Honour-based violence and help-providers in Finland

What are the help providers doing to help women of colour seeking help and how do they conceptualize other important collaborators?

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ABSTRACT

Although Finland is deemed to be a female-friendly country, it has been criticized for the inability to eradicate violence committed specifically against women. According to the Finnish League for Human Rights, – who work closely with immigrant women suffering from honour-based violence, which is the type of violence focused on in this paper – Finnish social workers nor police are well equipped to deal with women suffering from honour-based violence. Hence, the purpose of this research is to analyse how help-providers and other important collaborators work in practice as well as analyse it from a multi-theoretical perspective. With the aid of the interviews conducted with five help-providers and thematic analysis, I was able to reach a conclusion, which highlighted how the help provided fluctuates between different groups in question. Also, the help provided is very dependent on the competency of the help-providers, which lacks in many aspects due to various intersectional factors.

Key words: honour-based violence, multi-theoretical aspect, othering, racial ignorance, patriarchy, gender, help-provider, negligence, culture, human rights discourse, intersectionality
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I would also like to thank the interviewees who agreed to participate in this study and provide me with valuable information to conduct this research. It would have been impossible to do it without you! Thank you for making it a safer space for women of colour to reach out to you and for listening to them.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to Israa Ghrayeb, Banaz Mahmod, Fadime Sahindal and every other woman who got brutally murdered due to “honour”-related issues. I am sorry no-one listened to you when you asked for help. I promise to keep on fighting for every woman with various intersectional factors suffering due to patriarchy, especially to my women of colour who never give up when people in power give you every reason to do so. I see you; I hear you and I celebrate you.
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1. Introduction

In recent years, honour crimes have received an increasing amount of interest from the media, police and politicians\(^1\), yet the notion of honour remains under-studied and marginalized due to various intersectional factors and the difficult nature of the violence.\(^2\) Rich languages, such as Turkish, provide various terms for the notion of honour, such as “seref” and “izzet”, in which the former one links to the glory derived from a man’s accomplishment and the latter one stands for the type of honour, which is derived from being able to show generosity to others.\(^3\) The concept of “honour”\(^4\) is perceived as a non-tangible pathway for social status that allows one to equate a poor individual with a very wealthy one\(^5\), hence it is important for some people to attain “honour”. (Sexual) honour – which is the type of “honour” utilized in this research - , on the other hand, is described as an idea that the reputation of men, family or a community is built on the integrity of its female associates.\(^6\) According to Unni Wikan, the notion of honour has to do with the rights of collective over the individual’s obligation to surrender.\(^7\) Also, the term is linked to structures, systems and social categories of people programmed into the belief that the notion exists to serve the system.\(^8\)

According to the books and articles available online, there seems to be an unchanging figure attributed vaguely to the UN of 5,000 honour killings per year worldwide, although honour crimes are regarded to be on the increase according to the alarmist literature on honour crimes.\(^9\) The growing public concern in relation to “honour” crimes has been largely embraced by women’s group and has prompted governments to take necessary steps to overcome these crimes committed in the name of “honour”.\(^10\) Moreover, as honour-based

\(^4\) The notion of honour is put into quotation marks, because I personally do not see anything honourable in abusing women – and occasionally also men who belong to sexual minorities, hence put in the quotation’s marks.
\(^5\) Aysan Sev’Er and Gökçeççek Yurdakul, “Culture of Honor, Culture of Change “, 2016, pg. 972
\(^7\) Unni Wikan, “In honour of Fadime: Murder and shame”, University of Chicago Press, 2008, pg. 16.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^10\) James Brandon and Salam Hafes, “Crimes of the community: honour-based violence in the UK”, 2008, pg. 1. (It is acknowledged that Brandon and Hafes speak on honour-based violence in the British context, but since it felt applicable in the Finnish context as well, hence the quote is utilized).
violence is a phenomenon which is not fully understood yet because of its difficult nature, hence the exact number of victims suffering from the notion of “honour” are unreported due to many factors, such as the fear of not getting an adequate protection from the authorities. Moreover, according to a research produced by Chesler in 2010 in a sample of 230 honour-killings examined worldwide between the years of 1989 and 2009, 7% of the victims were men.\textsuperscript{11} This aspect is not scrutinized in this paper, but it is important to acknowledge that men are not only the perpetrators, but also the victims of the notion of “honour”.

The notion of honour displays in different forms, which are considered to be manifested in this paper in the form of control; forced marriage; restriction of freedom; and financial, sexual, physical and emotional abuse. Although the notion of honour-based violence is a serious concern for men and women, this paper analyses the responsibility of “honour” mainly falling on women. This paper focuses on help-providers who work with people suffering honour-based violence. The help-provider are interviewed to discuss the situation of women of colour in relation to honour-based violence. They interviewees – located in Helsinki - report receiving approximately 400-500 women of colour asking for help. This paper examines how women of colour are aided when in need with the help of the theories of orientalism, postcolonialism, multiculturalism and the concept of colour blindness.

1.1 Research problem and aim

The Western countries, such as Finland prides themselves for having democratic values and for embracing women’s rights. Although Finland has signed many treaties supporting women’s rights and freedom - including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women -, yet it turned out to be the second most dangerous place for women to live in in the EU.\textsuperscript{12} The Finnish League for Human Rights (Ihmisoikeusliitto)-organization has produced a report in which it has been illustrated that the Finnish social


workers nor police force are fully equipped to deal with honour-based violence\textsuperscript{13}, which can lead to detrimental consequences such as in countries like the UK. Finland has continuously received complaints from international human rights bodies for not eradicating violence committed against women with enough incentives.\textsuperscript{14} Hence, I aim to scrutinize how the Finnish help-providers’ work is carried out in practice and what perspectives, if any, are taken into account when help related to honour-based violence is provided for women of colour. Also, the previous research conducted on honour-based violence has hardly scrutinized the concept of honour from any theoretical perspective, hence I also aim to scrutinize the help-providers’ work from a multi-layered theoretical perspective utilizing the theories presented later in this research paper.

1.2 Research questions

There are three operational questions relating to the main research questions in order to provide the reader with an in-depth analysis of the prevalence of honour-based violence in Finland. My overarching research question are: What are the help providers doing to help the women of colour seeking help? How do they conceptualize other important collaborators?

Although I think that the help-providers interviewed for this research offer all the help they can afford, however I also want to analyse whether there have been factors affecting the help provided for women of colour. Hence, my operational questions are the following:

- What kind of a pattern exists amongst the help-providers when aiding battered women?
- How do the help-givers define honour-based violence?
- What role do the theories of intersectionality, postcolonialism, orientalism and assimilation play in relation to the help provided for women of colour?

1.3 Situatedness

The concept of honour is very complicated in nature as the term has many different levels to it. The shame and guilt put on the shoulders of girls and women are not only suffocating but also can instigate mental illnesses due to all the pressure. I personally have been able to live a life of my choice without the pressure from my family to confirm to the society’s rules where

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, pg. 16
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
“honour” plays a significant role. Yet, there has been an invisible pressure that I faced as an Arab living in Finland by confirming to two different cultures. Living in-between two opposite cultures where I feel like belonging to both yet none because of the different expectations from both cultures has caused me anxiety and guilt.

I identify myself as an Arab woman raised in Finland with the intersections of race, gender, religion and ethnicity. There are many layered blankets of oppression that affect people differently. It is important to note that my intersectional factors affect me differently than they may affect another woman from similar backgrounds. Women of colour are not a homogeneous group with similar experiences of oppression, hence I want to emphasize that although I come from a culture in which honour-based violence is prevalent, and although I have been affected by the concepts of shame and guilt - which are embedded in the notion of honour – it is, by no means, on the same level some other girl from similar backgrounds. I acknowledge my privilege in having a family whose best interest align with my own best interest.

Also, I have had the privilege to attain my university diploma. Furthermore – due to my privileges acknowledged - I do not aim to become a spokesperson for women of colour who suffer from honour-based violence in Finland or elsewhere. I aim to speak with them and bring more awareness on the matter. There is a commonly agreed upon unspoken rule within feminism that argues that speaking for others is arrogant, unproductive, immoral, and dishonest, which is partly due to the growing acknowledgement that when one speaks for another person, it affects the meaning and truth of the person. According to Linda Alcoff, this also demonstrates how the practice of privileged persons speaking on behalf of less advantaged people has, in fact, reinforced the oppression of the group spoken for. Additionally, although this paper has been restricted only to Finland, it does not imply that the Finnish authority figures and minority communities are exceptionally disturbed.

Lastly, notions of honour and shame are so significant for some women that to talk about their experiences of abuse constitutes “a violation of the social hierarchy and entails putting self above the family”17. To even write about this subject as a Middle Eastern girl from the

16 Ibid.
West is difficult; I am afraid to be judged by my community for being selfish and writing about certain tribal values in my community. On the other hand, I am afraid that my culture will be trivialized and stigmatized as “backward” and “oppressive” by the West. In my culture, selfish women are condemned whereas the absence of selfishness is considered an asset. With the words of Gloria Anzaldúa, culture is made by those in power, meaning men, and they make the rules and laws while women are expected to transmit them. The reason I decided to write about this is not to only raise awareness on the injustices experienced by women of colour remaining as minorities within minorities, but also because of prejudices based on the colonial attitudes that are reinforced.

1.4 Delimitations
This research paper is mostly based on empirical material derived from interviewing help-providers from an organization dedicated to help battered women. Part of the interview questions concern the authority figures’- such as police force and social workers – approach to help women of colour in need and whether the help provided requires amendments. Although the intention is to listen to the stories from the employees who were present when the officials provided them help, it would have been more enriching if authority figures were also interviewed, but due to the limited access and lack of space allotted in this paper, thus I decided to keep the focus on this particular organization. Also, this research could have offered a different view if a permission was granted to interview women of colour who have experienced honour-based violence and their relationship with authority figures, but since the topic itself is a very sensitive one, and reminiscing the past can retraumatize the person, hence I decided to only interview help-providers.

1.5 Ethical limitations
In order to protect the participants in the best possible way, ethical considerations must be addressed. Although one of the main goals of research is to collect knowledge or to develop an understanding of a particular phenomenon, it also needs to be acknowledged that achieving these goals should not come at the cost of all else. In my research, I took this into consideration and offered the participants consent forms, in which I emphasised how it is voluntary to take part in this particular research. Also, it was informed that they have the right

19 Ibid, pg. 16.
to withdraw at any point without any consequences and gave them the chance to choose if they want their identity to be revealed. Although I got the permission to disclose the name of the organization interviewed as well as part of the interviewees, I chose to keep them anonymous due to their sensitive work.

Furthermore, the notion “women of colour” which is a political term utilized in this paper created by Black women attending a National Women’s Conference in Houston, Texas. It was created to be inclusive of women of other marginalized racial groups, however it is being hijacked to erase the same struggle and Blackness of women who created it. In this paper, when I refer to women of colour, I discuss the women who have been affected by honour based violence who, according to the participants, seem to be predominantly from the Middle-East and North-Africa. Lastly, the concept of colour blindness is replaced with racial ignorance and racial denial, because it may be unappreciated amongst the disabled activists. Hence, the concept is replaced from now on - and especially in the theory-section, in which the concept is elaborated - to be in solidarity with the disabled activists.

1.6 Chapter outline

This research paper consists of nine different chapters addressing the research questions introduced relating to the honour-based violence in Finland. The first chapter is the introductory chapter, which introduces the reader to the concept of honour and what this research project is about. Also, the first chapter introduces the research aim and research questions aimed to answer throughout this thesis as well as the delimitations to this research. I will also situate myself in this research in order for the reader to understand my relation to the topic, and as much as I aimed to be objective, there are certain intersectional factors that had an impact in the way I analysed the data, which can be understood from this chapter. The second chapter provides information on the methodology and the methods utilized. The third chapter explains the material utilized in the research project. Moreover, chapter four discusses the theories and the concepts used in the paper. The fifth chapter offers an overview of the previous research conducted on honour-based violence. It also elucidates how I decided to scrutinize how the help-providers offer help to women of colour from a multi-layered perspective which is due to the gap in research. The sixth chapter is where the

22 Ibid.
different emerging themes are analysed in scrutiny. Next, chapter seven discusses the findings and the following chapter provides the reader with a conclusion and a suggestion for the next research topic.

2.0 Methodology

This chapter discusses the qualitative methods chosen in this thesis, which are interview, case study and thematic analysis. The research design of this paper is a case study – an organization dedicated to help battered women - which is an exhaustive investigation of one or more cases of a contemporary social phenomenon. A case can be considered to be a person, an incident or an organization.

The interviews are analysed utilizing the method thematic analysis. Interviews are a prominent method of data collection in political research. Interviewing is concerned with obtaining detailed, often specialized information from a single individual or small number of individuals. Interviewing is chosen to approach the issue of honour-based violence because it allows me to tailor my own questions in order to get full and rich stories for my area of focus in this research that otherwise would have not happened if I only relied on academic journals. The second method – thematic analysis– is chosen because the approach emphasizes the participants’ experiences and feelings, which allows the participants to discuss the topic in their own words and free them from fixed-response questions that are commonly found in qualitative studies. This is important in order to comprehend how people working with honour-based violence make sense of honour-based violence in Finland and how they provide help. The central methodologies utilized in this paper are the interviews and thematic analysis.

2.1 Research design

The case study was chosen as the research design of this thesis, because it allows one to gain an in-depth understanding of the organization for, predominantly, women of color and the assistance they receive in time of need. Gillian Rose argues that when determining the material to examine, the significance and representativeness are very substantial, which is why the

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24 Ibid.
26 Ibid., pg. 254
help-providers from the organization were selected to be scrutinized due to their representativeness and usefulness. Moreover, the case study method usually requires a purposive sample.\textsuperscript{28} Purposive sampling method involves the researcher’s own expert judgement to select respondents whom they consider to be representative of the population of interest.\textsuperscript{29} Additionally, in this thesis snowballing sampling method is also employed, where respondents who have already taken part in the interview put forward their acquaintances to take part in the study.\textsuperscript{30} It is important to note that the two non-probability sampling methods have their defects. Purposive sampling suffers from many of the same problems as quota samples, since it is very easy to introduce bias into selection.\textsuperscript{31} Also, since snowball sampling involves the interviewees finding respondents who meet some criteria of interest, this way the researcher is able to build up a sample of respondents.\textsuperscript{32}

Case study as a method is very valuable as focusing on a single case allows one to intensively scrutinize the case.\textsuperscript{33} Due to the intensive examination, this method which is strong in relation to internal validity\textsuperscript{34} as one can establish the “truth” about the causal relationship concerning the case studies. However, the external validity – referring to the generalizability - is weaker, because the method allows one to examine a limited amount of cases of a more general phenomenon.\textsuperscript{35} The lack of generalization is one of the main criticism of the case study method, because the individual cases are not sufficiently representative.\textsuperscript{36} Despite extending the analysis to more cases can potentially offer a more extensive understanding and be more generalizable to a certain extent, however it can also lead to the distortion of the original concept, hence threaten the validity of study.\textsuperscript{37}

\textbf{2.2 Interview}

The method of interviewing is concerned with obtaining detailed, often specialized information from a single individual or small number of individuals.\textsuperscript{38} The aim of this

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., pg. 244
\textsuperscript{29} Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath, “Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills”, Oxford University Press, 2012, pg. 430.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., pg. 246
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. pg. 205
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., pg. 172
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., pg. 254.
particular method is to gain valid knowledge and understand what the person in question thinks rather than make generalizations.\textsuperscript{39} Interviews prioritize validity, which allows one to gain detailed knowledge.\textsuperscript{40} The interviews conducted in this thesis were done face-to-face, which is considered the best data-collection type for open ended questions and in-depth exploration of opinions.\textsuperscript{41} This allowed me to probe unclear responses and ask follow-up questions by being able to ask the participants personally.

There are three forms of interview – structured, unstructured and semi-structured interview - that vary with respect to the degree to which the question and responses are standardized across interview subjects.\textsuperscript{42} The interviews conducted in this research are in the form of semi-structured interviews that involve a small number of interviews. The interviewer uses a combination of structured questions to obtain factual information and unstructured questions to probe deeper into people’s experiences.\textsuperscript{43} Semi-structured interviews, in addition to unstructured interviews, can give greater insight into the meaning of a subject’s experiences and hence provide more valid data.\textsuperscript{44} However, the data is not standardized and thus hard to generate from as the results cannot be quantified nor re-tested.\textsuperscript{45}

The formulation of the questions are mainly open-ended questions, which permits one to obtain in-depth information on issues which they are not familiar with, such as opinions and attitudes on sensitive issues.\textsuperscript{46} Whenever the response was inadequate or unclear, I used probing in order to gain in-depth knowledge on the matter. Probing consists of asking questions to encourage further information without influencing the answer.\textsuperscript{47} Furthermore, when the questions were formulated, the aim was to strive for objectivity, hence I tried to avoid leading questions, double-barrelled questions and use simple and direct language. A limitation with all types and forms of interviews is that the researcher is dependent on what the participants tell them.\textsuperscript{48} Some participants may have problems in recalling information accurately, but all people come to interviews with bias and prejudices.\textsuperscript{49} Also, people are prone to “interview effect”, which is the tendency for interviewees to give more “socially

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., pg. 256.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid. pg. 258.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., pg. 260.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., pg. 269.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., pg. 259.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
acceptable” answers.\(^{50}\) I aimed to curtail the interview effect by asking open-ended questions and by conducting an overt research, however since I revealed the aim of the research in the beginning, demand characteristics may have taken part.

### 2.3 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a method utilized for systematically identifying, organizing and offering understanding into patterns of meaning across data.\(^{51}\) Through focusing on meanings across a data set, thematic analysis allows the researcher to see and make sense of shared meanings and experiences.\(^{52}\) Moreover, identifying unique meanings and experiences found only within a single data item is not the focus of thematic analysis, but rather it is a way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and of making sense of those commonalities.\(^{53}\) It is important to keep in mind that numerous themes could be identified across any data set, but the purpose of the analysis is to identify the relevant themes to answering particular research question posed in the research paper.\(^{54}\)

The approach of thematic analysis entails a six-phase process, and before discussing the process, it is important to define a theme. A theme “captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set”.\(^{55}\) The first stage entails familiarizing oneself with the data, meaning that one needs to immerse oneself in the data by reading and rereading textual data, listening to audio data and transcribing the audio.\(^{56}\) The aim of this phase is to become intimately acquainted with one’s data sets’ content and to begin to detect ideas that might be relevant to one’s research question(s).\(^{57}\) The second phase is to generate codes and provide a label for a feature of the data that is potentially relevant to the research question.\(^{58}\) The third phase is to search for themes by producing them rather than discover themes.\(^{59}\) Moreover, the fourth phase is to examine potential themes against the accumulated extracts of data and

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\(^{50}\) Ibid.


\(^{52}\) Ibid.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Ibid. 57

\(^{55}\) Ibid., pg. 63 (Reference to Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, “Using Thematic analysis in psychology”, Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3, 2006, pg. 82).

\(^{56}\) Ibid., pg. 60

\(^{57}\) Ibid. pg. 61

\(^{58}\) Ibid. pg. 63

\(^{59}\) Ibid., pg.
examine whether the themes match the data.\textsuperscript{60} Good themes are distinctive and - to some extent - work together.\textsuperscript{61} The researcher’s job in analysing data and reporting them is to tell a particular story about the data that answers the research question(s).\textsuperscript{62} The fifth step is to define and name themes - the themes often have singular focus; are related but do not overlap - and directly address the research question(s).\textsuperscript{63} The last step includes producing the report, which should be credible and clear yet complex and entrenched in a scholarly field.\textsuperscript{64}

Thematic analysis is a flexible and an accessible method that allows researchers to focus on the data in numerous different ways, and it can take many forms that suits a wide range of research questions and research topics.\textsuperscript{65} The forms thematic analysis can take are for example that one can focus on analysing meaning across the entire data set on one particular aspect of a phenomenon thoroughly; one can report apparent or semantic meaning in the data; or one can question the covert meanings, the assumptions and ideas that lie behind what is openly stated.\textsuperscript{66} This research paper wishes to analyse covert meanings and assumptions that lie behind what is openly stated. Also, linked to the fact that thematic analysis is so flexible is that it can be conducted in numerous ways, and has the ability to straddle three main continua: inductive versus deductive or theory-driven data coding and analysis, an experiential versus critical orientation to data, and an essentialist versus constructionist theoretical perspective.\textsuperscript{67}

The approach utilized in this research paper is the inductive versus deductive, in which the former one is a bottom-up approach and is driven by what is in the data referring to the codes and themes that derive from the content of the data.\textsuperscript{68} Deductive approach to data coding and analysis, on the other hand, is a top-down approach where the researcher brings to the data a series of concepts, ideas or topics that they use to code and decipher the data.\textsuperscript{69} The concept I decided to utilize and further contribute to is racial denial, which emerged in the data indirectly. It is important to note that coding and analysis often use the combination of the inductive and deductive approaches, because one always brings something new to the data
when analysing it, and one rarely disregards the semantic content of the data when coding for a specific theory.  

3.0 Material

The empirical material of this thesis mainly consists of the interviews conducted in addition to journal articles and books. Also, reports by the National Research Institute of Legal Policy and the Finnish League for Human Rights are briefly utilized in the analysis section to shed light and support the arguments in relation to honour-based violence. The former report is on immigrants as crime victims and offenders in Finland, whereas the latter discusses the Finnish authorities’ responsibility to aid immigrant women suffering from honour-based violence. Nevertheless, this particular thesis consists predominantly of interviews with individuals who work in an organization that assist women of colour, and the analysis section is based on extracts from the interviews. Instead of basing my information on already conducted researches, I decided to conduct interviews in order to gain an in-depth knowledge from field workers who have first-hand information on the hardships women of colour have endured. Also, since it is very difficult to attain information from people who have been survivors of honour-based violence, it was more convenient to conduct interviews with people who have worked with them.

3.1 Participants

I got the opportunity to interview 5 employees from the organization who work with battered women, and specifically women of colour. The participants and the organization remained anonymous due to safety reasons, hence the participants in this paper are referred to as Participants A, Participant B, Participant C, Participant D and Participant E. Furthermore, despite the fact that the employees are mainly non-white, I only got to interview employees with different Caucasian nationalities – amongst whom there were Russian, Swedish and Finnish – due to their busy schedule. According to Bruce Baum, Caucasian people are deemed to be racially diverse from various “races of Europe”.

Over 70% of the employees are born outside Finland and there are approximately 20 languages spoken in the organization, including Arabic, English, Farsi, Somali and Kurdish. The multicultural environment facilitates immigrant women’s wish to attain help as some of them may suffer from a language barrier or otherwise feel safer with a professional by their side when

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70 Ibid., pg. 58-59
discussing their difficult experiences. All of the employees work with women of colour who have been affected by violence. The employees mostly have a background with social work and crisis work as well as some experience with child protection. Although the services provided by the organization are meant for everyone - regardless of their gender, sexual orientation or other intersectional factors – the majority of the recipients of the aid have foreign backgrounds.

3.2 The transcription and coding of the material

In order to produce an analytical interpretation of the material, it is fundamental to undergo three main steps: data reduction, coding and drawing conclusions. “Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written up field notes or transcriptions”. The first step in data reduction is to transcribe the recordings or notes of the interviews. Out of the 5 interviews, I got the permission to record 4 interviews, and all of the participants were interviewed in Finnish. After the interview transcripts, I went through the transcripts looking for similarities, differences and patterns by making marginal notes of the potential themes and highlighting key words and sentences, which leads to the next step: coding.

Coding involves gathering together parts of a text belonging to a given label or name. Considering the variety of methods available for coding, it is important to mention the techniques utilized in this paper. Qualitative data entail different kind of data, including textual and non-textual, verbatim and non-verbatim as well as long and short, from which this paper has the textual and verbatim data. The scrutiny-based technique utilized when analysing the data is best done by eyeballing meaning searching for repetitions, metaphors, changes and linguistic connectors.

The scrutiny techniques utilized are pawing, cutting and sorting. When looking for themes in the transcripts, it typically entails pawing through texts and marking them up with different colours, highlighting and circling words. Cutting and sorting-technique, on the other hand,
is the most versatile technique, which generates a myriad of methods as it involves sorting expressions into piles, re-reading them and identifying different themes, subthemes and meta-themes. The coding of the transcripts of this paper were determined according to concepts, reoccurring patterns, similarities and differences, keywords mentioned by the participants. To link the different themes together, mini maps were also used to connect different quotations, thoughts, events and experiences together. Also, according to Lagemar one can use a quote more than once in more than one theme if the quote is descriptive, which occurs in this paper as well.

Moreover, when connecting different sections and noticing the emerging themes, the different parts of the material began to “discuss” with each other. The questions I had formulated before steered the potential themes, but when I coded the data, there were more unexpected themes that rose from the data. The most recurrent and though-provoking codes formed the basis for the themes presented in the analysis section. During the interview and when formulating the interview questions, I kept in mind the theoretical framework, research questions and aim as “[d]ata do not speak for themselves”.

It is important to note that the results of both coding and analysis depend upon the researcher’s interpretation of the data. Although it is intended to be as objective as possible, every text produced has the researcher’s own interpretation of certain matters, which need to be acknowledged. Similarly, when applying techniques that use informant-by-variable templates, researchers need to remember that patterns detected in such data may emerge from informant’s bias. Everyone interprets the world differently according to our own belief systems, which is why it is acknowledged that the data interpretation I made could be interpreted differently by others. Also, although there are computer-based program packages to code the data, I decided to do mine manually. It is partially because of the lack of time to learn to use the programs, and also because the interviews were conducted in Finnish, hence was not sure if it would work as efficiently as if it was conducted in English.

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79 Ibid., pg. 103
As mentioned, the interviews and some of the material utilized in this paper - such as the one by the Finnish League for Human Rights - is in Finnish. My native language is Arabic, and my Finnish and English are proficient. I aimed to use easy language to have a clear and simple language when interviewing, yet I dealt with some language issues due to idioms expressed only in Finnish, which were difficult to translate into English. Also, I had to translate a large part of my material, meaning the interview data. Regardless of the language fluency, one must keep in mind that languages operate through representations, and a representation of something carries a specific meaning\(^{84}\), meaning that interpretations do not necessarily hold one truth. All researchers draw on their subjectivity in their journey for research truth\(^ {85}\) and there is no absolute nor precise “truth”\(^ {86}\), meaning that the process of discovering the “reality” is quite relativistic.

4.0 Theories

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework present in this thesis, which provides an understanding of the help provided in relation to honour based violence for women of colour in Finland. The theories of assimilation, orientalism and intersectionality are the predominant theories in this thesis discussing how the help or lack thereof provided for women of colour. Firstly, it is important to note that although Finland was not a colonial country, yet Finland has benefitted from colonialism, whiteness and capitalism. Finns profited economically from the colonialism, and many Finns took part in the colonial business, for example as settlers of Swedish colonies in Delaware in North America and together with other Scandinavians in the Congo.\(^ {87}\) Hence, when the “colonial past” of Finland is mentioned in this paper, it refers to the complicity in the colonization. Nordic countries, such as Finland, were not merely bystanders in the invention of the racist theories and explanations of world theories.\(^ {88}\) Moreover, Finns were also subjected to racist stereotyping by Swedes and assigned a lower

\(^{84}\) Stuart Hall, “The spectacle of the ‘other’”, in Stuart Hall (ed.), “Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices”, SAGE, 1997, pg. 3-4

\(^{85}\) Deborah Court, “What is truth in qualitative research? Why is this important for education?”, Educational practice and theory, vol. 35, No. 2, 2013, Pg. 8


rank in racial hierarchies by some scholars in other European countries, but instead of questioning those ideologies, the Finns engaged in pseudo-scientific studies with the intention of producing counter arguments of “Finns as White Europeans”.\(^9\) Consequently, racist ideologies were formed in Finland, thus the racist ideologies were reproduced.\(^9\) The theory of postcolonialism is utilized to display the current prejudiced attitudes - that the Finnish people themselves were subject to – towards the women of colour.

Moreover, the theory of intersectionality - coined in 1989 by Kimberle Crenshaw - is also employed in this paper to depict the different intersectional factors when determining what help they were provided when needed. This particular theory was chosen to be a part of this research because it offers a more ample discussion on how the help provided for women of colour may lack due to racial denial and the intersecting factors that are linked to it. Thirdly, the theory of orientalism by Edward Said is used to elucidate whether some minority groups are othered and stigmatized amongst the help-providers. The theory of assimilation, on the other hand, elucidates how assimilation can be problematic and hide a different agenda behind it. Lastly, the concept of racial denial is utilized to elaborate on whiteness that can be seen as including certain privileges where individuals can “afford” to ignore their skin colours and positions of power.\(^9\)

4.1 Orientalism

The theory of orientalism was coined by Edward Said in 1978, which was deemed to be one of the starting points of the postcolonial theory as the theory revolves around the beliefs constructed by the West to depict the “orient”. Edward Said’s theory investigates how the understanding that the Western colonial powers formed about their people helped to rationalize their occupation.\(^2\) According to the theory, the West’s relationship with the East


\(^9\) Ibid., pg. 90.


is built on domination and control. Although the theory of orientalism emphasizes how the relationship between the East and the West, it also extends to the West’s relationship with Islam. The period in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the European interest in Islam was named “the Oriental renaissance” when the French and British scholars discovered the “East”, and Islam was regarded as part of the East sharing in its exoticism and mystery. Towards the end of the 19th century, there was a common view agreed upon that Muslim colonies were designed to stay under European power due to their perceived undeveloped states and their need of Western authority.

Moreover, the view that women from minority communities depicted as oppressed - which is illustrated in the analysis-section - has its origins in several theoretical bases in which Volpp refers to the history of colonialism, depictions of the feminist subject, the limits of liberalism and the use of dichotomous logic that have created intellectual genealogies and historical antecedents. According to McKerl, when one considers orientalism’s binary juxtaposition of a “traditional East” and a “modern West”, it continues to be fuelled by the theoretical engine of colonialism and present day neo-colonialism where non-Western women are premised as victims and oppressed subjects. This is the binarism that Edward Said created the theory of orientalism around, in which “the orient” (read: non-Western countries) are depicted to be oppressive and traditional whereas “the occident” (read: Western countries) as civilized and progressive.

Said’s theory has also faced criticism stating how his theory is preoccupied on examining microscopically the flaws of the West while concurrently portraying the East as a peaceful place endlessly wronged by the West. Ania Loomba argues that Said’s theory has dedicated a great amount of energy on imperialist discourses and their positioning of colonial people while disregarding the manner these people objected such discourses. Despite the criticism the theory of orientalism has received, it has been utilized by many people to scrutinize and understand the binary oppositions present in the modern day between the East and the West.

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95 Ibid., pg. 14
97 Ibid., pg. 207.
According to Said, the theory of orientalism is not a beautiful fantasy that Europe has about the Orient, but rather a theory in which a significant amount of material investment has been dedicated to it. 100

4.1.2 Othering

Said’s theory has also been utilized to elucidate on the topic of “othering”. In this research paper, othering is considered to be a cause for discrimination – which is the unjust treatment experienced by marginalized groups of people, for example, due to their various intersectional factors - that is a universally acknowledged human rights violation. An important discussion on “othering” has been executed by various scholars who conversate on how the “others” are categorized by the West and, also, how the West’s approach may build a wall between the majority and minority groups. 101 According to Mohanty, a homogeneous notion of oppression faced by women of colour produces an image of a “average third world woman” (read: ignorant, controlled, culture-bound) who leads a life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained, obedient). 102 Furthermore, Mohanty argues how “women” and the “East” are othered in order for the Westerner to represent oneself as the centre. 103 According to Aisha Gill, the public discourse employed in Europe has been simple-minded and essentialist, stigmatising ethnic and religious groups, and creating binary oppositions by othering people. 104 This is not to dismiss the contribution of some Westerners’ contribution to enhance the women’s lives worldwide. The invaluable Western feminist texts on women in developing countries are acknowledged. 105

103 Ibid., pg. 352.
105 Ibid. (It is acknowledged that the concept of “Third World” and developing countries used in this paper are demeaning. They are utilized to reiterate the authors’ ideas, however for me the terms signify countries who are facing difficulties in recovering from being systematically destabilized.)
4.2 Theory of postcolonialism

Colonialism – often defined and understood as control of other people’s lands and properties – is largely over, however many of its structures and power relations are still operating, and it reformed existing structures of human knowledge. Travel writing was a method used to produce Europe’s contrasting concepts of itself in relation to “the rest of the world”. The images of the “other” – the Africans and Muslims, for example - were constructed and reconstructed through various histories of contact, and colonialism was perhaps the most important test for their affirmation and rebuilding. It is important to note that the images of the ”other” have been circulating before colonialism, which is why occasionally such images are treated as the unchanging product of a timeless opposition between Western and non-Western people. The theory of post-colonialism is interested in the modern-day manifestation of historic aspects of European colonialism.

The term of post-colonialism has caused a lot of debate amongst various academics. The “post” implies an “aftermath” in two senses: temporal and contestable. According to Ania Loomba one should not see post-colonialism solely as occurring after colonialism indicating its downfall, but rather as a challenge of colonial domination. Loomba argues that such a viewpoint allows one to include geographically displaced people due to colonialism. Furthermore, Jorge De Alva argues that people residing in both once-colonized and once-colonizing countries are still subject to the oppressions put into place by colonialism. Lastly, the postcolonial theory offers an in-depth analysis of colonialism and the repercussions it carries in the modern world. The theory of postcolonialism – like any other theory – has been criticised by S. Sinha and R. Varma, for example, for overly focusing on Western capitalism and domination.

109 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid, pg. 58
112 John McLeod, “Beginning post-colonialism”, Manchester University Press, 2000, pg. 8
113 Ania Loomba, “Colonialism/Postcolonialism”, 2005, pg. 7
114 Ibid., pg. 12
115 Ibid.
116 Ibid., pg. 13
4.3 Theory of intersectionality

The theory of intersectionality coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw has a long history in Black feminism.\textsuperscript{117} The theory has reached a consensus on the fact that women’s lives are constructed by multiple, intersecting systems of oppressions.\textsuperscript{118} Intersectionality is presented as a theoretical and political remedy to what is perhaps “the most pressing problem facing contemporary feminism – the long and painful legacy of its exclusions”.\textsuperscript{119} The theory of intersectionality entails three aspects that affect the visibility of non-white women: structural intersectionality, political intersectionality and representational intersectionality.\textsuperscript{120}

The first concept refers to “the ways in which the location of women of colour at the intersection of race and gender makes our actual experience of domestic violence, rape, and remedial reform qualitatively different than that of white women”\textsuperscript{121}, which is one of the themes that emerged scrutinizing how women of colour may experience acts of violence differently compared to native Finns due to various intersectional factors, such as race, religion, ethnicity and language barriers. Secondly, political intersectionality refers to the fact that historically, feminist and antiracist politics in the U.S. “have functioned in tandem to marginalize issues facing Black women”.\textsuperscript{122} This approach is utilized in depicting how women of colour belong to at least two marginalized groups when seeking for help. Lastly, the representational intersectionality is concerned with the production of images of women of colour drawing on sexist and racist narrative tropes, as well as the ways that critiques of these representations marginalize or reproduce the objectification of women of colour.\textsuperscript{123} This particular aspect of intersectionality is utilized in exploring whether the organization and Finnish authorities, in general, uphold certain prejudice against minority groups, which reinforce a stereotype of the “other” non-white people, specifically women. This is done because a misconstrued portrayal of non-white people can interfere in their own lives and

\textsuperscript{117} Anna Carastathis, “The concept of intersectionality in feminist theory”, Philosophy Compass 9/5, 2014, pg. 305.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., pg. 304.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., (Reference to K. Davis, “Intersectionality as Buzzword: A sociology of Science Perspective on What makes a feminist theory successful”, Feminist Theory 9.1, 2008, pg. 70).
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., pg. 306.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., pg. 306 (Reference to Kimberle W. Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics”, University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989)
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., pg. 307
enforce oppressive stereotypes, which may influence the violence committed against women and justify it.

Moreover, the second claimed theoretical benefit of intersectionality is that it captures observed and structural complexity. According to Leslie McCall, there are three different kinds of complexity that intersectionality attempts to grasp; the inter-categorical approach, the intra-categorical approach and the anti-categorical approach. The first approach “focuses on the complexity of relationships among multiple social groups within and across analytical categories”. This approach is also utilized to understand the relationships between the help-providers and the women of colour and the factors that have an impact on this relationship and to scrutinize if any bias is omnipresent amongst the help-providers. Secondly, the intra-categorical approach analyses difficulties within a social group. This approach is employed to reveal the neglected intersections of the group under scope, meaning the women of colour. Thirdly, the approach of anti-categorical approach is concerned with how “…social life is considered too irreducibly complex […] to make fixed categories anything but simplifying social fictions”. All of the above mentioned three intersectional approaches agree that monistic, single-axis approaches – that are non-intersectional – fail to capture the complexity of social structures and subjective experiences, because monistic approaches to oppression are reductive: there is a reduced version of complex experiences.

Although the concept of intersectionality has been successful and widely accepted, it has been criticized. Despite intersectionality theory’s attempt to capture different structural complexities, Alice Ludvig has argued that the endless of differences seems to be a weak point in intersectional theory. Ludvig continues to argue that intersectionality theorists are faced with a definitional problem: “[w]ho defines when, where, which, and why particular differences are given recognition while others are not?”. Furthermore, Naomi Zack is doubtful that intersectionality delivers its inclusionary promise, because while

124 Ibid., pg. 307
126 Ibid., pg. 308
128 Ibid., pg. 308
130 Ibid. (Reference to Reference to Alice Ludvig, “Differences between women? Intersecting voices in a female narrative”, 2006, pg. 247)
intersectionality may indeed overcome essentialist constructions of identity, “[p]olitically, it easily leads to a fragmentation of women that precludes common goals as we as basic empathy”. Lastly, it is also argued that since intersectionality’s genesis is in law and critical race theory yet it does not reflect commitment to either of those but rather is utilized to marking and mapping the production and contingency of both.

4.3.1 The importance of intersectionality

The two following chapters focus on how crucial it is to contemplate on intersectional factors when approaching battered women of colour. Crenshaw argues that modern-day feminist and antiracist discourses have dismissed intersectional identities, meaning the factors that impact immigrant women’s lives, such as immigration status and race. Also, according to Amos and Parmar the contemporary feminists ought to be challenged constantly for depicting “third world” people’s cultural practices as archaic and oppressive, which must be educated according to the Western feminism. They further argue that several white feminists fail to acknowledge the differences – meaning the intersectional factors - between themselves and the “other” women, hence contributing to Eurocentric and ethnocentric theories regarding women’s oppression.

Additionally, from a solution-oriented perspective, Bunch argues that gender ought to be analysed with regard to other intersectional factors such as nationality, race, gender and class in order to distinguish the various forms of abuses that women experience. Non-white feminists have questioned and challenged Western feminists for assuming, generalizing and homogenizing particular matters worldwide that only women of colour face, which is highlighted by Mohanty when she discusses how Western feminists utilize the “universal sisterhood” to generalize. Lastly, Crenshaw highlights an important aspect on structural

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135 Ibid.
intersectionality, and how women of colour at the intersection of race and gender share a different kind of experience of domestic violence and rape compare to white women, for example. 139

4.4 Theory of assimilation

The word assimilation - which is quite often used as a synonym for integration - is the process by which the attributes of immigrant groups and host societies start to resemble one another.140 That process - which has both economic and sociocultural aspects - commences with the immigrant generation and continues through the second generation and beyond.141 Moreover, immigrant groups may differ in the apparent incompleteness at any point in time.142 Assimilation may be deficient because it is blocked completely or delayed and the type of incompleteness matters, because each type is loaded with different implications for theory, and thus policy.143 According to Susan et al., incompleteness could be a result from racial or/and ethnic discrimination, which is why it is crucial to evaluate the degree of racialization to reach conclusions about assimilation.144

There are three predominant theories of immigrant and ethnic integration: classic and new assimilation models, the racial/ethnic disadvantaged model and the segmented assimilation model. The first model, classic assimilation model, dates back to the Chicago School in the 1920s and, more recently, it has been represented in the work of sociologists, such as Milton Gordon and Victor Nee145, which is the model utilized the most in this paper, because it depicts the situation the best in Finland according to the empirical material collected. This theory expects immigrant groups who have resided the longest in the host society to show greater similarities with the majority group than immigrants who have spent less time in the host society.146 The classic assimilation theory works best when the mainstream is easily characterized.147 Alba and Nee acknowledge that assimilation operate within racially and

141 Ibid.
142 Ibid.
143 Ibid.
144 Ibid
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
147 Ibid.
economically heterogeneous settings, which consequently has led to the criticism on how they are trying to define assimilation so broadly that the concept loses value.

Secondly, the scholars of the theory of racial/ethnic disadvantaged model argue that the assimilation of many immigrant groups remain hindered. Moreover, this form of model argues that the majority’s language and cultural familiarity often does not lead to increased assimilation as the enduring discrimination and institutional barriers to employment and other opportunities block complete assimilation. Since immigrants compare socioeconomic opportunities in the host country to those in their counties of origin, they may not perceive these barriers, however by the second or third generations, they may realize that the goal of full assimilation may be more difficult and take longer time. Hence, this understanding can have social and cultural consequences, including sometimes the emergence of racial/ethnic awareness. This model is criticized for over-stressing racial and ethnic barriers, which in turn fails to sufficiently explain evidence of socioeconomic progress.

The last model – the segmented assimilation model – has to two elements combined from both the straight-line assimilation and the ethnic disadvantaged perspective. The segmented assimilation concentrates on identifying the contextual, structural, and cultural factors that separate selective acculturation. According Portes Zhou et al., it is fundamental to identify such factors in the case of the second generation, because difficulties experienced by the immigrant children can hinder assimilation at perhaps its most critical moment. However the model has been criticized since it has not been tested empirically beyond second generation, hence this model may misconstrue oppositional attitudes historically found among the young and misunderstand the pace of assimilation.

149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid.
153 Ibid.
154 Ibid.
155 Ibid.
156 Ibid.
Lastly, according to Susan Okin, minority groups are typically expected to assimilate into majorities’ cultures, and these expectations may nowadays be considered oppressive, hence Western countries are seeking to devise new policies to accommodate the cultural differences. Okin defines multiculturalism as a term that examines how minority cultures or their ways of life are not sufficiently protected by the practice of ensuring the individuals’ rights that ought to be protected through special groups rights or privileges. In this paper, multiculturalism is treated as a circumstance in which people from different backgrounds with varying intersectional factors have equal rights and opportunities in a society. It is important to mention that assimilation and multiculturalism may be used as synonyms, but they differ in the sense that assimilation aims to protect the host countries’ culture by encouraging immigrant groups to resemble the majority as explained above. Multiculturalism, on the other hand, stresses the importance of recognizing the existence of ethnic diversity and ensuring the rights of individuals to hold on to their culture and simultaneously enjoying full access to constitutional principles and the commonly shared values prevailing in that society.

4.5 The concept of racial ignorance
The ideology of racial ignorance – the modern-day framework for understanding and preserving white privilege – is part of a wider, all-encompassing ideology of “oppression blindness”. Whiteness is a privileged status, and it gives one (read: white people) an access to valued resources simply because of one’s group’s affiliation. Nevertheless, the failure to question white privilege has serious consequences as the invisibility of whiteness serves to “reinforce the existing racial understandings and racial order of society”. One of the most significant features of white privilege is that those who experience the privilege do not have to think about it while people of colour are confronted with the reality of inequality and oppression regularly. The white people’s social position becomes both invisible and

159 Ibid., pg. 10-11.
162 Ibid., pg. 64
164 Ibid., pg. 65
assumed to be the norm. The reason I decided to include racial ignorance in this paper is to shed light on the concept that is not widely recognized in Finland. Also, to provide knowledge on how help-providers and other important authority figures may reinforce white privilege, which is important to study as the help provided ought to meet the minority groups’ vulnerabilities and intersection, rather than adopt a one-size-fits-all approach.

Jim Crow’s racial structure has been replaced by a “new racism”, which is a powerful ideology that has emerged to defend the contemporary racial order: the ideology of racial ignorance. Ideologies are about “meaning in the service of power”, and they are representations at the symbolic level of the reality of dominance. The ideologies of the powerful are central in the production and reinforcement of the status quo. The central element of any dominant racial ideology is its structures for interpreting information. Although by definition dominant frames must misrepresent the world – hide the fact of dominance -, this does not mean that they are totally without foundation. For example, it is true that people of colour in Finland are much better off nowadays compared to when the racist skinhead attacks were much more prominent in Finland when the first immigrants emigrated to Finland and racism was much more overt. However, it is also a fact that people of colour still experience systematic oppression and remain behind in many important areas, such as receiving help when in need of it or having equal work opportunities.

Moreover, according to Martti Lehti et al., the risk of immigrants to be a target of abuse is two times higher compared to native Finns, and the risk of Middle-Eastern and African people to be a target of racist attack is much higher compared to other minority groups. Also, women of colour, such as the Kurds, experience violence and the threat of it much

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166 The name of a racial case system in the United States.


168 Ibid., pg. 25.


170 Ibid., pg. 26.

171 Ibid., pg. 26.


more compared to native Finns. According to Human Rights Council in Finland, through a case study conducted, it was identified that authority figures’ lack of action shows how they are lacking in knowledge in relation to honour based violence and the different forms it takes. In the era of globalization and countless amount of information available online, honour based violence should be a recognized form of violence amongst the authority figures.

Moreover, according to Bonilla-Silva, the racial denial ideology consists of four key structures that organize our understanding of racial inequality: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism and minimization of racism. Out of all the four frames, abstract liberalism is the most fundamental one as it constitutes the foundation of the new racial ideology. This particular aspect relies upon the language of political liberalism, implying to abstract concepts, such as equal opportunity and autonomy. This perspective goes by the logic that discrimination is no longer a problem as anyone who works hard enough can succeed in this world. In Akhlaq Ahmad’s research, it is demonstrated in his findings, which strongly suggest that employers substantially favour Finnish applicants over ethnic candidates, and within ethnic applicants, the employers prefer candidates with European names over a non-European name. This shows how deeply rooted institutional racism is in Finland and that despite the equal effort, it is not guaranteed that people are treated equally. Secondly, naturalization reframes continuing inequalities as the result of natural processes rather than social interactions. For example, the argument that the violence women of colour experience is due to the “fact” that their men are naturally savage and come from conservative and constraining cultures. The cultural racism reframes unending inequalities as the result of inherent cultural differences between racialized groups. Lastly, minimization of racism assumes that we now have a fair playing field,

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175 Ibid., pg. 96.
177 Ibid.
179 Ahmad Akhlaq, ”When the name matters: An experimental investigation of ethnic discrimination in the Finnish labour market”, Sociological Inquiry, 2019, pg. 1.
181 Ibid.
meaning that everyone is deemed to have equal opportunities to succeed, and racism is not regarded as a real problem.\(^{182}\)

5.0 Previous research

This section focuses on the various literature found online, which discuss honour-based violence. A great deal of literature have been produced and the most striking finding this far has been that there is a predominance on countries written about regarding honour-based violence due to the relatively high prevalence of the phenomenon and the large amount of media coverage, such as the UK. This can be problematic as honour-based violence is omnipresent and having a full focus on one specific country can possibly dismiss the occurrence of honour-based violence and its different forms it manifests itself in elsewhere. Hence, this paper focuses on Finland in order to shed light on the phenomenon. The themes presented in this chapter revolve around the history of honour-based violence, the cultural aspect relating to the phenomenon, patriarchy, the legal aspect and the prevalence of honour-based violence in Finland.

5.1 The historical context of honour-based violence

The phenomenon of honour-based violence is quite frequently linked in the Western media to South-Asian and Middle Eastern cultures in addition to the religion of Islam. Lama Abu-Odeh supports this mainstream ideology of the Arabs stating that Arab societies contribute to the notion of honour by expecting “their” women to refrain from any kind of sexual relationship prior to marriage.\(^{183}\) This argument makes it seem that Arab cultures are homogenous and composed of only one culture, and that it is only Arabs who contribute to the notion of honour. Despite the common idea shared that the notion of honour is solely limited to Middle Eastern and South Asian societies, it actually extends to the Mediterranean societies.\(^{184}\) According to Schneider, the concepts of shame and honour complemented institutional procedures for the distribution of power and the establishment of order in the

\(^{182}\) Ibid.


Mediterranean societies. Moreover, Bulbeck argues in the Mediterranean and Muslim cultures women’s sexual honour reflects the family’s honour.

It is crucial to understand the historical background of the notion of honour and how far it extends in order to challenge the stereotype attached to certain minority groups. The concept of honour has been treated at its best as a historical curiosity and at its worst as an archaic and brutal value system. Back in the history, the Mediterranean people considered the usurpation of water and animal theft a violation of honour. According to Schneider, the notion of honour can be regarded as an ideology of property holding group that struggle to define, expand and safeguard its property in a competitive ground. As one can see, the notion of honour has shifted from controlling one’s property to controlling women. The next chapter discusses an important concept embedded in the notion of honour; shame.

The concept of shame is regarded to be an important element, especially when women’s behaviour defines the honour of some social groups. The notion of honour and shame complement institutional agreements for the distribution of power and the creation of order in societies. In societies in which honour is emphasized, the women’s status – especially the sexual relationships - defines the status of all men who are related to her as the men share the responsibility to protect the women’s morality. According to Thiara and Aisha, the control of behaviour in families and communities marked by collectivist values intensifies the obstacles, which consequently leads women to remain in abusive relationships.

188 Jane Schneider, “Of vigilance and virgins: Honor, shame and access to resources in Mediterranean societies”, 1971, pg. 2
190 Ibid., pg. 2.
191 Ibid.
192 Ibid., pg. 18
Furthermore, in order to prevent shame and stigma from occurring within a community, there is a pressure to keep matters indoors, which consequently keeps women trapped for years. The notion of honour and shame are so important to some women that even talking about their experiences equals to disobedience and prioritizing oneself over the community, which is frowned upon.

5.2 Cultural aspect

This section discusses how some women (read: women of colour) are deemed to be the representatives of their cultures rather than individual people. A bunch of scholars - such as Gill, Amos and Parmar, and Warnock - examine the importance of upholding the notion of “honour” to some women as their decency and “honour” is tested when they are married. Gill and Warnock hold that in some societies in which honour is valued, the women’s hymen symbolizes the families’ honour. Gill highlights that honour-based violence is not a cultural matter rather a transcultural crime in which culture and tradition are utilized as justifications for violence perpetrated against women. Warnock, on the other hand, approaches “honour” from a prejudiced and cultural essentialist manner leaving one with the impression that the Middle East is a homogeneous Muslim country with honour-based beliefs. This is a prime example of what Mohanty has discussed on how Western feminist


194 Ibid., pg. 158.


199 In this paper, cultural essentialism refers to the practice of categorizing and labelling some people belonging to a culture according to the “essential” qualities.

categorize “third world women”, and how each text presumes that women are formed by a one coherent group identity within the different cultures discussed, prior to their entry into social interactions. 201

Furthermore, Seyla Benhabib provides one a noteworthy viewpoint on the notion of culture and how it is interpreted by conservatives and progressives in the modern-day era. According to Benhabib, conservatives argue that cultures ought to be held separate, because cultural hybridity causes tension and insecurity, whereas progressives argue that cultures must be preserved in order to fix patterns of dominance. 202 Susan Okin, on the other hand, argues that many of the world’s traditions and cultures, including those practiced within formerly colonized nation-states – which certainly encompass the majority of Africa, the Middle-East, Latin-America and Asia - are noticeably patriarchal. 203 This argument suggests that women from minority groups are victims of their patriarchal cultures – which gives the impression that patriarchy is exceptional to previously colonized nations -, but overlooks how Western women do also suffer from patriarchal practices. She suggests that the minority women could be leading better lives if the culture they were born in becomes non-existent or so that the people belonging to that culture are willing to reinforce the majority’s culture in relation to the equality of women. 204 This statement suggests that the minorities cultures do not encompass feminist values.

According to Mandy McKerl, this way of thinking – such as Okin’s - reflects the habit of assuming racialized people being motivated by culture – in relation to feminist values, for example – while white people are seen to be motivated by choice. 205 According to McKerl, placing gender subordination within this kind of context hides how gender subordination takes place in the Western or First World countries and how it draws other people into its practice. 206 This kind of rhetoric is not accidentally made up nor has it been generated out of minorities being oppressive and anti-feminist, but to be able to maintain a good picture of the West. Using contrasting narratives of “us” versus “them” demonstrate what is presented as

204 Ibid, pg.22-23
the “norm” in Third World and immigrant cultures is regarded as abnormal behaviour in the Western cultures.\textsuperscript{207}

5.3 Patriarchy and honour-based violence

Amos and Parmar argue against radical feminists - who regard patriarchy as the main defining characteristic of women’s oppression -, because they fail to see the irrelevance of such the concept of patriarchy in analysing the complex of interactions in the Black and minority communities both in the past and present-day.\textsuperscript{208} Gill further elaborates on this statement by stating that from an “outsider’s” perspective, the problem of the notion of honour entails the fact that there is conflict between patriarchal systems – meaning the ones that have deep historic and cultural backgrounds - and systems created on the principles of equality.\textsuperscript{209}

Amos and Parmar further argue and state that patriarchy ought not to be viewed merely in respect to its connection to capital and capitalist relations, but neither is it purely an analytical means, which illuminates the oppression of women experienced by men within a span of different economic structures.\textsuperscript{210} Moreover, it is important to highlight that boys can also be victimized by their father or community – especially if they belong to a sexual minority group -, hence are also victims of patriarchy. Although it is a fact that patriarchy is more or less related to gender oppression, however it is also about power relations, which are not always gender related.\textsuperscript{211}

Amos and Parmar used historical analysis to depict and illuminate a little on the history of by what means the white women’s sexuality has been assembled compared to the “other” women, such as Black women or women of colour.\textsuperscript{212} Aisha Gill used the Council of Europe in order to reach a consensus on the definition of HBV, but it could not cover all the different characteristics to HBV - such as power, domination, control and intimidation -, however a

\textsuperscript{207} Ibid. pg. 203.
\textsuperscript{209} A. Gill, “Honor killings and the quest for justice in black and minority ethnic communities in the United Kingdom”, 2009, pg. 477.
\textsuperscript{210} V. Amos and P. Parmar, “Challenging Imperial Feminism”, 1984, pg. 9.
\textsuperscript{211} Ibid., pg. 9 (Reference to Michele Barrett, “Women's Oppression Today, Problems in Marxist Feminist Analysis”, London: Verso, 1980).
consensus has been reached on how the potential victims ought to have access to adequate and sustained routes for justice and protection.\textsuperscript{213}

5.4 Legal aspect concerning the battered women

This section elaborates on the literature found on how the international human rights standards are relatively unfair towards women because of the existing male-specified norms.\textsuperscript{214} Aisha Gill argues that the countries’ ought to be responsible for what happens in “private” to battered women, and also that there is a lack of international human rights instruments addressing the “private” matters.\textsuperscript{215} Charlesworth, on the other hand, argues that the international human rights law is responsible in relation to the distinction made between “private” and “public” due to the enduring male dominance of all bodies exercising political power nationwide and internationally.\textsuperscript{216} Despite the authors’ good point made in relation to states and international laws’, Charlesworth and Gill have failed to consider the perpetrator’s responsibility when committing a crime. Charlesworth highlights this point by arguing that since the main subjects of international law are states, it is occasionally believed that the influence of international law affects the states rather than individuals precisely.\textsuperscript{217}

Moreover, Brown presents an interesting perspective in relation to the rights granted to women, and how the rights granted to them may oppress them rather than empower due to the contradictions in the rights.\textsuperscript{218} Brown argues that in order to have rights, it may demand some protection from the most restraining elements of the designation and subordination of


\textsuperscript{214}(1) Aisha Gill, “Patriarchal violence in the name of ‘honour’”, 2006.


\textsuperscript{216}Hilary Charlesworth, “Human Rights as Men’s Rights” in J. Peters & A. Wolper (Ed.), Women’s rights, human rights: international feminist perspective. pg. 105-106

\textsuperscript{217}Hilary Charlesworth, Christine Chinkin & Shelley Wright, “Feminist Approaches to International Law”, 1991, pg. 625.

gender, hence facilitates the control of women through that designation. Brown and Mohanty agree on how the generalization of women’s struggles is problematic, and continues to argue that the modern-day issues women are facing in relation to their rights are because of the masculinist discourse of rights. Although the scholars utilized in this section to emphasize the problem of exclusiveness women face in relation to international rights are based on claims made in 1991 to early 2000s, yet they are plausible till this day. Women are still suffering from “private” matters that are not intervened enough in, especially in relation to honour-based violence. Mayer and Charlesworth also stressed on how the international human rights law’s has become to signify the inclusiveness of men while excluding the women. Brown finalizes the arguments made by Mayer and Charlesworth by stating how the unceasing ill-treatment of women continue in courts and public policies also where they are depicted as women with needs and struggles rather than diverse subjects with options.

5.5 Finland and honour-based violence

The available articles on honour-based violence predominantly come in the form of news articles on how honour-based violence is threatening women of colour and also how Islam is linked to it. In addition to these articles there are two well-known projects that focus on sharing basic knowledge about honour-based violence and developing methods to tackle the phenomenon: DIDAR and SOPU research projects. The projects are focused on providing help for immigrant communities in which honour-based violence may be present

219 Ibid.
227 YLE, “Kristinnusossa ja islamissa on paljon yhteistä”, YLE UUTISET, 2006, retrieved from [19.6.2019]: https://yle.fi/uutiset/3-5748043 (“Christianity and Islam have a lot in common”)
228 Marianne Rautiokoski, Mervi Janhunen-Ruusuvuori and DIDAR-project’s partners, “Kohtuaminen ja dialogi kunnialkulttuuri- ja kunniaväkivaltatyyppisi – Didar Hanke”, Viestipaino Oy (Tampere), 2016. (”The encounter and dialogue on the work on honour based violence and the culture of honour violence – Didar Project”)
229 Johanna Aapakallio, ”Perustietoa kunniaan liittyvistä konfliktietistä ja kunniaan liittyvästä väkivallasta”, Kalliolan Nuoret ry, 2014. (“Basic information on honour-based violence and the conflicts related to it”).
in. Also, for people who may encounter some forms of honour-based violence and organize different activities for them in order to prevent honour-based violence from occurring.

6.0 Analysis

The themes that emerged from this research topic are various, but only specific themes were chosen due to the space allotted, and also to answer the specific research questions presented in the beginning of this paper. This section answers the research questions pertaining how help-providers work to help battered women of colour; how the help-providers define honour-based violence and how they conceptualize other important collaborators combatting violence; whether there is a pattern of negligence; and what role does the multi-layered theoretical aspect play in explaining the help-provided for women of colour.

There are three main themes that are analysed within this paper. Firstly, it is analysed whether dichotomous oppositions are created and whether the concept of multiculturalism is a word used to camouflage a troublesome reality in a politically correct way. Secondly, there is also a section analysing whether a pattern of negligence has taken place amongst the authority figures when dealing with women of colour due to racial denial. Also, employers from an organization is interviewed in order to get an idea on how they treat women of colour and what kind of an approach do they utilize. Additionally, honour-based violence as a concept is analysed whether it is regarded amongst the participants as a culturally motivated crime or gender-based violence. Lastly, the different hierarchies amongst the clients is also studied, which seem to be present in organizations providing help for various women. These themes are important to scrutinize in order to elucidate on how an organization such as the one interviewed - whose main priority is to provide safety for women - can also have biased attitudes, to a certain extent.

6.1 The organization’s work to help women of colour escape violence in their everyday lives

The organization that is kept anonymous in this research has mainly dedicated their work to help women of colour as the main client group are from immigrant backgrounds, mainly from the Middle East and North Africa. Although the services are mainly utilized by women of colour, there have been rare instances in which men from the sexual minority who have also suffered from honour-based violence have sought help. The organization does a lot of collaborations with other organizations and takes parts in projects to spread awareness on honour-based violence. Also, it works closely with other authority figures – such as the police – in case the client wishes to do so. There is a lot of acute help available to the clients as well
as other services provided, such as psychological help and accommodation. According to the participants, the help is offered to everyone regardless of their intersectional factors and the doors are open all the time. They help-providers are easily approachable, and they have approximately 500 women of colour seeking for help each year.

When the participants were asked whether they have a certain guideline to follow in order to spot a victim of honour-based violence, many participants agreed that “[V]iolence is not a matter that is openly discussed about, because it is regarded a private matter. It something that is not taught in schools, for example – not for social workers nor people who work in the social services”. According to Participant D, “the subject and forms of violence ought to be taught while obtaining a degree in health and social care in order to recognize signs of abuse and violence and the special characteristics of the different forms of abuse”. However, this particular organization has created a special list of questions in which characteristics of honour-based violence have been taken into account, such as questions regarding the woman’s freedom and clothing, for example. The human rights discourse is clearly utilized when the list of questions defining honour-based violence has been created. The intersections between the power of language and the lack of a widespread understanding of human rights seems to utilize the human rights discourse quite commonly in language, which is particularly attractive to policy makers. According to Jahren, the mixture of an emotional appeal and the lack of proper clarity makes human rights an effective rhetorical tool, which is challenging to oppose.

Also, the particular organization in question holds seminars to educate people on violence. It was also asked whether they take any preventive measures to avert the act of violence from occurring. The participants shared differing opinions on what is regarded as preventive measures. Part of the participants agree that they take certain preventive measures, such as hold speeches at the Finnish Parliamentary and the ministry, raise constant awareness on the matter and provide acute help so that the situation does not escalate. According to Participant A, however: “we do not have enough resources to take any preventive actions,

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227 Participant D, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
229 Ibid.
but instead try to educate the women who have escaped their homes by informing them about their rights and their work opportunities to enable them to live a financially independent lives separate from their abusive husbands”.

Since the organization is dedicated to help all women regardless of their backgrounds, and in order to offer them appropriate help, hence the majority of the employees are women of colour. They speak several languages catering many women of colour including Arabic, Russian, English, French, Nepali, Spanish and Swedish. Also, in the case of a language barrier, special interpretation services are provided. Despite the multicultural staff, the participants agreed that “…there is almost always a language barrier, hence the interpreters”. According to Patricia Cole, having materials translated into different languages is important, however it is not enough to address cultural issues. Also, there are two kinds of interpretation services available: the face-to-face one and the other one is via the phone. The latter one was invented to cater clients for safety reasons, because they may feel frightened to speak in front of an interpreter from the same background due to the fear of the rumours and the feeling of shame. “Finland is a small country which is why the chance of having an interpret from the same community is quite high”, hence the organization tries to eliminate these possibilities from occurring by offering these kinds of services. According to Patricia Cole, in order to reach more people of colour, the programs available ought to support immigrant women’s cultural beliefs, values and traditions.

Lastly, when asked whether intersectional factors have been taken into account in their work in order to provide efficient help for women of colour with intersecting factors, the employees agreed on considering different intersectional factors. The most eye-catching comment was made by Participant C stating that “when I applied for this job, I was asked how do I understand people coming from different cultures and how differing intersectional factors – such as language and age – affect an individual’s life”. She continued to state that

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234 Participant A, Participant B, Participant C, Participant D and Participant E, personal communication, Helsinki, 25.2.2019 and 4.3.2019. (The three dots refer that the participant continued explaining, but because of the irrelevance to this particular point, hence it was cut)
239 Participant C, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
“…nowhere else was I asked the same questions nor paid attention to as much as in this organization but I am not sure if everyone [the employees] knew what intersectionality entails”. The participants emphasize that everyone gets the service they want, and the cultural backgrounds are truly emphasized on. It is important to note that although the organization interviewed had multicultural personnel, the only ones interviewed and available were white women. If employees from immigrant backgrounds were available, perhaps another interpretation of intersectionality would have been offered from the same organization.

6.2 Multiculturalism: a hindrance to women’s rights or an excuse to othering?

” One good example [of honour-based violence] was a young woman – probably your age [24] – at her final stage in college who contacted the school counsellor … The problem was that since part of the college’s curriculum is to conduct an internship, but the family did not allow her – a woman over 20 year old – to apply for an internship because there were men at the workplace and her curfew was at 15.00 o’clock in order to participate in household chores, hence they banned her from achieving her college degree. This is a typical case where a young [woman] rebels and demands a little freedom to finish a degree. In this case we spoke a lot and she was very depressed and suicidal. She was very disappointed, and the family also had planned an arranged marriage – in her case it was a forced marriage, because she did not want to get married. The very same family had also two boys who could play basketball, go to bars and do whatever. The boys were allowed to live a normal life of a young person whereas the family’s girl was restricted. Although she had the permission to study, but practically she never had the permission to finish it because the family took it away from her”.

Multiculturalism is a term, which is debated a lot in the academic sphere as well as in the public due to its nature. It has a positive connotation to it, but it has gained a great deal of criticism because of the concern for the wellbeing of women that can frequently be used as a tool for the continuation of cultural imperialism and for upholding the view that women are the victims and usually presented as women who are acted upon, rather than the actors.

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240 Ibid. (The brackets within the quote refer to the word that was asked but was referred to in a different word, hence the clarification within the brackets).
During the interviews with the participants, the theme of multiculturalism rose a few times when discussing how honour based violence could be prevented to which some of the participants quite unanimously agreed that “assimilation is needed in order to prevent these cases from occurring”. According to Participant B “[E]ducation is more needed and the whole family needs be aided. Many of them do not ask for help. The conflicts arise when the families arrive, and they need to assimilate. The children are raised in a multicultural environment – integration issues … The refugees drift towards their own groups in which the religion plays a part”. Also, “We do not have enough resources to take preventive measures [for honour-based violence], but in our integrative work, we discuss a lot about women’s rights, the importance of work, the importance of education and the opportunities, because education is certainly the most important aspect as through it one can get employed and earn their own money in order to be financially independent from the rest of the family …. A lot of women see it as the men’s responsibility….”

The human rights discourse is also utilized when the need for educating the “other” is introduced. Education is regarded as part of assimilation because the system in which young people are enrolled is a Western Christo-normative system of education. The identity of the Westerners and non-Westerners are presented implicitly in binary oppositions “the educated and civilized” and the “uneducated and in need of education”. This West is framed to be regarded as the “developed, honourable and Christian” actor saving the “underdeveloped others”. According to Jahren, such binary oppositions are powerful and their existence in everyday language is intentional.

The theme of multiculturalism is not necessarily discernible, and the participants do not emphasize nor say directly that integration needs to occur in order to prevent honour-based violence, but the manner in which they frame the relationship between the minority and majority’s interactions demonstrate the occurrence of the problem, which is stated by Participant B that summarizes Participant A and Participant C’s ideas on the matter: “It is a problem when one lives between two cultures, which manifests later in other

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246 Participant A, personal communication, Helsinki, 25.2.2019. (MITÄ NOI PISTEET TARKOITTAAN)
248 Ibid.
relationships”.  This particular quote demonstrates how there will always be a problem when one is between two cultures due to the differing values and norms. This supports the idea Sayla Benhabib has put forward regarding the conservatives’ outlook on how cultures should be preserved instead of mixed in order to avoid cultural hybridity and “clash of civilizations”, which is seen to generate chaos and instability. On one hand, it is understandable that different values can cause confusion and misunderstandings amongst people who come from different backgrounds. However, when discussing about a form of violence – such as honour-based violence - and the discussion on how the cultures may collide emerges, it illustrates that the problem lies in the culture of the “other” and how the lack of assimilation prevents them from enjoying freedom like the rest of the Westerners and from taking part in the Western society. Also, this perpetuates a picture of how the “others” are in need of education as “their” values do not correspond to the Western values, which is supported by the comment made above regarding multiculturalism.

Susan Okin creates binary logic between multiculturalism and feminism by arguing that a preservation of multiculturalism should not outshine the cultures that discriminate against women, which, according to her, exists in many traditional minority cultures. Her outlook on how minorities ought to assimilate into the majority’s society can, also, be found in the empirical material derived from the interviews, in which Participant B sees cultural hybridity as a problem, because “… it [living between two cultures] would later manifest in other relationships”. Okin’s argumentation and opinions are quite alike liberal feminism in which the main focus is on how women should be able to maintain their equality through their actions and choices, when the reality is different from it as not every woman is able to make choices of her own due to the patriarchal nature in which she was grown up in. The reason why minority women do not necessarily have the ability to make their own choices may stem from the intersecting factors that they embody, for example.

During the interviews, there was not a noticeable binary opposition constructed when discussing of the minority and majority groups, but “they” were present in the discussions when considering how the “other” can be helped to become a part of the Finnish society.

Participant D described how difficult it is for women of colour “… when we discuss of clients who come from another country and have spent a little time here, who do not speak the language, does not know how to use money, does not know what is a bank card, does not know how to go to places nor where she even is, these people have hard time. We need to start the integration process here for many clients”.  Although it is true that some women do not know how to use money nor bank card, but the constant depiction of the women of colour as women in need to be educated “education is more needed and the whole family needs be aided…” and dependent on the their men connected with their efforts to integrate them into the society, suggests that immigrant women’s cultures are oppressive. The immigrant women are depicted as women with “needs” and “problems” rather than “choices” or “freedom”. This illustrates the superior “us” by depicting what the “other” is deficient in. Women and “the East” are defined as peripherals, whereas the West is depicted to be the centre, which determines the periphery. According to Mohanty, Western power is employed when the homogenization and classification of the oppression of women occur in Third World countries. The victimization of battered women is advised to be rejected because oppressed people cannot afford to feel powerless.

Moreover, the idea that the whole family needs to be aided in order to assimilate properly in a multicultural environment to avoid integration issues is somewhat understandable. It is needed to learn the language in order to work, for example. This is not to say that learning a language is assimilation, but rather a tool in the society, which can facilitate assimilation. A study conducted by Idema and Phalet in 2007 proved that individual characteristics such as educational attainment and language proficiency are proved to be important when they documented how Turkish adolescent women in Germany were more egalitarian about gender roles than their mothers in which the importance of religion for understanding traditional

253 Participant D, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
256 Ibid., pg. 353.
257 Ibid., pg. 335.
gender role attitudes combined with the individual characteristics are stressed in cultural assimilation studies.\(^{259}\)

However, assimilation into the majority’s culture, in this context, is also about values, which highlights the differences between the two cultures and creates binary visions. By saying “our culture made me do it” or “it is their religious duty”, for example, complicates the issue of exclusion from public life and feeling part of that society at a level beyond family and “local” community.\(^{260}\) Even trying to prevent honour based violence from occurring and by giving minority communities access to education and training, the value base are still instructed from white, Western, Christian – although Finland deems itself as a secular state – basis. According to McKerl, when people from minority communities enter the work realm, for example, the values are usually based on white, Western and Christianity.\(^{261}\) This serves to remind a non-white person from a minority community that they may have been born and raised in the host-country, and that they are not a part of the society, rather an addition to it.\(^{262}\)

Moreover, the expectation for the minority communities to assimilate into majority’s culture comes partially due to the stereotypes created about the “other”. According to Volpp, part of the reason many believe the cultures of the Third World or immigrant communities are so much more sexist than Western ones is that incidents of sexual violence in the West are frequently thought to reflect the behaviour of a few deviants rather than as part of “our” culture.\(^{263}\) Interestingly, Finland is the second most violent country for women in Europe\(^ {264}\), which is further discussed about in the next chapter on how some immigrant women suffering from honour-based violence may experience a lack of assistance. According to the European


\(^{260}\) Mandy McKerl, “Multiculturalism, Gender and Violence: Multiculturalism – is it bad for women?”, 2007, pg. 204-205.

\(^{261}\) Ibid., pg. 205

\(^{262}\) Ibid.


Union Agency for Fundamental rights, when comparing Finland with the rest of EU member states surveyed, the women in Finland indicate that they worry for their safety.  

6.3 A multi-layered theoretical aspect in interpreting the help-providers work

“At the end of last year I dealt with a young couple who I helped for a very long time due to the girl’s family and part of her relatives who did not accept her relationship. The boy’s father was Finnish, and the origins were from Africa; hence they did not accept it… The couple were both Finnish, but the girl’s origins were from Turkey, and the boy is from Africa – I cannot remember which African country though. They had a very difficult case because the girl was threatened, as well as the boy and the boy’s family which is why they could not be seen anywhere. They were for quite a long time within four walls due to the severity of the threats. They were sought after all the time, so it was very difficult for them and [they] had to quit the job and school. The girl had a permanent job which she had to resign, and the boy dropped out of high school and this case lasted for many months. The police were very involved in this case and they took the threats seriously, but also all of the messages and voice mails which proved the severity of the situation. The biggest threat was the girl’s big brother. The police worked very hard on it, we worked together very much and thought about the safety and how to improve their situation, where to go, and then they even got safety buttons which had GPS in order to find them if anything were to happen. It created a sense of [safety], but towards the end they visited the neighbourhood probably twice a week but nowhere near the central area, so it was very restricted, but fortunately it ended in a good way – although it lasted for several months. The police then managed to convince the family that if something were to happen, they will have to go to the court, and if something were to happen it would be clear who did it, so then the family agreed not to do anything. ‘We will not do anything anymore. We do not want to be in contact, but we will not do anything’, so the case kind of remained open, because the brother was not happy with the situation and we heard that he still went looking [for them]. The police called and said that he was found looking for the apartment of the boy’s mother in other locality where she lives, but then it kind of ended so that the young couple …. We were thinking of moving them abroad. They had the chance to live where the boy’s relatives lived. However, since they are both young.

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and it was their first time living together and they received help from the boy’s family. So, they decided to move to a smaller town and see if they can stay there.”

Families’ cultural backgrounds must be at the forefront as one contemplates on how to reach and assist all women, and whereas cultural values and customs and socioeconomic status do not justify violence committed against women, they must be considered in finding solutions so that partner violence is ended for all women in all communities. Some people of colour may not trust traditional service systems, government entities, law enforcement and the judicial system, because they may think that their programs on family violence are not sensitive to their race or culture, which is why there may be a big threshold on asking for help. According to Participant A, “we struggle with the challenge of some battered women’s refusal to ask for help and how some authorities do not have the necessary knowledge and do not intervene as they do not see the problem”. Despite the fact that the organization in question that was interviewed and them priding themselves with the multicultural staff they have employed, they are preoccupied with the authority figures’ they collaborate with - such as the police – due to the dismissal and lack of help provided when dealing with women of colour, which can in the future create a larger threshold for the battered women to seek help.

“It predominantly depends on the social workers and the authority figures [on whether they will take intersectional factors into account]...”

The fact that one depends on their luck whether to receive the appropriate kind of help – which, also, considers different intersectional factors as the dominant customer group are women of colour - is alarming. Adopting a stance in which social workers or any other authority figure neglect crucial aspects of social workers’ responsibilities could threaten the lives of the persons they are meant to help. Although according to Participant D, “people

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266 Participant C, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
speak more about violence nowadays - honour-based violence in particular. I do not know if it is due to the increased awareness or increased immigration, but many schools have been in contact with us in relation to this matter”.272 However, the majority of the participants agree that “There is not enough knowledge on the matter of honour-based violence. The authority figures – of course some of them are knowledgeable – but many of them lack the knowledge. They do not seem to understand the phenomenon and how broad it is and how many threatening aspects there are. There is lack in knowledge, which is why there may be lack in help provided”.273 The potential lack of help provided by the authority figures to victims of honour-based violence and any form of abuse may stem from different reasons all the way from overt racism to mere lack of understanding of the other culture, but it all traces back to white privilege. Despite the fact that representations of (white) privilege - a system of benefits experienced by white people due to the skin colour – resulting in total discrimination are now illegal, subtle differences remain that make it challenging for persons of colour to be truly equal in the society.274 Unlike overt discrimination – which is a conscious act against another person -, white privilege requires that no decisions to be made, no deliberate actions taken.275

Some authority figures in power to help battered women may fail to provide adequate help due to the lack in knowledge relating to honour-based violence due to their privileged position, which they may not even be aware of as the privilege is an unrecognised pleasure resulting from the dominant status of the white people. Regardless of the fact that the organization in question is determined and mainly focuses on providing aid for women of colour, the system is built to cater white people. White is seen as neutral and normal, the standard to which all other groups are compared against.276 The dismissal of various intersecting factors due to variety of reasons – such as the fear of being labelled “racist” or because of the lack of knowledge- encourages one to take a “one size fits all”-approach, which can lead to immigrant women not receiving the appropriate help. Also, according to

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272 Participant D, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
275 Ibid. pg. 7
276 Ibid.
Participant E, “there has been instances in which authority figures could not provide help due to the lack in resources, which left the woman afraid and sad”.277

Moreover, as quoted above, the participants unanimously agreed that the help offered varies according to the help provider: “…It depends on what social worker [or authority figure one encounters]. Some [recipients] who are in similar circumstances receive different service. Some [customer] gets everything while the other may get none… So, it depends a lot on the employee and whether they understand you and the phenomenon [of honour-based violence]”.278 This can be understood with the help of the theories presented in this paper. From an intersectional theoretical perspective, this can be interpreted as a lack of understanding important intersectional factors that ought to be considered in order to provide the victim of abuse full help and understanding rather than have the clients depend on their luck. According to Busche et al., the social markers of difference can have an impact in different ways, because due to the intersectional factors people can be privileged or discriminated against and, also, because they can have a strengthening or marginalizing impact for the individuals.279

Furthermore, an intersectional standpoint can encapsulate contradictory tendencies inside the dynamics of dominance relations.280 For example, an immigrant battered Middle Eastern woman with her immigration status pending is in a more vulnerable situation than a battered Finnish woman, hence the received help may differ a lot between the two. The possibilities for societal participation and the access to resources like education and money, for example, prove themselves to be regulated along the lines of social indicators of difference.281 In the case of battered women of colour, the access to receive the appropriate help may depend on how well authorities understand the phenomenon of honour based violence and are aware of different intersectional factors. The majority of help-providers interviewed, except for

277 Participant E, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
280 Ibid.
281 Ibid.
Participant B, seem to be aware of the concept of intersectionality, but it is unknown how they apply it in their work and how the people they collaborate with do it.  

Secondly, the lack of providing equal help regardless of the help-provider available may also stem from the existing stereotypes against certain minority groups. Although Finland has not been a coloniser, but the colonial mentality exists in relation to the “other”. It is argued that the Western discourse in relation to the Orient is based on binary oppositions, which allows the West to assign any feature that point to one view within the binary system while the opponent is automatically assigned to the opposite perspective. Based on the differentiation highlighted, it emphasized on what the “other” lacks in and automatically assigns all the Western standards and undesirable features - which are presented as opposing the West - to the oriental work. In other words, the binary oppositions created between the minority and majority groups may be another explanation to why immigrant women’s intersectional factors are dismissed. The differences between the groups are highlighted and instead of understanding the factors, which may affect the experiences of immigrant women, they are solely justified as being a part of their culture and must be accepted as such, hence the help provided is limited. The strategies of the discourse represent the Orient as “inferior, unchanging and old-fashioned”, and by regularly repeating the same vocabulary, images and symbols about the orient, the discourse maintains its control. The “others” are ascribed as inferior through established codes, stereotypes and vocabulary utilized whenever the relationship between the colonial power and the colonized people is spoken or written about.

According to an interview Nikunen Kaarina conducted in a high school in Finland, a clear stereotypical attitude is still present in the Finnish school system. Nikunen interviewed

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284 Ibid., pg. 120-130
286 Ibid.
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Finnish people – with various backgrounds including Iraq, Iran, Kurdish and Russia - who studies Finnish as their second language. One of the Kurdish interviewees discussed with Nikunen about the honour murder of Fadime Şahindal - which took place in Sweden - and how one of her teacher’s approached her and asked her if something like that could happen to her, too287, considering her culture. Although the teacher’s intentions were not necessarily bad, but the question was based on a stereotype and a system of power.288 Also, from a postcolonial perspective, these kind of questions entail a particular perception of the “other’s” culture as inferior and primitive.289 The construed picture of the “other” may also send a subconscious message to the help-providers that the violence occurring in immigrant women’s homes is due to their culture and religion – matters that the help-providers “cannot” help with as that would require to change their culture and religion, which brings us to the next theory: assimilation.

As discussed in the theory section, the theory of assimilation aims to encourage the immigrant group to assimilate into the majority’s society so that they become a homogeneous group. The differences between the groups are highlighted and rather than being celebrated, they are solely tolerated. According to Nathan Glazer, assimilation was a desired outcome in order to reduce the prejudice and discrimination experienced by some people.290 Additionally, assimilation is regarded to be an expectation on how different ethnic and racial groups ought to respond to their common presence in one society.291 In the case of how help-providers’ aid may lack can stem from the lack of acquaintance to intersectional factors due to the expectation of them assimilating into the majority’s society. One of the reasons for the expectation for assimilation can potentially be that once a homogeneous group is formed, it is easier to provide people in need the help as they are all assumed to have similar needs, which in turn is easier to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach and provide the help. It becomes easier for the help-providers to identify the needs and the challenges of a person when the group in

288 Ibid.
289 Ibid.
291 Ibid., pg. 123.
question shares similar values and backgrounds to oneself, which leads us to the next concept – racial ignorance.

The lack of understanding the phenomenon of honour-based violence – and hence provide the appropriate help - may also stem from a racially ignorant aspect in which everyone is encouraged to be viewed and treated similarly and ignore the race. Although racial denial is not always damaging, but because whiteness is used as the standard for interaction in the society, racially ignorant norms are the norms of white people.\textsuperscript{292} Thus, white privilege allows white people to believe that their practices are the norm and anything else is to be considered abnormal.\textsuperscript{293} It is noteworthy to mention that according to the participants, “the victims of abuse come from different backgrounds, such as Russia, Middle-East, Far-East, Central Asia and Africa”\textsuperscript{.294} Although it is difficult to say what customers get all the necessary help, it is important to note that some of the customers have heterogeneous needs. Also some of the customers are white, which are easier to deal with as the concept of honour is not as embedded in their culture as it is for some other women of colour, because according to Participant A: “… [I]n Helsinki 15% of the people coming from immigrant background mainly consist of Estonians and Russians …”\textsuperscript{295}

Furthermore, an interesting element rose from the theme of racial denial: the homogenization of oppression. Firstly, the idea that violence affects all women the same regardless of their intersectional factors, such as religion, ethnic background or skin colour. This assumption by Participant B: “… Violence as violence is quite similar [to everyone]. A Finnish woman can suffer from economic violence as well and live without any income. It is an international thing when discussing of violence…”\textsuperscript{296} This kind of a perspective encourages service providers to ignore cultural diversity and to employ a one-size-fits-all method to serve victims of intimate violence.\textsuperscript{297} This is problematic in relation to honour-based violence as

\textsuperscript{292} Denise A. Donnelly, Kimberly J. Cook, Debra Van Ausdale and Lara Foley, “White privilege, color blindness, and services to battered women”, Violence Against Women, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2005, pg. 10.
\textsuperscript{293} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{295} Participant A, personal communication, Helsinki, 25.2.2019. (Reference to the points)
\textsuperscript{296} Participant B, personal communication, Helsinki, 25.2.2019
patriarchy operates differently in every culture and homogenizing violence only encourages one to adopt an unbefitting approach to it as people suffer differently and “universal sisterhood” is not applicable everywhere.

By assuming that all women are similar and by treating them the same, the employees spread an idea that since all women are treated similarly, hence the outcomes will also be similar. The immigrant women’s experiences are universalized and generalized globally with the idea of “universal sisterhood”, which neglect to recognize other intersectional factors, such as race, sexuality and nationality leading potentially to a false sense of unity of oppressions and interests amongst women worldwide. According to Chandra Mohanty, Western power is exercised when the homogenization and systemization of the subjugation of women operate in developing countries. The women in the third world countries are only referred to as women with “needs” and “problems” instead of “choices” and “independence”. The racially ignorant approach expects the minority groups to follow the steps of the majority, which means that their needs become invisible. Racial ignorance often renders women of colour invisible, because help-providers assume that they are similar to white women or they respond to being treated in the same manner as white battered women.

6.4 Honour-based violence: A culturally motivated crime or a gender-based violence?

“… We have, for example, had many cases in which women who had not used a scarf in their home countries, but due to the community’s pressure, they decide to put a scarf on to avoid the judgement. It is a small thing, but on the other hand it is the freedom to decide whether to use one or not, but it is not necessarily seen as honour-based violence. It is a form of social control, but it again is linked to women and the women do not see it as such ‘it is just what they do’. It is seen as a good thing because the men would otherwise hear about it all the time ‘why is your wife not using a scarf?’ and when the man says that to his wife, she

301 Ibid., pg. 335.
will think that ‘ok, maybe I should wear a scarf, although I never used it in my home country…” 304

The participants unanimously agreed that honour-based violence is a form of gender-based violence, which is enacted in one of its many different widespread manifestations – intimate partner violence. 305 It was agreed upon by the participants that honour-based violence has similar characteristics as intimate partner violence, but it is, also, linked to honour-based views, which involves the pressure from the community and the extended family, which differs from intimate partner violence as it usually involves only the partners in question. 306 The participants agree that “the different characteristics honour-based violence entails include control; extortion; physical, economic and sexual violence; female genital mutilation; and the values”. 307

Also, Participant B linked honour-based violence indirectly to the culture and religion of the “other”: “We have talked that people are from different cultures and that whether religion [Islam] play a role [when committing honour-based violence]”. 308 The focus on whether honour-based violence is religion and/or culturally motivated crime prevents one from seeing it for what it actually represents. Honour violence and the most extreme form of it, honour killing - which is not the case in Finland – is an extreme act of violence committed, predominantly, by men who choose to interpret sacred texts according to their tribal vision of life. 309 This indicates that honour-based violence is performed in environments that place high value on tribal norms and patriarchal beliefs.

Furthermore, if some of the participants or the important people they collaborate with choose to regard HBV as culture-bound crime, the same logic can be used when discussing the alcohol problem in Finland and how many women die due to their significant other murdering them under the influence of alcohol. Alcohol has a significant role in the Finnish society when committing a violent crime, and in the past years 70% of the abuse and 80% of the homicide are done under the influence of alcohol. 310 One of the participants stated that

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305 Participant A, Participant B, Participant C, Participant D and Participant E, personal communication, Helsinki, 25.2.2019 and 4.3.2019
306 Ibid.
307 Ibid.
310 Minna Piispa and Markku Heiskanen, ”Alkoholin rooli naisten parisuhteessa kokeman väkivallan seurauskisissä”, Yhteiskuntapolitiikka, 74(1), 2009, pg. 45. (”The alcohol’s role in intimate partner violence experienced by women”)
“in Finland it is said that intoxicants are linked to violence so maybe the problem of substance abuse is inherited as a child in their childhood homes where they have seen violence, which affects one to become violent themselves”. She further continued to say that “it might be the same with honour-based violence as in since it is normalized or if it is regarded as a society’s order with the threat of violence, so maybe it is the same with alcohol”. This comment, on the other hand, dismisses that the ultimate reason – be it alcohol or the threat of honour-based violence – of abuse that lies in patriarchy.

An important aspect was also covered by some of the participants in relation honour-based violence and its occurrence in the West has been noted amongst Romani people:

“… [H]onour-based violence has always been somehow linked to Islam, and many think that it is [their] culture, but we have honour-based violence in Finland amongst the Romani minority groups, so it is not only amongst people who migrate to Finland, but usually it is generally thought that violence exists in patriarchal societies and the women/girls are expected to behave in a certain manner and boys as well, if he is a homosexual”. The comment substantiates the fact that honour-based violence does not only occur amongst Muslim Arabs. Moreover, the Romani people are considered to be (white) Caucasians in Europe – at least, according to Participant E – however, they are not fully considered to be white. “The Romani people have their own challenges when seeking for help … The social workers seem to be quite prejudiced. Many [people] think that the Romani people are all the same and they only try to take advantage of the system and the services, which in turn leads to them not receiving the appropriate help”.

Furthermore, this illustrates that there are intersecting factors among white women as well and leaves one wondering whether there is just one type of whiteness that is deemed to be acceptable. The minority and majority groups are held on two different standards according to their intersecting factors. Interestingly, Finnish people were subjected to racial stereotyping by the Swedes and assigned to a lower status in racial hierarchies, and instead of questioning those ideologies Finns engaged in pseudo-scientific studies in order to produce counter arguments of “Finns as White Europeans”, which subsequently established racist

311 Participant C, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
312 Ibid.
314 Participant E, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
ideologies in Finland.\textsuperscript{315} This illustrates how the history repeats itself and how the colonial ideology remains intact and reinforced as othering continues to persevere even towards their “own kinds”.

The omnipresence of honour-based violence is limited yet prevalent. According to Participant A, “honour-based cases exists all the time from 30 to 40 cases a year, excluding the unreported cases”.\textsuperscript{316} There is difficulty sometimes to name honour-based cases as such because: “Even the cases that we recognize as honour-based violence, the women refuse to define the case as honour-based violence, because they feel that if they recognize it as such, they admit that they have done something wrong an un-honourable…”.\textsuperscript{317} Simultaneously, it was asked whether the employees are taught to spot certain signs of potential honour-based violence victims, and it was said that “there is a certain form they[clients] are expected to fill, which includes different forms of violence – emotional, physical, sexual, economical – and questions on whether they are restricted when it comes to clothing and freedom”.\textsuperscript{318} All of the participants agreed that “authority figures are not educated enough on the matter of honour-based violence, partially because it does not seem like a phenomenon, which occurs on a daily basis”.\textsuperscript{319} Due to this, the help providers utilize the one-size-fits-all approach, which can be detrimental, because immigrant women experience violence differently, hence the help provided needs to be accommodating those needs. Intimate partner violence experienced women, women belonging to sexual minority or immigrant women can be left without help, because the services provided are very few that cater their needs.\textsuperscript{320}


\textsuperscript{316} Participant A, personal communication, Helsinki, 25.2.2019.

\textsuperscript{317} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{319} Ibid.

https://julkaisut.valtioneuvosto.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/72735/URN%3ANBN%3Afi-
fe201504226594.pdf?sequence=1

53
6.5 Important collaborators’ negligence of certain potential honour-based violence victims

"… There was a case where a woman with children had experienced violence for a long-time and wanted to seek for divorce – I cannot remember whether she came to seek help for divorce or if she already had been divorced. There was a lot of restriction, controlling at home and prior to that there was a lot of it in the home country, but after she reached the shelter house she started receiving threats ‘if you do not get home, you will cause me shame and I will have to kill you’… If I remember correctly, the woman’s family thought that she should file for a divorce because there was so much violence, but the man’s side of the family called her constantly … No matter how much she blocked them [the numbers], there was always a new number, videos and that kind, which were reported to the police. The police did not do much and when she further reported these cases which fell under the defamation offence, they only said ‘well, we cannot investigate this further as this is only word against word’ per usual, because concretely nothing had happened, no-one had hit you in the street, so then [they said] ‘fine, the investigation is over, because this [case] is vague’. Also, if I remember correctly, it was justified ’to solve these cases it requires a lot of resources from the police’, because they would have to investigate the threat coming from the home country, hence they could not continue. The woman was quite sad.”

According to Participant C, some of the authority figures she has worked closely with have demonstrated some form of negligence and othering: “My personal opinion as a social worker is that maybe police’s work could be more sensitive, because a lot depends on the police and how they handle matters since they are such authorities in Finland that are hardly questioned, but what I have personally heard from people[women of colour] is that their encounter has not always been the best . The police can be quite racist, for example. I am not sure if the police are always aware of what is considered violence … In Finland intimate partner violence is considered violence which is subject to prosecution and it should be reported as a crime although the victim would not wish so. If, for example, the police know what has been going on, the matter should move forward, but it does not always go. Why is it so?”

321 Participant E, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
322 Participant C, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019
Despite the participants’ efforts to avoid using racism as a justification for the negligence taking place, Participant D and Participant E agreed that some police dealing with women of colour refuse to offer them help because “it is just them [their culture]”. 323 “Sometimes I am very infuriated because it feels that some [police] do not even want to understand nor help and simply signs it as ‘it is again them’, but then there is the other half who says ‘ok, maybe we cannot do anything about this, but let’s check it out’, so they at least try. I would say that it [the help offered] is quite inconsistent because it depends who is there [offering the help]”. 324 The binary opposition is clear in this sentence as “their” culture is deemed the problem and impossible to change, hence it may be deemed difficult to provide “them” any help. The othering ostracizes people on the basis of perceived group differences. 325

Moreover, the participants agreed that “the client can herself be a challenge due to the violence experienced and mental health issues, hence some of the clients may not recognize their own problems and not seek for help”. 326 It was further argued by Participant B that “there is no tracking, so they do not know what happens to the client afterwards, although they do ensure that the clients have an opportunity to utilize other services in case they wish to do so”. 327 According to Mäkeläinen et al., intimate partner violence is a long-term problem, and the available services mainly focus on crisis intervention although the need for help continues despite the acute help provided, hence the aid provided should be considered from a long-term perspective. 328 It is understandable that nobody can be forced to seek for help if they do not wish so, but the fact that some of them are left on their own to battle the violence and mental health issues speaks volumes. The othering - which lies the at the heart

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323 Participant D and Participant E, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
324 Participant D, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
of racial oppression\textsuperscript{329} -implicit in assumptions that women of colour are different and take care of their own is an important component of white privilege.\textsuperscript{330}

The representation of the “other” works at two different levels simultaneously: an unconscious and the conscious level, where the former level works as a shield for the latter.\textsuperscript{331} The conscious attitude amongst the interviewees, and also the perception received of the Finnish social workers/authority figures by the participants seem to be that honour-based violence is a difficult phenomenon to tackle due to its difficult nature, hence unable to deliver the appropriate help for women of colour. This is not to dismiss the fact that honour-based violence is a difficult form of gendered violence. However, the underlying message from the interviews left was the impression that women of colour cannot get the appropriate help because “their” culture and religion – factors which are deemed to be inherent to them – is the main issue and integration needs to take place in order to avoid these kind of crimes from occurring. This, on the other hand, is a message that these kinds of crimes can be prevented through assimilation meaning that the minority groups ought to follow the majority’s footsteps. Hence, women of colour are trapped in a binary structure between two extreme stereotypes: either as oppressed or anti-Westerners for not integrating. The integration is a false solution to the problem of the “others”, because assimilation seeks to eliminate the differences upon which othering is structured - hence assimilation is hierarchical – that demands the marginalized groups to adopt the identity of the dominant group, leaving the minorities’ identity undamaged\textsuperscript{332}.

Moreover, the ideological assumptions spread by Westerners which has created a dichotomous opposition between “us” versus “them” thus allowed the West to dominate Oriental cultures\textsuperscript{333}, which is noted in the participants’ answers above regarding their experience with the police, for example. It was demonstrated that there was a clear dichotomous binary logic, which emphasized more on the backgrounds of the women of

\textsuperscript{330} Denise A. Donnelly, Kimberly J. Cook, Debra Van Ausdale and Lara Foley, “White privilege, color blindness, and services to battered women”, 2005, pg. 25.
colour rather than the act of violence itself.\textsuperscript{334} Also, stressing the backgrounds of certain minority groups does not only result in negligence of women of colour but also alleviates the perpetrators actions and justifies them instead of holding them accountable for their violence and abuse.

The concern due to the violence experienced by women has generated policy initiatives and conventions across Europe, where there is an extensive amount of policies and interventions designed to protect the rights of girls and women in minority groups.\textsuperscript{335} Also, tackling violence towards minority women has been an on-going initiative for governments, which is why conventions such as the Istanbul’s Convention was created to prevent and combat any form of violence women tend to experience. Interestingly, the convention also includes an article on crimes committed in the name of “honour” - signed by Finland in 2015 shares dissenting opinions by the participants. Half of the participants are happy that “Finland was amongst the first ones to ratify the convention and a lot has improved since the convention was ratified”\textsuperscript{336}, whereas the other half disagree and state that: “The attitude towards intimate partner relationship and in violence in general is thought of as a private familial matter in Finland, and according to Istanbul’s Convention, for example, we should have a lot more shelters than we do now, but we are not obeying the rules that we have signed which means that we do not see the importance in it. It [violence] is not seen as a problem. And if we do not see the basic intimate partner violence amongst the Finns as violence then how do we [see honour-based violence]. We have the ‘culture of silence’ in Finland…”.\textsuperscript{337}

\textbf{6.6 The prioritization of certain clients over others}

The group of people in question – the women of colour – are deemed different in relation to the help provided due to their intersecting factors, such as the culture, religion and ethnic background. As the participants confirmed, “it is mostly the lack of knowledge amongst some authority figures combined that results in negligence”.\textsuperscript{338} Also, according to Participant A, the responsibility does not solely rely on the help providers, but also the victims of abuse: “[honour-based cases] are dealt with in varying degrees. It also depends on the client’s will

\textsuperscript{334} Participant C, Participant D and Participant E, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
\textsuperscript{336} Participant A and Participant B, personal communication, Helsinki, 25.2.2019.
\textsuperscript{337} Participant C and Participant D, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
and wishes whether she even wants to file a crime report about her family or relatives or some member of the community, because it creates some form of tension immediately …” 339

However, as mentioned above, one of the participants stated that intimate partner violence should always be reported and it is a form of violence that is subject to prosecution, which is confirmed by the Finnish legal aid page that states that the majority of crimes are offenses under public prosecution, which the police always investigate when they get the information, even mild cases of domestic violence. 340

Domestic violence includes everything that happens within the family and violence is considered as acts that are done against the will of the victim that cause a lot of pain, including sexual, mental and physical forms of violence. 341 The majority of the participants agreed that honour-based violence comes in all of those forms and that it is a form of intimate partner violence: “I think it is a form of intimate partner violence, but I also think that it differs from it as it cannot be fully considered an intimate partner violence because it has different characteristics” 342, and by characteristics they meant the notion of “honour” and the fact that the crime is not only perpetrated by the intimate partner but by the family and/or extended family. According to Participant B, ”[Honour-based violence] is about norms and how people view matters differently. It occurs in different societies, such as amongst the Romani people”. 343 A number of factors present in honour-based violence cases overlap with the definition of domestic violence 344, however the help provided is not similar.

Furthermore, there are varying responses when asked whether the help received differs between women of colour and native Finns. It was quite a unanimous response that anyone in need of help - regardless of their gender, skin colour, sexual orientation or religion – receives the help they need, but according to Participant A “[Q]uite seldom the representatives of the

340 Eija Mikkonen, “Rikosasian käsittelyn vaiheet”, [s.n.], 2014, ("Steps in criminal proceedings").
 Retrieved from (25.8.2019):
https://oikeus.fi/fi/index/esitteet/josjoudutrikoksenuhriksi/rikosasiankasittelynvaiheet.html

https://www.poliisi.fi/rikokset/perhevakivalta
342 Participant A, Participant B, Participant D and Participant E, Personal communication, Helsinki, 25.2.2019
and 4.3.2019.
native population seek for help except if their significant other is of immigrant decent … however, according to the limited studies conducted in Finland, an immigrant woman has the risk to be a victim of abuse 2.5 times more than a native Finn and if every second woman from the native population faces abuse, then it means that when we speak of the immigrant women, the percentage is close to 100% if we consider all forms of abuse...”. 345 This illustrates how women of colour are in a more disadvantaged position compared to the rest of the population and how they are in need of more help if the percentages are correct.

An important point was raised by Participant B stating that “[the minority group women] are easier to manipulate, because the information is lacking, the language is not in control, being in the country [as an immigrant] is not simple, no income… A person from immigrant background can experience a lot of difficulty, because there is no safety net - not necessarily anyone -, whereas a [native] Finn can get help a lot easier”. 346 Participant C agreed by stating that “Of course everyone experiencing violence gets the help needed if they want to, but maybe the native Finns have it easier when seeking for help because their mother tongue is Finnish and it is easier for them to find services and also understand that it is wrong if you have been raised in Finland …. That violence is illegal, so maybe there is more understanding of one’s own rights versus a person who has just arrived to the country and does not know [of their rights]” 347, and Participant D followed by stating “I would say that our client group, on a general level, – when we are not speaking of the representatives of the native population – have hard times finding services. Of course, we can help with violence here, but when we are speaking of a client who comes from another country, has been here for a short period of time, does not speak the language, does not know how to use money nor the bank card, does not know how to get to places or where she even is in the first place hence these people have very difficult time. We need to start with the integration here for many of our clients”. 348

The quotes from the participants presented illustrate how women from minority groups remain minorities. Women of colour are seen different from white women who manage things differently in their own communities 349, which can lead to detrimental consequences as the help provided differs. It is understandable that people who speak the language and know

345 Participant A, Personal communication, Helsinki, 25.2.2019. (The three dots refer that the participant continued explaining, but because of the irrelevance to this particular point, hence it was cut).
348 Participant D, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
their rights have it easier to demand for help and understand the services available for them. However, the Romani people – who also suffer from a similar form of honour-based violence; “There are a lot of Romani people and honour-based violence occurs amongst them by killing one another or sending death threats. The shelters are filled with Romani people…”350, for example, who are also considered “true” Finns by some people, face different kinds of prejudices when seeking help, because they are perceived as people who try to milk the system.

According to Participant E, “[T]he Romani people have their own challenges when seeking for help … The social workers seem to be quite prejudiced. Many [people] think that the Romani people are all the same and they only try to take advantage of the system and the services, which in turn leads to them not receiving the appropriate help”.351 The minority women’s – such as the Romani people in this case - needs are minimized and neglected, which consequently leads to less help provided, because helping “them” is deemed too challenging amongst other stereotypes people may have. The discrimination against the Romani minority group compared to the representatives of the native population demonstrate a clear hierarchy between the people who receive it and who do not.

6.7 The motives for the lack of help provided for minority women compared to the other clients

There is a clear fear of stigmatization amongst the victims, which came to light with Participant C, “The clients quite often think that I [as a white person] do not know anything of this [honour-based violence] which makes it more difficult [to help them] or maybe they do not want to tell any outsider because they think that the one offering help should come from the same culture. I am not sure – it is just a speculation. And also, there is the possibility that one has been in Finland for a short period of time as an asylum seeker, so they do not know how to name violence … to find the words, how to depict it and to even be brave enough to talk about it – it is difficult”352 and “There is fear of stigmatization when speaking to the native population about matters, such as honour-based violence”.353 The fear of putting oneself out there and discuss the phenomenon of honour-based violence – which is thought to

350 Participant E, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
351 Ibid.
352 Participant C, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
353 Participant D, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
be a characteristic of the Muslim and Middle Eastern culture even by the people of colour themselves – is challenging as the stigma may get enforced.

Another explanation is that women of colour are afraid and hesitant to use the services available because of the conflicting intersections of race and gender. The women of colour may perceive violence as a result of White oppression of men of colour, not as gender oppression taking place in their own lives. Furthermore, the women of colour may excuse their men’s behaviour by considering that their anger and abuse of their female partners and family members is because there is no other outlet in the society where they can enjoy such power and privilege. Also, women of colour may fear turning in their partners to authorities due to the fear of them being harshly punished due to their skin colour, or other intersecting factors. Hence, some women may avoid using the services to not inflict potential pain on their significant others and excuse their behaviour by blaming the system. Also, this may lead to white people assuming that the reluctance to involve the authorities as evidence that minority group women are stronger and able to withstand abuse, rather than a sign of the oppression of men of colour in the society.

According to Kääriäinen and Niemi, citizens in Nordic countries have a relatively solid trust in the police due to the high standard of public administration and low amount of corruption and the general fairness. However, people belonging to ethnic minorities are significantly more prone to become the target of police measures than representatives of the native population. Members of minorities face unequal treatment even in Finland, although Finland is deemed to be a female-friendly and equal country. According to an attitude survey

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355 Ibid., pg. 12.
360 Ibid., pg. 9
361 Ibid., pg. 10
conducted in Finland, it indicates that of foreign citizens living in Finland, the Somalis and Russians are the two groups of whom the representatives of the native population are the most suspicious about.362 Moreover, an analysis conducted by Kääriäinen and Niemi, it appears that the Russian minority in Finland trusted the police as much as the general population, whereas the Somali minority group expressed a clearly lower level of trust.363 Moreover, the longer the Somalis had lived in Finland, the less trust they seem to have in the police.364 This observation and the deterioration of the citizens’ trust in the police could be due to the experience that the police are inefficient in guaranteeing safety.365 Also, the Somalis are a visible minority in Finland that are discriminated against in many ways, which is why it is likely that for some of them the police signify many of the negative aspects of Finnish society that are mainly displayed in the form of discrimination and dispossession.366

Moreover, there are interpreter services available for women who have the language barrier or have just immigrated to the country in order to discuss their cases appropriately. Although there are different forms of interpretation services, such as face-to-face and the other one through phone anonymously, there is still the fear of using the service available. “In the case of women being directed to a certain social service, it carries certain challenges in relation to the interpreter because many of the clients do not wish any interpreter due to mistrust in the interpreters not spreading the information afterwards … Finland is a small country and the interpreter can be an acquaintance which is why they will demand a Finnish interpreter, which are quite little who speak Persian or Arabic or a little rarer language. However, we have employees in the house who speak many languages. 70% of the employees are born outside Finland so practically we have approximately 20 languages”367 and “… Finland has quite small circles which is why the information will spread fast …”. 368

The reluctance of the battered women to disclose information also links to the concept of shame, which is an integral part of the concept of honour. “One [victim of abuse] does not often ask for help regarding intimate partner violence due to the fear of shame, just as well as

363 Ibid., pg. 13
364 Ibid.
365 Ibid., pg. 19
366 Ibid.
368 Ibid.
in honour-based violence, because honour-based violence is about the family’s values, hence the shame experienced is greater”. The barriers and the threshold to seek help is a multifaceted problem because there are many factors to be considered when even daring to ask for help. The concept of shame is also a reason why some battered women fear to ask help - the fear of getting one’s culture and family stigmatized and the fear of not receiving appropriate help due to the bias amongst the authorities, for example.

7.0 Discussion of findings
The themes in this paper revolve around the interviewed help-providers work, the need for assimilation, the hierarchies between the clients and the multi-theoretical aspect in understanding the help provided for women of colour. It is important to reiterate that these results are in no way generalizable, because indeed the main interviewees interviewed were white women interpreting honour-based violence from their experience. The help-providers interviewed for this research provide the women in need acute help as well as other services, including psychological help. They are approached by approximately 500 women annually. Also, a certain guideline is followed in order to spot potential victims of honour-based violence. Despite the fact that they are aware of intersectionality and its importance in their work, a great deal of emphasis is put on the culture of the “other” when discussing honour-based violence. The pre-existing notion of the “other” – in this case Middle Easterners and North-Africans since they are the group seeking help the most for honour-based violence – is reinforced in Finland amongst authority figures. This section answers the research question on what the help-providers are doing to provide women of colour help, which is that they provide them acute help as well as a possibility to discuss in one’s own native language due to the multicultural staff. Also, in case of the fear of rumours – as Finland is a small country and the people belonging to minority communities know each other – there is also a possibility for an interpreter via phone in order to remain anonymous.

Moreover, one of the topics that created a lot of discussion is related to assimilation, and how some groups are expected to assimilate in order to curtail cases related to honour-based violence. Although there is no straight-forward mention of how people belonging to minority cultures ought to assimilate, but there is a clear implication how cultural hybridity is not a desired phenomenon as it can potentially create conflicts between two different groups, meaning between the dominant and minority groups. The manner in which the need for

369 Ibid.
assimilation ought to take place was illustrated by Participant B stating how the “others” needed to get educated in order for the whole family to be aided, how it is a problem to live between two cultures and how problems arise when refugees shift towards their own group in which the religion plays a big part. Indirect comments like the ones presented in the analysis of the thesis demonstrate how women belonging to minority groups are oppressed because of their culture that is implicitly depicted to possess oppressive characteristics that are essentialized and naturalized.

According to Stuart Hall, a typical aspect of racialized regime of representation is the practice of reducing the cultures of minority people to nature, meaning that “their” cultures are naturally oppressive. The logic behind naturalization is simple in the sense that if differences between two groups – majority and minorities’ culture – are regarded “cultural”, then they are open for interpretation and modification. However, if the differences are regarded to be natural and part of the society, then they are beyond history and permanent. Naturalization is an approach designed to fix “difference”, and thus secure it forever, which is illustrated when comments, such as “[E]ducation is more needed and the whole family needs be aided” are made to imply that cultural hybridity ought not to take place as “their” culture is inherently “oppressive” and “savage” when it comes to women. Hence, minority groups need to assimilate into the majority’s culture, which is regarded women-friendly, civilized and righteous.

This supports the idea of Spivak discussing how “white men who save brown women from brown men”, because it generates an impression that multiculturalism is a threat to women’s rights as the “others” possess cultural norms that violate women’s rights, hence the minority women are in need of a rescue and ought to assimilate into the majority’s culture in order to experience freedom like the “rest” of the women. The binary oppositions created between the majority and minority groups are not created by accident. The dichotomous relationship created has a great value of capturing the diversity of the world within their

370 Stuart Hall, “The spectacle of the ‘other’”, in Stuart Hall (ed.), “Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices”, 1997, pg. 245. (It is important to mention that Stuart Hall spoke in the context of British Black people, however since the term “naturalization” and the representation of “others” are applicable amongst other minority groups as well, hence they were utilized.)
371 Ibid, pg. 245
372 Ibid.
373 Ibid.
either/or extremes, in addition to the reductionist way of forming meaning. “Difference”, however, is essential to create a meaning through a dialogue with the “other”, and the “other” is essential to construct the meaning of the self.  

Culture of the “other” is used as the main factor contributing to honour-based violence. The main issue is regarded to be cultural hybridity, which could cause further issues as the “others” culture does not correspond to the majority’s culture, which is deemed to be women-friendly, despite the acknowledgement that native Finns get abused by their significant other, too. According to Edward Said, the major element in the European culture– meaning the idea of European identity as exceptional compared to all non-European people and cultures – is what made the culture hegemonic. These previous chapters on integration answer the research question on what kind of patterns exists amongst the help-providers. Due to the emphasis made by all of the participants – except for Participant E – on the importance of integration, it seems that there is a pattern of encouraging women to integrate into the Finnish society, in order to lead an independent life. Also, the human rights discourse is utilized – which is explained below – in the questionnaire list created by the help-providers to spot potential honour-based violence. The human rights discourse is also a re-occurring factor when discussing how the women of colour are aided.

Moreover, according to feminist postcolonial thinkers - such as Gayatri Spivak – oppressed women’s level of empowerment is challenging to attain due to the colonial past. Spivak argues that it is impossible for the subjugated women to regain their voices. She further argues that the historically muted subjects can be understood when spoken to them directly rather than speaking for them. Nevertheless, Spivak argues that the subaltern (read: female) has no space to speak nor to be listened to due to the colonial history. Although Finland is not deemed to have an active role in colonialism, but the stereotypical and prejudiced attitudes towards some immigrant groups reinforce the idea that the “other” is

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377 Ibid., pg. 235-237
380 Ibid.
381 Ibid., pg. 91.
382 Ibid., pg. 103-104
inferior and in need of a salvation, when in fact anyone could be a victim of abuse – regardless of one’s intersectional factors.

When reinforcing certain stereotypes of immigrant groups, the help-providers fail to take other intersectional factors into account which could contribute to the oppression of women in Finland. These factors include the dismissive attitude received by some authority figures, which may prevent the women of colour from seeking for help later in life, which in turn is a factor that keeps the oppressed women oppressed. According to Participant A, Participant B and Participant E, the authority figures they collaborate with mostly lack knowledge on honour-based violence. Additionally, there have been cases in which authority figures have failed to provide proper help because “it is just them”.383 This covers the research question on how the help-providers conceptualize other important collaborators. Since the participants quite unanimously agreed that the authority figures they collaborate with ought to have more knowledge on the topic of honour-based violence, I had a follow-up question whether it has improved at all. According to the majority of the participants “it is difficult to say, because it is dependant on the authority figure one receives”.384 Participant D continues to state that “I’m sure the authority figures struggle with the resources … but I don’t know whether it is due to the lack of knowledge or their attitudes”.385 Participant B agrees with Participant C by stating that “the situation has improved, especially due to the advanced technology and the projects”.386 All in all, the work of the collaborators share dissenting opinions.

7.1 The utilized Human Rights discourse and its impact

The empirical material from the interviews briefly touched upon the subject of human rights discourse. It is evident that the people interviewed utilize human rights discourse with their clients in relation to informing them about their rights and freedom in Finland. Furthermore, the emphasis on educating battered women of colour of their rights and how to become independent enforces the narrative that women of colour are in need of a saviour. It is true that some women of colour – as any other (white) woman – are battered and are not able to lead an independent life due to many intersectional factors, but to solely push a narrative of the women of colour as women “in need” disempowers them. As stated earlier, it is

383 Participant D and Participant E, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
385 Participant D, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
recommended to not victimize battered women as they cannot afford to feel disempowered.  

The use of human rights discourse can stem from the idea that it favours the Western world, which is regarded have crafted the rights that are now presented as universal. According to Chandler whether the goal is to exploit human rights ideologically or to sincerely do good in the world, the outcome is similar, meaning the decision-making power and authority accrue to the states that have the capacity to decide and enforce. One of the most prevalent critiques of the human rights corpus has come from non-Western scholars who – despite their education in the West or Western-oriented educational systems – have questioned the noticeably Eurocentric formulation of human rights discourse. The non-Western scholars refuse to accept the specific cultural and historical matters experienced by the West as the standard for humanity. In terms of the participants utilizing human rights language when discussing with their client most likely come from a good place in order to raise awareness and make space for the women of colour to lead their lives without the need to rely on their partners. According to Ignatieff, adopting the values of individual agency does not necessarily result in embracing Western ways of life. He further argues that human rights do not and ought not to delegitimize entire traditional cultures. However, the discourse of human rights has a neo-colonial ring as the discourse is very powerful but also extremely imperialist in its claim to universality.

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391 Ibid.


393 Ibid.


7.2 Honour-based violence and patriarchy

Another theme, which created a great deal of discussion is whether negligence occurs due to the lack of knowledge or due to the ideas upheld by the “other”. The participants quite unanimously agreed that women experiencing abuse – especially women coming from immigrant background due to the notion of “honour” attached to them – have a big threshold to report a case of abuse. There are multiple reasons to why some women may be left without help, such as the fear of “their” culture getting stigmatized or because they are afraid that their problems are not dealt with in an appropriate manner. It came to light that although the participants working specifically to alleviate immigrant women’s pain, the system is still created to cater white women’s needs.

Racial ignorance is a quite prevalent concept displayed in this paper. The reoccurring quote by the participants stating that it is quite dependent on the battered women’s luck whether they will receive the appropriate help and a knowledgeable help provider. The inability to consider intersectional factors that may contribute further to some women’s oppression only encourages people in power to help to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. Without the consideration of different intersectional factors – such as race, class and gender –, the help offered will not provide battered women from diverse backgrounds with the kinds of personal and social changes necessary for safety and growth at the individual and communal level.396

We exist in social contexts created by intersections of structures of power, and gender inequality itself is modified by its intersections with other systems of power and oppression.397 As discussed in the analysis-section, immigrant women’s experiences are in that sense generalized and an idea of “universal sisterhood” is embraced, which on the other hand, fails to acknowledge other factors fundamental in understanding the phenomenon of honour-based violence. Interestingly, the false sense of unity due to the “universal sisterhood”-rhetoric is only used when depicting how all women suffer the same, but when multiculturalism is encouraged, the rhetoric gets thrown as “all” women are not alike, because of the “others”’ culture.

Furthermore, there was quite a big discussion on what honour-based violence entails and whether the offense is regarded to be a culturally motivated or gender-based crime, which answers the research question on how the help-providers define honour-based violence.

397 Ibid., pg. 43
Participants agreed unanimously that honour-based violence is a form of gender-based violence, which is manifested in different forms. It has been linked to intimate partner violence, despite its difference due to the community’s involvement in the women’s lives in cases related to honour-based violence. Although they unanimously agreed that honour-based violence is a form of gender-based violence, there were comments made which discreetly linked honour-based violence to “others” culture and religion (read: Islam). Although culture is crucial to understand the violence women experience, it would be very simplistic to solely rely arguments linked to culture.

Furthermore, culture may be used to justify violence against women, yet there is a danger of presenting the role of culture in domestic violence in a purely negative light. It needs to be emphasized that the participants who partook in this research did not put the full blame on the culture, but the manner in which they discussed other important authority figures – such as the police - with whom they collaborate frequently, gave an idea that culture is being used as an excuse to dismiss some cases. One of the most disturbing information shared by the Participant C is how the police they have collaborated with have not filed any crime report although it had to be reported, or how according to Participant E, one case got closed as there were not enough resources. Also, the disturbing comments made by some police stating that “it is just them” referring to the battered women’s backgrounds. When oppression and violence occur in communities of colour or immigrant communities, culture is often suspected to have a particularly powerful explanatory power. Specific cases of violence, for example, are not hypothesized as reflecting individual behaviour; instead entire groups are stereotyped.

Furthermore, the powerful (read: white) are depicted as having no culture, other than the universal culture of civilization, and the non-white “others” are said to engage in oppressive and misogynistic cultural practices that justifies enduring biases and serves to downplay the existence of culturally agreed upon and equally atrocious acts of violence against women in white Western communities. Utilizing the culture-argument manoeuvres the conversation from the real facts one should be focusing on, which is patriarchy and how it operates

398 Ibid., pg. 46  
399 Ibid.  
401 Ibid., pg. 46-47
differently in different cultures. Wife battering when intoxicated or honour based violence are not culture, but rather traditional patriarchal customs that men have practiced and women have accepted for generations.\textsuperscript{402} Violence committed against women of colour in immigrant communities is seen as culture-bound, when in reality it is a product of male domination that is inextricably bound up with racism as well.\textsuperscript{403}

7.3 Hierarchies amongst the battered women

The participants agreed that there is a big threshold for women of colour to go forward and discuss of the violence they endure. There is a fear of stigmatization, and, also, that the people in power to help do not necessarily understand the phenomenon. Participant C agreed that “some immigrant women are afraid that they[help-providers] do not understand the problems they are going through”.\textsuperscript{404} Yoshimama argues that there are major limitations to mainstream measures of domestic violence because the measures lack sociocultural contexts, meaning that what may be considered violent by one person may not by the other due to sociocultural backgrounds.\textsuperscript{405} The prevalence of domestic violence cannot be measured effectively without taking into account the fact that different cultures define violent behaviour differently.\textsuperscript{406} Although the participants have emphasized that they raise awareness on what is deemed as violence, including physical, mental, financial and sexual abuse, but some women may experience violence differently, hence not define some forms of honour-based violence as violence per se. According to Participant A, “many women think that it is the husband’s responsibility to take care of the finances and provide for the family regardless of their backgrounds”.\textsuperscript{407} Hence, women who are denied the right to work by their husbands, for example, may consider it as a sign of love and comfort rather than abuse.

Also, the help-providers encounter different kinds of women of colour with differing intersections, including the aspect of class, where women may suffer due to their immigration status and money. The aspect of class puts these women in a very vulnerable situation and

\textsuperscript{404} Participant C, Personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
\textsuperscript{406} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{407} Participant A, personal communication, Helsinki, 25.2.2019.
separates them from the representatives of native Finns due to the social and financial status. Immigration status may also be a factor, which contributes to women not seeking help when needed due to the fear of losing their permit to stay in the country. The women may fear that if the marriage dissolves prior to receiving the permanent residency, the immigrant spouse will have to leave the country. According to Anita Raj and Jay Silverman, battered women with less protected immigration status often do not leave their violent partners for the fear of extradition. Moreover, as depicted earlier by Participant D, some women do not even know how to use a bank card or money in general, which puts them in a vulnerable situation and makes them dependent on their perpetrator compared to native Finns: “… [P]eople who have come from another country has stayed for a short period of time, does not speak the language, does not know how to use money…”.

Furthermore, an interesting and worth further investigation aspect rose regarding the Romani people in Finland who also have the notion of “honour” in their community. Romani people face a lot of prejudice and discrimination in the Finnish society, especially in the social services when they seek for help. Participant E highlighted this very strongly and emphasized how social workers, for example, are very prejudiced towards them as they are seen to take advantage of the system. Although Participant E referred to the Romani people as native Finns, it is clear that they are not considered as such and that there are clear hierarchies between the representatives of the “true” Finns and the rest, including the Romani people. There is a clear binary opposition between the two groups in receiving help as the former one is seen “worthy” of help and the latter as taking advantage of the system, when the system has been put in place to help people in need. This illustrates how whiteness also has different hierarchies and not all white people are treated the same, just as the Finns were assigned a lower status in racial hierarchies. According to Dominelli, racism is expressed in social work through restricting welfare resources by excluding racialized groups from services aimed at ensuring individuals’ personal well-being while regarding and treating their characteristics as abnormal. Moreover, this is a great example of how honour-based violence is not unique to

409 Participant D, personal communication, Helsinki, 4.3.2019.
Middle Eastern cultures\textsuperscript{411} nor Islam as it evidently is present in communities considered white by some.

This section further elaborated on the research questions pertaining whether there is a pattern amongst the help-providers, as well as how they conceptualize important collaborators. Participants agree that sometimes it is based on someone’s luck whether they get a good social worker; some police can be quite racist and dismissive; and some social workers lack of knowledge on this phenomenon. On the other hand, it needs to be acknowledged that there are social workers and other important collaborators who do their best to help women in need of help. Also, there seems to be a certain kind of a pattern of negligence in relation to the Romani people in the Finnish society when seeking for help.

7.4 Contribution to the existing research

Lastly, it is important to discuss my contribution to the existing research. I contributed to the research by examining and relating the concept of “racial ignorance” to honour-based violence. The term is not recognized in Finland as it is usually utilized when explaining a medical condition rather than a term understood to depict white privilege. The term helped to elucidate on how the idea of a homogenous group of people or the “universal sisterhood”-rhetoric may contribute to the oppression of immigrant women. This is due to the idea that the “struggles” immigrant women face is universal, which lead to one-size-fits-all approach, which is damaging as people with differing intersections, which require different solutions. Also, this section covers my theoretical contribution to this research by explaining the help-providers work. When searching for honour-based violence related articles, it was extremely difficult to find available research made on honour-based violence from a multi-layered theoretical perspective. This final chapter answers the last research question on what roles do the theories of intersectionality, postcolonialism, orientalism and assimilation play in relation to the help provided for immigrant women. The theoretical perspectives are usually overlooked in the realm of practical work, but theoretical aspects are important to consider, especially in the social work in order to provide battered women appropriate help.

The intersectional approach explains the othering of certain women from the lack of understanding important intersectional factors, meaning that some women do not necessarily get the appropriate help due to the help-providers lack of understanding factors that may

\textsuperscript{411} It is important to acknowledge that the Middle East is not comprised of one single culture, religion, traditions or language. The Middle East is a heterogeneous area presented in many texts as homogeneous.
further contribute to their subjugation. Participant C stated that when she applied for the position in the organization, she was asked about different intersectional factors concerning her and how she understands the concept. Although this contradicts some of the results presented above indicating how some intersectional factors are dismissed, it ought not to be forgotten that the acknowledgment of one’s intersectional factors differs from the ability to recognize others intersecting factors. This is since battered women of colour are a heterogenous group and intersectional factors differ with every person. Women suffering from honour-based violence may be afraid to come forward as one may be frightened that her intersectional factors can be utilized against her, such as the culture or religion. This, on the other hand, can be explained utilizing the theories of orientalism and postcolonialism.

Although a lot of people consider Finland to have been a neutral country during the era of colonialism, the fact is that Finland participated in colonialism. Hence, the colonial mentality of the “other” – which exists in Western countries – is prevalent. The minority groups are stereotyped and homogenized according to the attributes that are attached to them and intersectional factors that they embody. The intersectional factors that they embody may be the reason they are othered and deemed as inferior. This is because honour-based violence might be considered to be culture-bound, which is why “they” are believed to need an education in order to be able to provide them the help they need – assimilation. Lastly, the theory of assimilation helps one to understand that one ought to assimilate -which was present in the conversations with the interviewees - into the society in order to become a more homogenous group. Once a group has more similar characteristics, it is easier to provide them appropriate help as the intersectional factors become more “similar” and manageable.

8.0 Conclusion and further research

Since the previous research illuminated what aspects have been taken into account when studying the phenomenon of honour-based violence, this paper aimed to scrutinize how help-providers work in practice and analyse that from a multi-layered theoretical perspective. The conclusions presented below are derived using multiple theories – intersectionality, orientalism, assimilation, postcolonialism and the concept of racial ignorance – as well as the utilization of three different methods; case study, interviews and thematic analysis. The participants interviewed are specialized in providing help and services for battered women, which mainly consists of women of colour. The women providing help are mainly from white
Caucasian backgrounds and the women interviewed do a lot of work with other important authority figures and spread awareness on honour-based violence to curtail the phenomenon. A great deal of acute help as well as opportunities for follow-up help are also provided. Moreover, the theories utilized in this paper are present in the discussion on how help-providers provide help for the women in need. The multi-layered theoretical perspective helped to examine how the help-providers may justify the help they provide. Understanding intersectional factors and recognizing as well as challenging one’s thoughts - which may be rooted in colonialism – are crucial factors to keep in my mind when providing help.

The understanding of honour-based violence from the participants’ point of view is crucial when helping women suffering from it. The participants agree that honour-based violence resembles intimate partner violence with a little difference as it involves the community and extended family members. Also, they mentioned that the characteristics of honour-based violence include control; extortion; and physical, financial and mental violence. Additionally, some of the participants linked honour-based to the culture and religion of the women of colour who seek help. The focus on cultural and religious aspects diverts the attention from the real problem, which is patriarchy and how it operates differently in different societies.

Moreover, an interesting aspect also rose from the interviews when discussing honour-based violence – the Romani people. Honour-based violence also exists in the Romani community, to a certain extent. It became evident that there is a pattern of lack in the help provided for the Romani people, which is alarming due to the prejudice and stereotypes amongst authority figures. They are discriminated against, and there is a clear hierarchy present between the “true” Finns and the Romani people.

One of the themes that rose from the interviews concerned assimilation and the fear of cultural hybridity. Although the fear of multiculturalism was not directly stated, but the implications made demonstrated how multiculturalism is deemed to be a problem as cultural hybridity is seen to cause unrest and chaos. Also, there was not a clear binary opposition created by the interviewees, except for when considering how “they” could be aided to become part of the Finnish society. The women of colour are more presented as people with vulnerabilities, problems and needs. The view that women of colour as oppressed and degraded has its origins in several theoretical bases. The binary juxtaposition of the

“traditional them” versus the “modern us” is fuelled by colonialism and continues to be fuelled by the present-day neo-colonialism where women of colour are regarded as victims and oppressed subjects.\textsuperscript{413} The need for assimilation mainly stems from the stereotypes created of the “others” as more sexist and belonging to cultures that are accepting of violence compared to the “civilized” Europe. Despite the stereotypes reinforced, Finland has been voted to be the second most dangerous place for women in EU.\textsuperscript{414}

Moreover, this paper also scrutinized how immigrant women’s high threshold to ask for help stems from. Part of the reason, according to some of the participants, is that women of colour may not trust authority figures nor the traditional service system. Most of the women interviewed criticize the authority figures they have collaborated closely with. This is because the help provided for the women of colour depends mainly on their luck whether they will get an authority figure who is willing to take the case forward if needed and understand the phenomenon in general. This may lie in the fact that a racially ignorant outlook is taken when dealing with women who have various intersectional factors. Whiteness is used as a standard and women of colour remain invisible because of the lacking services provided. Also due to the fear of being stigmatized as “racist”, it may compel the authority figures to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to provide everyone with the same help everyone equally while forgetting that everyone suffers differently due to the differing intersectional factors. Furthermore, some of the participants also criticized the police for negligence and racism as some of the police do not proceed with the cases compared to intimate partner violence. Also, there have been cases where authority figures have chosen to disregard some battered immigrant women’s experiences by stating that “it is just them”, which shows a clear binary opposition.

Lastly, an interesting aspect was mentioned by one of the interviewees on how the perpetrator ought to be aided in order to prevent this phenomenon from occurring. Most of the literature available and media focus on the cultural and religious aspect when depicting and discussing honour-based violence, yet dialogue on toxic masculinity and its origins are lacking in the present dialogue. The different forms of patriarchy and toxic masculinity would be interesting

\textsuperscript{413} Mandy McKЕrl, “Multiculturalism, Gender and Violence: Multiculturalism – is it bad for women?”, 2007, pg. 207  
to scrutinize. A potential research question could be related to the feminization of colonized men and the repercussions of that on the battered women of colour.
Gender studies – intersectionality and change
Tema GENUS, Linköping University

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9.1 Books


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Gender studies – intersectionality and change


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9.4 Websites


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10.0 Appendix 1 – Interview question checklist

This is the interviews checklist of the questions that guided the conversations with the participants:

1. Tell me a little about your work background. What do you work with?
2. For how long have you been working with this?
3. Have you collaborated with other people?
4. What have been the biggest challenges in your work?
5. How do you define honour-based violence and what does it entail?
6. In what form does honour-based violence manifest itself in in Finland?
7. How are honour-based violence cases dealt with in Finland?
8. Has there been any cases related to honour-based violence recently that you have been working with?
9. How many honour-based violence cases get reported annually?
8. Has the concept of honour changed? Has your concept or idea regarding honour-based violence changed?
9. Who are the main victims of honour-based violence primarily?
10. How does honour-based violence differ from other forms of violence?
11. Does your work differ between minors affected by honour-based violence and other kind of violence?
12. Have you encountered any case of honour-based violence where the target was a man/boy?
13. Have the social workers been taught how to spot a potential victim, and yes, how? Are there any characteristics one could pick up on?
14. What are your working hours?
15. In case you and the client have a language barrier, how do you help them? How are they helped?
16. What resources are there in the case of an emergency?
17. Where are your colleagues from? Are there people hired from the minority communities to deal with honour-based violence?

18. In which minority community does honour-base violence exist the most?

19. Does the help provided for the native Finns differ from the help provided for immigrant women?

20. Has any preventive measures been put into place to deal with honour-based violence?

21. Do you take any intersectional factors into account in your work?

Other questions

22. Are there any domestic practices developed for honour-based violence?

23. Have there been any cases in which minority groups have been discriminated against when seeking for help from help-providers?

24. What is your opinion on Finland’s ratified Istanbul’s Convention?

25. Is honour-based violence treated as a form of violence or is it regarded as an umbrella term?

26. Do you know anyone else I could interview on this topic?