Voicing Violence: *An Ethnography of Rural Punjabi*

Women

By

Sadaf N. Khan

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Criminology

School of Health & Society

University of Salford

2021

Abstract

This ethnographic study presents a rich picture of the many forms of violence experienced by the women of rural Punjab, Pakistan. It gives voice to their perceptions of the reasons for such violence. Using qualitative methods combining in-depth interviews, informal group discussions, field observations, and photography the researcher was able to develop a nuanced understanding of how the women concerned described, interpreted and coped with their violence punctuated lives. A theoretical framework was applied to the research for explanatory interpretive purposes, devised to test whether gender inequality could account for the phenomenon of violence against women in this context or whether the picture was more complex, perhaps featuring the interplay of multiple inequalities. Therefore, both essentialist radical feminism and Bourdieu's multidimensional social spaces underpin the framework.

The research found that the sample of women in a province of rural Punjab, particularly those of child-bearing age, experience a full spectrum of violence and controlling behaviours. They live their lives with a lack of privacy in both the public or private domains. Women's lives were dominated by their marriages over which they had little control, and their subsequent childbearing. The phenomenon of honour was strongly associated with women's oppression and extreme violence. Complex male-dominated belief systems play a powerful role in social control and exist in the space where formal public sphere institutions would be seen in other societies. While men committed most of the violence against women the research also revealed the extent of affinal kin domestic abuse committed or instigated by women. Inequalities other than gender, such as class, caste and religion did not exhibit explanatory value as they were not spoken about; however, there were generational factors influencing the violence.

The thesis makes a series of theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions and concludes with recommendations for both practice and further research. The research should be of interest to other researchers, policymakers and all those active in women's rights and welfare, particularly those in Pakistan and the Global South.

Declarations

I hereby declare that except where specific reference is made to the work of others, the contents of this dissertation are original and have not been submitted in whole or in part for consideration for any other degree or qualification in the University of Salford, or any other University.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to the women who broke barriers of silence and had the courage to disclose experiences in an attempt to help other women.

Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1 Framing the thesis

1.1 Background to the study

The dominant social discourse on violence against women (VAW) asserts that it is something a few men perpetrate against a few women victims, in an unfortunate deviation from normally harmonious gender relations. The few bad apples are seen as having a psychological make up that gives them a propensity to commit acts of violence. The social consequences of widespread violence against women have often been framed as being contained within the walls of the homes of the perpetrator and victim, without wider consequences. However, as research and monitoring of VAW has grown so has the realisation that this interpretation is wholly inadequate. Violence against women is a universally significant social phenomenon that has attracted research interest from around the world since the 1970s. While the prevalence of VAW may vary, it is a phenomenon found in countries and communities of all types from the wealthiest most economically prosperous to the lower-income nations of the Global South.

The United Nations defines VAW as,

> "… any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (United Nations, 1993, p.3).

VAW is overwhelmingly intimate partner violence (IPV) (often termed domestic violence) in that it is inflicted by the woman's intimate partner or ex-partner. Added to this, women experience non-IPV or stranger violence and state VAW. This latter form is exemplified by institutional violence which may take on many forms such forced marriage, female genital

mutilation and judicial violence (Sweet, 2019). While evidence points to wide-ranging prevalence rates, as a phenomenon, VAW transcends race, class, religion, nationality, and can occur at different stages of a woman's life (Bows, 2018). Few social phenomena can match VAW for its universality.

The violence may lead to death, injury, mental and emotional damage, economic disadvantage and restricts the pursuit of happiness. Despite its terrible consequences, the world remains without a definitive solution. Nevertheless, a large body of research studies have facilitated the development of theories of VAW. These theories can be situated in three groups. The first group are micro-oriented theories and encompass social learning theory (Bandura, 1973), personality characteristics, psychopathy (Gondolf, 1988), and biological and physiological explanations (Burgess & Draper, 1989). These approaches highlight the individual level and seek to explain an individual perpetrator's actions. The second group are macro-oriented theories which take a more structural, societal level approach and examine the social and cultural conditions which facilitate VAW. Among these are feminist theory (Dobash & Dobash, 1992), the family violence perspective (Strauss, 1990), subculture of violence (Bowker, 1983) the cultural acceptance of violence (Baron & Straus, 1989), symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998) and intersectionality (Walby, 2007). The third group can be viewed as multi-dimensional theories and include exchange theory and social control theory (Gelles, 1983), and approaches which use models which examine the interaction of structural violence and the personality features of perpetrators. These approaches tend to refer to family violence rather than violence against women.

No research study could proceed by retaining all possible theoretical explanations of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the researcher embarks on this study with some informed

assumptions as to the nature of the research context and the phenomenon under study. This together with a thorough review of existing literature facilitates the formation of a theoretical framework that inevitably leads to choices being made as to which theoretical positions to include. A more detailed discussion of theoretical approaches to VAW, including those forming the theoretical framework is presented in chapter three.

It has been proposed that violence, including VAW, has declined across time (Pinker, 2007). However, this assertion has been countered by the thesis that rather than reducing VAW has instead been privatised, relocated to the private domain (Ray, 2011). The decline of violence thesis has been subject to critique on several fronts. Perhaps most relevant in the context of this study are the fact that there are consistently high rates of violence against women even in Western societies (Ray, 2011; Walby et al., 2015), and questions over the applicability of the thesis to parts of the Global South. While it is difficult to say that the passage of time has reduced the overall level of men's violence against women, it is fair to assert that the degree to which the state and its institutions provide a permissive environment for this violence has changed in some parts of the world. Feminists would argue that this is the result of their campaigns that have left women in a stronger position to escape and seek redress for the violence committed against them (Walby, 1990). In addition to feminist campaigns, feminist research has played its own notable role. In some countries, this research has been used to improve the lives of women through the formulation of new social policies aimed at addressing this form of violence and improving the services available to them. It should be added that this progress has largely been restricted to the Global North where there has been a marked improvement in state recognition of VAW and in the protection of women against it (Bessel, 2015). In the Global South, this trend is far less visible which further underpins

the importance of research into the phenomenon in these countries. One such country which has largely bypassed the trends seen in the Global North is Pakistan.

1.1.1 The Pakistan context

Pakistan came into being as a result of the partition of India that itself resulted from the ending of British colonial rule, a rule that had lasted approximately two centuries (Ahsan, 2003). In the decades before independence, India's two main communities Hindu and Muslim had tried to arrive at a means to maintain a unitary state but by 1940 these efforts had been abandoned and the intention for an independent Pakistan had been declared. The future Pakistan and India were divided not just by religion and language but as explained by independence leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah, they represented two distinct social orders (Ahsan, 2003). Independence was formally declared in August 1947. Significantly, at this point many of the supporters of Islamic Pakistan, particularly in the professional classes, were not greatly familiar with Islam. They spoke English, had been Western-educated and had little in common with the rural-dwelling majority (Ahsan, 2003). By March 23rd, 1956, a constitution of an Islamic republic had been declared based on democratic principles and situating itself as a welfare state neutral in geopolitical terms against the backdrop of the Cold War. Further constitutions were drafted in 1962 and 1973 but the political state was in trouble through rigged elections and military interventions. Secular civilian governments were under pressure to give concessions to Islamist groups such as the banning of alcohol and the establishment of Friday as a weekly holiday (Cohen, 2003). A process of Islamization was underway at the same time that some spheres of life such as the education system still operated as they did in the colonial era. In 1972, the eastern wing of Pakistan was lost as Bangladesh gained its own independence.

Pro-Islamic sentiment grew in Pakistan and the wider region following the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of neighbouring Afghanistan. Secular political structures were failing, whether they were secular political parties and presidents or military leaders (Mazari, 1999). The first fifty years of independence in Pakistan had been marked by political instability. At the turn of the Millenia, Pakistan faced new turmoil in the form of ethnic conflict, particularly in Karachi and Sind as well as sectarian fighting in North-West Frontier Province. Pakistan was also confronted with negative reactions from the countries it looked to to support its economic development when it announced the successful testing of a nuclear device in 1998. It also faced difficult geopolitical choices that would cause further divisions in the aftermath of September 11th, 2001(Shaikh, 2011).

The last two decades have featured significant attempts at economic growth and the development of trade relations (Talbot, 2012). Relations with neighbouring India have also featured prominently with both conflict and attempts at reconciliation. Likewise, relations with a main benefactor, the United States, have at times been fractious (Economist, 2011). Domestically, governments saddled with debt struggled with how to increase public welfare and prosperity. Political instability continues (Amir-ud-Din, 2020).

With the notable exception of Benazir Bhutto (prime minister 1988–1990 and 1993–1996), the history of Pakistan is recorded as a male dominated one. According to Akhtar and Métraux (2013), "Pakistani women dwell in a land that for many decades has hung absolute misery onto their shoulders" (p. 62). Obtaining accurate data on violence against women in Pakistan is highly problematic despite the best efforts of NGOs and rights campaigners. The Global Gender Gap Index 2020 reported that Pakistan was the third worst country for overall gender inequality (WEF, 2020). The same index reported an 85% lifetime prevalence of

gender violence among women. For comparison purposes, the figure for the UK was 29% (WEF, 2020). Data produced under the aegis of government ministries tend to report lower rates of prevalence with the Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18 reporting that 28% of women between the ages of 15-49 had experienced violence since they were 15 (National Institute of Population Studies, 2019).

For Pakistan, compared to many other countries, the process of understanding violence against women and responding to it through public policy is at a much earlier stage. This study specifically focuses on women in Pakistan because 'country-specific' violence, e.g. honour-related violence, is seen to significantly affect particular women and marginalise them. In rural Punjab the identity and status of women is largely derived from their relationship to the explicitly gendered categories of wives, mothers and daughters. Women, as such, are defined in familial terms as carers and nurturers. Moreover, women are constantly defined in relation to men, and as subordinate to men. This subordination is codified into Pakistani law. For example, inheritance laws prioritise men's inheritances over women's (Zahid Law, n.d.). The public domain is presented as the man's sphere, while the private sphere, including the home, is presented as the domain of the woman. There are also notions of dependence and independence, with women specifically being defined as dependent upon men. Where urban educated middle-class women are seen to challenge this status quo, they are subjected to relentless pressures from fundamentalists (Mernissi, 1992).

This study presented in this thesis was conducted in the Gujrat district of Punjab province near the border with India. Specifically, it took place in one village that is not named for confidentiality reasons. This village is in an irrigated area meaning the local economy is dominated by agriculture. It is home to an estimated 500 households though no formal

population records exist. Figure 1-1 comprises an aerial photograph of the village commissioned by the researcher and inset is a map indicating the location of the Gujrat district.[1]
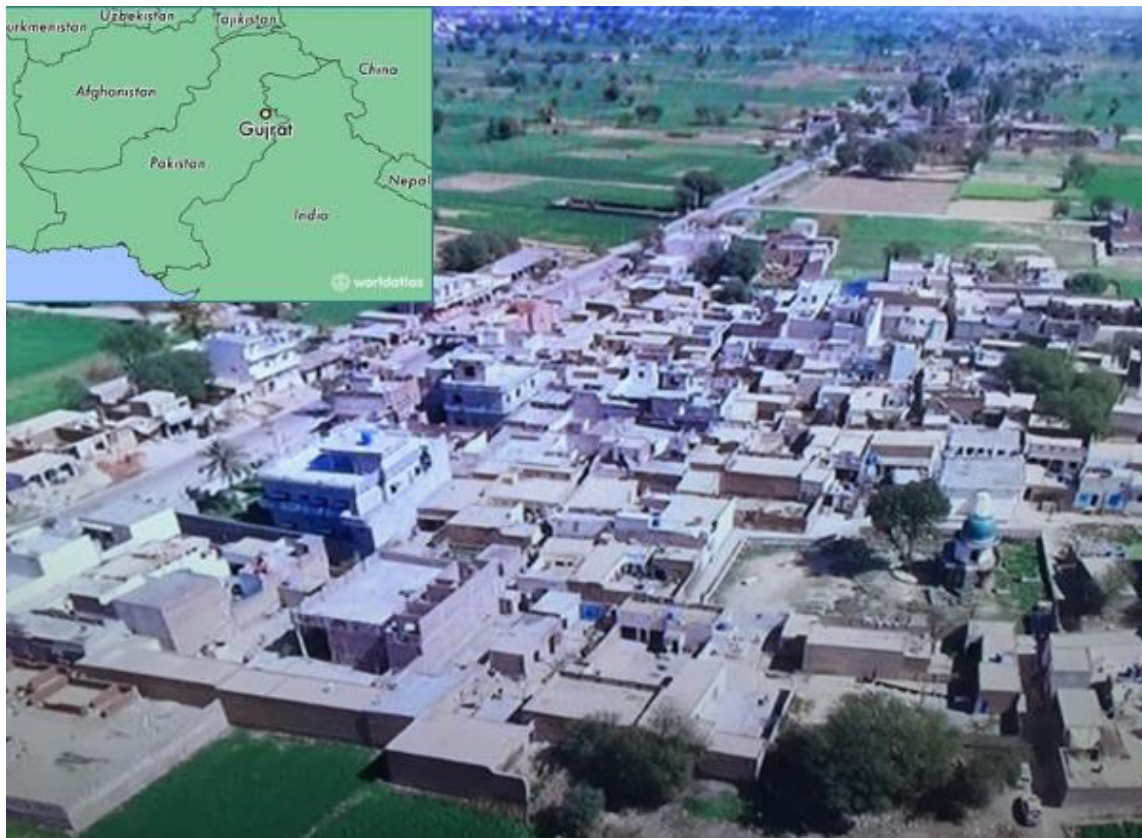
Figure 1-1: An aerial view of the research setting (inset - map indicating Gujrat district)

This research explores the violence that women face in the rural areas of Punjab. My intention in particular is to illuminate the different forms that this violence takes, and how this violence is interpreted by the women concerned. Although VAW affects a large proportion of women in their lifetimes (Devries et al., 2013), in order to fully understand the variations of violence

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[1] The similarity of the villages in this area and the sheer number means that the research setting would be extremely difficult to identify from an aerial photo.

across countries and cultures, we need evidence from the women's perspectives as victims and even as perpetrators. While concerns have been expressed in light of high-profile cases like Mukhtar Mai[2] and Qandeel Balouch[3], previous work has not specifically addressed the violence that women in rural areas of Punjab face on a daily basis. In addition, no research has taken into account the impact of the constant surveillance and control that these women face, commonly referred to in this study as the constant 'patriarchal/matriarchal eye'. The extent to which confinement to the private domain exists in rural Pakistan and what role this restriction has in facilitating VAW also requires further investigation. The women of rural Punjab are a hard-to-reach population because of their physical confinement to the private domain of the family home and the psychological confinement of social-cultural pressures which inhibit participation in research and indeed any form of open discussion of sensitive issues. Hence this study is uncommon in giving voice to these women.

My research is designed to remedy these deficiencies and plug the knowledge gaps by providing in-depth accounts from women in rural areas about their experiences of, and with, violence whether these are direct or indirect. While men commit the overwhelming majority of VAW, studies have also reported on women perpetrators and their motivations (Caldwell et al., 2009). The present study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of how violence is experienced and interpreted by women irrespective of the gender of the perpetrator.

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[2] Mukhtar (also known as Mukhtaran) Mai is from the village of Meerwala in Punjab. In 2002 she was the survivor of a gang rape as a form of honour revenge.

[3] Qandeel Balouch (real name is Fouzia Azeem) was a Pakistani model, actress and social media celebrity. She rose to prominence due to various controversial issues. She was born in Dera Ghazi Khan in Punjab. Qandeel was one of the top 10 most searched people in Pakistan. She was honour killed at the age of 26 by her brother, who alleged that she had brought 'shame on the family'.

According to data collected in Pakistan by the Aurat Foundation (2014), reported cases of violence against women were highest in Punjab compared to the other three provinces. It was against this backdrop of violence in the Punjab, that the long-awaited Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act (2016) was passed in the province. This legislation contains remedial action for victims of violence and provides special centres that eliminate the usual red tape that can complicate a woman's quest for justice in the Punjab. The Act has been controversial with male traditionalists who have claimed it is contradicting holy texts. While the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2019) has cast doubt on the effectiveness of this legislation particularly in the case of honour-based violence.

Pakistan is undoubtedly amongst the least equitable and most dangerous places in the world for a woman to live (Sukhera, 2021). While the issue of violence against women may have a higher profile, this does not appear to be reflected in progress on tackling the challenge. In July 2021, Noor Muqadam, 27, was tortured and murdered in Islamabad ostensibly for spurning a marriage proposal, leading to nationwide protests. At the same time the government failed to pass a bill aimed at criminalizing violence against women in the face of opposition from Islamic clerics (HRW, 2022).

The Human Rights Commission Pakistan (HRCP) reported an increase in domestic and online violence complaints over the two most recent years (Sukhera, 2021). It should be considered that the increase in complaints may reflect the increased profile and greater campaigning on the phenomenon as much as actual increases in this violence.

The most organized protest movement is that of the Aurat Foundation, first established in 1986. The movement's manifesto extends beyond VAW to a wide range of gender equality

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issues. In addition to an annual march held in cities across Pakistan since 2018, it has a vocal social media presence (Aurat Foundation, n.d.).

Formal legislative protections and promotion of equality have long been in place but have failed to produce positive outcomes. The Constitution itself states the principle of equality before the law and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2004 gives women protection against "offences committed in name or on the pretext of honour" (Nasrullah et al., 2009, p.196). The latest policy attempt to address the rising concerns and increased campaigning has been the Domestic Violence Bill. The bill attempts to codify matters such as sexual violence within marriage and emotional and psychological abuse which has made it particularly controversial (Amir-Ud-din, 2021). Furthermore, recent history has shown that placing a law on the statute books is only part of the process of change. Failures of implementation at provincial and local level as well as the longstanding tendency to avoid formal solutions to problems in the private domain mean that any real impact could be a distant thing (Amir-Ud-din, 2021).

There are support services available to Pakistani women. Shelters are available as places of refuge and these can be either publicly run 'Women Protection Centers' or provided by the many NGOs active in the country (VSO International, n.d.). In 2020, a free, nationwide helpline was launched by the Ministry of Human Rights (MOHR) through which cases of domestic violence could be confidentially reported (MOHR, 2020). Although women in Pakistan have some protections, legal rights and resources available to them, there is a low awareness of the availability of such support. Awareness of and access to support and protection is lower in rural parts of Pakistan including the rural Punjab, the setting for the present research. The activities of gender rights campaigners, such as the Aurat Marches, are also overwhelmingly played out in Pakistan's cities.

1.2 Aim of the Research

The aim of feminist ethnographic research, such as that presented in this thesis, is to "expose the structures and conditions that contribute to the present situation" (Sarantakos, 2005, p. 55). The situation in question is the social phenomenon of violence against women and the context is rural Punjab in Pakistan. Therefore, the specific aim of this research is to understand how these women define and interpret the violence, in its many forms, that they face in their everyday lives and which factors appear to be influencing this. This is achieved by giving voice to the women themselves and by observing their lives close up.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the study are presented as follows:

- to critically evaluate existing studies about violence against women with a focus upon the Pakistani context;
- to identify intellectual gaps in the field to conduct an ethnography within rural Punjab, Pakistan;
- to gather experiential data (via observations and in-depth interviews) to meet the first research aim;
- to analyse the experiential data to see how it resonates, confirms or departs from existing knowledge about VAW generally and the experiences of rural Pakistani women specifically to meet the second research aim.

1.4 Research Questions

Flowing from the aims and objectives, the research questions set for this piece of ethnographic research are:

RQ 1. How do the women in rural Punjab interpret, conceive and experience violence?

RQ 2. To what extent is violence against women in rural Punjab linked to the patriarchal nature of that society?

1.5 Rationale for the study

The majority of sociological theory on VAW has been derived from the Global North (Gelles, 1985; Heise, 1998). The structures of globalisation on experiences and local meanings in the Global South highlight the need to account for women's experiences of violence in these countries and regions. In this regard, this research will add to and advance Carrington et al.'s (2015) work referred to as Southern Criminology.

Previous research on Pakistani women seems to have been centred upon 'honour crimes', this study seeks to provide a more holistic analysis of violence conceived upon an everyday spectrum or continuum in rural Punjab. Although the areas of violence and honour crime have been touched upon in relation to Pakistan, it still remains a neglected area of academic research. The voices of the research participants, the women of rural Punjab, are largely unheard in society in general and in research specifically.

This study fulfils two academic rationales, namely:

1) The area of investigation is under-researched, particularly amongst rural Pakistani populations, and specifically in the Punjab province.

2) The study's focus reflects the profile of the researcher which makes issues of access, rapport, language and cultural sensitivity relatively straight-forward.

It is also significant that access to support, protection and justice is highly restricted in the setting so from a feminist research standpoint the voices of the women of rural Punjab need to be heard and understood. As the research setting is socially organised along highly patriarchal lines, feminist research is challenging to this status quo and generates knowledge value as a result.

1.6 Thesis Overview

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter two critically analyses existing empirical studies and literature on VAW and will serve to provide a context for arguments that are developed in the later chapters of this thesis.

Chapter three discusses the key theoretical perspectives that have been used to understand VAW and goes on to present the theoretical framework which informs this study. Chapter four provides an in-depth discussion of the research methods that were employed to collect the data, primarily interviews with a small sample of women, observations and photography. It also explains how this qualitative data was analysed through a coding process from which themes emerged inductively. This chapter also describes the ethical and personal challenges that the researcher encountered during the research including issues of biography and positionality and how these were managed and negotiated.

Following a thematic analysis of a vast body of data, chapter five presents the findings of the study organised into the ten major themes that emerged from that analysis. The chapter has a narrative commentary based on observations and is supported by the voices of the women

interviewed in the form of illustrative quotations. Where useful, photographs are also used to support the findings. In chapter six the findings are discussed, and the research questions are addressed. Other literature is drawn on to reflect on the findings and the theoretical framework developed in chapter three will be returned to, to assess how the present study confirms, contradicts or adds to these theories. Finally, chapter seven summarises the research, makes final conclusions including on the contributions of the research and makes recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review: the empirical study of violence against women

2.1 Introduction

A review of existing literature is an important element of evidence-based research. With theoretical perspectives covered in chapter three, the emphasis in this chapter is to support those concepts of value to the present enquiry, as identified through the research aims, objectives and questions, through empirical findings. These findings are from a broad range of literature but follow the principle that studies relevant to the Pakistani context are focused upon. There are many forms of review applying different methods of searching, appraising, synthesis and analysis (Grant & Booth, 2009). This present review uses a narrative style of synthesis and analyses the literature thematically with the chapter organised into a series of headings and subheadings. Keyword database searches were combined with manual searches to increase the comprehensiveness and relevance of the included sources. The keywords were modified for each section and sources were critically evaluated for their contribution based initially on reading of the abstracts. Online searches were conducted via the University of Salford library producing results from major social sciences databases including Scopus, Proquest, Jstor, Taylor and Francis Journals among others. Non-English sources and those for which the full text was not available were excluded. No publication date criterion was set as historical context was viewed as valuable. In addition to these searches, e-book collections and theses and dissertation databases were searched as was Google Scholar. While literature from Western contexts was not excluded per se, priority was given to those offering understanding of the phenomena in Pakistan and South Asia.

The aims of this chapter are, (a) to establish what is already known in the literature about violence against women and related issues with a focus on the Pakistan context, (b) to highlight concepts and phenomena understood to be useful to understanding VAW and associated risk factors, again particularly in the relevant context, (c) to establish an empirical basis on which to make evidence-based assumptions that will inform the design and operationalising of the present study, (d) to link the existing literature to the research aims and objectives of the present study. The chapter starts by defining the key concepts related to violence against women. It then goes on to review the literature on VAW, broadly surveying contributions from many different settings before narrowing down to focus on South Asia and particularly Pakistan. This is followed by a series of relevant thematic sections including honour-based violence (HBV), religion and cultural traditions, caste, and the control of fertility.

2.2 Defining the key concepts

This section defines and describes the core terms and concepts used in the literature on violence against women, beginning with violence itself then violence against women and its various forms.

2.2.1 Violence

There are negative consequences of narrowing down the definition of violence to only physical harm as it can prove to be reductive and therefore ends up ignoring the different forms of violence that women are subjected to, psychological harm being one such form. Bufacchi (2009) looks at violence as two different concepts, physical, as an act of force, and a comprehensive conception going beyond the physical - a violation. Not all acts of violence

are intentional, direct, or, with immediate results. The first concept endorses a narrow conception of violence known as the 'Minimalist Conception of Violence' (MCV) and the latter is seen as a broader concept the 'Comprehensive Conception of Violence' (CCV). Although the MCV is a very tight definition, it is restrictive of other violent elements that are significant (Bufacchi, 2009).

Feminist researcher Elizabeth Stanko's (2001) definition of violence takes into account these factors and is often cited when analysing or explaining violence from a feminist perspective. Stanko describes violence as "any form of behaviour by an individual that intentionally threatens to or does cause *physical*, sexual or *psychological* harm to others or themselves" (Stanko, 2001, p. 316). Ray (2011) agrees with Stanko's definition but adds that this is a 'working definition'. Importantly, Ray discusses how psychological harm is more difficult to establish than physical or sexual harm. Similar to Stanko, he points out that, "not all 'harm' arises from acts that would conventionally be regarded as 'violent' – they may arise from neglect or negligence" (Ray, 2011, p. 7). The present study follows Stanko in recognising a broad definition of violence that exists across a spectrum of behaviours.

2.2.2 Violence against women

Violence against women is often substituted by the term gender-based violence (GBV). The latter term permits the inclusion of all violence motivated by the gender of the victim whether male or female (EIGE, 2020). GBV has become the umbrella term for this form of violence. This term is not confined to VAW, but also recognises violence against children, same sex domestic violence and violence where women may be the perpetrators, but their involvement is mediated by gender. Over time there has been a broadening of perspectives in research and a shift in terminology. This has helped incorporate and highlight certain forms of violence

that were invisible before. However, this present research is concerned solely with violence against women, and for this reason violence against women (VAW) is the term used throughout the thesis. Furthermore, the term violence is taken to cover a spectrum of harms as described in the literature.

Krahe (2018) describes VAW as "a social construction based on a societal consensus about the roles and rights of men and women" (p.6). VAW is often subdivided into two categories: intimate partner and non-intimate partner violence. Intimate partner violence (IPV) is described by the World Health Organization (2012) as "one of the most common forms of violence against women and includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling behaviours by an intimate partner." (p.1). IPV is more usually termed domestic violence in general use.

IPV is the most common form of violence experienced by women (United Nations, 2015). Statistics reported by the World Health Organisation show that approximately "35 per cent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual violence by a non-partner at some point in their lives. However, some national studies show that up to 70 per cent of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime" (World Health Organisation, 2015). In contrast, men are more likely to suffer violence from strangers or acquaintances. Women can experience IPV as a perpetrator rather than victim. Analysis of data aggregated by the United Nations and covering 33 countries, reveals that while the proportion of women who experience lifetime physical IPV as victims was 28.6%, there was a smaller but significant 6.8% who experienced as a perpetrator (United Nations, 2015). While self-reported data needs to be treated with caution, this data suggests that gender-based violence cannot solely relate to women as victims.

It is worth noting that academic definitions of violence against women are not necessarily aligned with how women themselves may perceive and define the phenomenon. Rao and Waters (1995) found that low level violence was seen by some women as routine behaviour and associated violence more with severe and life-threatening acts. The meanings and definitions attached to VAW can also change over time in a process of redefinition (Kelly, 2001).

2.2.3 Physical and sexual violence

Physical violence is defined as, "Any act which causes physical harm as a result of unlawful physical force. Physical violence can take the form of, among others, serious and minor assault, deprivation of liberty and manslaughter" (European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), 2017). Kelly (1987) describes a continuum of sexual violence ranging from rape, incest and domestic violence to obscene phone calls and flashing. The line between physical and sexual violence is a blurred one but in Kelly's interpretation sexual violence can only be committed by men against women and is an expression of power used to control women, in line with a radical feminist perspective (1987). This conclusion has received 'official' endorsement. For example, the FBI defined forced rape as "the carnal knowledge of a *female* forcibly and against her will" (author's emphasis) for nearly a century until 2012 (Stemple & Meyer, 2014, p. e21). More recently, however, while female sexual victimisation has remained the dominant paradigm, female perpetrators of child sexual abuse (Denov, 2003), male-on-male sexual victimisation (Scarce, 1997; Gear, 2007) and to a smaller extent female-on-male victimisation (Smith, 2012) have been researched. Official definitions in some countries have also changed to reflect the changing paradigm with the U.S. changing its

definition to a gender neutral one (U.S. Dept. of Justice, 2012). Within intimate relationships,

sexual and physical violence are likely to be experienced together (United Nations, 2015).

2.2.4 Psychological and Economic violence

Despite many shortcomings, in many countries of the Global North penal systems protecting

women from physical and sexual violence have grown in their deterrent effect as countries

take VAW more seriously (Bessel, 2015). However, this may have led to a growth in non-

physical violence in the form of psychological and economic violence aimed at maintaining

patriarchal gender roles. Psychological violence has been defined as,

> Any act or behaviour which causes psychological harm to the partner
> or former partner. Psychological violence can take the form of,
> among others, coercion, defamation, a verbal insult or harassment.
> (EIGE, 2017, p.45)

Economic violence is defined as,

> Any act or behaviour which causes economic harm to the partner.
> Economic violence can take the form of, among others, property
> damage, restricting access to financial resources, education or the
> labour market, or not complying with economic responsibilities,
> such as alimony. (EIGE, 2017, p.46)

Both psychological and economic violence fall within the concept of coercive control which

has been defined as,

> … a pattern of coercion characterized by the use of threats,
> intimidation, isolation, and emotional abuse, as well as a pattern of
> control over sexuality and social life, including . . . relationships with
> family and friends; material resources (such as money, food, or
> transportation); and various facets of everyday life (such as coming
> and going, shopping, cleaning, and so forth) (Stark & Flitcraft, 1996,
> pp. 166–167).

This form of control aims to achieve the same ends as more overtly physically violent forms

of control but at lower risk. As the phenomenon became increasingly accepted it too was

criminalised in some countries. For example, in England and Wales coercive control became an offence in December 2015 when the Serious Crime Act 2015 defined it as "continuing act, or pattern of acts, of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim". There is a maximum sentence of 5 years for conviction and conviction rates have been high (Gallagher, 2019). In Pakistan, there is no legal concept of coercive control and more than this, many of the actions the concept covers would be viewed as entirely within social norms pertaining to the rights of the husband. For example, according to Chowbey (2016), Pakistani women with their own income from employment are expected to surrender this money to their husband.

2.3 Researching violence against women

Violence against women is a universal phenomenon not restricted to any one category of country or community; while risk factors may determine prevalence, as a phenomenon it remains ubiquitous. Prevalence data is problematic due to the stigma attached to reporting incidents and the lack of support from legal systems and authorities. Underreporting is highly likely. Having made this qualification, the WHO recorded a lifetime prevalence for IPV of 30% and for non-IPV of 7.2%. These being the results of analysis of data collected in more than 80 countries (WHO, 2013). Among the outcomes of this violence are injury, disability, mental health problems, lack of reproductive control, poor maternal health outcomes, substance abuse, and death from homicide or suicide (WHO, 2013). Domestic violence has been proposed to be the most common of all crimes (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Hammer & Stanko, 1985; Worrall & Pease, 1986) and one which sees only the tip of the iceberg formally recorded while the majority remains hidden (Richardson, 1996; Skogan, 1977).

Physical control of women through the use of violence can be viewed as a control mechanism for maintaining the patriarchal form of social order. From this perspective, VAW is not an individual or a family issue but a societal one where hundreds of years of the patriarchal system has legitimised a man using physical coercion to control his wife (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Felson & Messner, 2000). The United Nations (2015) posit that among the risk factors for VAW are experiencing or witnessing violence in childhood, cultural tolerance of such violence, low education levels, inadequate legal protection, substance abuse, and low income.

Women across the globe are subjected to different forms of violence regardless of their age, income or education and this violence can leave long-term effects, in the form of physical or mental health problems. Historical evidence shows that violence against women has always been widely prevalent in society (Martin, 1976; Freeman, 1979; Doggett, 1992), while Stanko (2001) wrote extensively about how women attempt to avoid and negotiate the threat of violence. Stanko's research shows that women of all classes have developed, where possible, strategies of resistance to the violence they (may) face. While many researchers consider domestic violence to have the highest figures of any type of crime (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Hammer & Stanko, 1985; Worrall & Pease, 1986) it is important to note that this crime is seen as 'hidden' (Richardson, 1996) and contributes significantly to the 'dark figure' of unreported crimes (Skogan, 1977). However, over recent years, there has been an increase in data on VAW.

In the countries where data has been gathered, less than 40 per cent of women who have experienced violence seek help (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). The women who do mostly look to family and friends for this help. A very small percentage of women seek help by appealing to the police (United Nations Department of

Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). Many countries have passed laws on sexual violence; however, these are not always compliant with international standards and recommendations are not always implemented (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015). The question to ask is, are the women for whom these laws are implemented able to use these laws for their own benefit?

The prevalence of violence declines with age but is still persistent amongst older women (Bows, 2018). This is acknowledged in The World's Women Report 2015. Violence against older women may take the form of physical, sexual or psychological abuse, as well as financial exploitation or neglect perpetrated by intimate partners, family members, or caregivers. Risk factors include residence in an institution or mental/physical impairment. In many countries, institutions established to provide care for older women and men are not managed properly and low standards of care go unchecked" (United Nations Department of Economic & Social Affairs 2015, p. 148).

In extreme cases VAW can lead to death (Meeto & Mirza, 2007; Patel & Gadit, 2008; Lari, 2011; Oberwittler & Kasselt, 2012). In many countries men *and* women believe that domestic violence is acceptable in certain circumstances, with acceptability highest in South Asia where one study found 47% accepting (Sardinha & Nájera Catalán, 2018). However, surveys have shown that attitudes towards violence are beginning to change. Bograd (1988) acknowledges this by identifying that many women suffer psychological abuse which can take the form of humiliation or verbal degradation. Despite this, Bograd, like her predecessors focuses largely on physical abuse. Research over the past four decades has highlighted the abuse of women and highlighted this as a social problem, rather than a private matter. Many researchers have mainly focused on women's experiences of IPV. In recent

years we have seen the profile of VAW change in the UK as it has in other countries of the Global North. There have been some legislative changes, i.e. Clare's Law, and increased public information campaigns against domestic violence. The effect of this has been to ensure that domestic violence is not as hidden as it used to be.

The literature recognises several distinct forms of violence against women, and this is reflected in the approach taken in the present study which explicitly adopts a multi-form definition of VAW and seeks to investigate violence of all kinds, as experienced by the women of rural Punjab.

2.4 Violence against women in Pakistan

In Pakistan "violence against women is embedded in the social, political, and legal structures of society" (Zakar et al., 2012, p.3269). Relatedly, Bhanbro et al. (2013) bluntly declare that "Pakistan is infamous for violence against women" (p.1468). A Thomson Reuters Foundation experts' survey placed Pakistan as the 6th most dangerous country in the world to be a woman (Thomson Reuters Foundation, 2018). According to data published by the United Nations almost one-third (32.2%) of Pakistani women aged 15 to 49 experience physical violence at some point during their lifetime. Table 2-1 shows who commits this violence.

Table 2-1: Who commits VAW in Pakistan?

Perpetrator	Percentage mentioning as source of violence
Current husband	79.4
Former husband	8.0

Father/stepfather	7.0
Mother/stepmother	11.9
Sister/brother	5.6
Daughter/son	0.1
Other relative	1.6
Mother-in-law	6.5
Father-in-law	3.3
Other in-law	9.8
Teacher	0.9
Employer/someone at work	0.1
Police/soldier	0.0
Other	0.5

Source: Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2012-13

The high prevalence of VAW is sustained by the social expectations and cultural norms of Pakistani society that encourage men to assume a dominant and commanding position (Hadi, 2017). Furthermore, acceptance of VAW in Pakistan is commonplace (Bhanbro et al., 2013; Bhanbro, 2021). Figure 2-1 presents data published by the United Nations on the acceptability of husbands beating their wives in Pakistan. It is striking that more women think it is acceptable than men. As many as 42.5% of women felt domestic violence was acceptable in at least one of the circumstances given. Data from other countries shows that this seemingly anomalous finding is common in the countries of the Global South in Africa and Asia (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2015).

Percentage thinking it is justified for husbands to beat their wives

Reason	Men	Women
REFUSES TO HAVE SEX WITH HIM	16.3	30.6
NEGLECTS THE CHILDREN	18.5	31.1
GOES OUT WITHOUT TELLING HIM	19.8	29.6
ARGUES WITH HUSBAND	18.9	33.7
BURNS THE FOOD	5.1	18.4
AT LEAST ONE OF THESE REASONS	34	42.5
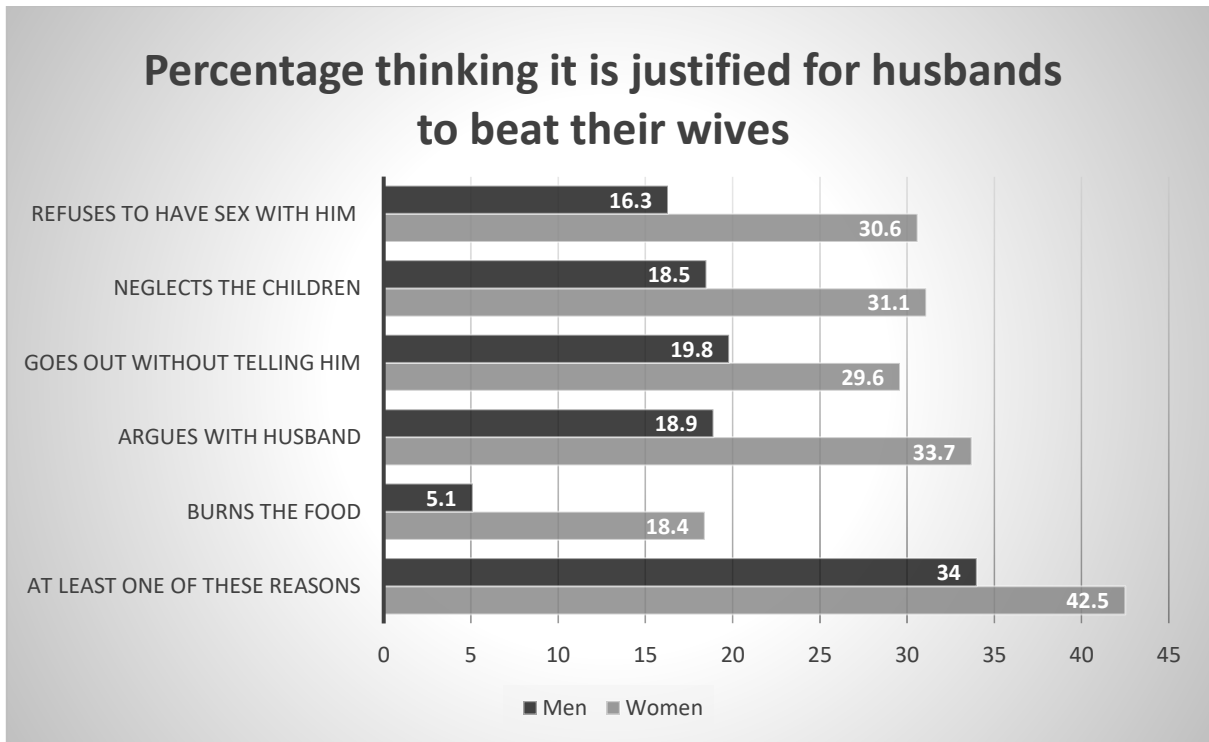
Figure 2-1: Attitudes to domestic violence in Pakistan

Source: Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2012-13

Over the last two decades, it has been increasingly recognised by researchers that the background of violence in Pakistan stems from cultural, structural, political and feudal frameworks (Hussain, 1999; Castetter, 2003; Jehanzeb, 2004; Weiss & Mughal, 2012; Lari, 2011). These combined, or alone, create situations and circumstances in which women are subjected to violence routinely. Aslam et al. (2015) posit that IPV is so endemic in Pakistan that it is widely perceived as a normal and inevitable part of married life to the extent that women simply do not realise that their human rights are being violated.

Ali et al. (2015) conducted a systematic review of IPV studies in the Pakistani context. On the issue of prevalence, they found a wide range of results for different forms of violence. The results are summarised in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2: Prevalence of IPV in Pakistan

Form of IPV	Prevalence Range in %	# of Studies
Psychological IPV	48% to 84%	17
Physical IPV	16% to 80%	20
Sexual IPV (during pregnancy)	1% to 77% (14% to 21%)	12 (4)
Economic IPV	39%	1

Source: Ali et al. (2015)

Women VAW victims in Pakistan are the least likely to seek help from the police among 29 countries in the Global South for which data is available. While 35.2% of respondents sought help, less than one out of a hundred of these sought this help from the police, preferring instead to seek help from friends and family (United Nations, 2015).

2.4.1 IPV in Pakistan

There is a small corpus of literature on the predictors of IPV in Pakistan. Fikree et al. (2005) highlighted the experiencing of physical abuse as a child are a predictor of adult males being perpetrators. Similarly, the same study found that witnessing parental IPV in childhood makes adult males more likely to commit IPV themselves. Childhood experiences of violence feature as a predictor in other studies (Farid et al., 2008; Fikree et al., 2006). Low level of education is another predictor (Ali et al., 2011) as is low socio-economic status (Ali et al.,

2011). Males who are aggressive in nature (Zareen et al., 2009), unemployed (Ali et al., 2011) who use tobacco (Farid et al., 2008), alcohol (Abrar & Ghouri, 2010), or who have been previously married (Karmaliani et al., 2008) are more likely to be perpetrators. Marriage between distant relatives (Fikree et al., 2006) and the involvement of, and conflict with, in-laws (Zareen et al., 2009) have also been identified as predictors of IPV in Pakistan. Jejeebhoy (1998) and Peek-Asa et al. (2011) identified women's relatively weaker social position, low literacy rates and lack of awareness of their social and legal rights, as the main predictors of IPV. Risk of IPV can be lowered by the availability of social support (Farid et al., 2008), living with the extended family and satisfaction with the intimate partner relationship (Naeem et al., 2008).

In a study of both urban and rural dwelling women, Abrar and Ghouri (2010) found that the three most common reasons cited by women experiencing domestic violence were being suspected of extra marital relations, dowry related issues, and husband's alcohol use. When researching women living in government shelters in Punjab province, Tarar and Pulla (2014) heard from their participants that women were driven to extra-marital relations when their husbands could not provide the basic necessities of life.

In many societies the home has been a woman's domain and is associated with their subordinate social position (Rosaldo, 1974). Scholars have long recognised that this private domain is the location for much of the violence committed against women (Butler, 1979; Berk & Loseke, 1981; Russell, 1984; Tardiff, 2006). Stanko (2001) challenges the socially constructed 'myth' of the safe home environment which has the effect of concealing women's experiences of violence in the home. Within the Pakistani home a man assumes a sense of entitlement towards women because of the patriarchal form of social organisation that

prevails (Karmaliani et al., 2012). Any lack of co-operation on the woman's part leads to punishment with some form of violence. For these researchers Pakistan has a culture of systemic violence with men facing violence in the public domain which they then displace on women in the home, which is further displaced by mothers onto their children creating a cycle of violence (Karmaliani et al., 2012).

Women are effectively trapped in a violent environment as Pakistani society tolerates IPV and views divorce as totally unacceptable unless initiated by the husband (Ali et al., 2012). Although more girls are attending school and women are taking paid employment in increasing numbers, for the majority of women, especially in rural areas, life is spent mainly within the confines of the family home, first their own parents' home and then after marriage with their husband (and often their in-laws) (Zakar et al., 2013). In Pakistan, as in many African and Asian societies, men believe it is their legitimate right to exercise full control of their wives' body and fertility including their reproductive decisions and sexuality (Martin et al., 1999). A rare study into this belief reported that it was held by around half of Pakistani men (Fikree et al., 2005). The response to breaches of this control and resistance against it is often met with violence (Fikree et al., 2005; Munir, 2002).

The literature on IPV in Pakistan supports the conclusion that the nation represents one of the most dangerous societies in which a woman can live. It is not unique but also not typical in global terms. A number of themes arise in the literature which may reoccur in the present research. Many of these themes are expressions of the strongly patriarchal nature of Pakistani society.

2.4.2 Significance of rurality and poverty

The rural nature of the present research setting is significant. The most academically gifted women of rural Punjab tend to migrate to the cities for university and then employment leaving a relatively lowly educated population behind. Niaz (2011) posits that women who are unemployed, illiterate and those who live in impoverished conditions are at a higher risk of becoming a victim of violence. A nationwide demographic and health survey conducted in Pakistan in 2012-13 reports that rural women are more likely to have ever experienced physical violence than urban women (National Institute of Population Studies, 2013).

Education level has been associated with domestic violence with more highly educated women less likely to experience such violence (Simister & Makowiec, 2008). Access to higher education is a means to escape the social isolation that facilitates VAW by contributing to the presence of social networks (Levendosky, et al., 2004). Urban dwelling women experience life differently to their rural counterparts with generally better welfare. Krishnan et al. (2001) and Koenig et al. (2003) both argue that women living in rural areas are more at risk of domestic violence than their urban counterparts. In contrast, women living in rural areas experience a wide spectrum of violent experiences that include sexual violence, beating and threats as well as emotional and mental violence (Ashraf et al., 2017). Rural communities are characterised by low educational levels and lack of economic empowerment both factors associated with domestic violence (Anitha, 2016). Further evidence of a higher prevalence of VAW in rural areas of Pakistan compared to urban areas is provided by Labore et al. (2019) who recorded a 37.4% percent rate of self-reported emotional or physical violence among rural-dwelling women compared to 27% among their urban counterparts. Those lacking any formal education were found to face higher risk. Urban dwelling Pakistani

men in Zakar and colleagues' qualitative study framed VAW as a phenomenon of the illiterate rural areas of the country (Zakar et al., 2013) although other research (Fikree & Bhatti, 1999; Fikree et al., 2005; Nasrullah et al., 2009) calls this assumption into question. Rural dwelling women in Pakistan are also unlikely to be aware of their rights and legal protections and as a consequence more vulnerable (Patel & Gadit, 2008).

Global data collected by the World Health Organisation indicates a lower prevalence of IPV in high income countries compared to middle and low-income countries (WHO, 2013). Low incomes have been associated with high levels of rape in the U.S. (Planty et al., 2013). In Pakistan, Abrar and Ghouri (2010) found 58% of low-income women reported sexual exploitation with the figure dropping to 15% for those classed as middle class based on their income. They were also more likely to experience physical violence during pregnancy. Labore et al. (2019) also reported a wealth effect with the two lower quartiles of wealth experiencing greater prevalence than the upper two. However, other evidence suggests that high income status does not necessarily reduce risk (Ellsberg et al., 2008) including in Pakistan (Amir-ud-Din, 2018).

In conditions of dire poverty, as found in rural Pakistan, men can use women in various ways to solve their financial problems. Brohi (2010) refers to cases where women are accused of adultery, and compensation is demanded from the alleged male, regardless of the damage that this may cause the women. Some instances are even more serious: "Unable to pay loans, some men are known to have killed a woman of their own family to implicate someone in the debtor's family to ensure the loan would be extinguished in compensation" (Brohi, 2010, p. 6). Such findings demonstrate how important setting and context are to the present study.

Rurality in Pakistan is associated with poverty. Poverty is in turn related to class with landowning status the principal determinant of social class (Javid, 2012). Again, these factors can be seen as predictors of experiencing violence. There is evidence that honour crimes are associated with low levels of education and poverty, both features of rural life in Pakistan (Sindh Education Department, 2006).

Rurality and poverty are also associated with low literacy and poor health-seeking behaviours. Ferdous et al. (2017) explore the relationship between domestic violence on empowerment of women and their health seeking behaviour in Pakistan. They argue that "Worldwide little is known on how domestic violence can affect women's health and their decision-making power" (Ferdous et al., 2017, p.e12231-1). This research explored the relationship between domestic violence, women's empowerment and their health-seeking behaviour. The results echo previous research and affirm the findings from existing literature, confirming that low literacy levels contribute towards VAW. They also affirm Aslam et al.'s (2015) findings that there is a learned behaviour that comes into play in rural society where daughters see, imitate and expect behaviour that their mothers experience.

Overall, living in rural areas can be viewed as a risk factor for VAW. Women in rural Punjab have low incomes, are poorly educated, lack knowledge of their rights and lack access to social protection. It is within this cultural and socio-demographic context that the current study was undertaken.

2.4.3 External protections against VAW

If Pakistani women enjoy little or no protection in the private domain of the family home, the situation is not much better in the public domain. Legal systems in the higher income states of the Global North have increasingly protected women. While still not offering

equality of access to justice and featuring flawed procedures such as those in rape investigations and prosecutions (Avalos, 2016) protection is sufficient to discourage many men from criminal means of control. In Pakistan, there is no legal concept of coercive control and more than this, many of the actions the concept covers would be viewed as entirely within social norms pertaining to the rights of the husband.

Women are supposedly kept safe from the public domain through *de facto* confinement to the private domain. However, there is little or no extra-familial protection against what happens in the private domain where the majority of VAW is perpetrated. In many other societies there are varying degrees of such protection from the police and judicial system, but this protection has been historically weak in Pakistan. Furthermore, with regard to sexual violence, discussion of issues related to sex are taboo in Pakistan putting up another invisible barrier between women and their rights.

The legal system of Pakistan, in common with many Muslim countries, mitigates against justice for women who are victims of violence. Despite this barrier, approximately 10,000 cases of rape were reported in Punjab for the period January 2014 to June 2017 (Khalti, 2017), a figure which may be the tip of the iceberg with women reluctant to file reports. A woman accusing a man of rape who then fails to secure a conviction through lack of evidence, or an unfavourable judgement will be automatically considered to have committed the crime of adultery. Becoming pregnant outside of a valid marriage is also considered evidence of adultery (Baxi et al., 2006).

In cases of rape, the Pakistani penal code had been based on Islam. Then in 1979 the Hudood Ordinance laws were passed to replace much of the existing British penal code as part of a push for the Islamization of the country. This brought in Sharia legal provisions which had

the effect of making convictions for rape near impossible and criminalised the victims rather than the perpetrators. The eye-witness testimony of four men was required to secure a conviction. As protests against the Hudood Ordinance mounted the Protection of Women (Criminal Laws) Amendment Act was passed in 2006 which decriminalised the victims and permitted forensics and DNA evidence to be used. It also defined rape and its penalties as well as creating an offence of abduction for forced marriage. However, domestic violence was not covered, and this was left to the provinces to legislate for. Sindh became the first province to address this legal gap with the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2013. In Punjab province protections against domestic violence were introduced in the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act (PPWVA) 2016. The law was swiftly challenged as unconstitutional by some Islamic scholars on the basis of it being un-Islamic (Nabeel et al., 2016).

This brief summary indicates that on a formal level violence against women is acknowledged as a social issue in Pakistan. However, formal recognition does not necessarily translate to real protections and the present study will contribute to our understanding of how women interact (or fail to interact) with authority and protection in the public domain.

2.5 Kinship and Marriage

The institution of marriage plays an integral role across the Global South. Throughout Asian cultures women's statuses are inextricably linked to marital trajectory (Weiss, 2014). Within these trajectories there are practices which lead to exposure to violence, e.g. dowries. Naved and Persson (2008) carried out a study in rural Bangladesh and found this to be a highly prevalent practice, those women who were married under conditions of dowry were more likely to experience violence than other women.

In rural Punjab the lives of women are influenced to a far greater degree by the kinship relations than they are by the state (Maskiell, 1990). The importance of kinship relations in the Punjab has been attracting research interest for a long time with considerable work carried out in the 1970s (Alavi, 1972; Das, 1976; Wakil, 1970). The *biraderi* system of kinship relations comprises a wider network of relatives with a shared identity and an inner core whose membership is often determined by competitive gift giving (Wakil, 1970). It is from within this inner core that marriage partners are invariably selected. The *biraderi* system controls both marriage and the transmission of property that must receive the assent of elder male group members (Fricke et al., 1986). Alavi (1972) asserts, contrary to widely held perceptions, that the system of kinship relations in the Punjab outweighs caste in its influence on social organisation. Kinship acts as a means for acquiring political, economic and ideological resources in Punjabi society with marriages being an opportunity to make a move to enhance these resources (Awan & Kokab, 2016). Lyon (2013) explains that landed families "seek maximal political advantage and minimal household disruption with marriage arrangements" (p.45). While the kinship system is part of the underlying patriarchal control of resources in Punjabi society it does assign to women an important role as "signifiers of alliance between families" (Fricke et al., 1986, p.491). Fricke et al. (1986) posit that a woman's value as a signifier varies according to their biological home, birth home and other culturally assigned characteristics.

Marriage is the main form of control over a woman's fertility. In Pakistan, marriage is also closely linked to kinship with a woman essentially being gifted from one family to another, or from one part of the same extended family to another. As Hyde (2007) explains,

> The woman who is given in marriage similarly takes on typical functions of the gift. She, too, establishes a bond (between clans or families), and as part of an ongoing system of kinship, she, like any gift, becomes an agent of the community's cohesion and stability (p.99).

In rural areas of Pakistan, the practice of endogamy is commonplace, this normally means marrying within a group and can take a number of different forms, "it can be kin endogamy, village endogamy, or status endogamy" (Agha, 2016, p. 1). While endogamy has a broader scope, consanguineous marriages, a subset, are those between close blood relatives. These too are particularly commonplace with Pakistan having one of the highest rates of this type of marriage, especially marriage between cousins, in the world. Pakistan's Demographic and Health Survey established that more than half of marriages (56%) are contracted between first and second cousins (Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey, 2012-2013). This finding supports Jones (2010) who posits that Pakistan has one of the highest rates of this type of marriage in the world.

Another form of marriage common in Pakistan, particularly in rural areas is the exchange marriage. This is the simultaneous marriage of a brother and sister pair from two different households. These marriages account for a third of the marriages in rural Pakistan (Jacoby & Mansuri, 2008). The exchange marriage is seen as a way to protect wives by mutual threat, as the husband who mistreats his wife can expect his brother-in-law to treat his sister in the same way. Thus, the threat of violence is used as to preserve 'order' within marriages.

Some researchers have posited that the only way close kin endogamy can be understood is if this is looked at through the context of poverty and the patrilineal organisation of kinship and descent followed in Pakistan (Khan, 1998; Taj et al, 2004). Khan (1998) refers to the women that live under this system of patrilineal kinship as second-class citizens and describes these

women as the property of men. Women's identity in Pakistan is constituted in terms of their dependency on men for security. This dependency is further strengthened by patriarchal values that are proliferated by culture and religion (UNICEF, 2012). There is also evidence that religion is an influencing factor. Pakistan is an overwhelmingly Muslim country where rates of consanguinity are exceptionally high. In neighbouring India, rates of consanguineous marriage were also found to be highest among Muslims, twice as high as among Hindus (Bittles, 2002).

Forced marriage, often including abduction, is a common phenomenon in Pakistan. These marriages have been described as "a means of controlling female sexuality and women's autonomy. It involves coercion, mental abuse and emotional blackmail, and intense social pressure" (Janghel, 1999 p.46). Women forced into marriage are often subjected to physical violence, imprisonment, sexual violence and some are murdered. There are also cases where women fleeing a forced marriage are killed by their own families (Hossain & Turner, 2001).

Child marriages are more common in the Global South (Solotaroff & Pande, 2014) and are also the reason why many women who are married in adolescence are at significantly higher risk of being exposed to violence (Raj et al. 2010). Child marriage persists in Pakistan despite the existence of legal protections. A UNICEF report estimates that more than one in five Pakistani girls are married before they reach 18 although the same report does state that there is a downward trend (UNICEF, 2019). A bill was passed in 2019 to raise the legal age of marriage to 18 though Islamic politicians opposed the law as being un-Islamic (Senate of Pakistan, 2019).

There is evidence of a relationship between fertility and the experiencing of physical and/or sexual violence. A United Nations report indicates a link between violence and fertility,

finding that "The experience of violence peaks when women are in their reproductive years. This is true in both developed and developing countries" (United Nations, 2015, p.145). Data collected within the EU indicates that 15% of 18-29-year-olds experienced either IPV or non-IPV within the last 12 months, which reduces to 6% for women aged 60 and above (United Nations, 2015). Honour killings, discussed in detail later, are linked to the control of women's bodies and fertility. Pope (2012) posits that honour killings may have had a specific purpose in tribal societies where modern technology, which offers the possibility of confirming paternity, was and still is absent. Until the discovery of DNA, men could never be entirely sure that their offspring were really theirs. Controlling women's sexuality and making sure that they did not marry outside the tribal group was therefore crucial to preserve the bloodline.

Infertility can have catastrophic consequences for women in strongly patriarchal societies such as Pakistan due to the expectation that women will bear (hopefully male) children. The infertility rate among Pakistani couples is understood to be 22% (Sami & Saeed Ali, 2012). In rural areas, women widely believe that infertility results from black magic and the presence of an evil spirit in a woman's menstrual blood (Sami & Saeed Ali, 2012). In a Turkish study, Ozturk et al. (2017) found that infertile women reported low levels of exposure to violence. This encouraging finding, however, may be related to the consequences faced by infertile women which are understood to include divorce, ejection from the family home and the husband remarrying. However, if a woman becomes infertile but has already produced a male child her consequences may be milder (Sami & Saeed Ali, 2012).

Also linked to the issue of fertility is the phenomenon of son preference and female foeticide. While these twin phenomena can be found in other cultures, they are particularly prominent

in South Asia as demonstrated by the sex ratios in Pakistan and India. Data from the United Nations for 2010 gives estimates for Pakistan's sex ratios that in Table 2-3 are compared with those given for the United Kingdom (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009).

Table 2-3: Sex ratios of Pakistan and United Kingdom populations (2010 estimates).

Country	Total population – all ages	Male population	%	Female population	%
Pakistan	184 753	95 115	51.5	89 638	48.5
United Kingdom	61 899	30 388	49.1	31 512	50.9

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2009

If Pakistan's ratio mirrored the UK, there would be 4.435 million more females in the country. In neighbouring India, where a similar phenomenon exists, the government has legislated to ban sex-selective abortion, but this has failed to rebalance the sex ratio (Purewal, 2014).

As well as population level analysis, other evidence of son preference in Pakistan has been presented. Atif et al. (2016), conducted a cross-sectional descriptive study using a random/ probability sample in the city of Peshewar and confirmed the prevalence of son preference. The authors state that this preference leads to induced abortions based on antenatal scanning. The phenomenon is strongest among low socioeconomic classes as girls are seen as economically less valuable than boys. Indeed, while boys are considered assets girls are viewed as liabilities (Atif et al., 2016).

2.6 Religion and VAW

From a western perspective, honour killings are associated with the Muslim religion, but in reality, it is the product of pre-Islamic traditions (Pope, 2012). The Qur'an does show strong disapproval of illicit sexual relations and recommends stoning for adulterers, however, at the same time it requires a high evidential threshold of four eyewitnesses to prove a case. The personal justice of honour violence is nowhere condoned (Pope, 2012). Gender relations are a well-covered subject in Muslim holy texts setting out the rights and responsibilities of male and female partners and do not sanction domestic violence. Terman (2010) argues that the interventions of senior Islamic scholars condemning honour killings is evidence that rather than Islam, this type of crime is culturally rooted. Contrary to this view, Ginat (1979) and Kressel (1981) both assert that studies on honour crime have come to the conclusion that these practices are fundamentally Islamic. Ghuneim (2013) disagrees and argues that although some 90 per cent of honour killings in the contemporary world occur in Muslim countries, scholars are divided about whether specific Islamic traditions are implicated in the support for these killings (e.g., Kulczycki & Windle, 2011; Oberwittler & Kasselt, 2012; Eisner & Ghuneim 2013). Gill (2015) describes honour crime as a concept which cuts across ethnicity, class and religion. Hence, we can see that the relationship between Islam and honour killings or broader VAW is a disputed one.

One of the strongest themes in Islam is the need to control women's sexuality. As Qureshi (2010) explains, "Islam considers women's sexuality to be more potent than men's and can appear obsessed with managing it to prevent sexual chaos (*fitna*)" (p.184). This echoes the earlier contribution of Mernissi (1987) who describes Islam's portrayal of women as

inherently sexually uncontrollable with massive disruptive potential, thus justifying extreme measures to control them.

One explanation for the linking of VAW, particularly honour killings, is the misinterpretation of religious teaching used to maintain a culture of gender-based violence (Ashraf et al., 2017). This raises the issue of the control of the means of production of religious knowledge and the fact that it has always been in the hands of men (Robinson, 1999). Islamic societies are theoretically classless according to the religion with the only exception being the class of men of religious knowledge. The continuance of traditions, practices and rituals that are fundamentally un-Islamic is attributed to the patriarchal control of religious knowledge and are invariably detrimental to the position and rights of women. Western (2008) argues that Islamic law has been "taken hostage by customs and traditions that are clearly not Islamic" (p.147). Similarly, Dogan (2011) examines the distortion of Islam that is reformed to match the patriarchal ideologies of society.

At nation level there are Islamist, reformist and secularist Muslim states which contrast quite sharply. The different interpretations, sects and practices of Islam can be seen in Pakistan. Indeed, Islam in Pakistan has been described as a 'kaleidoscope' (Abou Zahab, 2020). Of strong influence in Pakistan is the Deobandi movement, a Sunni Salafist form of Islam that emphasises the Taqlid doctrine (conformity to legal precedent). This school of Islam dominates the provision of seminaries in Pakistan with as many as two-thirds being run along Deobandi lines (Shah, 2018). Long-standing tensions have existed in Pakistan between the Deobandi movement and the Sufism and Barelvis. The core difference between them being that the Deobandis accept only the Quran and Hadith as legal sources whereas the Sufists and Barelvis see Sufi saints as legitimate intermediaries (Abou Zahab, 2020). To the Deobandi

Salafists this is seen as an impure form of Islam infected by South Asian Hindu influences (Shah, 2018).

2.6.1 Shrines and Sufism

In rural Pakistan there is more to religious and spiritual influences and practices than Islam. Despite Islam not approving of alternative spiritual influences, this is a region with a complex belief system set of superstitions, dreams, black magic and features visits to shrines, belief in ghosts and the use of amulets, charms and talismans collectively referred to as *ta'wiz* (Farooq & Kayani, 2012). In the rural communities of Pakistan, courtyard shrines, known as *darbars*, play an important role in daily life. The shrines honour a Sufi saint and are used equally by men and women. Reasons for going to the shrine include expressing dedication to the saint, *Mannat* (prayers for good outcomes), to seek guidance on some inner conflict or just for entertainment and social interaction (Farooq & Kayani, 2012). The saints are the embodiment of the link between traditional superstition and supernatural beliefs and Islam as they are the men credited with converting their tribe to Islam.

Women who are mainly restricted from the public sphere enjoy comparatively unfettered access to the *darbars* but there is an expectation they should use the opportunity to pray for worthy outcomes such as a successful marriage and the birth of male children (Sheikh, 2019). The *darbars* are led by a *pīr*, a spiritual leader and healer who holds an important position in the local community and is often a descendant of the original saint after whom the shrine is named. However, *pīrs* have been associated with exploiting their position for monetary and other advantage something assisted by the lengths people will go to gain favour with them, reportedly including the offer of daughters (Sheikh, 2019). *Pīrs* enjoy unquestioned spiritual authority over their devotees and the devotees view visiting the *darbar* and the *pīr* as a

positive move toward keeping up social appearances (Basu & Werbner, 1998). *Pīrs* and their families have been described as highly conservative forces in Pakistan, often using their status and their devotees to secure political power and discourage development and literacy (Malik & Mirza, 2015). There is evidence of a link between the shrine network and VAW; Aziz (2001) reports incidents of sexual harassment and even rape are widespread.

Pirani (2009) identified the main purpose of the shrines as being a source of healing. What visitors to the shrine were mainly being healed of was dark magic or possession of the mind and body by an evil spirit. The magic spells were believed to be cast by other mortal beings with malevolent purposes and motivated by envy or jealously. In contrast, possession by an evil spirit was believed to result from the individual's transgressions such as not being properly veiled in public, watching Western TV channels, or breaking some other social or behavioural taboo. While most women chose themselves to visit the shrine there were cases where family elders had instructed the women to be forcibly detained there (Pirani, 2009). This description of the shrines' purpose frames them as the South Asian equivalent of Western psychiatry. Pakistani women who sought formal psychiatric therapy were stigmatized in a way that shrine attendees were not because attributing a mental disorder to a magic spell or possession meant that it was a temporary problem that could be solved (Pirani, 2009).

Pseudo psychiatry is not the only purpose identified by researchers. Batool (2016) found that women attend to pray for educational success for their children, financial issues such as a husband's loss of a job, children's health, as well as for introspection and spiritual satisfaction.

Some shrines also attract the seamier side of Pakistani life. A Save the Children report described what was observed at one shrine,

> … the [shrine] is also a haven for drug addicts, drug pushers, prostitutes, crooks and child sex exploiters. One can always see groups of addicts, men and women, with expressionless faces and staring eyes, smoking hashish and roaming aimlessly or dozing off on the roadside or under a tree or at a verandah. (Save the Children Sweden, 2005, p.32).

2.7 Caste in Pakistan

As a Muslim country, the 'official' view is that caste is not a significant phenomenon and that it runs counter to Islamic egalitarianism. However, in Punjab province its presence is undeniable and has been identified in a number of studies undertaken there (Tamin & Tariq, 2015; Usman & Amjad, 2013)

Farooqi (1999) traces the roots of the South Asian caste system back to the 15th century B.C. The caste system in Pakistan is a complex one based on birth and profession. Further complexity came with the addition of more layers with the arrival of Muslim communities from Persia, Arabia, Turkey and Afghanistan in the 12th century A.D. (Abdullah, 2015). The caste system ascribes status based on group membership rather than material wealth. Group membership is dependent on birth and hereditary professions. In rural Punjabi villages the clearest division is between landowning *zaat* and service providing *zaat*. *Zamindars* cultivate land while *kammi* provide labour and offer their crafts as barbers, carpenters, cobblers, blacksmiths, weavers, potters etc. (Usman & Amjad, 2013). A *kammi* can come to own and cultivate land but their status remains that of a *kammi*. Traditional professions are in decline and new forms of employment in the private sector and government sector expand employment opportunities and increasingly draw *kammi* to the cities. However, whatever

their city occupation when they return to their village they are still regarded as a *kammi* (Usman & Amjad, 2013). Hence the caste system is an extremely powerful block on social mobility.

Another domain where caste exerts a powerful influence is marriage. Inter-caste marriages are discouraged and can lead to honour killings. One consequence of this endogamy is elopement where a couple may leave the village to marry and live, some never being able to return for fear of being killed (Usman & Amjad, 2013). In addition to endogamy, the caste system is also preserved through a tight control on the sale of land preserving the division between those deemed appropriate landowners and those who are not (Tamin & Tariq, 2015). Tamin and Tariq describe caste in the Punjabi context as a "powerful stratifying dimension" (p.51) intersecting with other dimensions to maintain the social hierarchy and stigmatise certain groups, excluding them from land ownership, employment opportunities and access to education.

Kaur and Garg (2009) found a marked difference in self-reported experiencing of domestic violence from one caste to another in their study of rural-dwelling Indian women. Alcoholism was reported as a prominent factor. However, the sample was small, and the finding could reflect propensity to report the violence rather than the level of violence. Usman (2011) explains that in rural Punjab, "Birth in a lower caste group attaches a lifelong stigma of subordinate identity to the members of that caste e.g., barbers, even if they acquire higher education or join respectable professions later in their life" (p.16).

Caste is sometimes described as the 'secret' or 'hidden' source of oppression in Pakistan (Gazdar, 2007). It is perhaps one of the broadest manifestations of the kinship group which "… remains a key – perhaps the key – dimension of economic, social and political

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interaction." (Gazdar, 2007, p. 87). Class and caste are mainly viewed as occupation statuses which are in turn very closely associated to land ownership with the landless belonging to service and menial castes (Gazdar & Mallah, 2012). Rouse (1988) posited that the division between landed, land poor and landless in rural Punjab is caste-linked and may trace its roots to Hindu tradition. He argues that it formed the most prominent status ideology in the province. In rural Punjab, land is the means of (agricultural) production and households are defined in status terms by their relationship to this land. Nature too plays its part with villages surrounded by irrigated land taking on different characteristics to non-irrigated areas (Sathar & Kazi, 2000).

Landowners are served by a combination of tied farm servants who are lowly paid and better paid but casual labourers (Martin, 2009). Tied farm servants are often bonded by loans paid to them at the outset that they then work to pay off (Gazdar & Mallah, 2012). Women often work in both tied and casual capacities in rural Punjab. Landlords act as patrons of Punjabi villages and monopolise economic resources, state 'authority' and coercive power including power over votes (Martin, 2009).

Caste is understood to affect women's lives and inequalities in Pakistan in manifold ways. Women of the lowest castes were found to experience the worst maternal outcomes such as death in childbirth (Mumtaz et al., 2011). Caste is also understood to be associated with female infanticide which is so acute in some parts of Pakistan that there is a noticeable gender imbalance (Patel, 2016). Patel (2016) posits that different castes have different attitudes towards the concept of honour and the use of violence to preserve it. Honour and violence are discussed in the following section.

2.8 Honour and violence

Honour is a concept of considerable importance in South Asian societies, as will be observed later in this thesis, it features in the lives of the sample of women informing this study. Academic interest in the phenomenon, including its existence in Pakistan, has no doubt been heightened by the cases reported in Europe among the Pakistani diaspora (Stewart, 2015).

In some societies women and girls are at risk of death as a punishment for marrying without family approval, marrying outside the clan, abandoning a marriage, interacting with the opposite sex and even being the subject of a rumour of an illicit relationship. Yamin (2011) describes this as "cultural femicide" (p. 235) because it is systemic killing in accordance with social custom.

In the Punjab the term *ghairat* translates several English words including jealousy, honour, courage, modesty and shame. The opposite *be-ghairat* means shamelessness, the state of being without honour (Werbner, 2007). Aase (2002) explains that in northern Pakistan if a male can demonstrate he has defended and upheld family honour he will be rewarded with *izzat* in later life. *Izzat* means power, influence and authority.

One in five of the world's honour killings occur in Pakistan (Honour Based Violence Awareness Network, n.d.). At the time the Pakistani government 'outlawed' honour killings in 2005, 1200 women a year were being murdered for honour and the perpetrators were getting an 80% acquittal rate in those cases that came to court (Tohid, 2005). Despite this the phenomenon continues and it is believed that more than one thousand women are killed each year over 'honour' (Human Rights Watch., 2019). The Pakistani state has long enabled the phenomenon of honour killings to continue unabated although opposition in various quarters has strengthened. A court judgement in a widely reported case *Sujit Kumar and others v State*

of UP and others, *2002 (45) ACC 79* exemplifies this opposition. In his judgement the judge stated,

> "… this Court has been shocked to note that in our country also, which boasts of being a secular and liberal country 'honour killings' have been taking place from time to time, and what is deeply disturbing is that the police and other authorities do not seem to take steps to check these disgraceful and barbaric acts. In fact, such 'honour killings', far from being honourable are nothing but pre-meditated murder." (p.80)

Over recent years violence against women committed, in the name of honour, has attracted a lot of scholarly attention. Honour based violence (HBV) has been defined as violence that is perpetrated against women, and is associated with "patriarchal family, community or other social structures in which the main justification for the violence is the protection of a social construction of honour" (Gill et al. (p. 75, 2012). Use of the word honour in the context of violence is itself controversial with Pope (2012, p.17) reminding us that it is violence "in support of social mores that require girls to be obedient and chaste".

Women in Pakistan do not just bear the children they also have to bear the family honour to a far greater extent than men. Honour is preserved through obedience, abstinence from both pre-marital sex and extramarital relations together with general observance of social norms (Shaikh et al., 2010). A cross-sectional survey was conducted in Islamabad, in which an honour killing vignette was read to participants. In the vignette, the husband had killed his wife after discovering her in bed with another man. Fifty-seven percent of respondents (53% of women) agreed with his course of action while 36% responded that he should have divorced her (Shaikh et al., 2010). More than this, a majority of both men and women believed that he should have also killed the other man. There was little support given to the notion of forgiveness or redemption by either sex (Shaikh et al., 2010). Hence, despite the

condemnatory pronouncements such as that of the previously quoted judge, honour and its preservation through violence is a powerful social force in Pakistan.

Attitudes to VAW are highly significant because they shape responses to such violence in three separate domains: firstly, the perpetration of the violence itself; secondly the individual and societal (including institutional) response to the violence; and thirdly women's own response to their victimisation. Faqir (2001) proposes that Pakistani men perceive honour killing as the only way to restore honour of their family or community.

HBV is commonly committed against young women by male relatives who view this as necessary to preserve, and at times, restore, the family's honour (Afzal, 1994; Jehanzeb, 2005; Hassan et al., 2005; Gill, 2015). Honour, in Muslim societies, especially when cited at times of committing crimes, is always seen as a concept that is masculine and refers exclusively to males. The reason for this is that women cannot lose their own honour as they personally do not possess any (Ruane, 2000). Instead, in settings like Pakistan where the concept is prevalent, honour is a male prerogative and failing to defend his own and his family's honour is a failure of masculinity. As Ruane (2000) expresses it, such a man becomes a woman.

A study conducted in Pakistan's Sindh province examined 1957 honour killing events. Victims were mostly married women (88%) and the stated reason for the killing was overwhelmingly (92%) alleged extramarital affairs (Nasrullah et al., 2009). Figure 2-2 shows that the majority of perpetrators were husbands though a significant number of acts were carried out by brothers and other close male relatives.

Honour Killing Perpetrators by relation to victim
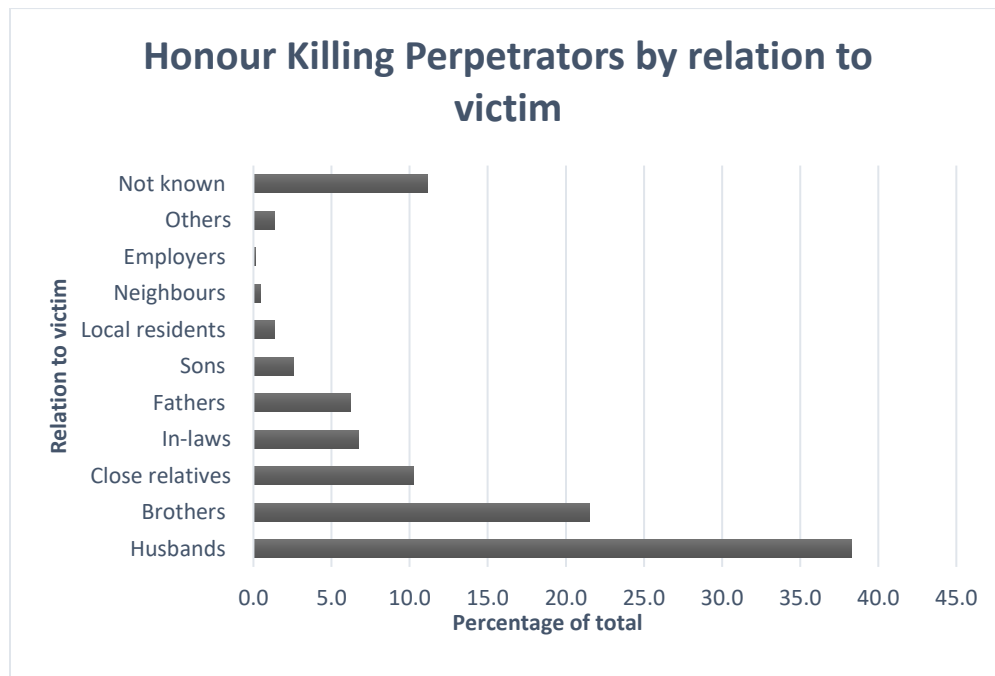
Figure 2-2: Honour killings by relation to victim (%)

Source: Nasrullah et al., 2009

Jafri (2008) echoes the idea that a woman brings shame to the family through violating the honour norms and it is through killing that the shameful act can be purified. Ruane (2000) also looks at cases of 'mistaken' honour crimes. These crimes are committed on the basis of rumours, suggesting honour is socially constructed and truth is irrelevant. It is important to note that although the term 'honour' has a number of different meanings, none support the assumption that the right to claim honour requires any form of violence. Honour, in the way it is defined in the West, is only concerned with positive messages around reputation and prestige, none that are compatible with violence. Therefore, seeing 'honour' and 'violence' going hand in hand is tragically ironic for those with a Western perspective.

Justifications for honour killings range from extra-marital (though consensual) sexual affairs to highly spurious ones including a man just having a dream that his wife was committing

adultery (Wikan, 2009). Accusers are invariably family members, though not always husbands and not even always male relatives as mothers-in-law are also known to lead accusations. A phenomenon known as bride burning has also been revealed in Pakistan (Amnesty International, 1998). While honour violence is mostly associated with protecting family honour, bride burning is often a punishment for a failure of the bride's family to provide an adequate dowry to the groom. These killings are committed by family members and covered up as accidents (Ashraf et al., 2017). They leave the groom free to pursue another dowry. Prosecutions are rare and police often label the deaths suicide (Terzieff, 2002).

If a man feels like he has lost control — and the community knows about this — he feels he has lost his honour along with his control. To try and reinstate his honour, the male will then do what the culture and traditions require of him (Nancy, 1999). For its part, the term 'honour' has been interpreted and promoted differently by a variety of cultures and societies to represent behaviour that is seen as beneficial to the community. According to Ruane (2000), a woman does not actually possess any honour herself, but rather is seen as a symbolic vessel of honour — all of her actions are seen to reflect upon the male members of the family. In analysis of the concept of honour, one interpretation is that it has been construed in patriarchal ways in which women are deemed empty of honour but symbolised as a vessel for the honour of male family members. Honour is a deep-rooted traditional notion that has developed through the ancient culture of desert tribes in pre-Islamic eras. Honour can thus be seen as a fluid concept that has evolved over time and is now seen to play an important part in an individual's religious and cultural identity. This suggests a deep-rooted and traditional idea that honour can only be reinstated by punishing the women (Hussain, 2006).

Researchers posit that HBV differs from other forms of violence (Welchman & Hossain, 2005; Sen, 2003, 2005; Gill, 2008). What differentiates HBV is the framework of collective family structures that this violence occurs within (Gill, 2008; Roberts et al., 2014). HBV has received increasing scholarly interest in Western nations such as the UK and USA. The United Nations (2000) estimated that over approximately 5000 women are murdered every year in the name of honour. Roberts et al. (2014) suggest that there could be this number of cases in Pakistan alone. It should be noted that honour has a "gender neutral meaning" (Dogan, 2011, p. 424) that is not normally applied when discussing honour crimes. A study of the British Pakistani diaspora identified a range of invisible HBV crimes including forced marriages, rape, murder, imprisonment and mental harms involving financial and physical abuse (Hall, 2014). Although the perpetrators are overwhelmingly male, it is important to note that females also commit crimes and are at times accomplices. The study found that the most common motivation for HBV was the control of female sexuality. A range of 'offences' were deemed deserving of punishment including seeking a divorce, refusing a marriage proposal, engaging in a sexual affair or breaking cultural rules such as publicly disrespecting a husband (Hall, 2014).

The antithesis of honour is shame. Shame has also been widely studied in diverse settings (Cairns, 2011; Goddard, 2013; Akpinar, 1999). Goddard (2013) proposes that the attribution of shame is a means for men to control a woman's sexuality. Akpinar (1999) contrast honour as a male concept with shame which is something associated with women.

The present study is set in rural Punjab, and it is important to note that there are certain things considered socially acceptable in urban locations, but in the rural locations, these same things are considered taboo and dishonourable. In rural locations it is considered shameful to go

against your family, or even highlight family issues publicly, to do so would be to go against your family's honour. The violence that women face takes on different forms that are dependent on the geographical location, the regional culture and the women's family's socio-economic status. Women in rural locations are afraid of leaving their husbands or speaking up about the violence that they are subjected to. This is the ideology that is ingrained in women from childhood. In rural locations there is a very strong 'honour code' within the community. Women are abused daily, but they accept the violence as part of their lives under the context of honour. There is both academic literature (Nasrullah et al., 2009; Hassan et al., 2005; Fikree, 1999) and media reports (Tohid, 2005) documenting Pakistan's HBV cases where families and communities have tortured, abducted and/or killed women for disobeying the familial codes of honour. Police statistics report that in 2018 there were 244 reported cases of honour killings in Punjab province (Punjab Police, 2020). In Pakistan the concept of honour and the (often violent) practices that flow from it are among the most powerful ideological/ cultural expressions of patriarchal social organisation and have proven a powerful glue holding male dominance in place.

2.9 Women as perpetrators

Domestic violence incidents, IPV, can be committed by men or women, though the majority of IPV is committed by men and men are more likely to be repeat offenders (Hester, 2103). In a UK study of a sample of domestic violence incidents, Hester (2013) found that men were associated with the use of physical violence and habitual IPV. Women, on the other hand, were more likely to be recorded as having used a weapon, usually in incidents where there were dual perpetrators indicating that the weapon was used defensively.

Miller (2001) argues that women's involvement in domestic violence is often of a defensive nature but that the justice system, certainly at arrest stage, usually operates free of context (e.g. history of male violence) with police either unable or unwilling to differentiate between a primary aggressor and a self-defensive response. Carney et al. (2006) reject the thesis that female violence in domestic situations is mostly defensive and sees many of the attempts to depict it as such as resulting from the way that women as perpetrators contradicts feminist theory. Evidence, mostly from the US, is also contradictory with some surveys finding women as likely to engage in IPV as men (Archer, 2002; Straus, 1999) and other data showing a far wider prevalence among men (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). UK crime statistics show that in terms of victims, women are twice as likely to experience domestic violence as men, with younger women particularly affected (ONS, 2019). In 75% of domestic abuse-related crimes the victim was female. However, this figure rose to 96% in the domestic abuse-related sexual offences category (ONS, 2019).

A study of women IPV perpetrators reported a series of psychopathological risk factors associated with women who had perpetrated IPV including PTSD, anxiety, alcohol and drug use, and panic disorder. Each factor was substantially elevated among perpetrators compared to the general population (Stuart et al., 2006). There can be little doubt that men do experience IPV and that some women perpetrate such violence, what is more debated is the theoretical underpinning for this phenomenon and how it sits with feminist theory.

2.9.1 Women as perpetrators in Pakistan/ South Asia

The above-cited literature comes from a Western context and lacks insight into the particular characteristics of women perpetrators of patriarchal societies of the Global South. The most notable omission is the phenomenon of honour-based violence. The archetypical perpetrator

of honour-based violence is the youngest brother or male cousin of the victim chosen for the likelihood of leniency and their lower economic importance to the family (Kulczycki & Windle, 2011). However, some researchers have pursued investigation of the phenomenon of women as perpetrators. The prevalence of women's involvement in honour killings is debated in the literature. Some studies have found the prevalence to be as high as 25% (Khafagy, 2005) while others reported far lower levels (Kressel et al., 1981). Among the most common findings is that women were involved as instigators and amplifiers of gossip and organisers of the circumstances and of the male participants (CEWLA, 2005; Faqir, 2001; Glazer & Ras, 1994). Older women, particularly those of higher status, may use honour-based violence to maintain the social order (Glazer & Ras, 1994). Following her multi-country qualitative study of female committed honour killings, Chesler (2015) concludes that the phenomenon of women perpetrators has been underestimated and minimised due to the far higher visibility of male-on-female violence and its endemic prevalence. Women were involved in honour killings at several levels from spreading gossip, as conspirator-accomplices and as hands-on killers. Based on the cases she investigated, Chesler (2015, p.8) concludes that the women involved in honour killings are every bit as capable of being "calculating, brutal, and without remorse" as men.

Honour-based violence is a hard-to-reach research domain and women's role in it, bearing in mind that males are invariably put forward by families as the perpetrators, is even harder to investigate. It is unsurprising, therefore, that literature specifically addressing the role of Pakistani women as perpetrators is sparse. Mothers are known to play a full role in declaring the guilt of their daughters and the innocence of the male relatives who commit the violence (Rafi, 2019). We can conclude therefore that while honour killings are associated with the

2.10 Summary

From this review it is clear that VAW is a widespread phenomenon and is particularly endemic in Pakistan. This violence takes four main forms, emotional/psychological, physical, sexual, and economic. The present research is mainly concerned with physical and sexual violence. These two forms occur in both the public and private domains. However, as the women of rural Punjab, Pakistan are limited in their access to the public domain the predominant domain for VAW is the private one. This private domain violence has in turn three main manifestations. Physical control is exercised through IPV, social control comes in the form of HBV and control of fertility includes forced pregnancies, femicide, child marriage, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. This conceptualisation of violence is summarised in Figure 2-3.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

	Physical	Sexual	
Emotional/ Psychological			Economic

Private Domain

Public domain

Physical Control → Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) (domestic violence)

Social Control → Honour Based Violence (HBV)

Forced Pregnancy

Control of fertility → Femicide/ Forced Abortion

Child Marriage/ Forced Marriage

Female Genital Mutilation

Non-Intimate Partner Violence (Non-IPV)

Sexual harassment (e.g. in the workplace)

Trafficking

Conflict Violence

State-sanctioned violence

Figure 2-3: Forms of violence against women

Source: Based on United Nations (2015)

This chapter has defined the main terms and concepts related to the research problem. It has also presented and discussed those empirical studies undertaken on VAW and made appropriate use of data from authoritative bodies particularly to establish the prevalence of VAW. The chapter also identified the main risk factors for VAW particularly those related

to the research setting. Literature on fertility, religion, caste, and the social control exercised

through honour-based violence were also discussed. Much of the literature reviewed in this

chapter studies violence against women and related research problems without seeking to

declare or develop a theoretical or conceptual framework. Where theoretical lenses are used

in the literature the most common one is the feminist perspective and the related concept of

patriarchy. Others, that consider a broader range of dimensions or inequalities such as caste,

income, rural-urban, education, age etc. could be broadly described as intersectional. In the

following chapter these two approaches are discussed and critically evaluated as the

conceptual framework for this research is developed and presented.

Chapter 3 A theoretical framework for understanding violence against women

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss a range of theoretical approaches to VAW and then propose and present a theoretical framework for understanding the research problem and evaluating the findings of the current study. In this research, the theoretical framework also provides the researcher with a lens for observation and analysis of the phenomenon of violence against women in the rural Punjab. Researchers use theoretical frameworks to add structure and vision to their studies. Grant and Osanloo (2016) argue that setting about a piece of research without a theoretical framework in place is like trying to build a house without architectural plans. Much feminist research into VAW has lacked a theoretical framework and as Hunnicutt (2009, p.553) argues "A better understanding of violence against women depends on further development of feminist theory." The theoretical framework needs to align well with the purpose of the study and its research context. In other words, for the present study the theoretical lens needs to be one which will underpin an examination of the phenomenon of violence against women in rural Punjab.

While feminist research has a heritage of action and practice this does not preclude making theoretical contributions. However, to do so it is important to establish exactly what such a contribution is. Whetton (1989) identifies four essential elements of a theoretical contribution. First the *what,* which refers to the identification of which factors or variables are considered to be relevant in explaining the studied phenomenon. Second, the *how* which addresses how the aforementioned factors or variables are related to the phenomenon or to

each other. These first two are both descriptive. Third is the *why*. Why are the assumed factors, variables and relationships justifiable? Hence the *why* element is explanatory. Finally, the fourth element bundles the *Who*, *When* and *Where* representing a reflective process in which the researchers consider the boundaries of their research and evaluate the generalisability of their study (Whetton, 1989). This chapter addresses the first two of these elements. The third is considered in chapter six where the findings are discussed and the fourth in the concluding chapter, chapter seven.

As a female researcher conducting a study among women into violence against these women it is unsurprising that this research is identified as feminist research. However, it would be wholly inadequate to simply state that feminism is the theoretical framework applied. As this chapter will clarify, there are many feminist perspectives under this broad umbrella term and these merit discussion, as does their application to violence perpetrated against women. Furthermore, the chapter discusses theoretical perspectives and constructs that have been associated with the investigation of VAW but not all are ultimately carried forward as part of the theoretical framework which is presented at the end of the chapter.

3.2 Feminist research and standpoint theory

This study aims to understand how the women of the rural Punjab define and understand the violence that they face in their everyday lives and their perceptions of which factors appear to be influencing this phenomenon. It does this by giving voice to the women themselves; thus, feminism is adopted as the overarching theoretical perspective.

The current form of feminist research can be traced back to the late 1960s and 1970s. A growing belief had emerged among female researchers and students that the prevailing

research models seemed inadequate for addressing social phenomena of the time and for explaining the findings of contemporary studies (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007). Studies were presenting findings as gender neutral when they were both of and by men and these findings were generalised as studies of society as a whole (Epstein, 1981). As this was happening, female academics began to question the scientific methodology popular at the time which they viewed as being the product of patriarchal consciousness controlling which questions were asked and which approach to analysis and discussion was taken. Holland and Ramazanoğlu, (2002) refer to this as "male-centred frameworks of explanation" (p.45). The 1970s and 1980s saw further specific criticisms of traditional research methods including the use of "biased research designs" the selection of "sexist and elitist research topics" and the "exploitative relationship between the researcher and the subject" (Fonow & Cook, 1991, p. 86). The critique extended to what was viewed as the superficial and simplistic use of quantitative data and the tendency to generalise without justification (Fonow & Cook, 1991). These perceived shortcomings provided the momentum for feminist research, as we know it today, to emerge.

Essentially, social research was seen at the time by some feminist scholars as being part of the patriarchy that ideologically dominated society at the time. In response, feminist researchers argued that by focusing on documenting women's lived experiences, gender-based biases and stereotypes would be illuminated and hitherto subjugated knowledge would be released. Sarantakos (2005) explains that "Feminist research is based on the assumption that the world is socially constructed, displays a relative aversion to empirical positivist methodology and rejects the value free nature of research" (p. 54). Two concepts fundamental to feminist research are the equality of the research and researched and the empowerment of

women. Furthermore, feminist researchers emphasise the emancipatory nature of their work (Millen, 2007).

Relatedly, Standpoint Theory emerged in the 1970s and 1980s as a feminist critical theory, concentrating on relations between the production of knowledge and the practices of power and has often been presented as a feminist epistemology and an underpinning for feminist methodology. Nancy Hartsock, the pioneer of this approach, developed standpoint theory explaining, "At bottom feminism is a mode of analysis, a method of approaching life and politics, rather than a set of political conclusions about the oppression of women" (Hartsock,1981, p.35). The function of standpoint theory was to ensure that feminism and feminist research was not merely viewed as political but was also concerned with method, truth, and epistemology (Hekman, 1997). Collins (1989) discusses standpoint theory and presents this as a way of empowering oppressed groups and valuing their experiences.

Harstock (1983) claims that it is women's 'unique standpoint in society' that provides the justification for the truth claims and also provides the researcher with a method, with which to analyse reality. Feminist standpoint theory is significant in the sense that this becomes a method and justification for women's epistemological power. The foundations of standpoint feminism lie in the understanding and acceptance that there are psychological and social differences between men and women that are attributable to their sex. Hartsock notes that truth is perceived in different ways by different segments of society and states; "Feminism as a mode of analysis leads us to respect experience and differences, to respect people enough to believe that they are in the best possible position to make their own revolution" (Hartsock cited in Hekman, 1997, p. 343).

3.3 Theorizing violence against women

Before considering the feminist perspectives on VAW that are included in the theoretical framework I briefly discuss two approaches – liberalism and class-based analysis – that are not included in depth in this study, explaining why.

3.3.1 Liberalism and liberal feminism

The liberalist approach could be seen as the 'conventional' way of analysing VAW because it focuses on the psychological aspects of the phenomenon not the social context. Male violence was associated with a tiny minority of deranged individuals. An example of this approach is found in West et al. (1978) who, based on 12 case histories, proposed that rape was a product of dysfunctional development in individual men. The researchers found that issues of childhood development such as the lack of a secure emotionally warm family environment had led to these men being unable to form normal relations with women in adulthood. Pizzey (1974) had followed a similar line of argument in proposing that domestic violence results from men having seen their fathers beat their mothers when they were children. Her findings are also based on case histories, this time of women residing at a refuge that she had herself set up in Chiswick, London.

According to Walby (1990), generational transmission of male violence may have a role in some cases, but it does not adequately explain the phenomenon of VAW. Furthermore, she argues that while Pizzey was selective in the cases cited in her work other empirical evidence of greater quality pointed to a different conclusion, one that suggested only a small minority of victims or perpetrators had violent fathers (Gelles, 1972; Gayford, 1975). MacKinnon (1987) posited that between a quarter and a third of women in the US experienced serious violence at some point in their lives in direct contradiction of the liberalist implicit

assumption that VAW was a rare phenomenon to be addressed from a psychological perspective.

Hay (2013) argues that liberalism has come to be seen by many academics as "the intellectual handmaid of homogenization, colonization, and marginalization" (p.1). Reasons for this characterisation are stated as its reliance on potentially erroneous notions of liberty and autonomy; its individualistic slant; its abstract nature; and its inability to conceptualise harm from oppression (Hay, 2013).

Despite these critiques, a liberal feminist tradition has emerged to play an important role in Western societies, particularly in advocating for legislative change to promote gender equality. Their stance is essentially that society can be nudged towards equality through legal measures in areas such as discrimination and equal pay combined with a greater representation of women in leadership positions. Furthermore, they argue that this can be achieved without the kind of structural change that radical feminists would view as necessary (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

In the context of the present study, Punjab province in Pakistan, the liberalist approach would seem inadequate in attempting to understand VAW. This is because the evidence points to VAW being very widespread. A survey of 32,000 households in the province reported that one-third of woman aged between 15 and 64 had experienced violence (UFNPA, 2019). The nature and extent of VAW points towards cultural and structural conditions that enable it (Walby, 1990) and needs to be researched as such. While generational issues will be returned to in the discussion of the findings, liberalism will not be included in the theoretical framework.

3.3.2 Class-based analysis and socialist feminism

Those using a class-based analysis approach the phenomenon of VAW with the assumption that men's violence against women results from their frustration with their economic circumstances. In other words, violence is situated as a symptom of a class-based society. Wilson (1983) takes this perspective when linking VAW to economic stresses such as those during periods of high unemployment. Those men at the bottom of the social ladder experience these stresses most acutely and, it is hypothesised, are the most likely to take out their frustrations on their wives. There is certainly some evidence to support this perspective. For example, the British Crime Survey of 2000 reported that women living in households with an income below £10,000 were three times as likely to have been raped than those in households with an income over £20,000. A similar but earlier survey conducted in the US reported similar findings (Eisenhower, 1969).

Another branch of class-based analysis is the sub-cultural approach. Those at the bottom socio-economically become alienated from the dominant culture and form their own subculture with their own set of values. The link to VAW arises because, among males, values of physical superiority and machismo emerge leading to violent behaviour. Amir (1971) argues that the disproportionate presence of black and working-class males among those reported to the police for rape in the US was evidence of the association between VAW and socio-economic circumstances. As Walby (1990) points out, using data on reported rapes is problematic because most rapes are not reported. Evidence of this is found in a study by Russell (1984) who also found race-based differentials in the rate of reporting with white rapists being much less likely to be reported than Afro-Americans. McKinnon (1987) also stated that rapes by a black man on a white woman are more likely to be reported because

the women may perceive that she is more likely to be believed as it conforms to the dominant culture's archetype.

The main issue with class-based analysis is that it sheds no light on why these frustrated and alienated working class males respond with violence towards women and in many cases their own wives rather than other males or those of more affluent social classes. Furthermore, the analysis overlooks the central fact that the violence is gendered. There is no suggestion from this perspective that women in socio-economically deprived households become equally violent.

In the context of Pakistan, a class-based analysis is likely to include or be substituted by caste-based theory (Gazdar & Mallah, 2012; Martin, 2009). While there are consequences for women from the existence of a caste system, much caste analysis focuses on the occupational status of the working age males of the household and whether they own land or not. As such there is limited potential for caste to add significantly to a feminist study such as this.

As with liberalism, a class-based or socialist feminism tradition has also made an important academic contribution. Based on Marxist ideology, socialist feminism views women's oppression as one form of oppression among many that are inherent in the capitalist system. Sexism and racism are deprioritised in favour of class as the main variable of analysis (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Socialist or Marxist feminists have long been characterised as straddling "an uneasy horse" (Petchesky, 1979, p.375) in their attempts to reconcile a class and a gender form of analysis.

In the context of rural Punjab there are reasons to believe that the class-based analysis may be ineffective as a theoretical lens. While wealth inequalities most certainly exist in rural

Punjab (Mohey-ud-din, 2017) most firmly rooted in landownership, the communities of rural Punjab are in absolute terms low-income agriculture-based places. The context is further differentiated from those of the UK and the US, where most of the studies discussed above were conducted, in that a caste system is present in the Punjab. While caste issues may arise inductively in the present study, the class/ caste-based analysis perspective is not included in the theoretical framework on the basis of the homogeneity of poverty expected to be found in the setting.

3.3.3 Intersectionality

If radical feminism was a product of the second wave of feminism, then intersectionality was born of the third wave, starting in the late 1980s. As the critique of radical feminism and its core concept of patriarchy grew, a number of other constructs replaced patriarchy where inequalities and oppression were discussed. Foremost among these were intersectionality. Audre Lourde encapsulated the basic assumption of intersectionality when proclaiming, "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives" (Lourde, 2007, p.138). Speaking as a black, lesbian woman, Lourde embodied her words but also exemplified the multidimensional nature of inequality in American society. These sentiments were soon taken up by researchers and theorists.

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that can be traced back to Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) who first conceived and coined the term. Crenshaw's main motivation was to counter the absence of a race discourse in the study of VAW and more broadly to understand better the multi-dimensional aspects of oppression. She was highly critical of the apparent invisibility of black women in American projects on domestic violence and intersectionality was promoted to address this. Crenshaw argued that it is only through intersectionality that

a more nuanced understanding of women's experiences can be accessed stating, "Through an awareness of intersectionality, we can better acknowledge and ground the differences among us" (Crenshaw, 1991, p.1255). McCall (2005) has stated that intersectionality can be seen as the most important theoretical contribution towards women's studies. If Crenshaw's theory is applied, then as McCall posits, women's studies can become richer in nature.

At the same time as Crenshaw's pioneering of intersectionality, Harris (1990) also made an important contribution to its establishment through her critique of the work of radical feminists including MacKinnnon. The fundamental point of her critique was the failure of radical feminists to accommodate the possibility that the life experiences of black women could contrast greatly with their white counterparts. She referred to this deficiency as gender essentialism (Harris, 1990).

Hence both Crenshaw and Harris are prominent in the early stages of intersectionality at a time when the leading source of inequality to be added to gender was race. This became associated with Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is a theoretical perspective within the social sciences that examines society and culture through race, law and power. It was in the mid to late 1980s that CRT began as a theoretical movement within American law schools as a reworking of critical legal studies on race. Early work by Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Charles Lawrence and Mari Matsuda helped develop a framework and vocabulary to address the different types of structural and institutional racism. By 2002 many America law schools offered CRT courses, with CRT becoming quite important in fields of ethnic studies and women's studies.

The main view adopted by CRT scholars was that 'Whiteness' was a socially constructed identity, one that referred to a set of assumptions, beliefs and practices which ensured that

the interests and perspectives of White people were dominant. "'Whiteness' is a racial discourse, whereas the category 'white people' represents a socially constructed identity, usually based on skin colour" (Leonardo, 2009, p. 169). Many CRT scholars are interested in exploring how inequities are shaped by processes and are influenced by identity and social structure. It is at this point that intersectionality becomes crucial. Hence, the concept of intersectionality took root in CRT.

The current study is set in a highly homogenous context. There are multiple ethnic groups within Pakistan of which Punjabis is the largest. However, these ethnicities tend to concentrate in respective provinces. The Punjab, where the current study is set is, unsurprisingly, overwhelmingly the home of Punjabis and the rural areas even more homogenous. In terms of race, while acknowledging the different approaches to defining race, the population of the Punjab are Asian. For this reason, it is anticipated that black feminism is unlikely to be useful in interpreting the findings of this study in the way it would be in the many multicultural societies around the world. This applies to both the earlier conceptualisations of black feminism including its association with the civil rights movement in the US (Weathers, 1969) and the more recent reconceptualization which integrates black feminism with intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991; Nash, 2018).

Another key feminist responsible for developing intersectionality is British sociologist Sylvia Walby. Walby's approach is to frame the social and political environment in terms of projects. Feminism (or more appropriately gender equality) is situated as one of multiple projects including nationalism, anti-racism, human rights, social democracy, environmentalism and others. These projects do not progress independently but rather they intersect (Walby, 2011). For example, Walby (2011) points to the intersection of feminism

with national projects. She asserts that tension arises through the national project's creation of a myth of a common (national) background and a discourse over whether women's domesticated role prevailing in earlier times should remain in place or be supplanted with women becoming "full citizens in the public sphere" (Walby 2011, p. 128). This conflicts with the feminist project's support for or rejection of any given positioning for women in the national project. Another example occurs where women's rights become merged with human rights as the feminist project intersects with the human rights project to create a global highly organised project producing advances in women's position including in highly patriarchal societies. The United Nations is one manifestation of this. The social democratic political project intersects with feminism with social democratic parties around Europe inserting women-positive policies such as childcare, equal pay, anti-discrimination etc. into their platforms and encouraging the increased presence of women as party candidates, officials and trade union leaders (Walby, 2011). Clearly, intersectionality contrasts sharply with the binary universalism of radical feminism. Thiara and Gill (2010) posit that if experiences are viewed through an intersectional lens, we as researchers can gain an insight into the complex intersections of gender, ethnicity, class and culture present in the everyday lives of female members of 'honour-based' communities. The rural Punjab, the setting for the present study, is one such community.

Central to the intersectionality perspective is the creation of categories. Puar (2011) asserts that all individuals are intersectional whether they perceive themselves to be so or not. This means that they can be situated in more than one category giving rise to complexity. McHall (2005) proposes that this complexity can be viewed as anti-categorical, inter-categorical or intra-categorical. Briefly, anti-categorical complexity represents categories that are arbitrary

labels derived from culture and language with only a weak association with how individuals actually experience society (Quraishi & Philburn, 2015). Intercategorical complexity retains the 'established' categories and focuses on the relationships between these groups and how they change over time. Intra-categorical complexity is most readily viewed as a middle position which questions but does not entirely reject categories and moves the focus to people who create subcategories by crossing category boundaries or straddling categories (Quraishi & Philburn, 2015).

By using the intersectional approach to VAW a researcher can consider whether and where gender intersects with other sources of inequality. Inequality can arise from many sources other than gender including: ethnicity, race, caste, class, education, disability, sexuality, indigeneity, citizenship status, age etc. By using intersectionality to understand individual's or group's experiences of violence, a unique and context-specific analysis can be undertaken. Delgado (2011) critiqued this framework and described 'intersectional people' as far removed from the mainstream, who have trouble making themselves heard. Delgado discusses how intersectionality can increase the social distance between the speaker and the audience: "Consider how the hearer must make a double leap to understand a message that begins by proclaiming, 'I am an X who is also a Y, and I'm saying such-and-such.' (Delgado, 2011, p. 1272) This is also supported by narrative theory that believes the only messages that are received well are those that are not conflicting from ones that have been previously heard. Delgado discusses how these groups/individuals find themselves "shorn of social power because they do not occupy the centre of any large, familial category" (Delgado, 2011, p1263). Delgado also references the inherent tendency for intersectionality to breed subcategories to such an extent to make the original category meaningless.

Intersectionality has been criticised for focusing all the attention on the victims of intersectional categories, thereby ignoring the perpetrators who are responsible for creating the categories (Delgado, 2011). Other literature raising questions of the use of intersectionality has pointed to its appropriation by white feminists (Nash, 2019). Similarly, others have viewed intersectionality as facilitating a "feel-good anti-racism" (Cuesta & Mulinari, 2018, p. 979).

In regard to the present study, one potentially significant limitation of intersectionality is its being firmly rooted in Western scholarship, whether it is the American legal scholarship of Harris and Crenshaw or the European sociology and social democratic academic tradition of Walby. This represents both a challenge and an opportunity for the researcher. The challenge being the relative lack of intersectionality studies in developing country settings and the opportunity being the chance to contribute to filling this gap. It is suggested that intersectionality allows for a more nuanced understanding of social practice and can let the researcher explore lived experiences. Intersectionality allows the researcher to examine multiple aspects of a person's identity to try and identify if the intersection of specific aspects means certain women in Pakistan are more likely to be discriminated against. The intersectionality paradigm sheds light on the array of factors between gender and socio-cultural backgrounds shaping the experiences of Punjabi women. The qualitative questions which intersectionality may help address are how intersectional categories are created, and how individuals move in and out of multiple categories (McCall, 2005).

In the present study, intersectionality is not included in the theoretical framework partly due to the limitations stated above but also due to the strong assumption that it may prove of little value in such a strongly patriarchal context as the rural Punjab, Pakistan. Nevertheless, the

From this brief summary of the approaches that are not part of the theoretical framework, the chapter now moves on to discuss the theories and constructs that actively inform the study,

3.4 Radical feminism

Along with but separate from the Marxist-socialist form of feminism, radical feminism emerged as part of the second wave of feminism in the 1970s. Thompson (2001) asserts that in line with other forms of power and domination, patriarchal power is secured in many ways ranging from the extraordinarily violent to the subtle day-to-day forms that embed themselves in the minds of both men and women. Radical feminist theory situates violence against women as both a cause and outcome of their subordination to men (Kelly, 2005).

Liberalism overlooks the social character of VAW while the class-based approach ignores the gendered nature of this violence. Radical feminist researchers view VAW as both a social and a gendered phenomenon. As representatives of this approach, we can consider the work of Susan Brownmiller and Catherine MacKinnon, both American feminist authors. Brownmiller is best known for her 1975 book *Against Our Will.* In it she expounds the idea that violence is what underpins men's control of women in a patriarchal society. To support this, Brownmiller describes cultural artefacts such as songs and movies which eulogize men's strength and machismo. The ultimate expression of this is found in militarization and war which Brownmiller also links to increased instances of rape (Brownmiller, 1975).

Catherine MacKinnon also took a radical feminist perspective to the issue of gender inequality. Her work is often described as dominance theory (Carbado & Harris, 2018). She accepted that other forms of inequality existed but asserted that gender inequality was the prime form. She also asserted the existence of patriarchy as a political ideology in which social relations are structured in such a way that females are dominated by males and are forced to submit to them. The basis of these relations is viewed as sexual. Moreover, through patriarchy men have power over everything that is seen to have value and dictate society's labelling of what has value (MacKinnon, 1987). Gender relations are a power struggle in which Mackinnon argues only the actions of women to get men's "feet off our necks" and seize power from them can challenge this patriarchal form of social organisation (Mackinnon, 1987, p.3). On violence, Mackinnon focused on its sexual aspects and on the role of law in maintaining the patriarchy and the (male) concept of gender difference. She posits that the law is used to define in which domains and in which aspects women are permitted sameness and in which difference is maintained (Mackinnon, 1989). Delgado (2011, p.1281) explains MacKinnon's universalism,

> MacKinnon in one of her replies pointed out that she didn't write of an essential woman who just happened to be white; rather, she was writing about experiences all women suffer, including black women, lesbians, and others at the intersections of different categories. Those experiences had to do with male power, patriarchy, and the way men socially construct women for their own convenience, often sexual. They affect all women, however situated, like a scythe cutting down flowers-the tall ones as well as the short ones.

Radical feminism has taken the concept of VAW as its central subject and has made significant innovations in the field. Purewa (2018) asserts that "Resistance to systematic male/patriarchal proprietary control over women's reproduction and sexuality has been a central concern for radical feminists in articulating the violences that are exerted in order to

curb women's autonomy" (p.31). A key concept for radical feminists for exploring the principles and structures which reinforce women's subordination is that of patriarchy. Jill Radford (1987) argues, "It is clear that men's violence is used to control women, not just on their own individual interests, but also in the interests of men as a sex class in the reproduction of heterosexuality and male supremacy" (1987, p. 43). Feminists like Daly and Chesney-Lind (1988) reiterate Radford's argument and discuss how men engage in violent behaviour in order to control women. Radical feminists have played a crucial role in breaking the silence on the multi-dimensional nature of male-to-female victimisation (Kelly 1988) and were able to successfully demonstrate that this problem is not only 'widespread' but is also 'omnipresent' in Western societies and elsewhere (Liddle, 1989). Hanmer and Saunders (1984) used a radical feminist approach to the issue of wife beating, concluding that such violence was used for social control purposes.

Radical feminism broadly defines sexual violence as any type of force, abuse, and coercion experienced by women and perpetrated by men (Kelly, 1987). Radical feminist theory also views sexual violence as structural and analyses it at this level (McVey et al. 2020). Furthermore, it tends to view this violence as being on a continuum (Kelly, 1987) from harassment to rape with many forms in between, but whatever form it takes it remains part of a structure. This structure is present in all forms of society dating back to the earliest human societies. Brownmiller argues that throughout history sexual violence, specifically rape, has been an ever-present means of control by men over women, "From prehistoric times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear" (p.33).

While it is commonplace to view radical feminism as an era or wave that existed in the past, this is not accurate. Like all theories, it has developed and attracted a new nomenclature, but researchers still undertake studies that adopt its central assumptions. A recent example has been research into the #MeToo phenomenon which brought sexual violence to the top of the social and political agenda in Western countries (Banet-Weiser, 2018; De Benedictis et al., 2019; Hearn, 2018).

3.4.1 Critique of radical feminism

Radical feminists have been criticised for ignoring the influence of social class, and their determination to see all men as being equally likely to victimise females (Messerschmidt, 1983). Furthermore, Harris (1990) argued that Mackinnon and her 'gender essentialism' underrepresented and even overlooked the racial dimension and the experiences of black women. Certain critics have said that by not listening to men, and discussing women's experiences with men, by only talking to women, radical feminists do not take into account men's motives for violence, and therefore claims are raised regarding the validity of such data (LaFlame, 2009; Liddle, 1989). In racially diverse societies the absence of a race dimension in radical feminist analysis is also considered problematic (Walby, 1990). Radical feminists would counter by arguing that while class and race inequality intersect with gender inequality, it is the latter that is the foundational source of inequality and one which precedes, in historical terms, the emergence of class and race-based inequality (Campbell and Wasco, 2000). Radical feminist research has also been critiqued in empirical terms. For example, radical feminist work on pornography has been labelled too reliant on anecdotes and sweeping generalisations while lacking empirical rigour and being the very antithesis of sound scholarly research (Weitzer, 2011).

Radical feminism has faced decades of critique and challenge. Nevertheless, it made important and sustained contributions to the analysis and understanding of VAW. Furthermore, and bearing in mind the context of the present study, while western societies experience multiple forms of inequality due to their complexity, it is at least plausible that in the relatively homogenous rural Punjabi society gender may remain the foundational and dominant form of inequality and patriarchy the determining social system. For these reasons, radical feminism and the concept of patriarchy are central to the theoretical framework for the present study.

3.4.2 Patriarchy

Patriarchy is not a theory but a description of a particular form of social organisation. It is included in this chapter as a potential causal factor for VAW. Patriarchy is a central concept in radical feminism but also plays an important role in other forms of feminist scholarship. Indeed, Anderson (2009) describes patriarchy and feminism as "a conceptual pair" (p.810) and goes further to suggest that the existence of a patriarchal form of social organisation is feminism's *raison d'etre*. For this reason, it is considered here in detail, with a particular focus on patriarchy and VAW.

Many definitions have been offered for patriarchy. Stacey (1983, p.53) refers to the "systematic organisation of male supremacy and female subordination". Feminist historian Gerda Lerner (1986) defined patriarchy as "the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in the society in general." She explained "that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does not imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence and resources."

(p.239) This last point is significant and suggests that even in a strongly patriarchal society there is potentially room for women to have areas of influence.

British sociologist Sylvia Walby defines patriarchy "as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" 1990, p. 20). Similarly, Kambarami (2006, p. 2) theorised that "patriarchy is a social system in which men appropriate all social roles and keep women in subordinate positions". Continuing this theme, patriarchy has been defined as "… the legal, economic and social system that validates rule by men over women; it is systemic in every aspect of society to the point where it is experienced as normal." (Rakoczy, 2000, p.13). Understanding exactly how it is experienced is an important line of feminist research of which the present study is a part. Another significant insight from Rakoczy (2004) is that rather than a phase of human development, in almost all societies, patriarchy has come to be seen as eternal and ahistorical instead of the reality that the structures in which patriarchy is embedded are all human made (Rakoczy, 2004).

In a patriarchy, men are seen to hold power over women, and women are generally seen as inferior. Men use this power to further subordinate women and keep them within an oppressed social position. This power is wielded through the various forms of violence that women face. Men are seen to benefit when women's lives are controlled and restricted because of their fear of (potential/actual) violence. "It should not be surprising that violence forms an integral aspect of male dominance, since systems of power and authority are ultimately based on the use or threat of force" (Dobash & Dobash, 1979, p. 57).

While it is often stated that Bourdieu neglected feminism in his analysis of power relations, his work merits a mention here for the contrast it exposes in the nature of patriarchy and how

it varies from one society to another. Bourdieu (1998) offers a theoretical interpretation of the maintenance of power inequalities in a Western society when he considers how, in France, despite formal ground rules for gender equality, inequalities persist. Rather than the blatant violence-enforced patriarchy seen in Pakistan, Bourdieu describes a subtle power game that is partially invisible and yet which reinforces the process of categorisation which established hierarchical principles that assigns women's role and in particular their economic role to low worth categories (Bourdieu, 1998).

In Pakistan patriarchy can be found in the private sphere almost as much as in the public. Hadi (2017) recently looked at patriarchy in Pakistan and discussed how gender inequality weakens women's position within society making her vulnerable to violence. The underlying belief here is that it is this gender specific violence that results in giving men superiority over women.

The current project draws from Bhanbro et al.'s (2013) research in Pakistan who have also drawn on patriarchy as a theoretical framework for their research. Using patriarchy as a framework for their research, Bhanbro et al. have indicated that VAW is ingrained in wider social organisations in which males dictate and decide what is right and wrong, and what action deserves punishment. They carried out their research in the Sindh province and refer to patriarchal values as one of the main causes of women being treated like objects and having all aspects of their lives governed by men. The current project is based in a village in the Punjab province. It is important to note that Punjab has not been researched qualitatively, in regard to VAW, and we will be able to consider whether these conditions are as prevalent within the Punjab region as in Sindh.

3.4.3 Critique of the patriarchy concept

Patriarchy and its use as a theoretical explanation of VAW has been the topic of extensive debate. Hunnicut (2009) identified five main criticisms. First, it is said to unjustifiably simplify power relations. Second, the concept of patriarchy carries an implication of false universalism. Third, its application has often overlooked any differences between men and instead treated them as an homogenous group. Fourth, it can offer no explanation for women's own violence or male on male violence. Fifth, its universalism does not align with the fact that in patriarchal societies often a minority of men engage in VAW. These are significant proposed deficiencies. Nevertheless, the concept and the theoretical development of patriarchy remains in use although sometimes in a reshaped form (e.g. Gilligan & Snider, 2018; Nelson, 2021; Patil, 2013). Often this means blunting its binary nature and allowing for a greater degree of complexity (Hunnicut, 2009).

Patriarchy was increasingly viewed as inappropriately "monolithic" and "homogenous" (Patil, 2013, p. 847). With its replacement and reshaping looking for more nuanced alternatives. However, these developments were overwhelmingly taking place in Western contexts, which were becoming increasingly complex in terms of inequality rather than more homogenous monocultural settings such as that of the present study. For this reason, and notwithstanding the strongly argued criticisms, patriarchy is retained as part of the theoretical framework for the present study.

Pakistan is undoubtedly a largely pure and unreformed example of a patriarchal society and where reforms have been attempted, they have mainly sunk under the weight and all-pervasiveness of patriarchal power which is cloaked in a patchwork of Islamism, tribal tradition, the caste system and Sufi mysticism. Radical feminism, which retains the patriarchy

as its core concept, seems appropriate to place in a central position in the explanatory framework applied in the present study.

3.5 Bourdieu and multidimensional spaces

Bourdieu rejected the economic determinism of Marxism in favour of theory of human society as a multi-dimensional view of capital in which total capital is the combination of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital (Fogle, 2011). Society comprises of a series of fields which are competitive arenas where social agents and institutions compete over control, production, and acquisition of capital in its various forms (Rey, 2004).

Pierre Bourdieu's theory of 'social space', first proposed in Bourdieu and Saint-Martin (1976), replaced the notion of a one-dimensional social ladder with a three-dimensional space. The dominant dimension evaluates social groups and the individuals within them in terms of their 'capital-volume' which represented the sum of their resources. This volume was said to be the main determinant of how much power a particular social agent could exercise over and within the 'space' (Vandebroeck, 2018). Much focus of society and its actors is spent on the accumulation of capital.

As with physical space, social space is the result of a historical process of construction. When applying his theory, Bourdieu maps social positions (primarily based on occupational data) and lifestyles (cultural practices) as layers with the axes showing the composition of capital and the volume of said capital. This creates a topology of social space. This mapping process has been taken up by researchers working in diverse contexts who use it to map social agents, institutions, organisations and cultural practices and artefacts (see e.g. Atkinson, 2021; Pereira, 2018; Prieur et al., 2008).

Three main classes emerge within the space: the dominant class located at the top of the space where most power is held, the middle classes (petit-bourgeoisie) and the working classes comprised of both skilled and unskilled workers. In this respect, Bourdieu's conceptualisation does not seem particularly original at first glance. However, there are further complexities to his model. Within the dominant class there are differences between groups who are endowed mostly with cultural power (artists, writers etc.) and those whose power takes the economic form (capitalists, employers etc.). Likewise, the middle class comprises economically resourced small business owners and culturally significant agents such as teachers. In the working class, there is greater unity in the sense that fractions are neither culturally nor economically resourced although the difference between skilled and unskilled workers is acknowledged (Bourdieu, 1984).

Bourdieu posited that social divisions emerged through the economic field in the form of differential access to anything that can be ultimately converted to money. However, it is within the familial field that gender divisions emerge, and indeed male-female division emerges as the initial, primary source of social division. This all takes place within the private familial domain where reproduction and the first stages of socialisation take place (Meisenhelder, 2000). Bourdieu views the sexual division of labour as fundamental to how gender is socially constructed and bases his perspective on ethnographic work conducted in Algeria amid peasant communities (Bourdieu, 1958).

While Bourdieu based his social space theorising on survey data collected in France he argued strongly for its transnational validity. This claim has not been fully taken up by all with some preferring to take concepts such as cultural capital and develop these rather than the entire conception of multi-dimensional 'social space' and applying it to different contexts.

The construct of *Habitus* describes the sensemaking process used to understand one's place and also the place of others (Bourdieu, 1989). It is Bourdieu's conceptual link between social structuration and actions at the individual level (Lizardo, 2004). This process is guided by the practices, norms, attitudes and tastes of the social group (class) in question. Social groups are defined and bound to a great degree by a shared Habitus.

Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence could be considered as potentially having explanatory power for the present study, despite it being a highly contested theory (Bardall, 2021). A ruling class facilitates its imposition of their own ideology through complicity, consent and misrecognition of this violence which is "a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible, even to its victims" (Bourdieu 2001, p.1). Bourdieu described symbolic violence (1979, 1991, 2001) as "the purposeful imposition of the ideas and values of a ruling cultural class (for example, men with certain social characteristics) onto a dominated social group, such as women, often through subconscious means" (Bardall, 2020, p. 318). For symbolic violence to be present, three main factors must be satisfied: misrecognition, consent and complicity (Morgan & Björkert, 2006). While not a gender-based theory of violence, it's inclusion may be useful alongside radical feminism.

3.5.1 Critique of Bourdieu's social space

Bourdieu offers us a model of how the different classes and fractions within classes co-exist and the antagonism that exists between them. However, it could be described as a gender-blind conceptualisation as it is entirely reliant on access to either economic or cultural capital. This portrayal is challenged by those who see Bourdieu's work as the basis for a theory of the interrelations between class, gender and race and how they define social position in advanced industrialised societies. For example, Meisenhelder (2000) elaborates on

Bourdieu's basic concepts in order to propose a model that more fully incorporates not only class but gender and race. In the advanced capitalist society of America, however, Meisenhelder (2000) advocates for the centrality of the economic field and raises the possibility that a focus on race and gender that detracts attention from the economic domain may be a source of false consciousness.

Restricting gender division within society to the social relations of reproduction and socialisation within the family seems to take the focus away from other aspects of social organisation associated with patriarchal social systems, their cultures and their institutions. Whilst acknowledging the formative influence of Bourdieu's ethnographic work in Algeria, many of the constructs used in the development of his work on multidimensional social spaces seem difficult to transpose to the agricultural economies of rural Punjab. In these societies, gender is a division which for women closes off access to economic capital and to religious and political status which are the main sources of cultural capital. Hence, while it would be wrong to categorise Bourdieu's work as gender-blind in any way, for a piece of feminist research such as this, his lack of engagement with feminist thought (Lovell, 2000) is problematic, particularly in a context (the Punjab, Pakistan) which continues to display such clear and powerful signs of patriarchy. Collins (2008) dismissed the notion symbolic violence as a poor way of interpreting and understanding the real nature of violence with Colaguori (2010) also arguing the concept added little to an already crowded theoretical field. However, despite these misgivings, the theory of social space and the concepts of cultural capital and symbolic violence can contribute to the explanatory theoretical framework and offer an alternative to gender essentialism and are therefore included. Regarding Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, Walby et al. (2014) strongly reject any inference of victim

3.6 Standpoint and reflexivity

Truth is perceived in different ways by different segments of society (Hartsock, 1981). In addition to a theoretical framework used to interpret the findings, a feminist researcher needs to be clear about their standpoint and be committed to applying reflexivity in their research. For this reason, three approaches are considered as a way of establishing the standpoint and basis for reflexivity used in the present research.

3.6.1 Islamic feminism

There is no doubt that feminist approaches are overwhelmingly rooted in Western societies and that their content is a reflection of the prevailing social and political conditions at the time. Context is vital in social research, and this is certainly true in the current study which is conducted in a setting sharply contrasting with the West. The developed, increasingly secular, and more individualist societies of the West have many differences with rural Punjab despite claims of universality for the concept of patriarchy.

Pakistan, including Punjab province, is a religious society. In such societies, patriarchy takes on an eternal ahistorical nature due to its status as being specifically sanctioned and ordained by God. Religious texts, both Christian and Islamic, devote many words to framing gender relations. Besides, God is exclusively depicted using male nomenclature and imagery, 'King', 'Lord', 'Father' etc. (Rakoczy, 2004).

Starting in the early 1970s, the latter part of the 20th century saw the emergence of political Islam (Kepel, 2002). Central to its manifesto was the call to revert to patriarchal sharia and

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an extremely sharp division between men's role in the public sphere and women's role in the private domain (Kepel, 2002). Islamic feminism was a reaction to this aggressive patriarchy and perhaps the perceived lack of generalisability of Western feminist approaches (Mir-Hosseini, 2006). Islamic feminism enabled feminists to avoid having to choose between their gender consciousness and their religious beliefs while still pursuing greater equality. Educated women increasingly questioned the textual basis for the new fundamentalist patriarchal Islamic doctrine. As a result, they began "a gender discourse that was and is feminist in its aspiration and demands, yet Islamic in its language and sources of legitimacy" (Mir-Hosseini, 2006, p. 640). The text of the Qur'an was never questioned only its interpretation with involved "women exerting their own exegesis on the Qur'an, reinterpreting the holy texts through rationale and historical context, and finding that human rights and egalitarian principles exist in the core of Islam's teachings" (Eyadat, 2013, p.360). While Western feminists may reject the notion of feminism within an Islamic (or any religious) context, others view it as a positive attempt to subvert the patriarchal Islamist project (Badran, 2008, p.26). From a Western perspective the best-known Pakistani feminist is Malala Yousafzai who since her being shot by the Taliban has become a cause celebre in the West and a leading campaigner in Pakistan. While the secular-Islamic division is true in general, Malala retains her Muslim beliefs while adopting positions that would be familiar to western feminists (Zakaria, 2013).

Islamic feminism has grown to represent a broad movement across the Muslim world bolstered by rising numbers of female university graduates and academics working in the West. These women pursue empowerment but via a religious path with their main method being the critique of how the holy texts are interpreted by fundamentalist religious leaders

who hold sway over much of the Muslim world (Badran, 2011). Examining more closely the arguments of Islamic feminists, we can see that their interpretation supports a view that far from being oppressive the basic principles of Islam are far more egalitarian than religions of the West, primarily Christianity. They point to the moral and spiritual equality inherent in Islam and the equal treatment in the ownership and passing down of property (González, 2013). Men, they argue, have responded to a perceived threat from modernity which they see as threatening their gender role and social position; perceptions encouraged by the rhetoric of misogynist religious leaders keen to defend their particularly exulted positions. Hence Islamic feminists have chosen the path of negotiating for greater rights and equalities but without challenging the conservative and religious bases of society (González, 2013). For example, the legitimacy of the holy texts is not questioned, only the interpretation. Also, women advancing gender equality are still likely to be seen wearing the veil to emphasise that they are not challenging fundamental traditions and are willing to work with legitimate sources of authority (González, 2013).

In Pakistan, two forms of feminism have coexisted for decades — secular feminism and Islamic feminism reflecting the overall nature of Pakistani society and culture (Serez, 2017). Indeed, these two 'camps' have endured a rather hostile relationship. Pakistani secular feminists use human rights arguments to argue for equal rights and against discrimination in a way that would be familiar to many Western feminists. Islam is seen as part of the problem and not a source of solutions. In contrast, Islamic feminists in Pakistan do indeed see a solution in Islam and view problems in gender relations arising from men not living up to the true meaning of the holy texts (Serez, 2017). Where women suffer discrimination, it is because of men resorting to patriarchal traditions and not to the Qur'an (Badran, 2008). Serez

(2017) argues that the schism between secular and Islamic feminists in Pakistan has acted as a break on progress towards greater rights for the country's women.

Successful or not, Islamic feminism finds itself opposed on two sides, on the one hand it is seen as un-Islamic by the majority of Islamists, and to secular feminists, Islamic feminism is a blatant contradiction in terms (Mir-Hosseini, 2006). For many looking from a Western perspective the concept appears oxymoronic. However, the Western form of feminism can, from a developing country standpoint appear bourgeois and "a luxury of rich people" (Fernea, 2010, p.36). Islamic feminism has also been described as a form of state feminism and part of a religious movement. The state gives Muslim women the license to be active in certain limited areas of the public sphere provided it is within the bounds of Islam (Ahmed & Jahan, 2014).

A cautionary note regarding Islamic feminism and the current study is that this feminist approach has been associated with the increasing access to higher education among Muslim women and increasing numbers of female academics. Our setting, the rural Punjab is characterised by the absence of such women due to lack of resources and access and the fact that those who are academically gifted tend to move away to the cities. Nevertheless, Islamic feminism is retained as part of the conceptual framework.

3.6.2 Criminology of the Global South

The domination of knowledge and research by the high-income states, particularly the anglophone world has led to the recognition of the concept of the Global South. Rather than being a reference to geographical location, the Global South describes "peripheral voices located anywhere in the world" (Carrington et al., 2019, p. 165). Academia had become

rooted in the "tendency to believe that events, developments and questions only matter when they manifest in the Global North" (Moosavi, 2019, p.334).

Recognising that the theoretical approaches to criminology, including violence against women, were products of the Global North some researchers sought to develop an approach suited to studying crime in the Global South free of the prevailing assumptions. This approach has been referred to as Southern Criminology (Carrington et al., 2016).

The lack of prominence given to critical criminology from the Global South is viewed by these researchers as a cognitive injustice that requires correction. Behind this injustice is the reality that the means of production of knowledge and research is overwhelmingly situated in the Global North, particularly in English-speaking countries (Connell et al., 2017; Goyes & South, 2017). Democratising and decolonizing knowledge, in criminology and more generally, is viewed as a vital project and one that other researchers are urged to contribute to.

Southern Criminology is not just a theoretical project, but also an empirical project. The South is discussed as a metaphor for the marginal, the other, the invisible and the excluded. Commenting on the importance of Southern criminology, Matthews described it as "probably the most significant theoretical development in the recent period" (2017, p.581).

The emergence of Southern Criminology can be traced to postcolonial theory (Said, 1978) with a further contribution from sociology (Connell, 2007). Postcolonial theory promotes the recognition of diversity in cultural values among countries, even those in the same region

(Travers, 2017). This counters the tendency in the Global North to view the Global South or regions within as homogenous as well as inferior. An example of this assumed superiority would be automatically advocating the higher status of criminal justice systems in the Global North compared to alternative approaches taken in the Global South (Travers, 2017).

The gap in influence between Global North and Global South researchers has been described as epistemological blindness (Santos, 2014). The consequences are that knowledge and understanding are incomplete and contributions from non-English speaking sources are substantially undervalued. Furthermore, anglophone countries dominate the global academic infrastructure of databases, journal articles, books, and conferences reinforcing the hegemony (Goyes & South, 2017).

It has long been recognised that the social sciences have been colonized by Westerncentric perspectives and Southern Criminology was not original or pioneering in promoting this realisation. Nevertheless, it has provided researchers in this field with a refreshed debate in which to address crime, punishment and policy in Global south contexts (Fonseca, 2018). While other domains of modern life, culture, the economy, geopolitics, may have internationalised in recent decades, the social sciences have remained stubbornly Westerncentric (Kurzman, 2017).

While Southern Criminology is a legitimate response to the Westerncentric colonisation of criminology it brings with it its own limitations. Perhaps most obviously, the objectivist epistemology would reject the need for a separate criminology of the South as, they would posit, science transcends context. Beyond this is the argument that there is no homogenous South, any more than there is a homogenous North. In fact, the South comprises a wide range of highly contrasting cultures spanning several continents and having varying political

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structures and economies. Muslim and non-Muslim is another variable of contrast and even among Muslim countries there are significant differences. Furthermore, Asian Criminology quickly became dominated by East Asian research and Confucianism (Liu et al., 2013). Failing to recognise Global South diversity presents a danger that the colonisation from the West may be replaced by, for example, an Orientalist domination of the study of crime in the Global South. Moreover, it should be recognised that researchers and contexts of the Global South are not equally marginalised. In response to this, Connell (2007) warns against a unified doctrine of the Global South, instead calling for a global sociology that is "a conversation among many voices" (p.6). This caution would later be reflected by Carrington et al. (2018) who insisted that they were not seeking to establish a new separate criminology but rather were intent on making criminology more inclusive alongside other emerging perspectives including feminist, queer and postcolonial criminology.

Moosavi argues that the call for intellectual decolonisation among intellectuals of the Global North is not a new movement but a late coming to the position long taken by those in the Global South (Moosavi, 2019). Moosavi offers a five-point critique of intellectual decolonisation as proposed by Northern academia. First, he warns that the decolonisation project may not even be possible. From a minority position, the task may meet with immovable and intractable opposition. Second, there may be an over eagerness to incorporate marginalised perspectives which unwittingly re-establish colonial thought through appropriation of the Global South. Third, the process of identifying who is marginalised and who is not is fraught with the potential for mischaracterisation and lack of consensus. Global North/South does not fully match with West/Non-West leading to significant anomalies. Then there is the added complexity of a recognised scholar of the Global South working

within the institutions of the Global North. Fourth, Moosavi warns of laudable intellectual decolonisation being hijacked by those with a nativist agenda, including those with political agendas. Here intellectual merit is subsumed by what he refers to as "Third World Nationalism" (Moosavi, 2019, p.347). Finally, comes a warning against slipping into tokenism. Failure to appropriately include Southern voices and actively challenge coloniality can lead to the affirmation of colonial structures. These cautions are recognised and acted upon in the present research.

The present study is set in Pakistan a country of the Global South designated as a low-middle income country (World Bank, n.d.). The implication of Southern Criminology for this study is that the researcher sets aside, or assesses critically, assumptions of the transferability of both concepts and findings from the literature on VAW from the Global North. By doing so it adds a further contribution to the Southern Criminology literature. Furthermore, it should be remembered that Southern Criminologists demand for the reflexivity of others does not negate the need for them to engage with their own reflexivity (Moosavi, 2019). Therefore, the researcher considers reflexivity in general and in the context of the present study in the next chapter.

3.6.3 Rejecting gender-blind and binary theories of violence

Any gender blind or gender-neutral theory of violence seems inevitably destined to adopt the lens of the prevailing patriarchal construction of the phenomenon. The interpretation becomes the interpretation of men (Conway, 2016). In the absence of consideration of gender power relations an attempted theory of violence is inevitably partial. For this reason a feminist perspective in a study aimed at contributing to the understanding of violence against women is not just justified but required and gender-blind theories are rejected. A feminist

perspective is required to analyse the relationship between violence and patriarchal structures of power on the assumption that "Gender power shapes the dynamic of every interaction" (Cockburn, 2004, p.28). Thanks to the feminist perspective, concepts and related theories on gender specific violence have been born and developed. An example would be the concept of femicide which was brought into existence by the second wave of feminism in the 1970s (Russell, 1977).

A second component of the theoretical lens applied in the present study is the rejection of the strictly binary male-female analysis of violence situating men as perpetrators and women as victims (Heyes, 2013). It is important to accept that non-binary violence can occur within social structures and social interactions dominated by patriarchy. Male-on-male, female-on-male, female-on- female, intergenerational, mutual violence and violence against minors are all empirically proven phenomena and a feminist perspective needs to be able to offer analysis of these, particularly if it is to be relevant to the widely differing forms of social organisation we see around the world. Hence, in addition to rejecting gender-blind theories of violence I also reject restricting my theoretical framework to a binary analysis of violence. In particular, I reject the notion that women are always either victims or bystanders but at the same time acknowledging the evidence that they carry by far the heaviest burden from its consequences.

3.7 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to establish a theoretical framework to guide the current study as it is operationalised and evaluated. Following the introductory comments, the fundamental principles of feminist research were discussed, and standpoint theory was emphasised as part of this. Based on the review of empirical literature undertaken in chapter two certain

assumptions could be made as to the theoretical approaches likely to be of value in addressing the research problem. One was the rejection of gender-blind approaches and the other was the rejection of the stricture that using a feminist approach meant ignoring everything other than male-female binary violence.

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Liberal feminism and socialist feminism were rejected. Class-based explanations of VAW in the present study's setting seem unlikely as the setting is a rather homogenously low-income rural one. With its overwhelmingly Westerncentric application and tendency toward complexity, intersectionality was not included in the framework as it was felt to be a poor match with the setting of the present study. Bourdieu's concept of multidimensional social spaces was also discussed and is included in the framework as an alternative lens. It was reasoned that if economic or cultural factors did emerge, Bourdieu's social space concept could be used to evaluate these in conjunction with other factors.

So, two lenses are included in the theoretical/explanatory framework for the present study. The primary lens is radical feminism that could also be referred to as dominance theory or gender essentialism and in which the patriarchy concept is highly prominent. For the purposes of the framework, patriarchy is not interpreted as a theory but as a form of social organisation. Nevertheless, it is assumed that it will be an important concept in the evaluation of this study's findings as a key factor in explaining VAW. Should this lens is to be helpful in explaining the findings of the present study, that would suggest a single category of analysis – gender – and a single causal factor – patriarchy. An important qualification needs to be added here. Much radical feminist work on violence is associated with a binary male perpetrator-female victim approach. Since much of this work was published, evidence and

re-theorizing of violence has shown that a binary approach is unnecessarily restrictive (Boyle, 2019) and this study concurs with this analysis. In other words, I recognise that within a patriarchal society women can perpetrate violence and part of a researcher's task is to investigate why they do. Feminism, particularly the forms which prioritise the concept of patriarchy, accommodates the researcher's assumptions regarding the power and importance of this concept in the specific setting. An alternative lens based on Bourdieu's notion of social space is included to allow for an interpretation of the findings based on multiple causes and multiple categories of inequality. The theoretical framework is presented as Figure 3-1.
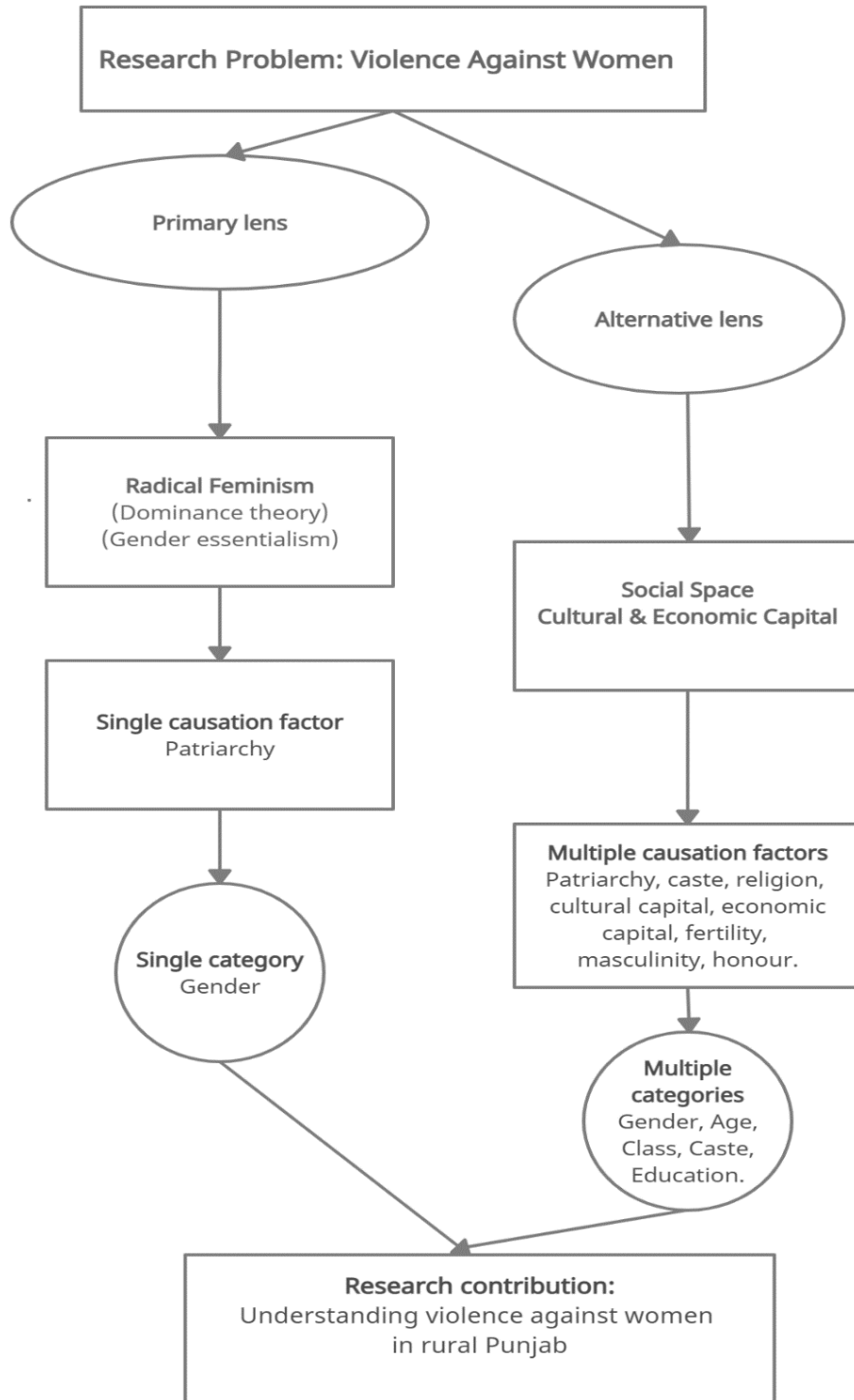
Figure 3-1 Theoretical Framework of the present study

Islamic feminism was also discussed in this chapter. This is not so much a theory as a means or a movement to enable Muslim feminist researchers to advance the cause of women without rejecting their religion. It is considered likely that religion will have some association with VAW and that therefore it may be of interest to see how women interpret VAW through the lens of their Islamic religion.

In establishing and carrying forward this framework I acknowledge the key concerns expressed for both its main lenses. Firstly, the radical feminist approach, the study's primary lens, is associated with a belief that what one woman experiences they all do and that all women share the same standpoint (Collins 1997). Secondly, an alternative lens based on Bourdieu's work on social spaces is included though this work is known to pay little attention to feminist thought. It is in the desire to avoid either of these analyses that both theoretical perspectives are taken forward as part of an explanatory framework so that both a single causation and multiple causation interpretation of the findings can be evaluated. Having established the theoretical basis for the present study, the thesis now proceeds to present the methodology and the methods of the research and to describe how the study was operationalised. The theory that has been discussed here in chapter three informs the methodology and the methods in many ways. The approach to both knowledge and research is guided by the feminist standpoint as is the priority given to reflecting on the reflexivity and positionality of the researcher. The choice of how to collect data and from whom is guided by the feminist objective of giving voice to the mostly unheard voices of rural-dwelling women of the Punjab, Pakistan.

Chapter 4 : Methodology and research methods

4.1 Introduction

This chapter has two main purposes. The first is to show where this research is located within the ontological, epistemological and methodological universe. I will explain the interpretivist, constructivist, qualitative and feminist ethnographic nature of the research and justify why these choices were made. The second purpose is to describe, explain and justify my role as researcher and the actions I undertook to operationalise the study covering how I collected data and how I then analysed it. There is also consideration given to the limitations of the methods and to the ethical issues I needed to reflect on when planning and carrying out the research.

4.2 Knowledge and the approach to research

While much of this chapter describes and justifies the methods used, the sample, the data collection and analysis of this data, it is first necessary to discuss the basic assumptions on which all this is based. This includes the epistemological fundamentals of the research paradigm, the feminist character of the research and nature of social research in an Islamic context.

4.2.1 Epistemology and the research paradigm

The study of the validity of different forms of knowledge is termed epistemology (Fonow and Cook, 1991). Krauss (2005) defines epistemology as "the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know" (p.758). To contextualize the methodological choices made in forming the research design, the two main epistemological approaches, positivism and

interpretivism are discussed and contrasted with the main focus being interpretivism as that is the epistemological foundation of the current research.

4.2.1.1 Positivism

The positivist paradigm holds that the researcher is entirely independent of the phenomenon or object under study. Furthermore, positivist research is the discovery and verification of knowledge through direct measurement or observation of the phenomenon. By taking apart a phenomenon and studying its component parts, facts can be established (Krauss, 2005). As the era of science replaced the metaphysical reasoning of the Enlightenment, positivism became the dominant paradigm by the early nineteenth century (Venn, 2006). Soon, positivist principles of the natural sciences were being applied to the social world as typified by the term 'social physics' coined by August Compte the French philosopher who would subsequently propose the discipline of sociology (Münch, 1989). Much of Compte's work was at the philosophical level. However, industrialisation was giving rise to a whole gamut of new social issues and policymakers as well as scholars were in search of solutions. In search of these solutions, researchers began the search for quantitative data on many aspects of society in order to devise and justify social policy. A classic example of this is Durkheim's study of suicide originally published in 1897 (Durkheim, 2005). From this time and for a large part of the 20th century, positivism would dominate social research. As Durkheim urged, positivist researchers would undertake their work seeking entirely objective value free study of social phenomena using mainly quantitative methods. It is this belief in the plausibility of researcher objectivity that was the main reason for the emergence of anti-positivst scholars who rejected this premise in the study of the social world. In broad terms, their paradigm can be described as interpretivist.

4.2.1.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is referred to as "epistemologies, or theories about how we can gain knowledge of the world, which loosely rely on interpreting or understanding the meanings that humans attach to their actions" (O'Reilly, 2009, p.119). Social research is undertaken on the basis that knowledge is socially constructed. Although interpretivism is mostly associated with the later decades of the 20th century, it can be traced back to the work of German philosophers writing in the mid-19th century. They used the term *verstehen* ('to understand' or 'to interpret') to refer to understanding actions from the standpoint of the actor; hence an empathetic form of enquiry (Makkreel & Rodi 1989). *Verstehen* is closely associated with the work of Max Weber, the German anti-positivist sociologist who led the way in incorporating the philosophical concept of *Verstehen* into sociology. From this evolved multiple perspectives that challenged the positivist hegemony including symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, critical theory and feminism each of which fall under the broad interpretivist umbrella. These new approaches were matched by the development of new research methods and an expansion in the amount of qualitative research being undertaken (Bryman, 2008).

The main assumption of all the interpretivist approaches is that the positivist pursuit of objectivity is a fallacy because the social world is inevitably experienced subjectively and so the transfer of the methods applied in the natural sciences to the study of social phenomena is unachievable and inappropriate. This is not least because no two researchers, or any individuals, will experience the social world in exactly the same way. An interpretivist researcher seeks to generate understanding of the subjective meaning of social action. They are the interpreters of the interpretations of their subjects (Bryman, 2008). Their objective is

to give voice faithfully to their subjects (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000). The need to give voice to the women of rural Punjab as they recount their lived experiences leads to the selection of qualitative methods.

4.2.2 Ontology

While positivism and interpretivism are the two significant empistemological orientations there are paralell ontological approaches – objectivism and constructivism. Objectivism holds that the phenomena of the social world are external tangible 'facts' and are not influenced by us as individuals (Bryman, 2008). Applied to cultures, objectivism situates a culture or subculture as an objective reality constraining social actors through a system of shared values and beliefs. The alternative ontological position is that of constructionism. Social phenomena and their attendant meanings are continuously constructed and revised by social actors. Meanings are created through social interaction. For research this means that a researcher presents a single unique version of social reality not a definitive one. Culture, therefore, is viewed as something being continually constructed rather than being a static external reality (Bryman, 2008). With its interpretivist epistemology, the present study has a constructionst ontological orientation.

4.2.3 Undertaking feminist research

This research is conducted from a feminist perspective, but it is important to acknowledge that the term feminist research is a broad umbrella term. Feminist research as it is understood today has its roots in the late 1960s and the 70s. The motivation was a growing belief among female academics and their students that the prevailing research models and the research output it produced failed to match their lived experiences (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2007). There was a growing awareness that the research models and the findings they produced were

overwhelmingly framed by men but then generalized as applying to society as a whole (Epstein, 1981). Holland and Ramazanoğlu (2002) referred to the "male-centred frameworks of explanation" (p. 45) which determined which research questions were asked. As a result, the dominant research models were deemed inappropriate for gender-based research. Sarantakos (2005) explains, "Feminist research is based on the assumption that the world is socially constructed, displays a relative aversion to empirical positivist methodology and rejects the value free nature of research" (p.54). Therefore, this research adopts an interpretivist paradigm.

Mackay (2015) has proposed four criteria for determining whether feminist research and writing falls within the radical feminist perspective. Firstly, there is the assumption of the existence of a patriarchy combined with the resolve to end it. Second, it advocates the use of women-only space as a method of organising. Third, it focuses on every form of male violence against women viewing it as entirely central to women's oppression. Fourth, it extends this analysis of violence to include the institutions of prostitution and pornography (Mackay, 2015). The first two criteria in particular emphasise the close link between radical feminism and activism.

Feminist research of whichever variety has certain fundamental principles. One is that it seeks the empowerment of women, and another is that it is based on the equality of researcher and researched. In the present research, the recommendations of Harding and Norberg (2005) to minimise the power relations between researcher and the participants and to eliminate the hierarchies in knowledge production were fully observed. In order to do this, research protocols and processes were designed that would enable critical reflection on my own identity-based positionality, and how this shapes relations with the participants, and

ultimately interpretations of findings. Feminist researchers need to recognise the power they exercise over participants as it is the researcher who defines the research project, sets the questions and evaluates the findings from their own standpoint (Harding & Norberg, 2005).

Shahnaz Khan, a Pakistani Canadian researcher, described how in Canada she was seen as ideally placed to research Pakistani women but in Pakistan she was not viewed as 'one of them' because she would ultimately return to Canada leaving the women to face their challenges (Khan, 2005). Despite being a regular visitor, I too experienced this labelling with those I encountered suggesting I was not fully authentic in their view.

I took pains to avoid interviewing 'down' whilst recognising the goal of value-free interviewing and interpreting was ultimately unachievable. Instead, I reduced the hierarchies by being open myself and being willing to talk about my own experiences and my status as a divorcee and single mother, in the same way I wanted the participants to be open about theirs. Further details of how I used protocols in relation to establishing relationships and in regard to my positionality and reflexivity are given later in the chapter.

Feminist research is also inherently emancipatory (Millen, 2007). Furthermore, a feminist perspective is an important determinant of how the empirical research is designed, the methodology chosen and how the data is interpreted. A feminist analysis in violence research is especially fitting given the role of patriarchy in causing and maintaining this violence. Over time we have seen feminists challenge both old and new concepts. No matter what the epistemological stance is, or the theoretical position is, women are generally invisible in these analyses. The deeper issues of epistemology, of how we know, what we know, needs to be fully explored to understand these discourses in full detail.

Related to both empowerment and emancipation goals of feminist research is the concept of 'voice' (Coddington, 2016). This concept has been associated with using research to correct power imbalances that silence marginalised populations. These groups are enabled to talk back to the disembodied patriarchal forms of understanding about their lived experiences (Ellsworth 1992). By committing to giving voice, a researcher is attesting to the right to be heard and to make available one's testimonies to others and to contribute to the construction of self rather than having a construction imposed by others (Britzman, 1989). Bogdan and Biklen (1998, p. 204) define the giving of voice as "empowering people to be heard who might otherwise remain silent" including those silenced by others. Mazzei and Jackson (2009, p. 1) refer to the researcher's task as being to "'free' the authentic voice from whatever retrains it from coming into being, from relating the truth about the self ". In addition to its emancipatory function, giving voice to women offers new lesser heard perspectives and experiences essential for a fuller understanding in whatever setting is being researched (Calvert & Ramsey, 1992).

Voice is given to women who have experienced violence. Survivors' narratives can be powerful sources of strength to other women as well as informing those involved in women's protection (Pace, 2020). The history of feminist work on gender violence began with qualitative descriptions that were usually obtained by interviews. Pizzey (1977) described the experiences of women in the first ever book-length publication, 'Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear', which was followed by 'Violence Against Wives: A Case Against the Patriarchy' by Dobash and Dobash (1979). These early publications were based on a combination of interviews and observations and provided theoretical explanations of violence.

Feminist research is based on the assumption of the co-production of knowledge. A feminist researcher engages in the co-production of knowledge with the research participants when using participatory methods (Nazneen & Sultan, 2014). A feminist researcher should adopt a philosophy and related practices which are on the one hand constantly mindful of the structural conditions under which their interactions occur while on the other ensure equitable forms of research participation and knowledge production (Erikainen et al., 2021). For co-production, and for that matter co-learning, to take place a researcher must pay great attention to their reflexivity and positionality (covered later in the chapter).

It is through qualitative research that different dimensions of the social world can be examined, especially the experiences and understandings of participants and the way their relationships with others work, the routine of their daily lives and the importance of the meanings they generate and how these meanings are generated. This can all be achieved by using methods that are qualitative in nature. It is qualitative methods that allow for a richer, deeper and more nuanced understanding. What is more significant is that the 'voice' of the participant is evident in qualitative research.

4.2.4 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research uses a range of methods that are characterised by their reliance on non-numerical data (Bryman, 2008). This data mostly comprises the meanings and perceptions attached to experiences, events and the social environment. To pursue these meanings the qualitative researcher adopts a more flexible approach to research design than the quantitative counterpart who works within a rigidly structured design (Bryman, 2008). Furthermore, a feminist perspective is an important determinant of how the empirical research is designed, how the methodology is chosen and how the data is interpreted. A feminist analysis in

research addressing violence against women is especially fitting given the role of patriarchy in causing and maintaining this violence. Over time we have seen feminists challenge both old and new concepts. The deeper issues of epistemology, of how we know, what we know, needs to be fully explored to understand these discourses in full detail. This project is a qualitative study of women in a rural location of Punjab province North Pakistan. In addition to providing a critical evaluation of the existing literature on the criminology of violence the project involves an empirical study of the lived experiences of women with a specific focus on how the respondents conceive and experience 'violence'. This study explores and attempts to understand the violence that women face in rural Pakistan. The main focus is on women's experiences of violence, this can extend from domestic to non-domestic violence. I wanted to reach the interpretations of violence as women perceived them and to try and analyse, if possible, the prevalence and incidence of violence in their lives, the nature, context and the impact of the violence. Once the data is analysed, it may be possible to determine patterns of such violence, how the women made sense of, interpreted and even justified violence.

Finding out the consequences of violence, can only be achieved by using the right method. Quantitative analyses of data on VAW have been criticised as patriarchal in nature in its choice of methodology, it has been criticised as being very formal and inflexible in its approach and data collection. In qualitative research, the researcher would have the flexibility to ask further questions and gain a better understanding of the context, feelings and consequences of the act.

Greenblat and Adler (1981) use their interview data to illustrate the differences between male and female violence. In a table of quantitative data, a man punching his wife, and a woman punching her husband, would be quantified as the same act. In a table of qualitative data, the

same scenario would be analysed in a different way, the context would be taken into account, and the effects of the act would be analysed. More recently Dobash and Dobash (2004) discuss how victims and perpetrators are defined to a large extent by what is counted as violence. In their research men and women report a wide range of physically and sexually violent acts committed by men against women and women against men. This enabled a direct comparison of men's and women's violence but omitted 'high end' violence committed by men against women. Dobash and Dobash had a number of findings, but what was of interest for this research was that researchers have contradictory findings concerning violence in an interpersonal relationship. "Research findings are contradictory suggesting, on the one hand, *symmetry*, with men and women equally likely to perpetrate violence against an intimate partner, and, on the other hand, *asymmetry*, with men the primary perpetrators of violence against women partners" (Dobash & Dobash, 2004, p. 343).

Walby and Myhill (2001) assessed the methodologies of the new national surveys on violence against women. There are three surveys that were considered, a generic national crime survey, dedicated domestic violence surveys, and violence against women surveys. These surveys were developed to measure crime that was not reported to the official authorities and were based on perceptions of victims. Walby and Myhill (2001) concluded that the data from surveys could be more beneficial if there was scope for further questions enabling richer and deeper data.

Yllo (1988) stated in her research that she learnt more about wife abuse from 50 interviewed women than the quantitative data on over 2,000 couples could reveal. Yllo, made it clear that she was not detached from her research, rather she made her position clear by saying from the onset she was a part of what she was studying. A considerate analysis of the discourse

around the practice of honour crimes provides us with a method by which to better understand the phenomenon. Malinowski (1961) explained cultural practices are better explored after "penetrating the mental attitude expressed in them" (Malinowski 1961, p. 19). The purpose of this research is not therefore to simply reiterate 'facts' and analyse previous written work, but to discover reasons for certain phenomena and present these from my own specific perspective as informed by the theoretical and epistemological literature. The purpose is to try and gain an in-depth account of the respondents' perceptions. This data is not easy to code and quantify, but the aim is to identify discourses that will articulate the phenomenon of honour crimes and violence. As a British Pakistani, I have visited the proposed field location on numerous occasions and am well-versed in Pakistani political and social events. This experience has enabled a foregrounding of the nature and scope of violent crimes that are committed in Pakistan.

Silverman (1985) and Bryman (1988) amongst others have carried out a lot of work in distinguishing two 'schools' of social science. Both of these 'schools' are associated with two distinct versions of research: positivism and interpretivism. The school of thought adopted for this research is interpretivist, this concentrates on observation and description as its basis. This approach is adopted in line with other qualitative researchers to define and describe the social world as agreed by the interpretivist paradigm, and to try and reach meanings. As stated by Bryman (2008), one version of qualitative research is taking on the participant's perspective, describing the routine detail of everyday settings and understanding actions and meanings within their social contexts. When, as a researcher, you take on the participant's perspective, you are in effect trying to view events, actions and values through their eyes. By paying attention to mundane details of everyday life we can better understand

what is happening in specific contexts, so that we are able to add layers of reality to events. It is not possible to say that one school of thought is superior to the other. The choice of schools just helps the reader understand the approach the researcher has adopted and the reasons why.

Bhanbro et al. (2013) adopted an interpretive research methodology to try and understand the phenomenon of honour killings by accessing the meanings that participants assign to them. My research takes a similar approach by exploring and looking for meanings that Pakistani women give to violence that they face, perceive, and, or define in their everyday lives. Interactionist studies have been criticised in the sense that when the researcher is faced with behaviour within a culture that the researcher is familiar with, this behaviour can be seen as obvious and therefore unremarkable. Goffman (1961) disagrees and points out that this familiarity with cultures should be used as clues to help enable us to understand what is going on in situations. "Instead of beginning by asking what happens when this definition of the situation breaks down, we can begin by asking what perspective this definition of the situation *excludes* when it is being satisfactorily sustained" (Goffman, 1961b, p. 19). Familiarity with a culture can help the researcher see what is being excluded and why it is being excluded. This is information that could be very significant but could be overlooked by someone who is not familiar with the culture.

In this research the participants were given the freedom to actively construct their social world as seen by them. This generated data that gave an accurate insight into people's experiences. The primary mode of data collection was via semi-structured in-depth interviews. To understand the communal psyche of the culture, on issues of violence and honour, interviewing is the most effective tool that can be employed to access the

perspectives of the respondents. This is data that cannot be obtained from secondary sources. Using primary data will allow the researcher control over the direction and depth of the information received (Bryman 2004).

In addition to conducting in-depth interviews I engaged in participant observation, immersing myself fully within the routines and daily lives of the women in the rural area of Punjab. Through interviewing the women, I was able to learn about the culture in rural Punjab, and the lives and experiences of these women. Collecting the copy of the village *Shijra*, (A family tree – a book that contains details of all the families that live in the village) and analysing it led to the discovery that the *Shijra* only contains details of the male family members. This is an important book, one that is constantly updated and referred to consistently. The book helped me to make links between villagers and develop a deeper understanding of the kinship ties. Going to Pakistan on a scoping trip gave me the chance to explore the routines and daily lives of the respondents. As the focus was on investigating this phenomenon within its real-life context, the interviews gave me the chance to delve deeper for meanings. The data collected allows for meanings to be provided by the respondents rather than remaining restricted by pre-existing meanings. Although collecting data in this way generates a variety of issues for the researcher. Researchers investigating violence face certain methodological dilemmas concerning ethics, safety and empathy amongst others (see Ellis, 2016). How such issues impacted upon my own fieldwork will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

4.2.4.1 Critique of Qualitative Research

As stated earlier, the volume of qualitative research has increased in recent decades. However, it is not without criticism. The principle, accusation levelled at this approach is that it is too subjective to constitute science and add to knowledge. Critics also argue that this

research is often unsystematic and too impressionistic (Bryman, 2008). They assert that a qualitative study's findings are too closely dependant on the skills, biases and idiosyncrasies of an individual researcher (Bryman, 2008). In rebuttal, qualitative researchers point to normativism and argue that the objectivity goal is unattainable and not even desirable (Sarantakos 2005). The question of whether the research is systematic lies in the hands of the individual researcher who can take measures to ensure the rigor and replicability of their work. The measures taken in the present research are described throughout the rest of this chapter.

4.2.5 Ethnographic research

At its most literal, ethnography is the science of 'ethnos' meaning people, nation or culture. The way it is defined by social scientists varies greatly particularly since it has evolved from its anthropology dominated origins (Sarantakos, 2005). The main features of ethnographic research are that it is field research that examines cultures and interprets lived experiences in context (Sarantakos, 2005). The researcher is immersed into the setting, while trying to remain external to it (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). Ethnographic research involves in-depth investigation of the meanings of participants while stressing subjectivity (Pfeifer, 2000).

Ethnography was originally mainly employed by White Western academics that travelled to study 'exotic' communities in the Global South and East. Anthropologists utilising ethnography have argued that to fully understand a group of people it is necessary to immerse yourself amongst them for an extended period of time to observe daily life. The typical period of observation should last years to properly understand cultures, to learn the language, and

to be able to understand the cultural norms and participate in social events. Clearly, such a lengthy period is not possible in the context of PhD research.

With the volume of ethnographic research increasing, the issue of maintaining validity in their work was also important to the researchers concerned. Researchers are encouraged to spend their time in the field listening rather than talking and keeping accurate, extensive and candid notes. To ensure that the readers of their work are given sufficient understanding of the setting so that they can put themselves there too (Wolcott, 1990). They should also give a balanced presentation giving similar weight to each participant's account. This advice was applied in the present study.

4.2.5.1 Strengths and weaknesses of ethnography.

There are many strengths attributed to ethnographic research, among them the holistic nature of the approach and the significance given to sociocultural context in providing explanations (Sarantakos, 2005). Ethnographers understand that the researcher cannot be invisible but is an integral and active part of the interactions that they are hoping to discover. Hammersley and Atkinson (1986, p.19) have echoed this by describing the ethnographer as "the research instrument par excellence", someone who actively participates in the research process. By combining interviews, observations and photographic evidence in an ethnographic study I was able to achieve a significant degree of method triangulation. Method triangulation is achieved by using multiple methods of data collection about the same phenomenon (Polit & Beck, 2012). Like other forms of triangulation, method triangulation is viewed as a means to increase the rigour of a qualitative study (Denzin, 1978).

There are some limitations to observing people in their natural setting, the first being that this was a highly patriarchal society that I was entering, so it was difficult for me to establish

myself, as a new face, especially as a woman. Another limitation was that ethnographers normally spend extended time in the field, and I have used ethnographic methods, but with limited exposure, for a limited time duration.

4.2.5.2 Feminist ethnography

Feminist ethnography can be defined loosely as "ethnography that foregrounds the question of social inequality vis-'a-vis the lives of men, women, and children" (Visweswaran, 1997, p.593). The term first emerged in the late 1980s although the practice predates that. The approach uses qualitative research methods and the data gathering resembles that of anthropology (Ghosh, 2016).

In common with other critical theories, feminist ethnography strongly features "an ethical responsibility to address processes of unfairness or injustice within a particular lived domain" (Naidoo, 2012, p.3). In other words, the researcher acknowledges, and does not seek to conceal, compassion and a sense of duty to reveal unfairness and suffering and make their own contribution to promoting change. McNamara (2009) sums this up as "storytelling that makes a difference" (p. 161). Clearly, this is antithetical to the principles of positivism.

So, what makes ethnography feminist ethnography? The feminist ethnographer considers first the perceptions of participants at an individual level and then seeks to situate these perceptions within the social relations prevailing in the research setting:

> A central tenet of this approach is that individuals' experiences are socially organized, and as such, the researcher begins by examining the individuals' experiences but then proceeds to explore how the broader social relations have shaped them. (Perry et al., 2006, p.177)

This tenet is reflected in the present study as the narratives are first presented free of discussion (chapter five) and then linked to a discussion of social relations and other relevant phenomena (chapter six). McNamara (2009) highlights continuity and reflexivity in considering gender as key features. Feminist Ethnography also gives priority to the gender implications of the research process starting with the formulation of research questions and on through to the discussion of the implications of the findings. Warren (1988) reports through his findings, that when the researcher and participant were both of the same gender, people were far more likely to discuss their interests more openly.

There has been an ongoing debate as to whether there can, in fact, be such a thing as feminist ethnography. Stacey (1988) posits that a distinct feminist ethnography is not possible principally because the researcher cannot truly share the experiences of their subjects because they can at any time depart the setting. This standpoint has been countered by others who assert that feminist ethnography has played an important part in giving voice to previously marginalised groups of women (Reinharz, 1992). I acknowledge that I was able to leave the setting and the participants could not, but I do not feel that undermined the above-mentioned benefit.

While ethnography has often been used in the study of violence it is important to note that this method has not been commonly used to study violence against women specifically. Bourgois (1998) used ethnography to study violence in San Francisco heroin shooting encampments. In the 1930s, the Chicago School of Sociology were the first to pioneer ethnographic work within criminal communities (Bourgois, 1995; Fielding, 1981; Maher, 1995). They specialised in ethnographic fieldwork and created a new body of work though it tended to focus on forms of public violence such as gang violence. Over decades we have

seen a vast number of researchers take forward the tradition of ethnography. Whyte (1992) carried out observation work and discussed the importance of treating gender as a topic. Over time, the gender of researchers was seen as an important factor within fieldwork. Warren (1988) reports through his findings, that when the researcher and participant were both of the same gender, people were far more likely to discuss their interests more openly. This is something that I also found in this research, having the same gender made the respondents discuss issues that they would not discuss with a man. Many respondents spoke to me informally about certain topics and started and ended the conversation with a sentence like, 'you don't discuss these things with men', or 'men wouldn't understand these problems'.

Research in the Chicago School tradition has stressed that in order to understand human behaviour, it is necessary to explore the social meanings that underpin it. Emphasis is placed on studying the perspectives of individuals, paying close attention to attitudes, intentions and the way these individuals interpret their lived worlds. The present ethnography is an example of feminist ethnography.

 This method has been utilised more recently to study male violence and address contemporary debates. These studies are often British-based and focused on male-to-male violence largely and continue the tendency to grant attention to public violence (Ellis, 2016; Treadwell & Garland, 2011; Winlow et al., 2001). While these recent ethnographies have advanced criminology's understanding of male violence, particularly in economically deprived locations of Western societies, as Wattis (2020) has argued recently, absent from them is consideration of violence towards women in such locations. A further and significant point to make here is that these studies are situated in the Global North, further emphasising

the importance of the use of ethnography to understand violence against women in poor, rural locations in the Global South.

4.2.5.3 Focused ethnography

Research like mine, which as well as being feminist could also be termed focused ethnography, has been used by many researchers over many decades including Goffman (1952), Festinger (1964), and more recently Wall (2015). Wall (2015, p. 3) explains, "A focused ethnography usually deals with a distinct problem in a specific context and is conducted within a sub-cultural group rather than with a cultural group that differs completely from that of the researcher". In conducting focused ethnography, I focus on gaining exposure by becoming an actual participant in the rural settings and contexts; opening myself up to the daily experiences and contingencies of those who are being studied.

Further characteristics cited by Wall (2015) and shared by the present study are short term field visits, interest in a specific research question, the researcher having background of insider knowledge of the setting or cultural group and intensive data collection methods. Focused ethnographies produce a large amount of valuable data in a relatively short space of time. In this research, I had to select what to observe and what to record, there is a danger that my preconceptions and existing knowledge about this culture could have biased my observations.

4.3 Situating the Study

I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in a larger than average-sized village (the name of which will not be disclosed to maintain anonymity). The local population were all Muslims although it was apparent that unorthodox beliefs and practices were dominant including Sufist shrines,

witchcraft and supernatural powers. Demographic description of the research setting is limited not only by the desire to maintain anonymity but also by the lack of local record keeping. Hence, data such as population numbers, number of households and ages cannot be reliably stated. One of the most important dates on the village's calendar is the annual festival in honour of a locally born spiritual leader (*Pir*). Households in the village are typically extended families often with three generations under one roof. A much smaller number of nuclear families also live there. As a village on irrigated land, the local economy is largely agricultural with taxi driving and small-scale shopkeeping other popular occupations. Women also work on the land on a temporary casual basis, but their role is overwhelmingly within the household cooking, cleaning and child rearing.

I wanted to have a picture of the village to add to my research. I asked the local photographer if it was possible to get an aerial picture of the whole village. He did so by using a drone. The village cannot be identified by anything in the photographs and looks very similar to neighbouring villages within the Gujrat region. Although the shrine may seem to be quite distinctive, it is virtually identical to the shrines in the neighbouring villages. From the photograph the reader can gain an idea of the size of the village, the layout of the houses, and the overall feel of what a typical village in Pakistan looks like.
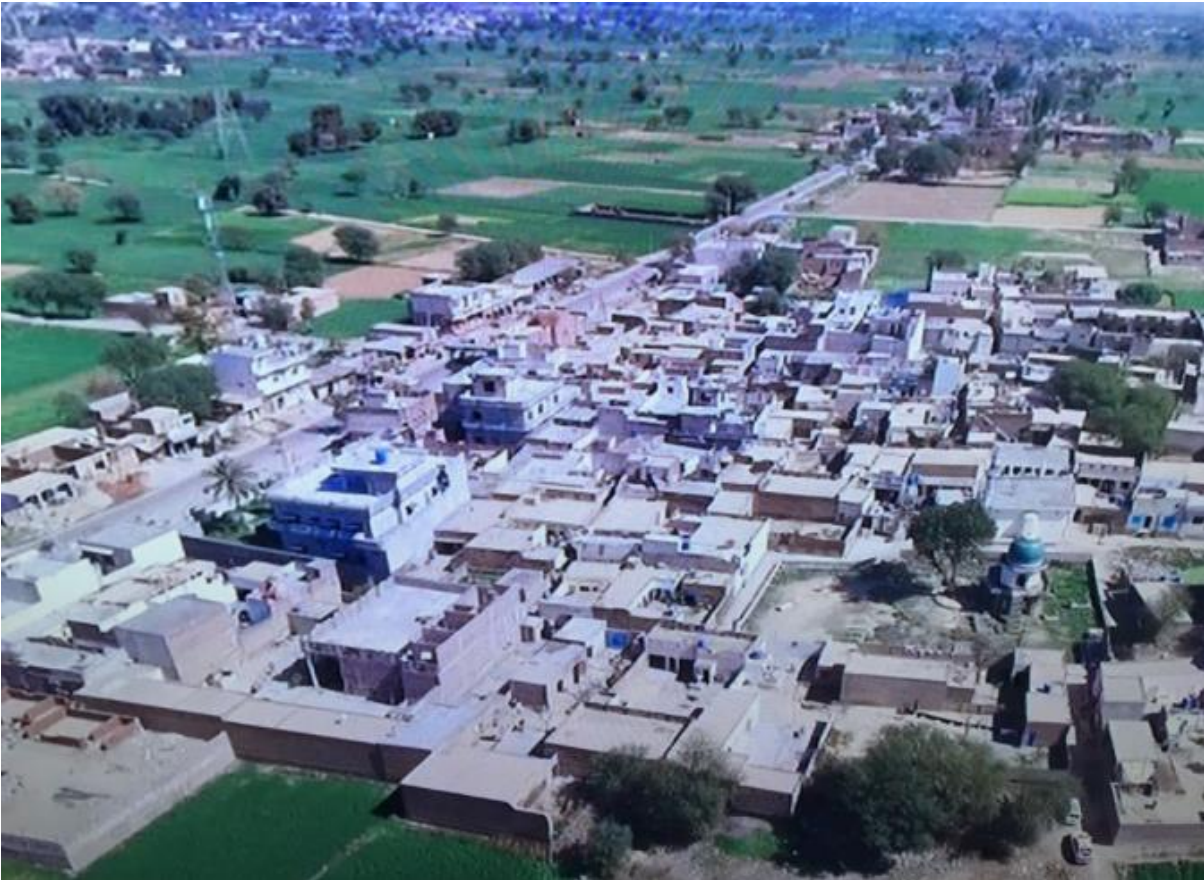
Figure 4-1: An aerial view of the village

4.4 Developing relationships and the use of gatekeepers

Although Pakistan is a country that I visit quite often, in many ways the culture was still quite foreign to me. The habits, practices and language although familiar, were not second nature to me. I needed to go to Pakistan and re-establish familiarity with the culture and learn the verbal and nonverbal 'interactional cues' that these women use in their daily lives. Ryen (2002) debates the dangers of going to different cultures and misunderstanding their language and gestures. Ryen discusses how extra linguistic features of communication can give rise to intercultural misunderstandings, such as when cultural groups use similar gestures but with different meanings intended. One example that Ryen gave was how nodding in most parts of Europe signifies agreement, but in many areas of Greece means *no*. I was very careful to

keep in mind that although I am a Pakistani, I am a British Pakistani. Having lived in Manchester, I could not assume that I knew everything about the culture and practices in Pakistan.

Before going to Pakistan, I took many lessons from an acquaintance in the UK to increase my knowledge of the practices in the village, to learn about the customs in the village that are different from here and improve my understanding of the Urdu language. As I was interviewing in Urdu and not English, it was necessary that my language skills were good enough to allow me to understand the women I interviewed and be understood by them. Having built up links with this community over the last two decades I was aware that my respondents all understood Urdu. The majority listened to me and then replied in Punjabi which I fully understand.

Many researchers have a gatekeeper that helps the researcher gain entry and to some degree acceptance within a culture and society. I also had two gatekeepers. They were not used in the strictest sense of the word; rather they were used as aids. I was able to discuss certain ideas with them, check on certain practices, double check my interview guide with them, and make sure I would not ask something that would be considered offensive or disrespectful.

I adopted a number of different techniques to become unobtrusive in the setting and to reduce reactivity. This meant that I had to pay special attention to my dress code and act in ways that would allow me to blend into the setting, as other researchers that have utilised ethnographic methods have done. In his research in Liverpool with 'downtown' adolescent boys, Parker (1974) did not exactly copy the boys' way of dressing, but did wear a black shirt, black jeans and a leather jacket, which he explained enabled him to blend in with the others.

Ethnographers normally spend considerable amounts of time within the field so that everyone around becomes used to their presence. Due to my frequent past visits to Pakistan, I was a familiar face and was able to fit in straight away, and it did not take me long to build relationships of trust. I was able to trade on current experience and knowledge in developing participants conceptions of my identity. Other researchers have also used their 'present identity' to help in their research. Pryce (1979) in his research utilised his identity as a Jamaican and knowledge of Jamaican religious activities in order to form a rapport with his participants.

I had to be very careful about my 'self-presentation' – I engaged in everyday conversations and allowed others to discuss and question me on my own life. This was crucial in getting accepted. I was also very careful in concealing my personal and religious views, and in this way ensured I was sensitive to the community. I did draw the line at taking part in religious activities that were not in line with my religious beliefs. This approach was adopted by Fielding (1982) in his research on the National Front where he concealed his political views and presented himself as an 'unconverted sympathiser'. Hobbs' (1988) research was also similar, Hobbs in his study of detective work put himself forward as 'sexist and chauvinist' in order to fit in and be seen as an insider, although when integrating within the culture Hobbs' drew the line at racism. This is also something that can be seen in other studies, where the researcher suppresses their own views to integrate within the culture but draws certain lines and boundaries depending on their own moral views (see Ellis, 2016). The researcher has the power to reveal aspects of their own self, as and when they choose over the duration of the research. Often you can find that your role changes as your relationships develop with participants.

It is important to keep in mind that there are limits to the identities that the researcher can negotiate with the participants. Attributed characteristics such as age and gender can limit the identity taken on by the researcher. Having the same characteristics as the participants can aid in the construction of identity. Although desirable, this is not always a possibility. In my case I was unable to disguise my class. This meant I had to try harder to get accepted by the lower-class women. The fact that I don't live in Pakistan and was only there on a visit, separated me slightly from the women there, who thought I would not understand their problems. This was not an insurmountable problem, but one that required careful handling, if this had become a barrier that I could not overcome then this could have restricted access to data. I navigated this by changing my dress to simpler clothing, and leaving behind expensive accessories, i.e. expensive watches, and eating the same food as them.

Hunt (1984) went through a similar issue in her research on developing rapport in fieldwork amongst the police. Due to her gender, she was seen as 'untrustworthy' by the other males in the force. Hunt overcame this by utilising strategies such as spending time on the pistol range, displaying skills in judo and by taking unusual risks; she was eventually able to negotiate an acceptable identity for herself.

4.4.1 Using gatekeepers

The use of gatekeepers in ethnographic research is very common. These gatekeepers can be individuals, groups or organisations. They have in common the ability to influence the researcher's access to participants (Latchem-Hastings, 2019). Frequently, these gatekeepers are notable for their decision-making position within the population of interest and may be community leaders, human resource managers, organisational leaders or those with political influence.

Similar to other feminist researchers, my interests lie in exploring other women's lives and hearing about their experiences, but to be able to reach these women, sometimes it is important to realise that you will have to go through males. The patriarchal nature of Pakistani society means that to get anywhere it is necessary to go through men who are gatekeepers. This raises significant issues for a feminist ethnographer conducting research in this context.

The use of gatekeepers is common across many types of research design and is often unavoidable. For Singh and Wassenar (2016) there are two distinct and sequential gatekeeping processes — access and cooperation. Access enables the researcher to initially enter the setting for the fieldwork and cooperation enables the fieldwork to run smoothly and continue for as long as required to collect the required data. The primary issue with the use of gatekeepers is that they may try to exercise control or seek some kind of reciprocity. A gatekeeper may want to exchange permission for influence over sampling or even over the findings, undermining the legitimacy of the research (Broadhead and Rist, 1976). In a highly patriarchal setting where gatekeepers are normally men, the female researcher has to be particularly aware of this possibility.

For my fieldwork my initial access was secured with the help of two male villagers with whom I had kinship ties and who I had had contact with prior to my arrival. In addition to ensuring access, I was able to discuss certain ideas with them, check on certain practices, double check my interview guide with them, and make sure I would not ask something that would be considered offensive or disrespectful. The word gatekeeper could be misconstrued as meaning an obstruction without whose help nobody shall pass. In my case, the gatekeepers were more like guides. They pointed me in the right direction and saved me embarking on

pointless quests. They gave many small tips as to how I should present myself and played a subtle role in opening doors and smoothing my way.

Once the fieldwork had begun, I periodically sought the cooperation of a family mainly through approaching family patriarchs, though sometimes it was the matriarchs. Snowballing also took place as one participant would introduce me to another potential participant. It was a challenging aspect of the research to gain and maintain access and co-operation and required me to pay great attention to my manner, dress and style of communication.

4.4 Reflexivity and Positionality of the Researcher

Researchers approach phenomena from a variety of perspectives and positions which lead to the development of diverse, but equally valid, understandings of these phenomena. A researcher's background and their positionality affect what area of research is chosen to be researched, the research questions, the angle of investigation, the methods that are judged adequate for this research and the evaluation of the findings. Malterud (2001) argues that reflexivity also includes the "framing and the communication of conclusions" (p.483).

4.4.1 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an awareness of your own self while you are in the situation of action, and the role of the self while you are constructing the situation. Reflexivity can be seen by some as a reliability problem; others, however, feel the different ways of approaching data collection and analysis can provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of complex phenomena. Sweet (2020, p.922) posits that "reflexivity" should help researchers theorize the social world in relational ways. Bradbury-Jones (2007) and Stronach et al. (2007) describe how reflexivity is the active acknowledgement that as a researcher your position has the ability to

affect not only the research process, but also the research outcome. There is a growing literature featuring the reflexive accounts of female researchers as they investigate the phenomenon of gender-based violence (Green et al. 1993; Palmer & Thompson 2010; Presser 2005, 2007; Sharp & Kremer, 2006; Thambiah et al., 2016) to which the present study aims to add.

According to Haraway (1988) feminist research and particularly feminist ethnographic research pursues situated knowledge through a heightened reflexivity. Therefore, reflexivity is closely linked to feminism and feminist research and is intertwined with many of its ethical considerations including the feminist ethic of care (Kirsch, 1999). It can even determine what a feminist researcher studies and how they design their research (England, 1994). Feminist ethnographies such as this one do not avoid or seek to hide the presence of the researcher. Instead, reflexivity is an integral component of the overall research endeavour (Nencel, 2014). Nencel (2014) asserts that reflexivity occurs at both an epistemological and a methodological level with the former considering our approach to learning about knowledge and the latter how we should conduct research to gain this knowledge. One aspect of reflexivity required in the present study was the ongoing need for the researcher to reflect on the authenticity of the testimonies of participants who may experience perceived pressures to restrict their candour, and which may influence them to take stances in line with social expectations.

4.4.2 Positionality

Self-reflexivity starts when the researcher reflects on their own positionality. Berger (2015) states that reflexivity, is indeed a critical self-evaluation of the researcher's positionality, but added to this by suggesting reflexivity is a continual inner dialogue. It is important to

understand the position, perspective, beliefs and values of the researcher, particularly in qualitative research where the researcher is often constructed as a 'human research instrument'. In line with Berger's thinking, in this research I turned the researcher's lens onto myself from the outset to recognise my own positionality within the research, the effect that I may have on the setting, people that were to be studied, the data that was to be collected, and its interpretation.

The importance of positionality in feminist research is based on the assumption that knowledge is formed by the specific circumstances or contexts in which it is located and produced (Valentine, 2002). My positionality was that I approached this research as an educated middle-class Muslim woman, who travelled to Pakistan to conduct fieldwork. The participants were Muslim women of different classes and educational backgrounds. I had preconceptions before I travelled to Pakistan, thinking that as a woman I would be able to relate to the women who participated in this research. However, I discovered quite early that this was not enough. What truly helped me gain acceptance was my background as a divorced woman. I was told that the reason I was 'included' in certain conversations was because I was 'able to understand' having gone through this experience.

The aim of feminist research is to produce *for* women, research that is ethically accountable and empowers the participants. In order for this research to become a truly feminist study, I had to eliminate barriers and overcome the 'me' and 'them' binaries. This helped generate trust and co-operation, and as Mullings (1999) wrote, helped me to gain a better understanding of women's lived realities. The second step was for me to manage issues around positionality and a need to create positional spaces where the participants were able to talk to me without fear of being overheard. At times I found it difficult to create positional

spaces, or when created, to be able to interview the women (interruptions, fear of being discovered disclosing information by others).

In fact, when inviting people to take part in the research I was initially turned down by some, until they discovered that I was divorced and now a single mother. Initially I was very hesitant about discussing my status with the respondents as I am a very private person, but I soon began to discuss my own status and experiences without much prompting. This was very deliberate and fast became my chosen process of 'selective self-representation' (Mullings, 1999). My experiences as a single mother offered a parallel trajectory which enabled a shared context to be developed. Although each woman had her own lived experiences, they were able to share their journey with me, confident that this would be understood as similar experiences and backgrounds can draw people closer together. For example, as Berger (2013) points out "an interviewer who lost her father may use the lens of this experience in making meaning of narratives of bereaved individuals" (p.2).

Similarities, understanding and empathy of experiences are seen as an invisible bond that draws people closer. Yllo (1993) acknowledged that as a woman she was vulnerable to violence, and it was this awareness that made a difference to how she understood this problem. Yllo saw this subjective understanding as an important component of her analysis, rather than an impediment to her work. Yllo stated that it is impossible to avoid objectification while conducting research. Her reason for this is that she is separate from the women who are interviewed, the violent incidents are not experienced by her, but they can be understood by her as recognition of the problems that they pose (Yllo, 1993).

For most researchers, women are asked to take part in the research through voluntary agencies, or when women have stepped forward to report their experiences to the justice

system. Kelly (1987) is very clear about her own identity as a woman, rather than a researcher, and discusses how this influenced her choice of qualitative research methodology. Feminist researchers are particularly sensitive to the nature of the relationship that they have and maintain with the respondents. Kelly describes how she was very keen to try and give a little 'something' back to the respondent.

In designing the research project, my own biographical experience, and those of the women that were known to me, were drawn upon. The interview guide was developed carefully so that women could give a full account of their experiences. Oakley is one of the pioneers of the second wave of feminism and makes very important contributions to feminist approaches to research. Oakley (1981) discusses methodological problems and looks in-depth at women interviewing women. She found, and stated, that the goal of finding out about people through interviewing is best achieved when the interviewer and interviewee relationship is non-hierarchical, and the interviewer is prepared to invest their personal identity in the relationship.

My religious beliefs and values were very different to the beliefs held by the participants. This made it difficult at times for me to connect to the women who would discuss their beliefs with me. I overcame this by constantly reminding myself that beliefs and values were products of different upbringing, education and exposure to different cultures. Malterud (2001) writes that, "preconceptions are not the same as bias, unless the researcher fails to mention them" (2001, p. 484). By reporting my preconceptions, beliefs, values and position throughout this research I believe that I can increase validity and reduce bias.

Exploring lived experiences has been a central theme of feminist scholars in recognising the value in researching women's experiences of life. The concept of a 'lived experience' is

closely linked to reflexivity. The aim of this research is to explore the lived experiences of the women in rural Punjab, and while I acknowledge that reflexivity can be presented in my work through my values and thoughts, my research can also benefit as these same values and thoughts are commonly shared in rural Punjab by the women that will be interviewed. This can help build up trust and rapport faster and allow the shift from 'outsider' to 'insider' to be smoother.

Throughout the duration of data collection, I developed a reflexive journal, similar to that proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in which I made regular entries. I recorded my positionality, insider/outsider status, methodological decisions and the reasons for these, photographs, the logistics of the research, and reflections on what was happening according to my own values and interests. This diary was very private and cathartic. I tried to balance my multiple accountabilities in this process.

My prior knowledge of the setting and the life experiences of some of those who lived there moderated my response to hearing more of these stories and in more depth. Although the stories were distressing, I was more prepared for what I was to hear than a 'stranger' researcher would have been. Knowledge of the setting, the use of gatekeepers as guides and an interviewing technique that avoided taking a participant beyond their comfort zone were all factors in managing personal risk. Furthermore, my reflexivity included an ongoing assessment of my own vulnerability to hearing the testimony and my safety more generally. Ethical issues related to harm to the researcher are discussed later in the chapter.

4.4.3 Managing marginality

One of the main problems that researchers are faced with in ethnographic work is the balancing of the insider and outsider role; this is seen as managing marginality. If the

researcher identifies too closely with the participants, observations and interpretations can become biased, presenting an inaccurate picture. Over-rapport can lead the researcher to concentrate on one particular subgroup or setting, to the extent of ignoring, side-lining or minimising access to other groups or settings.

By adopting an outsider position, I was able to see the participant's behaviour in a relatively detached way with the freshness of an outsider. Things that participants take for granted will be seen by the researcher. There is a balance that needs to be maintained between being an outsider and becoming an insider. One danger of remaining an outsider and being too detached is that it becomes difficult to build up relationships of trust. In this instance participants were unlikely to talk about their experiences or views, which will in turn prevent the researcher from developing an understanding and knowledge of the social meanings that underpin group interaction and the participant's perspectives.

The aim for me, as a researcher, is to balance the insider and outsider roles and combine the advantages of both. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) have emphasised that striking a good balance between the outsider and insider roles is essential for good ethnographic work. They have stressed the importance of being part of the group and yet remaining detached – being a 'friend' while remaining a 'stranger'. This is easier said than done, it can be a difficult and stressful experience, but if done correctly, can be very rewarding.

4.4.4 Veiling

For a study involving interviews and observations, the issue of veiling is one that requires consideration in terms of its impact on the research. There are many forms of veiling, all of them acceptable within this society. There are a few examples which include:

Figure 4-2: The full heavy covering
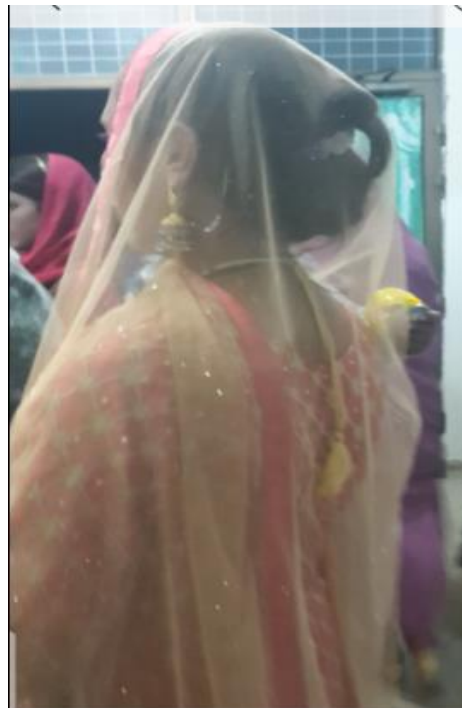
Figure 4-3: The basic covering

Figure 4-4: Even pre-pubescent girls cover their hair

The different forms of veiling within the same society can be seen as contradictory. Contradictory to the rules of Islam which state that the purpose of the hijab is to inspire morality – a covering of the hair and bosom only. Although there is no specific style, the primary objective is to cover the hair completely. There is no Islam-based obligation to cover the face, or for young children to cover their hair. Also, wearing a veil that is transparent defies the purpose of veiling itself.

I found it strange to hear members of the community discuss women who would not cover their hair with veils as 'immoral' and 'loose' but respect women who wear transparent veils. The cultural expectations were different to the dictates of religion. This may indicate that local traditions are overriding the written texts of Islam which I came to realise was a consistent theme in many areas of life in this setting. I observe the veil myself, but do not judge others who do not wear the veil as many of my close family members do not agree with the veil. I myself started observing this practice only in recent years. I also did not have a preference for a certain style of the veil. My positionality here helps – being from the UK

I have attended many religious seminars, and an equal number of fashion events to know that there are many styles and shapes for the veils, and these are adapted by each individual according to their own positionality. My network of family and friends has helped me in learning that the wearing of the veil is subjective to each person – religious/fashion/necessity.

Considering the impact on the research, little is to be found in the literature on this question. Some research studies have included facial expressions in their data as a further dimension of participants responses (Ismail, 2017). Furthermore, most interviewers would allow facial expressions and body language to inform their lines of enquiry. Clearly, full face veils would hamper this process, but the researcher can compensate by being increasingly sensitive to tone of voice which is what I did.

Gaining access to the participants required me to observe a certain dress code and behaviour which may have created a sense of discomfort for me if I did not belong to this background and was not already accustomed to wearing similar clothing. The change in my dress code and the veiling at times of my face helped to bridge the positional differences which also helped to lead to an insider status. The veiling of the face was something that I had never done before but was able to adjust to without too much trouble. Again, this was something that I was uncomfortable with but realised it was necessary in order to achieve the insider status.

4.4.5 Autonomy

A second issue related to women's social position in the setting relates to their autonomy. It is important to state that some women in the village were not confined to the private domain and some worked, usually on the land, and some regularly ran errands for their household. Some, however, had their movements more closely controlled. These women constituted a

'hard to reach' population (Rockliffe et al., 2018) but I considered their inclusion and their voices important to the research. For these women greater effort was required to use gatekeepers to ensure participation.

Figure 4-5: A woman riding a bicycle to run the household errands

Documenting and analysing my experiences as a researcher required ongoing critical reflection as part of a reflexive research process. I have described and explored the situatedness of the participants, their multiple and shifting identities and agendas that shape the knowledge they produce, in association with my own positionality. Situatedness is a concept that acknowledges that individuals are cognitively intertwined with the social, cultural and environmental factors in their lives (Costello, 2014). For a researcher this means

understanding is reached through both hearing the voices of participants and also having an understanding of these influencing factors.

I will briefly discuss how I managed issues around positionality in my research across multiple divides of power, locations and areas of social difference. Firstly, I would argue that the most important step in this research was to take on board Harding and Norberg's (2005) recommendations to minimise the power relations between myself and the participants and eliminate the hierarchies in knowledge production.

A few respondents told me they did not mind being interviewed in the *darbar*[4]. I found it uncomfortable to visit the *darbars* with these women due to my religious beliefs. In addition, I found it difficult to comprehend how some women, who were medically unwell, were not allowed to travel out of the house to visit the Doctor. These women were able to go to the shrine, regardless of the time. Watching the women quietly accept and not question their husband's orders was challenging for me to observe. I did not want to be seen as a 'troublemaker' in the village or feel responsible for inciting a woman to take a stand that she may not be ready for.

Mullings (1999) also discussed the importance of 'positional distance'. My religious views were vastly different from the participants. This made me feel uncomfortable at times, changed the way I presented my own beliefs, and at times made me behave differently than I normally would. One of the dilemmas that I was faced with was my disbelief in the powers of the *darbars*. It was very difficult for me not to put across my beliefs to the participants. I had to constantly remind myself that I had gone to the village to explore the experiences and

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[4] Darbar is a shrine that is frequently visited by the rich and poor alike. Some attend the darbar to pray while others see attending a darbar as a soul-searching exercise.

views of these women and visiting the *darbar* to pay their respects and pray was a genuine belief of a particular world order, and a communication channel that I was unwilling to close off. However, as the researcher I experienced distress at encountering these perspectives. Seeing how women were at times placed in situations where they were not able to fully dismiss, or challenge views and practices was difficult for me. When questioned on why the women visited the *darbars* I was told it was because it was the 'right thing to do', 'we are told to go', 'our parents always come… their parents came before them…'. Luff (1999) makes similar points about establishing rapport with participants and her struggle to achieve a balance between gaining acceptance and not misrepresenting her position. Luff discussed the difficulty of listening patiently and facilitating discussions on views that she would normally challenge. Although methodological protocols are followed, Luff describes the experience as one that can feel very difficult.

Another dilemma that I faced was when I visited the *darbar* with the participants. My religious belief is that women are forbidden to enter graveyards, however, in order for me to acquire an 'insider' status it was important for me to participate in the activities of the participants, especially activities that were important to the respondents. I visited the *darbar* a number of times during my stay in Pakistan, these visits were not opportunistic visits, but rather a deliberate act of gaining trust with the participants, a chance to place the women within this context and to elicit further information.

Occasionally you can feel powerless at different stages of the research and find that you are overlapping the insider/outsider divide – I was an insider, due to my religious and ethnic background and my family connections in the village, yet I was an outsider as I tried to create an identity as an academic researcher. My own experience of living within a Pakistani culture

and, as a single mother offered a comparable trajectory. This allowed a shared context to develop, which enabled me to accept that each woman has their own experienced journey to share.

In terms of the effect of a lack of autonomy among some women, those given the least autonomy are less likely to make themselves available for interview. Those experiencing coercive control within their households may be less forthcoming if they do attend an interview or join in the informal observed discussions at the firepit. This issue is intensified by the research questions being addressed in the study which are highly controversial and sensitive in nature. It is for this reason that it was essential that a self-selecting sample was used comprising participants who self-identified themselves and who gave their informed consent in full knowledge of the nature of the study. Both sampling and ethical considerations are covered in this chapter.

4.5 Sampling

There are two basic methods of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling. The sampling method that was adopted for this research was non-probability sampling, sometimes called purposive sampling. This gave me the freedom to use as a sample whoever is available and willing to take part in the research. I was able to observe and speak to who I wanted as the research progressed.   This research study used convenience sampling aided by snowballing. Convenience sampling has been defined as "a type of nonprobability or non-random sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate" (Etikan et al., 2016).

For my research I wanted to learn how women in the Punjab define and interpret their lived experiences of violence and the reasons that they attribute to this violence. To begin the research, it was necessary to identify the 'population' that I wanted to study. The main area of concern was of how the 'membership' of this population was to be defined. For this I had to go back to my research questions, and to have these research questions answered I only had one sample criteria that I kept in mind when selecting respondents. One inclusion criterion was clearly that the respondents were all to be women. However, I had to decide the extent to which I restricted participation to the direct victims of VAW. Early in my interactions in the setting it became clear that rich descriptions and interpretations could be heard from those indirectly affected such as the close relatives of direct victims. Indeed, some of these accounts may have the added value of a degree of distance from the incidents discussed which may free participants from some of the pressures on participation and offer more dispassionate accounts. Furthermore, when I was interviewing women, it was only while interviewing, that I discovered who was a victim and who was a perpetrator. It is difficult to 'choose' a victim or perpetrator while interviewing in research such as mine, as I discovered, certain participants were both a victim and a perpetrator at the same time, others started off as victims and later became perpetrators, while one woman who was a perpetrator and later became a victim. As a result, the direct experiencing of VAW was not applied as an inclusion criterion.

It is often stated that violence including VAW is largely hidden. Although researching in a hugely contrasting setting to Elizabeth Stanko, I agree that it is a mistake to view VAW in this way (Stanko, 2006). Whereas in the UK it is public records and media reports which lay the issue bare, in rural Punjab word of mouth and personal direct and indirect experience

ensure that violence including VAW is a widely known and widely discussed phenomenon. When interacting in the field it was not a question of whether a woman was aware of the violence in her community but whether her knowledge was direct or indirect and, in the latter case, her relationship to the victim.

The women in the village had different levels of literacy; some women were illiterate, while there were a few women who had graduated from university. Being literate was not considered as an inclusion criterion. There were some women who took part in the research who were employed, some who had been employed, and others who were unemployed and had never had a paid job in their lives. The women in the village that I was in were all Muslim, but categorised themselves as Muslims belonging to particular sects, and had different beliefs. For the purpose of this research, it was not necessary for the women taking part to be of a certain age, marital status or class.

Access to suitable respondents was facilitated via my own personal links within the community in Pakistan utilising snowballing and opportunistic sample gathering techniques. The project therefore adopts a community studies approach as utilised in related studies, e.g. Quraishi (2005). Many local residents knew me and communicated with me on a daily basis. This helped me to identify initial interviewees and the technique of snowball sampling increased the list of participants.

When it came to selecting a sample size, a number of things were considered; the resources that were available to me, and the sample sizes that were used in previous studies. Bhanbro et al. (2013) and Brinkmann (2012) for example, are amongst some of the researchers who opt for a 'less can be more' approach with fewer participants. There are many benefits to using a few cases as researchers can be more thorough. Another advantage is that a small

sample size leads to a much more feasible study. Finally, it is possible to discover important phenomena within cultures and societies from analysing a few cases. One example of this is the study by Chaudhry (2009) who looks at a very small sample of girls and women (5 women, 2 girls) who are perceived as deviant by their communities in rural Punjab. It is through this study that Chaudhry was able to represent the participants' as co-constructors of knowledge.

There is no consensus on a suitable sample size for qualitative interview studies. Creswell (1998) proposes conducting between 20 and 30 whereas Morse (1994) argues that a minimum of six interviews be included. Bertaux (1981) sets the minimum at 15. In line with Creswell, Green and Thorogood (2009) posit that "the experience of most qualitative researchers is that in interview studies little that is 'new' comes out of transcripts after you have interviewed 20 or so people" p. 120). These authors are alluding to the notion of saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) whereby interviewing only continues until no further valuable data is being gathered and that which is collected is merely repetitive. The aim originally was to interview around twenty women for this research. One of the benefits of having a smaller number of respondents to interview is that this allowed for a closer relationship between the researcher and the interviewer, gaining more trust, which allowed them to be more open. The interview sample size is in line with the qualitative research approach and is similar to the size that is used in existing studies in this field.

The subject of violence and honour is a culturally sensitive area and the slightly larger sample size factors in unseen matters, i.e. non-attendance, illness, or pressure from family on the individual not to take part in the research. The interviews were conducted in a safe establishment so that there was no physical danger to the researcher or the interviewee. It

was left to the respondent to nominate a meeting place for the interview. The other area for

consideration was that the research will be published in the UK, even though participants

will be anonymised, this helps in minimising any risk to the researcher and the participants,

that may arise unintentionally if an interviewee feels stigmatised as a result of the research.

The interview sample ultimately comprised of 15 women as presented in **Error! Reference

source not found.**.

Table 4-1: Interview participants

Pseudonym	Age	Recruitment method	Marital status	Education	Social class
Women Participants					
EZINA	19	Invited to take part in the research by me	Single	Studying in an Islamic Institution	Lower Class– No one in the family works – Father occasionally does odd jobs in the village for money – dependant on charity they receive from villagers
SUNDAS	21-25	Invited by me – originally introduced by Ezina	Married – 2 Children	Educated until College	Upper Class. Have workers in the house for household tasks and chores. Father and Husband earning in Kuwait.
ZULEIKHA	16	Asked if she could take part in the research	Single	Never been in education	Lower Class - Ezina's younger sister
DADI	Over 60	Introduced by Ezina	Widow	Never been in education	Lower Class - Ezina's paternal grandmother
ZIYA	21-25	Invited to take part in	Separated	Educated until High School	Upper Class – Relocated to Italy when she was 18 – travels

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		the research by me			back and forth now. Spends majority of the time in Pakistan.
IMAN	16-20	Invited to take part in the research by me	Married	Educated - but was not able to complete High School	Lower Class
RANIYAH	46-50	Invited to take part in the research by me	Married	Educated until College	Upper Class – In a second marriage – obtained a divorce in her first marriage
ZAKIYYAH	16-20	Introduced by Ziya	Married	Educated until High School	Middle Class
BAY JEE	Over 60	Introduced by Raniyah	Married	Educated in Islamic Studies only	Middle Class
HIDAYA –2 interviews	26-30	Invited	Married	Was unable to complete education	Middle Class
MUSHIRAH	26-30	Invited	Married	Graduated with BA (Hons) in English	Upper Class
LAILA	Over 60	Invited	Widowed	Uneducated	Upper Class
REYHANA	26-30	Introduced by Ziya	Divorced	Educated until High School	Lower - Middle Class
HIBA – Interview heavily redacted	26-30	Introduced by Ziya	Married	Uneducated	Lower – Middle Class
INAYAH	40+	Introduced by Subhani	Married	Uneducated	Lower class
RABAIL	Information withheld				

In addition to the interviews, I spent an extended amount of time with three of the women (Reyhana, Iman and Rabail) accompanying them during their daily routine but also recording (with consent) some of the conversations we had. This data was added to the overall data corpus for analysis. Also, three women with whom I spoke at the firepit are quoted in the findings chapter under the pseudonyms Rimsha, Naseem and Nazish.

4.6 Observations

In our daily lives we use observation to gain knowledge that helps enable us to know how to act in the world. Observation for research purposes is similar, but with a vital difference. The aim of this observation is to produce theoretical and empirical knowledge about specific issues. When observation is used for research purposes, observation is named differently, organised differently, and is recorded and interpreted differently. Observation in ethnographic research is a comprehensive, ongoing process undertaken systematically with the researcher placing themself within specific places at specific times with the intention of gathering data. The data that is gathered is not stored in personal memory but is noted straight away (or as soon as), and then carefully interpreted and analysed through a systematic procedure. One of the benefits of observational research is that this is subject to validity checks, and therefore more accurate than observation produced regularly in everyday life. Malinowski (1922) and Whyte (1992) discuss how ethnography can help enable qualitative descriptions of particular behaviours, cultures and groups. The behaviours that were chosen by me to observe and record were dependant on the research questions being investigated and determined by theoretical interests.

There are two categories of observation used in research —participant and nonparticipant. Participant observation sees the researcher take part in the daily activities of those being

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observed which enables a closer identification with their experiences and thought processes (Woods, 1986). However, this deeper involvement does increase the potential for bias and subjectivity. In contrast, for non-participant observation the researcher acts as a remote observer looking in on these activities. This is a simpler form of observation requiring a less intensive effort by the researcher and may reduce subjectivity. On the other hand, the greater remoteness could cause nuanced findings and explanations to be missed and removes from the researcher the possibility of becoming a contributing part of the group with the resulting satisfaction this can bring (Burns, 1994). Non-participant observation can be further divided into covert and overt observation. Covert observation involves concealment from participants who are unaware of the researcher's presence. The overt type has no concealment and observations are made with the knowledge of participants (Miller & Brewer, 2003). For my observations I mainly adopted a participant stance; for example, when I was at the firepit making chapatis with the women of the village. One exception to this was my observations at the *darbar*, where I observed the 'scene' more remotely rather than trying to observe individuals.

Figure 4-6: Making chapatis at the firepit

Another advantage of ethnography, which is quite significant, is that data that is obtained

through observation can be used to supplement information used through other sources, i.e.,

interviews. The data collected from participants in interviews, about their own behaviour,

can be compared with and added to observations of samples of their real behaviour. This

helps produce a more holistic picture of the participant's culture. There are also a number of

limitations to observation as a research method. The environment may be inaccessible

making observation difficult or impossible. The reason for this could be that certain

behaviour deliberately avoids observation, as can be the case with deviant behaviour. There

were a number of times that I had the opportunity to visit a 'shop' to see how women purchase

'amulets' for 'black magic' but was unable to go. This was an area that was hidden and

dangerous, due to the alleged deviant activities that take place within these shops. Although

I was very tempted to go, I was stopped by others who were with me as they considered this a danger to my personal safety.

To gather data, there were times when I was observing certain events and practices covertly, i.e. visiting the 'Darbar' (Holy Shrine). The reason for this was that I was not there to observe the people in that area, but rather to observe the culture, the processes and the practices. A number of times observations were carried out covertly, this was to reduce reactivity – I did not want the participants to behave differently if they thought I had conflicting views. Patrick (1973) carried out covert research on a Glasgow Gang to reduce reactivity as such groups can be difficult to access and may react negatively to the presence of a researcher, a situation I too was faced with during the course of my observations in the village. Although visiting Darbar's was something that I had heard of, and I knew what to expect, actually visiting one was a new experience for me, this is only one example of how I was able to see the familiar as strange. "Field research is essentially a matter of immersing oneself in a naturally occurring… set of events in order to gain first-hand knowledge of the situation" (Singleton et al, 1988, p. 11). This was something that I did as much as I was able to throughout the research. Where possible I tried to immerse myself within certain events so that I was relying on data that was gathered by myself.

Originally, I started recording my observations on a coding sheet. A coding sheet (sometimes referred to as coding scheme or system) comprises a list of codes assigned to actions, behaviours and responses that are assumed in advance to feature in the behaviour being observed (American Psychological Association, n.d.). I soon gave up the sheet and started making field notes instead. The reason for not using the coding sheet was that I felt restricted in writing up the information. The advantage of this sheet was that I was able to organise my

data better, but soon realised that the pre-determined categories were deflecting attention away from certain activities that could not be categorised. Since the data has been obtained, I have been able to determine categories and redefine categories. As Bryman (2008) reminds us of the need to be both vivid and clear and I felt this would best be achieved without the constraints of a coding sheet. I did not want to run the risk of returning to my notes and having to ask myself what I really meant when writing a particular note. Another principle I followed that Bryman (2008) recommends is to write the notes as soon after the event you have observed as possible. Rather than waiting until the day's fieldwork was complete I carried by notebook with me and updated it as I went along. Since the data has been obtained, I have been able to determine categories and redefine categories. Being able to return to my field notes, gives me the ability to reread my data in multiple ways. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) have also recognised this in their work. They have identified and understood that the researcher will be torn in two – between narrowing down the analysis through categories and at the same time allowing them the freedom to be able to reinterpret their original data.

One of the benefits of ethnography is that information about the physical environment and human behaviour can be recorded by the researcher without having to depend on accounts from others. Observation recorded directly by the researcher is more objective and freer from bias, than observations related by a participant. The observations that are taken from participants may be misleading as it may not have been systematically recorded and will therefore be prone to errors. The account may also be distorted so that the participant can put forward a more desirable image of themselves. The researcher will also be able to 'see' what the participants cannot. In this case, as an outsider, I was able to 'see' certain features of the

environment and behaviour that the participants take for granted. I was able to see the 'familiar as strange', note down descriptions and pick up important patterns and regularities.

4.6.1 The Researcher's Role

Gold (1958) and Junker (1960) discussed the researcher's role in the research, concentrating on the extent of participation of the researcher in the group or setting. Gold and Junker highlighted four key types of roles along this dimension.

- The complete observer;
- The observer as participant;
- The participant as observer;
- The complete participant.

As the 'complete observer' the researcher has no interaction with the participants during data collection. The 'participant as observer' involves the researcher taking on a more established role in the group for the bulk of the research. The 'complete participant' fully immerses themselves within the participant's role and plays an established role within the group. The role that I took on was the 'observer as participant'.

As I did not have an established role within the group, my role was just one of conducting research through interaction with the participants. This role is commonly used in more structured observation in natural situations, where as a researcher I spent short periods of time observing behaviour in relatively large number of settings. This is similar to a complete observer's role, as the researcher is able to maintain their detachment from the participants, adopting an outsider's view. Within this role I was able to move within the group to observe behaviour in different settings and sub-settings. As a result, I was able to get a more holistic picture of the group.

The danger in this role is that the researcher is viewed with suspicion by participants and may be considered as an outsider. This may result in the participants changing their behaviour in order to present themselves in a particular way, even reacting with antagonism towards the researcher. This is particularly likely if the researcher remains with the group and in this time fails to negotiate an acceptable identity or is unable to conform to participant's expectations. I found that although I did acquire an insider status, this was not a status that was constant – I was frequently moving between the insider and outsider status.

To gather data, there were times when I was observing certain events and practices covertly, i.e. visiting the 'Darbar' (Holy Shrine). The reason for this was that I was not there to observe the people in that area, but rather to observe the culture, the processes and the practices. A number of times observations were carried out covertly, this was to reduce reactivity – I did not want the participants to behave differently if they thought I had conflicting views. Patrick (1973) carried out covert research on a Glasgow Gang to reduce reactivity as such groups can be difficult to access and may react negatively to the presence of a researcher, a situation I too was faced with during the course of my observations in the village. "Field research is essentially a matter of immersing oneself in a naturally occurring… set of events in order to gain first-hand knowledge of the situation" (Singleton et al, 1988, p. 11). This was something that I did as much as I was able to throughout the research. Where possible I tried to immerse myself within certain events so that I was relying on data that was gathered by myself.

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picture. Over-rapport can lead the researcher to concentrate on one particular subgroup or setting, to the extent of ignoring, side-lining or minimising access to other groups or settings.

By adopting an outsider position, I was able to see the participant's behaviour in a relatively detached way with the freshness of an outsider. Things that participants take for granted will be seen by the researcher. There is a balance that needs to be maintained between being an outsider and becoming an insider. One danger of remaining an outsider and being too detached is that it becomes difficult to build up relationships of trust. In this instance participants were unlikely to talk about their experiences or views, which will in turn prevents the researcher from developing an understanding and knowledge of the social meanings that underpin group interaction and the participant's perspectives.

4.7 Interviews

Interviews are useful in helping us to understand participant's experiences, and the meanings they attach to them. The verbal and non-verbal discourses and language used by the participant can help inform us about how participants construct their lived realities. Interviews give the researcher the ability to probe the respondent to gain further insight and clarity. As well as numerous advantages, interviews as a means of data collection have also been criticised. Lee (2000) highlights how interviews can be limited to only those who are accessible and agreeable to participation. The author also notes that collecting data using face-to-face contact may reduce the likelihood of admitting to socially undesirable behaviour (Lee, 2000). From this standpoint, data from interviews does not reflect social reality, but rather only the subjective interaction between the researcher and the researched.

This research is qualitative and depended upon in-depth and in-person conversations with women about their day-to-day lives and their experiences. Interviews were chosen as the core method to collect data due to the explanatory nature of the research. An interview can be characterised as in-depth should it generate a detailed, rich account (Bryman & Bell, 2019). Kvale (1996) likens a researcher using in-depth interviewing to a miner digging for gold in the form of precious nuggets buried deep in the experiences and perceptions of participants. The treasure cannot be revealed through attempting the shortcut of leading questions. Lightly and flexibly structured, the in-depth interview is interactive in nature as data is generated through the interviewer-interviewee interaction (Legard et al., 2003). Typically, in an in-depth interview, the researcher attempts to explore certain meanings at greater depth by delving into the reasoning, beliefs and feelings behind the responses, responses which may be rather superficial before such probing takes place (Legard et al., 2003).

As well as in-depth the interviews used in the present research can also be defined as semi-structured. This is one of the common types of interviews used in social research (Sarantakos, 2005). Rather than use a rigid questionnaire, the researcher prepares an interview schedule. The researcher retains a good degree of flexibility to pursue threads and responses that could arise, and which were unanticipated. A further means to achieve this is to use mostly open questions (Bryman, 2008).

In the present study, the goal was to try and expand my enquiries and go in the direction that the women led to. The interviews were not rigidly structured, this enabled the women interviewed to bring forward information that they thought was useful in making sense of what happened to them. The nature of the phenomenon being explored, and the unpredictability of the responses and their emotional accompaniment meant I had to be

realistic about the degree to which I could expect to keep to an interview schedule. However, there were still certain questions I wanted to ask each participant so it would be wrong to view the interviews as entirely unstructured. Instead, the interviews were split into categories that aimed to discover:

- Definition – What is violence and how it should be defined?

- Extent & Distribution – How frequent are the incidents, how is it spread and whether it is distributed evenly across certain demographics like age, caste and class?

- Causes – Although the research is not going to focus on causation, certain questions will be asked to try and see what women think the reasons are for this violence, ie, are they to be blamed – do they think they 'provoked' the men to initiate violence?

- Impact – What is the impact of violence on the women and does this vary within the social structure?

I introduced an issue and then followed up on the participant's answers. The original interview guide is appended as Appendix 3.

4.7.1 Audio recording and notes

Mirroring the recording of notes in other spheres of life, social research makes greater use of audio and video recordings than in earlier times when handwritten notes were the norm. The audio recorder, particularly digital versions that record files that can be replayed on a computer and stored electronically are a major asset to today's field researcher.

Written notetaking has some serious drawbacks. With normal conversation generating perhaps 150 words per minute (Barnard, 2018) it is impossible to record verbatim speech with pen and paper, which means the interviewer would have to be selective in what is noted. These selective notes would then be difficult to reconstruct into data for analysis purposes.

However, the audio recorder also has weaknesses. One is that it cannot record things that are unspoken. These are primarily body language and the thoughts of the interviewer which occur during the interview. An audio recorder also has the potential to malfunction. The user may not switch it on properly or the batteries may fail. The potential that a participant may object to a recording of their voice being made also needs to be considered.

Taking all these issues into consideration I opted to audio-record the interviews but also have the means to take notes with me. In the end, the main notes I was left with were those noting unspoken communication, those related to ideas and insights I had which I did not want to forget and comments on the conduct of future interviews such as improvements on phrasing questions. Another category of noted items were omissions and inconsistencies in answers which can be as important as commissions and consistency. One example of this was when one of the women I was talking to said that she had agreed to marry her husband without any pressure, but later in the conversation kept alluding to how she was forced into the marriage and had no choice in this. At first glance this seems like an inconsistency but was actually a reflection of her socialisation and mental state. She was socialised from birth to agree to what her parents decided for her, not having the opportunity or right to make her own decisions. When she said she agreed without pressure, after some probing it was discovered that this was what she had been doing since she was a young girl – agreeing without questioning her parent's decisions regardless of what she wanted or felt.

4.7.2 Interview techniques

The interview was introduced by a briefing in which the situation was defined for the participant. There was a brief discussion on what the interview consisted of then consent was obtained, anonymity discussed, the use of an audio recorder was discussed and if the participants were asked if they had any questions. The first few minutes of every interview are decisive. The participants will want to have a grasp of the interviewer before they speak freely about their experiences and feelings. A good contact is always established by focused listening, with the interviewer showing interest and understanding. I introduced an issue and then followed up on the participant's answers. These interviews were not narrative interviews, and therefore there was a lot of jumping around from topic to topic, and events were not always discussed in a chronological order.

After the initial request for information, the interviewer's main role is to become a listener, abstaining from interruption and only asking 'clarification questions'. It is through questions, silences and nods the interview becomes a 'co-producer' of the interview. Conversation is seen as a basic means of human interaction, through which you interact, learn about experiences and the world they live in. It is through interview conversations that you learn about the lived world of the participants. Oakley (1981) explains that the 'conversations' (interviews) aid a researcher's understanding and allow the researcher to give something back to the respondent, in terms of advice and information. Kelly (1987) reiterated this and discussed how she did not stop talking to the respondent after the interview concluded and the recorder was turned off – sometimes Kelly spoke to the respondents after the interview, and spent as much time talking after the interview, as she did during the interview. This was also replicated in my research, sometimes through choice, at other times through necessity,

to ensure that the respondent felt comfortable and not suffering any stress as a result of the interview.

As Kersti Yllo (1993) outlines, devising interview questions for social research is quite a complex task. The kinds of questions that are asked are very important. The questions that we ask as researchers can reflect our values. Bograd (1988) shows how important it is to phrase questions in the correct way, so that the interview is conducted in a sensitive manner. The example Bograd used to highlight this was the phrasing of the question 'Why do women stay?' Phrased in this way, the question could be seen to blame the woman for remaining in an abusive relationship and further victimises her. Questions like these should be phrased in different ways, for example, it could be asked, 'What prevents you from leaving?'

Russell (1984) pointed out the significance of posing questions in a sensitive manner, as the answers influence the analyses. Russell found higher than usual figures for sexual violence in her research, accounting for this by proposing that broader and general questions were asked, so that women were able to state experiences that would not have been recorded had more restrictive phrases been used. What was of upmost importance was to try and allow the respondents to specify household affiliation/hierarchy as they themselves perceived it. Participants were encouraged to provide rich accounts of the violence they experienced/perceived, the contact relating to it, the connotations attached to the incident and the effects of this incident on their lives.

I had assumed that I would need to ease into the topic of violence rather than asking specific violence related questions during the early stages of the interview. With each interview I became more adept at doing this as conversations turned to relationships the participants

would themselves volunteer whether these relationships included violence and then recount examples often at substantial length.

An important method of researching violence has been to interview both victims and perpetrators to generate valuable data about their actions and interpretations (Waterhouse et al., 1964; Athens, 1980; Gondolf, 1987). In line with this, one of the areas that I was looking at tentatively was women perpetrators. In the interviews I was hesitant about bringing up this topic but discovered that this was a topic that was quite prevalent and ended up becoming one of the stronger themes in my research. Although I did originally have a guide, I did not end up using this much, I would prompt the participants throughout the interviews, but would generally rely on the participants to introduce topics that they found relevant regarding violence. My fear was that in introducing topics, I was not giving participants the flexibility to introduce topics of interest to them and may end up overlooking topics that were of relevance to these women. My aim in the interviews was to keep the flow of the conversation going and encourage the participants to talk about their feelings and experiences. I ensured that the questions were easy to understand, were short and more importantly were lacking academic language.

At the end of some interviews, the participants were tense or anxious, as they had opened up about experiences that were sensitive and difficult for them to face, or even re-face. There is a good chance that some participants may have discussed these issues/events for the first time in their lives. Some participants, if not all, will probably wonder at the end of the interviews about the purpose and the later use of the interviews.

4.7.3 The interview with Hiba

One of the participants who took part in this research was a woman named Hiba. Hiba was in her late 20s and belonged to a lower-middle class family.

While I was in Pakistan I was staying in my cousin's house until after my cousin's wedding. I was able to see Hiba almost on a daily basis. Hiba consented to being interviewed. However, Hiba approached me and asked me what the purpose of the interview was (this was explained to Hiba before she was interviewed). After listening to everything Hiba said she did not consent to the interview being included in my research. I assured her that her name and certain characteristics like age, family, address would be anonymised, but Hiba refused. I discussed this with my supervisor when I returned, and he asked me to try once again to speak to Hiba and see if she would consent to her interview being included. I then called Hiba and asked again — I wanted to include Hiba's interview in my research. Hiba did agree for her interview to be used, but only if I agreed to several conditions.

There were a number of things that Hiba wanted omitted from the interview — which I agreed to, then I read the interview out to Hiba. After that Hiba mentioned that she still was not happy with the interview and wanted some more information omitted — after which she wanted the interview read out to her again. By the time we finished, and Hiba was happy with the interview, I had redacted over half the interview. Hiba's fear was that her in-laws may not be happy about her taking part in the research or may take offence to something that she had told me. She felt that by taking part in this research she had dishonoured herself, and if the interview was published, she would end up further disgracing herself and her family.

Goffman discussed this situation, stating, "there are occasions when individuals whether they wish to or not, will feel obliged to destroy an interaction in order to save their honour and

their face" (Goffman, 1959, p. 158). I was satisfied that at the end of the process of reaffirming Hiba's consent to have her interview used she was satisfied and had not been coerced. While it was sad to lose half the interview it is a researcher's priority to avoid harm to participants.

Certain participants after interviews are left with feelings of emptiness, as they may feel they have given so much and have not gained anything in return. On the other hand, participants may leave the interviews feeling enriched, not just having enjoyed having an attentive listener, but also sometimes having obtained new insights into their lives. I found this to be the case in my research, I felt certain respondents left feeling satisfied and unburdened, and there were some, like Hiba, that left the interview feeling uneasy with everything that had been shared. With some respondents I was able to extend the time spent with them in the interview, to helping them after the interviews in their daily chores. I found that this practice gave the participant's time to collect themselves after the interview and relax before I left them.

4.7.4 Conducting telephone interviews

There were two interviews that were conducted on the phone when I returned from Pakistan. One was Hidaya's interview. Although Hidaya was interviewed in Pakistan, she called me once I returned to be interviewed again. When interviewed in Pakistan, although Hidaya did give consent to be interviewed, she was very hesitant at the time. Once I started interviewing her, she gave very short answers, and concluded the interview shortly after starting. The first interview is included below; this will not be used for analysis purposes, and is no longer part of the data:

Me: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

Hidaya: We're 4 sisters and 1 brother.

Me: Are you the eldest?

Hidaya: No – I am the fourth sister, then its my brother and one sister younger.

Me: How many children do you have?

Hidaya: A boy and girl. Hassan (son) is 12 and Harem (daughter) is the younger one.

Me: How old were you when you got married?

Hidaya: I was 13.

Me: 13? Did you have your rukhsati at 13?

Hidaya: No – that was when I was 14.

Me: Legally are you allowed to get married at that age in Pakistan.

Hidaya: No – but you can always find someone who will get the younger children married – or you can find someone who will read your nikah without checking your Identity card and won't know the age. We don't ever put down the age on the nikah nama.

Me: Were you asked if you wanted to get married to Asif?

Hidaya: No.

Me: Were you ok with the marriage taking place?

Hidaya: No.

Me: Why did you not speak up – say something?

Hidaya: I did – again and again.

Me: And?

Hidaya: No one listened to me.

Me: Were you in education at the time?

Hidaya: Yeah – I was memorising the Quran at the time – I had already memorised 5 chapters out of the 30.

Me: Did –

Hidaya: I don't want to answer any more questions. Maybe if I find time afterwards.

The reason that the above interview is reproduced here in the Methodology chapter, is to show that it is not always possible to get the hoped-for interview. Originally, I wanted to discard the interview as I felt that this was not an interview that could be used, due to the brief answers and the actual length of the interview. However, once I started analysing this, I decided that this interview was actually a lot better than some of my 'longer' interviews. The reason that this interview was not used for analytical purposes is that the second interview given by Hidaya is used in its place and I was concerned that during this first interview the participant may have been under stress and that as it was not face-to-face, I could not confirm this.

One day when I was at university, I received a call from Pakistan. When I picked this up it was Hidaya. We made small talk, discussing the weather and current affairs, after a few minutes she apologised to me for not properly 'allowing' me to interview her. Hidaya told me that her brother Rohaan (gatekeeper) had told her that I was 'alright'. She asked me to interview her again, which I did. Hidaya's second interview gave me really good insight into Hidaya's life. I think one of the reasons that Hidaya wanted to be interviewed was because of the distance between us. Hidaya probably felt 'safer' being interviewed by someone who was geographically distant from her. However, as I was not expecting the call I was not able to set up audio-recording and was left with note taking in this case.

4.8 Photography

As mentioned previously, in addition to electronic recording, photography is used to capture data and provide a record of behaviour. Although the use of photographs as a research method has increased over the last few years, little is known about the processes by which

photographs can be integrated into qualitative research and used as visual data (Hurworth, 2003). One of the reasons for this is the lack of agreement about the ethical and moral issues that are associated with the use and presentation of data in photographic form (Banks, 2001). Stimson (1986) has noted that the use of photographs, illustrations and diagrams are virtually absent from sociological journals and books.

Pauwels (2015) identifies three main forms of using photographs in social research. The first is the use of 'found' photographs, photographs that are already available at the setting and discovered during fieldwork. Second are photographs used for elicitation purposes, normally during interviews. Third are photographs taken to represent the research, taken expressly for that purpose (Pauwels, 2015). It is this third form of photography that is used during the current research.

Photography, as a data collection method has its roots in ethnographic observation. "In an ethnographic context the use of the camera can yield powerful and revealing images" (Quraishi & Philburn, 2015, p. 67). Harper (1994) describes the photograph as an 'undeniable, static record of the truth'. Anthropologists have used photography as visual notebooks to explore the 'otherness' of foreign cultures (Banks, 1995). Photographic images are open to a multitude of interpretations that can reveal perspectives and meanings within the research process.

In visual research, consent is a very tricky issue, as anonymity cannot be given. Radley and Taylor (2003) in their research in hospitals, were given consent to take photographs of places and objects, but not of people. Recent advantages in digital technology now allow us to entirely block out the faces in photographs to preserve participant's anonymity. The only concern that I have with this is like Banks (2001) suggested, the 'fuzzy-face effect' in the

Western world is associated with criminality. In addition, I found that having the 'fuzzy-face' effect in photographs defers attention from the context to curiosity about the individual in the photograph. To avoid this, even when I had consent to take photographs of respondents, I tried to avoid capturing the face.

Byers (1964) and Sekula (1975) both argue that viewers typically approach photographs from two perspectives, as an art, or as an accurate record of a scene/subject. Viewed as documentary evidence, photographs reproduce the reality by yielding a record that is unmediated and unbiased. Barthes (1964) has classified photographs as 'polysemic', something that generates multiple meanings in the viewing process. The viewers of this thesis can use the photograph as a receptacle from which they can actively construe meanings, rather than passively obtain meaning, as each photograph is subject to multiple perceptions and interpretations. This ambiguity is not a limitation; it is in fact a strength as multiple meanings can be excavated for the rich data that the photographs yield.

Wagner (1979) advocates increased interest in visual studies of people in their natural settings, which results in us not being able to view people carrying out their daily tasks in their physical contexts. Once we have photographs of people within their settings, there is little explanation of the image itself. This research aims to use photographs as documentary evidence in conjunction with the ethnography.

Upon my arrival to Pakistan, in line with Collier's (1967) suggestion, I started photographing the local areas and places of interest and built up an extensive photographic archive. I ensured that my activities were visible, so that the local residents were aware of my presence. It was while photographing that I observed daily patterns of the women in the village. These observations, along with accounts of my photographic activities, were included in my field

notes. It is the field notes that were taken that helped guide me as to which photographs should be included in the thesis and which should be bypassed. While taking photographs I was able to meet many of the residents of the village, increase my networking by starting up conversations, and increase my knowledge of the local activities. This approach was taken to help the viewer/reader have the ability to try and understand the culture in which the research took place.

The significance of photographs lies solely in the interpretation that is given to them. The communicative and structural characteristics of photography can possibly be compared to the verbal language. Moran and Tenago have described photographs as having the same "subjective, interpretive potential as words" (Moran & Tenago, 2005, p. 2).

The meaning attached to the photographs used in social research is co-constructed between researcher and reader. The first steps in this construction come from the photographer/researcher as they decide (1) what to photograph and (2) which photographs to publish (3) whether to crop or pixelate any parts of the image. The researcher also contextualises the images using captions and sometimes commentary. Hence the researcher has a substantial role in influencing the meaning of the photograph. Nevertheless, the meaning attached to the photographs is ultimately subjectively formed by the beholder, in this case the reader of this thesis.

Notes were kept on each photograph taken including data, time, description (later used for captions) and any other pertinent memos. As such the notes accompanying photography resembled those made for observations. Once the fieldwork was completed and in parallel with the analysis of interview data, photographs were analysed for their representativeness

and the importance of the information and meanings they conveyed before decisions on inclusion were made.

The photography in this research is intended to convey meaning and help create deeper richer insights. I was acutely aware that the vast majority of people who would read my research would have very limited personal knowledge of the setting in rural Punjab and that while I may make written descriptions a photograph can add greatly to what I could convey in words alone. Hence, as well as an evidentiary role in supporting my findings, the photographs had an important informative/ descriptive function.

I considered carefully the ethical and consent concerns that come hand in hand with using photography and overcame these by being transparent at every stage of the research. I ensured that I only took photographs of the participants with their consent, and also explained to the participants that the photographs were only to be taken for contextual purposes, they were a representation of the respondents while they were in 'their world'. Despite this I have only taken a small number of photographs in this research that include participants.

4.9 Analysing the interview data

Elisabeth Stanko asserts that research into violence against women is reliant on women telling their stories. "Accounts matter" she advises, as does the researcher's ability to carefully analyse these accounts (2006, p. 552) to uncover the patterns they reveal. Therefore, a systematic process of data analysis was employed to faithfully reflect these accounts.

All the face-to-face interviews were audio-recorded. The sample was a combination of literate and illiterate women which was why it was very important to use a language that could be understood by everyone. These interviews were conducted in Urdu, the National

language of Pakistan. Some of the respondents replied in Urdu, others in Punjabi. I do not speak Punjabi, but understand it fully, and the respondents who spoke Punjabi, were not able to respond in Urdu, but were able to fully comprehend what was being asked.

4.9.1 Translation and transcription

This research is reported in English but my interactions during the fieldwork were in either Punjabi or Urdu. When carrying out research in other cultures and societies it is important to keep in mind that the linguistic and social issues of translation are very important. There were many times that certain phrases or words were used that I was not well-informed about, and rather than just assume I knew what the words/phrases meant, I clarified these with the gatekeepers and made sure that these phrases or words were not taken out of context. I took great care when selecting gatekeepers, as individuals who were culturally acceptable as well as proficient in the Urdu language.

Once all the data was collected it was necessary to translate the interviews into English before they could be transcribed. Urdu and Punjabi audio recordings both required translating into English. There were significant challenges in the translation process. I conducted this translation myself. For each audio recording of an interview, I voiced a new recording in English. I judged that this would be less time-consuming and at least as accurate as transcribing first and then translating. It was then the new English recordings were transcribed.

I cannot claim that through interpretation of the data there were no discrepancies or variations from the original data. These discrepancies (if any) would have occurred through my interpretation of the answers, as I have understood the answers. One of the main difficulties that I discovered was the differences in the languages. English and Urdu are two very

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different languages, and it was very difficult to always put across my thoughts in Urdu, and in return, accurately translate the respondent's answers in English. The aim of this research was to try and find out what women in Punjab thought violence was, if they defined this as physical or mental. One of the complications was that the Urdu language does not have a specific word for violence.

Table 4-2: Urdu and English words associated with violence

IN URDU	IN ENGLISH
Zina bil Jabr/Zyadti	Rape
Hamla	Attack
Tasshadud	Torture
Qatil	Murder
Zabardasti	Force/Rape
Taish	Fury
Maar/Haath a Payi	Physical Hit
Zulm	Cruelty
Daba'o	Pressure
Taanay	Derisions/Remarks

Error! Reference source not found. shows the list of words that were closely related to violence in the Urdu language and their English translations. The words listed above are very specific acts of violence. I wanted to find out if violence was seen as physical, mental or emotional, by using the words listed above I would be implying that I saw violence in a

certain form, be it either physical or mental. Once in Pakistan I got a dictionary to help me with certain words, if need be, but soon realised that this was of no help. The words listed in the dictionary were not necessarily words used by the general population, especially within the rural areas.

These words may have been used in the urban locations where the population had a higher literacy rate, but in the rural locations, these words did not form part of the resident's daily vocabulary. One example is that the given word for violence in the dictionary and on the internet was 'Tasshadud', when I mentioned this word in the village and asked the respondents what they understood by this I was told unanimously that it meant torture, this was always considered as a physical punishment. Another example was the word rape – the official translation for this was Zina bil Jabr, but the local villagers would only refer to rape as 'Zyadti'.

Sutrisno et. al. (2014) encourage researchers to explain their translation process and to be aware of the potential pitfalls from an ineffective translation process. I took great care to faithfully translate the questions and responses for the revoicing recordings including reproducing pauses and intonation. As videorecording was not used, body language was not recorded. There were certain words and phrases that I deemed important enough to spend additional time to check I was converting them to English appropriately. As the recordings were made using a digital audio recorder the resulting files could be played on a computer.

Once the interviews were revoiced, I could begin the transcription process. I listened to the recordings through headphones while they played on my laptop. I simultaneously typed the words into a Word document, pausing when necessary. It was a time-consuming task spread over several days. Hammersley (2010) identifies a series of choices a researcher must make

when approaching the transcription task. Firstly, it is necessary to decide whether to transcribe at all. As I planned to use a computer application to code the data, I knew transcription would be necessary. Then there is the decision of how much to transcribe. As Bryman (2008) points out there will be segments of interviews which yield no significant data in that they do not address the research question. However, I decided to transcribe interviews in their entirety. The coding process would reveal less relevant passages because they would not contain coded fragments. The third, decision is what to capture in the transcription. Are there things beyond words that would be useful such as pace of speech, intonation, pitch, amplitude? As my tapes were revoiced to translate them, I decided to focus on the spoken words and did not record these additional dimensions beyond lengthy pauses, laughter and anger.

4.9.2 Using CAQDAS for data analysis

Armed with my transcriptions and observation notes, I began the process of data analysis. As a framework for this analysis, I adopted Braun and Clarke's approach to thematic analysis, often referred to as reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) (Braun & Clarke, 2005).

The interpretivist/ constructionist epistemology underpinning the research is reflected in the approach taken to data analysis. More specifically, I understood that the identification of themes and codes is not purely a function of recurrences but more one of meaning and meaningfulness in the context of the research and its research questions (Byrne, 2022). In other words, a theme needs to be both recurrent and relevant to the issues being addressed in the research.

RTA brings together three elements to conduct analysis: the dataset itself, the theoretical assumptions on which the research is based, and the skills and resource applied by the

researcher. Hence, by using RTA the researcher acknowledges that their particular application of the three elements produces a unique analysis that would not be replicable no matter how carefully another researcher attempted to recreate the process (Byrne, 2022). Instead of attempting objectivity I embraced reflexivity, subjectivity and creativity as Braun and Clarke (2019) encourage.

To manage the data analysis process, I decided to use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). According to Bryman (2008) CAQDAS has a number of benefits in that it pushes the analyst toward being both reflective and explicit about the analysis process, encourages them to seek connections between codes and can be helpful in developing plausible explanations. I imported the Word files into the chosen application (Atlas-ti). Carefully reading through each transcript I performed a series of actions largely concurrently. I created and applied a set of codes. The codes were applied to representative data fragments. In all 50 codes were created and applied. During the coding process new codes were added as I progressed, some were deleted, and others were merged or renamed. At the same time, I created memos to capture my thoughts about the data for use when presenting the findings and developing explanations. Birks et al. (2008) refer to memoing as a means of probing the data and describe it as a flexible analytical strategy which enhances data exploration. The researcher uses memoing to ensure that data is used in the context of the aims and focus of the specific research study.

A third process was the grouping of codes into themes and subthemes that would be used to organise the presentation of the findings in the written report. Figure 4-7 shows an example of the reports available to Atlas-ti users with this one indicating the most commonly used codes.
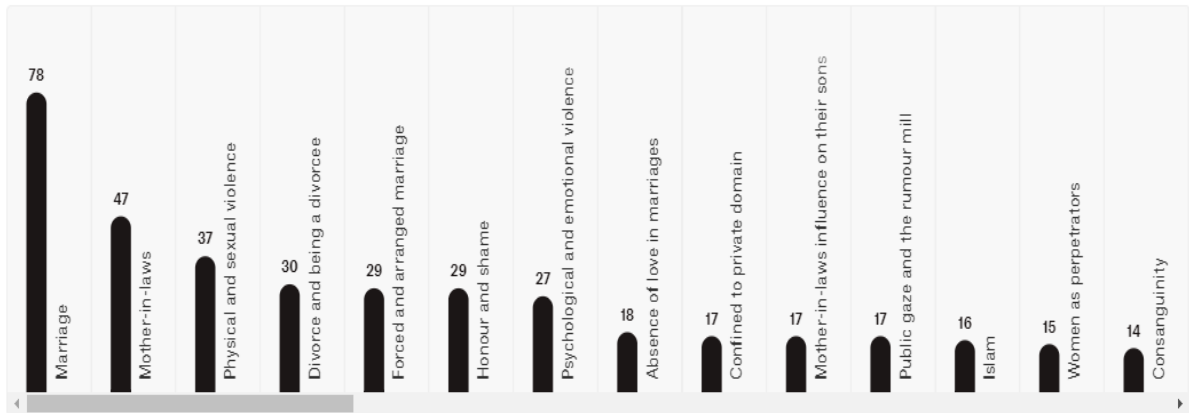
Figure 4-7: Screenshot of most common codes report - Atlas-ti

Six main themes each with their own set of subthemes were established as a result of the above-described process. In addition to recurrence, themes and subthemes were evaluated for their relevance to the research questions.

Table 4-3: Main themes and subthemes

Main themes	Subthemes
Marriage and Fertility	Absence of love in marriage
	Controlling fertility
	Having affairs
	Beauty and worth
	Childlessness, wrong sex or disabilities
	Widows
	Forces and arranged marriages
	Divorce and being a divorcee
	Money problems

	Child marriages
	Consanguinity
Belief Systems	Islam
	Caste and class
	Black magic
	Superstitions
	Fatalism
	Shrines, Sufism and pirs
Public Domain-Private Domain	Confined to private domain
	Role of education
	Dangers of the public domain
	Public gaze and the rumour mill
	Nobody to talk to
	Pursuit of happiness
	Public domain
Violence	External protections against VAW
	Stranger violence
	Suicide
	It's my fault I deserved it
	Economic violence and control
	Psychological and emotional violence
	Women as perpetrators
	Males-on-male violence
Actors and generations	Fathers-in-law
	Mothers-in-law
	Changing times
	Mothers-in-law & their influence on their sons
	Fathers
	Mothers
Honour, shame and keeping up appearances	Honour, shame and keeping up appearances

This structure of themes and subthemes guided the presentation of the findings in chapter five.

4.10 Limitations of the research methods

All research designs have limitations. Ethnographers have said that it is difficult for research to be truly objective. In this thesis the focus was not on remaining objective, rather it was my subjectivities that enabled this research. My positionality, biography and lived experiences ensured that I did not have to become the phenomena or hide behind a false sense of objectivity.

The present study was limited in sample size. As the sample was relatively small, it is by no means representative of broader female populations in Pakistan. In quantitative research, a small sample undermines the reliability and generalisability of a study. The issue is very different in qualitative research. Small samples are commonplace in qualitative studies which seek rich in-depth understandings the phenomenon of interest (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Qualitative researcher may prefer to judge sample size by the concept of saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) meaning a sample has reached the appropriate size when to add further participants would not produce novel data that could established new themes, subthemes or findings.

The research was conducted in Urdu and a translation process was required to convert collected data for analysis and reporting. This gives rise to a potential limitation. To exemplify this, Urdu does not have a single direct equivalent for the English word 'violence'. The Urdu words tended to describe a specific type of violent action or behaviour which

needed to be carefully reflected in the English translation. On occasions however, the clearest exposition of meaning in the context of the present study required use of the word 'violence' which from a purely technical translation point of view could be challenged.

My findings represent the views of a certain group of women, from a specific rural area in Punjab, these findings are not to be taken as fully generalisable. There are clear distinctions between urban and rural areas, likewise, all the rural areas in Pakistan are not similar, some are very 'urbanised' with built houses, many local facilities and good economic opportunities for the local residents. Other rural areas have few houses with fewer people, and businesses and facilities are located far away from one another. Depending on the rural location, the views and experiences of the residents can differ greatly.

It was stated earlier that for some classic anthropological ethnographies, researchers can commonly spend years in the field. I was restricted to three weeks in the field. Having said this, I was able to gather a substantial corpus of data in this period in the form of interviews, field observation notes, and photographs.

4.11 Ethical considerations

All researchers need to consider the ethical implications of their work and the potential issues that may arise at various stages (Bryman, 2008). Bryman proposes four categories of these issues: 1) potential harm to participants or researcher; 2) informed consent; 3) privacy (anonymity and confidentiality; 4) avoiding deception. I also took fully into consideration the suggestion made by Stacey (1988) that "ethnographic methods also subject research subjects to greater risk of exploitation, betrayal, and abandonment" (p.21).

4.11.1 Harm to participants or researcher

A researcher has a duty to avoid causing harm to either participants or to themselves (Bryman, 2008). Maher (1997) observes that ethnographic research involves participants in relations of risk and exploitation, due to this it is imperative that we do not impose any additional burdens or expectations on these women. There were times when the respondents cancelled the interviews due to other developments. The desire to get the interview exposes the interviewer and interviewee to unnecessary risks and fear of exploitation. Therefore, there were times when I had to reflect and reconsider, this involved at times letting opportunities go. I adjudged that I needed to mitigate risk of harm to participants that ranged from embarrassment right through to physical harm from disapproving husbands and male relatives. The two main ways I achieved this was to use male gatekeepers and to seek cooperation and assent of the relevant family's patriarch or matriarch. In addition, to this I spared no effort in reminding participants that they could pause or withdraw at any time.

The case of Hiba described earlier in the chapter exemplified a number of issues. First, it demonstrated that in a country where the honour concept is so powerful researchers must be acutely aware of the prominence this will have in participants' minds. Second, it demonstrates that the process of informed consent is just that — a process not an event. The example of Hiba showed how researchers may need to engage in a lengthy period of negotiation and that this must be undertaken without any suggestion of coercion or deception.

I initially thought when I would undertake the work that the emotional risks would outweigh any other risk. However, I discovered this was not the case. Initially when I started this research, I discussed with my supervisor that I was going to focus on domestic violence and emotional violence, with a conscious wish to stay away from sexual violence. The reason for

this was for my own psychological wellbeing. Listening to stories of sexual abuse was something that I always found difficult. These would result in me having sleepless nights and have a major impact upon my mental condition. Nevertheless, I found once I started interviewing it was not possible to exclude sexual violence from the remit of my research, as doing this would cause detrimental harm to my overall research because domestic violence and sexual violence are inextricably linked. Violence with a sexual dimension and that without flow from the same patriarchal social structures and so should be analysed together (Walby, 1990). Domestic violence can take the form of many different violent actions and behaviours included sexual violence (Walby et al., 2017). Acts of domestic violence are often serial and may one day be sexual, another physical and another psychological. To conduct an interview which precludes the sexual incidents would have been both impractical and inappropriate to the aim of presenting a complete picture. To ensure that I did justice to my work I needed to include everything that arose within the interviews.

In addition, when sexual violence was discussed, it became necessary for me to ask questions that were probing in nature to reveal further data. This was another ethical dilemma that I faced. Islamically it has been prescribed that there is a prohibition of disclosing sexual relations, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (Allah be pleased with him) reported that Allah's Messenger (Peace be upon him (PBUH)) said: The most wicked among the people in the eye of Allah on the Day of judgement is the men who goes to his wife and she comes to him, and then he divulges her secret (Sahih Muslim 1437, The Book of Marriage, Book 16, Hadith 3369).

According to my early Islamic education, I was always taught that this applies to men and women, one must not disclose their sexual relations to others, to do so is to sin. It was a very difficult decision for me to make, whether I should discuss the sexual relations that the

participants have with their husbands, and then if this should be disclosed in my thesis. The participants gave their consent, but it was a psychological predicament for me and caused me much apprehension. In the end, I included the data collected, but at a psychological risk to myself.

There were no physical risks encountered while undertaking the fieldwork in rural Punjab, but there were a number of emotional and psychological risks. The area of research resulted in data that was not only sensitive but also very distressing to listen to. It was important for me to ensure that there was someone in place who I could talk to after an upsetting interview. I ensured that this was done without breaching confidentiality.

4.11.2 Informed consent

Despite additional challenges I ensured that the principle of informed consent was applied. The English version of the Informed Consent for is appended as Appendix 2. Interview participants were informed as to the purpose and process of the research and advised that they could pause or terminate their participation at any point. However, there was a practical barrier to the use of informed consent forms as some of the participants were illiterate. For this reason, in some cases I relied on verbal consent. For informal discussions, such as those that took place at the firepit and for the observations conducted during the fieldwork, it was impractical to fully apply informed consent. Bryman (2008) addresses this dilemma, "In ethnographic research, the researcher is likely to come into contact with a wide spectrum of people and ensuring that absolutely everyone has the opportunity for informed consent is not practical" (p.121). Seeing informed consent as a process rather than a one-off is a valuable lesson from my experience. It is important to note that the principle of consent is also applicable and was applied to the taking of photographs. No 'blanket' consent was sought,

instead when I wanted to take a photograph, I advised anyone present the purpose and framing of the image and its intended use. In visual research, consent is a very tricky issue.

4.11.3 Privacy

I ensured that all the interviewees were anonymised so that individuals could not be recognised in the thesis. In place of their real names, names that were in common use in Punjab province were used but changed should I learn of a name being associated with the participants' families or other individuals at the setting. In addition to this, I ensured that 'personal' data was not collected from the participants, i.e., date of birth, address. All interview transcripts were kept on a password protected computer. All transcripts will be kept for a minimum of 36 months. Transcripts will be confidentially shredded upon completion of this research as defined by its acceptance and publication. This research included taking and using photographs. The principle of anonymity was also applied to these. I ensured that no photographs were used which could identify participants or indeed any other individuals at the setting. Anonymity was also assured for any photographs taken and participants were assured that they would not be identifiable from photographs.

In order to fulfil the ethical duty of confidentiality it was essential to build and maintain a relationship of trust with the participants, which built up the integrity of the research. Access to suitable respondents was facilitated via my biographical links within the community. When I approached respondents, I informed them about the project via an informal oral briefing, the respondents were assured that anonymity and confidentiality will be provided. However, the respondents were informed that although anonymity will be absolute, confidentiality was conditional on them not revealing intentions to harm themselves or others in line with the ethical code.

Another aspect of privacy was ensuring that the interviews were conducted in a place where the interviewees would not be observed or overheard. I had hoped to use a secure building but a suitable one could not be found. Instead, all face-to-face interviews took place in the homes of the participants in a private room out of earshot of other people. When someone else approached, the interviews were paused. When I realised there was going to be an issue in locating and using a secure building, I consulted with my supervisors who acknowledged that things can change once a researcher enters the field. They confirmed that it was ok to proceed provided that I adhered to the principle of the avoidance of harm, which I did.

4.15.4 Avoiding deception

In the context of social research, deception would involve not truly representing research work, its purpose or the role participants have in it. It is mostly psychological studies which may need to employ some level of deception in pursuit of a more natural response to the experimental treatment (Bryman, 2008). I personally avoided deception by clearly stating and often repeating the nature of my research, the role a participant would play in it and what the data I was collecting would be used for.

4.11.5 Ethics approval

University ethical approval as informed by the British Society of Criminology (Code of Ethics for Research 2006) was gained before any fieldwork was carried out. This was a long process as the application was not initially approved. There were a few issues that were raised by the University board that involved further clarification. The ethics form was submitted with a Risk Assessment form in which I outlined that I would have a chaperone present and the interviews will be held in a secure building.

4.12 Summary

In this chapter I have fulfilled two main purposes. The first was to situate my research within the ontological, epistemological and methodological universe. Specifically, I identified my research as interpretivist, constructivist, qualitative and feminist ethnography. The second purpose was to describe and discuss my research design, methods and the actions I undertook to operationalise the study. This included the research context, my reflexivity and positionality, the two main data collection methods (observations and interviews) and the way this data was analysed. Finally, I considered the ethical considerations of the study.

The overall aim of the research was to give voice to the women of this village in rural Punjab and the decisions made and described in this chapter all grow out of this aim. The population that was researched was a vulnerable population, whose voices were previously unheard. These women were encouraged to speak, and the meanings they ascribed to their words were accepted as a way of understanding their experiences. My purpose was not to reinterpret the respondent's answers to fit preconceived theoretical ideas about gendered violence, but rather to allow the unheard voices, to put across their own meanings and definitions.

These voices, my observations and some of my photographic evidence is now presented in the following chapter as findings that are organised according to the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

Chapter 5 Research Findings

Feminism forces us to locate our own autobiographies and our experience inside the questions we might want to ask, so that we continually do feel with the women we are studying (McRobbie, 1982, p. 32).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research. In doing so, it gives voice to the previously unheard thoughts and perceptions of rural dwelling women of the Punjab. Some of these women were interviewed, others contributed to informal discussions at which the researcher was present, and which mainly took place at the fire pit at the edge of the village. Other data presented here comes in the form of narrative based upon field observations recorded by the researcher when in the field and subsequently fashioned into commentary. As a feminist researcher a high priority is placed in this chapter on revealing the actual spoken (though translated) words of the women involved; hence the extensive use of direct quotations. The researcher also took many photographic images during the fieldwork and where appropriate some of these have been included. The chapter is organised according to the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data analysis described in the previous chapter. The data analysis process ended with the grouping of codes into five main themes, each having multiple subthemes. The main themes are marriage and fertility, violence, public-private domains, belief system, and actors and generations. The chapter focuses solely on presenting the findings and avoids the citation of other literature or theoretical perspectives as this is the purpose of the following chapter. At the end of this chapter a summary identifies the main findings.

5.2 Marriage and fertility

Marriage dominates the lives of fertile women in rural Punjab perhaps more than in most other societies. This was reflected in the data with many codes justifying a range of subthemes all related to marriage, marital status and fertility. With education not seen as a widespread priority among girls. Careers are not encouraged and from a young age, girls are reconciled to having their marriage negotiated by their own parents often to secure the social position of the family and sometimes even for short term material gain.

5.2.1 Beauty and Worth

Women who met society's standard of beauty discussed the abuse and difficulties they went through in their lives and how they considered this beauty to be a curse, while the women who were considered 'bad' looking, not quite meeting the expectations that society set for them, discussed the violence that they face in their lifetime. Beauty in rural Punjab consisted of women who are fair skinned and slim, and for everyone who did not fall within the accepted category, they were then ridiculed and belittled.

Being perceived as good looking, and being self-aware of this, was a factor in women's attitude to divorce and their assessment of their chances of remarrying. Hidaya, who saw herself as good looking wanted to divorce her husband and remarry but was being prevented from doing so by her parents.

When I asked her of her prospects of remarrying, Hidaya replied,

> Why wouldn't I? I'm good looking – it will be easy. You can't even tell I have two children; my body is still perfect. When I go out, no one believes me when I tell them that I have two children. (Hidaya)

In contrast, Rabail recounted how her life had been affected by not being viewed as good looking:

> I was never liked by my in-laws. I was very young when I got married. My in-laws did not like me. Said I was not pretty – my husband deserved better. Atif only married me due to familial obligations. They said I would just always complain that I was not good company. I would never get invited to occasions. Lots of people would arrange meetings in their house, I was never called to any. My in laws caused all this. My husband would not even eat from home. He would visit one of his sisters and eat from their house. One day my brother-in-law sat my husband down and explained to him that this could not carry on. That's when Atif told him that he liked this girl he met in his college. He wanted to marry her. Before I knew it Atif's wedding was arranged. Everyone liked the new girl. Her name was Aliya, but everyone called her Gauri (White). It's because she was really fair in her colouring. I did not ever meet her myself, but I heard she was really beautiful. My sisters in law who would never come to my house then came to tell me how beautiful she was. (Rabail)

A perceived lack of beauty had really knocked Reyhana's confidence and made her feel worthless.

> The [husband's] mum was telling him that although I'm dark and fat, and not nice – in fact she said – and I still remember her words – she said I was not capable of being a wife, because I was not attractive enough for any man – Irfan should put up with me because I was his passport to a better future. Things that had been left unspoken were said. I was told how difficult it was for him to have someone like me as a wife. How difficult it was for him to be intimate with someone as ugly as me… (Reyhana)

The women felt once they had 'secured' a husband, it would not be possible to find someone else who would be willing to take on a 'bad' looking woman. This was the reason cited for staying in their marriages. The women in this study said that their looks affected their own actions and the actions of everyone around them. They knew what they were able to 'get away with' and where there was no point saying anything.

There were also cases of women who have been told they are 'ugly' and have straying husbands – they are told that they should appreciate how their husbands are still letting them stay despite their looks, and so they have no grounds for complaint. Some women said that they have tried to ignore affairs to minimise the damage this has on their psyche but have been confronted by the deviant women themselves who are having the affair. The women deliberately engineer meetings with the wives in order to belittle them. The wives are told that they are not good enough for their husbands, they are being tolerated because of the children, they are not able to sexually hold their husband's interest, and they are not good looking enough.

5.2.3 Consanguinity and Forced Marriages

Rural Punjab is a kinship society based on membership of a group. The most significant groups are caste (*jati*), clan (*got*), village (*pind*), division (*patti*), and family (*parivar*). This form of social organisation is sustained through consanguinity – marriages between blood relatives. Marriage to someone outside the group is very rare and women have little or no say in their marriages which are normally arranged by their parents. Participants were mostly resigned to having their futures decided for them. Failure to submit to an arranged marriage was countered with appeals to family honour, something inculcated into girls as they grow up.

Although the custom of forced marriage is widely prevalent throughout Pakistan, especially in rural areas, it is actually outlawed religiously in Islam and also the Pakistan Constitution.

The research found that women were forced into marriage, despite not giving their informed consent, which resulted in deep unhappiness. Forced marriages in Pakistan were rarely seen

as a form of gender-based violence, rather they were seen as decisions that they were not happy with. Although my sample was small, I did find that it is not just women that are forced into marriages, men can also be the victims of this.

Ziya spoke of her experiences:

> Mamu Javaid came to wake me up. He asked me why I had not eaten anything before going to bed. We started talking about mum and both started crying. After a while my dad came up and said that I had to come down for my nikah (official marriage ceremony, the exchange of marriage contracts between the bride and groom). I was shocked to hear this, firstly, as I didn't know that my marriage was being discussed, secondly, my mum had only just passed away shortly before. I kept saying that this is not right, mums chaalisma (mourning period) has only just ended 2 days ago, we haven't finished mourning her properly so I can't even think of marriage at this time. I also said very clearly that I don't want to marry at all yet, regardless of the day or time. But as is typical of our families, no one listens to what the girl has to say. I was crying – a lot – but my dad and everyone else – all my maternal uncles (3) talked me into going down and sitting down for the nikah (marriage ceremony). (Ziya)

I probed on how her male relatives put pressure on her:

> They said that if I did not agree they would be shamed in front of all the relatives that were here and wouldn't be able to show their face in public to anyone – everyone would be talking about how their daughter refused the marriage. This is a big thing in Pakistan, this is the first thing that is said when a girl is told that she has to get married to someone who is not of her choice. The concept of shame is used. This is something that you grow up hearing and have this instilled into us from an early age. Probably for the reason that when marriage is brought up in the future with the girl it will be easier for the parents as they will have less explaining to do. (Ziya)

Ziya describes how she was informed and then coerced into agreeing to the marriage – one that she was mentally not ready for.

Zakiyyah was married at 16, to her cousin who was 13 at the time; the pair were both forced

into the marriage. With her brother and sister getting married her parents thought it would be

a good idea to complete the set by having her married at the same time. She recalled,

> I did not know that I was getting married – I only found out 3 days
> before the marriage. I used to go college. I only found out when my
> furniture (dowry) came home – otherwise I wouldn't have known at
> all. (Zakiyyah)

When I asked whether she had agreed to the marriage, she replied,

> Yeah – Pakistan culture is such – if your parents say that you have
> to do a certain thing, then you cannot say no.

I pursued this further telling Zakiyyah that I could not understand why she did not refuse to

do something that she knew was going to be a mistake:

> You're from abroad – you can say no to your parents. In Pakistan a
> woman cannot raise her voice. The ones that do raise their voices…
> That's why parents don't send their children on for further education
> they don't want them to know their rights or rebel. That's why
> parents put a stop to their daughters raising their voices from an early
> age – the fear of them going against what the parents want. If the
> daughters are not allowed to go out of the house, they do not know
> anything – than they cannot raise their voices. They don't have the
> 'permission' to speak. (Zakiyyah)

Not only are Zakiyya and Hidaya examples of forced marriages, but they also bring to light

the practise of child marriages. These practices do not follow the teachings of Islam; they in

fact go against the teachings of Islam. These practices are prohibited in religion but are the

norm in Pakistan. When coming across themes like this, it was clear that the cultural aspect

was much more important in the lives of the women interviewed and their families than the

aspect of religion.

Another frequent occurrence that can be found in rural areas is 'wife inheritance' which involves a married woman dying and having the deceased's sister replace her in the matrimonial house. There have been a number of cases where this has been discussed. The women all discussed that there would almost always be sexual abuse present in these marriages. The reason for this is that the 'sister' (this may not always be the sister of the deceased, at times it can be a first cousin or close relative but is always referred to as the sister of the bride) replacing the dead woman will almost always be forced into the marriage. This marriage typically will involve a male who is much older than the female. The abuse is said to take place when the woman who is to get married is unhappy with the marriage and has to forcibly acquiesce to her husband's wishes. Upon further probing I was able to uncover that the women were discussing rape in marriage as opposed to abuse.

5.2.4 Child brides

It is a widely held belief in the rural areas that younger girls conceive early, and this results in bringing home young brides – at times child brides, girls who are under the legal age of marriage. For many child brides this is an incredibly traumatic experience, but for some it is quite customary, with the children not thinking too much about it and naively accepting the marriage as the next phase in their lives. One woman explained how her life course was planned from an early age:

> You have to realise that I come from a small village – here children play together – and they have very simple games. As young girls we would get together and play with our dolls. We would all play games which would involve families – our dolls would marry each other, they would then have children, throw parties, invite other dolls to their house. We grew up playing families; it always started with getting married. We as girls, while growing up are constantly conditioned into thinking this is the natural order of the world. Our

upbringing is such… When I was told about my marriage, why would I refuse? This is what we are taught from a young age, that you grow up to get married, that's when you run your own house, you have your own family, you can meet your friends, have parties. (Inaya)

Typically, child brides are not aware of their rights, and their fertility is 'managed' by their husbands. Many girls in the village are known to have just turned 16 and are already mothers of a child or two. The women here apportion the blame on the mothers that bring home child brides for their son's, before blaming the sons, for raping the young girls. The women have said that they as a unity do not consider marriage with child brides as marriages – they consider these as simple transactions. These marriages are not legal nor are they Islamically accepted.

When asked what the marriages were, I was told that they were simple transactions, breeding cattle in exchange for a paltry sum. Child brides were almost always from working class families. These families are not able to feed their children and are more than willing to 'sell' their daughters to the first bidder. By selling, the women refer to the dowry payment given to the bride's family. However, not all families do this for money, there can often be other reasons, as Reyhana explained when I asked about which parents gave their daughters in marriage:

They are the parents who have daughters that are not accepted by others. Divorcee's, widow's, the very poor or those girls who have some sort of scandal attached to them – many reasons. (Reyhana)

Another woman discussed these issues during her interview explaining why she had got married at such a young age:

I was 13 – at that age you cannot have the nikah read. My family had to bribe the Imam from the local mosque to read the nikah and make the marriage official. Asif (husband) was engaged to my other sister

Meywish. Meywish did not like Asif. She was interested in someone else. She told the family that she was not happy about marrying Asif, but you know what our families are like, they told her that she had no choice she had to marry who they said. Meywish, at the time, agreed. She got engaged and then after a few months, just before the wedding date, she ran away with the boy that she was interested in. That's how I got stuck – I was a replacement for my sister. The groom's family insisted on the marriage to take place fast. They said that after Meywish ran away, they were not going to take the risk of having another one run away. If you get married at a young age it is said that the in laws can mould you to be what they like, because you are like soft clay. The older you get the more difficult it becomes to adjust in your in laws – you start developing your own thinking. It is very common in Pakistan, underage marriages. Girls will be at a very young age and will find themselves engaged or married. A lot of girls that you meet outside, in clinics, shopping centres, with little children, you think that they are brothers and sisters, and then find out that they are children with their mothers. Some girls have children and still look like a child themselves. These girls struggle to look after themselves, and you think, how can they look after the children? (Hidaya)

When probed on what she saw as the reason for the practice of child brides she replied,

> The reason is ignorance. People are not educated enough to know better. That's why you will find this in the villages, it's very common, and it's not as common in the cities. The reason is that people in the cities are more educated, they know better. (Hidaya)

While at the firepit when the question of child brides was being discussed I was introduced to three girls who looked to be in their early 20s and told that they have been married for many years and had a few children each. Two of the girls looked happy with their situation and said as much, but the other was very quiet. Once the girls had left, I asked why one of the girls was not happy and was told that Aneeqa was frequently abused by her husband. The women started discussing the sexual abuse that Aneeqa was subjected to. This was discussed at length – after listening for a while I felt confident in asking why this was allowed to carry on. I was given a list of reasons. Firstly, Aneeqa was not speaking up herself against the violence, which meant no one else could. Second, Aneeqa was not in a position to leave as

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she would not be accepted by her family after a divorce. Third, Aneeqa had no skills to support herself and her children on her own. Fourth, Aneeqa was scared of her husband and mother-in-law.

Everyone predicted that Aneeqa would face one of two ends, the first being that Aneeqa would end up committing suicide, as that was the only option open to girls who are from working class backgrounds, or she would get killed by her husband after 'one of their nights together'. Despite knowing this no one was able to help. This was one of the hypocrisies in the culture that I came across. The community was frequently interfering in everyone's private lives, but when it came to matters like this, no one wanted to step in and take part. I was told that this was a 'story' that was found in every other household – and it was so widespread that it was now accepted by everyone.

5.2.4 Bearing the right children at the right time

Once married, women face the challenge of childbearing, specifically bearing the right children at the right time. Being married too long without producing a child creates danger for women.

> If you do not have a child, you will be seen in the wrong. People will not say that you have not been able to conceive and it's the fault of the couple together, or Allah's will. The woman alone will be blamed. The majority of times you can see that the woman will be sent for tests to try and find out what is wrong with her. It is very, very, rare that a man will be put through the same treatment. (Ziya)

However, bearing male children is a social mobility factor, with women who have sons gaining in status:

> When you are married you attain a certain level of respect,
> however, the only way you attain the status that you really want is
> when you have a child. While a woman in Pakistan does not have
> a child, her status remains very shaky. The only way she can plant
> her feet firmly in the ground is once she has conceived. And again,
> this status varies. You only reach the higher status if you give birth
> to a boy. (Ziya)

Some women are sent back to their maternal home with a divorce for consecutively producing girls and being incapable of producing boys. This attitude was very widespread in my sample and is perhaps reflective of a broader attitude in the Indian subcontinent as a whole. A woman is seen as incomplete if she does not have children and is still seen as lacking if she does not give birth to a boy – an heir to carry forward the family line. The women discussed how they were incapable of controlling their own fertility, how the decision was taken out of their hands by their husbands and mothers-in-law. At times, the women discussed how they were medically advised not to have another child for a few months/years to let their bodies recover, but this advice fell on deaf ears.

The women discussed the sequence of childbearing-related violence that they go through. First was the wait for conception including frequent rapes in trying to get the wife pregnant. Then came the abuse faced at the hands of the in-laws for not conceiving – both mental and physical. Then the pregnancy made difficult by the hard labour that the wife would have to carry out for her in laws during the day. Then the discovery through the scan that the woman is carrying a daughter not a son, and the abuse that follows. In this event there may well be an abortion that the woman is made to go through if she has not conceived a boy. In what the women saw as a money-making scam, the cheap hospitals would always say a Caesarean was necessary. Post-natal care was virtually absent at both the hospital and back home, with frequent infections. Then there is the ongoing stress from having had a daughter. More pain

comes from contracting illness as a result of the herbal medicines they are given for contraception. Then the ultimate insult of seeing another wife being brought in if they have too many daughters, or if they fail to conceive.

Reyhana had a rare positive experience for a woman bearing a daughter:

> Initially when I was told I had a girl, I did think to myself, that my in laws may not be happy about this, my mother in law had only had sons – everyone wants sons, no one wants daughters. But when I saw everyone's excitement in the family, I realised that this was not the case. My daughter was loved more by everyone. When I had my second daughter, again everyone loved her just as much as the first. (Reyhana)

Laila contrasted the value placed on daughters by the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) and the social reality:

> Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) said that households that had daughters in it was blessed. However, when society talks about these households, they always say that the house is cursed because it is full of daughters. Households with sons in, are seen as blessed. (Laila)

5.2.5 Having affairs

Many women in the village are known to have sexual affairs with men from other villages. Some are married women and others are unmarried girls. These affairs are discussed very openly, and the women appeared to be quite brazen about their affairs. The women that have the affairs see this as their right and do not see anything wrong, morally or legally in their actions. Furthermore, they are unconcerned of the impact that this affair may have on their personal lives or the lives of the men they are having affairs with.

The women whose husbands were having affairs were very upset and discussed how their confidence in themselves was shattered by this, as they felt they were 'less of a woman'. At the fire pit, the women discussed how this made them feel like they were not able to sexually please their husbands, or they were lacking in certain areas – here the concept of beauty was repeated.

In addition to this, the wives and sisters – at times even the mothers of these men – discussed how they were treated at home as a result of the men having these affairs. The women were restricted from going out of the house unless absolutely necessary, and even then, under strict rules about where they could go, who they had to take with them as chaperones, what time they could go and even how long they could go for. The chaperones – men - would be individuals approved by the men of the house, and they were the set of eyes that would be used when the men of the house were not able to keep an eye on the women themselves.

The women that would engage in the sexual affairs were criticised by other women for being able to go out and about as they pleased without restrictions and 'watches' placed on them. This was considered as unfair by the 'chaste' women, and they felt further victimised as a result of the actions of a few 'loose' women. They were often referred to as 'women like them'.

Naseem discussed a family of 'loose' women in her neighbouring village. She mentioned that there were three sisters who were sexually very active. They had affairs with men – all of whom were married – in their own houses. This story was mentioned as it deviated from the 'normal rules of affairs'. Boundaries here were pushed as these sisters broke 'traditional customs' of having an affair away from the house. The sisters would forcibly give their

mother sleeping pills, and then invite their boyfriends to the house and have sex there.

Naseem discussed the impact that this had on the mother of the girls:

> Aunty Fozia did not realise at the start about what was happening. However, it is hard in a village to keep anything private – people outside know more about what is happening in your home than your own family members. When aunty would go out and about in the village, she noticed a difference in the way people treated her, looked at her and spoke to her. Over the months this became worse – I am not even sure who told aunty. What we do know is that aunty confronted her daughters and there was a very big argument. The daughters hit their mum… The daughters also became more shameless – which I wouldn't have thought was possible. Once they realised that their mum knew everything, they stopped giving their mum the sleeping pills, but would instead lock her in her room at nights. Aunty had become addicted to the pills over the months and was now unable to sleep without them. In addition to that, she could hear what was happening in her house at nights… The combination of both these things had a very bad impact on her health, her health started deteriorating… There was also the isolation that she was going through – she had no one that she could speak to at home – the villagers refused to acknowledge her or welcome her in their homes – many felt sorry for her and knew she was helpless and not to blame, she herself was a victim, but despite this no one wanted to be seen talking to her as they feared association of any form may bring shame on to them in some form or the other… Eventually her mental health deteriorated to the point of… she is in depression now and she now walks the streets as a lost soul, with the kids laughing at her… (Naseem).

It was not always others that regulated certain behaviour in these women, but that some women would hold themselves to very strict standards of behaviour themselves. These I found were mainly women who came from large families or close-knit communities where honour was an important element of their lives.

However, there were always women in every society and community that were considered to be 'promiscuous' and although community members know about this and judge these women, they are generally left alone and do not fear any sort of punishment. Many women

discussed this and were very upset with the hypocrisy of the men who make the decisions in the community. They gave examples of women who had been punished heavily for actions that were slighter in scale.

A reason why these women got away with their actions was said to be because the decision makers were men who knew these women on an intimate level. The women who were known to 'sleep around' were never seen as harmless. Women complained about how they would struggle to keep the males of their family away from them, whether it was their husbands, sons or brothers. Once 'entrapped' by these women the male members would then ignore the women of the house, spending all their money on their 'girlfriends'. Household expenses would take a hit as the dip in income would become quite considerable. These women would start by asking for mobile phones to stay in touch and, top up cards for these, new clothes, expensive perfumes, jewellery and cosmetics. The women of the households of these men were known to suffer not just financially but also personally. There were many complaints of how the male members after starting an affair, would become much stricter on the women of the family.

The women in these men's families would be regulated a lot more, would have to wear the veil if they were not already wearing this, and would not be trusted. A number of women echoed the same reason for this.

> Once you start having an affair and you find a woman who will be willing to trade her body for money, gifts or pleasure – you leave with the impression that all the women are the same. If one is capable of this, so are the rest. What you do privately with the woman outside, is not what you want to imagine your sister doing with someone else. If you are having an affair with a married woman, the last thing you then do is trust your own wife – if someone else's wife can have an affair without her husband's knowledge, then effectively

> so can your wife. This then means that you lay down boundaries in
> your own home to protect your women from men like themselves.
> (Rimsha)

The women discussed amongst themselves how they were all victimised in different ways and the cause was women 'like them'. This was one of the reasons that the women said they felt the violence that would come from men was not because of men themselves, it was because of a woman. The women who were known to have affairs with the men, were also known to instigate them against the women of their households, especially against their wives.

The wives were constantly under threat from the women 'outside'. They felt they were replaceable and were always under pressure to be a 'better wife', one who was able to hold her husband's attention better so that his 'gaze does not wander'. The women who had affairs were described as not under any threat as they were not tied to anyone in particular – if they lost one man, they would just replace him with another.

Some women were quite distressed as they said they would live in the same village as these women and would constantly see them about their daily tasks. Some women complained that it was the girls hired to do the housework that were the ones who were having affairs with the men of the house, and this was done very openly, under the same roof as them. To retain their status the women said they would have to ignore this and tolerate it as best as they could. An issue for some of the women was the lack of support from other women. These women would admonish them and say that 'men will always be men' – and 'this is what they do'.

Men of course also engaged in affairs. Reyhana recounted her experience:

> One day when Saira was with Irfan in the bedroom. That day when
> Irfan hit me and said things, this was one of the things that he said.

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> He said him and Saira were together and there was nothing that I
> could do about it (Reyhana).

While there are two parties to an affair, it is invariably the woman that is punished and vilified. The formal laws on adultery may have afforded more protection to women since 2006, however honour killings continue in large numbers and many Islamic scholars still uphold the use of stoning and lashes as a punishment for women believed to be adulteresses. Despite women's confinement to the private domain and despite the consequences affairs are a prominent part of rural Punjabi life.

5.2.6 Hierarchy of Punjabi women of childbearing age

Through the interviews and observations, a clear picture of a hierarchy of women emerged which was based on marital and childbearing status. The highest status was attributed to married women who had male offspring, preferably more than one. Next come those married and with both male and female children. After this come women who have married and had a daughter or daughters, while this is often viewed unfavourably the woman has at least shown herself to be fertile with the potential to bear a boy next time. Then come the childless women, first those in the early stages of marriage then, in a precarious position, those already married for a few years. In rural Punjab, almost 30% of females over 15 have never been married (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2020) and this despite it being socially unacceptable. The rate is higher in urban areas where women pursuing university education and a career is more accepted. However, in the villages of rural Punjab this group has an uncertain value and is treated with suspicion or seen as a burden. The last two groups are widowers and divorcees for whom life in the rural Punjab can be very problematic.

Reyhana summed up the community's attitude to divorcees when she remembered her own experience: "At the start of the divorce, people that came to offer their 'condolences' – because a divorce is equivalent to a death". Similarly, Iman explained that "The stigma of having a divorce is… it's a heavy burden… not everyone is able to carry this." In Zakiyyah 's village the stigma was so strong it virtually ruled out divorce:

> Yeah – there is [a stigma] – and no one will get divorced – for this reason – but the girls hold on to this hope – just makes them feel better – feels like that there isa way out… But everyone knows that in families you just don't get a divorce. (Zakiyyah)

The public gaze is particularly unforgiving for divorcees and has a long memory. A divorced woman is assumed to have committed a grievous sin, as Zakiyyah explains:

> This is a label that will stick to you all your life – even after remarriage you would still be known as a divorcee – it's a mark that you always carry with you – one that you cannot wash away – this will always keep popping up. … we have to keep in mind that we are living in this culture – we have to abide by the culture's rules. People are quite brutal in their thinking and actions – they won't think that maybe the girl is divorced because she was a victim – they will think and say that most likely the girl committed a major sin that resulted in the guy having no choice but to divorce her. (Zakiyyah)

Lack of access to divorce acts to trap a woman in what is often a violent and deeply unhappy situation. Women fleeing this situation face the strong chance they will be sent back by their own parents as Hidaya experienced:

> I have tried enough times to leave this marriage. I don't even know how many times in these 14 years I have left my husband and gone back to my parent's house. But I keep getting sent back. My dad says that I am not allowed to get a divorce and that is where I'm going to spend the rest of my life. The amount of times he's put me back in the car and drove me back here. I think this is the rest of my life. Nothing is going to change. I keep begging for a divorce! (Hidaya)

In contrast to the woman's need to apply to the court for a divorce in the face of enormous social pressures not to do so, men can divorce by *Talaq,* a unilateral declaration of the end of the marriage normally confirmed in a written document but sometimes just by a text message on a mobile phone. Imran Khan, current president of Pakistan, divorced his second wife in this way in 2015 (Tomlinson, 2015).

Widows face a similarly difficult life in rural Punjab. Zakiyyah explained, perhaps ironically, how becoming a widow was one way to avoid the stigma of divorce:

> For example, when we know that our marriage is on the verge of breaking down, we can pray that our husbands come under a bus and die – being a widow and returning home is a lot more respectable than being a divorcee. (Zakiyyah)

However, Laila recounted how widow status renders a woman unacceptable for subsequent marriages even when the prospective husband is in favour of it.

Even for women who marry and bear sons, life in rural Punjab can be hard and violent but for others outside this group their problems can multiply. For widows, the children become a hindrance and prevent you from being able to move on in life.

> I was very young when I got married, had my son when I got married straight away, husband passed away shortly after, time stopped then. It was hard to live life as a single woman. (Dadi)

When I asked why she did not remarry, she explained,

> Normally, [if widowed] you get married to your husband's brother; he would be willing to take on your responsibility and your child's. A brother's child is just like your own child. You know that only he can pick the responsibility of your child, as his own father would. Its blood – the ties are very strong. You have a responsibility to your own. My husband was an only child. I lived with his parents. Not many would take the responsibility of someone else's child. (Dadi)

Hence, a husband's brother can be viewed as an insurance scheme but in Dadi's case this was not an option for her.

Women's position in both the social hierarchy and in the way they self-identified altered through their lifetimes. The main stages were daughter, wife, mother/mother-in-law as illustrated by Inayah, who is the focus of the next section.

5.2.7 Life-stages of violence – Inayah's tale

Inayah was a lower-class woman in her late 40s and her experiences illustrate these changing identities richly. Inayah's husband is a drug addict, and frequently abuses Inayah. In Inayah's interview we see snapshots of the violence that she experiences at different times in her life. As a daughter she was coerced into marriage,

> We as girls, while growing up are constantly conditioned into thinking this is the natural order of the world. Our upbringing is such… When I was told about my marriage, why would I refuse? This is what we are taught from a young age, that you grow up to get married, that's when you run your own house, you have your own family, you can meet your friends, have parties. (Inayah)

Inayah accepted her marriage and the reasons why she did – not because she was happy with the marriage, but because this is what 'girls do'. Women went through certain things in life because it was 'expected' of them, despite what women wanted, what was ultimately exercised was what society wanted. The women said that the reason for this was because inclusion in this society was what gave them their identity. If they did not follow society's expectations, they would be cast out and this would not just affect them on their own, but their whole family.

As a wife, when Inayah experienced violence, she said:

> Over time, he started hitting me more, the bruises started showing –
> I didn't know what to do. The punches were very painful. I used to
> ignore the slaps they were not as painful – the punches would leave
> aches, that would sometimes last days. (Inayah)

Inayah resorted to what a lot of the other women did, they minimise their experiences of violence. The women in the sample said that when they were slapped or shoved, they didn't care much as it was 'not painful.'

> I had been hit that many times that I didn't care anymore. It was hard
> the first few times. Now, it doesn't make a difference. I don't even
> feel it anymore. (Inayah)

There was a sense of fatalism and pragmatism that could be seen in a lot of the stories. The women dealt with physical pain very practically and moved on without giving this too much consideration. These women not only minimised what was happening, but also discussed how they would cover and hide their bruises and pain and try to get on with their daily routines as normal.

> As our income dropped – and we had less and less food in the house,
> I started asking my family for money – I couldn't see my girls cry
> for milk. You can stay hungry yourself, you can't watch your kids
> starve in front of you. (Inayah)

The violence that Inayah was coping with as a wife was not something that she was able to cope with as a mum. This was another strong theme. Women are at a disadvantage and are victims of violence, however, when their identity changes and they become mothers, they are further victimised, and become more vulnerable. This was true for all the women that were interviewed, once they had children, their status changes, their identity changes and this came across in their narratives.

Inayah mentions the emotional blackmail that her husband would subject her to – how he would separate her children from her as he knew that would cause her the most pain,

> He took the children with him. Said I was not allowed to see the children. If I wanted, I could stay at my parents' houses, but the children would stay with him. I know how much the children dislike him – and it's also very difficult for me to stay away from the children. I would return for my children. (Inayah)

Inayah explained how her steadily took her possessions and her freedoms,

> We don't have much – as women – the only things that we can hold onto and have some control over is our self-respect. That's something that no one can take off us. Over time, Akram took my gold jewellery, my savings, my family was stopped from seeing me, my freedom was taken from me – I was not able to go out of the house to see anyone of my neighbours or friends. (Inayah)

What these women did have was a sense of self-respect. The women who were interviewed were proud of the fact that they had self-respect. This was mentioned on multiple occasions – for these women, although this was not tangible, it was an asset that they were proud of. Another theme that came through strongly through the interviews was empathy that these women have for other women – mainly the daughters. Mothers were seen to have this empathy for their daughters who were also experiencing violence from an intimate partner or mother-in-law:

> Every other day they would say things to my daughter. She hid these from me. Then they started hitting her. Her husband and mother in-law both. Again, she tried to hide this from me. But as a woman you can see the signs. Especially once you have been through these things yourself, you can read the signs on others better. I could see the way she would keep pulling her dupatta (scarf) tighter around herself, making sure that I couldn't see her skin on her neck or chest. She was also very fidgety, and wouldn't make eye contact with anyone, she would smile – a lot – but without looking directly at anyone.

When her mother-in-law, gave her a shout from the kitchen while we were at her house, she jumped in her seat on hearing her voice – in her rush to go see what was needed, she tripped. When she came to my house to see me, she told me that her husband dropped her off outside, as he did not have the time to come in, but her shoes were too dusty and dirty for someone who had been dropped off. She told me that she had to go to a side to call her husband because he likes talking to her every lunch – so she locked herself in the bedroom, when she came out, she was smiling saying he always does this every day because he loves her so much – but I heard no sound coming from the bedroom while she had been in there talking to him. I could read her better than she knew. My mum was unable to read me – but maybe I had not been as close to my mum as I had thought – or maybe my mum had been happy in her marriage and did not see the signs of abuse on me or realise the extent of mental torture that we go through when we are abused, mentally and physically. Maybe you have to face these things to really understand what's happening to others… (Inayah)

The sense of helplessness was very prominent throughout the interviews. The women knew that there was almost no point in them raising their voices or attempting to fight back against established societal customs and expectations and they seemed to give up without a fight, accepting their role as submissive women. The interviews also revealed that women experienced different stages of violence as their identity changed primarily determined by their marital and childbearing status.

5.3 Belief systems

The belief system in rural Punjab is complex and draws from Islam, Sufism, superstitions and other supernaturals including a belief in magic. This complex belief system is socially learned and is stronger among rural Punjabi populations than their urban counterparts.

5.3.1 Islam and fatalism

Islam is the dominant religion of Pakistan and most of the rural dwelling Punjabi population

are Sunnis, though some are Shias. For many girls in education in rural Punjab their learning

did not usually extend beyond memorising the Qur'an. When asked if she had been in

education, Hidaya replied,

> Yeah – I was memorising the Qur'an at the time – I had already
> memorised 5 chapters out of the 30 (Hidaya)

Ziya also gave an example of the role of religion in the lives of these rural dwelling women,

> Do you know there's another form [of violence] – spiritual – it's
> said when you point one finger at someone else you have four
> pointing back at you – people don't realise that they are also in the
> wrong at times – they just like pointing out your faults – Allah is
> watching you – Allah will do this to you – Allah will punish you
> in this way. (Ziya)

The women in this study raised the contradictions between Islamic texts and the practices

and behaviours in their communities regarding the position and protections of women. In

Zakiyyah's analysis this is because culture has overcome Islam and changed it fundamentally

in a patriarchal direction:

> No one listens to that – here – in Pakistan – culture is placed above
> Islam. Islamically - my husband was not old enough to get married
> – Islamically – I shouldn't have been married to him, or my sister
> to her husband, if we were not happy about this. Islam is not looked
> at, as this gives women rights – rights that our families don't want
> us to have. Rights before marriage and after marriage! The right to
> obtain a divorce – the right to maintenance from your husband for
> your children after a divorce so you are not dependant on your
> parents. If this was followed maybe all the parents who are poor
> and are not able to support their divorced daughters, won't feel the
> burden. Maybe girls won't commit suicide as they have options
> open to them. Culture has oppressed us more than anything else!
> (Zakiyyah)

Inaya points out that the role of women in the Islamic texts was granted greater respect than

what was actually given to her in daily life:

Our religion has told man to value women and respect them, but the majority of times we see that men from a young age are taught to disrespect women and we see that men often refer to women as their shoes (Payr di jooti)- this is very disrespectful, but so common. (Inayah)

Fatalism is a key feature of Islam as practiced in Pakistan. Conception, health and happiness are among the things seen as resulting from God's will. Ziya explains how the community perceive failure to conceive as Allah's will and invariably the fault of the woman.

Laila makes a clear point about Islam and its hijacking by men. Both men in leadership positions and men in general within their homes. Instead of being blessed as the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) stated, households with daughters were at best seen as disadvantaged and at worst as cursed. She references Mohammad Ali Jinnah calling him *'Quaid-I Azam' or 'Great Leader'.* As a teenager, Jinnah married his first cousin when she was 14, sadly she died a few months later. He waited 25 years before marrying his second wife Rattanbai who was a prominent figure in public life.

5.3.2 Shrines, Sufism and pirs

Darbar is a term in the Urdu language used to describe a courtyard featuring a shrine. The *darbar* is always located in a graveyard. In Figure 5-1 the *darbar* can be seen, and Figure 5-2 shows the somewhat unsafe steps leading up to the Darbar. In Figure 5-3 there are a number of graves, the majority of which are unmarked. These were places that women were 'allowed' to visit and women in rural Punjab had a strong belief that when they were upset and needed help, they could visit and pray for help, and this would solve their issues. This belief was so strong that women would encourage others who had been affected by varying problems to go to the *darbars* to have their prayers answered.

Many villages across Pakistan will have at least one *darbar* situated in them. There are, however, a handful of other villages where there can be up to four. The *darbar* consists of a single grave which is said to be the resting place of a Saint (see Figure 5-4). Once in the *darbar*, you read Islamic prayers and pray for what you want with the faith that your prayers will be answered.

The participants discussed how they were restricted from visiting their family and friends, and even the mosque, but they were allowed to visit the *darbars*. Women who visited the *darbar* went to pray for fertility, the 'ability to give birth to a son', a happy marriage and any other problems that they may have encountered in their personal life. Hiba explained her use of the *darbar*,

> I go there to pray and to pay my respects… [to] the deceased person
> … You get your prayers answered. You get what you ask for. This
> is something that we have been doing for generations. (Hiba)

Figure 5-1: An aerial view of the *darbar* in the village

Figure 5-2: Steps leading up to a separate chamber in the *darbar*

Figure 5-3: The cemetery around the *darbar*

However, many Islamic scholars forbid women from entering a graveyard, deeming this to be wrong. The general ruling is that women are able to go to the mosque and pray for anything that they need, or they should pray at home. It has been narrated the Prophet (PBUH) cursed women who visit graves – visiting graves is only for the men. The scholars forbid men and women from praying at gravestones and have stated that there is no benefit to be achieved from praying at gravestones, and Islam condemns this. Regardless of this, men and women flock to *darbars* to pray.

A *pīr* is the custodian of the shrine and often a descendant of the Sufi saint buried there. They are powerful figures in Punjabi society with spiritual and healing powers are attributed to them.

In some ways the Pirs resemble astrologists as Iman described,

> Do you know when the Pirs open your 'book' – they do your life's reading – tell you what's in your 'star' who you should marry and spend your life with – which 'star' your 'star' will be more compatible with – who you should join your name with. In this way you have an idea before marriage if he will be good or not. (Iman)

There is also a dark side to the *darbars* and *pīrs* within them. According to the women there is a lot of abuse that takes place within the *darbars*, the *pīrs* that stay here are well-respected and in a position of power. The men and women look up to the *pīrs* who are the custodians of the shrines and in the name of religion visit these *darbars* often. Perhaps due to their confinement to the private domain, women use a wide range of excuses to justify visiting the *darbar*. As Ziya explains,

> Some pray for relief from illnesses. Others ask the *pīrs* to pray for their children if they have exams. The majority of women that are there go for domestic problems. Some are daughters in law that are

sick of their in-laws, some get a hard time from their husbands; others want children as they haven't conceived. It's quite interesting to go there and see the people that go and the reasons that they go for. Some go, simply because they say that their children are not in their control and don't listen to them – then you find out that the children are aged 8, 9 and 10! It is a joke really. (Ziya)

Figure 5-4: A *darbar* has one tomb housing a holy person who is close to God

Many women visit these *darbars* with their daughters and daughters-in-law, to get them 'blessed' or 'treated'. More often than not spiritual aid is given more importance and preference than medical aid. The females being left overnight – often for a number of days and nights at a time – with the *pīrs* were left to be treated but were often abused. Many women brought the *pīrs* to their home so that the women of the house could all be blessed

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and treated at home – it was common knowledge that abuse occurred in the homes also. There have been a number of incidents highlighted by the media in connection to fake *pīrs* and the dangers of visiting them. The women that visit them however are very superstitious and do not want to break age-old traditions by going elsewhere for treatment. *pīrs* were visited quite frequently by women in Pakistan and for many reasons other than just fertility.

> You know – you lot probably don't have them in England – but we believe in them here – I went there to show him my hand – with my mum before marriage – when he saw my hand – he said that this girl has a dark complexion – but she has an attraction that other girls don't have – he also said that my heart is very pure. He said that in today's society there is a lot of discrimination due to class and caste. The *pīr* said that my heart rejects all that – it accepts people from all areas – whether they are the same caste as me or not, poor or rich. The *pīr* said that I should not be stopped from doing what my heart desires. When I am now stopped from doing what my heart desires – I feel like I'm stopping myself from doing everything. (Iman)

Inevitably, there is a violent dimension to the *pīrs* phenomenon. When the women at the firepit were asked what would happen when women were left with the *pīr* they stated that they were normally raped by the *pīr* — some by the *pīr* and the workers. This was thought to be less common now than it was a few years ago, but the practice of being taken to the *pīr* still existed and the *pīr* could be found quite commonly to offer help with women's fertility.

5.3.3 Black magic and spiritual violence

Another component of the belief system in rural Punjab is black magic and superstition which play a prominent role in the lives of rural dwelling Punjabi women. It is mostly found related to marriage and fertility and can also be linked to spiritual violence. It is another source of fear in their lives but is also perceived as a source of respite or revenge. Ziya explained how her pregnant stepmother feared that a magic spell would cause her to miscarry,

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I was discussing before with some friends the use of Black Magic in Pakistan. You were asking me before about my step mum – if she will be coming to the wedding – she won't. She has conceived and is scared that through magic someone might cause her to miscarry. People here are very superstitious. Sometimes people are the victims of magic – at other times you go through unfortunate incidents in life that take place naturally, but people assume that they are having magic practiced on them. (Ziya)

Asked if she believed in the power of black magic, Ziya affirmed that she did,

I do – we see signs of it everywhere. There are places known to have people in it that carry out acts of *Zulm* [through magic. I know of a woman that wears a certain amulet around her neck – when she finds out that someone has conceived – she will go to their house on a 'visit'. The purpose is for her to get close enough to the pregnant woman for her shadow to fall on her – this will cause the woman to miscarry – it's called *perchawaan* – it's quite common here. (Ziya)

Ziya recounted how the death of her two-year-old son was widely attributed to the evil eye.

The evil eye features in many Islamic countries. It is believed to be a supernatural glare imparting misfortune on the glared at. Amulets and talismans are the main form of defence against the evil eye.

Magic came in good and evil forms. Good magic was associated with healing while black magic was used for harming. Ziya told me about one notorious man in a neighbouring village,

The village of Seekerali has someone in it that does this – actually there is someone in our village as well that does this. The man in Seekerali that used to do magic – everyone knows about this – when he was at death's door- death wouldn't come to him – it was because he had to pass his 'izn' on to someone else before he could pass away. The man's elder son wouldn't take it – the younger one thought that dad is having a hard time passing on to the next life – so he took it. It was after passing on the 'izn' that he was able to pass away. When he was buried, his 'grave' caught fire – everyone said it was a sign that he was a dangerous man – and while alive he practiced magic that was very dangerous and damaging to others. His magic was so powerful that there was no 'taror' [good magic cure] for it. (Ziya)

Black magic 'shops' are common in the rural Punjab. Many women that call on these arts justify doing so by claiming that they are victims of black magic, and they are getting magical amulets to protect themselves. However, once at the 'shop', women say they are tempted to 'shop' for other things. Sometimes, it is just 'helpful things', like buying a love potion, or helping sway someone psychologically into accepting a proposal that was originally turned down – in short, we can see the victims slowly turn into the perpetrator. Practitioners seek to inflict both mental and physical injury. Participants said that black magic also causes death – and this was a frequent occurrence. Rabail recounted how she turned to the witchdoctor in an attempt to get her husband back after he had left her for another women:

> We went to [the witchdoctor's] house. He was awake. He took us to a room on the side. It was very dark there. There was no one else there. I tried to tell him what my situation was. He said there was no need. He just wanted to know what I wanted from him. I said I wanted my husband back. He left the room for a while. It felt like forever. The room had an odd smell. The only light in the room was from a log fire. The room was full of boxes and baskets. When he returned, he gave me something wrapped in paper and tied with string. I was instructed to bury this near the doorstep of my husband's house. I took off the ring that I was wearing and gave it to him and walked out. It was dawn by the time I got home. I went straight to bed. It was the following night that I waited until it was dark before I went out and buried the little package. I was very scared doing this. I thought I might get seen. After two days Atif came to visit the children. That day he even stopped to eat food with them. This had not happened in months. My visits to the witch doctor increased. I started visiting him on my own. It was always in the middle of the night. I had gone through my possessions and jewellery that had any value. Then to employ him I started carrying out services for him. This included taking packages back and forwards for him. At times he would need certain things from graveyards. I would get these for him. Although Atif improved his relationship with the children and he would come to the house, I was still not happy. I did not have a relationship with my husband of any sort. One night I broke into Atif's house. I knew they were staying at Gauri's mum's house for the night and that their own house was empty. I stole some money and a watch. I thought about what I was doing. I decided there was no other way. I went again to see the witch doctor. I said I wanted

> him to kill Gauri. I gave the money and watch in return. I was promised this would happen. I had to walk home naked that night. Through the graveyard. I had to read certain verses sat under a tree there. Then I had to dig up something from near one of the graves. I did everything I was asked to do. At this point I felt nothing. I did not care about my reputation. My self-respect. I just wanted to get rid of Atif's wife and have Atif come back home and be with me. Within the week Gauri died. No one knew how she died. It was thought that it was probably something that she ate. (Rabail)

In this story we learn how black magic and the village witchdoctor are a real phenomenon in 21st century rural Punjab. We can also see the lengths that a woman would go through to restore her self-respect, her honour, in this case by plotting the murder of her ex-husband's new wife.

Huma mentioned that for her what was painful was the humiliation of when she had to go to the Doctor for medical checks to see what her fertility levels were like with her mother-in-law. She said throughout the journey and checking there the only thing she kept thinking of was how she should have come with her husband, who should also have had the same tests as her. On the way there she mentioned this to her mother-in-law and asked why men did not go through the same tests, her mother-in-law stayed quiet. It was when her husband came home and started hitting her that she realised that she had offended her mother-in-law by daring to suggest her son might have some sort of defect.

5.4 Public and private domains

In the patriarchal society of rural Punjab, women are mostly confined to the private domain. In their home, often shared with in-laws, they combine household chores with child-rearing and have little beyond this. To reinforce this confinement, women's perception of the public domain is that it is fraught with dangers.

> A woman, going alone to the police station is likely to get more abused than she was at home. Sometimes you can get into more trouble by stepping out of the home. (Reyhana)

> It's dangerous in Pakistan to drive out in the dark. There is a risk of something happening. And the route from my in-laws' village to my grandma's house is considered very dangerous. (Ziya)

> Violence at home, by your own is not as bad as violence by a stranger… (Reyhana)

When asked if she was able to go out in public on her own Reyhana replied,

> No. I would never have been allowed. We live in the village, not the city. Here girls don't just walk out and do things on their own. (Reyhana).

Some women experience greater freedom of movement. Reyhana's mother was given as an example of someone with a husband who was more relaxed about his wife entering the public domain:

> Small things – go shopping for clothes and vegetables – taking us out to the local mele's (fairs). Being able to go visit her family members and cousins as and when she likes. In a manner of speaking, she had no restrictions – the restrictions that others had placed on them by their husbands (Reyhana)

Private domain confinement severely limits the educational possibilities of rural dwelling Punjabi women. When there is education, it is often limited to simply memorising the verses of the Quran. Mushira had ambitions to study medicine:

> I wanted to study medicine, but I was not allowed to go to university – and it was not possible to study medicine from home. So, after a lot of thinking and research I settled on studying English. This was something that I could do from home, so my family was ok with this. You have to a regular attendee at university to study medicine. Arts was the only option that was open to me. Arts was something that I wasn't really opposed to, so it was ok. (Mushira)

It's a life of hard work in the private domain for married women. Laila gave a graphic description of a typical day:

> I would go home exhausted after working at my mum's house. When I would get home, my mother-in-law would have left all the days work for me to do. I would then spend a few hours and clean the house, wash the clothes and dishes and then go to bed. Sometimes I wouldn't even be able to get in bed my back would still feel stiff, I would have to walk around for a while and gradually ease myself into bed. Sometimes I would feel like my body was broken, it was like someone had beaten me up and thrown me all bruised in a corner. (Laila)

One way to cut women off from the outside world seems to be to deprive them of phones. A phone in the hands of a woman is seen as a route to mischief and affairs. Several participants make reference to male attitudes to phone ownership and to being deprived of owning one.

From my observations it became clear that not all women were confined to the private domain and that some families do not have men who are capable of working or running errands. The women in these families work themselves; they gain employment and run their own errands. Many women use public transport to go from A to B – some women, however, do not want to use public transport. Some use mopeds (see Figure 5-5). Some complained about harassment on public transport, while others said it is cheaper to have their own transport.

Figure 5-5: A woman riding a moped to run the household errands

There was no consistent approach to women's access to the public domain. Certain households in the village seem to keep their daughters under such close surveillance that they are not able to go to their neighbour's house to borrow sugar without a chaperone, and other households allow their daughters to go out of the house without a chaperone to earn money and carry out errands. Discussions with villagers revealed that previously villages had had a tribal council that would decide everything – the rules that all the families in the village had to abide by, and the punishment when these rules were violated. Now the practise of tribal councils has died out, families within the villages are showing more independence and are managing their lives themselves without accounting to anyone else.

5.4.1 Public Gaze and the rumour mill

Despite many women being largely confined to the private domain there were many references made to public gaze and a rampant rumour mill. The firepit where women would

make chapattis and chat among other female villagers was one place where women could freely associate. Inevitably it became a hub of the rumour mill. Reyhana and Ziya commented on the extent of the issue,

> Everyone in the village is always really quick to let you know what's happening in everyone else's life. (Reyhana)

> There's a saying – 'as many stories as mouths' – that's the case with this – everyone's talking about it – but each story will be slightly different to the next persons. (Ziya)

Gossip and rumours appeared to have a controlling function in women's lives. The threat of being gossiped about and particularly being labelled as someone having relationships outside of marriage was ever-present. Affairs seemed to be the most common topic for the rumour mill:

> Generally – your name would be linked to a guy. The 'guy' himself doesn't have to have a name – it's just enough for people to say that she was most likely interested in someone else – she was having an affair- she never really got over her 'first love' before marriage – those would be the typical stories that would be circulated. (Zakiyyah)

Reinforcing this comment Hiba gave her own thoughts:

> The people that spread rumours do so regardless. They don't need a valid reason. They would say that I must have had an affair with him, and his family was forced to propose to legitimize the affair. I would be known as the person who trapped her husband before marriage. (Hiba)

It would be wrong to stereotype the women of the rural Punjab as the sole sources and spreaders of rumours, as Iman explains:

> It's so hard to maintain your innocence when you have rumours going around. It is rumours that can ruin a girl's reputation. These rumours are normally spread by men, to men. When men listen to these rumours outside that's when they come home and make life difficult for their own families. (Iman)

The rumour mill is one aspect of the public gaze women are subjected to. Another is the lack of privacy. Even in the private domain women lacked privacy. In rural Punjab privacy is not highly valued, it is an alien concept. Here the daughter-in-law will most likely move into an intergenerational family and is expected to be submissive to her mother-in-law, with minimum privacy over her personal life. The level of interference varies according to the dynamics of each family.

At the firepit, the women belonging to lower classes also complained of having no privacy at home. They said their house was an open plan house and they had no privacy. Their main concern was that they had to bathe themselves in the open at the hand pump. This section was partitioned off by low walls to afford limited privacy. As can be seen in Figure 5-6 these areas do not have a covering, therefore can easily be seen by people on the roofs.

Figure 5-6: The women's public hand pump

This meant that anyone who was stood on the roof of their households were able to look in. The women I spoke to clearly struggled with this and felt extremely violated.

5.4.2 The role of education

In the rural Punjab education is a domain dominated by inequalities. Social class, caste and gender are all sources of these inequalities.

For some women memorising verses of the Quran is the only form of education they experience. Hiba, for example, was an example of a girl taught the holy verses at home. For others whether or not they are schooled or go to college is often determined by the parents' marriage plans for them. Sometimes different strategies can be applied within the same family as was the case with Hidaya:

> Meena [her sister] now, she is allowed to go to college. My parents have said that she is going to become a lawyer. She has had a number of proposals, but my parents have turned them down. It's because she is in education, and my parents don't want her distracted. I was taken out of education and married off! Meena is old enough to get married… I had 2 children at this age… It's just very unfair when your family apply one theory when it comes to you, and a different one for the other daughter. (Hidaya)

Sundas recalled how her education was abruptly stopped when she was married off. Some participants perceived lack of access as a means of control:

> It's the fear that if we get educated, we might one day reach a stage where we take a stand against them and raise our voices for our rights. (Sundas)

Zakiyyah also raised the possibility that access is being denied because parents/ husbands may fear the girls/women will use college attendance to run away; something she said had happened in the past. Others see it as a result of a lack of financial resources:

> We couldn't afford the payment. When it got too much, I was taken out. (Iman)

If a husband or ex-husband is from a wealthy background, a woman's children are more likely to go through higher education. As Sadia explains,

> As my ex-husband belongs to a very rich background, he is easily able to provide for my daughters. It is him and his father that pick up the cost of my daughter's tuition and university fees. (Sadia)

While girls had far less access to education than boys, they could still appreciate the importance of a high-quality education and would seek this out for their own offspring. Sundas recalled the fight to get her son taught at a good school:

> This was a battle that I had to fight alone. My parents and husband did not understand why this mattered to me. My parents argued with me that any school close by would be good enough for my son. But I was adamant that I would send him to a school that I knew had high standards – that had teachers that didn't teach for the sake of earning a paycheck, but ones that were concerned with making sure the children that attended actually learnt something. (Sundas)

There is clearly a stark rural-urban and social class-based divide on attitudes to education. In the cities of Pakistan families are more likely to understand the value of a girl continuing her education. In fact, female higher education enrolment among urban middle class families is close to that of males. females are in the majority in public sector universities. With women mostly confined to the private domain in rural areas, the notion that they have no need for education is clearly a powerful one among both men and women.

5.4.3 The pursuit of happiness

We learn from the likes of Laila that life could be hard for a married woman living in rural Punjab. After doing the housework for a disabled mother she returned to her marital home exhausted, however, she was required by her mother-in-law to do several hours more work. The pursuit of happiness rarely featured in the stories told by the participants.

The question of love and happiness is not seen as relevant by Hiba. It is not even a consideration in the matter of marriage. She saw even wanting to contribute to discussions of marriage as shameful. When Iman was asked how she sought happiness she replied,

> I try and be nice to everyone around me – I like to see people happy – that makes me happy. I do as much as I am allowed to do – there isn't much that I can do – obviously if eating a certain dish makes you happy – my happiness will be to cook that for you – but then my husband may have an issue and stop me – there's a lot of restrictions in my life – and I'm still a little scared of my husband and in-laws (Iman).

When asked if she was happy in her marriage, Sundas responded saying,

> It's odd. I am not happy, nor am I unhappy. It is not what I expected and it's not a difficult marriage. There's just a lot more that I would have liked. But I guess that's human nature, you always want more… better… (Sundas)

The rural dwelling women of the Punjab have a very limited expectation of happiness, they lacked the agency to seek out happiness due to a combination of patriarchal control and a lack of financial and social capital.

5.5 Actors and generations

Women of fertile age experience intense pressures and have little agency to influence their life paths. From a young age, girls are mostly defined by their arranged marriage often to a family member.

5.5.1 Mothers

Unsurprisingly, mothers play an important role in the lives of the rural dwelling girls and women of the Punjab. In particular, mothers were the main decision-makers on the question of their daughters' marriage and choice of husband. Zakiyyah explained how her mother

decided on the marriages of herself and her siblings and was insistent on a consanguineous

marriage:

> When it came to our marriages, it wasn't our dad that decided – it was mum. She said that we were not allowed to marry outside the family – and even when it came to family, we had to marry within the same village. Mum did not want us to move away from her. (Zakiyyah)

Similarly, Raniyah had her choices made for her when remarrying:

> It wasn't me – it was my mum – she decided – I was against this – obviously I had daughters – I didn't want to bring a stranger into their lives who may prove to be a negative or harmful person. But my mum insisted. I turned down a few proposals in the family before I agreed to marry Zakir – and this was only at my family's, mainly my mum's, insistence. (Raniyah)

Some mothers made choices based on economic gain rather than the preferences of their

daughters. Others experienced greater support, such as Reyhana,

> Mums are the only ones in this world who know you more than you know yourself. (Reyhana)

> My mum was really good in that time – she supported me through this, did not let us fall apart. As a family, we became stronger. I was really worried that this might affect my sisters' future proposals, but my mum reassured me that this was not the case. (Reyhana)

> Boys are different, they don't care! Boys can calmly turn their parents down without a second thought. Boys can be very rude, they can even threaten their parents, and instead of saying anything to their sons, they feel proud! Because this is what boys are supposed to be like? If a girl says anything, she will get a slap first before anything else is said! (Iman)

> Pakistan culture is such – if your parents say that you have to do a certain thing, then you cannot say no. (Zakiyyah)

5.5.2 Fathers

In a patriarchal society, fathers would be expected to have a major role in the lives of the women of rural Punjab. Yet based on the stories of the participants they would seem less prominent than mothers and mothers-in-law. Fathers appeared more as background figures. For example, in the arranging of daughters' marriages it appeared that mothers played the leading role. When asked about violence in her family Zakiyyah explained that while not using violence their father was a feared figure:

> No – not in my family – we are all scared of our dad – but he has never been physically violent towards us – we're not scared of our mum, but for some reason we fear upsetting our dad – or displeasing him. He's always given us everything we have wanted – very rarely stopped us from going anywhere or doing anything – still. (Zakiyyah)

Should a woman marry and experience violence from her husband it is not always possible that she can call on her father for support. Iman recalled an example of this:

> My papa doesn't speak to them about any mistreatment that I go through – he's close to them. My papa likes my husband and in-laws more than me. He doesn't love me. My papa has told me even if no one in that house loves me I should love them all – that's my duty – I should make my place in everyone's hearts – I should try harder. (Iman)

Fathers did have a role in protecting the family honour, mainly by policing their daughters. Hiba recalled how her father would buy her clothes to avoid the need for her to go to the city where she could be exposed to all manner of moral hazards.

5.5.3 Mothers-in-law

Data analysis clearly demonstrated the important role of mother-in-law in the lives of rural dwelling Punjabi women. Domineering mothers-in-law played an important and often highly negative role in the lives of some women. They were portrayed as argumentative and willing to take any opportunity to humiliate their daughters-in-law. Their influence begins when

marriages are being planned and intensifies after a newly married girl/woman enters the household of her husband and his family. Mother-in-laws are strongly linked to violence both mental and physical.

> My mother-in-law has also hit me once and thrown me out of the house … when I newly got married – it had only been 10 days since our wedding. I got into an argument with her – she then argued with me, then hit me and then threw me out of the house. (Iman)

Mother-in-laws' choice of marriage partner for their sons was often based on economic and social status reasons. Reyhana explained why her mother-in-law was so desperate to arrange a marriage:

> It was because my elder brother had moved to Spain. He used to work there. He would come to visit us 3 – 4 times a year. When he would come, he would bring us gifts, something for the kitchen, a blanket, something for the garden, a new table, ornaments for mum to place in the house… Things that others could see… There was a lot of jealousy. Asking for my hand in marriage meant an 'exotic' dowry. Things that could be shown to others… (Reyhana)

Mothers-in-law expected their sons to continue to side with them and support their chastising of their daughter-in-law:

> I still remember when I went and started cooking in that house, his mum took the first bite and started screaming – said your mum has not taught you how to cook – the food is awful! Get back in the kitchen and remake the food. Irfan tasted the food and my father-in-law, and they both said that there was no need, the food was very nice. Irfan even said that this was the tastiest food that he had ever had. His mum was so angry! She didn't know what to say and kept screaming there is too much salt in the food. And extra salt is not good for her. When she saw that she had no support, she started crying … (Reyhana)

Mother-in-laws influence the attitude of their sons to their wives, if not immediately then over time:

> Irfan was very good initially, slowly over time his mum started getting through to him. His attitude, the way he would speak to me, the way he would act… everything started changing. It was very gradual at first – I almost didn't notice it, but over time, it became more noticeable.

With an antagonistic mother-in-law — daughter-in-law relationship being so common, Ziya conjectured that perhaps the mothers-in-law were conforming to expectations of what their role should be:

> It seems like an obligation for them to point out your mistakes and warn you of the spiritual consequences of your mistakes, constantly putting you under pressure. You find that this is quite common in the houses – the mothers-in-law are the ones that use these lines on their daughter in-laws to keep them oppressed. (Ziya)

An alternative proposition is that mothers-in-law are acting out of a fear that they will be replaced in the lives of their sons by their new wives:

> … these mums become so obsessed with their sons they control each aspect of their lives. They then bring in daughter in-laws in the houses and control them as well through their sons. The main fear is that the daughter in law may try and take the place in their son's life which was previously the mothers. (Mushira)

The irony is that these mothers would have had a leading role in selecting and arranging the marriage of their new daughter-in-law. The influence that mothers-in-law had over their sons was often alluded to during the interviews and was rarely viewed as benign or positive. Reyhana recalled how her mother-in-law told her son to put up with her for financial reasons and that she would shout, scream and shove her. Even as they become elderly mothers-in-law can still inflict hurt as Iman exemplified:

> She's always brainwashing him and poisoning his mind against me. She looks so weak and frail – other people do not know what she's really like – but when she is alone with me – she treats me –

as if – as if – I'm not even related to her at all! People do not even treat slaves the way I get treated. (Iman)

The mother-in-law is seen as a figure that sours marriages, and, often over time, ruins the relationship between husband and wife.

> The only thing that I have done is marry her son. That's the only reason she dislikes me, her son, according to her, spends more time with me now than with her. She can have her son back; I don't even ask him to spend time with me. And it's not a great experience having Ilyas sit with me, it's not like he showers me with rose petals when he talks to me – he just spends all day criticising me and pointing out my flaws – that his mum has poisoned him with. (Iman)

Among the women participating in this study, it was common for the mother-in-law to be an important indirect and even direct source of violence. Mental violence of daily oppression and micro-aggressions were widely reported. Based on the statements and perceptions expressed in this study, once married, a woman would have a substantial part of their life and marital happiness determined by the nature of their relationship with their husband's mother whose household they invariably join. However, the situation could be reversed when the daughter-in-law was more wilful and of stronger character. For example, Hidaya recalled how an extremely close bond between mother and son was tragically broken over time by an assertive wife:

> She struggled all her life to get her son a good education and to give him a good life. She would clean people's houses and save and buy her son what he wanted, no matter how frivolous, because she didn't ever want her son to feel like he had less than anyone else. She tried all her life to be a mother and father for her son. When she got Shahbaz married, his wife wasn't nice. She didn't like the bond that the mum had with the son. She started turning the son against the mother. Slowly, slowly, Shahbaz's attitude towards his mum changed – his wife was always right, and his mum was always wrong – his mum's attitude was not right; she was overly harsh with his wife; she was too demanding; she would argue over petty matters… The list would go on. The mum suffered

in silence; she wouldn't ever defend herself. The whole village was witness to how good she was – no one believed Shahbaz's wife – apart from Shahbaz. One day Shahbaz's wife left home said I won't come back until your mum does not come and apologise to me, in front of my whole family for her attitude with me and take me back home. This was a deliberate attempt to humiliate her. Shahbaz was not able to live without his wife and started arguments at home, he wanted his mum to go and apologise. Aunty had a lot of pride and refused. She said that she had not done anything to apologise for. The arguments went worse, one day she was found dead – she'd killed herself. She had led her whole life with a lot of pride and respect, when she felt like she had lost that, she ended her life. It's really sad. Her life had always been tough, but she was able to face everything while she had her son on her side, the minute she was left to fend for herself, she wasn't able to. She went against the whole world for her son, but she was not able to go against her son. (Hidaya).

One participant proposed a reason for mothers-in-law playing a role in bring violence to the lives of their daughters-in-law:

These women when they have their daughters in law, treat them the way their mother in-laws treated them. They also have their sons treat their wives, the way they were treated by their husbands. It becomes a cycle. Instead of breaking out they carry it on. They teach their sons to carry on the violence. Some people do break this cycle – they try and teach their sons to respect women, they value respect and know the pain that disrespect and violence causes a woman. However, these women are rare – it is a very strong woman that can overlook the injustices in her life and treat others fairly. (Laila).

In the West, couples are much less likely to live with their parents/in-laws but the practice is commonplace in Pakistan. The present study evidences some of the consequences of this form of social organisation. The data on mothers-in-law shows that suggesting violence was solely a male behaviour would be far from accurate. While much of the violence perpetrated by mothers-in-law was on the psychological and emotion level there was also some physical violence. They also either contributed to or failed to intervene in the violence committed by their sons.

5.5.4 Father-in-laws

Compared to the number of references to mothers-in-law, fathers-in-law featured less strongly in the women's narratives. However, it was noticeable that they were viewed far more benignly and were not portrayed as a source of violence.

> You know my father-in-law? He doesn't do anything to me, he doesn't say anything to me, he doesn't argue with me. It's only [my mother-in-law]. Iman

Some participants described the support they received from their father-in-law. In Reyhana's case he seemed to be powerless to intervene,

> My father-in-law took me to a side one day and said to me that he can see what's going on in the house, but he doesn't have any power or authority over his wife or son. He said what's happening is wrong, it shouldn't happen. I was on the verge of having a break down at that point. I think he sensed it. When he spoke to me, it gave me hope. I don't know what kind of hope. But I felt better. I felt like I wasn't going crazy – like I hadn't magnified the situation. (Reyhana)

Raniyah had a particularly positive relationship with her father-in-law and even approached him first to discuss her unhappy marriage to his son,

> My father-in-law was very good. I discussed leaving my husband with my father-in-law first. He supported me and said over the years he had seen me suffer and he couldn't force me to stay with his son as his son was not showing any signs of improving. He used to treat me less like a daughter in law and more like a daughter – part of the reason that I stayed with my ex for so many years was the support that I used to get from him. (Raniyah)

While they featured less often in the women's narrative it was still striking that fathers-in-law were not viewed as anything like the issue that mothers-in-law were in terms of the different forms of violence experienced by the women.

5.4.5 Husbands

While mothers-in-law played a major role inflicting emotional and psychological violence on women, husbands were responsible for the majority of the physical and economic violence that featured in the testimonies of participants in this research. This violence is discussed elsewhere in this chapter. Many husbands were found to be heavily influenced by their mothers who would typically live in the same household. This influence was often malign. As with many societies, alcohol and drugs feature as a social issue in rural Punjab and were mentioned as a serious component in the problems experienced by women participants and their relatives and acquaintances.

With domestic violence covered elsewhere, it is important to take account of the minority of participants who spoke of positive relationships with their husbands. Mushirah and Laila were two women giving evidence that suggests a violent marital relationship is not inevitable. When asked if she was happy in her marriage, Mushirah replied,

> Yes. My husband treats me as an equal. I think that's the foundation for any relationship. When you get treated with respect and don't get undermined you can lead a happy life. You have satisfaction within the relationship. (Mushirah)

Laila had similarly positive comments about her husband, comments which suggested that a positive relationship is more likely when the husband is less influenced by his mother,

> He was so good… I wasn't expecting him to be this good. If he had not been this good, I don't think I would have survived that period. Over time, I started feeling indebted to him – that was what would stop me from speaking up and answering his mother back the way she deserved. He would lend me his strength; this would keep me going. When your husband supports you, you can face anything. (Laila)

Reflecting on the perceptions and interpretations of the women in this study and listening to their anecdotes, some of what seems to cause disharmony is intergenerational conflict. Even

in rural Punjab there maybe a gradual liberalising of attitudes that is clearer to see in urban centres.

Ziya suggested there may be a different generational trend with the longstanding patriarchal control of society losing its dominance to women, particularly mothers-in-law.

> … this behaviour where the men control the women seems to have carried over the generations. BUT – this generation things seem to have changed – the power lies with the women – Shamila's mother-in-law is the one that's controlling – more than her son. (Ziya)

5.6 Violence

In chapter four I explained that one of my goals was to reach the interpretations of the various forms of violence experienced directly or indirectly by the women in this study. This section presents these interpretations.

5.6.1 Psychological and emotional violence

Psychological and emotional violence was portrayed as commonplace by the women in this study. It was often a precursor to or accompaniment to physical violence. Overall, it was perceived as being at least as serious as physical violence while being ignored or downplayed by parts of the community, according to the participants. Laila was one of those viewing non-physical violence as leading to subsequent physical violence,

> The starting stages of violence are always mental. (Laila)

Reyhana was an example of a woman who experienced both concurrently:

> I wasn't just hit physically – I was also hit mentally and emotionally. (Reyhana)

The participants viewed mental violence as at least as dangerous as physical violence and for

some it was worse:

> … mental violence is quite widely prevalent and is more
> dangerous. (Mushirah)

Ziya explained that mental violence was more serious because there was no physical evidence

of it to show others:

> People say that physical torture is worse, but I say that mental
> torture is worse- with physical torture you can at least show your
> scars – when its mental torture and you try and tell people what
> you are going through – no one believes you. (Ziya)

A similar point was made by Mushirah who also saw mental violence as a
precursor:

> Mental violence cannot be seen – so is ignored – no one looks
> deeply to see if a person is feeling hurt – if there are no physical
> scars to show. My understanding is that for physical violence to
> take place there has to be a history of mental violence beforehand.
> (Mushirah)

Sadia repeated the theme and spoke from personal experience,

> I think when you are mentally abused its worse. Both are bad –
> violence is violence – whichever form it takes – but mental
> violence is worse. I went through mental violence, not physical and
> I know how difficult it can be to live with someone who mentally
> tortures you day and night. (Raniyah)

When asked her thoughts on types of violence Ezina also emphasises the mental variety even

downplaying physical violence,

> It is both – I would lean more towards the mental side. In fact, its
> mental. I don't think when its physical it's that bad – I think it's
> really hurtful when its mental. (Ezina)

Overall, there was a high degree of awareness among participants that not all violence leaves

visible scars and that women in rural Punjab experience a spectrum of violence. In a society

where there is little or no protection from extreme physical violence trying to get support for the invisible emotional and psychological forms of violence widely experienced is unsurprisingly difficult. Indeed, while the victims clearly recognised and could articulate experiences of this violence for large sections of society there was little recognition of the concept.

5.6.2 Economic violence and control

In rural Punjab women's lives are tightly controlled, they have little agency to determine their life path. The way this control is exercised is multi-dimensional and is by no means restricted to overt physical violence. Another form that emerged from the interviews was economic control. Women's choices are severely restricted by depriving them of money often barely leaving them with enough to survive. Ziya spoke of an acquaintance who was married to a man who made her fully dependent by depriving her of money:

> I just know that he was very controlling – for example, she would not have any money of her own – she was totally dependent on him for everything … she didn't have money did she. She jumped on the train without a ticket. Then she saw the 'conductor' on the train. So instead of getting off the train from the way she should have got off – the part near the platform, she jumped off the other side with her daughter. This side did not have a high pavement, and there was a bit of a drop – when she jumped out of the train she fell on her daughter and broke her leg. (Ziya)

Iman had direct knowledge of economic violence, she replied to a question about buying herself a mobile phone:

> How? Ilyas doesn't ever give me money – all the money is for his mum. (Iman)

Economic control did not end at depriving women of money, even their food supply was controlled. Laila recounted her story of a friend

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> He was so selfish he wouldn't give his wives money. He would also lock the grain in the *sandook* and keep the key himself. He would take out measured grains and give them to his wife – enough for 2 chapattis for him, and 1 for her. Because men need more food and women have smaller appetites (said very sarcastically, almost like an imitation). Not only were his wives stopped from seeing everyone, stepping out the house, having money, but they were also restricted in what they were able to eat. (Laila)

Some examples of economic control were attributed to husbands needing the family's money to feed a drug and/or alcohol addiction.

> Over time, Akram took my gold jewellery, my savings, my family was stopped from seeing me, my freedom was taken from me – I was not able to go out of the house to see anyone of my neighbours or friends. (Sumera)

Inaya's husband blamed a downturn in business to cover for the lack of money coming to the family when in fact the money was going towards drugs. She had to resort to hiding money:

> I struggled for years to save money in bits and hide it from my husband so that I was able to put this on a side for my daughters' marriages. (Sumera)

5.6.3 Physical and sexual violence

Physical and sexual violence pervades the lives of women living in rural Punjab. These forms of violence have inevitably been widely alluded to under other themes. This section presents a picture of how the women participating in the present study experienced and interpreted these extreme forms of violence. Laila recounts how one of her relatives experiences violence due to the actions of affinal kin who do not even live in the same country:

> Nadeem's brother Adeel lives abroad with his wife – in their own house. He isn't good to his wife. He always does the same thing – he always hits his wife. This is partly his upbringing, his mother taught him to disrespect women, and partly because of his family's constant influence. His mum and sisters are always on the phone to him, filling in his ears. All the fights that take place in their house are because of what the mum and daughters tell. (Laila)

The women discussed a number of sexual acts that they understood to be taking place in their community. These included: rape within marriage; rape by strangers; rape by family or friends; rape by employers or co-workers; gang rape; sexual harassment/advances; sexual abuse of children; forced marriage; child marriage; trafficking; denial of right to control own fertility; and, forced abortion.

At one end of the spectrum of violence is the perceived stranger danger that controls women's actions. Nazish recounted an example of this,

> My family was always very supportive of what I did – when I wanted to meet friends, it was always ok – when I wanted to educate myself further, my dad gave me permission – when it came to marriage proposals, I was the one that always had the last say. In our house daughters were treated the same as the sons of the house. After my education I got a job in the local school – I was good at what I do, I enjoyed my job, but I did not get paid enough. I applied for bigger schools in the city. I even got through and started work. But, I had to travel on public transport. This was where I started having trouble. I often got harassed at the bus stops, often I would have cars pull up to me at the bus stops and men ask me if I would go with them… The buses would often be cramped – it's very difficult to get a seat, and when you do, you often give this up to the elderly. Although women normally group together on the bus, and men stay towards the back of the bus, there were times when I was pressed up close to men and I felt men feel me. It was a disgusting feeling and one that I wanted to avoid. I started travelling into work earlier to avoid the rush hour and trying to come back earlier. This did not resolve the problem, but it did reduce it. It was when I had been working there for 3, maybe 4 months that I saw a bike (motorcycle) pull up alongside the bus and keep up. There were two males on this, and they kept looking at me. I would go to work wearing a big shawl on with which I would cover my hair and body, but I would not wear a _niqaab_ to cover my face. These males escorted the bus from work to my bus stop near home for a whole week. They did not ever do anything, they did not even speak to me, but I felt very strange – almost like something was about to happen – like they were waiting for their time. I have heard enough stories about girls who have been carried away by men and kept for days. I did not want to become like them girls. I stopped work then. The risk was too big for me to ignore. I stopped working in the city and started my old job. (Nazish)

Other comments made on stranger danger referred to the awkward stage when they would have to walk past the outskirts of the village where the men are all gathered; the harassment they would have to go through on public transport; the difficulties of standing on an open road waiting for transport, and the abuse they would hear, the wolf whistling and the 'compliments' that you get from men walking past, with some even taking time to sing a song to them; the fear of their own villagers that they felt when they returned home and are intercepted by someone saying something that is designed to dishonour their family.

Such experiences help explain why women found it difficult to seek any form of independence. They show it was difficult for women to earn their own money as this would involve going out of the house. Jobs in the local community were not easy to get, and there were not many available, they would have to travel to the closest city for employment. This clearly came with its own set of hurdles.

At the other end of the spectrum is rape. Marital rape is almost never reported to the police, and if it ever is, the women discussed how the police treat this very leniently. Many women 'laughed' and discussed how going to the police would probably result in a worse sexual experience than what they had originally faced. There was also the knowledge that taking a case to the police would be costly and taking this further would result in further expense – money that was not readily available to them. Women who feel they are unable to break free from abuse, stems from feelings that they will be abused further for attempting to challenge it and they feel restricted due to financial constraints. It is important to note that women in rural areas rarely manage the household finances, have no savings and limited access to money.

Gang rape is known to be used as a form of punishment in Punjab province. It is seen informally as a reasonable means of punishing women and one of the things that was often discussed by participants was the frequency of this act. Particular attention was drawn to the case of Mukhtar Mai who is a survivor of gang rape. This was carried out as a form of honour revenge and was sanctioned by a tribal council and media coverage for this story was so extensive that she became internationally known as a symbol of hope. However, stories like this are commonplace in rural Pakistan, and women who are gang raped find that they are normally the ones who pay the price for their family's actions. The women at the fire pit discussed this form of punishment. Often this informal 'justice' would become public knowledge before the act is committed. No one would intervene to help the victim before the act, while it is happening, or even after the act.

This was not the only form of punishment linked to sexual violence mentioned by the participants. One woman discussed how her friend from a neighbouring village told her that as a punishment one of the women from her field had been paraded naked through the village. While this was considered as shocking, the women did not feel much empathy for the victim as she had not been put through physical pain.

One participant, Inayah, recounted a disturbing story about her husband who was extremely violent as well as an alcoholic and drug user. She had already sent two of her daughters away to live in Lahore for their own safety. Then her husband found himself owing his drug dealer money:

> He sold my Mariam – the last time I went to my parents' house, when he broke my arm… He kept the children here, which he has done before… I got a call from Ayesha… she told me what he did… The man that provides my husband with the drugs, wanted payment.

Akram did not have enough money to pay; it had been a few months that I had not been at work properly, so Akram had fallen in debt with the person that provided the drugs. How and when he decided what he did, I don't know. I don't even know if it was his idea or someone else's. All I know is what Ayesha told me. Some men came to the house one night asking for Akram. Ayesha opened the door. She said the men were very rude; they almost shoved Ayesha on a side when she opened the door. They spoke to Akram on a side. Ayesha picked up enough to realise that Akram owed them money. The amount was unknown. They said that they would come back the next day and he had 24 hours to get the money together. That night the girls said that they went to sleep hungry. Akram stayed awake all night pacing around in the garden. The next night, when the men came, the children were in the other room. Ayesha said that this night the men were not rude, they were quieter. The girls did not think anything of this. We all generally ignore Akram and pay no attention to what he does. The children were just waiting for the men to go and Akram to sleep so they could eat something. After a long time, Akram came to the room, and he had a man with him. He walked up to Mariam and said she is prettier, how much for her? That was it. (Inayah)

Inayah explained that her daughter had been trafficked and was not seen for a three-year period. When she returned, she was a shell of a person,

She's not alive. She's a walking corpse now. One who will die with each breath that she takes. She will live and die at the same time. Watching her I pray for death – that I die so I don't have to see her in the state that she is in. And Akram dies – because anything less than death would not be good enough for him – it will not be a justification for the crime that he has committed. The only thing that will be of the same scale would be death – death is what he sentenced Mariam to – and death is what he should get. (Inayah)

While Inayah had no doubt who to blame for the terrible fate that had befallen her daughter, elsewhere the research revealed a disturbing trend in the reactions to sexual violence. When discussing the issue at the firepit there was general agreement that men would often find out if any sexual abuse/activity had taken place from other men, and they would condone this and place the blame on the woman involved. On the other hand, when women would hear of

this, they would not condone the acts, but would also blame the victim, and use her as an example of culpability.

Another participant, Iman, discussed a further case where a woman was used as currency in place of financial compensation in this poor community. In many rural areas many families cannot provide monetary compensation for the death of a family member caused by another family. There is, however, a custom in which a female for example is given to another family to assist in reproducing a male heir. This is to end blood feuds or any sort of retaliation from the family of the deceased taking matters into their own hands and therefore prevent further acts of 'violence'.

However, what everyone remains oblivious to is the violence that the married girl goes through once married, which normally results in sexual violence. This is because this marriage is not a love match. Iman discussed her friend Shaila, using her as an example of how women are used as compensation. Shaila's brother murdered Imtiaz in an argument that started over a game of cards. Shaila's family offered Shaila in marriage to Imtiaz's older brother – Basharat, who was already married.

> Shaila was always unhappy. She wouldn't try to cover her bruises. Would ask what the point was of doing so… She said when she got married and went to her husband's house, she dreaded the first night with her Basharat, she said he beat her up that night. Then he spent a few weeks ignoring her, said he didn't want to see her face – she would remind him of his brother… After a while he started raping her at nights. She's been married for a few years now. Doesn't have any children either – she keeps miscarrying – no one knows why – everyone has their own theory… Shaila is really weak, she doesn't eat much- how is the baby going to receive the right food to survive? She also has a very small body – she can't carry a child in that body – it's just not big enough! Her husband still hits her – all the time, maybe that's why… But I do know that if she had a child, she would become happier, having a child, especially a son, changes

everything. Her mother-in-law would be nicer to her also if she could give them a son. Because she would then replace what they had lost. (Iman)

Women also pointed to the role of other women in causing sexual violence if not carrying it out,

> The mum and daughter were gang raped… it was because of the other sister – she led him on – when she got married elsewhere, he got so annoyed. Out of anger he took his friends and raped her sister and mum. (Mushirah)

Women were also blamed for not responding to the initial signs of violence displayed by their husbands. When directly asked if she blamed women Zuleikha responded:

> Yeah - because if his wife had not put up with his abuse – today he wouldn't have had the courage to approach another woman. He thought because he was able to suppress one woman, he could do it to all women. His bravery came from hitting one woman – if his wife had grabbed his hand on the first day, he wouldn't have tried to oppress a second woman (Zuleikha)

Abused women even blamed themselves for the violence being inflicted upon them,

> The reason Shaila never spoke up against any of her abuse – the hitting, the rape, the imprisonment – it was because she said her husband and in laws had a right to do this – she was to blame. The murder of her brother-in-law was due to her brother – the actions of one person in a family are spread so they cover the whole family. Shaila feels like she is the one who committed the murder…" (Iman)

5.6.4 Women as perpetrators of affinal abuse

Judging by the narratives of the women in this study, women are perceived to be both perpetrators and instigators of certain forms of violence, particularly affinal domestic abuse. Why this should be in a patriarchal society is an important point of discussion that will be

addressed in the following chapter. Earlier in this chapter the role of mothers-in-law in the

lives of their daughters-in-law was evidenced, including concerning violence.

There was widespread recounting of this phenomenon among the participants, as exemplified

by Reyhana,

> His mum started shoving me around. Before this she would shout
> and scream, but she would never touch me. When she started
> shoving me, I got really angry, but I stayed quiet. I didn't say
> anything. And you know what was worse? She would shove me
> around and then cry to her son and say I push her around.
> (Reyhana)

Even when the couple live in a different country to the mother-in-law and the husband's

sisters, there can be a malign influence delivered by telephone,

> Nadeem's brother Adeel lives abroad with his wife – in their own
> house. He isn't good to his wife. He always does the same thing –
> he always hits his wife. This is partly his upbringing, his mother
> taught him to disrespect women, and partly because of his family's
> constant influence. His mum and sisters are always on the phone
> to him, filling in his ears. All the fights that take place in their
> house are because of what the mum and daughters tell Adeel.
> (Laila)

In addition to actual stories of female inspired violence there was also the perception that

women were at least as responsible, if not more so, than men. Mushira gave her view:

> I would say that women are the real perpetrators of violence. In our
> culture, or country – whichever you prefer. The reason for this is
> that you find that women are abused by the men in the family –
> they do not have rights, they are not allowed to voice opinions, or
> make decisions. Therefore, as soon as they have children – sons –
> then they consider them to be their property. It finally gives these
> women – who were always considered worthless – a sense of
> worth. These women were previously seen as owning nothing, as
> being owned, and now they own something that cannot be taken
> from them. They use their sons to try and bring a change in their
> lives. Sometimes they use them to get revenge on certain family
> members that used to previously humiliate them. They do this
> without taking into regard what their sons are becoming like – the

values that these women are instilling in their sons – the hate they grow up hearing and seeing, causes them to become the men that later violate others in their lives. It's a cycle that carries on. Primary socialisation is so important, and attention must be given that children are raised correctly, especially as children at an early age are so impressionable. (Mushirah)

Ezina recalled how her own father had been regularly struck by her mother while acknowledging this was rare. Overall, women are highly active in the violence that pervades rural Pakistan and in instances of honour killings women, particularly mothers and mothers-in-law of adult offspring, are often among the perpetrators.

Female violence was not restricted entirely to affinal violence perpetrated in the private domain. There were younger women also involved themselves directly or indirectly in violence. Ziya told of one younger woman's plot to kill her husband,

> She tried her best to break the engagement – told her family repeatedly that she was not happy to be married to him – the family didn't pay any attention – and as is typical eventually she ended up married. She didn't have any sort of sexual relationship with her husband – but would see her ex-fiancé when she could. The pair started having an affair. Eventually, they made a plan to kill the woman's husband. The girl called her ex-fiancée on a day when it was only her at home with her husband. She had her husband killed by her ex-fiancée and his friends – quite brutally – she recorded the whole thing on her phone. When they killed him – she told them to leave. She then sat down and started screaming, "Robbers! Robbers!" with the doors and windows open – when people outside heard the commotion, they came into see what the issue was. When they saw the body, they called the police – she claimed that the house had gotten broken into by strangers – and her husband got killed by them. The village was near the city and there were CCTV cameras outside the house. The whole time that her husband was being tortured, she was filming the entire thing on her phone – look at her courage – she stood there watching and recording the whole thing! (Ziya)

5.6.5 Male on Male violence

As the participants in the present study were exclusively women the experiences of violence are also those of women. Male participants may have given a contrasting picture of the role of violence in rural Punjab. Brothers of women being abused by their husbands sometimes intervened to punish the husband. Iman recalled an incident at a pre-wedding event when her brother attacked her husband who was violent towards her:

> Ilyas first stayed sat there – I think Hidaya's screaming threw him off for a while – he didn't know how to react. Then he came and started swearing at me – in the middle of the gathering. Atif was sat in the kitchen, and he heard. That's when he came out and hit him. There was a log piece on the floor. Atif hit him with that. Ilyas was quite badly bruised. (Iman)

Sumera also recounted a time when her brothers intervened on her behalf:

> The first time, when I came home and the family saw my bruises, my brothers went and got Akram. They hurt him more than he had hurt me. Akram was very apologetic after that. They hit him a few times. Not that it made a difference to Akram. (Sumera)

5.6.6 Support from others

Women experiencing violence of whatever form often had the sense that there was nobody to turn to for help. This applied to their own families and external authorities. Reyhana explained why she did not tell her own family of her problems,

> I didn't know what to do, who I should speak to. I did not want to burden my mum with this. I knew the troubles that my mum was going through. I couldn't approach my brothers, our relationship was very formal, I couldn't speak to them about anything like this. I didn't want to discuss this with my sisters or friends. It was humiliating! How could I tell them that I was seen as an ugly girl, one that Irfan was suffering with, just to increase his wealth. (Reyhana)

Even if technically under the law a woman was entitled to report a crime, in practice the social pressures and practical barriers deterring them felt overwhelming. When her daughter was kidnapped by a drugs gang because of her husband's unpaid debts, Inaya felt helpless,

> For women like us, [going to the authorities] is not an option. It is very difficult to seek justice in this country. Justice is only for the rich. We do not have the money to even go to the police station and log an FIR – if this was to go to court… I couldn't afford this. To go to the police station, I could not go on my own – I would need to go with a man. Akram [her husband] would not have gone with me. I did not want to drag my brothers into this mess. It was unfair on them. The men that had my daughter they were very powerful, I did not want my brothers to have men like that as enemies. (Inayah).

However, if a woman sought support, they feared humiliation and transgressing the all-powerful rules of family honour. Faced with this many stayed silent.

Changes to the law seem to have had little impact. In 2016, a law was passed outlawing all forms of violence against women. Little changed and the media still report horrific crimes such as the woman burned to death by her own mother for marrying without family consent (BBC News, 2016).

5.6.7 Blame and 'deserving it'

Among the statements made by the participants there were some instances of women suggesting they or other women were to blame for their experiences of violence.

> … if his wife had not put up with his abuse – today he wouldn't have had the courage to approach another woman. He thought because he was able to suppress one woman he could do it to all women. His bravery came from hitting one woman – if his wife had grabbed his hand on the first day, he wouldn't have tried to oppress a second woman. (Zuleikha)

Participants all placed a heavy emphasis on the blame culture that they were surrounded by. The women said that they were always the victims but were also always considered to be the perpetrators or at least the ultimate reason for whatever bad outcome was being discussed. When Reyhana's husband crashed his car, she was told it was because he had not left the home happy because of her not being a good wife. When her children were not doing well in school Laila was told it was because she did not spend enough time going over their homework. When Bayjee was hit by her husband, it was justified because he did not like the food she cooked.

Not just blame but the fear of blame was a controlling factor in women's lives:

> I wanted the divorce for a few years – my husband was very abusive – it was more the mental torture that I was unable to live with, there was also the physical pain… I was scared of him… but the community we live in does not allow that. Once divorced I would have been blamed… its always the women who suffer… (Raniyah)

Blame also proliferates through a family. When one family member is perceived of committing a misdeed it often spreads to other family members and can transfer blame from a male perpetrator to a female family member. This was evident in Iman's recounting of Shaila's story:

> The reason Shaila never spoke up against any of her abuse – the hitting, the rape, the imprisonment – it was because she said her husband and in laws had a right to do this – she was to blame. The murder of her brother-in-law was due to her brother – the actions of one person in a family are spread so they cover the whole family. Shaila feels like she is the one who committed the murder…(Iman)

While some women inflicted the blame onto themselves, others said that they would be held to blame by the wider community. This creates a situation in which men can commit further

violent acts knowing that they will not be punished. Blame it seems travels downwards to the powerless, which in this society invariably meant women.

Here as elsewhere, the women in the study were at least as concerned with highlighting the role of women in the violence in their community as they were with discussing men's role in it.

5.6.8 Resistance and Resilience

While helplessness and a lack of support was a strong theme, there were a minority of cases where women appeared capable of withstanding submission and even of fighting back. Zakiyyah 's husband was younger than her, she was 16 and he was 13 when they married. In developmental terms, this is a significant gap and Zakiyyah took advantage of this to assert herself:

> The main thing is that he is younger than me – so I can pressurise him – I do it all the time – he's scared to speak to me! He doesn't raise his voice in front of me. I should be able to use the marriage to my advantage – so I found his age to use against him! I can't accept him – I might as well make life difficult for him! (Zakiyyah)

Her assertiveness led to views on how other women should behave when faced with injustices,

> Many people say that it is a woman's responsibility to listen to the man – and do everything that he says. But I believe that every woman has a right to speak – a woman not only has the right to speak up – she should speak up against any injustice committed against her. (Zakiyyah)

Ziya had a character that lent itself to standing her ground when most other women would not do so:

> This was our first major fight. Why should I have given up the phone? Firstly, the phone was given to me by my dad – if my dad did not have a problem with me having a phone why should someone else? Secondly, if I had given up the phone, tomorrow it would have been something else. It always starts like this, when you don't stand up for your rights… you have to give up one thing, then another, then another… before you know it you have lost everything and don't have any rights left. We women don't have many rights, the few we do have, we have to fight to keep hold of, if we don't they will be taken off us as well. (Ziya)

Having been pulled out of schooling herself to get married, Sundas explained how she refused to back down over her son's education in the face of opposition from both her parents and her husband. She was asked where her resolve came from,

> I don't really know – I think they just realised that I wouldn't give up. It was the first time I demanded something – I think they were shocked. When I was pulled out of education – my parents knew how much I wanted to go into further education, I didn't even argue then – I didn't demand my rights, accepted what my parents wanted. After a few days, they gave in. (Sundas)

Ezina describes her sister who is an example of an assertive outspoken young woman who seems able to control her father and therefore avoid his bad behaviour.

> Dad is scared of her. She isn't like me. If she doesn't like something, she won't hesitate before letting you know, regardless of who is around and listening. (Ezina)

While the majority of women appear quite meek and resigned to their often-unhappy lives, a minority may be more assertive.

5.6.9 Suicide

During the interviews several women discussed how those women who were in an abusive relationship often committed suicide because they felt like there was no other way out for them. The feeling of helplessness was something that was prevalent with the women that were interviewed in the village.

Hidaya was a middle-class woman who was in her late 20s, married with two children. She was forced into her marriage as a child bride and was unhappy with her marriage. I asked why she was staying in the marriage if she was so unhappy. Hidaya discussed how despite having options, these are not really 'options' for women in the rural areas:

> I can't say if this is common everywhere in Pakistan, but the area that we are from it is quite common. These stories – of suicide – are very frequent. One girl told her family to look after her kids while she goes to throw the rubbish out. She put all the rubbish in a *tayngari* (deep oversized tray), put that on her head and went straight to the canal and jumped in. So many villagers saw her. Her body was found after 8 days! Zubaria went last month to the train track to see the girl who had committed suicide. I didn't go because I didn't care. But a lot of the other girls went. The reason why she committed suicide was because her husband would take drugs. He wouldn't give her money; he would spend it all on his drugs. She wasn't able to buy herself anything or her children. It's really sad, because a lot of these deaths could have been avoided. A few weeks before she committed suicide, she started telling everyone that she feels like killing herself as she feels so helpless. When the bikes come around the village selling kulfi's (Milk ice lollies) and her kids ask for them, she isn't able to get her children any – she feels really bad seeing the other kids on the street having them, and she has to drag her kids inside and lock them up until the seller has left. If this was something that her family had helped her with – tried to resolve – her death could have been avoided. It's when your family doesn't support you that you cannot see any way out and have to do things like this. At the end of the day you have to realise that suicide is not a small thing, no one wants to go down this route. You only do this when you have no other choice! It is the only option left, because all the other options have been taken off you. I can tell you a million stories, the girl in the story will be different, her age may be more or less, she may be abused by her husband, or mother-in-law, but the outcome will almost always be the same for her if she wants to leave the marriage – she can only do this by taking her own life. (Hidaya)

An important area of concern for these women was the lack of options that they had available. The women who were interviewed often claimed that the only way out for them if they were unhappy was through death. There was no other route open to them for escape. Different women had different ways of putting this across, but the message was the same. To leave a

'bad situation' and save their family's honour, suicide becomes the only option open to these women.

It was common consensus amongst the women that they could willingly give up their life as they found this route easier than to compromise their family's honour and leave their abusive relationships. Going back to their father's house was considered shameful for their fathers and brothers and not something any of the women were prepared to be responsible for. For the women, if they were not able to build their family's respect, they would never consider doing anything to harm their honour either.

I saw the train track running through the village which had become a popular suicide spot and despite it gaining this reputation no restrictions on access had been put in place for prevention, as seen in Figure 5-7.

Figure 5-7: Train track suicide spot

Women spoke of other women who they knew personally who had resorted to suicide to escape living with someone that they were unhappy with. Hidaya then took me to the rail track so that I could see for myself how 'convenient' this was for someone who wanted to end their life.

> It is not difficult to get to and is a short walk from the houses in the village and there is no climbing over fences to get to the track (Hidaya)

My lasting impression was that society, at least in this village, had seemed to open the door to women's suicide. There were no cases referred to me of men visiting the track.

Despite the overall sense of helplessness, there were occasions when women would take a stand. Reyhana provides an example of this when she responded to her husband's infidelity. First, she explained how controlled her life was:

> I was restricted from everything, unable to go to my mum's house without permission, not given any money, not allowed to meet my friends unless they came to our house – and even then, I was mostly watched, to make sure I didn't say anything to anyone. (Reyhana)

Then one day she decided enough was enough,

> I then took a stand. One day when Saira was with Irfan in the bedroom – That day when Irfan hit me and said things, this was one of the things that he said. He said him and Saira were together and there was nothing that I could do about it. Before that day their affair was hidden. But after that day, the curtain had been lifted. Off everything. There was nothing left to hide. Irfan and Saira would regularly meet up. In our house and go to our bedroom. I was told to stay away. Not that I wanted to be around. What was even more hurtful was that my mother-in-law knew this and she was the one that would provide them with opportunities to meet up more frequently and encourage this. If my mother-in-law had not encouraged this… If she had supported me… maybe… I went upstairs – it was very embarrassing. They were together. I walked up to the bed and slapped her. I felt such satisfaction at doing that. I thought to myself that my father-in-law had been right in saying that I had not been helping myself by staying quiet. I told Irfan that this could not go on and I was going to Saira's house to tell her family what exactly she comes to our house for. I walked out after saying that and set off to go to Saira's house. I was halfway there when Irfan caught up to me. He grabbed my arm, twisted it, and dragged me off. I thought he's going to take me home and hit me again. I refused to go through that. I managed to get my arm away from him – not through strength; I think I had shocked him when I fought against him. For him appearances were everything, he had always been careful not to give people reason to look down at him. I had no such issue; I just didn't want to go through getting hit again. So, when I started screaming at him and shoving him in the middle of the street, I shocked him enough to be able to move away. (Reyhana)

5.7 Honour Shame and keeping up appearances

Much VAW is connected to and justified by the powerful socio-cultural concept of honour. The participants said that 'honour' was the foundation of their society, and they lived their life according to the unspoken rules of this society. Honour was the determining factor in their lives – choices were made, and life was led in accordance to this. Hence, it was not just men that ascribed to a set of honour rules, but also women who recognised this, and what the findings suggest is that women endorsed these rules even more than men did. There were no instances of participants questioning the fundamentals of honour as a guiding principle for judging behaviour.

Maintaining a marriage despite domestic violence and the absence of any love was one expression of the power of the concept of honour. As Reyhana explained,

> In our society making a marriage work out is not something you do to make your marriage work for your own satisfaction, it's for appearances – to prove to society that you are respectable. It's an illusion to maintain a certain status, for yourself, for your family's respect. (Reyhana).

Ezina's interview provided a rich definition of honour and the consequences of breaching it,

> It is when you are judged by society – you have failed to live up to the expectations that have been placed on you – this causes you to lead a life where you are not able to hold up your head high in society – you feel humiliated – this not only affects you – but all those around you – your parents, sisters, and children that you may have. Sometimes this stigma and shame can stay with you and move onto the next generation – affecting them. (Ezina)

There was a close association between honour and marital status from the arrangement of marriage, to a publicly known troubled marriage and, especially, to divorce. Reyhana recounted her behavioural changes during a troubled period,

> My whole personality changed in those months [of marriage difficulties]. I almost stopped laughing, I stopped talking aloud, I stopped saying as much… It was very difficult to stay quiet, but I did it. It was to make my marriage work out. In our society making a marriage work out is not something you do to make your marriage work for your own satisfaction, it's for appearances – to prove to society that you are respectable. It's an illusion to maintain a certain status, for yourself, for your family's respect. (Reyhana)

She went on to explain the reaction of others as the divorce process began,

> At the start of the divorce, people that came to offer their 'condolences' because a divorce is equivalent to a death. (Reyhana)

The question of family honour arose in Laila's life when she received a marriage proposal that she did not want to accept,

> Originally when the proposal came, I said no. Then one day my would-be mother-in-law sent Khadim to our house on her behalf. Khadim was very highly respected in the village… This put us in a very difficult situation, we couldn't turn him down. In those days, whether you wanted to do something or not, you would have no choice if a third person got involved. To turn someone away empty handed was very disrespectful. In those days respect was everything; it is not like these days. (Laila)

Honour killings had also affected the lives of the participants. Laila recounted one such incident concerning her husband's brother, Rahmat. One of Rahmat's brothers had passed away and left a young widow, Bushra. He had only been married for a year, there were no children.

Rahmat's brother's widow (from the same village) returned to her parent's house. She received a proposal soon after, which she accepted. It became public knowledge that this was

not an arranged marriage, rather it was a love marriage. Rahmat saw this as an embarrassment for him – believing everyone in the community would mock him and say that he was not able to control his brother's widow, who was now living with a man of her choice which was considered shameful and caused issues of honour - the family was perceived to have lost their honour. He was told by the men of the community that to regain his honour he would have to 'resolve' the 'situation'. One day he stood in wait for Bushra's husband, chased him through the village, cornered him a dead-end alley. Here he approached him, and while Bushra's husband tried to escape by climbing the wall behind him, Rahmat used the axe to attack him from behind.

> While he was climbing the wall… That was when Rahmat got him the first time… with the axe… He carried on… He hacked him into pieces. The whole village stood by watching. No one tried to stop Rahmat. Everyone encouraged him. Rahmat got what he wanted. He wasn't known as a coward any longer. Society also got what they wanted. No one was happy to see Bushra happy. How dare Bushra find her own happiness? It wasn't so much to defend their honour that the villagers pushed Rahmat into doing this. It was to show the other girls in the village that the men are in control, and they make all the decisions. Women are not allowed to make their own decisions. (Laila)

Interestingly, Laila explained that honour is a more potent phenomenon for men because a woman could escape its worst effects because they could withdraw into the private domain.

> Losing honour for a man is not the same as it is for a woman. A woman is able to hide within the four walls, but a man has to step out and meet these people. (Laila)

Honour is by no means a purely gender-based phenomenon, it is also a generational one with parents policing their children to protect the family honour as they interpret it. Referring to a friend's experiences Iman saw this as a failure to stand up to parents as the biggest weakness of the younger generation,

> … She got married to someone who has grown children. But that's
> not really her fault… This is the main issue with Pakistani girls –
> their inability to say no to their parents… they can wreck their whole
> lives just so that their parent's honour stays intact. (Iman)

Protecting the family honour by putting on a falsely positive public face was raised by

Zakiyyah,

> Yeah – there's no harm in smiling – you have to do this for your
> family's honour – act happy even when you're not – when you've
> sacrificed so much – what's one smile? (Zakiyyah)

It was notable that other than honour killing, the women interviewed seemed oblivious to

honour crimes. The majority of women that were interviewed were forced into marriage to

uphold the family's honour in society – but these women did not see this as a crime of honour

or a form of violence. Iman did recognise the scale of the sacrifice young women made to

preserve the honour of their parents,

> This is the main issue with Pakistani girls – their inability to say
> no to their parents… they can wreck their whole lives just so that
> their parent's honour stays intact. (Iman)

Women said that crimes and violence that were committed against a single person become

difficult to define; however, the women were all in agreement that crimes and violence

perpetrated in the name of honour – were overwhelmingly committed against women. They

also agreed that the 'real' perpetrators of these were women - even when the violence or

crime was committed by men, the underlying belief was that these men were encouraged and

provoked into doing this by the women of the house. In fact, the perpetrators of the violence

were men, and women were often the instigators. Furthermore, they agreed that these

practices of honour crime and violence are centuries old and have now become 'tradition'. It

was also notable that the participants all acknowledged the physically violent dimension of

honour crimes, but only the physical characteristics were mentioned, other forms of more subtle, non-physical abuse were not acknowledged.

5.8 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the research through the voices of women living in rural Punjab, Pakistan. These women, whether interview participants or those present during participant observations, mainly at the fire pit, told the stories of their lives and the forms of violence that punctuated their own experiences and those of the community they lived in. The analysis of the interview data led to six main themes being established each with associated subthemes. The main themes were: marriage and fertility, belief systems, public and private domains, actors and generations, violence, and finally honour, shame and keeping up appearances. These themes are certainly not discrete but rather they overlap and interrelate. For example, the powerful social force that is honour is closely associated with violence and the institution of marriage is a major part of the confinement of women to the private domain. Other pervasive social concepts such as patriarchy did not feature as a theme but were present in all those presented in this chapter. The chapter's purpose was solely to present the findings, as it is the next chapter that discusses these findings and links them to the existing knowledge base.

Chapter 6 Discussion of the findings

"Pakistan is suffering from multiple imbalances: gender, class, ethnic, sectarian and religious. But gender imbalance seems to be the one that now haunts the social, public and state environment. A recent worldwide survey ranked Pakistan as one of the most dangerous places for women." (Sarwar Bari, 2012).

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings from my analysis of the large corpus of data I collected from observations, the observed informal group discussions at the firepit and one-to-one interviews as well as some photographic evidence. While a narrative commentary was given, the findings were not set in the context of existing literature as that is the purpose of this chapter. The chapter is organised based first on the six main themes presented in the previous chapter, then on the need to address the research questions set in the first chapter of this thesis. Throughout the chapter the findings are interpreted through the theoretical lens developed in chapter three which highlighted radical feminism and its key concept patriarchy, and the work of Bourdieu on social space, including symbolic violence. These dual perspectives facilitate the evaluation of whether the violence experienced by women in rural Punjab is most accurately viewed as resulting from them being women or whether multiple dimensions are involved. Another key aim of the chapter is to situate the present study's findings within the literature on violence against women, seeking to establish where it is confirmatory and where it challenges or extends the literature.

Before discussing the themes and for context, it is worth restating some of the statistics on women, inequality and violence in Pakistan to give some quantitative perspective. The

2018/19 Global Wage Report (ILO, 2019) identifies Pakistan as having by far the largest gender pay gap among low middle income countries and very low labour market participation. Women in Pakistan are, therefore, highly economically dependent on their male guardians. The assumption that women are destined to be limited to the private domain has led to them being limited to the bottom end of the educational system (Noureen, 2011). This is particularly true of the rural population. While the state officially recognises the importance of formal education, the reality on the ground is often different. Officially, statistics point to a reasonable level of participation but with millions of female children not even being registered at birth, their absence from the school system goes largely unnoticed (Noureen, 2011).

Violence is also a major part of women's lives in Pakistan. Understanding violence against women is clouded by the question marks over official data and the fact that much is not reported in the first place. This, of course, is an important reason that researchers continue. With that qualification, recorded gender-based is on the increase including, domestic violence, honour killings, kidnappings and sexual violence (European Parliament, 2020). The Global Gender Gap Index 2018 published by the World Economic Forum identified Pakistan as the sixth most dangerous country in the world for women and, overall, Pakistan is ranked as the second worst country in the world for gender inequality (WEF, 2019). Consider also that these national level inequalities are intensified in rural areas such as the rural Punjab where the current study was set. It is clear, that Pakistan is a problematic place for women to live their lives and that the country can clearly be identified as a highly patriarchal society. The chapter now moves on to consider the themes, starting with marriage and fertility.

6.2 Marriage and fertility

Marriage defines the lives of rural dwelling Punjabi women and even many young girls. As soon as they are fertile a female is viewed as wife-in-waiting. Parents, the wider family and even the community beyond begin to speculate on, plan and execute the arrangement of their marriage, almost invariably to someone within the same family and certainly someone within the same village and caste. In line with the literature on kinship relations (Alavi, 1972; Awan & Kokab, 2016; Das, 1976; Fricke et al., 1986; Lyon, 2013; Wakil, 1970) the present study identified marriage as a key moment in kinship relations with important economic and social status ramifications.

The findings on marriage and fertility fell mainly within the sub-themes of consanguinity and forced marriages, child brides, bearing the right children at the right time, having affairs, beauty and worth, and the hierarchy of Punjabi women of childbearing age. Marriage choice is a domain reserved for parents with the voices of elder married siblings sometimes also heard (Hussain, 1999). In the present study, most marriage decisions were indeed made by the parents and the decisions were the source of a great deal of conflict.

The rural Punjab that forms the setting for the present study is a collectivist kinship society based on membership of a group (Zaidi, 2014). The society practices an acute form of endogamy, where marriage is restricted to the group and those outside are shunned. The most significant groups in this form of society are caste (*jati*), clan (*got*), village (*pind*), division (*patti*), and family (*parivar*). It is this form of social organisation that is sustained through consanguinity – marriages between blood relatives. Despite the evidence of thalassaemia, heart disease, deafness and other disabilities in the children of such marriages (Zaman, 2010)

the practice of consanguineous marriage continues in the rural Punjab where awareness of genetics is virtual non-existent and where superstition, beliefs, traditions and the parental will dominate.

 The dominance of marriage within the group was confirmed by the findings of this study. The power of the sanctions of shame and loss of honour sustained marriage within the group, usually within the family. Marrying a first cousin was the standard practice and one that many of the women in the study followed, sometimes willingly, but more often reluctantly. This finding is supported by other studies reporting the prevalence of first cousin marriage (Hussain and Bittles, 1998). Resisting a consanguineous arranged marriage would likely become a defining act in a woman's life, forever labelled as a shamed and unworthy daughter or sister, and would risk being cast out of the group. Hussain (1999) uses the findings of his interview study to argue that consanguineous marriage is motivated less by economic gain than by sociocultural factors. These included a religious dimension based on the (mistaken) belief that Islam favours such marriages apart from those specifically proscribed in the holy texts. According to the *Sunnat,* Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) married his daughter Fatima to his paternal first cousin Ali. Despite this, Hussain (1999) found little evidence of a religious underpinning to the practice according to the perceptions of the Pakistani women he interviewed. Economic reasons were also largely absent from the reasons given. Instead, the most powerful influences were cultural ones including the long-standing belief that a marriage to a cousin offered the best hope for a good match (Hussain, 1999).

The question of why some societies, mainly patriarchal, Muslim societies practice consanguinity needs to be addressed. The importance of the question is raised by the evidence that consanguinity has a deleterious effect on the health, politics and economy of the societies

in which it is widespread (Jaber et al., 1992; Bittles, 2001). To address the question, Weinreb (2008) took the approach of identifying shared personal characteristics of women in such marriages in his Egyptian study. Using autonomy and wealth as explanatory variables and controlling for local variability, he found the practice was built on underlying institutional supports and that the women, though poor in absolute terms, were above averagely wealthy within their own community. While Egypt and Pakistan share some similarities the study may have limited generalisability due to the influence of what the author referred to as micro cultural factors. From a feminist perspective, a key question is whether consanguinity is a practice that supports the patriarchal society. Armytage (2016) views consanguinity as one strategy used by elite families that has permeated society. He states, "… cousin marriage, is seen to strengthen family unity and ensure that family wealth is not divided, as property rights do not leave the family through the inheritance of women" (p.113). In particular, parallel cousin marriages, between the children of two brothers avoided having family wealth watered down by the Islamic property rights bestowed on daughters (Armytage, 2016).

Perhaps, the classic study of consanguinity in rural Punjab was conducted by Alavi (1976). He linked more explicitly the role of consanguinity in men maintaining their status within the patriarchal system. Local customs dictated that marriages should take place inside the *biraderi* (extended kinship group). This system saw men appropriating their own women instead of exchanging them with 'outside' families, something which would put their social prestige at risk (Alavi, 1976).

Closely related to the issue of consanguinity is the practise of arranged, and/or forced marriage. The two terms are connected, but not identical. Having your marriage arranged by your parents was a near-universal experience. For some women, including some in the

present study this was seen as inevitable and even acceptable. For others, there is a greater degree of compulsion used to conclude the marriage. The present study graphically exemplified the damage caused by this practice on the lives of Punjabi women.

Another aspect of marriage in rural Pakistan is *watta satta* or exchange marriages and defined as "the simultaneous marriage of a brother-sister pair from two households" (Jacoby and Mansuri, 2007, p1). The marriage is founded on a mutually implied threat that if one daughter is treated badly, the other will also be, in retaliation. Such arrangements were also commonplace in the present study. These marriages are part of the consanguinity tradition, but the mutual threat is seen as further insurance that the marriage will function as intended. Absent a son, the parents of daughters cannot engage in this form of marriage and so have less protection for their offspring when they marry, unable to enforce any reciprocity. Jacoby and Mansuri (2007) measured the effect of being in a *watta satta* marriage on typical negative outcomes for the wife, specifically estrangement, depression and domestic abuse. They found very substantial reductions in all three outcomes for those in an exchange marriage. One potentially confounding factor is that the wife may experience even greater pressure to uphold family honour in such a marriage. Honour, as will be discussed later in the chapter, is a hugely powerful force in rural Punjabi society. Indeed, the dominant reason why the women in the present study felt they could not object to unwanted marriages was the fear of their family being dishonoured. Despite the evidence of benefits, the women participating in the present study stated that these marriages are a threat to their peace of mind. Many indicated that they live in the fear that if the marriage of their sibling is in trouble this will in turn directly affect their marriage. Their future and physical safety is, therefore, out of their

own hands. They live under a sword of Damocles, and some recalled how the sword had fallen on them in the form of domestic violence carried out to teach their siblings a lesson.

One of the more extreme forms of arranged/ forced marriages are those involving child spouses. Child marriages are more common in the Global South (Solotaroff & Pande, 2014) and are also the reason why many women who are married in adolescence are at significantly higher risk of being exposed to violence (Raj et al., 2010). The phenomenon of child brides is commonplace and that includes Pakistan. Leeson and Suarez (2017) posit that the 'disposal' of daughters, even pre-pubescent ones, is an attempt to make way for the male offspring they, and society as a whole, so fervently prefer. They propose a theory of the market for child brides, hypothesising that with resources scarce parents take better care of their sons which creates a supply imbalance when it comes to marriage. This scarcity creates demand from wife-seeking men unable to secure brides through the 'normal' processes. Leeson and Suarez (2017) also argue that offering a daughter as a child bride is an alternative to infanticide or abandonment, so what may seem from a Western perspective as a wretched practice may be seen in context as a humane one.

As with other forms of marriage, in child marriages the controlling actors are parents. From the evidence in the present study, mothers in particular are active in making marriage arrangements. The power inequality dominating this facet of a young women's life seems more generational than gender based. However, the end result of the marriage practices remains the maintenance of a system of patrilineal kinship.

It is true that the overwhelming burden of negative outcomes from the prevailing marriage practices of the rural Punjab fall upon women. However, young men are almost equally constrained in their choices. Going outside the *biraderi* is deeply discouraged for males as

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well as females and sons carry the expectations of parents perhaps even more acutely. After all, when arranging the marriage of a son, parents are playing their stronger card. The present study also provides evidence that the practice of child marriage can apply to boys as well as girls. One of the participants, Zakiyyah married at 16, to her cousin who was 13 at the time.

Dowry is another prominent aspect of marriage in rural Punjab. With economic opportunities very limited, the dowry takes on a major significance. A dowry is defined as "the transfer of wealth by the bride's parents at the time of marriage" (Makino, 2018, p.769). Specifically, the transfer goes to the groom's family and is effectively the price that must be paid for a woman to be accepted into the new household. Elsewhere in South Asia, legislation has been enacted banning or restricting doweries. However, attempts to do the same in Pakistan have proven unenforceable. The Marriages (Prohibition of Wasteful Expenses) Act of 1997 was passed but later struck down by the Supreme Court as going against national traditions. This followed earlier failed attempts in 1964,1967, and 1976. The practice has continued to be nearly universal with 95% of marriages believed to involve such a wealth transfer (Jabeer, 2020). Another attempt to clamp down on the practice came in October 2020 when the Minister of Religious Justice declared the practice prohibited. In future, doweries would be restricted to clothes and bedding for the bride herself and in the case of divorce all doweries would be repaid (Dhaka Tribune, 2020). While this may affect future marriages for the women in the present study dowry was a significant part of their marriage and in poor rural Punjab a major part of the economy.

In rural Punjab, forced marriage represents a broad umbrella term. Few marriages are consummated free from social pressures, and many involve considerable coercion. From the present study's investigations, a picture emerges of marriage as, in large part, dominated by

generational power inequality more than gender. The majority of negative outcomes of marriage practices are experienced by women, though the pressures on boys and men are also tangible. To add to generation, the economic factor is also pervasive. Amid poverty, scarce resources and restricted access to education, marriages represent a rare opportunity to protect or advance the economic position of a family. As Hyde (2007) explained, a family giving a bride over to marriage is essentially giving a gift aimed at contributing to the cohesion and stability of the community.

Once married the bride transfers to the household of the husband's family complete with dowry. Immediately, attention turns to bearing children, the right kind of children. The mostly Western concept of deliberately delaying raising a family does not exist in rural Punjab. If marriage was associated with coercion and social pressures, childbearing, according to the women in this study had a closer relationship with violence including in its physical form. In this study, both timing and the gender of offspring were shown to determine a wife's status and personal safety. Too long a period before childbearing brought danger, the public gaze would start to fall in their direction and within the household the mothers-in-law ire would rise. We heard from participants that suspicions will arise that the woman is medically at fault or that Allah, or an Earthly curse is affecting her. Sami and Saeed Ali (2012) found that the women themselves and the wider community believe that infertility results from black magic and the presence of an evil spirit in a woman's menstrual blood. The present study confirmed such beliefs. Those who do give birth face a different problem if their child is a girl and consecutive daughters can see a woman returned to her family home like a defective gift. Chapter two highlighted the phenomenon of son preference in Pakistan (Atif et al., 2016) and the present study confirmed its ongoing existence. Failing to produce

a boy is a serious matter that puts the patrilineal kinship system at risk. Women in the study recalled how their fertility was in the hands of their husbands and mothers-in-law and even when medically advised against childbearing they would be coerced, particularly if it were to bear a son.

6.2.1 Adultery

Since the Second World War there has been a global trend towards decriminalisation of consensual heterosexual sex between a married person and another person. Pakistan is one of very few countries to have moved in the opposite direction (Frank et al., 2010). For a society in which women are mainly confined to the private domain, rural Punjab communities feature commonplace adulterous affairs, as reflected in the present study. Participants, both interviewed and observed, spoke freely of the known affairs both adulterous and those of single women. According to the findings, husbands engaged in affairs with relative impunity under the cover of the excuse that it is only the inadequacy of the wife that makes taking such a course necessary.

Adultery represents a clear threat to patrilineal authority and so the very fabric of a patriarchal society. In response, such societies put terrifying deterrence in place. In Pakistan, in common with other Muslim countries, sex outside of marriage is a crime punishable with death by stoning. Although carrying out this punishment is rare, it does occur, particularly in tribal areas. In 2007, two men and a woman were stoned then shot in the tribal region of Khyber, near the Afghan border (Irish Times, 2007). In 2014 a couple, each married to other people, were stoned to death in Baluchistan in an extra-judicial killing (Yousafzai, 2014). Rather than formal judicial processes, women and occasionally men accused of adultery find themselves subject to the extra-judicial punishments of so-called honour crimes, which are discussed

later in the chapter. Women fleeing abusive relationships are often accused of adultery with those not lucky enough to find a refuge ending up in prison often waiting long periods for a trial.

Unmarried women known to have sexual relations with men, including married men, represented a differently perceived issue in the present study. Participants viewed them as tolerated by the men of the village, some of whom had liaisons with them. Women viewed them as a potential drain on scarce resources as they asked their husbands for money and gifts. Although covered by the same formal and informal laws and punishments as those engaging in other extra-marital sexual relations, these single women where perceived as being protected by those (men) with power in the community who were likely to be involved with such women.

Marital and childbearing status determined the social position of women in rural Punjab. Data analysis saw a hierarchy emerge through the perceptions of the women of the village in which the study was set. As presented in the previous chapter, women who have male offspring have their status raised and more than one son raises it still further. Married women with a daughter who have at least demonstrated their child-bearing capability come next, though bearing further daughters will see this status slip. The following positions in the social hierarchy of Punjabi women present considerable hazard. Childless women, who have been married for some years already have a precarious life. They have failed to add the expected value to the husband's family's household. Infertility becomes, therefore, a major issue in the lives of women, and to a lesser extent men, in rural Punjab. The infertility rate in Pakistan is understood to be as high as 22% (Ali et al., 2011). Next in the hierarchy come single women. Though increasingly common in urban Pakistan, a rural dwelling single woman is

viewed with suspicion, and seen as a burden. Two further groups occupy the positions of lowest status the divorced and the widowed. Subject to an unforgiving public gaze, these women are assumed to have caused their own predicament and are viewed as a poor choice for future marriage. This leaves them particularly economically vulnerable.

The context of marriage and fertility is one of the most significant domains in which socially constructed gender roles are acted out. Its dominance as a theme in the present research confirms this. In rural Punjab, the woman's role, deeply embedded in her consciousness almost from birth is overwhelmingly dominated by fulfilling social expectations as a wife and a child-bearer. In the following section, the complex belief systems found in the present study are discussed.

6.3 Belief Systems

The second main theme to arise from the data collected from interviews, group discussions and observations related to the complex web of beliefs and superstitions that strongly influenced attitudes and behaviours in rural Punjab. The findings confirmed earlier studies (Farooq & Kayani, 2012) in evidencing this complexity and featured the full gamut of such beliefs. This section of the discussion considers the role of belief systems in the lives of rural dwelling Punjabi women. This starts with Islam, the dominant religion of Pakistan's Punjab province, then considers the Sufist form of Islam practiced and ends with the superstitions and black magic that maintain a firm hold in this region.

6.3.1 Islam and fatalism

According to official data, rural Punjab is 97.2% Muslim, with small Christian and Hindu minorities (PBS, n.d.). There have been reports of systematic conversions to Islam,

particularly among young girls being prepared for marriage (Inam, 2020). Estimates of the population breakdown between Sunni and Shia denominations varying though rarely go below 75% Sunni. Historically, the Punjab has been a region where both mainstream Islamic and the more mystical Sufi tradition are intertwined. As girls in rural Punjab, it is common that their 'education' will comprise the memorisation of holy texts and this was confirmed by some participants. The participants were also strongly aware that many of the behaviours they experienced, including those towards women and their place in society, conflicted with what they had learned from the holy texts. Marriage practices went against Islam and a general lack of respect contradicted the written word of these holy texts. Women saw Islam as being hijacked by men for their own purposes, a sentiment in line with the tenets of Islamic Feminism as described and discussed in Chapter three. Islam has much to say on the respective responsibilities of men and women, particularly within the context of a marriage. It is also particularly explicit in its condemnation of adultery though there is some dispute as to whether the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) recommended the use of stoning (Alasti, 2007; Pavlovitch, 2010).

Despite being a text-based Abrahamic religion, Islam, has historically been prone to differing interpretations. The main interpretational differences are those between Sunni and Shia denominations. In the Punjab as with Pakistan as a whole, the dominant denomination is Sunni. In the present study, women barely mentioned denomination as a factor in their lives and inter-denominational marriages were unremarkable. Beyond denomination, context-based interpretations of Islam have led to disputes on the validity of certain modern-day practices. One of these disputes is on the interpretation of gender roles and particularly the treatment of women. The participants were strongly aware that many of the behaviours they

experienced, including those towards women and their place in society, conflicted with what they had learned in the holy texts. Marriage practices went against Islam and a general lack of respect contradicted the written word of the holy texts. Women saw Islam as being hijacked by men for their own purposes, a sentiment in line with the tenets of Islamic Feminism as described and discussed in chapter three. However, unlike perhaps among the middle-class women in Arab states, the women of rural Punjab are seldom able to voice their perceptions of these contradictions. The present research gave such an opportunity.

One theme of the Islamic faith, indeed perhaps all monotheistic religions was the fatalism that surfaced regularly in the comments of the women in this study. In particular, conception, health and general happiness were among those things seen as entirely dependent on God's will. Befalling a tragedy was rationalised as also being a result of God's will, something confirmed in other studies in a Pakistan setting (Kayani, 2011).

6.3.2 Shrines, Sufism and pirs

Sufism is the leading mystical dimension to the Islamic religion, specifically the Sunni denomination. Its roots can be traced back to the establishment of Islam. It is characterised by the spiritual replacing the worldly, described by early proponents as the internalization of Islam. From its uncodified beginnings, Sufism played a central role in the spread of Islamic civilisation between the 13th and 16th centuries (Karamustafa, 2007). Despite coming under fierce attack from many sides, including the Wahhabism that is still influential in Saudi Arabia and modernist reformers of countries like Egypt (Voll, 2009). By the mid-Twentieth century Sufi orders has almost disappeared in many countries. In today's rural Pakistan, the 'populist' form of Sufism is practised, involving *darbars* (courtyards featuring shrines,

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saints, and *pirs* (guardians of the shrines). Opposition to this form of Sufism' now comes from banned radical Islamist groups who regularly bomb Sufi shrines.

With restrictions on visits to friends, shopping trips and even to the mosque, the *darbar* was perhaps the only public place the participants could visit relatively unhindered. The women participating in the present study visited the *darbar* to pray for fertility, the 'ability to give birth to a son', a happy marriage and any other problems they were encountering in their personal life at the time. Farooq and Kayani (2012) reported that almost nine in ten Punjab villagers in their study visited the shrines of Sufi saints with the main reason for doing so being the tradition of paying respects to these saints. The authors also reported that Pirs commonly dispense *taweez* these are Quranic verses often on paper presented inside a leather covering. They can also be taken in food or drink form (Farooq and Kayani, 2012). However, in this study, the authors used a sample of older (55+) villagers and in the present study a more complicated picture emerged. At the *darbars* the women encounter *pīrs*, custodians of the shrine and sometimes with asserted lineage to the enshrined saint. These *pīrs* are powerful figures in rural Punjabi society and are ascribed with spiritual and healing powers. The motives and behaviours of *pīrs* have been widely questioned with many believed to put material wealth ahead of the spiritual wellbeing of the community. Village families placed great importance on gaining favour with the *pīr* even if that meant offering up their daughters (Sheikh, 2019). The present study heard of women having their fortunes palm read to discover whether their future spouse was appropriate and asking the *pīr* to pray for their children's exam success. We also heard of older women bringing their daughters and daughters-in-law to the *pīr*, some being left for days on end, or of inviting the *pīr* to their home. For both cases, stories of the young women

being abused by the *pīrs* were widespread. The informal observed discussions held with the villagers by the firepit revealed the widespread expectation that a visit to the *pīr* would end in rape, although some mentioned that behaviour may be reducing over time.

6.3.3 Black magic and spiritual violence

Black magic and superstition were a constant presence in the lives of the women. Despite claims to the contrary, the primary purpose of black magic is to inflict some form of bad outcome on an individual or group. The majority of clients of black magic practitioners, known as *aamils*, are women (Soomro et al., 2014). Perhaps lacking other forms of power, they seek these magical powers to use against their foes. The lines between Islam and black magic are blurred. *Jinn's*, anglicised as genies, were supernatural creatures that first appeared in pre-Islamic writings, and which survived into Islamic theological writings. Through the power of black magic these *jinns* can inflict mental and physical harms (Khalifa et al., 2011). Soomro et al. (2014) list making someone fall in love, securing a spouse, breaking a marriage, and the revenge of the jealous as being among the intentions of those who resort to black magic. In the current research there where graphically described examples of black magic, including the woman who exchanged her ring for a small package from an *aamil* who told her to bury it outside her husband's house after he had left her for another woman. Soon after, the participant recounted, the usurping woman was dead. Falling victim to an evil spell was another source of fear for the women in the present study. The link of spells and fertility was especially strong with women fearing that a foe may enlist an *aamil* to cast a spell that renders her infertile or causes her to lose her baby.

The women in the study were clear in their discerning between 'black' magic and 'white' magic. They viewed black magic as the weapon of the perpetrators and white magic as a

defensive measure used by the victims. White magic was essentially, amulets and charms that would block 'bad' magic. These defences were obtained by the victims of black magic in order to protect themselves from further violence. Black magic was termed as harmful, while white magic was described as good magic, where the first was described as a form of violence the latter was described as a shield that would deflect harms. Unsurprisingly, for the right price, the *aamil* would be happy to supply both forms.

Superstitions appear somewhat less harmful than black magic and can still be found in Western societies alongside the widespread use of astrology. A study conducted in a Punjabi village similar to the one in question examined the reasons older men and women (55 and above) gave for believing in the supernatural. Firstly, they found that superstitions were widely believed in, including those associated with colours, number, days of the week and time of day (Farooq and Kayani, 2012). Belief in superstitions were given four main justifications, personal experience, observance in other, tradition and religion. Women were found to be more superstitious than men (Farooq & Kayani, 2012). Relatedly, half the participants believed in the real-life significance of dreams.

Another void filled by superstition and black magic is that which in the West would be filled by psychiatry. Without access to expensive therapies rural dwelling Punjabis resort to visiting the local shaman who for a price would administer an amulet, prescribe recitations of Quranic verses, and/ or apply holy water or other types of rituals (Gadit, 1996). Potentially, more than half the Pakistani population rely on traditional healers claiming spiritual powers for their mental wellbeing (Gadit, 1996). The local population seem attracted to this form of treatment for a number of reasons though it should be remembered that the alternative 'Western' form of psychiatry comes at a high cost and involves treatment of a long period

(Gadit, 1996). Potentially, more than half the Pakistani population rely on traditional healers claiming spiritual powers for their mental wellbeing (Gadit, 1996).

It is interesting to note that at times of distress the women resorted to supernatural explanations to try and make sense of what they were going through. This has also been found in other studies (Fakhr El-Islam, 1992; Saeed et al.,2000; Bayer & Shunaigat, 2002). It is beliefs like these that cause the women to avoid doctors when faced with a physical or mental condition and advocate treatment by the *pīr* or go to 'shops' to get amulets for their own treatment and protection. The complex belief systems in the rural Punjab pervades the lives of village dwellers, both male and female. In some ways, with women largely confined to the private sphere of the husband's family household, access to shrines, *pīrs*, and the *aamils* represents a rare chance to interact beyond their home life and attempt to seek some empowerment over their circumstances. In this aspect of life, they come closest to achieving equality. However, religious and spiritual power is almost exclusively vested in men and their ability to seek solutions through these mystical routes is largely illusory. Furthermore, all permitted religious and spiritual activities are supportive of the patriarchal structures of this rural society including the patrilineal kinship system. From an economic point of view, the market in religious 'cures' and black magic spells rewards men in terms of power and material wealth.

Overall, some western perspectives may view the experiences of Pakistani women as a result of religious suppression. An incompatibility of Islam and gender equality. However, the picture emerging from this study and confirmed by others is far more complex. Only elite women have a greater degree of choice over their life paths. For both lower- and middle-

class women it is a struggle for survival. Much of this is rooted in "a deep feudal mentality" (Akhtar & Métraux, 2013, p. 56) unconnected to Islam, but to which Islam has been co-opted.

Bourdieu paid only limited attention to religion, but his concepts are not without utility. The religious field sees social agents and institutions compete for the production of legitimate capital as they do in all fields (Rey, 2004). In the rural Punjab the struggle is mainly between more orthodox Islam promoted by the state and the populist Sufism associated with mysticism, and the veneration of saints. Bourdieu saw religion as an important part of the legitimation of power inequalities hence contributing to the misrecognition of the prevailing social order as being legitimate.

6.4 Public and Private Domains

Global economic trends have directly affected women's status in the Global South. Women who work give society the impression that they are the breadwinners due to the husband's inability to secure paid employment which can cause tensions within the household (Weiss, 2014). Often, women are considered to be 'loose' if they go out to earn a living and have economic independence and are seen as a threat to the values in their family (Derks, 2006, p.193).

In Pakistan, women's freedom and movement are restricted based on social norms (Karmaliani et al., 2017). The notion of gendered spheres has long been a matter for scholarly interest. Anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo wrote one of the seminal works on the issue in which she argued that the separate spheres served to make concrete gender inequality by attributing a low social value to the work undertaken by women in the private sphere in

contrast to the high value assigned to men's public sphere. This was then in turn used to justify unequal rights such as lack of women's suffrage (Rosaldo, 1974).

Women's restriction to the private domain and the segregation of the sexes is a well-known phenomenon in South Asian societies and is referred to as *Purdah* which translates to English as 'curtain'. Makino (2019) argues that in rural Punjab *Purdah* is relatively relaxed, something that may be related to the extent of village endogamy. Such endogamy means that people are related to one another and thus the public sphere is more like an extension of the private sphere. In the present study, the weakness of purdah was also exemplified by some women opting not to wear a veil while others did.

In Muslim countries, having a voice in the public sphere has become established as a path to empowerment and women are increasingly seen in the business world, politics, the creative arts and most other public domains. In the rural Punjab, however, this process is barely evident. Urbanization has given city dwelling women a voice but in rural areas it is still considered a women's role to bear children and perform household duties while restricting their activities in the public sphere to a minimum. The findings of the present study confirmed this reality as participants described their lives and their limited interactions with the 'outside' world.

The present study showed that confinement is not inevitable and in cases where husbands take a more 'progressive' view of a women's role the woman can interact more frequently beyond the confines of her home. The mother of one participant was described as having the additional freedom which she used to go shopping and socialise outside the house. Most of the researcher's observations happened at the one place outside the home where it was

permissible for women to gather, the firepit, where women would make chapattis and chat. Perhaps the firepit was acceptable because the women were preparing food.

Women's restriction to the private domain is not isolated to rural Punjab, or indeed Pakistan. It took World War II to see women in the UK leave their homes on mass to join the war effort in munitions factories or working on the land. Nurseries opened in large numbers to release women to work, it was a dramatic change at revolutionary pace. Once the war was over a backlash began, half the nurseries closed as a patriarchal campaign to return women to their homes was undertaken and the 'normal order' was restored in the 1950s with women as housekeepers and the now demobilised men going to work (Riley, 1983). It was not until the 1960s that women returned to the workforce in large numbers to meet the demands of a growing economy (Chapman, 2004). In the rural Punjab, the economic forces requiring women to join an industrialised workforce are absent, so the patriarchal imperative dominates. This latter assertion, however, may need qualifying because women can be engaged in agricultural production. There is an indication from the literature that economic necessity may play a role in determining autonomy, with the wives of poorer families more likely to be allowed to work. However, this only extended to agricultural work as lower economic class also equated to a lack of education which meant other avenues of employment were not available (Sathar & Kazi, 2000). Interestingly, the authors also found that gender systems are established at village level and may vary from one village to another. New brides were found to have less autonomy than those who already have grown up children.

In the present study, set in the irrigated region of central Punjab, women, including some of those participating in the research, would work on a casual basis in agricultural production. This meant they would spend more time in the public sphere than women from landed

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families and also those women from non-irrigated parts of the Punjab. This confirmed the findings of Sathar and Kazi (2000). Makino (2019) also studied women's autonomy in Punjab province, Pakistan. Participants in this study were asked if they could visit the local health centre, visit friends, or go to a local shop. Seventy percent could do the first without permission and 77% the second and third. Women were found to make smaller decisions related to preparing meals and their child's health but were rarely involved in larger decisions such as major purchases (Makino, 2019).

Women's confinement to the private domain is therefore partly class based because in poorer landless households the women need to work to help with the family's finances. This economic reality takes precedence over the complex belief systems which tend towards keeping women out of the public sphere. It is the women of financially more prosperous households who see less of the outside world. Women who did not work in the fields faced long days of work at home, often under the supervision of the mother-in-law's gaze. The stories told by the participants portrayed hard lives, particularly for new brides yet to have their own grown-up children. Some even worked both in their new homes and their parents' homes. This unpaid domestic work left the women economically dependent on their husbands.

6.4.1 Surveillance and Gaze

The study findings revealed that the women of the rural Punjab live their lives under continual multidimensional monitoring. As O'Connor (2012, p.93) explains, "Surveillance monitoring does not fall equally on all members of the population but rather serves as an instrument for the maintenance of long-standing social divisions, namely those of class, race, gender, sexuality, and age". In our case, two such divisions are particularly prominent, gender and

age; specifically affected are women of childbearing age. The women in this study were subjected to 'honour policing' and I observed that women's behaviour was being constantly monitored for any indication that social expectations may be breached.

Surveillance is strongly associated with VAW and could justifiably be considered violence itself. Women are monitored for breaches of the honour code or simply to feed the rumour mill. The result of breach is often violence. Surveillance also forms part of controlling behaviour as defined in Western terms. For example, in the UK the formal definition of controlling behaviour is "a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour" (Home Office, 2013, p.2). The surveillance behaviour observed and recounted in the present study would certainly appear to fall under this definition.

While much feminist research has recently examined the surveillance of women using technologies such as the internet (Shephard, 2016) this has yet to manifest itself in the villages of the rural Punjab. However, the study did find that mobile phones are viewed as a means of evading surveillance and as a consequence, their possession is restricted or at least frowned upon. Wanting to own a mobile phone brings suggestions that a woman is planning to engage in dishonourable behaviour.

In rural areas women do not have any control over their bodies and lives, they are also unable to guard themselves against unwanted intrusion. Women are surveyed in and out of their houses, conversations controlled, activities monitored, expenditure organised, and social

visits supervised. Surveillance is employed in rural Punjab as a means of regulating women's lives. The women referred to this as the 'eye that would constantly watch them' that they were not able to avoid. Some argued that the patriarchal gaze was not as dangerous or malicious as the 'matriarchal gaze' that they were subjected to by affinal kin.

From a feminist perspective the role of matriarchs is how they are complicit in the violence, but it is in a patriarchal society, which gives them limited power. The main area that they have power in is within the domestic sphere. In the private domain these women have the capacity to wield dangerous/violent power.

The present study develops understanding of the gaze that women are subjected to dividing it into two dominant modes: the patriarchal and the matriarchal. The patriarchal gaze is what the women were subjected to when they went out of the house – which as they recounted was infrequent, and the surveillance that they felt in the home which was often matriarchal in source. In addition to establishing the patriarchal-matriarchal forms of surveillance, the findings also revealed that there were two levels of surveillance. One is social surveillance, and the other is intimate surveillance – two very different kinds of monitoring. The first is a very general observation of routine activities, while the other is a more detailed scrutiny of every aspect of an individual's life. The women who live under this scrutiny learn submission and generally accept this as part of their daily routine, but despite the acceptance of this the women were all majorly affected by this and felt violated.

6.4.2 Restriction to the private domain

There are several complex forces that keep a woman away from the public sphere. The women in this study expressed their perceptions of the 'outside world' as a dangerous place.

As well as physical danger there was a powerful public gaze ready to question a woman's motives for being outside the home. Gossip was rife, but it was also dangerous and could lead to issues of family honour being raised. Women led the way in perpetuating the rumour mill and so were complicit in keeping their fellow women confined.

The existence of the two spheres and their gendered nature has been an observable phenomenon for centuries and featured, for example, in Western societies during the industrial revolution. It is associated with patriarchal social systems, and it is unsurprising that it endures in the rural Punjab. Also of note is that in the same way as seen during WWII in the UK, the patriarchal forces keeping women at home do not withstand economic necessity with women often working the fields on a casual basis. While gender segregation and the purdah women live behind are to be found in this setting it is not in its most extreme form. The ever-present gaze and the village endogamy mean that women's presence in the public sphere is tolerated to some degree.

Walby (1990) proposed that the private and public domains each had their own form of patriarchy. The private patriarchy plays out within the household and has the dominant male dominating and subjugating the female to exclude them from participation in the public sphere. Meanwhile, in the public sphere, a different set of oppressive factors operate such as workplace discrimination. Walby (1990) sees the Western world as having shifted from the private to the public patriarchy. The present study was set in a very different context. Women were less likely to experience public patriarchy because they were more confined to the private domain. Also, in that private domain, to the extended nature of the households, the relationships were more complex, with, for example, the husband's parents often present in the same house. Having said this, most of the patriarchal structures that Walby identifies are

present in the rural Punjab including women's unpaid labour in the household, a state that is biased against women; patterned and systemic male-on-female violence; patriarchal relations in sexual behaviour; and patriarchal cultural institutions including religion, media and others (Walby, 1990).

6.4.3 The role of education

Women's access to education is strictly rationed in Pakistan. This is particularly true of the rural population. While the state officially recognises the importance of formal education, the reality on the ground is often different. Officially, statistics point to a reasonable level of participation but with millions of female children not even being registered at birth, their absence from the school system goes largely unnoticed (Noureen, 2011). Restricting access to education in this way is a form of economic violence (EIGE, 2017).

Poor literacy holds back women's awareness of their legal rights, government support services and the activities of the voluntary sector such as the Aurat Foundation. In this way, keeping girls and women uneducated supports the continuance of the patriarchy. A woman with an education is a greater threat to this patriarchy than one without. Indeed, there is evidence that gaining an education is a risk factor for IPV as men feel threatened by a wife who is more educated than they are and beyond the marriage, the community may perceive a woman seeking an education as acting beyond the traditional expectations for womanhood (Karmaliani et al., 2017).

As I was able to confirm in this study, where education is supplied in rural Punjab, it is often restricted to learning the verses of the Quran. This is of direct relevance to the study of VAW as a low level of education is an important predictor of experiencing such violence (Ali et al.,

2011). It is no accident that the most extreme patriarchal actors in Pakistan associated with a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam go so far as to argue that girls should receive no education at all.

6.4.4 Reflection on social spaces

This section on public and private domains is perhaps an appropriate point at which to consider aspects of Bourdieu's theory of social space in relation to the findings of the present study. Bourdieu's theory proposes that socially similar groups tend to inhabit the same spatial (geographic) space while those socially distant from each other tend to interact only occasionally and briefly (Bourdieu, 1989).

In the rural Punjab poorer people were often in the service of those better off, this was commonly domestic service which by its nature meant spatial proximity between the two classes. However, there is a strict code that despite this proximity, direct interaction was limited to instruction giving and other communication required to complete the tasks. Familiarity with those in service to you would raise eyebrows as it was believed important to maintain the social hierarchy. This applies also to agricultural workers.

During my fieldwork I stayed at the wedding house where preparations were being made for the wedding I attended. It was a significant event in the life of the village and many people were engaged to work on various aspects of the preparations. I saw at first hand how, despite very close proximity, social distance was maintained between the employed and the employers. So, while this contradicts Bourdieu's assertion that contact between social groups was rare and brief it does show how social space can be maintained in the absence of physical space.

Interestingly, the rules seem suspended at the fire pit where hierarchy was virtually undetectable. I realised that understanding the social dynamics of the firepit would help me access understanding of the research problem. Two main factors characterised the difference between the firepit and the rural Punjabi society as a whole. First, it was a male-free zone where only women gathered free from the gaze of husbands, fathers, brothers, cousins, and fathers-in-law. I felt this was a strong factor in the non-hierarchical interactions but not the only one. It was also free of the presence of the older generation, males and females. The behavioural expectations that tightly control this society are enforced more stringently by older people irrespective of gender and in their temporary absence at the firepit this control loosens and social interaction changes. With otherwise clear definitions between public and private domains, perhaps the firepit was a grey area with a distinct set of rules, or even an absence of rules, producing a different set of behaviours.

6.5 Actors and generations

The women who participated in this study were of different ages, marital status and education level. However, through these interviews and the observations at the firepit a rich picture emerged of the roles of the various actors in their lives and the generational influences found in this setting.

Kinship relations and endogamy are a dominant aspect of life in rural Punjab, Pakistan (Usman & Amjad, 2020) and households are often multigenerational. This section discusses the findings on the women's mothers, their mothers-in-law, fathers, fathers-in-law, and finally their husbands. After this the generation-based findings are addressed.

6.5.1 Mothers and mothers-in-law

One element of this picture that emerged amongst all the clear evidence of a patriarchal society was the important role that women played in influencing the lives of the younger generation. The mother seemed to play the primary role in getting their daughters married to a socially acceptable (meaning usually a consanguineous marriage) husband. We learned how this often occurred at a young age. A mother's decision of marriage partner was not to be questioned by daughters, while young men were more likely to reject parental choices. Mothers also acted as supervisors of their daughters' chastity. A supportive mother was an important asset to a woman both before and after marriage. There were sharply contrasting stories heard among the participants. Some had supportive mothers and others had mothers who would not intervene even if their daughter was the victim of domestic abuse. Mothers chose partners for their offspring based on economic considerations. In this form of rural society, a marriage was one of the few opportunities to alter the economic situation of a family.

The most commonly mentioned actor in the narratives of the research participants were mothers-in-law. A newly married bride invariably goes to live with the husband's family where his mother and often his sisters are living. For a married woman the relationship with the mother-in-law is an important one that is often fraught with dangers. Perhaps sensing the loss of influence over her son, the mother-in-law seems to engage in an attritional struggle with the new bride for the attention and obedience of her son. We heard how mothers-in-law were often the instigators of psychological, emotional and even physical violence aimed at their daughter-in-law. The bride's new household was painted by the participants as often being a place with a toxic atmosphere lacking any harmony. While more assertive wives may

take an aggressive stance towards their mother-in-law, the present study suggests that the more common direction of aggression was from mother-in-law to daughter-in-law with the husband being urged to take a side and even being encouraged to physically abuse his wife for her supposed failings. The role of mothers-in-law in perpetrating domestic violence has been identified in other Pakistan studies (Karmaliani et al., 2016; Mizra, 2017). The present study makes a contribution by strengthening and adding to knowledge and understanding of women as perpetrators, particularly within a previously under-researched rural Pakistani context. This form of violence, where women commit acts of violence against other women plays a significant role in ensuring the perpetuation of patriarchy supplementing the violence committed by men.

6.5.3 Fathers and fathers-in-law

From the testimonies of the research participants, fathers were less commented upon although, for some, a supportive father was a major asset to a woman experiencing domestic violence. Fathers seemed to be background figures though they did have a role in sanctioning daughters who had risked the family honour. With the father as the head of the family in a patriarchal society their infrequent mention in the research was striking. With the mother taking the leading role in finding a husband for their daughters it may be that fathers pay less attention to their daughters than their sons. Daughters, after all, were destined to be someone else's concern as soon as they were old enough to marry.

Fathers did have the main say in the allocation of household resources (Makino, 2018). One of the main decisions in this area related to the education of their offspring. Purewal and Hashmi (2015) explain how access to education runs counter to the virtue associated with female domesticity and so connects to questions of family honour. They state that girls'

education was "a direct opposition to the concept of respectability within the rural Punjabi household, by crossing the binaries of male and female and of public and domestic" (p.980).

The father-in-law was also relatively absent from the stories of the participants although it was notable that in some cases a friendly relationship with a father-in-law counterbalanced an aggressive mother-in-law. Father-in-laws were not described as a source of violence. A pictured emerged of fathers-in-law as passive actors, sometimes embarrassed by the actions of their wives towards their daughter-in-law.

6.5.5 Husbands

Notwithstanding the previously discussed role of the mother-in-law in the cycle of violence experienced by the women of rural Punjab, the majority of violence was committed by husbands within the confines of the marital home. This study found that domestic violence permeated the testimonies of rural Punjabi women. This is not a novel or surprising finding as there is a broad base of literature supporting this. Asif et al. (2010) quantified the issue using a survey study in the province finding that 17.5 percent of married women reported a lifetime experience of a high incidence of physical violence from current husband, 40.9 percent reported a medium level, and 41.6 percent a low level. When mental violence is added the prevalence is even higher. There was an indication from the present study that some women tended to understate or justify the kind of violence they were experiencing. Previous evidence had already established the prevalence of VAW in Pakistan so its confirmation in this study is not surprising. The study does, however, provide fresh insight into the perceptions and experiences of women facing violence in rural Pakistan.

Alcohol and drug use among husbands also featured in the narratives of several participants. Money problems inevitably followed these behaviours which led to even greater conflict. This study did not examine IPV from a male perspective. One study that did, reported that "deep-rooted patriarchal norms around femininity and masculinity were the strongest drivers of IPV …" (Karmaliani et al., 2017 p.14). Furthermore, the authors found that predictors of male IPV included poor education, unemployment, poverty, alcohol and drug abuse, and childhood witnessing of violence (Karmaliani et al., 2017). IPV may also be viewed as the use of violence to compensate for the lack of power in other areas of marital life. For example, Babcock et al. (1993) found that males lacking economic power over their partner were more likely to resort to physical abuse than those with such power. There was evidence supporting these findings found in the present study some of the worst IPV violence occurred in households in financial difficulties sometimes related to the husband's alcohol or drug habit. Researchers understand the value of so-called deviant cases, so it is important to add that despite their marriages being arranged, two of the participants spoke of a warm and positive relationship with their husbands but this constituted a minority view. It is important to recognise that the understanding that not all relationships feature IPV extends to the rural Punjab as well.

6.5.6 Generations

There are two main aspects to the subtheme of generations that this present study contributed to. The first concerns fertility and the second modernisation. Fertile women, particularly those yet to start or just starting child-rearing appeared to occupy a particularly vulnerable position in society. They were vulnerable to accusations of risking or losing family honour, vulnerable from their mother-in-law as they sought to establish themselves in their husband's

household and vulnerable from the husband himself. As women's children grow up and they become both mothers of young adults and also mothers-in-law their role changed. They appeared safer and less vulnerable. Some would undoubtedly reprise the behaviours they had themselves suffered from as new brides. They would play an important role in arranging the marriages of their offspring and in policing the family honour. They would 'welcome' a daughter-in-law into their son's household and some would treat them poorly. It is therefore important to distinguish between the generations of women as mostly determined by their fertility or whether they have established a family and brought it to adulthood. From the role of these older women, as revealed in this research, it would seem that they are fully co-opted into the patriarchal system of rural Punjab, a system which reserves its most oppressive treatment for younger women of fertile age. The participants said that as wives they were not able to have any autonomy, they had no money, no ability to make decisions, or freedom to travel outside the house to see friends and family. The 'mothers' of their respective husbands were said to hold all the power within the households. They would make all decisions in the house, manage the incomes and expenditures, have the ability to travel where they like, without permission or male company.

The second aspect of generations and their presence in the research setting is that surrounding modernization theory (Jaquette, 1982). There were contributions made by some participants which echoed the sentiment that things were changing and behaviours that were common now would not have been countenanced among earlier generations. One typical example was the use of mobile phones. Modernization theory holds that all societies are set on a path from the traditional to the modern with institutional transformations redefining and overturning family, economic and belief systems (Galland et al., 2008). This theory has been criticised

for being effectively confusing modernization with Westernsation (Farooq & Kayani, 2014). In the case of the current research, there are only weak signs of contemporary structures replacing conservative ones. Long term historical analysis may detect trends but that is beyond the scope of this current study.

6.6 Violence

The present study confirmed that the lives of rural-dwelling Punjabi women are punctuated by violence of all kinds from controlling behaviours to severe physical and sexual violence. A report for Human Rights Watch published in 1999 estimated that 70 to 90% of Pakistani women suffer domestic violence (Human Rights Watch, 1999). In the Punjab, research on hospital admissions conducted for the Human Rights Commission for Pakistan (HRPC) reported that 35% of women admitted to hospital in the province stated they suffered from domestic violence and that overall, 70 to 90% of women experience spousal abuse. One common infliction was burns. In 1998, 282 women in the Punjab were admitted with burns, of which 65% died from these injuries (HPRC, 1999).

However, violence against women is not confined to Pakistan. Indeed, it is a near-universal phenomenon, resulting in widespread academic interest to seek explanations. There are a number of different scholarly approaches to men's violence towards known women, some are biological, some psychological. Sociologists use concepts that are grounded in interpersonal and societal structural conditions, which may include poverty, social stress and sub-culture, to explain male violence. For Hearn, the central notion for understanding men's violence is patriarchy. Violence is seen as a means of control for men over women. "In this societal context, violence is a means of control for men over women and indeed children.

Violence and its threat is understood as an attempt to diminish the power and resistance of women to men" (Hearn, 1998, p. 32). This research affirms Hearn's findings and shows the pluralities of violence that women face in rural Punjab, which is a patriarchal society. Pringle (1995) notes that men are violent due to their need to dominate and control. Issues of masculinity are not always questioned, and men often blame their violence on being 'drunk', 'depressed' or that women 'asked for it'.

The body of pro-feminist work on male violence is relevant to this research. The women participants in the present study showed a marked tendency to absolve men of wrongdoing by blaming other women. Hearn and other pro-feminist scholars on violence suggest that patriarchy effectively minimises men's agency/role in the committing of violence. Wykes and Welsh (2009) argue that the power structures in place effectively remove men's agency.

Even gang rape, the ultimate patriarchal weapon, was sometimes seen by other women as a justifiable result of the victim's transgressions. These punishments are given publicly so that they are seen as a deterrent to other women and families. Not only would this be committed publicly, but it would also be discussed frequently within households as a lesson to be learned. Parents would warn daughters not to commit certain acts, or they would face similar consequences. This would become a form of coercive control – which is the intention – that shaped the community according to patriarchal values. Women's focus was on not getting raped by behaving according to these expectations, rather than on the behaviour male perpetrators of sexual violence.

Domestic violence is widespread in the rural Punjab and was repeatedly discussed by the participants in the present study. Gender was the predominant risk factor for domestic

violence, but it was not the only one. Generation was another one to emerge with parents and parents-in-law committing various forms of violence and controlling behaviours on the younger generation. Walby and Allen (2004) identified gender and age as risk factors in a UK study, but also added housing tenure, ethnicity, region and health status among others.

On analysing how women define violence that they and their friends and family experience, the overall results were that women experience and define violence in complex ways; there is fluidity in the conception of violence. Violence is construed largely by conception of physical violence, but not exclusively. Women are now discussing violence as being coercive control. For these women, violence is on a continuum, which affirms Kelly's (2001) work.

Abdullah and Ullah (2016) described Pakistani women who had suffered domestic abuse as "restrained, nervous with low self-confidence" (para 7). This description certainly matches the findings of the present study, but the findings presented here go beyond this to identify specific coping strategies and, perhaps most strikingly of all, the extent to which the rural-dwelling women of Punjab province were willing to blame women for being the source of, or reason for, the violence. Some of the participants in the research discussed how women actively and willingly use violence themselves against other women, which is a counter narrative argument that discusses women who only use violence as a last resort and only to defend themselves (Hester, 2012; Saunders, 1988).

An important finding in the present study regarding patriarchy was that the rural-dwelling women of Punjab province understood the need for men to head up families and have a sense of power and control. But remarkably, there was a consistent message emerging that, in fact, they were often not in control and that some of these men were subject to the 'hidden' control

of their mothers. There was a stark difference in the way that other women of households were treated, demonstrating that not all women can be grouped together in the same category. Women are generally subordinate to men living as they do in a patriarchal society, but at certain life-stages they can also be in positions of superiority where men are the ones who are subordinate, though this subordination was more likely psychological than physical. This subordination is normally to mothers but can for certain men be subordination to wives. In this way, the present study adds to the non-binary understanding of VAW shedding light on the complexities of the phenomenon.

Choudhury (2009) also looks at women in rural Punjab in her ethnography. The accounts in her study have some similarities to the present one. Her report is made up of detailed ethnography and interviews; there is a lot of contextual detail alongside extracts taken from these women's interviews. Although Choudhury's research is also qualitative and her approach is similar, her focus is slightly different as she looks at deviance amongst these women, and the implications of certain behaviour and how it is perceived. Choudhury does not give definitions of deviance or violence, and categorises women as victims and perpetrators, with no room to move between categories. My work adds to Choudhury's by looking at women in rural Punjab in further depth, bringing up new themes while focusing specifically on violence against women. We can now look at the subthemes on violence that emerged from the data collected in the present study.

6.5.1 Physical and sexual violence

Rural Punjab features a high level of physical and sexual violence and chapter five exemplified how this phenomenon punctuated the lives of the participants and the people

they knew. This violence was present in both the private domain where women spent most of their time and the public domain which they accessed much less often than men.

Herman (1985) posits that sexual violence is not a one-on-one act but a socialised behaviour through which the patriarchy is maintained, and women are kept submissive and frightened. Walby (1990) advanced a similar argument for all violence against women, rejecting the notion that such violence was "the acts of a few men upon a few women" (p. 128) and instead proposing that it was part of the patriarchal social structure. Sexual violence has been described as a form of terrorism. Following a number of other feminist scholars (Card, 1991; Hollander, 1996; Sheffield, 1997), Sharlach (2007) argues that rape is used in Pakistan as a form of terrorism against women. This has included a history of state rape in the country. Western radical feminist scholars have tended to offer universal explanations for violence against women. This may be questioned as inappropriate with a need to consider context being a more enlightening approach. One aspect of rape that differentiates the Pakistani woman's experience from that of Western counterparts is that an entire family's honour is symbolised with the daughters' chastity. Any form of sex outside of marriage would bring dishonour whether it is consensual or not. A woman who is raped is heavily stigmatised in a way that the rapist is not (Sharlach, 2007). Understanding this honour jeopardy sheds light on the strong desire to have daughters married at a young age, even before puberty as a means to avoid a possible loss of family honour.

6.5.1.1 Sexual violence

The present study revealed how widespread sexual violence was and participants readily recounted stories of martial rape; stranger rape; rape by family or friends; rape by employers or co-workers; gang rape; sexual harassment/advances; sexual abuse of children; forced

marriage; child marriage; trafficking; denial of right to control own fertility; and, forced abortion. Overall, a large proportion of the instances and forms of violence experienced by the women of rural Punjab had a sexual dimension. Khalti (2017) estimated that there had been approximately 10,000 cases of rape reported in Punjab for the period January 2014 to June 2017, a number likely to be the tip of the iceberg with women so reluctant to file reports.

Gang rape is known to be used as a form of punishment in rural Punjab and evidence of this was voiced in the study. It was an informal way of punishing a woman accused of honour-related transgressions and can be sanctioned by a tribal council and even widely known about before it even takes place. We also heard from the women in the study that other forms of sexual punishment were used including an instance of a young woman being paraded naked through a village.

There is a wealth of research on domestic violence from around the world. This research shows that the overwhelming majority of the violence is committed by husbands. Reported prevalence rates vary greatly from a few percent of women experiencing domestic violence in the past year in countries like Canada, Australian and the United States (Ellsberg et al. 2000) to as high as 57% in Japan (Yoshihama & Sorenson, 1994). One problem with this data is that interpretations of the different forms of violence are likely to vary greatly from one culture to another. In the present study, emotional and psychological violence was seen as a major problem, but low-level physical violence was dismissed and even seen as deserved. A study in rural Punjab using a sizable sample (n=800) of married women revealed that women reported a wide range of physical health problems resulting from physical abuse (Asif et al., 2010). Chronic pain syndrome, thoracic and abdominal injuries, and ocular

injuries were all common with as many as 41% reporting the first of these. Such findings confirm that domestic violence is a major public health issue in the rural Punjab.

6.5.2 Psychological and emotional violence

A study published by the World Bank reported that 90% of Pakistani women are mentally and verbally abused by their husbands (Tinker, 1998). Unsurprisingly then, the concept of psychological and emotional violence was well understood by the participants who saw it as being at least as big a problem as physical violence. Some saw it as the beginning of a cycle of violence that ultimately turns physical. As mental violence left no physical marks it could not be proven which made it particularly difficult to deal with. Women would often suffer in silence. With little or no protection from physical violence, avoiding psychological or emotional violence is near on impossible. Seeking support from relatives was a risky and reluctantly taken route. Psychological violence, like physical violence, exists on a continuum from yelling and insults to coercion, and which included threats and forced isolation. It is understood to be the most common form of IPV (Dokkedahl et al., 2019) A similar wide range of violence was found in the present study and voiced by participants. One participant described a woman she knew becoming a walking corpse as a result of her experiences.

VAW is a major contributor to mental health problems among women and the scale of the mental health problem among Pakistani women has been recognised but little action taken. Victims experience reduced self-esteem, and are vulnerable to conditions such as depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder with some resorting to alcohol or drug abuse or even suicide (Niaz, 2004). The effects on children are also significant. Those witnessing an abusive parental relationship are more like to experience behavioural problems including poor school performance (Niaz, 2004). In the present study, the effects of VAW on women's

mental health were easy to see as both an observer and from the stories the women recounted to me.

6.5.3 Economic violence and control

Economic violence is perpetrated by controlling a person's access to financial resources through which that person may hope to secure the necessities of life and beyond that exercise agency and the pursuit of happiness (United Nations Fund for Women [UNIFEM], 1999). Such violence is non-binary in that it is not inevitably man-on-woman violence. The example of slavery is an extreme form of violence committed against both men and women. Nevertheless, women often experience economic violence at the hands of men when men secure control of the families' income and make all decisions on how money is used leaving women totally dependent for their basic needs (Fawole, 2008).

The present study confirmed economic violence as part of the overall system of violence that subordinates women in the rural Punjab. Participants spoke of direct or indirect experiences of women barely surviving due to the control men, mainly husbands, had over their access to money. I heard of men giving money to their mothers instead of their wives and of men taking their wife's possessions, sometimes to feed alcohol or drug habits. In a patriarchal society such as rural Punjab it is to be anticipated that control over finances would feature.

6.5.4 Stranger violence

The women in the study depicted a dangerous world beyond the confines of their own household. A woman out alone or with another woman but not their male guardian was at risk of harassment or worse. Women wore the veil in part to reduce this unwanted attention, but they still ran the risk of careless talk spreading with all the honour jeopardy that brought

with it. The end result of this was less opportunity to take jobs in the city, to pursue education, or to form any other meaningful associations beyond their households. It kept women in the private domain. Participants described wearing the veil paradoxically as both control and protection, but the protection element should not be underestimated. The veil became a means to achieve invisibility yet at the same time for those who did not wear a veil there was social disapproval. Women who do not wear the veil were often judged by the community, with the wearers of the veil being respected. Overall then it was a form of control that some women felt they could use to their advantage in the public domain.

6.5.5 External protections

The reports heard in the present study suggested that women perceived there to be little access to formal protections available to them. This is despite there being an extensive legal framework in place that on paper offers them legal instruments for combatting violence against women including domestic violence. These include constitutional provisions and various other laws such as the Domestic Violence (Prevention & Protection) Act 2012 which defines and criminalises such violence (Zakar et al., 2015). The reality as described by the women in the study is mostly of local police and authorities that are reluctant to take up cases unless bribes are paid. The weak socio-economic position of women, low levels of education, particularly low literacy, and the informal but powerful sanctions of the 'honour' system mean women rarely seek or receive justice (Nasrullah et al., 2009; Zakar et al., 2015). The women's perceptions were confirmed in the 2019 report of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, which stated, "The shockingly high acquittal rates in cases of gender-based violence point to poor implementation of legislation and lack of effective prosecution" (HRCP, 2020, p.16). It was not just gender that was seen as a barrier to legal recourse. Justice,

we heard directly from a participant, was something for the rich. Women "… are suffering because every Pakistani government, be it from the military or elected, has miserably failed to protect even the most basic rights of the majority of its citizens" (Akhtar & Métraux, 2013, p. 62). The Pakistani police authorities are highly masculinised and there is evidence that the existence of police masculinity impedes the intervention process as well as the outcomes for female reported domestic violence offences (Yalley & Olutayo, 2020).

The sense that there was nobody to turn to applied to family as well as to the authorities. Women were reluctant to share their problems with their own parents or relatives because being a wife with a problem with their husband or mother-in-law was burdensome and did not conform with social expectations. A daughter who had been married into another household was normally seen as no longer being the responsibility of the natal family.

There were cases of women fighting back against the violence and hardships they experienced though this mainly occurred through informal routes. Some appeared to have more assertive personalities or had married a husband that was younger than them. Some may have a father or brother that is willing to intervene. For those left helpless and isolated there were few options. One was absconding, another suicide.

6.5.6 Suicide

The women in this study experienced feelings of helplessness and observed it in those women around them in their community. Suicide and the contemplation of suicide was the clearest expression of this sense of helplessness and, based on the findings of this study, something that occurred with some regularity in rural Punjab. The sense of helplessness was very prominent throughout the interviews. Many women knew that there was almost no point in

them raising their voices or attempting to fight back against society and seemed to give up without a fight, accepting their role as submissive women.

Many participants said that it was not just themselves who felt helpless, but others like them, who were all stuck in a similar situation, and they were unable to get out of this situation, going to a shelter in the city was not an option for these women. The fear that women had of strangers was also palpable, so much so that they were willing to stay within an abusive relationship. Many feared the unknown presences they may come across if they were to go to a women's shelter. Some participants acknowledged that even if women have the power and ability (financial, support etc.) to leave an abusive relationship, they are sometimes held back by knowledge that doing so would bring dishonour on their families. At this point the only option that women can see is suicide. This is supported by Patel and Gadit (2008) who found that women can be, and often are, pushed to commit suicide to prevent the family from losing their honour.

The sense of helplessness was very prominent throughout the interviews. The reason given for women's submission this was that inclusion in society was what gave women their identity. If they did not follow society's dictates, they would be cast out and this would not just affect them on their own, but their whole family. Once again it was clear to see that the prominent theme here underlined was that of honour where the women were not willing to stray away from what was expected from them in the fear that this would affect the families' honour.

One expression of this helplessness was seen in the responses of the women to extra-marital affairs. Some women are known to rebel against the affairs, but they are in the minority.

Many women silently suffer through these, hoping this is a passing fancy and will be over soon. The wives who stay quiet do so knowing that there is no other option open to them. Some women say this is the lesser of other evils, they could have a husband who physically abuses them, and the affairs are the least damaging thing that they have experienced. This shows that there is a focus on physical abuse and coercive control is not always acknowledged.

Many women seem to have known little else in their lives. For them this is considered normal. They have had fathers and brothers who have carried out affairs outside, they do not find anything unnatural about their husbands doing the same thing. There are not many mechanisms in place for women to resist such behaviour and attitudes, and the women are not able, or have no knowledge of how, to empower themselves. Existing literature also found a sense of resignation or even expectation among rural dwelling daughters who see, imitate, and expect the same behaviours and treatment that their mothers experienced (Ferdous et al., 2017; Aslam et al., 2015).

Suicidal behaviour remains an under-researched subject in Pakistan. The fact that attempting suicide and suicide itself is an illegal act and that it is both socially and religiously condemned is part of the reason for this. The WHO report on suicide estimated that in 2012, there were 13,377 suicides (females 7085; males 6021) in Pakistan (WHO, 2012). Khan and Hyder (2006) did conduct research on the phenomenon urging others to follow suit so that policy on suicide prevention can be correctly formulated. In the present study, the absence of any prevention measures was particularly stark. Shekhani et al. (2018) conducted a scoping review of suicide and self-harm in Pakistan. They reported that while suicidal ideation was more common in women than men, recorded suicides were greater among males. Married

women were more likely to commit suicide than single women. Among the correlates found were unemployment and financial hardship together with low educational attainment. The present study also features both these inequalities.

The setting for the present study featured a place notorious as the favoured spot for suicides, an open stretch of railway running through the village (Figure 5-7). Despite its reputation no attempt had been made to make it inaccessible or safer in any way, which seemed to symbolise the general attitude towards the phenomenon in rural Punjab.

6.5.7 Women as perpetrators

One of the most direct challenges to the feminist perspective to come out of the findings of this present research was the role of women in the violence found in this rural Punjab setting. Abdullah and Ullah (2016) described Pakistani women who had suffered domestic abuse as "restrained, nervous with low self-confidence" (para 7). This description certainly matches the findings of the present study, but the findings presented here go beyond this to identify specific coping strategies and, perhaps most strikingly of all, the extent to which the rural-dwelling women of Punjab province were willing to blame women for being the source of, or reason for, the violence.

The single most significant female actor in the perpetrating and instigating of violence was the mother-in-law whose role has been discussed in a previous section. The violence took the form of affinal kin domestic abuse occurring as it did within the confines of the family home. The relationship between the mothers-in-law and their daughters-in-law was a highly prominent one and was frequently highly negative and often abusive. Women were the main victims of violence, but they were also capable of violence themselves particularly

psychological and emotional violence. In chapter two, survey data was presented which showed that mothers-in-law were mentioned by just 6.5% of ever-married women who had experienced physical violence as the source of that violence (Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2012-13, 2013)

In such a strongly patriarchal society as Pakistan this phenomenon requires explanation. Roomani et al. (2016) raised the issue of overlooking women's role in violence in their study of domestic violence in Pakistan. Female-on-female domestic violence was found to be common and may be linked to various cultural specificities related to Pakistan. In Pakistan, a new bride joins the household of her husband where his mother is also residing. Roomani et al. (2016) found that this led to conflict over the attentions of the husband with mothers attempting to assert dominance over their sons fearing losing out to the newcomer. Such conflict was confirmed in the present study. Also, the tradition of the dowry provided another source of conflict in both this and the Roomani and colleagues' study. Thirdly, the preference for male offspring and delays in childbearing were also found to cause violence both by Roomani et al. (2016) and in the present study. It is difficult to imagine that such a level of female-on-female violence would exist if Pakistan followed the nuclear family form of social organisation whereby a newly married couple are more likely to live in a new household away from parents. This is not to suggest that such a household would not experience violence, domestic violence is a major issue in Western societies, but it may explain why female on female violence is so common in Pakistan. The concept of honour is a hugely influential aspect of Pakistani culture and women are full and active participants in preserving and policing family honour, including instigating violent punishments.

The feminist study of female violence has tended to focus on notions of masculinised femininity resulting from the cultural reframing of young women as 'ladettes' taking on male qualities and patterns of behaviour (Carrington, 2013). Others have related the rise in female violence to increased use of social media (Patchin & Hinduja, 2006). Both conceptualisations are firmly rooted in Western contexts and could not be applied to rural Punjab. Indeed, based on the findings of the present study, we can narrow the phenomenon of women as perpetrators of violence to affinal kin VAW and further to recognise it as occurring within the private domain. The affinal kin domestic abuse that featured so strongly in the present study has drawn earlier research attention in the South Asian context. Rew et al. (2013) posit that having been on the receiving end of the negative ramifications of being a bride brought into the husband's household and possibly themselves being victims of domestic abuse, mothers-in-law take on the same traditions and practices now that they stand to be beneficiaries of them. Pakistani mothers develop such close relationships with their sons that sharing them with a wife brings with it perceived hazards giving rise to conflict. These mothers feel their security threatened and may fear being left alone when elderly (Mizra, 2017).

So, the question arises of how to theorise women's participation in VAW from a feminist perspective. The existence of men who do not commit acts of violence against women, nor the presence in the village of women who do not accept it passively, is not *per se* in opposition to feminist theory (Grosser & Tyler, 2019). Neither does the existence of a structure of VAW preclude the co-opting of women into this structure as found in this study in the form of affinal kin domestic abuse of younger women.

VAW is theorised as a social construction arising from a societal consensus on the rights and roles of men and women (Krahe, 2018). In the current study there was a counterintuitive level of consensus found among the women on these roles. Counterintuitive in that women suffered in their role, as richly described in the previous chapter. VAW as social construction is therefore supported. Women were aware of the VAW, often experienced it first-hand but had a complex set of rationalisations or coping strategies including forgetting, minimising and blaming women at least as much as men.

Kelly (2001) has mentioned that the frequency of the violence that women face is the main reason that women define the violence as violent. When there are long gaps between incidents women minimised the incidents by focusing on the non-violent times. Forgetting was often seen as a blessing as this allowed the women some time to gather their strength before facing the experience and its effects. Sometimes it takes years for a woman to remember events fully. The women found that their memories were triggered during the research interviews. On a methodological note, this is another reason that researchers choose qualitative research methods as opposed to quantitative. Qualitative research methods allow the researcher the freedom to involve a trigger in the interview while talking to the women. The fact that many women recalled certain events at a later point in the interview highlights the difficulty of assessing and exploring such events in survey questionnaires.

The term minimising has been adapted to show that women often try to limit the significance and the impact of occurrences. Minimising was said to occur more frequently with more common forms of sexual violence. Radford (1987) found that many women would minimise their experiences by comparing it with another woman's experience and find that the other woman's experience was worse than what they themselves were facing. By categorising their

own experiences as less serious the women were able to settle with this and it allowed women to carry on with their day-to-day lives without dwelling on what may have happened to them and letting it affect them much.

Women being perceived as the perpetrators and/or instigators of VAW has been discussed above. In addition to this, women often rationalise VAW through suggestions that the woman involved 'deserved it'. Women being blamed for adverse events was the default position in the rural Punjab whether it be accidents befalling their family members, their offspring performing poorly in school, or a misdeed committed by a husband. The issue of VAW could in part be hidden or mitigated by this blame shifting. Throughout the rural Punjab responsibility for society's problems sunk downwards away from the empowered, whether it be culturally or economically empowered and down onto the disempowered. The main channel for this was a gendered one.

The result of the coping strategies and of societal blame shifting was that women largely acquiesced in the face of the violence they faced. Tolerating was the first choice of response to violence and the less severe or less frequent the violence the more this was sustainable. If a woman was experiencing only low-level or infrequent violence, they could always think of those in a far worse situation.

Another reason for coping and tolerating was the lack of alternative. Both informal internal support and external 'official' protections were largely absent for the women of rural Punjab. The honour phenomenon, discussed further in the next section, was one major barrier to seeking protection either from friends and family or from the 'authorities'. Furthermore, the legal system of Pakistan, as with those in other strongly patriarchal countries, mitigates

against justice for women victims of violence and often punishes women who seek justice (Baxi et al., 2006). Laws have been introduced and or amended to formally increase women's protection, but these laws are challenged by some Islamic scholars and still have to operate alongside widely followed 'shadow' laws such as those flowing from the honour phenomenon. Furthermore, the notion that women do not require formal public protection because they have private sphere protection, and that is all they need, is shown not to be true by the testimonies of the women in this study.

The radical feminist approach to the violence committed by men against women as discussed in Chapter three situates the phenomenon as a firmly gendered one. Indeed, violence is viewed as the basis of men's social domination of women (Brownmiller, 1975). This violence is culturally justified through the militarised glorification of machismo which is reinforced in movies and songs. The present study finds support for the assertion that in a patriarchal society the state would side with men against women's accusations (Walby, 1990) although this support is increasingly passive and characterised by 'turning a blind eye'.

As a racially homogenous society, rural Punjab is a less easy setting to demonstrate an intersection of race and gender as authors have done in other settings (Crenshaw, 1990). Regarding class, there has been evidence proposed that social class may be replacing caste as the main stratification structure in rural Punjab (Farooq & Kayani, 2013). There were manifestations of social class being associated with VAW, particularly in regard to access to education and access to overseas earned income. Furthermore, money issues were intertwined with many of the adverse experiences recalled by the women in the study. Nevertheless, based on the present study, it would not be accurate to say that social class was the strongest predictor of experience of VAW merely one of them.

As stated in chapter three, for Bourdieu's symbolic violence to be present, three main factors must be satisfied: misrecognition, consent and complicity (Morgan & Björkert, 2006). There is certainly a degree of support for each in the present study. Women both took the blame for violence on themselves and attributed it to other women quite commonly suggesting they misrecognised it as a violence imposed by the ruling cultural class, in this case men. The acceptance of the violence could be fatalism, the acceptance of the violence as normal, or it could be the consent factor. Thirdly, women's participation in the instigation and even the perpetrating of the violence can easily be seen as complicity. However, while there was undoubtedly a level of the voluntary submission that Bourdieu referred to, much of the violence I observed was not "a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible, even to its victims" (Bourdieu 2001, p.1). It was all too often enforced by brutal physical violence. Furthermore, it is difficult to view the perpetrators of VAW in rural Punjab as being unconscious of their participation and the victims who did sometimes blame women were in many cases most definitely neither consenting of complicit. At best we could view symbolic violence as a subset of the violence experienced in the rural Punjab, though this could also be contested.

6.5.8 Resilience and resistance

There are exceptions to the main picture presented in this section. While a fatalistic acceptance of violence and even a willingness to believe they 'got what they deserved' was certainly observed, so were instances of resistance and the quality of resilience also clearly detected. There were cases of women refusing to submit to violence and others of untypical assertiveness. It is interesting to consider where this strength comes from and why it is present in some women but not others.

Some women do fight back, and others do gain support from their family. Some perpetrators are punished through the judicial system. It would be wrong not to highlight this. In some circumstances, a woman was capable of assertiveness such as the participant who married a husband who was younger than her (13) and who she was able to dominate. Another defied her family in decisions over how her son should be educated. Another spoke of a sister who exercised dominance over her father and was able to make more life choices herself as a result. These were minority experiences and raise the question of why some women acquiesce more readily than others. One of the most notable attempts to theorise this question is that attempted by Lukes (2005). Lukes proposes an answer to why one group may accept domination by another group. Domination, according to Lukes is an insidious form of power that relies on one of two forms of acquiescence, thick or thin. Thick acquiescence is based on the submissive group holding a genuine belief in the values belief systems that have led to their submission. In contrast, 'thin' acquiescence arises not from any such firmly held beliefs but instead from a psychological state of resignation to the inevitability of their submissive position (Lukes, 2005). This seems a useful theoretical lens through which to consider the findings of the current study but also one which is problematical for the researcher. Lukes is not a feminist theory; it is intended to be a universal theory of power and its explanations for the underlying causes tend to be generalised under the umbrella of socialisation. Also, rather than clear cut thick or thin acquiescence it is more likely that a spectrum exists. The participants in the present study voiced attitudes towards the prevailing values and belief system which ranged from total acceptance to total rejection with most lying somewhere between these two poles. With so much social pressure and taboo surrounding the issues discussed, a researcher faces a great challenge in identifying whether

a genuine willingness to be dominated or a state of resignation is guiding the responses they hear.

Katz (2004) makes an important contribution to understanding resistance and resilience. She proposes a set of practices in three categories: resilience, reworking and resistance in response to her belief that hitherto the literature had somewhat lazily attached the resistance label to all discursive practices. Resilience described acts aimed at "autonomous initiative" or recuperation aimed at survival and endurance in oppressive circumstances. Reworking occurred through attempts to rework inequalities and oppression. Resistance was the label given to acts aimed at subverting or disrupting oppressive and exploitative circumstances (Katz, 2004). From her work in rural Sudan, Katz identified acts of resilience required just to get by in circumstances of rural impoverishment and intensified social inequalities caused by a state-sponsored agricultural project (Katz, 1991).

Examples of reworking may be community self-help programmes, gang membership or religious affiliations which may enable the restoration of some level of human dignity in an overall oppressive environment. Katz sees this reworking as people retooling themselves for survival within existing relations and in social environments that had been left behind, starved of funds and lacking in public policy support.

In her study of women asylum seekers that carried forward Katz's framework, Smith bore witness to the asylum narratives they told which she termed narratives of resistance (Smith, 2014). She argues that "Narratives of resistance are vital to survival, to finding meaning in atrocities and to sustaining commitment to improving the lives of women everywhere" (Smith, 2014, p. 37). Deciding to take part in the research interviews can itself be interpreted

6.7 Honour

Punjab province is reported to be among the worst provinces for honour crimes including killings in one of the worst countries (Rafi, 2019). The concept of honour emerged strongly from the data in the present study. From a young age a Pakistani girl's life is dominated by a set of social expectations which determine what behaviour is acceptable and what is deviant. She will quickly learn that marrying for love and a partner of her own choosing, pursuing education and a career, seeking a divorce or taking any course contrary to her parents wishes, are considered deviant and subject to harsh penalties (Rafi, 2019). The honour concept is found in the most overtly patriarchal societies, most of which (but not all) are Muslim. Family honour is male honour, and it is almost always women who can cause it to be damaged (Standish, 2014). Pakistani girls assume the role of a symbolic vessel of honour (Ruane, 2000) which they retain for most of their lives. With the honour concept so deeply embedded in Pakistani culture, men are unopposed in using it to control women's lives and bodies (Hadi, 2017). Despite the honour concept controlling women's behaviour and their life choices and notwithstanding the considerable jeopardy and appalling punishments women faced there was no evidence in this study that women rejected the legitimacy of the concept, such is its power. Like rape, women are largely unprotected by the state from honour killings. Sharlach (2008) explains how the perpetrator of an honour killing, if caught and found guilty may

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simply be required to pay compensation to the male guardian of the deceased woman and that often it is that male guardian who commissioned the murder in the first place. The chilling effect of the extreme sanctions meant that women of the rural Punjab lived in fear and all of the women encountered during the course of this research had personal knowledge of one or more examples of honour punishments.

While honour killings are alarmingly common, the deterrent effect is near universal. It was a major influence upon the behaviours of the participants in the present study and its main effect was keeping this behaviour within the socially constructed boundaries developed over centuries in this most patriarchal of societies. The honour concept also outweighs Islamic principles, one of which is that men and women are equal in their right to choose their partner and exercise free will in entering into the marriage contract (Rafi, 2019).

Like other aspects of violence against women, the women in this study were quick to acknowledge the role of women in instigating honour punishments and encouraging males to arrange or actually carry out the crimes. To maintain honour within the family the women are themselves seen to police the behaviour of other women. The participants in the present study perceived honour as the guiding principle of their society and submitted to its inevitability and status as a centuries old tradition. It was not labelled as a patriarchal phenomenon but one in which the whole community participated albeit one whose main victim was invariably a woman.

There have been a number of cases of honour violence that do not follow the 'typical' pattern of patriarchal violence. One such example is the case of Zeenat Bibi (16), who was burnt alive by her mother Perveen Bibi in Punjab, for eloping with a boy of her own choice. Mrs Perveen after killing her daughter went out on the streets and screamed' "People! I have

killed my daughter for misbehaving and giving our family a bad name" (Malm, 2016). This demonstrates that gender discrimination is not the only factor that prompts violence but is an intersection that can sometimes come into play. It is in cases like the above mentioned that we can see that there are a number of women who also subscribe to the same set of honour values as males. However, cases like these are side-lined with women perpetrators typically seen as accomplices to males.

The terms 'honour killings' and 'honour crimes' are highly problematic because they associate extreme acts of violence with something of virtue. While not specified in the present study, acid attacks, nose cuttings and stove burning killings are some of the appalling acts associated with honour violence (Niaz, 2004). By positioning women as the embodiment of male honour violence is justified and the perpetrators released from responsibility (Gupte, 2013). One notorious case exemplifies the lengths some go to to protect the 'honour' tradition. In 2012, a video emerged of five women clapping to a wedding song. They were believed to have been killed a month later by the mutual consent of their families. A (male) campaigner, Afzal Kohistani sought justice for the women but faced his own retribution for doing so with his house being firebombed before being gunned down in 2019 (BBC News, 2019). The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (2019) stated in its 2019 report that "Legislation has failed to deter or reduce the abhorrent 'honour' killings which continue throughout the province" (p.16). The powerful concept of male honour seems impervious to religious teachings, formal law and growing levels of literacy making it one of the most dangerous tools in the patriarchal toolbox. The women of rural Punjab do not tend to hear the voices of human rights activists and NGOs that are heard in the cities and this study shows that their submission to the concept of male honour is virtually complete.

6.8 Summary

The experiences recalled by the women in this study confirm Akhtar and Métraux (2013) and their assertion that Pakistani women endure almost unmatched misery in their lives. In a society where women face a wide range of disempowerments, from economics, health, education, to political participation and the pursuit of happiness, violence intensifies their inequality and dominance by men. In this chapter, the main themes arising from the findings of the research giving voice to the women of rural Punjab have been discussed to seek interpretation and understanding in their own right and in the context of other literature including theoretical perspectives. The systematic analysis of the qualitative data corpus gathered during the field work gave rise to a series of main and subthemes which informed the organisation of this chapter.

Feminism has been criticised for its discounting of other social inequalities such as class and ethnicity. However, rural Punjab is a relatively homogenous context. Those who can leave for the cities leave behind an almost exclusively poor and poorly educated population, equal in their lack of economic resources and broader capital to use Bourdieu's construct. While there is a Sunni majority and Shia minority, this did not surface at all as a potential source of inequality or risk factor for VAW, neither did caste. This is not to say caste does not exist in the rural Punjab or that it is not a source of inequality, but it does indicate that in the context of a study of VAW it was not raised in interviews or during observations. Hence, while the radical feminist approach has become more nuanced in Western contexts since its 1970s heyday, it still appears relevant in the context of the present study. That said, the picture that emerged from the study suggests that important qualifications need to be made and nuances

stated that may be largely context based. As the quote that began this chapter asserted, there are multiple inequalities affecting Pakistan but the dominant one is gender (Bari, 2012).

The work of Bourdieu was also brought forward as part of the explanatory framework particularly his theory of multi-dimensional social space but also cultural capital and symbolic violence. His work offered an alternative to gender essentialism. With poorer families of the rural Punjab often in service to those with more capital, it is difficult to reconcile the notion that different social groups inhabit separate social spaces and that these spaces have separate physical spaces. Symbolic violence may help interpret why there is some accepting of VAW and even women as perpetrators but my experience in the field suggests to me that the violence is anything but gentle and imperceptible to use Bourdieu's own (translated) adjectives.

Women experience a wide spectrum of violence in their lives in the rural Punjab. This ranges from controlling behaviours such as surveillance in both the public and private spheres, to physical and sexual violence. Perceiving themselves vulnerable to strangers they seek the protection of the private domain, though here many of them experience domestic violence. There is also a strong spiritual theme to the violence featuring black magic and witchcraft. To cope, women would forget or minimise the experiences of violence they had had themselves or had heard of from others. The research found a widespread sense of helplessness among the women participants with references to suicide.

The study revealed that while violence was committed overwhelmingly by men against women, the women of rural Punjab did not always interpret this violence as purely patriarchal. Rather it was framed as societal violence containing an important element of

matriarchal violence and particularly matriarchal controlling behaviours. Behind every violent man was a controlling mother was the perception voiced by participants. The study confirmed the importance of affinal kin domestic abuse as an important component of the spectrum of violence women experienced.

Furthermore, 'honour', so prevalent in discussions of violence in this and other studies, was not interpreted by participants as a purely patriarchal concept. If anything, it was seen as a generational concept with the older generation of parents, uncles and aunts, policing the family honour to ensure it is not put at risk by the reckless young by, for example, not marrying the partners chosen for them.

In the following chapter, the main conclusions of the research, its contributions and its limitations will be presented. Recommendations for further research will also be made.

Chapter 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has reported a feminist research study of rural dwelling Punjabi women and their lived experiences of different forms of violence. In doing so it has empowered these women and given them a voice to speak about this social phenomenon from their own perspective. This final chapter offers a concise presentation of the main conclusions of the research, followed by consideration of the contributions the work has made empirically, theoretically, and methodologically. The limitations of the research are proposed and recommendations for practice and further research are made. A short epilogue gives some closing remarks and reflections.

7.2 Main conclusions

The women of rural Punjab live in the presence of violence and the absence of equality, opportunity, financial security and, for many, happiness. Their lives from a young age are defined by marriage and childbearing and the community's expectations of these. With little or no say in their marriage partner and with selection guided by a powerful tradition of consanguinity these marriages are often unsuccessful and, in many cases, feature violence.

Communities, such as the one in which the field work was conducted, are founded on a belief system which combines Islam and mystic Sufism alongside the supernatural and black magic. This belief system intersects with violence at several points. While women can fully

participate in the rituals associated with the local belief system as apparent equals, this is illusory as religious and spiritual power is invested almost exclusively in men.

In the rural communities of the Punjab women are far less likely to be seen in the public domain than their urban dwelling counterparts. Instead, their lives are mainly spent in the private domain, first in their family home and then once married in the home of their husband's family. Whether in the home or outside, women, particularly those of fertile age, are constantly surveilled. Their parents monitor them for possible infractions of the family honour code, then their husband's family take over this role while all the time the public gaze evaluates their behaviour eager to feed the ever-present rumour mill.

The research highlighted a significant role for the female members of the husband's family in the psychological, emotional and physical violence married women experienced. This was found to be particularly true of mothers-in-law who sought to control their sons and preserve their own status within the household as the matriarch. Women yet to bear children, especially boys, seemed more vulnerable to this persecution than those married for longer and with male offspring. It can be concluded that affinal kin domestic abuse is a significant part of the violence experienced by women in the rural Punjab.

The women in this study were more than capable of identifying and discussing the different forms violence assumed. There were even indications that psychological violence was perceived as damaging, if not more damaging than the more routine forms of physical violence. A full spectrum of violence was voiced during the interviews and the observed informal group discussions. Abscondments, kidnapping, suicide, murder, gang rapes as well as domestic violence came together to paint a grim and dangerous picture of life for these women and other women they knew.

The study revealed that women played a role in the violence permeating the village. Indeed, the most striking response to the violence was the way the cause of the violence was so often attributed to other women. Participants perceived that once beyond child-bearing age, these women became as involved in the cycle of violence as their sons, husbands, and brothers. This role was explained in the rich narratives of participants who detailed how the mother and sisters of married men, particularly recently married men, would seek to control the wives who had moved into their households. This included inciting the husband to mistreat his wife, including the use of violence, the women themselves used physical and psychological violence. The mother-in-law was prominently identified as playing a highly negative role in the wives' lives. The reason for this phenomenon was not empirically isolated in this study though assumptions may be that there could be some protecting of matriarchal status occurring, a fear of losing influence or even dominance over their sons and repeating behaviours that they themselves had once been victims of. These causes are in line with the findings of an earlier study (Roomani et al., 2016). Wives yet to bear sons seemed particularly vulnerable. Mothers of female offspring are not in this position as daughters leave the family household to live with their husband's family.

The research also confirmed the prevalence and power of the honour concept as central to the issue of VAW and as a means of patriarchal control. Men have honour but it is women who can lose it. This leads to the constant surveillance of women's actions, particularly younger women. Violence in the name of honour is socially accepted, but failure not to protect it is unacceptable. Male relatives commit violent acts including rape and murder in the name of family honour and are often treated leniently by the justice system. Mothers and mothers-in-law were as avid in upholding the concept of family honour, a source of so much

of the violence, as any males. The concept of matriarchal power may or may not be a true reflection of power relations in rural Punjab, but it is undoubtedly perceived to exist in the minds of the women in this study.

Overall, it can be concluded that the women of rural Punjab province, particularly those of child-bearing age, experience a full spectrum of violence and controlling behaviours. A range of behaviours are used to control the women's fertility, throughout the fertile phase of their lives. Arranged marriages, including those of young girls, are commonplace. Once married the women are expected to live with their in-laws where they lack privacy in either the private or public domains. The power in this society is not in the hands of women of childbearing age. All aspects of the local culture are part of an elaborate patchwork designed to keep these women powerless.

7.3 Contributions of the research

The present study aimed to understand how these women define and understand the violence that they face in their everyday lives and which factors appear to be influencing this. In pursuing this aim, the researcher proposes that significant contributions to the body of knowledge and the cause of ethnographic research have been made. This can be divided between empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions.

7.3.1 Empirical contribution

The research presented in this thesis is an important addition to our understanding of violence against women in rural contexts and from a radical feminist perspective. Since the 1970s there has been considerable research interest in violence against women matched in some countries by important policy development. Much less has taken place in the most dangerous

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places for women to live in, of which Pakistan is one. Feminist research in hostile patriarchal settings brings its own set of challenges but is also capable of revealing valuable knowledge due to both the scarcity of the research and the starkness of the findings, which is what I believe this study has done. It has given voice to an oppressed and disempowered group of women. A voice that is rarely heard.

The research aimed to make an important contribution towards an empirically informed understanding of violence as defined by the women in rural Punjab. There is little existing research on the issues of women and violence in Punjab, with the available studies based mainly on quantitative research (Abbasi, 1980; Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001). This present research has addressed women's perceptions of different forms of violence and the roles of different actors. In addition to that, this research is qualitative, providing a rich contextual analysis of the research problem. Similarly, there is a lack of research addressing the role of women in settings where violence against women is so prevalent and institutionally uncontrolled.

While meeting its pre-set aims and objectives the research also contributed to new areas of knowledge. In particular, the phenomenon of women being complicit in violence against other women. Whilst we may be tempted to refer to this as matriarchal violence this study showed that far from challenging the patriarchy this violence functioned to defend it. None of the violence committed by women that this study revealed was directed at positively altering the social position of women as it was overwhelmingly directed against other, mostly younger, women. While this thesis has used the term violence against women (VAW), on reflection and in the light of the findings it may be more appropriate to use gender-based violence (GBV) as defined by the UN (1993). This is a broader term and more fitting for this

thesis, as it recognises violence against women, and violence *by* women that has a seriously detrimental impact as does violence inflicted by men. Understanding the reasons and mechanisms behind women's role in the overall environment of violence in rural Punjab needs further research now that it has been highlighted here as a significant phenomenon.

This research found that some women, who suffered as a wife, later became violent mothers-in-law. Research carried out by Saunders (1988) affirms this as she discovered that wives, who were accustomed to violence in their relationships, were likely to approve of marital violence. This research also contributes to understanding of affinal kin domestic abuse which was the form of violence that women were mainly involved in.

Tradition, religion and culture would have us believe all women are empathetic and would not engage in acts of violence, however, this research has suggested otherwise. The women in rural Punjab seem trapped from the outset where their lives are not their own – it is how they deal with this that is interesting. Stories of resistance and resilience also surfaced adding to this literature. This research pushes knowledge forward by capturing the voices of an under-researched population within the context of rural Punjab, much of which had also been an unexplored realm.

The present study also adds to the existing literature on belief systems by confirming an important role for black magic and the supernatural in the lives of the women of rural Punjab, including its use in inflicting violence. Its formal rejection by most Pakistani Islamic scholars has been shown to be ineffective in stopping its prevalence in the context of the rural Punjab. Overall, this research is a contribution to the feminist ethnographic literature on violence against women in rural patriarchal contexts of the Global South.

7.3.2 Theoretical contribution

There have been numerous theoretical approaches applied to the explanation of the phenomenon of VAW. The most prominent among these were discussed in chapter three. The theoretical framework adopted for this study combined a radical feminist (essentialist) perspective with Bourdieu's concept of social space that allowed for a non-feminist alternative analysis should this have emerged as pertinent to the violence experienced and described.

The core radical feminist concept of patriarchy was confirmed as dominating the social organisation of the rural Punjab. The complex belief system and the concept of honour were highly significant components of the preservation of patriarchal power. A surprisingly strong propensity for women to blame themselves or other women for much of the violence was a third force maintaining women's disempowered position in this society. The study did nothing to disprove the status given to Pakistan, and particularly rural Pakistan as one of the most dangerous places for a woman to live. There were indications of matriarchal power in the private domain among older women who had borne sons but this in no way challenged the patriarchy; rather it acted to reinforce it.

Aside from gender and the related factors of fertility, child-bearing and martial status, in this study other inequalities did not inform the understanding of the violence. While there is undoubtedly a division between land-owning and non-land-owning families, between those in service (whether domestically or in the fields) and those paying them, the women in these groups did not express contrasting views on the subject of VAW. Similarly, although the caste system is known to be a powerful factor in social organisation in Punjab province in the interviews and the informal observed discussions it was seldom raised. We know that VAW is commonplace, but this could also indicate that it is experienced across castes and

socio-economic groups. Kinship relations, known to be a key determinant of social organisation in the Punjab was dominantly prevalent as an influence on the lives of the women in this study. However, as it is universally important and another aspect of the homogeneity of the population, beyond confirming that it formed part of the underlying patriarchal control of resources in Punjabi society, the role of kinship relations as a risk factor for VAW could not be fully established as this would have required further data.

The research raised important questions on the application of what are, essentially, Western-developed constructs to other highly contrasting cultural contexts, such as the rural Punjab in Pakistan. Radical feminism and patriarchy have for some time been viewed by many in the Global North as insufficiently complex and unable to deal with the multiple risk factors of inequality present in these societies. As far as applying these approaches to the Global South, one response has been the development of literature of criminology of the Global South (Carrington et al., 2019). However, the present study was conducted in a far 'simpler', more homogenous context where gender was the overwhelmingly dominant risk factor. Other risk factors such as fertility and martial status flowed from gender. There was little evidence of other risk factors. Religion, specifically whether a woman was a Sunni, or a Shia Muslim was not raised in the context of violence. Caste did not merit inclusion as a theme or subtheme in this context despite its historical and cultural importance in South Asia. Race did not feature in this racially homogenous setting. Social class and related factors such as education/ literacy clearly feature as sources of inequalities in Pakistan but in this study of VAW were not prominent in the narratives of the participants.

Bourdieu's work on multidimensional social spaces was included in the explanatory framework to offer a non-feminist perspective as an alternative to radical feminism. Rather

than social spaces reflecting physical spaces as he proposed and physical and cultural distance being maintained between classes (employers and those in service to them) I observed these groups in very close proximity to one another but avoiding interaction. I also found that the symbolic power and violence of which Bourdieu wrote did not match well with the cruel and often brutal violence to which the women

Hence the theoretical contribution was to raise these issues and promote consideration of how these theories should be viewed and developed in for Global South contexts. It would appear that women in the Global South are at a higher risk of experiencing violence than their northern counterparts. There are many factors that contribute to this which include, but are not limited to, factors that are associate with rurality, social isolation and lack of economic opportunities/resources (Carrington et al., 2015; Donnermeyer & DeKeseredy, 2014). Furthermore, the present research points to a potential nuancing of the standard concept of patriarchy by providing evidence that, in some contexts, men do not oppress women *per se* they oppress fertile women. Questions too are raised as to why so much violence is accepted, justified and even blamed on other women. Additionally, the phenomenon of affinal kin domestic abuse emerged prominently in the experiences of the women in this study.

7.3.3 Methodological contribution

This study provides an example of how an important social phenomenon can be understood through ethnographic research. The ethnographic approach contrasts with the health and positivistic approaches currently undertaken in rural Pakistan. The research shows how researchers can generate rich and authentic descriptions and interpretations of the social world and the lived experiences of a social group. In particular, it offers future researchers insight into the conduct of ethnographic research in a challenging setting. This research is

also an example of the relevance of both the reflexivity and positionality of the researcher. Without sufficient self-awareness and acceptance of the changes made to my early preconceptions during the research process the fieldwork could not have been successfully concluded. This study of a distant hard to reach population and on a sensitive research topic required a major effort to gain acceptance and develop a relationship through which valuable data could be collected. The study confirms that reflexivity is a significant dimension of qualitative research (Palangas et al., 2017). England (1994) described research as a space shared by the researcher and participants. My identity as an educated Muslim British woman of Pakistani descent shapes the way I make meaning and this study reconfirmed the importance of recognising positionality and of keeping it at the forefront of reflection throughout the research process.

Researchers, including, Greenblat (1981), Saunders (1988) and the Dobashes' (1981) have all argued that to understand VAW fully it must be looked at in context. To do this, women should not be called to a clinic and interviewed; they should be interviewed and observed in their everyday lives. This reaffirms the need for a qualitative methodology. This ethnographic study has provided an example of the use of a qualitative research design to generate a rich picture of an important social phenomenon by giving voice to the actors themselves.

The researcher has close connections with the village in which the fieldwork took place. Without this known affiliation with the context, it is highly doubtful that the research could have taken place at all. An 'outsider' researcher would have found it almost impossible to gain access to the women of the village and establish their trust. The voices of the women participating in the study would have continued to go unheard. This is a contribution because

it encourages feminist and ethnographic researchers to consider where they could best direct their efforts.

Furthermore, in this study both the researcher and the researched have challenged traditions of silence. This research has focused on a highly complex and sensitive subject, whilst putting forward numerous questions on how to develop meaningful and empirical data to help generate knowledge and understanding of the factors that affect Pakistani women's experiences of violence, specifically in the Punjab region of Pakistan.

7.4 Limitations

As this research has confirmed, the women of rural-dwelling Punjab province are subject to surveillance in both the public and private spheres. This makes them a hard-to-reach population and also requires the researcher to negotiate past the mainly male gatekeepers. The level of control the participants are under could have restricted their candour and influenced them to take stances in line with social expectations. These influences have the potential to lead to inauthentic testimonies. However, based on the body language, expressions of emotion and the opportunities for cross referencing narratives, the researcher judges the women's accounts to be authentic so the impact from this limitation is more likely to have been non-participation than any effect on the data collected from those who did.

Conducting the fieldwork in Urdu and then translating the data into English is a potential methodological weakness as some words, including those highly relevant to the study, did not have direct translates. It was important for the researcher to consider the context of the spoken words to arrive at the correct translation and to correctly reflect the participants' meanings. A further limitation of the research design was that data was collected from a

single site, one village in Gurjat district, Punjab province, Pakistan. Researchers seeking to transfer the findings to other contexts should carefully consider the 'fittingness' between the two contexts.

Time resources was another limitation. The PhD journey is a relatively long one, but it still requires the researcher to place limits on the time available for fieldwork. With more time it is possible that more interviews could have been completed and that some of the emerging themes could have been addressed in more depth.

The research added to other contributions to the understanding of affinal kin domestic abuse (Mizra, 2017) as it revealed the prominence and prevalence of such violence within the setting. However, this phenomenon could not be fully investigated within this research as it appeared as an unanticipated theme and interviews with mothers-in-law were not planned or conducted to investigate further.

Finally, while the researcher's personal links to the community and, in particular, to the women of the village made this study possible, my gender prevented me from accessing the inner sanctums of patriarchy, the witchcraft shops and the darbar with its *pir*-controlled secluded areas. While the women spoke of these, I was unable to personally witness them in any meaningful way.

7.5 Recommendations

Research, especially feminist research, is not an end in itself. It behoves the researcher to make practical recommendations and give guidance to other researchers on how further understanding of the research problem could be reached. Feminist research including the radical feminist approach that made the main contribution to the theoretical framework

should be emancipatory. It should be empowering for women, and it should hold men to account. It is insufficient to give voice to women and their struggles, however important that may be. Rather, specific recommendations need to be brought forward which could tackle the inequalities and injustices they face on a day-to-day basis. The scale of the challenge and the failings of government in service provision, set out in the first chapter and confirmed throughout, need to be addressed by these recommendations.

7.5.1 For practice and policy

Sarantakos (2005) posits that ethnographic research should "ultimately contribute towards social change and reconstruction (p.55). After completing the present study, I was faced with the question of 'Where to Start?' in making this contribution. The complex forces behind the violence experienced by women in rural Punjab can appear insurmountable and in such circumstances a researcher may see making practical recommendations futile. However, this would be to ignore one of the central purposes of ethnographic research. I focus on four areas: school attendance and literacy; recruiting women police officers; establishing local health clinics; and the role of protest and campaigning. The first three of these relate to the need for greater public investment in women's services and greater effort to connect women to these services at a local level. The final recommendation recognises the limitations and poor track record of government in delivering these services and calls for greater voluntary sector attention to be paid to rural communities.

My starting point for improving the lives of the women of rural Punjab would be school. I was shocked that the schools did not seem to care that students were taking so much time off – there were no checks made on attendance, no registers kept. There was little to no feedback from teachers to parents regarding how their children were performing. There were no

parents' evenings. Children, particularly the daughters frequently truanted to stay home and help with the household chores. This is highly relevant to the later lives of these girls because it left them illiterate and uneducated with no opportunity to escape violence. *School attendance needs to be monitored and teacher-parent feedback needs to be increased and formalised. It should be policy to spread literacy in the rural Punjab and build upon the disappointingly slow increases seen in recent decades.*

A second area that should be addressed is the absence of women within the law enforcement agencies and the disinterested responses women receive to their grievances. If there was a female presence on hand women would be more confident taking their problems further than is the case when their interactions are overwhelmingly with often unsympathetic men. The profound sense of helplessness confirmed in the findings of the present study may be somewhat alleviated. *Women should be recruited to serve in the police and other public offices.* Female officers can then be assigned to VAW cases and could lead a public information campaign aimed at encouraging women to come forward, but in a safe and confidential way. While women, particularly mothers-in-law, can play a role in the cycle of violence this should not negate the benefits of having female police officers who may have a greater understanding of the issues than their male counterparts.

I also recommend changes to healthcare provision to rural dwelling women of the Punjab. Women were not able to discuss their sexual health or seek advice and support, this led to many problems – the main ones being women were eating many herbs and things as natural contraception, things that were not good for the women and were having a harmful effect on their bodies. They were also doing the same thing to self-abort. *Local health clinics should be established to provide evidence-based healthcare and discourage unscientific treatments*

that are currently causing harm. Having a local clinic that women were able to go to, to get contraception or advice would be an important development.

This research has highlighted the prevalence of affinal kin domestic abuse in rural Punjab. It features as a significant component in the patchwork of forms of violence experienced in the everyday lives of women, particularly those of childbearing age. However, the desire of a feminist researcher to propose solutions and policies to lift this burden cannot mask how difficult it is to make a recommendation in this area, such is its embeddedness deep within the private domain of kinship relations. It is not dissimilar to the challenge of the harms caused by the concept of honour.

While the provincial government of Punjab declares its aim of raising the awareness of women of their legal rights and eliminating the customary practices that affect them so negatively (Government of the Punjab, 2016) This study detected little impact in the rural village where the field work took place. Raising awareness will require the campaigning attentions of organisations such as the Aurat Foundation and their network of voluntary citizens' groups. However, in rural areas of the Punjab there is no detectable presence of such organisations and the women encountered in this study made no mention of them. Lack of awareness is the most likely reason but fear of a backlash from their families may also act as a deterrent. *It would be an important and recommended step forward to spread the network of these organisations into rural areas.* Furthermore, there is an opportunity to engage rural-dwelling women through social media and other online channels. While the village I conducted my fieldwork in lacked many things, internet connectivity was not one of them with the main means of connection being smartphones with data packages, although wifi was also commonly available. *Organisations such as the Aurat Foundation should raise*

awareness of their social media pages as well as their own websites. However, some women may be restricted in their accessing information due to limited reading skills which links to the need invest in improving literacy.

7.5.2 For further research

Many themes emerged in this research all linked to the problem of violence against women. Two that I feel merit further investigation are witchcraft and the *darbars*. However, it must be recognised that access to these locations, the witchcraft shops and the secluded areas controlled by the *pīr* is almost impossible for a female researcher, even one with close links to the community. There is a reason why this is so. These places hold within them an understanding of the darkest aspects of male violence and control of women. A male-female research team may be one possibility of meeting this challenge.

Also, the interesting finding that women blamed other women for the violence at least as much as they did men merits further investigation. Further work is needed to understand whether matriarchal power is real or an illusory permitted power that serves the patriarchy. Based on the present study, the existence of matriarchal power is predicated on the influence mothers have on their sons' behaviours throughout adulthood. Mothers without sons would not be in the position to exercise this power, however illusory it may be. Comparative study of these two groups and their interpretation of violence against women would be of great value. Further research which included a sample of males would provide enlightenment as to the authenticity of the concept of matriarchal power.

In addition to these two, a similar study of males in rural Punjab which aimed to understand their perceptions of violence and particularly VAW could shed further light on the phenomenon. Linking individual male perceptions and experience to the structure of violence

could make significant theoretical contributions. It may be possible to establish the macro-level social and cultural causes of this violence by hearing the interpretations of perpetrators. However, this study may be problematic for a female researcher to conduct.

7.6 Epilogue

When I embarked upon my research journey, I knew I would encounter women whose lives were punctuated by violence and lived in the shadow of oppression. The narratives I heard were often distressing to me, but I was motivated by the desire to give voice to the previously unheard. I sincerely hope that this will not be the last that is heard of them. No matter how intransigent the factors behind the violence appear to be, researchers can build understanding and give progressive policymakers a point of reference from which change can result.

As I reflect on the research, I constantly ask myself why the women I encountered often blamed other women for the cycle of violence or at least demonstrated a willingness to discuss this perhaps more freely than men's violence. Were they right or wrong? Were they living in such a powerful all-pervasive patriarchy that their consciousness had absorbed a false ideology? Perhaps they were just negotiating a path to survival and sharing, or switching, the blame to women was part of the strategy? Perhaps in a patriarchal society such as this, women felt freer to recount stories of other women's role in violence. Perhaps in a patriarchal society mothers-in-law felt particularly threatened by losing any proxied power they had in the person of their sons.

There is a case for concluding that it is women of child-bearing age that are oppressed, rather than women *per se*. Once a woman has fulfilled her child-bearing duties it seems she joins the ranks of the oppressors, exercising control of and even commissioning and committing

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violence against younger women. One important caveat to this explanation is that mothers of adult married daughters are less likely to engage in affinal kin domestic abuse than those with sons.

My reflections have mainly centred on the cultural distance between the UK and the rural Punjab, and in particular the differences in household formation. In an individualist society, the bonds between parents and their children start to loosen as soon as they reach adulthood. This does not occur in the collectivist societies where the role of parents in the lives of their now adult offspring stays strong. In the West, marriage normally signals the creation of a new household separate from parents. In Pakistani culture, perhaps more so than anywhere else in the world, newly married women are expected to live in the same house as their in-laws rather then set up a new household. This leaves them particularly powerless, controlled and lacking in any privacy or agency. The experience had clearly convinced the participants that the position of mother-in-law was at the heart of the cycle of violence they experienced directly and indirectly.

Theoreticians strive to formulate their theories in such a way that they can be universally applied. On reflection, I can see that there are so many contextual specifics in this research that the fit with the theories I sought to apply was destined to be partial at best. These specifics included the way households are formed after marriage, the powerful concept of honour, the ongoing use of black magic, the absence of a gender-blind law and order system, and the homogeneity of the women in the study. These factors can be found in other societies, but their combination and consequences lead me to the conclusion that this context, the rural areas of Punjab province, Pakistan, is as near to being unique as is possible.

I left behind the women of the rural Punjabi village greatly concerned for them, certain in the knowledge that the violence that shrouds their hopes from brighter futures is likely to remain. It seemed to me that this society remained a bastion of patriarchy. If VAW was a bacteria then rural Punjab would be its petri dish, cultivating it unabated.

Outside of the cities, there was little trace of mechanisms of struggle that could lead to changes observed elsewhere and similarly little sign of change among men. In 2020, a police chief admonished a gang rape victim for being out at night unaccompanied while in June 2021 Pakistan's prime minister Imran Khan suggested rape victims were responsible for their plight through wearing too few clothes (Tariq, 2021).

The structure of violence seems set to remain in place for the foreseeable future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Ethics Certificate

University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

8 December 2015

Dear Sadaf,

RE: ETHICS APPLICATION HSCR 15-106 – A Qualitative Approach to Pakistani Women's Experience of Violence

Based on the information you provided, I am pleased to inform you that application HSCR15-106 has been approved.

If there are any changes to the project and/ or its methodology, please inform the Panel as soon as possible by contacting Health-ResearchEthics@salford.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

Sue McAndrew
Chair of the Research Ethics Panel

Appendix 2 Informed Consent form and supporting organisations

Consent Form

A Qualitative Research into Honour Crime in the Punjab Province

Please note that if the participants are illiterate the consent form will be read out to the respondents and consent will be acquired verbally.

Please tick the appropriate boxes	**Yes**	**No**
Taking Part		
I have read and understood the project information sheet. 17.11.2015 v3	☐	☐
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	☐	☐
I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project will include being interviewed and audio recorded.	☐	☐
I understand that my taking part is voluntary. I can withdraw from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.	☐	☐
Use of the information		
I understand my real name will be anonymised in the research and in any subsequent publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.	☐	☐
I understand that my words may be quoted anonymously in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.	☐	☐

_____ _____   _____ _____17.11.2015___
Name of participant [printed]   Signature   Date

_____   _____
 _____
Researcher [printed]   Signature   Date

Project contact details for further information:

Organisations that will provide support

EDHI Homes

→ **Edhi home Peshawar** (for women)

→ **Edhi Home Islamabad**
(for women, orphanage boys and girls) Near Shifa International Hospital.
Sector: H - 8, Islamabad
Phone: +92 (51) 4435129

→ **Edhi home Quetta** (for women)

→ **Edhi Home Multan** (for men and women)

→ **Edhi Home Lahore** (for men)
Gulbarg, Lahore

→ **Edhi Home Lahore Township,** (for women)
Lahore (for mentally retarded females)
(Edhi shelter home for women left their house because of domestic violence)

<u>Mukhtar Mai – shelter home</u>

Establish in 2006, the Mukhtar Mai Women's Shelter Home is a home for women who have been subjected to violence, in need of shelter and services to provide refuge and ultimately help them transition into a healthy, safe, and normal life.

Services:
SHELTER AND DAILY NECESSITIES (food, clothing and daily commodities)
Upon entry into Shelter Home, each resident is provided with food, clothing, and daily commodities. The children accompanying their mother also avail of these facilities.
LEGAL SUPPORT
The women are provided with a lawyer to advocate their cases in the courts, as well as with other legal matters. The files are maintained for each resident by the staff in a safe and secure location. The residents are provided with transportation facility for pursuing their cases in the courts.
LONG TERM SUPPORT
Long-term support is available for the women who have been exposed to violence. In some cases, this support may have to continue for a year or more. After leaving a violent relationship, many women may undergo psychic crises and depression, and it is important to make long-term therapy available to such women free of charge.
MEDICAL TREATMENT & PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING
The Shelter Home provides the battered women with medical treatment and psychological counselling that respond to respond to both the physical and mental violence the women have endured. MMWO has close relations with a hospital as well as clinic doctors in case of complicated health issues (pregnancy complications & deliveries etc.) as well as required medical tests.

Women's Rights Association Pakistan

This organisation worked 15 years to fight against gender-based violence, promote hygiene practices and advocacy to support women in southern Punjab region of Pakistan. We work with our skilled and competent staff and pool of professional trainers, whom are designing and implementing programs and advocacy campaigns, trainings, developing modules.

They closely cooperate with print and electronic media, lawyers, government departments/institutions, academia, professional bodies, national and international human rights organizations/networks to give the best possible support to our beneficiaries.

Head Office ADDRESS

Zaman Jaffery Street, Chowk Qazafi,
Khanewal Road, Multan, Pakistan

Central Office ADDRESS

House #13 Hans Road New Shalimar Colony
Bosan Road, Multan, Pakistan.

PHONE NO

+92-61-6513386
+92-337-7242627

FAX NO

+92-61-6513386

Appendix 3 – Interview Guide

A Qualitative Research into Honour Crime in the Punjab Province

The interview will be split in 10 sections, some sections will be quite brief, others will be a very in-depth narrative. The same guide will be used for male and female respondents.

Introduction of Interviewer
This section will be a very informal introduction and will also be used to remind interviewees of the topics that will be discussed.
The interview will start with a reminder of the project goals and purpose.
It will be explained why the interview is to be recorded, **if** it is to be recorded, and verbal consent will be asked for. Confidentiality (Conditional), and anonymity (Absolute), will be discussed.
The interview will only be recorded if consent is given.

Introduction of Interviewee
This section will be a brief discussion of the respondent's background, education levels and marital status. This will be a brief, factual biography of the respondent.
  ➢ What age bracket would you put yourself in (not all respondents will know their correct age)?
  ➢ Have you been to school/in education (this could be Islamic education only)?

- ➢ If you are single, how many people live in your house, and how are they related to you? Parents, siblings, grandparents, extended family members?
- ➢ If you are married, who lives in your house with you? Husband, children, in laws?

Definition of Violence

This section will be a very informal dialogue of the respondent's understanding of violence.
- ➢ What would you say violence is?
- ➢ What makes you think this?

Definition of Honour

This section will be a very informal dialogue of the respondent's understanding of Honour.
- ➢ What would you say Honour is?
- ➢ What makes you think this?
- ➢ Is this an opinion that you have formed yourself or is this what you have been told?

Incidents of Violence

This section will be an in-depth narrative of the various events and incidents that the respondents want to discuss. The incidents could range from wolf whistling to rape. This section will vary according to the respondents definition of violence.
- ➢ Have you ever seen any form of violence in your life?
- ➢ Was this aimed at you or someone that you know?
- ➢ Could you discuss with me, the circumstances surrounding this incident?

Incidents of Honour Crime

This section will be an in-depth narrative of the respondent's understanding of Honour.
- ➢ What would you say Honour is?
- ➢ What makes you think this?
- ➢ Is this an opinion that you have formed yourself or this what you have been told?
- ➢ Do you think Honour crimes occur in the whole of Pakistan or are they according to you concentrated in certain area of Pakistan?
- ➢ Is this a cultural or religious practice?
- ➢ Has the media played a role in highlighting/increasing this practice?
- ➢ Do you think these crimes have increased/decreased?
- ➢

Tribal/Legal Courts

This section will be a very indepth dialogue of the respondent's knowledge of the tribal and legal court systems.
- ➢ Do you think legal courts are fair in decisions regarding Honour Crimes?
- ➢ Do you think tribal courts are fair in decisions regarding Honour Crimes?
- ➢ Would you say that tribal courts are more powerful than legal courts?
- ➢ Do you know who the tribal court consists of? How many members are there?
- ➢ If needed, would you approach the legal court for help? If not, why not.

Role of Community

This section will be an informal discussion of the interviewees opinion.
- ➢ What is the relationship between power and Honour?

- ➢ What is the role of the family and community in the construction of this Honour?
- ➢ Was there anyone in your community that was willing to support you, or the victim?

Feelings of the Interviewee & the Aftermath

This section will look at how the interviewee felt during this time, isolated, afraid, etc. It will also briefly look at the present situation, the aftereffects of the crime, if the interviewee is feeling excluded, etc.

- ➢ Are you aware of any after effects that this incident has had on the victim, if this was not you?
- ➢ Could you tell me how the incident has impacted on your life?
- ➢ Is there anything that you feel should be changed by the state/system to try and safeguard others from this type of incident occurring again?
- ➢ What is needed for change?

Conclusion

This will be a very brief summary of what has been discussed and the interviewee will be able to add anything that they feel is relevant and has been missed out