. Here a sample selection of interview participants will also be included. In addition, this also chapter divides the stages in this paper into three categories; before material collection, during material collection and after material collection to make the construction of this paper easy to understand and follow as a reader. This chapter also outlines and explains which type of interview and which techniques are being used and why. It also includes a part discussing the ethical considerations related to this study and the issue it has to take into consideration.

The third chapter, the Theoretical Orientation, consists of a literature overview, where twelve articles carefully have been read and analyzed to try to locate similarities and differences in the current debate on the subject of honor related violence.

Chapter four the results, here the narratives of the interview participants is transcribed and put into a flowing text. It is here that the biographic narratives are carefully examined to create an understanding for the victims of honor related violence.

The fifth chapter, Findings, presents the findings and conclusions from the unstructured interviews, summarizes the answers from the findings and lastly answers the research questions of this thesis.

In chapter six, Analysis, the findings are analyzed and elaborated on, in relation to the conceptual framework and theoretical figure being used in this study.

Chapter seven, Conclusion, summarizes the main findings of this study and presents a conclusion in relation to the problem of honor related violence. A suggestion on further research will also be given in this chapter.
2. Methodological Framework

2.1 Methodology

2.1.1 Inductive Reasoning

The methodological framework for this study is through an inductive process of writing and is through observations and unstructured interviews trying to build a systematic description revolving around the victims of honor related violence. A reason for choosing the inductive path of writing is because it allowed for me to research and write of a topic without the need for arguing its validity, which would have been necessary if choosing the deductive path. Here, I have had the opportunity to research and analyze biographic stories without having to prove and argue its truth. This has allowed me to find my own conclusion based on the evidence of this paper. This type of writing was best suited because it allowed me to examine and research my point of interest and throughout the paper letting the information collected slowly form into a conclusion, a conclusion not present from the beginning. (Stier, 2013)

2.1.2 Interview Approach and Technique

The interviews which will be biographic narratives will ask the participants to tell a story about their lives, a biographic narrative where they will freely speak with a minimum of questions. (Creswell 2003 p.13) The attempt is to inductively build a systematic description evolving around the participating woman's lives and experiences and as provided in the purpose statement to create a deeper insight to the actual needs of the subjected woman and not solely relying ones knowledge base to outside observers, as is the case today.

To develop an understanding to the lived experiences of many subjected women in Sweden and to create an insight to those woman's own perceived needs eight qualitative, unstructured, open ended interviews were conducted with four participants and took about 4-6 hours per participant.

During the unstructured interviews notes were taken and the whole interview was also audio taped. The audiotaping was very useful and even more so when a translator was used to make sure that no information would be lost or forgotten. The audiotapes also were very useful when transcribing the interviews. (Creswell 2003, p.179-184)
Having the sensitivity of the subject in mind an attempt to make the participants more comfortable was to decide to have the first meeting at a local coffee shop, this was successful and left the participant in a relaxed state and made the conversation more comfortable. After a relationship was established the next meeting took place at either my home or the participating women's home. But the decision of having a neutral first ground for the first meeting was an important step to creating a relationship.

After the unstructured interviews were done and recorded, observations were carefully analyzed in order to attempt to observe all types of patterns and tendencies amongst the participants and since the papers takes on an inductive way of creating a systematic description of the situation it was important for second interviews to take place so that the conversations between myself and the participant could flow naturally.

In addition, the method described by Bernard H. Russel of the echo-probe and the uh-huh probe were also used in the interviews (Russel, 1995, 216-217). The echo-probe being an encouraging way of keeping the interviewee comfortable and speaking and the uh-huh probe also doing the same and also re-assuring that the interviewer is following the interviewee in its story telling. (ibid) These were both very good ways of keeping the women speaking and letting them know that their story was being listened to and also understood.

Other techniques used in this paper involved review of secondary data such as reports, journals and documents. Many reports and journals on the subject were studied and analyzed carefully in attempt of locating a research gap and also developing a deeper knowledge of the ongoing debate surrounding honor related violence.

2.2 Sample Selection

As one can imagine it was a difficult task to encourage women to participate in this paper and many declined based on not wanting to bring back old memories and feelings. However, four women wanted to share their story and were then gratefully introduced to the thesis. Therefore, because of the sensitive matter and the fact that this is a bachelor thesis I choose to use women I had been in contact with prior or women I had some type of connection with, mostly thorough prior work colleagues.
2.3 Method

The litterateur review is to locate a research gap in the phenomenon of honor related violence against women who have migrated to Sweden. The first step in this paper was to locate and study already existent material written on the subject of honor related violence. The research started by carefully exploring the academic site LIBRIS to find peer-reviewed academic papers including the topic honor related violence. Key words used to find articles included: honor killings, honor related violence, honor based violence, honor, shame and violence against woman. The search was conducted in English because of the nature of writing an English paper. From the database LIBRIS articles were downloaded and analyzed, articles were also downloaded from the Linnaeus University database. Another source used in this paper, although carefully analyzed, has also been Swedish newspapers and news outlets such as Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter (DN) and SVT.

2.4 Before material collection

As stated above this paper started of with two weeks of solely reading as much regarding the phenomenon of honor based violence as possible in order to try to locate a research gap.

It was also during this time that the first interview participants were chosen and asked to be involved in telling their stories. Four women were selected, two being Kurdish from the Iraqi part of Kurdistan and two being from Baghdad, Iraq.

The participants where contacted by phone and told about the intentions of the paper and asked if they were interested in participating. After receiving positive responses from the woman the natural next step was to schedule the first meeting and introduction of myself and this paper, which took place at a local coffee shop. Then came the first interview.

The first interviews started out with us getting acquainted, and the women feeling comfortable enough to tell their stories to the best of their ability. Since it was an unstructured interview no questions were written down, instead the women were encouraged to freely tell their stories and their experiences without interruptions with the help of the above mentioned echo-probe and uh-huh probe by Bernard Russel.
2.5 During the material collection

The first interview went smoothly however it was after that that challenges arose. It was many times difficult reaching the participant and during especially three of the women's stories a sense of guilt arose where as the author of this paper I felt a sense of guilt for having the involved women go back in time and remember the difficulties and violence they had been subjected too. This became most apparent when one of the participants Diana, said:

“I know that it's only a matter of time before he [her ex-husband] kills me

And after that they [the police] will listen

And believe me but then it will be to late”

However, she was determined to continue the interview and even encouraged me to use her full name, however all participants have been given aliases.

All four interviews were face-to-face interviews because of the importance to observe body language and other reactions important to be included in the analysis. Because of the sensitive subject I also found the face-to-face interviews to be the best way in avoiding misunderstandings and keeping a good relationship with all participants.

However, since one of the participating women were Arabic speaking a translator was asked to join the interviews, but this did not seem to create any obstacles since the translator already had a connection to the interviewee.

In addition, phone contact was also a vital part for receiving new information when new questions arose.

2.6 After material collection

After all material was collected and the recordings transcribed the process of analyzing begun. The choice was made not to send the written interviews to the participants because of the worry of time in regards to receiving their consent yet another time. Also, since the women were carefully told about the objective of the paper and all gave their consent to having the meetings recorded it felt like a squander
of valuable time in an already time confined paper. The written texts were carefully read several times over to make sure they corresponded exactly with the recorded interviews, however unnecessary words such as uh-huh were not included in the written result.

Once the texts were analyzed certain insights occurred which will be mentioned and explained in the result part of this paper.

Also, the inductive way of making the study fit this thesis well since it was decided before hand that the paper would build on the experiences and in-depth open interviews, which allowed the women involved, to tell their story freely and without any interruptions.

The way the paper is structured where new knowledge and new information is molded and analyzed to allow for new conclusions, was chosen as the best-suited approach to this paper.

As written by Danermark et al a limitation to this type of writing and this paper is the internal limitations of the group chosen for interviews being representative of the larger group of exposed women. However since the women in the interviews are all women from middle-eastern countries with Muslim backgrounds, living in Sweden one can at least hope for a well rounded representation of the honor related violence on-going in, specifically for this paper, homes with more often that not Muslim cultures and tradition. However empirical generalizations, which are made here and in most inductive papers, are joined closely to contingency and hesitation because of its way of generalizing from observations of a few. Sadly as the media has shown over time honor related violence and murder has become a problem facing women and girls living in Sweden so the conclusions which will later be drawn will be based on a rather justly reality on-going in not only Sweden but all of the world. (Danermark et al. 2002. p 85-87)

2.7 Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is an important factor in this paper and will be carefully analyzed and measured. Since this is a rather sensitive subject and some of the women
set up to interview still live under fear and threats of violence an alias will be used as a precaution based on their subjection to honor related violence.

Of course the purpose and meaning of this paper has been carefully explained to the participants and they are all aware of the intentions of this paper.

Its is of extreme importance that the identity of the respondents be kept secret because they all still live in fear of future violence, so therefore a list of names will only be given to the examiner of this paper which will have to be destroyed shortly after review.

2.8 Limitations and delimitations

A limitation in this paper that will be brought into light will be my own biased which readers may think will hinder the possibility from writing a objective paper. Not only being a woman but also having Kurdish roots but being born and raised in Sweden in a liberal Kurdish family is a limitation important to mention. However this experiences as a Swedish born Kurdish woman has opened my eyes to the different conditions different families have in regards to the women in the families.

Also my mother being a victim of honor-related violence and almost murdered because of our way of living has also opened my eyes to the this subject and encouraged me to research it.

Being of Kurdish decent I have experienced the best and the worst of both worlds and seeing the paradox between different families and their values is what has created the interest for this specific type of violence. Being a Swedish born Kurd has lead me to experience many different situations where women and relatives have been subjected to honor related violence by their husbands and other male relatives because of societal honor codes being broken which has lead to shame being brought on the families. Having experienced this phenomenon first hand has also lead to a different insight to the needs and wants of the subjected women instead of only being an outside observer.

However I strongly feel that I will be able to write a good and purposeful paper and see my own experience as legitimatizing my paper instead of taking away from it, I
am speaking from experience from both the middle eastern culture and perspective which has been part of my life since birth and from a perspective of a Swedish born and raised woman.

I truly feel that my views and perception will be the same as any other opinionated woman writing on the subject just with a little more experience under my belt.

A delimitation I have drawn myself is to focus my work in just a handful of cities instead of Sweden as a whole.

This paper will also focus its research on women coming from a country of Islamic roots, Iraq and the Iraqi part of Kurdistan. Another important delimitation to mention drawn in this paper is that the interview participants are well integrated women who are either studying or employed in Sweden with well-established bonds in the Swedish society.

It is very important to point out that this paper does not want nor does it seek to generalize into the Kurdish and Arabic communities but instead draw focus to the victims of honor related violence weather the subjected women are Kurdish, Turkish, Arabic or any other ethnicity.

Also, obviously violence against women is a problem all over the world and in many different forms and to analyze all would be a paper with no end so therefore and because of the recent escalation of what seems to be violence against women acted out based on cultural norms this paper will solely focus on honor related violence i.e. violence with a cultural motive stemming from traditions and beliefs.
3. Theoretical Orientation

3.1 Litterateur Review

For this literature review 12 peer-reviewed and academic journals were studied and analyzed. For the sake of the limitation of this paper six of them will be presented here. The first 4 journal articles are 'Gender, Culture and the Law: Approaches to Honour Crimes’ in the UK written by Rupa Reddy; Counseling young immigrant women worried about problems related to the protection of ‘family honour’ – from the perspective of midwives and counselors at youth health clinics written by Venus Alizadeh, Ingrid Hylander, Tahire Kocturk and Lena Törnkvist; the third is ‘Honour’-based violence in Kurdish communities written by Aisha K. Gill, Nazand Begikhani, Gill Hague; and the last is Cultural dialogues in the good society : The case of honour killings in Sweden written by Zenia Hellgren and Barbara Hobson.

These four articles carry the same red thread through its texts. They argue around what the background for the phenomenon may be, is it culture or is it patriarchy? The texts found and used in this review all focus on the same underlying idea, if this phenomenon is based on cultural values or if it is a result of a patriarchal world where the man and his opinion dominates. Not only the texts used in this paper but several others non included here seemed to have the same purpose, to find the underlying cause of this phenomenon, patriarchy or culture? This seemed to be the focus of the authors involved in the current debate. One can assume that when the current debate is occupied with trying to understand the background to this phenomenon woman’s lives are being taken and one can be sure that the perpetrator is not analyzing whether its culture or patriarchy making him commit the act of honor killings.

The first four articles take the part of seeing honor related violence as a result of patriarchal dominance. The article written by Gill et al, explains that honor based violence is a phenomenon where male aggressors are seen by their families as innocent victims burden by having to handle the shame brought on them by the 'guilty' female relatives (Gill p.2). Gill et al also write that even though the murder of the female relatives to protect ones honor is decided by the socio-cultural conception and ideas of the proper gender specific roles in society the action of honor based violence is dictated by the norms and values existent in patriarchal societies (Gill p.2).
The remaining articles follow the same lines in regards to honor based violence being the root of patriarchal dominance which is existent not only in the middle east but also in Europe and all other parts of the world.

Another follower of the patriarchal opinion is the Swedish Organization for Women and Girl Shelters (ROKS) which argues that honor based violence has no links with fundamental cultural ideas but instead stem from patriarchal societies here they also claim that 'honor' has nothing to do with the media focused case of Fadime Sahindal murdered in 2002 by her father even though the family many times expressed the shame brought on their family by the actions of their daughter Fadime (Akpinnar 2003 p. 426)

However, the difference in opinion seems to be strong in the current debate of honor based violence. The large division between the scholars in the current debate has lead to two different camps in regards to the reason behind honor related violence. The articles below follow the second opinion of honor-based violence being an outcome of culture and the cultural differences, which exists between the liberal west and the conservative Middle East (the middle east being a chosen delimitation of this paper). The journals presented below represent the opinion of honor related violence as being part of an immigrant culture; Swedish experience of sheltered housing and conflicting theories in use with special regards to honor related violence (HRV) written by Eva Wikström & Mehdi Ghazinour; Is Honor Killing a “Muslim Phenomenon”? Written by Recep Dogan. Another follower of the cultural perspective is Dilsa Demirbag-Sten, who strongly believes that honor related violence has a direct correlation between the cultures of, especially, Kurdish societies (GP, 2012).

These two different approaches have been debated in Sweden and in Swedish media for years and even between Swedish politicians. Gudrun Schyman the main spokeswoman for the Feminist Initiative and former left-party chairman was heavily involved in the case of Fadime Sahindal and strongly stood by her opinion that the murder of Fadime was a result of patriarchal domination and not culture and expressed her opinion in an article named ‘Kultur används mycket godtyckligt för att förklara kvinnovåld’ (Culture is used in an arbitrary manner to explain violence against women).
Whilst Mona Sahlin another well acclaimed politician, who held the post of minister of Integration when the Social Democratic Party were in power, firmly believes that honor based violence is grounded in culture and not patriarchy. (Hellgren & Hobbson, p. 394)

Another realization, which occurred during this literature review important to mention more deeply, was the effort of police and authorities that was criticized continuously and seemed to be reoccurring in most of the journals. In the journals and articles used there seemed to be a similar thread where police was criticized for their lack of involvement and dedication to victims of this type of violence, but none too very little, text was dedicated to trying to understand why this was, and why the police seemed so unconcerned by this growing problem. This also is something that will be more deeply analyzed in this paper since the lack of police and authorities correlates directly with the continuance of honor related violence.

So therefore after reading countless articles and those mentioned in this review a research gap occurs. In the texts the use of actual victims of honor-based violence is non-existent. The use of midwives, police officers, organization employees and politicians take over the realm of actual victims. This leads to a 'fish-bowl' mentality to occur where the outside observers become the voice for the women instead of the actual women who have been subjected to this type of violence to speak for themselves and tell their own story. Out of 15 articles studied only one went to the source, the women, and asked them about their experience of the phenomenon of honor based violence. This is where this paper comes in.

This paper represents the women subjected to honor based violence and will be their voice where they through in-depth unstructured interviews freely speak about their experience and what kind of help they want from the outside. Another research gap that will be examined in this paper second to the previous and main research gap is that of lack of action taken by law enforcement and social workers which also seems to be forgotten in the quest of determining the reason behind this phenomenon, culture or patriarchy, which is clearly the focus in the ongoing debate.
4. Results of interviews

In this part of the paper all biographic narratives from the interview participants will be included to give an insight to their stories and their own reflections regarding their lives as victims of honor related violence. After the biographic narratives have been presented the research questions will be included to present the results found.

4.1 Diana, 25

Diana's story started when she was fourteen years old and married off to her mother's childhood friend. At the age of sixteen after two years of fighting against her mother's decision, the marriage took place against Diana's wishes.

The abuse started directly after the ceremony had taken place and lead too physical, mental and sexual abuse.

Diana says her husband raped her nightly and when she struggled the sexual abuse lead to beatings and name-calling.

Diana remembers never being allowed to leave the house she shared with her husband and was often forced to change her clothes because her husband perceived them to be too reveling for a married woman and when she refused he would verbally assault her calling her a whore and other names.

Diana explains that she had never consented to the marriage and therefore wanted to be granted a divorce from the moment that she was forced into the marriage, but this was not allowed from her family and they took her claims of abuse and responded that it was against tradition to divorce and that she would jeopardize her families honor by doing so. They convinced her that the abuse was self-inflicted by her behavior and that it was a direct respond to her attitude towards her husband, so therefore unless she changed her attitude and behavior it would continue and that she only had herself to blame.

This led Diana into a deep depression and suicidal thoughts that made her isolate herself from family and friend.
Four years after being married, Diana's husband decided to move to Sweden and without explaining why the move occurred he took his wife and three sons with him. Diana knew that moving to Sweden would not change her husband’s violent tendencies and was worried about leaving her family. She was right, the abuse not only continued but it also escalated once the family had immigrated to Sweden.

After immigrating to Sweden Diana realized that her eldest son stopped eating and lost a lot of weight and realized that it had a direct correlation between the escalated violence. After understanding the tremendous effect the violence indirectly had on her sons Diana decided to leave her husband and sought advice from a friend already living in Sweden.

She was inspired by the move to Sweden and saw the difference in her life to the lives of Swedish women and decided to take action against her abuser.

Her first step may seem as a small step but for Diana it was huge. As a revolt against the abuse distributed by her husband on a daily basis she decided to cut her long dark hair. She did this directly knowing it would enrage her husband who loved her long hair but did so anyways to make a stand for herself. This little step empowered Diana and lead to the largest step, which was divorce.

Diana contacted her friend, which advised and taught her about the laws in Sweden in regards to divorce. Diana wanted it done quickly as she feared for her and her sons’ lives if her husband found out about the divorce preceding before she had time to hide.

The husband started noticing a change in behavior from Diana and after some weeks she told him about the divorce application. She was heavily beaten and bruised.

It was then that she decided to involve the police. A few days after the abuse she went to the police station in the city where she lived and desperately tried to convince the police that her life was in danger and that her husband would not stop at nothing before she was killed, this she says was because she had dishonored him. The police disregarded her cry for help and said that unless she had proof of abuse nothing could be done and that she should return home.
Another abuse occurred and yet again Diana reached out to the police which lead to social workers and Kvinnocentrum (KC) Västerås being involved (KC is an organization in Västerås for abused women).

KC placed Diana at a hotel for five days and the organization believed that separating the spouses for a few days would better their situation.

Diana was worried about the level of understanding that the social workers and KC had towards her case, she felt that they did not take her unrest and fear seriously and felt that they only wanted to quickly get it done without really helping her move on with her life. From KC Diana received an abuse alarm available at any hardware store in Sweden, an alarm that only gives out a large noise when button is pressed and than she was sent back to her abusive home.

Once she came home after her hotel stay her husband had moved out and Diana thought the abuse had finally ended. But she was wrong. The threats continued and her now ex-husband used their children to give written messages to Diana, messages threatening her life.

A specific letter involved a death script known to all Muslims as a quote from the Quran only written on coffins after a death has occurred, the Swedish equivalence would be 'rest in peace', this letter Diana presented to the police and explained the meaning of the script and also explained that it was a direct threat to her life. But yet again the police sent her away without any help.

After the continuing claims from Diana and her fear for her life, KC decided to offer her something called 'jourlägenhet' this type of living is an apartment offered for a few months until more stable homes have been found for subjected women. But Diana was too afraid and asked for a secret identity and sheltered living so that her ex-husband and his family would not find her. However, the police deemed that she was unfit for the resources of a secret identity and sheltered living because her ex-husband never had been convicted of a crime in Sweden.

At this point Diana decided to get her own place of living and did so in 2009 with her children.
While attending SFI (Svenska för Invandrare) word got out that Diana had divorced her husband and the classmates many of them being her ex-husband friends and relatives started bullying her so much that she turned to the teacher for help. However, not much was done to alleviate the stress from her classmates so she decided to do an internship instead of attending SFI, this being the only alternative given when missing classes.

Diana many times mention the sadness she still feels from being ignored by authorities. She many times says that the only time she will be listened to and believed is when she is dead, which she says only is a matter of time. 'I dishonored him and the only way of redemption is to kill the source of the shame, which is me' She goes on to say that it would not be the first time a woman in her family is murdered based on this honor code.

With a shaking voice she says that she wishes that someone would believe her and not make her feel like a liar. She remembers the women handling her case as all being well meaning western women, all wanting her best but no one knowing or willing to take the measures to keeping her and her family safe. She also remembers feeling like an alien in the different meetings with social workers and staff from KC, this because she felt no one had understanding for her case an her particular situation. The mental stress of not being understood lead to Diana falling into a deep depression for almost five weeks where she many times contemplated ending her own life.

All through the interviews, Diana repeats that she wishes someone had listened to her and believed her. She says that all she wanted was for her wishes to have been acknowledged and not put aside because of bureaucratic rules. She also says that she was made to feel that she did not fit the western text-book on honor related violence since she had not been killed and remembers the frustration of bursting out in a meeting screaming 'I live this life not you so don't tell me what this is!'

To this day Diana receives threatening letters and phone calls from her ex-husband and his family and still feel a constant shadow of fear over her which she says will be there until she is dead.
However, after years of trying to establish a life in Sweden for herself and her children Diana no longer wants a secret identity nor does she want sheltered living but she does give examples of ways her life would feel safer and ways of making her life better. She says that if she only had one person at the police station or KC as a contact person who actually believed her she would feel more understood and much safer, this instead of being sent to many different staff members all with different views and opinions regarding her case. She also says that she always wanted to purchase a house alarm system that was directly linked with the police and that it would strengthen her sense of safety tremendously but that she could never afford it living on a minimum salary.

When asked why Diana think that honor related violence is such a problem for immigrated women she answered that the men from a young age are taught that women are inferior and seen as a commodity and not an actual person. She says that women in her home country (Baghdad, Iraq) are seen only as baby makers and maids who are only to birth children and keep the house clean, and put food on the table. She also says that women early on are taught to hold their tongues and not speak unless they are spoken too. She also says that honor related violence is a mix of a strong man dominated society as well as a culture where women are not seen as equal.

Diana expresses a sense of frustration from the ongoing debate where she feels that the women who she was in contact with which were social workers and police did not understand her. She expressed a feeling of being an outcast and that they did not understand her extreme fear for her life because of lacking knowledge. She explains that this type of murder and violence is strange to the western born person and that their knowledge of the domestic threats and how far back in the family this tradition goes is non-existent which leads to ignorance and forcing women into homes filled with violence. Diana expresses many times how she wishes she had someone to speak too, someone who understands and knows of the deep traditions of honor and women being seen as property. She says that it was the lack of knowledge and understanding that several times put her in harms way.
4.2 Lara, 23 and Khadidja, 46

The narrative between the two women will be co-written based on the fact that it is a mother-daughter relationship and because their story will best be told together.

Lara and Khadidja are Kurds from the Iraqi region of Kurdistan. They left their home in Kirkuk in 2003 to with Khadidja’s husband, Lara's father (for the sake of this narrative we will call him Murad) and Darin, Lara's younger brother move to Sweden in search of a better life.

Lara and Khadidja remember Murad as always having a temperament and for many years abusing Khadidja physically and mentally, often by pulling her hair and slapping her and often verbally assaulting her. However, the violence escalated and became more aggressive as they moved to Sweden and it was also then that the violence towards Lara started, as she became a teenager.

Murad had three of his brothers already living in Sweden and they became a major part of the family's life and the uncles often got involved in the family's problems and also encouraged Murad to become stricter in the way he raised his daughter Lara.

The uncles first started expressing concerns when Lara was allowed to attend school festivities and dances. They found it completely unacceptable that she would have any life after school and demanded that Murad make sure she came straight home from school. This also led to Lara not being allowed to have friends and isolated her from the rest of her class.

The three uncles also became critical towards Murad's wife Khadidja and pressured him to berate her daily because of her clothing and change in attitude. This often led to the uncles abusing Khadidja verbally and physically.

Lara explains her confusion as a child when two out of the three uncles had relationships with European women but deemed it completely unacceptable for Lara to even have friends who were Swedish and remembers her uncles saying that she was not allowed to associate with Swedish girls because they would make her a bad person without morals.
Many times only a suspicion of Lara having friends who were of the opposite sex would lead to her being abused by her father and also her uncles, this suspicion later lead to Lara almost being beaten to death by her father and her uncles.

The first memory Lara has of the judgment from her uncles was from when she was twelve and vacationing in Germany with her father and her uncles. During this time a confrontation happened over the fact that Lara was wearing a bikini at the pool and the uncles confronted Murad about it, which lead to Murad going against his brothers opinion. However, after much persuading Murad angrily grabbed Lara and forced her to change her swimwear.

After this incident Lara became very cautions around her uncles and often felt watched by them, a feeling which made her very uncomfortable. It was also during this time that the violence towards Khadidja escalated and Murad and the uncles blamed that on the fact that she was letting her daughter became a 'whore' and because it was Khadidja’s fault that Lara was behaving the way she did.

Another factor, which lead to the escalated abuse, was the fact that Khadidja wanted to get out in society and learn the Swedish language and become involved in Swedish society, something that enraged the uncles.

As the violence towards her and her daughter was escalating Khadidja felt a sense of hopelessness not knowing who or where to turn for help. She remembers feeling worried about how far the men could take their violent behavior.

In addition to the violence the men also forced Khadidja to against her will claim their younger brother as her own son in order for him to get a Swedish citizenship. She for many months resisted doing so but after the months of going against their will the men severely abused Khadidja and threatened her life if she did not comply.

Once the youngest brother came to Sweden he lived with Murad and his family, which lead to him involving himself, and the uncles even more in the family's private matters, him staying there also lead to the uncles coming over much more regularly than before.
The older Lara got the more controlling did her father and her uncles get, she remembers her father saying that she did not only have one father but five, referring to himself and his brothers.

After begging her father to let her spend time with her friends in her class her father agreed that she sometimes could stay a couple hours after school but as the uncles found out they became even more controlling, forcing Murad to go against his promise to his daughters.

One day during a family dinner where the men and their wife’s and children were all gathered one of the uncles wives turn to Lara and asks her about her school and friends. She perceives to ask if she also has friends of the opposite sex and Lara casually responds that she has both female and male friends at school. The wife of the uncle misconceives what has just been said and later that day tells her husband that Lara has a boyfriend at school.

One day after Lara has been at her summer job she gets picked up by her uncles and her father, she remembers sitting in the car feeling the tension and knowing something would happen.

As they all come home to Murad’s home the uncles confront Lara about her having a boyfriend, Lara not understanding what they are talking about denies the fact and promises she had never had a boyfriend.

The uncles now perceive her as lying and become more enraged and encourage her father to start the abuse and he does so by punching her in her face and on her head. A few minutes into the abuse two of the uncles join Murad and also start beating Lara and kicking her in stomach. Lara remembers one of the Uncles taking his belt of and tying it around Lara’s throat suffocating her until she faints. As she regains consciousness the abuse is still ongoing and she remembers her father and uncles screaming that she never will be allowed to become Swedish and that they will kill her if she is not a virgin.

Lara remembers being so afraid that she wets her self, she also remember seeing blood all over her clothes causing her to slip in and out of consciousness.
Khadidja is forced to watch this ferocity and is simultaneously abused and blamed that it is because of her that this was happening. Khadidja remembers thinking her daughter would die and also remembers screaming that the men were killing her as she laid on the floor unable to get up because of the kicks she had received to her legs.

The abuse ends by her father kicking her so hard in her stomach that her spleen gets harmed and several ribs get bruised.

Because of the extent of the injuries Lara had received she had to be taken to the hospital where she underwent surgery for almost 6 hours. At this point no criminal action had been taken because of Lara and Khadidja’s overwhelming fear. However, it was during this surgery that the doctor found Lara's ribs to be badly damaged and it was then that the doctors’ suspicion of abuse occurred.

After Lara had woken up the doctor asked to speak with them in private and expressed her concern and asked to be told the truth from them and explained that such injuries Lara had on her organs could only be from heavy abuse.

Lara and Khadidja had reached a breaking point and told the doctor about the abuse. The doctor then told them she had to call the police because of the severity of the abuse and Lara and Khadidja consented and there the police was involved.

Murad took responsibility for the abuse and said that it was only him who had carried out the abuse; even with Lara and Khadidja insisting that the uncles also were involved the police only took Murad into custody leaving the others free to torment the women.

Lara remembers her frustration towards the police when they only took Murad into custody, knowing their lives would not be safe as long as the uncles were free.

Soon after, the uncles approached Lara and Khadidja at their homes convincing them that it was wrong to imprison your own family and that it was a disgrace against the whole family.

After what Lara and Khadidja perceived as being brain washed and forced into guilt by not only the uncles but also by family and relatives back in Kurdistan they decided
to withdraw the allegations against Murad by claiming they were false, even after the doctors proof of abuse and the confession from Murad the police still freed him.

The case was dropped without any difficulty and Murad released. He also received 45000 SEK as compensation for being falsely imprisoned, again still disregarding the proof and his earlier confession.

Lara says that she know what she did, withdrawing her allegations towards her father but she also talks about the fact that she wishes that it should not been allowed to do so especially taking the situations surrounding circumstances into consideration. She says that she wishes the authorities would have seen her injuries as proof enough against her father and uncles and that they would have had some understanding over the fact that they were forced to withdraw the allegations against their own will. Lara says 'they forced and scared us into doing it (freeing Murad) but the police knew about my injuries from the doctor and my dad took the blame of the abuse, so how could they let him go?'

Khadidja also says that she wishes that someone would have taken a minute to read between the lines and understood that the uncles who had once been accused by both Lara and Khadidja as being involved directly in the horrific abuse were the ones behind Murad being released.

Both Lara and Khadidja were very surprised over how easily the case was dropped and remembers only receiving a phone call from the police after the release of Murad.

In addition to the physical harm Lara went through she also missed all of 9th grade and had to do the year over, this mainly because of the six operations stemming from the abuse.

After the situation had calmed down and Murad moved out of their joint home he did everything to maintain contact with his wife, daughter and son. Lara remembers Murad working hard on re-building a relationship with the family and does so by inviting them on a road trip to Germany.
After much convincing the family decides to go on the trip thinking it would only be them, however as they are about to leave for Germany three of the uncles also join without telling Lara and Khadidja.

It becomes apparent once they reach Germany that this trip only has one focus, which is marrying Lara off to a relative in Germany. Lara now being sixteen years of age strongly apposes the marriage proposal and threatens to press charges against Murad again and this time not withdrawing their allegations.

The last incident before the family moved and cut all ties with Murad and the uncles were when Murad had sent Lara to spend a week with her aunt and cousin in another city.

When the uncles found out they were furious and demand that Murad tells his daughter to come home as soon as possible. The uncles also call and threaten the aunt by saying that they will kill her unless she sends Lara back, this because they perceive their aunt and her two daughters as having become 'westernized' and therefore are a bad example for Lara.

The aunt tells them that she will press charges against them based on their threat of murder and does so, somehow the notice from police reaches the uncles and they start scheming a plot to kill their aunt to set an example for all the women in the family. So when the aunt in 2010 goes to visit her family in Kirkuk she is brutally stabbed five times left to die by the youngest of the uncles (Aftonbladet, 2009).

Lara being extremely close to her aunt at this point has had enough and goes to the police in her hometown and demands to speak to an officer.

She than explains what has happened to her and her aunt and that it is directly an act of the uncles and she also tell the officer that she wants them to know that if something ever happened to anyone in her family it would be a direct act from the uncles. The police disregard her concern and she yet again demands to speak to another officer, the new officer showing more compassion and understanding towards Lara's concerns.
After these tumultuous years Lara, Khadidja and Darin her son decides to move and start over. To do this they need the help of the social agencies in their town, so they book an appointment and explain their situation and their concerns for their lives. However the social agencies disregards their cry for help and say that they cannot help them with relocating since they have not pressed charges against Murad, and for the family to receive any type of help from them that had to be done.

Today, 3 years from the last incident, the women still fear for their lives. They have been able to start a new life without any contact with the men, however, they still do not feel completely safe and both wonders if another attack on them will ever occur, especially after the unprovoked attack on Lara's aunt.

The women have both expressed a want for a secret identity and a secret phone number but have both been denied it because neither Murad nor his brothers ever were convicted of crimes in Sweden and because of the perceived lack of evidence from police, proving Lara and Khadidja's concerns are valid.

Both women also express that a home alarm would make them much more comfortable at home this because of a hidden fear in the back of their heads a few split seconds every time the door or the phone rings that it could maybe be one of the men coming back to hurt them.

The reoccurring moment of frustration that the women several times point to in both the interviews is the lack of understanding they feel that they received from social workers and police. They many times mention feeling like outsiders when trying to convince people with a more liberal and western upbringing and life, about the difficulties they faced in their everyday life.

When asked the last question of what they perceived were the cause of honor related violence, Lara and Khadidja as well as Diana answered that this type of violence is a mixture between patriarchy and culture and that they both go hand in hand with each other and that honor related violence will not be able to be defeated unless authorities and politicians understand that it is not one or the other but both patriarchy and a culture who degrade and see women as the weaker gender. They explain that men from childhood are taught that women only have one role and that a good wife and
daughter is silent and obeys her husband and father at all times. They explain that this mentality of the men leads to women being abused when they express themselves and when they are seen as having disobeyed their husbands, fathers and brothers. They also stress the fact that the men hide behind the law, especially in their home country of Kurdistan, where the punishment for murder to save one's honor and one's family name is non-existent to a minimum of a few months. They say that the men get away with it and therefore it continues. Lara mentions that the young uncle who plotted and tried murdering her aunt by stabbing her five times only received nine months in jail and was let out after only a few months.

The men bring this mentality to Sweden where they together with relatives who still live in the home country plan different acts of violence against their women and get away with it because the act many times is not carried out in Sweden, only planned. This was the case of Lara's aunt when visiting Kurdistan in April 2009. Lara and Khadidja carefully explain how the men in their family, Lara's uncles who were living in Sweden convinced their youngest brother in Kurdistan to kill Lara's aunt who they believed had dishonored them. Lara explains how the police back home in Sweden had several phone tapings revealing how the oldest brother was manipulating his young brother to commit the murder, sadly police and prosecutors in this case saw the phone tapings as insufficient evidence and let the uncles free.

4.3 Imani, 45

Imani is an Iraqi woman who moved to Sweden in hopes of a better life for her and her family in 2001. She has two adult girls and one eight-year-old son, whom all live with her. As mentioned she left Iraq with the promise of a better life from her husband.

Imani says that her husband always had been a controlling man, which was angered when anyone especially his wife went against his wishes.

Imani's husband had an aggressive character and daily threatened her, which led to her living under constant fear of him acting out on his threats.

Imani was never allowed to choose her own clothes and was always forced to dress in clothes picked out by her husband. If she ever asked to wear something other than the
clothes he had chosen he would verbally abuse her, calling her a whore amongst other things.

He would often grab Imani's arms, holding her down against her will and shaking her roughly and many times also pushing her into walls causing pain.

She remembers the abuse starting right after they got married and she saw the marriage as being broken from the second it started.

She also recalls becoming pregnant very early against her wish, which lead to further distress on her behalf.

As the first-born daughter, Dilan, was four years of age Imani's husband decided to move his family to Sweden in search of a better life, mostly for himself. He did not tell the family about his decision until he had already left and sent for the rest of his family later. However, he first tried to convince Imani to send his first born alone so that he would be able to leave Imani in Iraq.

It was Imani's mother in law and husband who plotted to take the two daughters away from her by convincing her that they would send for her later, after the two children had reached Sweden. But Imani refused to comply with their plan, so they were all flown to Sweden together.

In November 2001, the family was reunited in Sweden and life in the beginning was somewhat calm and uneventful.

As the children started school Imani also started SFI classes (Svenska För Invandrare) and started finding her place in the Swedish society.

In 2003 Imani became pregnant with their last child, their son Dani. And it was also here that the violence tendencies from her husband returned. He claimed that Imani had become to 'westernized' and that her behavior was unacceptable. He would daily verbally abuse Imani regarding how she dressed, about her cooking, her child rearing. He would many times also spit on her, spitting being considered as the way of showing utter disgust towards a person and is considered very condescending in middle eastern countries.
After a week of daily being verbally abused Imani sunk down in her sofa when suddenly her husband's returns home and starts screaming at Imani about her clothes and her new 'European' way of life. He suddenly grabbed Diana and beats her several times leaving the baby screaming and in pain. He threatens Imani about calling the police and says that the police will take all children away from her because he will blame Imani for the abuse. Terrified Imani decides not to press charges. Instead she contacts the social authorities in her hometown and schedules a meeting with the help of a translator.

Imani remembers that her husband became more violent once she had moved to Sweden and feels that it was because his loss of control over her and his family.

Imani was put in contact with a social worker and felt very lucky to be put in contact with a social worker who came from an Iraqi background and knowledgeable and understanding to her problems at home. She says that her social worker was very much involved in her case and showed genuine concern to her and her children's well being.

After the second incident in a short period of time occurred where Imani's husband was extremely violent towards her in front of their children she quickly made the decision to call her social worker for help.

The social worker the same day arranged for a meeting between Imani and him, and also included the husband's SFI teacher and Kvinnocentrum. There it was decided that for Imani and her children's safety she would be moved to a 'jourlägenhet' an apartment for subjected women where they are in constant contact with social worker staff. This until a more permanent apartment could be found for the family.

At this time Imani also decided to apply for divorce and did so with the help and encouragement of her social worker.

Imani many times mentions how grateful she is over her social workers commitment and involvement in her case and says that if it had not been for him and his understanding of her culture and traditions she would still be stuck in her abusive relationship.
Imani also remembers the warmth she had felt from the staff from Kvinnocentrum and recalls one incident where they visited her home and saw that she did not have any furniture in the living room and arranged for her to receive an extra cash contribution from the social authorities to be able to buy furniture.

Today the family has no contact with Imani's husband and the children no contact with their father. They all feel much safer and do not have any concerns revolving him and their safety.

Imani ends the last interview with mentioning that she strongly believes that her case was so well handled because of the understanding and knowledge of her social worker that also had an Iraqi background.

The question was also asked to Imani of what she perceived to be the reason behind the violence against women in her home country. She was quick to answer by saying that it was a culture that was so obsessed by a woman's sexuality and virginity that a woman’s worth was not measured in her work, nor her education but in her 'cleanliness'. She also adds that the religion of Islam allows for men to harm women and hide behind the Quran which she says has been interpreted by power hungry men who only want to keep their women in check and at home. Another point Imani wanted to bring up was the importance of not blaming this type of violence on the Quran. She says that the problem does not lie in what is written in the Quran, but again how it is interpreted by a few power hungry men who see women as a commodity subordinate to men.
5. Findings

Below one will find the research questions, which the paper used as guidelines during the unstructured interviews.

- What do the victims themselves perceive to be the reason behind honor related violence?

- How do the victims of honor related violence perceive that the allegations they present to authorities, such as police and social workers, when wanting help, is received and handled? What is the response they have received when asking for help?

In this part of the paper the results from the interviews will be presented in correlations with the research questions. Both research questions will be presented individually under its own header.

5.1 Research Question 1: What do the victims themselves perceive to be the reason behind honor related violence?

The women throughout the interviews speak of living in a patriarchal society where the men are free to treat their women as they please with minor or no repercussion. They all speak of a culture with allows women to be abused if not following the norms set by the men.

Using a inductive logic one can generalize from these interviews and the women’s own perceptions that women living in countries where the culture stems from a patriarchal mind frame that women who are seen as not following rules will be looked upon as outcast who sadly may be exposed to violence based on the fact that they are breaking the societal rules of a good woman.

One can generalize that some men immigrating from countries who practice a culture where women are seen an inferior may need more education on the rules lived by in Sweden as a new country comes with new rules and regulations which needs to be followed.
Education may also fit in regards to informing the women of their rights and their opportunity to a full life as it shows from the interviews that the women were not aware of the help available to them.

A generalization which is safe to assume is that honor related violence and murders will continue but as Sara Mohammad, Chairman of Glöm Aldrig Pela och Fadime Organization says “we have to stop ignoring this type of violence”. She says that Sweden is a country that respects other religions and their views, however she stresses the importance of taking the glasses off where honor related violence is seen as something uncommon and surprising. Honor related violence is happening and it will continue to happen unless new reforms are introduced she says. (Världen Idag, 2012)

5.2 Research Question 2: How do the victims of honor related violence perceive that the allegations they present to authorities, such as police and social workers, when wanting help, is received and handled? What is the response they have received when asking for help?

From the interviews a conclusion can be drawn which are that three out of the four women were disappointed in the lack of concern shown from authorities. It became clear that the women experience a lack in belief and interest from especially Swedish law enforcement. Diana especially felt very questioned and felt as if her fear and concern were taken very lightly by police officers who several times disregarded her claims against her husband, sending her back into a unstable and abusive home. Lara and Khadidja also expressed the wish for the police officers involved to have paid closer attention, and analyzed their situation more closely, giving special attention to the details of their specific situation. The three women, unhappy with law enforcements engagement in their cases also several times mention that their claims were taken lightly and that understanding from the police was lacking. Lara and Khadidja were also very disappointed in the lack of involvement from the social authorities when asking for help in relocating. The same disappointment was also expressed by Diana who many times felt as if her fear for her life was not taken seriously by staff and that the staff from the social authorities office understanding was lacking towards the sensitivity of her case.

The only participants who was happy over the help she received from the social authorities and the women's center (KC) was Imani which many times pointed to the
fact that her social worker had the same background as her self as being a major factor in her claims being taken seriously and that it had to do with the social workers understanding of the her culture and traditions that she received the help she did.

When having the opportunities to express their own wishes in regards to a better life the three women not happy with the help given by police and social authorities explain the wish of having someone sensitive to their claims and someone who is more knowledgeable of the traditions sometimes practiced by immigrant families. They expressed the importance of having educated staff that does not question their honesty and instead genuinely looks into their claims of abuse instead of questioning the women's veracity. The women also expressed a need for home security such as an alarm being a useful way of maintaining a sense of safety at their homes. All three women also wanted to have the choice of keeping their phone number and home address private from online sources and wanted the decision to be solely up to them and not something that had to be allowed by the police through certain applications. Diana, Lara and Khadidja also speaks of the mental stress of being denied sheltered living and wishes that their prior desire for sheltered living had been taken seriously and granted, as Diana says 'no one who feels safe at home would ever want to live that way [sheltered] so the ones who ask for it are extremely worried and therefore their fears should be respected'

It is clear in this part that women living in these conditions feel ignored by outside forces. One can generalize that there are many more women, which may have been ignored by police when asking for help.

Sadly this generalization showed to be true when newspapers in Sweden wrote about a woman murdered inside a second hand store in Västerås. The woman had expressed her fear of her killer to the police and perceived to press charges. Sadly since the man was out of the country at the time of her wanting to press charges the police dropped the charges ignoring his violent and abusive past (Aftonbladet, 2013).

Another sad example of the ongoing ignorance from authorities is the murder of 19-year old Sara from Landskrona. She was a young girl with Kurdish decent who lived under constant fear of her family, so much that she slept with a knife under her pillow after her parents had sent her off to get married in Kurdistan against her will. She had
been in contact with the organization Tänk Om who works against honor related violence and workers at the organization had expressed to the municipality where she was living the gravity of her fear and the importance of sheltered housing, however, this was ignored by the municipality, which resulted in her brother stabbing her to death 107 times before he left her to die. (Världen Idag, 2012)
6. Analysis

The analysis which has occurred based on the results from the interviews will here be presented and will take on the part of representing the victims themselves instead of outside observers perspective of the victims wishes and needs.

It becomes apparent that the women in question feel very neglected by the police and social authorities, all but one feel that the received the right help and adequate attention. Three of the women wishes that some special attention would have been given their claim and that someone would have shown some type of understanding to their fear and need of help. Imani who was thankful for the help she received stresses the fact that her social worker was of the same nationality as herself, which she says was the contributing factor for his level of understanding of the emergency of her case. The remaining women all felt judged and ignored by authorities which lacked the knowledge to be able to most effectively help these subjected women and instead put them back in harms way.

Today much attention has been given to honor related violence in the media over the last ten years but this outside observer way of dealing with the situation and its victims has to end. Politicians and organizations instead need to listen to the actual women living these lives filled with fear and learn from their stories and through their own experiences develop the right methods for bettering women's lives. It is here also very important to remember that each situation involving this phenomenon is unique and therefore needs to be handled accordingly, surpassing bureaucracy and analyzing each unique case after the evidence of the case.

Police officers and staff at social authorities need to be educated more profoundly in the phenomenon of honor related violence and the right resources need to be offered so that a deeper understanding to the sensitivity of these cases are developed instead of the women being ignored and sent back to their abusive homes. It cannot be stressed enough that more attention needs to be given this type of crime before a murder occurs. Sadly much attention and much grief occur as a young woman is brutally murdered however had the woman's claims been taken seriously to start with maybe a murder would have been avoided.
Hence, the first step in helping women subjected to this violence is to start by listening to them, without judgment and preconceived notions. The same standards should not only be put on law enforcement but also on social workers to develop a deeper knowledge on the subject of honor related violence, this through internal education. It is important to look beyond the western way of life and understand the culture and traditions that the subjected women face and therefore education of law enforcement and staff is critical to increase their proficiency and intelligence on the matter. The fear, which is still current within three of the four women of still being a recipient of violence, is a concern that also needs to be rightfully handled and not ignored.

Again, it is important to analyze each case carefully in order to help the victims in the most efficient ways. In this phenomenon no case looks the same and therefore bureaucratic rules, which today subjects many victims to continuous danger, needs to be corrected because non of these cases are text book cases so to follow one and a same pattern will not benefit the women nor the society.

In addition, one may conclude that the cultural position may blame the phenomenon strictly on a different culture. A culture which allows for a woman to be killed if she strays from cultural norms which seems to be based solely on a woman's sexuality. The followers of the position, patriarchy, may blame the phenomenon on male domination ongoing in all parts of the world, even in Sweden.

The positions of the ongoing debate where the focus is whether this phenomenon is based on culture or patriarchy needs to take a lesser priority next to helping the women which should be the focus. All participating women blame both the culture and the patriarchal societies they come from. They all stress that less focus should be on what the reason behind honor violence is and instead focus on listening to victims and developing reforms to help them. Diana in her interviews says that her ex-husband did not think of why he abused her, she said “he does not think of culture or patriarchy, he thinks it’s his right because owns me”. So one may wonder why so much focus and time is spent on trying to understand honor violence from a western perspective instead of going directly to the source and helping them the best way possible regardless of culture or patriarchy. Obviously, a deeper understanding to this phenomenon is necessary to handle the root of the problem and to create reforms best
suiting this type of violence. But as the phenomenon seems to be never ending and media attention given cases where young women brutally are being murdered by family members in our own backyards, focus should be switched from why this is happening to how we can help them it is happening too.
7. Conclusion

7.1 Discussion and Reflections

The aim of this paper was to create an insight of the importance of listening to the subjected victims of honor related violence. Unfortunately the ongoing debate today takes the departure of viewing the phenomenon from an outside perspective where politicians and organizations are consumed with developing ways of helping women from an outside perspective and sometimes western perspective instead of going directly to the subjected women and from them developing a sense of the actual women's own wishes instead of western policies forced upon.

This paper however used actual victims of honor related violence as the primary source of information while complementing the paper with secondary sources such as articles and journals.

This paper will hopefully give a different insight to the actual wishes of subjected women and the importance of educating law enforcement and staff of social authorities so that they to their best ability can help the women who seek help.

This paper also has the purpose of showing the importance of early intervention in these cases so that the most extreme cases of murder can be avoided and women removed from abusive situations as quickly as possible.

In addition, taking from the ongoing debate, as mentioned in the literature review, the focus of politicians in honor related violence should not be whether the phenomenon stems from a patriarchal society or if it is based on cultural values, which is the reoccurring focus in many articles and journals, the focus instead should be on how its best can be prevented in order to keep immigrated women safe.

Sadly as this paper was written another honor killing occurred in Västerås where a woman was stabbed several times in broad daylight in the center of town by her ex-husband. After the woman had died as a result of being stabbed five times facts surfaced that the women, prior to being killed, had tried to get the police involved because of her fear concerning her life. Sadly this is another example of subjected
women's wishes and concerns not been taken seriously by law enforcement and authorities.

7.2 Further Research

Another conclusion, which showed to be something all women had in common, was that the violence escalated once they left their country of origin and moved to Sweden. All women tell a story of a patriarchal figure who is unhappy with the new culture and lives the women are being introduced to and therefore losing a sense of control which seems to lead to an escalation of violence.

This would be an interesting and very educational subject to research more deeply into in order to build an understanding to why this type of violence occurs once the borders of Sweden are crossed. However, because of the constraint of a bachelor thesis the occurring theme of violence escalation was chosen to not be included. It is however, encouraged to research since a conclusion in that topic could lead to a much deeper understanding on the occurrence and the thought process of its violators.
List Of References

*Online websites*


47


Printed sources (Books)


**Journals used for Literature Review which were Mentioned in this Paper**


