

**State policy, strategies and  
implementation in combating  
patriarchal violence, focusing on  
“honour related” violence**

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## Foreword

Some years ago the Swedish Integration Board (Integrationsverket) initiated a project in partnership with Ethnic Studies at Linköping University. The main aim of the project, *State policy, strategies and implementation in combating patriarchal violence, focusing on "honour related" violence*, with Dr. Suruchi Thapar-Björkert from Linköping University as author, was to improve and deepen the understanding of honour related violence through a comparative study of three countries: Sweden, the United Kingdom and Turkey. The project was completed in autumn 2006 and resulted in a report – the full version published in English and a condensed version in Swedish.

The aim of the study is reflected in the report's introduction through an analysis of how honour related violence is defined and understood in the three said countries. The occurrence of honour related violence is then identified, and finally, the responsibility and initiative of the state in combating this violence is analysed.

Dr. Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, from Theme Ethnicity at Linköping University, is the author of the report. Erik Olsson, Associate Professor at the same institution, has contributed to the study's quality appraisal. For the Swedish Integration Board, Analyst Erika Sallander and Deputy Head of Department Christer Gustavsson have been in overall charge of the study.

March 2007, Norrköping

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### **The UK**

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### **Sweden**

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### **Turkey**

We would like to thank representatives from Women for Women's Human Rights, New Ways and Flying Broom, for providing valuable information. Special thanks to the academics interviewed for this project and who also provided contacts to organisations.

## Executive Summary

In 2000, the UNFPA report, 'Living Together, Worlds Apart: Men and Women in a Time of Change', estimated that around '5000 women and girls are killed every year, across the world, because of dishonour'. Gender-based violence that uses 'honour' as a means of justification is prevalent in countries such as Turkey, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Britain, Jordan, Brazil, Egypt, Ecuador, Israel, Morocco, Sweden and Uganda. Underpinned by the indefensible notions of honour (izzat, sharaf) and shame (sharam), honour killings appear to be on the increase, transcending social, cultural and national boundaries. The practice of honour killings transcends class and social boundaries and is not confined to impoverished rural areas, but is also prevalent among the educated elite in cities.

The term 'honour related violence' is associated with a range of oppressive and discriminatory practices, which may or may not result in 'murder' or 'killing' but are equally and importantly harmful. Inequalities and power disparities in social structures can nurture and promote specific forms of direct interpersonal oppression and violence. These permeate the 'ordinary' lives of men and women and impact in gendered ways. Johan Galtung (1996) argues that this constitutes structural violence, which becomes evident when the potential development of an individual or group is held back by the conditions of a specific relationship and, in particular, by the uneven distribution of power and resources. As Amartya Sen (1999) notes, we have to take account of the instrumental role of capability expansion in bringing about social change.

The principal aim of this project was to enhance our comparative understanding of Honour Related Violence (HRV) in three countries, namely, Sweden, the United Kingdom (UK) and Turkey. We achieved this by first of all analysing how HRV is defined and contextualised in the three countries, then identifying the un-quantifiable prevalence of HRV and finally analysing the responsibilities and the initiatives of the state in combating HRV. Interestingly, violence against women conceptualised as HRV preceded state discussions in all three countries – the murder of Fadime Sahindal in Sweden (2002), Rukhsana Naz in the UK (1998) and Semse Allak in Turkey (2002). In fact, these incidences of violence altered the nature of the state's engagement in relation to HRV. Initially, the states refused to acknowledge that there was any evidence of honour related violence in their countries, often shifting the onus of violence on to 'others' – violence lies elsewhere. Secondly, states have often referred to these violent practices as a 'private matter' and beyond the realm of government intervention. In this case, their refusal to politicise honour related violence by individualising and privatising aspects of women's oppression has unconsciously sanctioned the violence. This attitude has also informed the ways in which human rights institutions have excluded or condoned 'honour' related violence from a human rights violation framework, often adopting an anti-feminist, anti-developmental and de-politicised perspective on this social issue.

No one encompassing definition of HRV exists. HRV is understood differently by different nation states, which has its own sets of problems. One of the central concerns of defining HRV has been that it may perpetuate culturalist-other stereotypes and lead to further labelling rather than solutions. Although discussions about HRV are continuously evolving, we

need to transcend debates relating to the specificity of violence or ‘cultures’ that support it, and instead view any violence or violation as a breach of human rights. For that we have to make the language of human rights accessible to those who perpetuate violence and to those who experience it. Too much focus on the killings or any specific culture deflects attention from relations of (post) colonial power and the gendered practices perpetrated by dominant constituencies and western states.

The Swedish state perceives HRV as an expression of patriarchal violence, with honour related violence, honour related life and honour related oppression constituting a continuum of violence. In the UK, the issue of HRV is discussed in conjunction with forced marriages and domestic violence. In the UK, the main emphasis is on analysis, through a Violence Against Women Strategy, which incorporates all forms of violence and includes those that use ‘honour’ to condone and justify abuse. In Turkey, HRV is conceptualised as ‘violence in the name of honour’, with an emphasis on the physical nature of the killing.

No official figures on the incidence of honour related violence are available, although there is a consensus that the ‘hidden statistics’ could be higher as a result of under-reporting. Alternatively, higher statistical numbers could reflect an increase in cases registered rather than an increase in the incidence of HRV. It is more important, however, to identify ‘young people’ at risk, irrespective of ethnicity or cultural background, who might suffer HRV on the basis of their gender or sexual orientation.

The report regards government initiatives as protective and preventative strategies. In our opinion both of these are important for combating honour related violence. Women’s shelters or refuges are expected to be a ‘safe haven’ for women and children who decide to leave a violent situation, are forced into that decision or are driven out by their families. The protective measure of sheltered housing is a contested issue, and while sheltered housing might provide a safe haven for the women concerned, it may not necessarily enable those who are at risk to successfully re-build their lives. Moreover, rebuilding one’s life requires regular appraisals and productive dialogues between different groups and agencies. Is that practically possible? There is also the dilemma for women of ‘foreign origin’ leaving home for a ‘new’ life in the shelters. Often women only need an intermediate solution that bridges the gap between lifestyle choices and cultural expectations, rather than a more extreme solution such as leaving their homes. Debates about sheltered housing also highlight the importance of tackling the problem at the structural rather than the individual level, because structures have to be changed first if further violence is to be prevented.

In relation to protective measures, the role of men still remains a highly contested issue among feminist academics and activists, where uneasiness is reflected in responses relating to the role of men. However, there is a need to move beyond statements such as ‘HRV is a problem created by men’ and instead explore the complexity of this deeply entrenched social issue. There are also a number of inter-connected issues. The first is that the community or collective is complicit in honour crimes. There is therefore a need to work in and with the community. Secondly, although largely operating within a patriarchal framework, women can also be complicit in honour crimes. While they may not conduct the killings themselves, they can act as informers and thereby encourage and endorse a killing. But in most instances women have to shoulder the responsibility for their own death; something that is implicit in statements like ‘she brought dishonour

and shame to the family'. Paradoxically, honour is something that is often only associated with women.

With regard to the issue of men's involvement in combating HRV, it has been brought to our attention that men can also experience vulnerability and powerlessness in relation to honour related violence. Men can either be 'victims' of HRV as a result of their sexual orientation (sexual), in relation to economic issues, such as being involved in theft or other economic violations (economic), by being associated with the woman victim (interpersonal) and finally, as victims of the gender patriarchal norms that permeate family life and discipline younger members of the family, irrespective of their gender (gender). In Sweden, the report looks specifically at the Sharaf Heroes Project, which has initiated several supportive activities for combating HRV. This project, which involves men organising themselves to fight honour related violence, is specific to Sweden and the only one of its kind in Europe. The closest parallel to the Sharaf Heroes Project is the work undertaken by community leaders in the UK to educate individuals on the occurrence of HRV and how to act as gate-keepers to communities.

The debate on HRV is continuously evolving, but we need to transcend debates that support a culturalist perspective and instead adopt a human rights perspective whereby violence is seen as a violation or breach of human rights. It is thus imperative that we make the language of human rights accessible to those who perpetuate violence and to those who experience it.

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## **Abbreviations**

BME – Black, Minority and Ethnic

CPS – Crown Prosecution Service

FCO – Foreign and Commonwealth Office

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

HRV – Honour Related Violence

HK – Honour Killings

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisations

SEK – Swedish Kronor

SBS – Southall Black Sisters

SH – Sharaf Heroes

UK – United Kingdom

UN – United Nations

VAW – Violence Against Women

WWHR – Women for Women’s Human Rights: New Ways

We – The authors of this report

## Introduction

Combating gender-based violence has been recognised as a responsibility of national and international actors at governmental and non-governmental levels. Each state in particular has the responsibility to develop and implement national strategies to combat violence, in accordance with international statutes. In particular ‘honour crimes’ are acknowledged as a violation of existing universal norms relating to human rights. The UN resolution 2004, states that:

*Bearing in mind also that crimes against women committed in the name of honour are a human rights issue and states have an obligation to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and punish the perpetrators of such crimes and to provide protection to the victims, that the failure to do so constitutes a human rights violation (www.un.org).*

The underlying rationale for this project was to develop some comparative understanding as to how different state governments define and conceptualise honour related violence and implement strategies designed to combat it. Many categories and terminologies are used globally for describing honour violence: ‘honour crimes’, violence in the name of honour’, ‘honour killings’, ‘honour based violence’ and ‘honour related violence’. Although all these categories associate the reasons for violence with defending or protecting ‘honour’, there is no consensus as to how to classify honour related violence. Should it, for instance, be placed under Violence Against Women (VAW), under Domestic Violence (DV), or should HRV stand independently as a specific form of violence?

Our study engages with the national policies and strategies of three countries: Sweden, the UK and Turkey. In relation to honour related violence, all three democratic multi-party states are engaged at the level of reform and legislation, although the level of commitment and engagement with the issue varies in the three countries.<sup>1</sup> Also, the information about all three countries has not been mapped equitably. The main focus has been to analyse government initiatives in Sweden, with the UK and Turkey as comparative models. The specific research questions that guided the collection of research data and analysis were:

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<sup>1</sup> In Sweden, several government ministries are involved in looking at the issue of honour related violence, such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health and Social affairs, the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture, the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications (gender equality) and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications has integration and equality as one of the key areas in their efforts against honour related oppression in Sweden. The UK government departments engaged with issues of violence and discrimination include the Department of Health, the Department of Trade and Industry, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Home Office and the Department of International Development. The Home Office is a ministerial department led by the Home Secretary, Charles Clarke. The remit of the Home Office include national security, support of victims, tackling drugs and alcohol, immigration, equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races. In Turkey, no specific government institutions are working on issues of violence. However, the parliament has a Gender Committee, which is responsible for issues of gender equality.

1. How is the issue of HRV understood by representatives of statutory and voluntary organisations at central, regional and municipal or local levels in all three countries? How does their understanding inform their opinions on what needs to be done to combat HRV?
2. Through what specific channels are government strategies to combat HRV being implemented by practitioners and professionals? This research question was guided by looking at two recent initiatives taken primarily by the former Swedish government: first, the Swedish government allocated money for sheltered housing for young people at risk of violence in the name of honour. The second initiative related to the government encouraging, supporting and involving men in combating patriarchal violence. What is important to note is that Sweden, as compared to the UK and Turkey, is the only country to have allocated large amounts of money to these initiatives. In analysing these research questions, we drew a distinction between protective and preventative measures, sheltered housing viewed by us as largely a protective measure and the involving of men in combating violence as a preventative measure.
3. In this project we wanted to ascertain how these financially backed and state supported initiatives were viewed by the individuals working with this initiative. For example, we wanted to ascertain whether sheltered housing was seen as an effective channel for combating HRV, or whether it would enable women to re-build their lives. This report does not aim to evaluate Government initiatives, however, since some of these initiatives have only recently been implemented. For example, in Sweden, a comprehensive follow-up to the initiatives between 2003 and 2007 is planned and will be carried out by Socialstyrelsen (The National Board of Health and Welfare).<sup>2</sup> Also, the aim of the report is not to generalise from the data we have. The data is indicative of the general trends/mapping, or a profile that suggests how individuals in various sectors of society view the issue of Honour Related Violence. In the UK, and to a lesser extent in Turkey, no specific initiatives have been allocated state funds. However, key stakeholders in both countries reiterated that there is a growing awareness of the dimensions and scale of HRV.

At the time the project was being planned, in early 2005, all the three countries seemed to be sharing knowledge and keeping themselves informed about developments in each country. For example, members of the *Sharaf Heroes*<sup>3</sup> Project in Sweden were invited by Scotland Yard to share their ideas. Sharaf Heroes is an initiative based at Fryshuset, and started by Arhe Hamednaca in 2003 with the primary aim of working against HRV and involving other young men in combating HRV. The main purpose was to educate the group on human rights and initiate a change of attitude.

On the other hand, Anna Lindh, the Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs,<sup>4</sup> visited Diyarbakir<sup>5</sup> in Turkey and established links with the organi-

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<sup>2</sup> Socialstyrelsen, 2005 Länsstyrelsernas insatser mot hedersrelaterat våld, delrapport 2003-2004, p 9

<sup>3</sup> Sharaf is Arabic-Turkish and Kurdish for honour.

<sup>4</sup> Anna Lindh, a Social Democrat and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, was stabbed to death on 11th September 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Diyarbakir is one of the 80 provinces of Turkey. See, [http://www.photius.com/wfb1999/turkey/turkey\\_government.html](http://www.photius.com/wfb1999/turkey/turkey_government.html)

sation, KA-MER (Kadin Merkezi Women's Centre); an organisation that had been working on the issue of 'killings committed in the name of honour' since 1997.

## Setting the Context

In Sweden the discussion about violence against 'women of foreign origin' has been in progress since the second half of the 1990s. Several cases have been brought to the public's attention by the media, where girls and women of 'foreign origin' have either been killed or severely beaten by close male relatives. This has sparked off a debate in the media on 'oppression' in different cultures. These discussions became more intense following the murder of Fadime Sahindal, a Kurdish-Swedish woman, in January 2002.,<sup>6</sup> The fact sheet titled "Governmental support for vulnerable girls in patriarchal families" (February 2002)<sup>7</sup> reflected the urgency with which the government chose to act on the issue. According to an article in Quick Response (2002),<sup>8</sup> the murders of Sara, Pela Atroshi and Fadime Sahindal were treated in different ways in the media. When Sara was murdered in 1996, the focus was more on the 'individual'. Her family was described as problematic, and it was reported that the boys that murdered Sara were drunk when it happened. When Pela Atroshi and Fadime Sahindal were murdered, the media discussed the murders in relation to 'culture clashes' and 'honour', rather than 'individual explanations'. For example, according to Quick Response, the murder of Pela Atroshi was identified as "the Kurd murder". The debate also incorporated the idea of 'culture' – and in what way the concept of honour could be seen as something that belonged to the 'Kurdish culture'. In all these three cases a debate on immigrant men and boys who 'can't accept the girls' wishes to choose their own lives' was raised.

At the time of the murder of Fadime Sahindal, County Administrative Boards were commissioned to hasten the work on creating shelters for vulnerable girls in patriarchal families.<sup>9</sup> It is also possible to regard the murder of Fadime Sahindal as a wake-up call that gave the issue greater political dignity. Fadime Sahindal, who was threatened by her family, was already publicly known by her engagement on the issue. On November 20th 2001, she gave a speech in Parliament during the seminar 'Integration on whose terms?' Her murder on January 21st 2002 was a shock. On the anniversary of her death, the evening Swedish tabloid Aftonbladet published an article written by Prime Minister Göran Persson, where he described Fadime as a symbol of the 'right to a life in safety and freedom.'<sup>10</sup> In 2005, Jens Orback was present at a ceremony in memory of Fadime

<sup>6</sup> Fadime Sahindal was a 26-year-old Kurdish-Swedish woman who was shot dead by her father on 21st January 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Regeringens insatser för utsatta flickor i patriarkala familjer Fact Sheet, Feb 2002.

<sup>8</sup> "Flickmord, kurdmord eller hedersmord" 2002-02-28 [www.quickresponse.nu](http://www.quickresponse.nu)  
The idea behind Quick Response is to follow how the Swedish news media reports on immigration, integration and xenophobia. On our website we publish our own articles about the media's coverage of these issues

<sup>9</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholm, Rätten till sitt eget liv (2002) förord.

<sup>10</sup> Artikel av Göran Persson med anledning av årsdagen av mordet på Fadime Sahindal. Aftonbladet 20030121

Sahindal, which can be seen a sign of the importance that the Government attached to the issue.

The international conference "Combating Patriarchal Violence Against Women – Focusing on Violence in the Name of Honour", held on 7-8th December 2004, can be seen as a statement where the Swedish Government, together with other countries, expressed its responsibility at an international level, and encouraged global networks to take up the issue. As the Minister of Democracy and Equality of Sweden, Jens Orback states, 'we had not focussed on these problems until a few years ago... till we had these types of murders'.<sup>11</sup>

In Sweden, the issue of HRV has been approached in many different ways. Firstly, the issue has been intensely debated in the media, although some of the decontextualised analysis has led the media to disseminate discourses which define, construct and represent the ethnic minority communities as 'violent' and locate the issue of 'honour' related violence as a 'cultural' problem.<sup>12</sup> A corollary to this understanding is that 'honour' related violence is conceptualised as irreconcilable differences between cultural values of some ethnic groups (not necessarily a minority) and the values of Western society. Academics and practitioners in the field have taken the media to task and instead argued against a simplistic understanding of 'honour' related violence. In particular, feminists have argued for a greater cross-cultural understanding, and have pointed to the prevalence of gendered and sexualised violence in the white Swedish population that is neither approached nor discussed in a cultural and essentialist manner (Mulinari, 2004, Akpinar, 2003).<sup>13</sup> Feminists have also warned that the concept of 'cultural relativism', often used to explain (and respect) cultural differences, can 'become a danger rather than an asset to feminist agendas... (particularly when) cultures appear neatly, prediscursively, individualised from each other, in which the insistence of "'difference"' that accompanies the "'production"' of distinct "'cultures"' appears unproblematic; and the central or constitutive components of a "'culture"' are assumed to be "'unchanging givens"'. This then re-enforces 'essential differences' between Western cultures and non-Western cultures (Narayan, 2000:95).<sup>14</sup>

In 2003, the researcher Masoud Kamali was commissioned by the Swedish Government to examine issues of power, integration and state discrimination.<sup>15</sup> In the summer of 2005, the first part of Kamali's presented report

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Jens Orback

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, some Kurdish women argued that there was a 'cultural dimension to the honour killings' and viewed them as different from other kinds of violence. They pointed out the logic of 'honour culture' where male control over the females and their sexuality was of utmost importance. For a discussion on this issue see Mikael Kurkiala (2003, Vol.19, No.1), 'Interpreting Honour Killings: The story of Fadime Sahindal in the Swedish Press.(1975-2002). '

<sup>13</sup> Mulinari, Diana (2004) 'Hon dog for hon ville bli svensk' in Larsson, Steig et al Debatten om Hedersmord: Feminism eller racism? Stockholm: Svartvitt, pp72-92 and Akpinar, Aylin (2003), 'The Honour/Shame Complex re-visited: Violence Against Women in the Migration Context' in Women's Studies International Forum, Vol.26, No.5, 425-442.

<sup>14</sup> Narayan, Uma (2000), 'Essence of Culture and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism' in Uma Narayan and Sandra Harding, (2000), 'Decentering the Centre: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Post-Colonial and Feminist World, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis.

<sup>15</sup> "Ny utredning om diskriminering, integration och makt" Pressmeddelande 22 december 2003

suggested that Swedish integration politics was based on an 'us' that wants to integrate and a 'them' that wants to be integrated. In his report, Masoud Kamali also regards the media debate on "honour killings" as an example of discrimination.<sup>16</sup> He also argues that it is 'a myth that reveals profound prejudices, perhaps racism, to claim that a special honour culture exists.'

Kamali's criticism is mainly based on the cultural connection commonly made when speaking of honour related violence, while culture is never mentioned in connection with "Swedish" men beating "Swedish" women. In the anthology (2004) 'The debate of honour murders – feminism or racism?' Kamali criticises the media debate after the death of Fadime Sahindal as one-sided, when culture is used as a model of explanation for the so-called honour murders. He comments: 'The same line of reasoning should in the name of consequence be used to explain why people of Swedish origin commit crimes of paedophilia. It could then be argued that since most paedophiles in Sweden that have been reported or convicted are of Swedish origin, paedophilia is a part of Swedish culture'. In his opinion, such a statement was just as groundless as all the other statements that build on cultural essentialism or suggest that the problem lies with a specific culture.<sup>17</sup> In Dagens Nyheter (050602), the Minister of Integration, Jens Orback, commenting on Kamali's view of so-called honour related violence, suggests that honour related violence is part of a general patriarchal violence in society – "but to shut one's eyes on the different expressions of violence, is to also shut one's eyes on how to reach solutions".<sup>18</sup> However, anthropologists such as Mikael Kurkiala warn us that 'acknowledging the cultural dimensions of human acts and motives, need not imply that all members of a community are pre-programmed to react in the same manner... (and) pointing to the culturally specific elements of honour killings need not mean belittling other forms of abuse against women, including those taking place in the West' (Kurkiala, 2003:7).<sup>19</sup>

In her thesis 'Life and Death Honour' (2003), Åsa Eldén describes how on starting her research she was met by scepticism and the view that the issue had little to do with 'us'.<sup>20</sup> According to Eldén, the issue of "honour killings" was extremely sensitive in 1996-1997 and was pictured in the debate as something "we Swedes" would never be able to comprehend.<sup>21</sup> In subsequent essays, Eldén (2004)<sup>22</sup> points out how in her analysis, the 'cultural context of honour' is a normative frame of interpretation in which

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<sup>16</sup> De los Reyes & Masoud Kamali (2005) Bortom vi och dom – Teoretiska reflektioner om makt, integration och strukturell diskriminering, p 55 f

<sup>17</sup> Kamali, Masoud "Media, experter och rasism" i "Debatten om hedersmord – feminism eller rasism" 2004, p 23

<sup>18</sup> "Även Orback ser brister i integrationspolitiken" Dagens Nyheter 050602

<sup>19</sup> A report National Council For Crime Prevention (BRÅ) by Lotta Nilsson (2002), points out that in research conducted in four counties of Stockholm, Gotland, Dalarna and Östergötland in Sweden, one percent of working women were exposed to violence within intimate relationships in one given year, BRÅ-report 2002:14.

<sup>20</sup> Eldén, Åsa (2003), p 6

<sup>21</sup> Nationellt råd för kvinnofrids seminarium den 8 maj 2001. "Våld mot kvinnor med invandrarbakgrund – vad vet du?"

<sup>22</sup> Eldén (2004), Life and Death Honour: Young Women's Violent Stories About Reputation, Virginity and Honour- in a Swedish Context', In Mojab and Abdo eds. Violence in the Name of Honour: Theoretical and Political Challenges, Istanbul University Press, November.

the behaviour of the individual (woman) cannot be separated from the honour of the collective (of men). Alden argues that the women she has interviewed in her research have contrasted the ‘Swedish’ to the ‘Arab/Kurdish’ construct and loaded one contrast positively and the other negatively. The former signifies gender equality and the other oppression against women. Also, according to Alden, women ‘oscillate’ in their narratives. For example, ‘Arab/Kurdish may be filled with a content where the collective takes precedence over the individual, while at the same time its loading may alternate between positive (safety, community, love) and negative (limitations, constraint, subjection)’ (2004:95).

In Sweden, some cities have been identified or associated with honour violence, such as Eskilstuna, Uppsala and Umeå. As we write this report, the phenomenon of honour related violence continues in Sweden. Last year a 20-year-old man was found stabbed to death in an apartment in Högsby, Småland. A 17-year-old boy says that he is the one who committed the murder, but the whole family, “mother, father and 16-year-old daughter “is detained in custody. The murdered man had a relationship with the girl in the family. They are all from Afghanistan and seeking asylum in Sweden. The murder has been discussed as an honour related murder in the Swedish media.<sup>23</sup> It has been speculated that the daughter could also have been threatened, since it is a widespread practice in Afghanistan and Pakistan that both parties in a ‘forbidden’ sexual relationship must be killed in order to re-establish the honour. This system is often referred to as the “karo kari”.

The media (newspapers and journal reports) in the United Kingdom has played an important role in bringing attention to cases of honour-based violence. There are no available statistics on honour killings in the UK and, as a Crown Prosecution Service representative says, ‘we never monitored it before and the UK is coming in late on this issue and has to learn a lot’.<sup>24</sup> Some suggest that approximately 12 murders a year are honour-related, although this figure relates to 2003/2004.<sup>25</sup> However, ‘these do not include crimes that fall short of a murder – such as forceful abductions, forced marriages, forced imprisonment’. The national newspaper, The Guardian, reported that in the UK, 117 ‘murders’ were being investigated as ‘honour killings by the MET Police’.<sup>26</sup>

Several incidents brought the subject of Honour –Related Violence to the UK government’s attention. In 1998, Rukhsana Naz from Derby was killed by her mother and brother. She had been married in Pakistan at the age of 15 and had returned to England, leaving her husband behind in Pakistan. She became pregnant by the boyfriend that she had met at school. Subsequently, she was strangled by her brother ‘while her mother held her feet’. The mother and the brother were imprisoned for life at Nottingham Crown Court in 1999. On October 12th 2002, Kurdish Abdalla Yones murdered his 16-year-old daughter, Heshu, because he ‘feared that she was becoming Westernised’. The case of Heshu Jones attracted considerable media attention, and wide coverage was provided by the UK’s broadsheet

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<sup>23</sup>

[http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=28854&a=490934&lid=puff\\_490999&lpos=ru  
brik](http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=28854&a=490934&lid=puff_490999&lpos=ru<br/>brik)

<sup>24</sup> Crown Prosecution Service

<sup>25</sup> R. Cowan (2004) Death Threat Couple Still Running – 11 years on, Guardian, June 28.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Death Before Dishonour’, Guardian Unlimited, 2004



and tabloid press (e.g. The Guardian, Daily Mail, The Mirror, The Sun, etc). The media forwarded a problematic understanding of the killing as symptomatic of a clash of cultures and a feature specific to ethnic minorities in Britain.

The debates that resulted were similar to those that followed the murder of Fadime Sahindal in Sweden. In Jones' murder trial, the UK judge, Neil Denison, stated: 'In my view the case was a tragic story of irreconcilable cultural differences (my own emphasis) between traditional Kurdish values and the values of Western society' (The Observer, November 21 2004). In the past, statements such as those made by the UK judge have led both the judiciary and the police to proceed cautiously on 'murders' where cultural practices are involved. The Home Office Minister, Mike O'Brien, commented that 'murder is a murder' and often, in the matter of honour killings, multiculturalism too often becomes an excuse for 'moral blindness'.

In the UK, issues of power and control in relation to violence against women (VAW) have been highlighted. In the UK, women Labour Party backbenchers lobbied on the subject of violence and successfully ensured that the Home Office Minister extended funding for the majority of the Crime Reduction Programme (CRP), Violence Against Women Initiative Projects. Debates in the UK, particularly those initiated by feminists, have argued for adopting an integrated approach and understanding honour crimes as part of violence against women, since acts committed in the name of honour are not that different from other acts of violence against women.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, feminists have pointed out that viewing all acts of violence against women in Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities as 'honour' related is also a form of discrimination and racism. So, for example, an act of violence that takes place in a white community could be seen as an act of domestic violence, while a similar act in a BME community is seen as honour violence.<sup>28</sup> Although culture and religion are used to justify honour related crimes it would be incorrect to suggest that HRV is a cultural practice of any specific community. HRV cuts across race, class and religion. In fact, feminists who have taken issue with multicultural policies argue that either the state multiculturalism adheres to non-interference with issues related to minority communities, or that when the state intervenes it can instead advocate 'preventative strategies' that are specially tailored for BME communities and different from strategies proposed for the White communities, thus essentialising and constructing BME communities as different.

There are a number of inter-related issues. First of all, while some organisations argue for adopting a VAW integrated approach, it is difficult to see how the tensions between honour violence and crimes of passion will be resolved. Abu-Odeh (1997)<sup>29</sup> argues that a crime of passion can only involve an individual and could be related to issues of sexual jealousy. On the other hand, honour crimes involve the rationale of collective injury or insult to collective honour, so that rather than only involving individuals they involve the whole family and, in some cases, the community. However, some individuals involved in advocacy argue that by broadening the remit of HRV, crimes of passion could be included. Secondly, while VAW as a strategy is useful, it should not make us oblivious to the fact that men

<sup>27</sup> See Report 'What a Waste', Women's National Commission

<sup>28</sup> Hannana Siddiqui, Southall Black Sisters

<sup>29</sup> Abu-Odeh, 1997 'Comparatively speaking: The 'Honour' of the East' and the Passion of the West, Utah Law Review, pp 287-307

can also be victims of honour related violence. While this idea is increasingly being incorporated by organisations, academics and the media, there is still hesitation in engaging fully with this reality, or involving men in combating violence. In a recent trial, Arash Ghorbani-Zarin, aged 19, was found stabbed 46 times in a car in Rosehill, Oxford. The Iranian Muslim had a relationship with the sister (Miss Begum) of his killers, Mohammad Rahman, 19, and Mamnoor Rahman, 16 (brothers). They were allegedly ordered to kill Mr. Ghorbani-Zarin due to the 'shame and dishonour' brought to the family by his relationship with Manna Begum. Miss Begum's father had planned for her to have an arranged marriage. In summing up the trial, Mr. Justice Gross said that the 'Western-style relationship' caused a 'battle of wills' in Miss Begum's family, as she resisted pressure to conform (BBC News, 4th Nov 2005). Although the judge draws on the differences in culture and lifestyle by referring to 'western style' relationships as enabling individuals to have more sexual freedom, what is significant is that the case highlights the importance of viewing men as both perpetrators and victims of social systems. Finally, women who are largely responsible for passing on 'culture' to the next generation can also play an important role in condoning honour violence. Working within the parameters of patriarchal norms, they often assist in these killings by either remaining silent or by supporting/aiding and abetting the killing, or by perpetuating the same norms they themselves encountered. In our fight against violence we also have to see how women can be empowered so that they can stand up for their and their children's rights.

Turkey is no stranger to honour killings,<sup>30</sup> although here the issue is beginning to attract international publicity in relation to debates concerning Turkey's accession to the European Union. In comparison with Sweden and the UK, Turkey experiences many more honour killings per year. Also, Turkey is the country of origin for ethnic groups such as the Turkish-Kurds who have been in the spotlight for the practice of honour killing in countries such as the UK and Sweden. However, it should be emphasised that HRV is not confined to any specific ethnic group. In fact there is evidence of killings amongst the Turkish community as well.<sup>31</sup> Importantly, although not the sole determining factor, the Sahindal family had come to Sweden from a small Turkish village in 1981.

Turkish society presents a paradox. While Turkey has encouraged women's education since the 1920s, it has not been able to do much in the field of violence. Following the killing of Guldunya Toren in 2004, from South East Turkey, State Minister Mehmet Aydin said he would ask for action from the state-run religious affairs directorate responsible for the writing of important sermons. Sermons relating to the rights of women were to be read in the mosques. This does not appear to have served as a deterrent for honour killings, however. It is doubtful that rendering honour killing as un-Islamic will actually have any effect. Fatima Shahin, a woman MP who heads the Parliamentary Committee on 'honour killings' tries to use a pragmatic approach, which tries to show that honour killings can tear a whole family apart.

While no primary research was undertaken in Turkey with government officials, interviews with women's organisations and co-ordination centres, such as Women for Women's Human Rights and Flying Broom, revealed

<sup>30</sup> see <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/3400389.asp> for some current reports.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=548853>

that they have been quite critical of the Turkish government. These organisations feel that violence against women has not been given priority by the government. It is only recently that the Turkish government has amended the penal code and incorporated changes suggested by women's organisations and gender-equality forums (see Chapter 4 of this report). However, there is some scepticism among the public as to whether these changes will be implemented as laws in the near future. Eren Keskin, head of the Istanbul branch of the Human Rights Association, said: "There are some positive developments in these new laws. However, in Turkey the written law and its enforcement can be two very different things. Until the feudal make-up of society, until the very mentality behind these crimes changes, we cannot expect anything very different."<sup>32</sup> Some organisations such as KAMER still believe that the media (both written and visual) should 'eliminate motifs that endorse violence in the name of mores and local cultures'.

## Methodology

The methodology used in this study includes conducting qualitative interviews and studying government reports, as follows:

### Qualitative Interviews

In-depth interviews with individuals in both the statutory and voluntary sectors were conducted. The interviews were conducted by Carin Persson in Sweden. Interviews with Jens Orback and Lise Berg in Sweden were conducted by Suruchi Thapar-Bjorkert. Jens Orback and Lise Berg are currently working on issues in relation to gender-equality, integration and violence. Interviews in the UK were conducted by Geetanjali Gangoli and Suruchi Thapar-Bjorkert. Interviews with representatives in Turkey (by telephone) were conducted by Suruchi Thapar-Bjorkert. Respondents were selected because a) they were working with the issue of HRV at academic and policy levels (ministers); b) had experienced HRV in their personal lives and were now working in organisations where their own experience was important for informing policy and practice. In Sweden we spoke to respondents: 1) who worked closely with government bodies in preparing material for dissemination (i.e. preparing fact sheets); 2) who worked closely with ministers responsible for issues of integration, gender equality and democracy. These individuals could also shed light on how the government wanted to present the issue of HRV; and 3) those whose responsibility lies in dealing with 'victims' of HRV.

Honour Related Violence is an extremely sensitive area, and as interviewers we expected that it might not be possible to find appropriate or an adequate number of respondents willing to share their opinions on the subject. We found it more difficult to access respondents working within government circles, not only because of their time constraints and busy schedules but, more importantly, due to a certain wariness of 'outsiders'. In addition, we realised that government officials are in many ways the gate-

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2006> Not available at the moment.

keepers of the ‘official’ narrative, which has to be adequately tailored for public consumption. In interviewing government officials we felt that their answers were articulated cautiously. Issues of power and hierarchy also had to be negotiated, although it is not possible to discuss all those issues here. One observation made by two of the researchers was the way in which official buildings (such as Rosenbad, Northumbria Police headquarters) can impose a silent authority on the researcher, reminding him or her of the relatively ‘anonymous’ status of a government office.

Individuals working with non-governmental organisations were more open during the course of the interviews, however. One plausible reason for this could be that they work at the interface of policy and praxis.

The interviews focused on ascertaining opinions and views on the nature of state initiatives. In the report, these views will be regarded as expressions of different “practical” discourses, which serve as starting points for further discussion on the perspective of the Swedish state and the measures that are implemented. Here we will attempt to address opinions, problem areas and discussion among the participating informants.

It is important to point out that our purpose is not to generalise on HRV from these interviews, but rather to present the varied viewpoints of individuals who have encountered incidents of HRV in their profession. Interviews with informants in Turkey were either conducted by telephone or via questionnaires.

## **Government Reports**

We looked at government resolutions, fact sheets, press releases and reports from different authorities. Sweden’s County Administrative Boards were given the responsibility of implementing the various government initiatives from 2003-2007. The Boards are responsible for both giving an account of the results and determining which initiatives will receive the allocated funds. At county administrative level we have looked at reports, with a particular focus on Stockholm County Administrative Board. In order to find out more about views of Government initiatives and the issue in general we also conducted interviews with people involved in some of the projects that received funds in the Stockholm area.

The interviews and government reports enabled us to understand and build on the theoretical frameworks of gender-based violence.

## How is HRV Understood?

Although the meanings and understandings associated with the concept of Honour Related Violence have undergone considerable transition, no single ‘popular’ definition is used across cultures and societies. Paradoxically, many European governments who associated HRV as something that occurred somewhere other than their ‘own’ countries have been forced to acknowledge that HRV is a global occurrence which can occur in both the developed and newly emerging economies. Transitions in the understanding of violence reflect that each government is trying to grapple with the problem in their own specific contexts, as well as learn from the experience of other countries. Since 2002 Sweden has introduced two official statements on HRV. Similar developments have not taken place in either Turkey or the UK, however. It is critical to evaluate the developments in relation to definitions for two primary reasons: Firstly, the way governments understands the issue also impacts on local (e.g. County Administrative Boards in the case of Sweden) understanding and dissemination of the issue. Secondly, the way an issue is defined often governs the policies that are designed and implemented to combat the problem.

### Understanding at National Level in Sweden

We present two government “fact sheets” that both introduce specific measures taken against ‘so-called honour related violence’ and present an official/public understanding of the issue. The fact sheet “Government initiatives to help girls at risk in patriarchal families” (February 2002) was presented shortly after the murder of Fadime Sahindal in January 2002. Anna Jacobson, a representative at the Ministry of Justice who worked with this issue, says that it was difficult to formulate the problem. In the 2002 fact sheet<sup>33</sup> the issue is described as:

*A lot of women and girls live an everyday life characterised by a lack of freedom, coercion, threat or violence. Men’s violence against women constitutes the most extreme evidence of the **imbalance** in the power relationship between women and men, i.e. men’s superiority and women’s subordination. In addition to this fundamental cause of violence against women, there is a further dimension – **girls and women in strongly patriarchal families** living under threat or coercion. At the same time they stand totally alone without any support, since the closest family or relatives actively or passively support the lack of freedom, the threats and the violence.*

The government formulation (around the issue of strongly patriarchal families) of the issue was also disseminated by the County Administrative Boards.<sup>34</sup> Anna Jacobson suggests that it was also important not to point to “any ethnicity, but rather the problem or the actual crime”. In fact, according to Anna Jacobson, Cabinet Minister Mona Sahlin’s work made an important contribution by describing the HRV issue as a *Swedish* problem

<sup>33</sup> Näringsdepartementet, February 2002, Fact Sheet., Regeringens insatser för utsatta flickor i patriarkala familjer.

<sup>34</sup> See for example, The right to one’s own life, Stockholm 2002, and Socialstyrelsens Meddelandeblad Nr 6/06, 2002).

rather than the problem of a minority. Agreeing with Mona Sahlin, Anna Jacobson remarks:

*And this is a Swedish issue, we can't just hide and say that this is something that other people do: it is a problem occurring in Sweden. It may be girls born in Sweden that are affected by the problem. So, it is not a good method to point and say that only certain groups do it. We must look at the problem [the crime in question] instead.*

But despite the intention to avoid singling out any specific group as more affected than any other, the phrase “strongly patriarchal families” came under critical scrutiny.

Questioning the formulation of the term ‘strongly patriarchal families’ in the 2002 fact sheet, Greta Johansson from the women’s shelter Terrafem comments:

*There has, however, been a change in the general debate, in that media has opened up to very racist expressions. And if one defends one's racist remarks by saying: But look at the situation of women! Look how patriarchal they are! And the word patriarchal was very important after the murder of Fadime. And it is “they” that are patriarchal. The Government says, “We work against strongly patriarchal families.” Then that violence is defined as patriarchal, and not the violence against “Swedish” women. We [in Sweden] have never used the phrase patriarchal violence to describe the violence against “Swedish” women. The Government declaration and the United Nations declaration mention women's subordination to men. The phrase patriarchal is not used. But the actual definition – why there is violence against women – contains the word patriarchal. It contains subordination and superiority. But we have never used it. But the Government uses it; all reporters use it. [When it comes to the HRV debate]. And when I question, and turn things around, [they argue] “But can't you tell that they are more patriarchal than us!” And that is where a “we” and a “them” is created. There are many expressions in the public debate that are grounded on racism, but are justified by saying “we defend the rights of women.”*

The authors of this report (from now on referred to as ‘we’) would suggest that in this definition there was first of all an implication that violence takes place in ‘patriarchal families’, thus leaving open the question of how we classify other families in Sweden. Instead of patriarchal oppression being seen as a universal phenomenon, this definition implied that patriarchal practices were restricted to certain families. Secondly, it was inferred that these ‘patriarchal families’ were different from ‘Swedish families’. The researcher Paulina de los Reyes has also criticised this definition in the Swedish Integration Board report *Patriarkala enklaver eller ingenmansland?* [Patriarchal enclaves or no mans land?] She writes: “In contrast to prevalent analyses and ongoing equality efforts, the description changes patriarchal values from a structural problem to an attribute of certain groups and families, more specifically families of an immigrant origin.”<sup>35</sup> De los Reyes thinks that this starting point defines both the girls and their parents as culturally, ethnically and religiously deviant in Swedish socie-

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<sup>35</sup> de los Reyes, Paulina (2003) *Patriarkala enklaver eller ingenmansland: våld, hot och kontroll av unga kvinnor i Sverige*

ty.<sup>36</sup> We would suggest that while there are potential flaws in the 2002 fact sheet, it does mention the differences in power relationships between men and women, and highlights the fact that there are different social expectations on men and women.

In a government action plan for equality politics (2003), the ‘imbalance’ in the 2002 fact sheet is referred to as the ‘gender power order’. It is also mentioned that the Government ‘regards male and female as “social constructs”, that is ‘gender moulds’ that are created from upbringing, culture, economic framework, power structures and political ideology.<sup>37</sup> Lise Bergh (State Secretary for Integration, Democracy, Gender Equality and Sports), who has been working with the issue of gender equality since 1999, suggests that ‘we always say so-called honour related violence...however, it’s not only violence but also oppression and of course it’s part of men’s violence against women ...due to the *gender based power order*’ (the emphasis is ours)<sup>38</sup>.

The 2003 and 2004<sup>39</sup> years’ version of the fact sheet is called “Government initiatives to help young people at risk of violence in the name of honour”.<sup>40</sup>

The 2004 fact sheet states that:

*In recent years the situation of girls and young women whose everyday lives are characterised by a lack of freedom, coercion, threats or violence has been increasingly in the public eye. Some girls are subject to extremely rigorous control by their families: some are promised in arranged marriages even as children or are forced into marriage, others are exposed to threats and coercion when they try to live like other young people. The fact that it is their closest family who are the perpetrators and that other relatives often take sides against them makes them even more vulnerable. Knowledge about this problem and about so-called violence in the name of honour therefore needs to be spread.<sup>41</sup>*

In the 2004 Government fact sheet, the phrase “patriarchal families” is no longer used. Instead the fact sheet expresses concern about “young people” subjected to control and the risk of threats and violence when they “try to live like other young people”. In the 2004 fact sheet, the government’s understanding of the phrase “like other young people” remains unclear, since it is difficult not to relate it to a Swedish norm. Here again the definition exposes itself to criticism because a number of inferences can be drawn. Firstly, does the phrase ‘other young people’ refer to white Swedish young people? Secondly, are these Swedish young people the norm and

<sup>36</sup> Eva-Lotta Johansson expresses similar sentiment.

<sup>37</sup> Näringsdepartementet. 2003. Jämt och ständigt. Regeringens handlingsplan för jämställdhetspolitiken – en sammanfattning. N3037.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Lise Bergh by Suruchi Thapar-Bjorkert

<sup>39</sup> Justitiedepartementet, Faktablad Ju 03.21). Regeringens insatser för ungdomar som riskerar hedersrelaterat våld

<sup>40</sup> In the Swedish version it is called “honour related violence”. Subsequently, a conference titled “Combating patriarchal violence against women – focusing on violence in the name of honour” was hosted by Regeringskansliet in December 2004.

<sup>41</sup> Ministry of Justice, Fact sheet Nov 2004, Government initiatives to help young people at risk of violence in the name of honour.

representative of ‘freedom’ and an “equal Sweden”? And thirdly, it constructs the ideal of ‘other young people’. What we need to be alert to is the fact that we do not want to build definitions that essentialise certain groups where violence in the name of honour is practised, nor construct them as deviants from the norm – the norm being ‘other young people’. Also, ‘control’ and ‘freedom’ are both relative and subjective terms, where one’s perception of control could be very different from that of another individual. Another feature in the definition needs to be highlighted: in the “2003 and 2004 definitions of ‘violence in the name of honour’, the groups most at risk are identified as ‘girls’ and ‘young women’, ‘boys’ and ‘young men’. While this is not untrue, the measures taken do not include the circumstances of elderly women (as wives and mothers) who might also face honour violence at home. This is not to deny that women are or are not complicit in the subordination of other women, however.

Like the statement of 2002, the 2004 statement does not single out any specific religion or ethnicity as being more frequently affected by the problem. That the perpetrators themselves state honour as a motive is, according to Anna Jacobson, an argument in favour of using the word *honour*. That some of the discretion in the discussion was to avoid falling into the trap of expressing racist views is hinted at in the following quote. Anna Jacobson’s quote highlights the fact that, after the murder of Fadime, individuals used her murder as an excuse to argue that immigrants should be deported:

*When the Government, or a public authority, expresses something, phrases are coined that may be very difficult to get rid of. And that thing about “strongly patriarchal families”, what about it? Are families here not patriarchal? And at the same time it was very important to the Government to not single out any ethnicity as such, but rather the specific problem. It was all so inflamed anyway, after the murder of Fadime Sahindal, when people called and yelled into the phone.... (and suggested that “they” should be thrown out”)*

In an interpellation ‘about the responsibility of equality for immigrant women’,<sup>42</sup> Member of Parliament Ulla Hoffman (former leader of Vänsterpartiet, The Left Party) asked Jens Orback (Minister of Democracy, Metropolitan Affairs, Integration and Gender Equality, Ministry of Justice) about what he meant by so-called honour related violence. Orback remarks that ‘eight out of ten abusive men are born in Sweden’, implicitly trying not to pinpoint any specific group:

*I also want to say that we have to be able to talk about so-called honour related violence, because this silence benefits nobody, especially not the victim – possibly the perpetrator.*

A report from Stockholm County Administrative Board states: “This form of violence is consistently described as *so-called* honour related violence, as a statement that Sweden does not support the notion that there is anything honourable about these crimes.”<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> 10 § Svar på interpellation 2004/05:105 om jämställdhetens ansvar för invandrade kvinnor

<sup>43</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005), 18 projekt till stöd för unga flickor och kvinnor som riskerar att utsättas för så kallat hedersrelaterat våld 2003–2004, p 6



In a subsequent interview, Jens Orback stated that:

*HRV is part of patriarchal violence. There was no conflict in working with honour related violence and working with patriarchal violence. Sometimes this distinction is taken to stigmatise communities of a foreign origin. But what is most important for me is that if you want to do something then you have to see the specific ways that HRV is carried out, otherwise your measures will not be accurate...because sometimes you can be threatened by one man or sometimes by the whole family. In Sweden, we have not acted upon this issue until 3-4years ago.<sup>44</sup>*

In the foreword of the report from the conference held in December 2004,<sup>45</sup> the Minister of Equality/Integration/Democracy, Jens Orback, is referred to as suggesting that:

*patriarchal violence has to be seen as part of the overall male violence that occurs all over the world. Men's violence against women is based on the assumption of male superiority and female subordination and not linked to any specific religion, ethnicity or culture, but to the degree of patriarchy... and is part of an exercise of power and control over women...Patriarchal violence and indeed violence in the name of honour is the ultimate vehicle for denying women and girls personal security, physical integrity, freedom, love and even the right to live... and its not only open violence but also threats of violence that constitute grave hindrances to the freedom of women and girls, which severely limit their lives and choices. Jens Orback stressed that no state should be able to call upon customs, traditions or religion to avoid their obligation to eliminate this violence. States must send clear signals that violence against women is never tolerated.*

Orback adds that the main thing is to include everybody in the human rights issue. Orback's statement also demonstrates the Government's position, in line with the Beijing Platform for Action (UN 1995), to reject the view of 'culture' as a mitigating circumstance. Instead, power and control over women are seen as important to an understanding of violence.

In the same speech Jens Orback cites the ideas of Ms Radhika Coomaraswamy, the UN rapporteur on Violence Against Women in 2002/2003, that 'violence including killings in the name of honour is typically carried out by husbands, fathers, brothers or uncles and sometimes on behalf of larger communities. Violence is not necessarily related to love, shame, jealousy or social pressure. Economic factors can also contribute as well as armed conflict and war. Moreover, what might be labelled or disguised as 'honour' might really be men's need to control women's sexuality and freedom, and to act as custodians for cultural and ethnic purity'.

It is evident from the above speech that Jens Orback views:

- Violence in the name of honour as an expression of patriarchal violence.
- Violence in the name of honour as an exercise of power and control, build around assumptions of male superiority and female sub-

<sup>44</sup> Interview conducted by Suruchi Thapar-Bjorkert.

<sup>45</sup> [www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se), Inledningsanforande av Jens Orback vid Konferensen, 7th December, 2004. Vänsterpartiet (The Left Party), another organiser of the conference suggested that a feminist understanding of the issue is crucial.

ordination. Also the need to control women's sexuality could be disguised as 'honour'.

- Draws a wider picture of causation of HRV, pointing to economic factors.
- Any culturalist explanation for violence is not seen as beneficial.

In a personal interview, Jens Orback talks about honour related life, which is a direct progression from some of the ideas he raised, particularly the distinction between 'open violence' and 'threat of violence'.<sup>46</sup>

Cecilia Axelby at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, one of the organisers of the conference in December 2004, suggests that honour related violence is clearly part of patriarchal violence in general, although "not just any part, but an unusually inexorable part". One of the distinguishing features of so-called honour related violence is the element of "execution", which implies a planned and sanctioned killing. This, according to Cecilia Axelby, is the most absurd expression of patriarchal oppression. Cecilia Axelby also points out that the control of women's sexuality and 'chastity' has been a feature of HRV.

**Some concluding remarks:** It is clear from the discussion that the current government has tried to construct bridges between the first and the second fact sheet when it comes to definitions of honour violence. First, the government understanding that HRV is a form of patriarchal violence that is universal in nature and neither confined to any country, culture or ethnicity, widens the understanding of HRV. Implicit within this understanding is the fact that patriarchal violence affirms the maintenance of power and control over women. In the authors' understanding, the word 'patriarchal' is a broad ambiguous term and meanings of the word 'patriarchy' are debatable. Also, the word 'patriarchy' assumes that power is exercised over women and leaves the question open about exercise of power over young men by other men. How do we then conceptualise HRV against men? We (the authors) would suggest that honour related violence has to be understood in conjunction with honour related oppression, since the latter enables us to think of all acts that do not materialise as physical violence but generate fear or constitute threats of violence. Honour related oppression also brings the hidden forms of structural violence to our attention, when social structures nurture forms of inequality and power which promote specific forms of direct interpersonal violence such as honour killings. Structural violence can permeate the 'ordinary' lives of men and women differently – which suggests that its impact is gendered.

## Understanding Sweden's County Administrative Boards

It is important to take into account how the term HRV is understood at the County Administrative Board level, i.e. at regional (and local) level, since most of the government funds were channelled from here. A report that introduces a resource team (a pilot project comprising of individuals with different competences on the issue of HRV) created by Stockholm County Administrative Board, states that after two years of working with the go-

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<sup>46</sup> Personal Interview with Jens Orback in September, 2005 by Suruchi Thapar Bjorkert

vernment assignment, there is no unanimity on the meaning of honour related violence, which in turn complicates the communication between different actors and will have consequences on what initiatives will be created.<sup>47</sup> The understanding of the problem will possibly also have consequences in terms of which projects will receive money.

Stockholm County Administrative Board has decided on the use of an operational definition “that is closer to the international definition”.<sup>48</sup> It is stressed that “the concept of honour plays a crucial part that clearly sets these crimes apart from other forms of patriarchal violence against girls and women.”<sup>49</sup> In the report entitled “18 projects in support of girls and young women”, the chosen definition is commented on in the following way:

*The narrower definition of so-called honour related violence (compared to the definition where all kinds of men’s violence against girls/women of non-Nordic origin are regarded as honour related has been chosen to minimise the risk of making invisible those exposed to violence with an explicit honour motive and with the support and acceptance of the collective). This making invisible is in itself a kind of oppression, as is the denial of individual, specific needs derived from specific kinds of oppression against a smaller group. The broad definition may hinder the creation of adequate measures of protection and support that are suited to the specifics of this complex phenomenon. Thus the broader definition is less suitable in carrying out the Government assignment.<sup>50</sup>*

Stockholm County Administrative Board argues that a narrower definition is more useful, since it reflects the specific needs of certain groups, such as immigrant groups. A broad definition, (which defines HRV as one expression of patriarchal violence) on the other hand, could be seen as oppressive, since it conceals the characterisation of the specific oppression and therefore also the specific needs of the individuals exposed to HRV.

Socialstyrelsen (The National Board of Health and Welfare), also uses this narrower definition in a report following the investigation of whether there was a need for national consultative support<sup>51</sup> for professionals dealing with young people at risk of HRV. The definition used is mainly based on Stockholm County Administrative Board’s definition,<sup>52</sup> although some

<sup>47</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005), Resursteam mot hedersrelaterat våld., p 11

<sup>48</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005), Resursteam mot hedersrelaterat våld., p 14. In 2002, The UN General Assembly was able to adopt Resolution 57/179, ‘Working Towards the Elimination of Crimes Against Women Committed in the Name of Honour’ It was called upon states to ‘investigate thoroughly, prosecute effectively and document cases of crimes against women committed in the name of honour and punish the perpetrators’. An updated resolution presented by the UK and Turkey was adopted by the UN on 28th October 2004, and included girls in its definition (see [www.wluml.org/english/news/UN-res-L-25.pdf](http://www.wluml.org/english/news/UN-res-L-25.pdf))

<sup>49</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005) 18 projekt till stöd för unga flickor och kvinnor som riskerar att utsättas för så kallat hedersrelaterat våld, p 6

<sup>50</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005)18 projekt till stöd för flickor och unga kvinnor, p 7

<sup>51</sup> Socialstyrelsen (2005) Nationellt konsultativt stöd våld. – för socialtjänst och andra verksamheter i arbetet mot hedersrelaterat våld, p 10

<sup>52</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005)18 projekt till stöd för flickor och unga kvinnor, p 3

additional points are also presented. We have chosen to reproduce it here because we regard it as an example of an understanding of HRV used by the “arms” of the Government.

- The violence is seen and expressed by the collective as a legitimate, unavoidable action to punish the disobedience of women, preserve the family honour and safeguard the social survival of the family.
- The notion of honour plays a crucial part.
- The violence is planned.
- The violence is collectively sanctioned and decided upon, in some cases also collectively carried out.
- The perpetrators are protected by the majority of the family/collective.
- The violence affects individuals of female gender from pubescence, i.e. from about 12-13 years of age and for the rest of their lives.
- The violence may also affect boys and young men if they help or protect a girl or woman who won't comply.
- The violence is mainly psychological (insults, guilt etc.) and social (isolation, the prevention to partake of normal societal activities, the forced wearing of deviant clothing, deviant behaviour, economic poverty, deportation). In the long run, the violence is also often sexual (forced sexual intercourse with an unknown man, deportation) and physical (ranging from slaps to murder).
- A rumour may be a sufficient reason for punishment.
- The violence may also be directed against individuals of both genders on grounds of sexual orientation deemed by the collective to be deviant, and against non-fertile women.

The working group<sup>53</sup> of the Socialstyrelsen report adds:

- Young men and boys may also be directly exposed to honour related violence when having a relationship with or marrying a woman who is not accepted by his family.
- The perpetrators of honour related violence are primarily men closely related to those affected, but closely related women may also partake.
- The violence also consists of indirectly coercive marriages. The girl does not dare or want to question the arranged marriage because of her dependency on her family.

Additional knowledge of the phenomenon accounted for by the Socialstyrelsen report is that:

Honour related violence occurs and is practiced in a human context distinguished by the view that the actions of girls and women are a symbol of the honour and reliability of the entire family.

- A certain religion, origin, ethnicity, class/education or “immigrant-ness” are not in themselves sufficient conditions for the occurrence of the phenomenon.

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<sup>53</sup> The working group consisted of: Ann Johansson, Projektledare Socialstyrelsen, Berith Josefsson, projektmedarbetare Socialstyrelsen, Maria Pilar Reyes, Länsstyrelsen Stockholm, Maria Lindberg Länsstyrelsen Skåne, Lasse Johansson, Länsstyrelsen Västra Götaland, Kristina Lundberg, Länsstyrelsen Norrbotten.

- The oppression will grow more intense in periods when the collective feels threatened and will vary over time with historical and socioeconomic events.<sup>54</sup>

Both Stockholm County Administrative Board and Socialstyrelsen (The National Board of Health and Welfare) use a more concrete and detailed understanding of a specific honour complex as a starting point. As we have seen, the Government's wording of the issue (as evident in fact sheet 2004, the December conference of 2004 and Jens Orback's own opinions) seems to aim at an open and broad definition. The above definitions instead try to identify the distinguishing features that frame a certain kind of violence and oppression. An important common idea between the Stockholm County Administrative Board, Socialstyrelsen and the Government's understanding is that emphasising one's religion, origin, class and ethnicity are seen as insufficient grounds for the occurrence of the phenomenon.

The Stockholm County Administrative Board and Socialstyrelsen definition also underlines the connection between sexuality and violence in that the purpose of the violence and oppression is to control sexuality. It is pointed out that the violence mainly affects women from pubescence and continues for the rest of their lives. But as we have seen, the measures taken in Sweden seem to focus primarily on young girls, since girls below the age of 18 seem to be more vulnerable. Also, the major part of the protective housing provision is intended for those below 25 years of age.<sup>55</sup> The same applies to the national consultative support that is being discussed. The inquiry, "National consultative support", discusses whether it is possible to include a centre of knowledge related to HRV in the proposed National Centre for Children, with the prerequisite that the target group is extended to 24 years of age. The same inquiry also mentions the need to examine whether the field of work against female genital mutilation should also be integrated into national consultative support.<sup>56</sup> It is notable that the issue of female genital mutilation seems to be outside the discourse of so-called honour related violence, especially as the intention in this form of violence is also to control women's sexuality.

Finally, we as academics and practitioners need to pay attention to the fact that it is clearly acknowledged in the report from Socialstyrelsen that 'oppression will grow intense in periods when the collective feels threatened'. This is important, because if we are to combat HRV we also have to pay attention to what makes the collective feel threatened. Here larger structural features such as poverty, deprivation, discrimination and exclusion in the host country become especially important. Other *problematic issues* arise from these definitions as well. Firstly, implicit in these suggestions is a creation of a specific superior norm (implicitly Swedish) against which others (i.e. immigrants) are judged. This is reflected in phrases such as 'deviant clothing and deviant behaviour'. Also, by using phrases such as 'this making invisible is in itself a kind of oppression, as is the denial of individual specific needs derived from specific kinds of oppression against a smaller group', Stockholm County Administrative Board could be seen to be supporting a culturalist argument, which, in spite of its good intentions,

<sup>54</sup> Socialstyrelsen (2005) Nationellt konsultativt stöd, p 10 f

<sup>55</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005) Länsstyrelsernas insatser mot hedersrelaterat våld, delrapport 2003-2004 p 15

<sup>56</sup> Socialstyrelsen (2005) Nationellt konsultativt stöd – för socialtjänst och andra verksamheter i arbetet mot hedersrelaterat våld, p 28

could be viewed as isolating and discriminating towards a ‘smaller group’. Secondly, it would perhaps be more useful to identify the commonalities (such as oppression, denial of human rights) between various forms of violence rather than the differences. Thirdly, oppression and violence are used interchangeably, although oppression may not entail physical violence

## Other Organisations and Governmental Bodies

### The Police

Recent developments in Rikskriminalen [the National Criminal Investigation Department] involve a devolvement of responsibility to the county police. We present the views of Kickis Ahre Algamo of Rikskriminalen,<sup>57</sup> which should be read as her personal opinions on the issue. Kickis Ahre Algamo is somewhat sceptical to the role of the county police because, according to her, the county police ‘do not understand the question of Honour Related Violence’. According to Kickis Ahre Algamo, HRV can be defined as:

*The violence that is physical or psychological because one of the members, particularly female, have dishonoured the family, and in 99% of the cases, crime in Sweden has been connected to female sexuality...but also HRV can be related to non-sexual reasons ...for example, a religious family (for example a Muslim family) may have a son who has committed theft ...is a criminal or has been drunk in public...that that he has also dishonoured the family... so may be beaten up by the family...the latter is also Honour Related Crime but may not be connected to sexuality.*

Kickis Ahre Algamo also suggests that in order to understand HRV we have to see that the ‘family is the smallest part of society unlike in the western way of thinking where the individual is the smallest part of the society’.

Furthermore, in her hands-on approach Kickis Ahre Algamo also suggests that there is a difference in the form of violence between educated and non-educated families. For example, in educated families there is more psychological violence, e.g. girls would be taken on a vacation to the home country and left there, while in non-educated families the tendency is towards physical violence.<sup>58</sup> Also, while it’s easier for various agencies (such as schools, police, etc) to discover families where physical violence is taking place, it’s more difficult to identify in the subtle strategies used by educated families. It is important to reiterate that Ahre Algamo usefully talks about the shifts in the nature of violence in different households, although

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<sup>57</sup> Kikis Åhré Älgamo, criminal investigator, the National Criminal Investigation Department (Rikskriminalpolisen). National Criminal Investigation Department (The National Criminal Investigation Department (NCID) provides investigation and criminal intelligence support in cases involving crimes with nationwide or international ramifications. The NCID is increasingly active in various international police partnerships.

<sup>58</sup> In 2001, a 13-year-old girl was taken to her home village in Northern Iraq under the pretext of a ‘reconciliation dinner’ and was shot by 86 rounds when she arrived at the house together with her mum and brother. SvD 11th January 2006, p.8

it would be difficult to generalise from her experience about any rigidity in the forms of violence on the basis of education.

Individuals based at the county police headquarters in Eskilstuna have been working with these kinds of problems for a long time. The first case was in the 1980s, though at that time there was very little knowledge about HRV and it was hardly discussed as an issue in Sweden. Claes Rydgren, a Superintendent Inspector (kriminalinspektör) in the Eskilstuna county police, talks about one of the first cases when a man was brought home from Canada to Eskilstuna to kill his sister. He then took his own life. According to this investigator, the Eskilstuna Police spoke of the case in terms of “honour crime”. In fact, due to this extensive experience with HRV, the Eskilstuna Police are often contacted by other local police forces to tackle issues related to HRV.

Claes Rydgren believes that “men can be enemies with each other and in that way hurt each other’s honour... And then it could become something that I think seems like blood revenge... they may not kill each other, but they do hurt each other.” However, he suggests that when a woman is ‘guilty’ of destroying the honour of the family, the ensuing violence is of a more serious nature, with her being hurt from it. He says that when working practically as a policeman, he does draw a distinction between honour related violence and violence against women, and adds that “if we look at the man who beats his wife and it’s not honour related motives, then it is individual violence, condemned by the surrounding society. But if we look at HRV, it is collective, it is often sanctioned and often planned – the serious crimes are always planned...’

The police have no specific statistics relating to “honour crimes”, and the investigator thinks that this is probably due to the difficulty of assessing what constitutes an honour crime and what does not. Claes Rydgren mentions a case in Eskilstuna where a girl was caught shoplifting and broke down when she realised that her parents would have to be told. Not only she, but also other family members had been beaten by the father for many years. The reason why she broke down in the store was that she was afraid of the consequences when her father got to know about her shoplifting. Her breakdown in the shop resulted in the staff contacting the social services. The social services analysed her reaction as ‘not normal’ and placed her in a foster home to investigate the situation. She also told her story in a ‘video questioning’ at the police station. It ended with an indictment order for the father. The family and friends took the father’s side, while the 13-year-old girl was expelled from the family and called a liar. The father was described by the family as ‘the most divine on this earth’.

The above case could be said to extend the definitions of what HRV is and when it happens. The risk of being detained (and betrayed by the family) highlights that this case is about honour in Rydgren’s opinion.

That is why Claes Rydgren thinks that an action plan for violence against women in general would not be a good idea. Claes Rydgren mentions, for instance, that the Eskilstuna Police use a so-called “Sara-model” when analysing “general violence against women”, but that he considers the profiling to be different in the case of honour related crimes:

*If we now would put it all together and investigate and judge all these crimes in the same way, these perpetrators would seldom be convicted in court. Here we must look at the motive and possible accomplices. Because one [the perpetrators] is aware that these crimes are against the law, and that is why they are carefully planned alibis are fabri-*

*cated and so on... and because it is sanctioned, nobody outside will speak as witnesses to this. No help from the community here. But before we get there, we must assess whether this is honour related or not. So it is not as easy as saying, as many do today, that all kinds of violence are related to male power... One might agree with that, maybe both cases are about the man's control of the woman. But, we can't stop there; we must go further. We would never be able to investigate a crime if we didn't make this distinction.*

Claes Rydgren suggests that since the collective protects the individuals in these cases, it is difficult to solve the crime or to judge the perpetrators if you don't have knowledge about the specific characteristics of a HRV crime (family or community). So when the police do their work, rather than using a wider understanding of violence it is more helpful to explore the specific mechanisms of honour related violence. Also using a broader definition of HRV as 'violence against women' could make the police miss out on the fact that more than one person was involved in the honour killing. This understanding also guides the county police in the drawing up of genealogical maps of a family (and extended) suspected of HRV.

The efforts of the county police in combating HRV have been viewed critically by Rikskriminalen, although one could add that the understanding of both Rikskriminalen and the County Police on the phenomenon of HRV is quite similar. First of all they both believe that the 'collective' is more important than the 'individual' in cases of HRV. We would suggest, however, that the word 'collective' needs to be understood in terms of the 'family collective' as well as the 'community collective'. While family dynamics are often shaped by the expectations of the community, in many instances the family has stood in opposition to the community. Secondly, both agree that economic reasons, for example, a boy or a girl who commits a criminal offence, can trigger HRV. Thus HRV is not always connected to the sexuality of the individual. However, taking a more hands-on approach, the county police depart from the official statement/definition used at governmental level and instead suggest that, for purposes of prosecution, HRV cannot be understood as a general expression of 'patriarchal violence' or 'violence against women'. The main reason for this is that the profile of HRV can be different from other forms of violence against women.

Another respondent is Karin Sant, who works as a consultant with young people exposed to HRV at the "professional healthcare organisation" Gryning Vård AB.<sup>59</sup> Among other things, Gryning Vård AB provides sheltered housing for young people exposed to HRV and received money from Västra Götaland County Administrative Board for this purpose.

Karin Sant says that before she started in her present post, she thought she had a fairly clear picture of honour related violence. Today she feels that making that kind of analysis it is becoming more and more complicated. For example, she thinks that the use of the phrase HRV may be problematic:

*Well, I don't really know what else to call it. I don't love the word, but the problem complex exists. The girls pay the price by following the family's honour within the system. But the phrase honour related vio-*

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<sup>59</sup> Gryning Vård AB is Sweden's largest healthcare organisation in the field of homes for care. Altogether the company comprises about 300 places in institutional care and family care. The company has municipal owners.



*lence might obscure things. You may forget the reason behind it. You forget the treatment part; those that are affected need much time and support. The actual protection is only primary. What we work with is trying to make the girls want to live. We talk of existential matters. They need long-term help. It really does not help the girls to blame on the collective – of course it is important to explain that it is not her fault – but it is not enough to do that and then just say thank you and goodbye and then count on her making it on her own.*

Karin Sant gives her explanation of HRV:

*It is a systematic insult of a person (or several) carried out by the closest collective, the collective which are the person's closest relatives and friends. I have been working in social services before and encountered cases like those, but what I didn't quite understand is how deeply rooted the way of thinking is in the girls. Even if they think that they have been wrongly treated they still carry much of this way of thinking with them.*

Karin Sant refers to the difficulties that a girl that leaves her home or a shelter home might experience: When she lives with her family, her 'deviant' opinions about how she may want to live her life become very evident and lead to conflicts. But in another context, she will perhaps defend her family and the norms she is used to and also feel guilty because she has left them. Although Karin Sant suggests the above explanation as a special feature of HRV, these reactions may not be specific to HRV situations, particularly when we look at the context of when and who makes the statement.

Karin Sant views this issue as difficult to understand from a Western perspective, and says that one of the big problems is that we try to impose Western solutions on a "Middle East problem":

*We must get the group we work with over on our side in a completely different way. A difference is that here in the West we are used to having confidence in public authorities. To many from these parts [of the world] the authorities are something negative. But it is also a matter of integration. The ghetto-like residential areas that we find in many places [in Sweden] do not exactly bring a sense of affinity with the Swedes. Then the affinity of the own culture becomes all the more important. If anything should be kept, at least one's culture should be. One does not oppress one's daughter for the fun of it, there is a purpose. And it is that purpose we much reach.*

Interestingly, Karin Sant raises the issue of larger structural problems, such as the lack of integration of ethnic minorities into the Swedish culture.

## **Non-Governmental Organisations in Sweden**

It is useful to ascertain the opinion of non-governmental organisations since they are the main channels through which state/government initiatives are implemented at the regional and local levels. However, non-governmental organisations can exercise autonomy in their decisions, and since they work closely with victims of HRV, they impart a critical edge to the debates.

Terrafem<sup>60</sup> is a women's shelter intended specifically for 'women of foreign origin' (www.terrafem.org). According to one of its representatives, it is often the case that if somebody from a different country/nationality is facing violence, the issue is treated differently than when Swedish women are exposed to violence.

The representative from Terrafem, Greta Johansson, holds the view that "the expression honour violence is very negative and wrong." She compares how men's violence against women ("in general") is described as "apartment crimes" or "crimes of jealousy". Greta Johansson says that many probably believe that Terrafem only works with women of foreign origin because the violence looks different, but according to her, violence is about power and control, irrespective of whether it is a man in China, Argentina or Sweden who beats his wife. The only difference is how it is referred to. For example, in South America and France, it is called a crime of passion, and in some African cultures it is said that they are bewitched. In the Nordic countries, violence is often associated with alcoholism.

However, Greta Johansson suggests that if one wants to refer to HRV it is better to talk about "violence in the name of honour." But the problem is, she says, that when one talks of honour, it is immediately associated with specific ethnicities such as Muslims, Turks, Arabs or Kurds. She claims that this is wrong, because if all countries were analysed and the amount of violence against women was compared, the results would probably be similar. Something that is common to all countries and cultures is the view of woman being subordinate to man:

*And that's what is... gender roles exist in all countries, and the role predestined to women rests upon the norms and values of all cultures. And what can be said to be common to all countries is that the position of women is subordinate to the men.*

She thinks that it is a mistake to turn honour related violence into a question of integration. In the debate that followed the murder of Fadime Sahindal, some Swedish debaters thought that men should have to take a driving test of Swedish values, she says. But which values are we talking about? Greta Johansson asks, because there is inequality in Sweden as well. There is violence against women here too, and most women are killed by men of Swedish origin, she suggests.

Yuksel Said from Linnamottagningen (the Women's Network)<sup>61</sup> says that the problem of oppressed young girls has been present in Sweden for much longer than is publicly admitted. "It has been there all along, we just haven't opened our eyes to it. One has tried to find other explanations for it.

As an example Yuksel Said brings up Sara, who was murdered in 1996:

*[The social authorities] absolutely didn't make an assessment of danger, because they didn't see the violence in the family. She was placed with her uncle, and she was killed. Many girls that have disappeared in that manner; there are no measures to find out why. Nobody has in-*

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<sup>60</sup> It was started in 2000.

<sup>61</sup> Linnamottagningen is a reception centre that started as a cooperation between the voluntary organization Kvinnors nätverk (Women's network) and the municipal joint-stock company AB Vårlyus. Today Kvinnors nätverk runs the reception centre alone.

*vestigated why. It is nothing that has emerged in the nineties, but it's only now that we have begun to see it. Some have disappeared, some have been murdered – or filed as suicides – we don't know. What was behind it? – xxx (a colleague) who works with me here was married away when she was 15 years old. Her parents came as foreign labour in the seventies. Nobody saw it [that she was married although she was so young]. She came back, and she was married and she lived with her husband and went to school. Her husband signed her papers instead of her parents. Nobody reacted. That is how bad it is. The problem complex has been present all along but there have been a lot of excuses made about it.*

Yuksel Said from Linnamottagningen believes that there is a connection between culture, religion, traditions and segregation. She claims that one must be aware that this kind of violence has to do with 'culture', otherwise why does this kind of violence not occur in all countries? At the same time, she objects to the picture that everybody who is Kurd or Turk or Iranian must share this view. One can't just say that this is culture and then "tar everybody with the same brush", she says. Instead one should question what is culture? Violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon, but it has different manifestations. In the case of honour related violence, the crucial difference is that the perpetrator has the support of the collective. If you don't see such differences, she asks, how can you then raise the question, change legislation or affect methods? One example is by making sure that children affected by this issue are not placed in the care of relatives, which is the common practice in Sweden. Yuksel Said thinks that the Government swings back and forth on its approach to the issue. One day they talk about the honour related problem complex, and the next it is general violence against women, she says:

*Partly it is ideological: do we have this problem or not? Should it be given attention and measures be taken against it? And then, if you think at the level of the Social service: they adhere to a family way of thinking. One tries to join with the family despite that it is impossible and one lacks the method. --- It is still random how the problem is defined.*

Yuksel Said says that the girls she meets understand their experiences in different ways. They might find it easier to discuss their experiences because the women working at Linnamottagningen also have immigrant backgrounds, i.e. they don't look 'Swedish', they share similar experiences, and thus can understand the language of the girls:

*Yes... [The girls] can define it in many different ways and we get to hear that. Many say that, 'you understand, you know what we are like.' Because we who work here, we look different, then...or 'I want to live like a Swede'. But they define that themselves. What we are trying to do here is about not giving rights a nationality. But this is right that you have a right to as a woman, as a child... [The girls] can see themselves that it simply has to do with the family system, which is different to others.*

Some girls suggest that they would prefer to 'live like Swedes'. In articulating statements like these they are questioning the norms in their family which may at times be oppressive, especially in relation to the dominant culture.

Some organisations such as Save the Children say that it is a deliberate choice not to use the phrase “honour related violence” in outward communications. A psychotherapist, Camilla Salan, involved in the Save the Children project, flicka.nu, says that there are several reasons for this:

*One is that because we work with girls and their families, mostly with girls, they are our principals. It is the case that no girl identifies with, or will come to a centre for treatment, if you have this name: honour related violence. It is the same thing with incest. Names can be good to show intent, but may also deter. So that is why we have been thinking more in terms of “double cultures.*

Camilla Salan suggests that from her experience of working with children and adolescents who have been abused, she has learnt that they might find it difficult to relate to the word incest at the first meeting. It is the same thing with HRV, in that girls or boys don’t always want to be put into same category as HRV because the problems are not only about violence. They might also be feeling ill, have backache, stomach pain, depression or any other problem. Perhaps a young girl feels that she is not allowed to do things that she wants to do by her parents, but does not conceptualise it in terms of HRV. These statements are important because they make us think about forms of oppression that may not necessarily entail violence, even though they may be equally violating and honour-related.

The homepage of the Save the Children project, flicka.nu, raises the question: “Are you a girl, live in two cultures and need to talk about it? It is difficult when you, a girl, want to both belong to your family and be yourself. Do you feel afraid or threatened? Here you can contact us for help and support.” Camilla Salan says that by defining the problem in this way, it may be possible to prevent the problem before it reaches the level of threats or murder:

*It feels less labelling, less problematic. We who have double cultures all know that it is a process. You shift from one to the other. You get into conflicts; anyone can do that. And then [the notion “double cultures”] normalises the problem, I think.*

Camilla Salan also wants to point out that young people experience different levels of oppression. Some of them are oppressed and controlled at home, while others experience violence or the threat of violence. Some young people may already be in conflict with their families, and some might have moved away from home and are living in shelters. Camilla Salan feels that they would like to include girls who are in different phases of violence and oppression in their lives.

Camilla Salan’s view of the concept of HRV is that it is a punishment for insubordination and isn’t always connected to sexuality, such as having a boyfriend or losing one’s virginity. There are other reasons too, such as wearing too much make up, general gossip or the fact that the girl has been seen in the public domain without a chaperone. Women may experience a range of things: from feeling confined to being abused and threatened at home. A steady control of women’s sexuality is discernable in these acts:

*We [@flicka.nu] have thought a lot and then we have decided and we have said that: honour murders have a cultural background, but not an ethnic or religious. It is no ethnic or religious background. Which means that within an ethnic group it may be the family culture, it may be anything. But it doesn’t have to... just because you are from, well*

*let's say Iraq, that everybody from there will have a honour related way of working But it is more about family patterns; it is feudal patterns that still remain. And then it is, then I also use to say that honour murders are a special kind of murder, which follows a certain pattern. That is the way, it is the family council meeting and deciding. Then honour murder is the ultimate punishment for transgression. Everyone says it is sexuality – yes, sexuality is a very important part, but it is not just that but it is more [about] transgression.*

Some of the issues raised by the psychotherapist resonate with the opinion of Ahre Hamednaca, one of the members of the men's group, Sharaf Heroes. He has also been a political consultant to the Minister of Equality/Integration, Jens Orback. However, he is critical of the idea of cultural clashes or views that emphasise differences in cultures.

Ahre Hamednaca claims that it is wrong to speak of honour related violence and prefers to refer to it as “honour related life”. He thinks that it is not just about violence, but also about an entire life that is controlled and oppressed:

*First of all I do not want to call it honour related violence, I want it to be called honour related life, or honour related oppression. ...When talking of the violence, maybe only the active part is considered. But who are caught up in that violence? Very few brave women have dared to say no. You see? Who has dared to show resistance: Like Fadime, Pela and others. But we have to remember that we have tens of thousands of girls and women living this life every day. To me a girl who doesn't choose her own boyfriend – that is a life, and that is oppression.*

Ahre Hamednaca claims that it is wrong to mix “honour related life” up with the structural patriarchal oppression that he claims affects women of Swedish ethnicity:

*The difference – the Swedish woman of today – she has the basics, she can live her life as a human being. She can choose her future. You can shape your future: Whether to get an education, whether to leave home, whether to get a husband, children... I am one hundred percent convinced that all Swedish women today have a right to choose. The problem is more structural. Men have not let go of the decision-making power, of the economy. Those transitions are slow. ...But the other part: the woman living under honour related life. She has no chance. She is oppressed from the start. Somebody owns her. She does not own her body. That is the difference. And that is why I think we must not mix these up.*

Ahre Hamednaca suggests that a lot of girls do not have the right to decide over their own lives. Most of these girls are often invisible to society. While they are not always exposed to violence, they may be controlled and monitored in other ways. However, if a girl resists it can erupt into violence and then become more visible to society.

Ahre stresses that he agrees with those who say that a patriarchal power structure is at the root of the problem, but at the same time says it is wrong to claim that “it is the same thing,” The difference between collectively and individually sanctioned violence is crucial in his view:

*But the difference is that when Kalle kills Kerstin it is individual. He does it himself; he's a lone maniac. Either he has had too much beer to drink, or he is jealous, or it may be anything. He isn't assigned the task by the family. But honour related violence and life is... It is a collective... It is the entire family that sits down and decides that I should do it [kill the girl/woman] against my will to save the family honour. In addition to that, I'm a hero after I've done it, the family hero. But Kalle is not a hero. He is a disgrace. That is the difference.*

Ahre is, however, critical of those that speak of “culture clashes” in the case of violence and oppression of women. He also speaks about the fact that other people with immigrant backgrounds sometimes regard him as having betrayed his culture and religion:

*And then they regard me as someone who has left my culture and my religion. Maybe they think that I have quickly “Swedefied” myself, and then I have jumped over to the Swedish culture. But if I say it this way: I really can't find the Swedish culture. What is the Swedish culture? The Swedish culture has been like my culture 50 years ago, but the Swedish culture has adjusted to the human rights. It has accepted the universal – e.g. children's rights, women's rights, it respects. And then, my culture, [In Ahre's case Eritrean background] must respect this too, and adjust. Even the religion must be adjusted to the human rights. And that includes the rights of women.*

*And that is why I think sometimes when politicians, and everybody, use a word I do not like: they say “culture clash”. That is wrong. I don't think that my culture clashes with your culture. When I speak of the rights of children and the rights of women, that is not Swedish culture to me. That is universal rights, you see?*

Ahre Hamednaca's criticism is that when we talk about culture clashes, we find excuses for actions that are against human rights. Instead of demanding that people align themselves with human rights, we try to excuse them by saying that it is difficult because they are caught up in a clash between their ‘original’ culture and Swedish culture. He would rather like to describe the problem as a clash with human rights. He also criticises Swedish society for being naïve, because it does not really demand that people align themselves to these supposedly universal rights. By not doing that we don't recognise the long struggle in Sweden to achieve these values (in this country), ‘people have fought for a hundred years to get there’. Also, Ahre Hamednaca suggests that as a refugee he found a haven in Sweden because it is a country with democratic values. But these democratic values must be respected and there cannot be different rules for e.g. women living in Fittja (a residential suburb of Stockholm). One has to respect the Swedish constitution and values, even if one's culture, religion or tradition differs.

Ahre Hamednaca is also critical of the view that the girls' problem is one of being “between two cultures” and thinks that it is wrong to ascribe these universal rights to the Swedish culture:

*And then we get back to the question you asked – and that is the Swedish naivety. The fear and the actual naivety that we don't dare – just because we try to find scapegoats, explanations on the side. And then one of these explanations is “well, those poor people, they are in a clash, a culture clash, they are in between, it is difficult.” What does*

*one want? One wants to create an understanding for oppressing your wife or daughter! One wants to feel sorry for one that has come to a country with a radically different culture. But this country, or those values that you have in Sweden, they didn't fall from the sky. People have fought for a hundred years to get here. That's where I mean the naivety is.*

***Then how do you think it should be regarded?***

*We must dare! I consider myself to have found a haven in Sweden... We must dare to say that in this country there are democratic values, human rights. All immigrants know that beating your children is illegal, everyone knows that. – The democratic values must be respected, otherwise what will it be... We create two different laws. Women living in Fittja don't have the same set of rights as you. And that is what we must demand; to me it's not just rights. It is responsibilities and possibilities. We have to show as well that in this country we live in this way, and our constitution says this, [but] we don't dare.*

## Summary

Certain dominant themes emerge from the discussion in Sweden. There is no consensus on how HRV is understood in governmental and non-governmental organisations. The government fact sheets and statements made by ministers clearly point out that there has been a shift in the understanding of HRV; from a phenomenon confined to 'strongly patriarchal families' in Sweden to one that is more global and seen as an expression of patriarchal violence. However, the county police and some non-governmental organisations believe that it is important to identify the specific characteristics of HRV and not confuse it with general violence. This is particularly important for those who have to investigate the incidents of HRV. One of the reasons behind this rationale is that HRV involves the 'collective' rather than the 'individual', which is different from other forms of violence. A middle route has been adopted by the Sharaf Heroes who believe that instead of HRV, we should call it honour related life or honour related oppression. On the other hand, the concept of HRV is still new to organisations such as the social services and youth reception centres.

There is a growing emphasis among some non-governmental organisations that the girls subjected to HRV or honour related life can present the issue in different ways: they may not choose to challenge their families or communities in an open and outright way, and they are sceptical of public authorities, which means that work on building trust and confidence among the girls is necessary. Interestingly, through contact with potential victims some organisations have realised that 'vulnerable girls':

- a) hesitate to oppose the entrenched familial structures and way of thinking. Some organisations such as Save the Children argue that some vulnerable girls do not conceptualise the problem as honour related violence but instead understand the issue in terms of 'double cultures';
- b) are sceptical about public authorities;
- c) can be given immediate protection, but that it is also very important to find ways for them to rebuild their lives. We would suggest that perhaps there is a greater need to listen to the voices of those individuals who are

affected (across gender and generations) and how they understand and articulate the issue. It is also important to remember that different individuals experience HRV differently.

## How is HRV Perceived in the United Kingdom?

### Understanding at National Level

Unlike Sweden, the UK has not produced HRV fact sheets, although there are similar efforts to find a more integrated definition of HRV. Also, the UK government has only recently actively initiated and supported activities to understand HRV.

### The Home Office

The Home Office is the government department responsible for the police service and the justice system in England and Wales. A Home Office representative, Sally Stanko, suggests that HRV is an important political issue and on being asked why, states:

*It is...what we have done, part of the domestic violence definition... is that we recognise and acknowledge that domestic violence can be perpetrated by a family member or extended family member and in other words we recognise that domestic violence can be perpetrated by Female Genital Mutilation, forced marriages and honour related violence. It can sometimes be members of the extended community that can help to perpetrate HRV violence ...and we call it 'so called honour related violence'. One of the root causes of HRV is control and oppression over women and girls. One of the reasons why HRV is an important political issue is the protection and promotion of women's human rights. We also recognise that HRV can be a form of patriarchal violence. But everybody would prefer to call it 'dishonour' crimes.*

*In the Sweden conference in December, 2004, it was agreed that although we would love to change the terminology and the name ...but we agreed that it's best to keep to the terminology of 'violence in the name of honour.*

Lawyers working on this issue, such as Ritu Singh (Barrister, Renaissance Chambers) and Maria Parkinson,<sup>62</sup> argue that 'genital mutilation'<sup>63</sup> (culturally based atrocity committed on women in the name of honour either before or after a marriage ceremony), honour murder, facial tattooing and acid baths and scaldings: these are different international guises of the kinds of domestic violence that have been visited mostly by men upon women for time immemorial<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> Ritu and Maria specialise in child law, international child abduction and the repatriation and protection of children and adults from domestic violence within the context of forced marriage.

<sup>63</sup> The Genital Mutilation Act 2003 was the government response to this problem but it had not led to many prosecutions.

<sup>64</sup> Honour Based Crimes and Murders, Law Society, Ritu Singh and Maria Parkinson, 20th June 2005, Working Paper, p.8



While the above definitions are not absolutely clear, it does appear that HRV is talked about in relation to domestic violence, although we are not entirely sure how female genital mutilation and honour murders that might also involve the ‘community’ or extended family’ could be understood within the framework of domestic violence. However, like some of the definitions used in Sweden, they do acknowledge that violence against women is a universal phenomenon, and is related to the subordination of women to men. They also suggest that honour murders are prevalent in other countries, e.g. Pakistan, and that ‘there is no reason to suppose that communities who come from those countries and settle in this country do not employ the same methods, at least as a fear factor, in this country’. There are some advantages in understanding HRV within the framework of Domestic Violence (DV), since DV eliminates culturally essentialist explanations or an over-focus on specific communities practicing HRV. However, if we are also analysing the involvement of the wider community, we need to consider whether or not we should think in terms of ‘domestic’ violence.

Adam Wilson, Advocate at Renaissance Chambers, talks more in terms of HRV as physical violence that involves an element of honour:

*I would use HRV as relating to violence or crime done purportedly by the actors/player in the supposed justification of honour to the family or to the individual....or in other words, the perpetrator of the crime would be seeking to justify it by reference to the perceived concept of honour. And usually without being said, it would be understood by most people in the context of the Indian continent. The crime aspect of HRV would have to specifically relate to the criminal conduct. So far as the violent aspect is concerned, I think generally in using the term...by and large, it would usually mean physical violence but I recognise that there is a wider concept of violent behaviour that is psychological behaviour or more threatening behaviour that would ordinarily be classified as violence. So by and large HRV is supposed to mean physical violence.*

Another way of understanding HRV in the UK is through viewing it in terms of the notion of honour in forced marriage situations. For example, in its official objectives the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) recognises that domestic violence can be a consequence of honour related/forced marriage issues. Ashish Chaddha, a representative at the Forced Marriages Unit, which works between the Home Office (HO) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), comments that:<sup>65</sup>

*Forced Marriages have an element of honour in them but not always. They are about honour when people are married off to someone from the same background to control the person... but the reasons can also be economic – for purposes of immigration...It’s a human rights issue,*

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<sup>65</sup> Forced Marriages Unit used to be a part of the Community Liaison Unit at the Home Office from October 2000 till January 2005. In January 2005, the Forced Marriages Unit was set up. The foreign and Commonwealth Office is a government department responsible for promoting the interests of United Kingdom abroad. The head of the FCO is the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, The Rt. Hon Jack Straw.

*therefore a political issue but not party political. Honour is used to justify violence and the burden of honour is placed on women.*

The FCO has also set up procedures for the discovery and repatriation of minors spirited away by their parents and forced into a marriage in a foreign country. In August 1999, the Home Office Minister for Community Relations, Mike O'Brien MP, established a Working Group to investigate the extent to which forced marriages were a problem in England and Wales, and to make proposals as to how this might be effectively tackled. The Choice by Right Report (June 2000)<sup>66</sup> was a consolidation of these ideas. Currently, 'forcing someone to marry' is not a criminal offence in England and Wales, although the law does provide protection from crimes that can be committed when forcing someone into marriage. The Government's Working Group described a forced marriage as being:

*a violation of internationally recognised human rights standards (that) cannot be justified on religious or cultural grounds...there are many similarities between the needs of victims of forced marriage and those of domestic violence and child abuse.*

The Working Group also discovered that some of the victims of forced marriages who had sought help felt that they had been denied access to social services that would ordinarily have been available to women fleeing from other forms of violence and abuse. Their problem was seen as a 'cultural' issue and therefore not something that service providers were prepared to deal with. The Working Group felt that if communities, service providers and the Government had a shared understanding that forced marriage could not be justified on religious or cultural grounds, this would then empower people in every sector of life.

- The working group (WG) established that forced marriage should be seen as an issue of violence against women, although the group recognised that men as well as women suffer violence as a result of forced marriage. Men are also forced into marriage. Moreover, both men and women can perpetuate forced marriage.
- There is a 'spectrum of behaviour behind the term forced marriage ranging from emotional pressure exerted by close family members and the extended family, to the more extreme cases, which can involve threatening behaviour, abduction, imprisonment, physical violence, rape and in some cases murder' (2000:11&12). Also 'many women who were forced into a marriage suffered for many years from domestic violence. These women felt unable to leave because of lack of family support, economic pressures and other social circumstances' (2000:11&12).
- While the majority of the cases presented to the WG involved families with a cultural background in the Indian sub-continent, it was not solely an 'Asian' problem. In England and Wales there are cases involving families from East Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Africa.
- In relation to the motivations that drive parents to force their children to marry, it was suggested that they included family honour and controlling female behaviour and sexuality (these are similar to

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<sup>66</sup> A Choice by Right, The Report of the Working Group on Forced Marriage. The working group was co-chaired by Baroness Uddin of Bethnal Green and Lord Nazir Ahmed of Rotherham.

HRV). Extended families often applied significant pressure on parents to marry their children off, including the use of force. 'Family honour was a significant factor motivating the behaviour of many parents' (2000:11).

- Isolation was one of the biggest problems facing victims of forced marriage. Often there was no one they could speak to about their situation. These feelings were similar to those experienced by women who had suffered domestic violence, often in silence.
- WG found that challenging and changing people's attitudes is the key to preventing forced marriage. The WG acknowledges the importance of the role of 'opinion formers' in developing an understanding of the right to choose. This includes anyone who is able to influence values, attitudes and behaviours. Religious and community leaders are key opinion formers, but the definition also takes account of local and national politicians, leaders of the community, women's groups and many others who can make a difference (2000:20).
- Formed in 1999, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence is a cross-party network of MPs and Peers that works towards the elimination of domestic violence policy and meets regularly to discuss and monitor current issues for policy and practice development. The Working Group recommends that the *All-Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic Violence should include forced marriage as an issue within its remit and work programme.*

## The Crown Prosecution Service

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the principle public prosecuting authority for England and Wales and is headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions. The Crown Prosecution Service is a national organisation consisting of 42 areas. Although the CPS works closely with the police, it is an independent body. The Director of Public Prosecutions is responsible for issuing a code for Crown Prosecutors under section 10 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985, giving guidance on the general principles to be applied when making decisions about prosecutions.

The Director of the Crown Prosecution Service, Tahir Rizvi, defines honour related violence as one that 'revolves around 'respect, esteem, prestige within a family or socio-cultural context':

*We in CPS believe 'honour violence occurs when any of the perceived borders (sexual boundaries or engaged in a relationship that the family does not approve) are crossed by a woman, particularly when suspected of engaging in sexual practices before or outside of marriage'. We in CPS keep an open mind' in relation to violence. In some cases, the motivation could be honour but in some other cases, it could involve other motivations such as financial motivations.*

The Crown Prosecution Service and the police work closely together, but the final responsibility for the decision as to whether or not a charge or a case should proceed rests with the Crown Prosecution Service. The definition used by the CPS resonates with some of the official formulations in Sweden where an economic rationale can be identified behind honour killings.

## Scotland Yard

An organisation that works very closely with both the Joint Forced Marriages Unit (HO and FCO) and the CPS is Scotland Yard. Scotland Yard is the headquarters of the Metropolitan Police Service, a statutory organisation. Ghazala Rizvi is Project Co-ordinator of UMBRA, which is the MET domestic violence initiative that looks at all aspects of domestic violence and holds the offenders responsible through the Criminal Justice System (CJS). It is commissioned by the London Criminal Justice Board (which includes partnerships of the police, magistrates, crown prosecution service (CPS), judiciary, etc) and the team members in the initiative report back to Solicitor General Mike O' Brian. Ghazala Rizvi is also Deputy Chair of the Association of Chief Police Officers, Forced Marriage Working Group, and responsible for policy and strategy work. Honour Killings has been a separate part of the Homicide Unit of Scotland Yard, but more recently Ghazala has suggested that:

*Since we see honour killings as a part of a continuum of Honour based Violence, we have brought all these together under Forced Marriage heading but in terms of looking at specific murder cases, Homicide Prevention will be doing that.*

*She also says that 'I think the government does not take a gendered approach but a gender-neutral approach. You hear people talk about male victims of violence, for example Commander Andy Baker talks about male victims of honour killings but what they don't see the particular links that man has with the particular woman and the whole power and control of patriarchal dynamics that are going on within those particular families or communities. I see it as pre-dominantly as violence against women. When you see the rhetoric about the violence against men or men as victims, it's not to highlight the issue, but more to shift the emphasis from violence against women.'*

Ghazala also adds that although the government has provided guidance to police officers and the social services, the issue of HRV has sometimes been sensationalised.

Commander Andy Baker, Head of Homicide, commented that Scotland Yard detectives refer to the offence as 'murder in the name of honour'. 'It's murder and we don't treat it as anything else' he said. According to Baker, the change in terminology reflects the fact that there is no 'honour' in killing a relative, even though a 'victim' had brought the family disrepute (Metro, Tuesday April 26th 2005). In another statement, Andy Baker said that honour killings had much in common with other forms of DV. 'Domestic Violence is abhorred by everyone except the perpetrator. Honour Killings is acquiesced in by other people' (Andy Baker, The Observer, Nov 21st 2004).

Ghazala Rizvi believes that when a white man commits a murder, it's seen as DV murder, but when an Asian man commits the same act, it is seen as honour murder. Ironically, honour may not have underpinned the acts of violence by either the white or Asian man. It could be understood as a feature of patriarchy or machismo. There are also crimes of passion in French legislation, but are they that much different from honour killings?

Ghazala Rizvi says that 'through the work on forced marriage, we have been able to pick up work around early marriage, dowry... and let us not forget that the forced marriage work emerged after the death of Rukzana Naz and had that killing (1998) taken place now, it would be called honour

killing'. Forced marriages (and FGM in African communities) have an element of honour or, in other words, forced marriages are a manifestation of honour based violence. In another incident, Samira Nazir, aged 25, was stabbed to death at her family home in Southall, West London. The suspicions surrounding her death had to do with her being punished for refusing an arranged marriage with a man in Pakistan' (Metro, Thursday April 21st 2005).

Ghazala Rizvi also suggests that there has been a lot of duplication of work. For example, much of the work done by the HK team had already been carried out by forced marriage group, 'so there was a duplication and it led to a waste of already limited resources... we were talking about the same issues. Every time a new issue comes along... unless we trace it within the context of Violence Against Women, you do end up with a fragmentation of the agenda and a further fragmentation of limited resources'.

In the document 'What a Waste', published by the Women's National Commission, UK, Liz Kelly and Jo Lovett (2005)<sup>67</sup> argue that an integrated/strategy approach to violence (VAW) that moves beyond the frame of focusing on any specific forms of violence would have benefits for the government, the victims/survivors and the entire community:

*VAW encompasses but is not limited to domestic violence, FGM, forced and child marriage, honour crimes, rape and sexual assault, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of girls, sexual harassment (in the workplace and in the public sphere), trafficking in women and exploitation in the sex industry (Kelly and Lovett: 2005).*

What is positive about this document is that it places the responsibility on the government, rather than on communities or individuals. The report argues that:

*Whilst forms of violence can be separated in law, in research categories and in service provision, they are intertwined in these women's experiences and are in the lives of many other women (2005).*

What the authors are alerting us to in the above quote is that escaping from one form of abuse can make you vulnerable to other forms of abuse. Thus, if we take an integrated approach to violence we can establish the links between various forms of abuse and violence.

Louis Baker at the Met Police is also a key member of the Wider Strategy around combating Domestic Violence and looks at the range of issues that affect the BME communities in the UK, specifically women, girls and children. She, along with other members, act as a resource for police officers and police staff within the organisation in responding to victims or potential victims of DV or HBV.<sup>68</sup> The mechanism for front-line/first stage response is through 32 community sector units in London Borough.

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<sup>67</sup> 'What a Waste' (2005): The Case for an Integrated Violence Against Women Strategy' by Liz Kelly and Jo Lovett. Document prepared for the Women's National Commission.

<sup>68</sup> In 2004, Scotland Yard received 104,000 calls on DV in one year and that according to Louis Baker is an underestimation because a woman would receive over 10 incidents of violence or more before she contacts anyone. There are many victims who do not contact or not in a position to contact any agency, thus experiencing a lot of violence before they ask for help. Scotland Yard do not have similar statistics for HBV since it is a new and emerging area of violence for them. Right

As part of this DV strategy she also looks at how elements of honour affect the nature of violence. She suggests that:

*Although the rhetoric is that DV affects everyone, across religion, caste and class...social backgrounds, the focus has been on intimate partner violence as opposed to the wider family involvement around violence in the home'. When I talk about the more accepted manifestation of Domestic Violence in terms of intimate partner violence, I see HBV as a broader interpretation*

In response to male victims of HRV, Louis Baker is of the opinion that:

*You have to acknowledge that within any kind of violence, women are the large proportion of victims and from our experience, the balance of power and control is still with men and how they behave violently towards women. In relation to male victims, it is difficult to gauge how men are affected because very few men come forward.*

## **The County Police**

Fred Archer, Community Engagement Officer for West Yorkshire County Police, says that HRV has a wide cover range:

*People don't have to be physically hurt to have HRV....I am talking about domestic abuse not domestic assault... where the abuse can be financial, emotional or even psychological....where no criminal offences can be put in action for that particular kind of abuse.....it could be a family or a male using abuse against a woman who has possibly come from abroad because she is not aware of her rights.... and then she can be undergoing psychological and emotional abuse without realising that it should be happening to her.*

On being asked about the scale of the problem Fred Archer reiterated some of the points:

*I see it everyday...violence, domestic abuse, women suffering mostly in name of family's honour....but this honour is never defined....for example a woman wearing wrong clothes is challenging honour, a woman running away is seen as questioning the family honour...sometimes the family will not admit that it was a family member that did it.*

The Public Protection Unit (PPU) was set up by Northumbria Police in November 2004 and focuses on issues of rape, sex offences, DV, child-protection and missing persons.<sup>69</sup> Forced marriages were not specifically included in the PPU remit, although the unit has recently submitted a report suggesting that the PPU should take the lead on forced marriage because it is very closely related to Domestic Violence.

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now they are pulling together statistics on homicide, which might relate to HRV. Scotland Yard is also collecting information around forced marriage since they deal with on an average of 3-4 cases a week from London city itself.

<sup>69</sup> Northumbria Police (Alan Brown, Chief Inspector and Public Protection Unit of Northumbria Police with a remit of Domestic Violence, Child Protection, Violent and Dangerous Sex Offenders, Missing Persons, Anne Marie Pearson, specialist in DV and child protection and Sergeant Pam Bridges who works in the Community Engagement Unit (CEU).

The Northumbria Police suggest that they have statistics for Domestic Violence but do not have any crime recording system that clearly identifies HRV or forced marriage. However, they tend to follow the FCO definition. Quoting an unidentified Swedish source, Alan Brown says that:

*Honour Crimes are defined as violence committed against women and girls who are perceived to have brought shame to their community.... Contrary to popular belief honour crimes are not limited to specific groups of countries or to any religion though the perpetrators may try to justify their actions on religious grounds.*

The Northumbria Police suggest that it is important to have one national definition of HRV, as for DV:

*all police forces understand it and any public protection unit or specialist unit looking at this area can focus their work....for example we don't use the term HRV at the moment...instead we use the terms domestic violence and abuse. We have a definition of DV and we work quite closely to the Crown Prosecution Service and share their definition of DV. So the definition of DV is 'any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse which is psychological, sexual, physical, financial or emotional between adults age 18 years or over who either have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender and sexuality. Family members is defined as 'father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, grandparents, in-laws and step family.*

Northumbria Police suggest that the national definition of DV clarifies what is meant by family member. The laws of England and Wales record DV in people of 18 years and above, while child protection laws apply to anybody under the age of 18 years. They suggest that such a local and national structured approach should also apply to HRV. Northumbria Police acknowledge that every definition should be subject to regular review, since circumstances can change, e.g. the way in which DV and abuse definition has been 'changed to include different variations in sexuality and groups within the community... because you cannot ostracise any particular group of people and it's important to include all people (including boys) who are subject to that particular area of violence and crime'.

## **Non-Governmental Organisation in the UK**

The organisations in specific focus in this section are those involved in combating HRV. The relevant organisations are described in brief in the following paragraphs.

### **Equality Now**

An international advocacy organisation based in London that does not provide direct services but instead mobilises public pressure to promote and protect women's rights around the world. The organisation looks at all forms of violence and was initially established as an organisation in New York (1992). It also has an office in Nairobi.

Sara Lewis suggests that:

*There is a whole range of issues which can be included...women who are murdered for bringing the reputation of the family allegedly in disrepute...it is a mistake to define it in very narrow area...there are areas where women bear the brunt of male violence because they are seen in that sort of relationship with man, even though may not be traditionally called honour related crime...for example dowry killings... domestic violence.*

Sara Lewis also maintains that:

*though terminology is important for the way people understand things but the more important thing is to make sure that people understand the problem and has solutions to solve those. I know that on FGM there is a big debate on how we look at it/what to call it...I think as long people are culturally sensitive...and that we should address all forms of violence and not focus on any one particular form of violence that a particular community practices against its people but to suggest that violence has elements in all the communities, but that its practice differs from one community to another. Violence exists in all the cultures*

Sara Lewis suggests that we should take the focus away from any culturally specific form of violence, but at the same time alerts us to situations where:

*there could be certain needs within a particular area...but if you take away the term honour crimes, then you also take away the focus, for example of all the things that go on ...so you don't want to stigmatise any particular community and not recognise that it does not go on in different places. In Sweden, there was a young person who was 18 years and was murdered by her boyfriend because she did not want to go out with him anymore...and that was a Swedish family. So in a society we should recognise women as equal individuals but at the same time not take away the specificity of certain crimes by putting everything in the same pot.*

Sara Lewis' main concern is that in the fear of stigmatising communities, we should not forget that violence still exists and that we need to address this violence. She talks about an incident taken up by Equality Now in 1994, which could be considered comparable to honour killing. This was the case of Kenneth Peacock who killed his wife, several hours after finding her in bed with another man. In passing the minimum sentence, which he then suspended, Judge Robert Cahill expressed his sympathy for the defendant and said: 'I seriously wonder how many married men...would have strength to walk away'. Jacqui Hunt suggests that while one would normally contemplate counselling or possibly divorce as a way of addressing the issue of marital breakdown, the judge in Baltimore Circuit Court of the United States felt that taking a woman's life for committing adultery was in some way justified' (<sup>70</sup>). She then raises the question, 'is that so different from an honour killing in Jordan'?

Also, she reiterates that 'even though fundamental human rights that are theoretically gender-neutral should protect the civil, political, social and

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<sup>70</sup> Paper presented for Expert meeting – Violence in the Name of Honour, Stockholm, 4-5th December 2003.



economic rights of men and women, violations of women's rights have been historically viewed as 'cultural'. The notion that human rights violations against women are acceptable cultural practices is a manifestation in itself of discriminations that allows 'culture' to be defined by those largely responsible for violations' (ibid).

## The Muslim Parliament of Great Britain

The Muslim Parliament is a community forum that campaigns on issues relating to the Muslim community. The community forum came about in 1992 in order to provide a national community forum where Muslims from all backgrounds, and both men and women, could come together and discuss issues that affected the community. Khalid Ali of the Muslim Parliament says that a number of core issues have been identified in the Muslim community, and since they are a campaigning/lobbying group, they have identified forced marriage and the associated Muslim marriage contract as a major issue.

Their work has mainly involved advocacy and the raising of awareness through campaigns, such as the **Stop Forced Marriages Project**. They also work very closely with the Muslim Women's Institute and have identified gaps in service provisions within the Muslim community relating to forced marriages and have focused on those specific needs, such as identifying and building alliances with other organisations with a view to facilitating change within the community by, for example, visiting schools to provide guidance and contact details of organisations who can help students who might be victims of forced marriages. They also identify opportunities to enter the current debate on family issues in the wider community.

In their public statement, MPGB suggest that 'the ideal of marriage can often be tainted by duress and family loyalties and examples of forced marriages, illegitimacy and honour killings are sadly rife within our community, although these issues are often brushed under the carpet'.

Their work mainly relates to forced marriage, which they define as 'marriage without consent and is unacceptable under both UK and Islamic law, where mutual consent is a pre-requisite to any marriage'. Their public reiterations are somewhat ambiguous, however. On the one hand it acknowledges that the parent's ability to force their marriage choices onto their children can often be reinforced by the attitudes of local Imams who share the cultural norms and values of Muslim parents. On the other hand the statement says that 'although youth should be given free will over choice of a spouse, they should also appreciate the Islamic etiquettes of finding a suitable marriage partner. Parents have a wealth of knowledge and experience they can share with their children in assisting the choice of a partner, which is fine as long as no pressure is being used'. The statement also places some responsibility on Imams who should be educated on the importance of ensuring that two people truly consent to the marriage before performing *nikkah* (marriage) ceremonies.<sup>71</sup>

In relation to honour related violence, Khalid Ali says that:

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<sup>71</sup> [www.muslimparliament.org.uk/marriage.htm](http://www.muslimparliament.org.uk/marriage.htm)

*it is an extreme form of violence against women. There is no honour in murder. It's a disgrace for people....these people are people who still behave they are part of a tribe...remnants of tribal culture where women are treated as commodities, where women are considered as if they have no souls...they do not think for themselves...men decide the women's future and what's best for them...this is a feudal/tribal kind of attitude that persists out here as well.*

*Also 'oppression is out there. A woman who is not prepared to surrender to a man's authority or has her own views is seen as a threat and unacceptable. Women are expected to listen and submit.*

Khalid Ali states that honour killings are not condoned by Islam; nowhere in the Sharia law are honour killings condoned. Marriage in Islam is a secular and civil contract between two individuals, each of whom is the guardian of his or her own honour. Honour is thus a very individualistic notion in Islam. Khalid Ali says that in all the cases they have seen, mothers are involved along with fathers and sons.

## **The Southall Black Sisters: SBS**

Southall Black Sisters, a non-profit organisation, was established in 1979 to meet the needs of black (Asian and African Caribbean) women. In their organisational aims they state:

*our aims are to highlight and challenge violence against women, empower them to gain more control over their lives, live without fear of violence and assert their human rights to justice, equality and freedom. For more than two decades we have been at the forefront of challenging domestic and gender violence locally and nationally and campaigning for the provision of support services to enable women and their children to escape violent relationships.*

SBS also manage a resource centre in West London that provides a comprehensive service to women experiencing violence and abuse, such as casework, advocacy, counselling and self-help support services in several community languages.

Tahleen Ali, the joint-coordinator of the London-based Southall Black Sisters (SBS) suggests that honour is based on the notion of family honour rather than personal honour, and is still important in South Asian, Jewish, African and Middle Eastern communities. Women are expected to conform to a sexually pure life. If they transgress, they could be accused of not only having brought shame and dishonour on the family, but also on the whole community. Honour is related to moral or sexual behaviour. It could also include not wearing traditional clothes, questioning husbands or parents, or cutting your hair; all these being deemed as tainting family honour. Saba Johri of Imkaan<sup>72</sup> says that 'honour itself is not endemic in the abuse of women, it's a feature that's present in many women's lives and affects

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<sup>72</sup> Imkaan is a national policy training and research initiative in the UK, dedicated to providing support and advocacy to the specialist refuge sector, supporting Asian woman and children experiencing violence. Imkaan has worked with women and girls who have experienced violence and but these girls do not separate 'violence' and honour related violence' but see honour as instrumental in their abuse.

many women's lives and often accompanies other forms of violence. She mentions that 'as a Muslim Asian woman in the UK, honour is a very important factor in my life and I and other members in my family have been affected by it'. Honour seems to govern the workings of everyday life and 'honour' is not always associated with physical violence or brutality. As it is a term that's important to both men and women, it cannot be completely abolished.

Transgressing can have serious consequences for women that range from social ostracism to murder and suicide. All these acts are seen as ways of restoring honour. The SBS also believe that forced marriage is a way of restoring honour and controlling sexuality. They recognise that men can also be under pressure to conform to marrying appropriately.

Reiterating similar concerns as those raised by representatives from Scotland Yard, SBS also believe that acts of honour are not very different from other acts of Violence Against Women (VAW). Also, they are cautious about building a 'parallel universe' for BME women when they argue that the experiences of white women are not that dissimilar. They cite an example that a white man beating his wife for talking to a neighbour is not so very different from an Asian man killing his daughter for having a Christian boyfriend.

The Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation<sup>73</sup> reiterates some of the ideas raised by Southall Black Sisters. In an interview, Shabeen Ali, a Kurdish from Iran, suggests that many women approaching her organisation are under threat of HRV:

*These women approach us when women are threatened to be killed by a member of family, for seeking separation or having a boyfriend...they are perceived to have brought shame and dishonour to the family by doing things that are not approved by their religion and culture. The boyfriend can be from any community, not necessarily a white boyfriend.*

Shabeen Ali said that 'what honour killing does is to make women's lives conditional: on wearing the right clothes, on not speaking too loudly, on not being seen with the wrong person, not even being the subject of rumour, for rumour is enough to stain the family's honour'.

However, Shabeen Ali challenges some of the ideas raised by Southall Black Sisters and Scotland Yard. Her organisation believes that although the Metropolitan Police and Home Office are looking at domestic violence and forced marriage units, they do not have a specific unit for Honour based violence, even though they see HRV as a crime. Shabeen Ali strongly believes that 'HRV is being considered by MET Police under the umbrella of DV, which is wrong, because HK is a deliberate act, a planned killing and the perpetrator is actively looking to kill'. Furthermore, in relation to a specific VAW strategy, Shabeen Ali reiterates that:

*We are campaigning for a separate unit, that is honour killings should have a separate department within the Home Office and Met Police, just like they have Domestic Violence and Forced Marriage. I agree with others that it is Violence against Women but it's not like DV.... all violence may not end up with killings or murder.... Honour Killings is*

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<sup>73</sup> They receive community grants from Camden and Islington Chests. They receive clients and the organisation works with DV, honour killings and forced marriage with women from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan and Turkey.

*to bring shame to the family....it's about women to preserve the shame...not to smoke, not wear make-up, not to have a boyfriend....it's a deliberate act, with knowledge and with a certain plan. It's different from DV... and DV can happen in every household in, every culture but honour killings don't happen in an English or Swedish family?*

Those who do not support the VAW integrated approach suggest that Honour Killings are different from Domestic Violence because first of all, incidents of Domestic Violence may not always end up in violence. Secondly, the violence associated around HBV is connected with issues of honour and shame. Finally, unlike Domestic Violence, honour killings do not take place in Swedish or English families.

There are similarities in the discourses presented by NGO's in the UK and the issues raised by government bodies. There are similarities in the idea that HRV could be seen as a part of Violence Against Women and that such a rationale will not allow one to build on 'parallel universe', or the idea that HRV is a feature that is unique to certain ethnic minority communities.

## Summary

In the United Kingdom, it is being suggested by various individuals dealing with HRV that various bodies in both the governmental and voluntary sectors do not have a very good understanding of 'honour-related violence'. This is a relatively new issue for some organisations, such as the Crown Prosecution Service, and some organisations have only been looking at this issue for two to three years, such as the Home Office/FCO. A number of these individuals suggest that we don't have a 'good' understanding but a substantial understanding and it's getting better'.

There is a unanimous opinion among various bodies that HRV is an important political issue, but opinion in the United Kingdom is divided on the understanding and conceptualisation of HRV. One opinion suggests that HRV is not clearly distinguishable from domestic violence, and that domestic violence often involves notions of honour. Such an understanding also prevents essentialising, as suggested by Scotland Yard. For example, when a white man commits an act of violence, it is seen as DV, but when an Asian man commits the same crime, it is seen as honour murder. The second opinion suggests that there is something specific about HRV so that there should be a separate legislation for it, and that it should not be confused with domestic violence. The third opinion suggests that Forced Marriages have an element of honour in them. Forced Marriages are also seen as part of honour-based Violence. Women within a forced marriage can also suffer Domestic Violence and women who refuse forced marriage may also suffer Domestic Violence. Interestingly, some of the ideas in the Swedish 2004 fact sheet, such as 'girls are subject to extremely rigorous control by their families...some are promised in arranged marriages...or forced into marriage...' are reiterated in the discussions taking place amongst government bodies in the UK. In the fourth and final opinion, it is suggested that we should work towards an Integrated Approach towards Violence Against Women (see the Women's National Commission report: 2005), where all forms of violence, such as forced marriage, domestic violence and honour murders, are included in the definition. This report would also light to highlight two additional observations. Firstly that there is a

need for a national definition of HRV that is similar to the Swedish definition. A national definition can always be adapted by agencies and institutions that are working ‘hands-on’ to fit the experiences they encounter in their day-to-day work. Secondly, it is being increasingly recognised in the UK that ‘opinion formers’ such as religious and community leaders can help in the combating of honour related violence. Working ‘within’ the community rather than from the ‘outside’ is an important step towards combating HRV.

## Governmental Organisations in Turkey

The Turkish government, like that of the United Kingdom, has not presented or prepared fact sheets as the Swedish government has done. The UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Yakin Arturk, suggests that:

*Singling out certain types of Violence – in this case honour crimes – has an adverse impact on the fight against violence in general. Honour crimes are only one dimension of VAW whether in Turkey or other parts of the world. There is also the danger of finger pointing (in Turkey to the Kurdish communities and in Europe to the immigrant communities) and normalising other types of violence in the society at large.*<sup>74</sup>

Although the Turkish government is not particularly proactive on this issue, as Yakin Sadak suggests, there is a ‘heightened civil society awareness (mainly women’s groups) on this issue’. Also the media has become quite ‘sensitised’ over the last few years. While the phenomenon of honour crimes is not a new phenomenon, ‘the reaction and sensitisation is quite new’. Every time an honour crime takes place against a woman, it makes the headlines of most of the national newspapers. It is no longer a taboo subject, neither is it a subject that anybody in Turkey still defends.<sup>75</sup> For example, Yakin Sadak mentioned that she had heard conversations in the UN delegations from different countries that HRV was related to ‘tradition’, and that ‘traditions are hard to change’... ‘not so much a defence but more a rationalisation of the process of HRV’. However, she suggests that nobody in Turkey argues in that way anymore. However, Yakin Sadak believes that what Turkey needs is more open and direct condemnation from the political leadership; the government. They should make it clear that HRV is an important political issue that needs to be eradicated.

More recently, Fatima Shaheen, a Member of Parliament, has been appointed to head a new parliamentary committee on combating HRV in Turkey.

<sup>74</sup> Personal Communication by Suruchi Thapar-Björkert

<sup>75</sup> Professor of Political Sociology and Gender and Women’s Studies, Middle Eastern Technical University, Ankara. Till, January 2005, Member and Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). As part of her responsibilities, she reviewed the situation in Turkey and worldwide in relation to violence against women. She gave recommendations to state governments to countries which report to the CEDAW committee.

## Non-Governmental Organisations

In Turkey, the meanings and understandings associated with the term HRV has resonance with those of the UK and Sweden.

### KA-MER

KA-MER is a women's organisation (they also define themselves as a 'civil organisation') based in the town of Diyarbakir in southern Turkey. In public debates, the term honour is found to be unacceptable because it contains a positive meaning and can therefore be used as justification for killing, while the term 'tore'<sup>76</sup> is found to be unacceptable for a number of reasons: a) it is used to attribute killings to particular ethnic or religious groups; b) it can give the impression that 'tore' consists of negative practices only; and c) the term 'tore' killings is also used when referring to blood feuds.

Taking these debates into account, KA-MER uses the definition 'Killings committed in the name of honour':

*When we say, 'in the name of honour', we refer to those killings intended to punish women'. And those killings committed 'in the name of honour' are done so based upon justifications put forth in order to make the killings acceptable and also those that serve to make the women obedient and subservient. We in KAMER state that 'We consider every killing committed in the name of 'honour' to actually be a case of 'extrajudicial execution'<sup>77</sup>.*

The Flying Broom,<sup>78</sup> a lobbying and advocacy organisation, says that the terms morality and honour are defined through women's bodies. Also, although women are seen to be protected by the law, their bodies are governed by the norms, values and conventions of society. These norms take the form of verbal laws and are instituted by the family; mainly by males.

## Women for Women's Human Rights: New Ways (WWHR)

Another organisation working closely on the issue of honour killings is WWHR, a women's NGO that was founded in 1993. The organisation is based in Istanbul and operates at regional, national and international levels. They have a partner international NGO in France called the New Ways, and WWHR is their co-founder. At national level, one of the major pro-

<sup>76</sup> The Turkish word Tore means the sum of the ways of behaviour and living, rules, customs and traditions, shared habits and means adopted by and established within the community.

<sup>77</sup> No More 'If Only': Project for the development of Permanent Methods in the Struggle Against Killings committed in the Name of 'Honour' in the South-East and East Anatolia Regions, 2004 Report, KA-MER.

<sup>78</sup> Flying Broom (Uçan Süpürge) was founded and began its activities in 1996. The initial aim was to establish a network between women's NGO's and to function as an information and documentation center. They do not work directly on violence. However, they disseminate information using several communication channels (website, local women reporters, radio programs, women's bulleting and film festivals). They are also engaged in lobbying. In response to a question on honour related violence, this organisation said that: said what?

grammes is advocacy for legal reform to protect/safeguard women's rights. They have co-ordinated several national campaigns during the last ten years, such as the campaign for the adoption of laws against domestic violence (Protection Order Law), to reform of the civil code, and more recently the reform of the penal code. They have also run a nationwide human rights' training programme for women since 1995, in collaboration with the social services. They train social workers who implement the programme in community centres in 30 cities in Turkey. They carry out follow-up evaluations of the programme, and a lot of grass roots' women's NGO's emerge from this training, which are then supported by WWHR.

Since the year 2000, WWHR has been concentrating on women's sexual rights, bodily/human rights in Muslim societies. They have a solidarity network of NGO's (in the Middle East, North Africa and more recently South East Asia), partly because they believe that the roots of violation are very similar, and partly to consolidate work that is somewhat isolated. In a statement, a representative from the organisation, Aytekin Ozturk, says:

*WWHR has worked hard to amend the Penal Code from a gender perspective. In 2002, we founded a working group to analyse the proposed draft law with feminist lawyers, academics and NGO's and formulate amendments. We analysed all the discriminatory clauses that were not in accord with international law/human rights norms and formulated amendments for the articles...because the proposed draft law in terms of gender was initially not very different from the previous code. As a working group we lobbied the MP's and the Justice Commission to make the necessary changes to the draft law. The working group expanded into a National Platform in 2003 constituting of national, local, and regional NGO's. 30 of our demands were accepted and overall it has been a major shift in terms of women and gender.*

In a recent meeting held in Istanbul in March/April 2005 and entitled 'Gender, Sexuality and the Law Reform in the Middle East, North Africa and South East Asia, WWHR shared their experiences of the Campaign for the Reform of the Turkish Penal Code from a Gender Perspective with 38 country-wide participants. The primary aim was to exchange strategies and challenges relating to civil and penal code reforms, and to share the experience of the advocacy that led to 30 amendments to the Turkish Penal Code towards safeguarding sexual rights and freedom.

WWHR believes that issues relating to sexuality are pivotal to gender roles and power in various countries. Sexuality is not only at the root of many practices that constitute wide-spread violations of human rights for women, but also central to social and political struggles. Practices and attitudes related to women's sexuality, such as honour crimes, sexual coercion and violence, marital rape, forced/early marriages, imposed dress codes or virginity tests, WWHR argues, continue to exist in our societies despite the increasing advocacy efforts of women activists and NGO's.

WWHR suggests that some of these 'imposed' norms around dress, lifestyle and demeanours have been explained as arising from post 9/11, where certain communities, and particularly the South Asian communities, have felt an increasing need to establish 'social order'. Also, since some of these

communities have been targeted by racist representations, the need for 'social order' is even greater.<sup>79</sup>

In a conference organised by WWHR in September 27th-30th 2001, soon after 9/11, participants discussed how religious and nationalist fundamentalists make utmost use of the perceived threat against Muslim identity by constructing a Muslim or national female identity as a last sphere of control against the West. There is thus increasing pressure on women to become the bearers of constructed group identities, and the control of women's sexuality is currently at the heart of many fundamentalist agendas.

Another important issue that was raised by WWHR was the impact of the political climate on creating a favourable or discouraging atmosphere for activism around women's sexual rights. For example, while in Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunis and Turkey there has already been a lot of activism around issues related to bodily rights and women's sexuality, the rise of fundamentalist movements in Yemen, the autocratic regime in Syria and political instability in Algeria, has created a more threatening atmosphere that deters women from putting issues of bodily and sexual rights onto the political agenda.

## Summary

Three main points arise in the Turkish discourse on HRV. Firstly, HRV is conceptualised as a violation of the human rights of individuals. Secondly, HRV is closely associated with the control of women's bodies and sexuality and thus any transgressions are punishable through death. Thirdly, 'honour' defines the everyday patterns of living for women in Turkey.

## Conclusions

All the three countries in question have reflected on and articulated their understandings of HRV at both governmental and non-governmental levels. Definitions and conceptualisations are not static and shift in relation to cross-border conversations and new empirical findings. One of the most important developments has been the governments' increasing recognition that honour related violence is a 'reality' in their own countries, and not merely a 'problem' of 'distant' countries.

Some transitions that we have identified are as follows:

- An increasing recognition that HRV should be seen as a form of 'violence against women' (VAW), or as a form of patriarchal violence. But this idea is disputed and some tensions can be outlined. Firstly, some believe that VAW should not obliterate the specific nature of violence, such as HRV. HRV may involve consent and approval from the wider community, which other forms of violence may not. Secondly, the HRV/crime or murder is often pre-meditated, which makes it different. Thirdly, if HRV is incorporated within the DV remit, the Domestic Violence definition will

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<sup>79</sup> Tahir Rizvi, CPS, UK.



have to be broadened to include both intimate partner violence and family violence.

- The suggestion that we should call it ‘honour-related life’ captures the oppression which may/may not include violence. Honour killing is the last act of physical violence, and before that, men and women can be subjected to degrading forms of abuse, including emotional and psychological. Finally, how do we account for those acts which do not come under the definition of direct/physical violence, but are nevertheless a part of patriarchal gendered oppression?
- The understanding that ‘honour’ and ‘honour related violence’ normally associated with women’s sexuality has been broadened to incorporate the ways in which men can also be seen to transgress the norms of sexuality, thus highlighting the taboo subject of transsexualism and homosexuality. Although organisations in the UK are aware of this issue, it has not been articulated in any official document. In Turkey, no suggestions were put forward on the consequences of sexual transgressions. The Swedish report, ‘Honour related Violence because of sexual orientation’, from the County Administrative Board of Skåne, suggests that honour related violence may occur because the family does not approve of the individual’s sexual orientation. Also, transgressions of normative boundaries do not necessarily have to correspond to those of a sexual nature, but could be connected to economic issues that are perceived to bring ‘dishonour’ to the family, such as stealing or indulging in drugs.
- Organisations, particularly those in the UK and Sweden, have broadened the range of actors who could be affected by HRV. Rather than being limited to women, definitions now also include young girls and boys. It is also being increasingly recognised that men can also be ‘victims’ of HRV, particularly if they are coerced by community pressure to commit an act of violence, or have a relationship with the potential female victim. This, we argue, will also affect the way we conceptualise patriarchal violence, which would include the abuse of men, coercion and the threat of violence. Thus, patriarchal practices make men vulnerable to oppression and violence.
- It is increasingly being recognised that we need to change attitudes within the community. Thus, the role of community leaders (particularly in the UK) is considered as being very important. But on the other hand, there is an opinion that suggests that community leaders are ‘patriarchal’ in their attitudes.
- In Sweden, particularly in the light of the academic and government debates, the definition does not assign responsibility to any particular ethnic/religion/culture, thus moving away from a culturalist approach. However, the definition encourages a ‘live like other young people’ attitude, which could be misinterpreted as implying that there is a dominant norm that is more liberatory.
- If we were to address HRV through a discussion of ‘gender power order’ (as used in Sweden) then we also have to point out how abuse and violence permeates different relationships in both Swedish and immigrant communities, namely, the violence and abuse of children. If we talk about gender power order in relation to honour

related violence, then we should be able to use the same conceptualisation to understand violence in Swedish homes, and why that still remains an under-researched issue.

## Prevalence of Honour-Related Violence

### Introduction

In Chapter 2 we analysed the different ways in which HRV is understood by organisations and individuals. There are a number of issues that we would like to raise. First of all, different understandings and conceptualisations of HRV make it particularly difficult to ascertain its prevalence. For example, in Sweden, the discussion in the previous chapters suggests that honour related violence may also include oppression and honour related life, constituting a continuum of honour-related violence. This would thus include a broader range of individuals affected by these issues. Similarly, in the UK, there is no consensus on the definition between/among governmental and non-governmental bodies. For example, some organisations see honour related violence as part of Violence Against Women (VAW), which includes everything from domestic violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) to forced marriage. However, if we were to draw a distinction between honour related violence and other forms of violence, who we chose to include in our categories would also vary. Secondly, some governments (for e.g. Pakistan) do not always want to recognise the occurrence of HRV in their countries. In countries such as Turkey, the issue of HRV has not been part of the government's political agenda; until very recently that is. It thus becomes very difficult to not only talk about the issue, but also who is affected. Thirdly, and related to the second issue is that the responsibility of HRV is often placed on other countries, so that HRV remains 'hidden' and unchallenged. During the course of the conducted interviews, it was observed that organisations/individuals would associate the 'problem' with 'them' rather than 'us', thus 'othering' the problem. When blame and responsibility is placed on 'others, one often turns a blind eye to issues within one's own community.

### Sweden

In Sweden, as mentioned in the previous chapters, there have been shifts in the way in which individuals and social groups affected by HRV have been identified. For example, since 2002, besides girls and young women (in strongly patriarchal families),<sup>80</sup> we have also recognised violence on 'young people' and also young HBT (homo-, bi- and transsexuals) i.e. individuals who could be punished on the basis of their sexual orientation.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Näringsdepartementet, Fact sheet, February 2002, Regeringens insatser för utsatta flickor i patriarkala familjer, Fact sheet, February 2002

<sup>81</sup> Regeringsbeslut 27. 2003-06-18, Skyddat boende m.m. för flickor och unga kvinnor som riskerar att utsättas för hedersrelaterat våld also see Ministry of Justice, Fact sheet Nov 2004, Government initiatives to help young people at risk of violence in the name of honour.

The issue of HBT-people exposed to violence has been illuminated by two specific reports: “*Rätt till sin egen kärlek*”<sup>82</sup> (The right to one’s own love) from the County of Västra Götaland and “Honour related violence against young people related to sexual orientation” (2004:24) from the Skåne County Administrative Board. In the report from Skåne, the Government is criticised for making a hetero-normative analysis of the violence against young people, because according to the report, power is used by both men and women. In other words, it is not just fathers or male relatives that practice violence against their daughters. Women can also be perpetrators, and boys may be victims. Within the system there is often “job sharing”, although it is usually the man who practises the violence.<sup>83</sup>

The report suggests that one needs to revisit whether a gender power perspective in the Government’s definitions explains honour related violence on the grounds of sexual orientation. The report from Skåne is interesting because firstly, it challenges the view that honour related violence is only associated with “immigrants”. It makes clear that young people in “Swedish families” are also exposed to violence based on honour and shame from their close relatives because of their sexual orientation. By making this group visible, it becomes possible to challenge and discuss violence from different perspectives. Secondly, as Cecilia Axelby suggests, the realisation of the presence of homosexuality in many ways disrupts the patriarchal understanding that power can flow in one direction only, i.e. from men to women. The fact that young boys are also included and seen as being exposed to oppression, we suggest, may perhaps contribute to a more sophisticated gender power analysis, i.e. one that looks at how power is diffused, shared and contested in different sets of relationships: between men, between men and women and between women.

There are no actual statistics of crimes with alleged honour related motives, and discussion as to the extent of the problem is subject to change. Between 2002 and 2004, County Administrative Boards carried out prevalence mappings of HRV, but these figures are uncertain and have been criticised, partly because the surveys were carried out differently in different counties, which make the results difficult to compare. These surveys calculated occurrences after discussions with welfare authorities, young people’s guidance centres, the police, and so on.<sup>84</sup> Nothing is known about the hidden statistics, however. In the Stockholm County Administrative Board report of 2002, entitled “The right to one’s own life”, the numbers for Stockholm County are presented, but it is clearly stated that the hidden statistics are estimated as being 3-4 times the number of cases reported to the police.<sup>85</sup> In October 2005, the Government decided that a new mapping of the occurrence of HRV was to be carried out by Socialstyrelsen. That is because the first mapping was seen as unreliable and the government felt that it was important to do a national mapping instead.<sup>86</sup> It is to be hoped

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<sup>82</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Västra Götaland län (2004a) *Rätt till sin egen kärlek*. Rapport om situationen för ungdomar som p.g.a. sin sexuella läggning utsätts för brott av närstående.

<sup>83</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Skåne län (2004) *Hedersrelaterat våld mot ungdomar på grund av sexuell läggning*, p 133

<sup>84</sup> Kvinnoforum (2005) *Honour related violence*. European resource handbook. p 39

<sup>85</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholm (2002) *Rätten till sitt eget liv*, p 4

<sup>86</sup> Regeringen uppdrar åt Socialstyrelsen att kartlägga förekomsten av hedersrelaterat våld, Pressmeddelande 051007, Justitiedepartementet.

that the occurrence of honour related violence against homosexuals (both men and women) will also be covered in this mapping.<sup>87</sup>

Anna Jacobson comments on the County Administrative Boards' figures (2003) and speaks of the difficulty in estimating these figures:

*But the County Administrative Boards made their surveys and showed that there was a number of girls – [at the time] we were still concentrating on girls and young women -there was still a number who had family problems, and that was difficult to know by then – what is an “ordinary” rebellion against the parents and what constitute serious threats or violence by parents in the name of honour? There were no central directives on how to carry out the mapping, on how they should go about it – so there were a number of different results – And what we can tell from these surveys is that we really don't know how many it is. But they said between 1 500 and 2 000 girls in the country are exposed to this violence, and about 15 percent of these girls were believed to be in need of concrete support and the society's protection.*

The above quote by Anna Jacobson points to the difficulty of statistically accounting for men and women who might not suffer direct physical violence, but who may live in fear or threat of violence or gender-oppression. Anna Jacobson also thinks that the numbers are uncertain partly because one cannot tell whether some have been registered twice in their contacts with the welfare and legal authorities, such as young people's guidance centres and the police. But more importantly, she thinks that the “the problem is there and it has to be taken care of.”

Expressing similar sentiments, Jens Orback in a personal interview and commenting on how widespread the problem is suggests that: ‘it all depends how we define it. If we define it as honour related violence, then it's not that widespread, but if we are to look at honour related life, then it is widespread. For example, if you are fourteen years old and your life centres around going to school and back and cannot meet anyone, then that's not good. So we have to work with HRV and honour related life’.

While Jens Orback signals the oppressive patterns that are built into honour related life, he is also very clear in stating that honour-related life is not confined to immigrant groups alone. It is also a feature of Swedish society. For example, it is oppressive for a man to stop his wife from going to a meeting at night after work.<sup>88</sup>

Lise Bergh, State Secretary for Integration, Democracy, Gender Equality and Sports, suggests that:

*If you are talking about honour related crimes, then it's more concentrated in the big cities.*

But on being asked the question about the particular communities affected, she responded:

*I find it very difficult to answer that question ...but where we know that honour murders have taken place, those are in Kurdish communities...but it is not to say that it does not exist in other cultures.*

<sup>87</sup> Regeringen uppdrar åt Socialstyrelsen att kartlägga förekomsten av hedersrelaterat våld, Pressmeddelande 051007, Justitiedepartementet.

<sup>88</sup> Personal Interview with Jens Orback

Claes Rydgren, a Superintendent Inspector (Kriminalinspektör) within Eskilstuna County Police, suggests that the hidden statistics are huge and could incorporate unlawful threats, physical abuse and violations of integrity. He continues:

*The girls are forced to do things, and other things they want to do but are not allowed to – like there could be certain classes in school that they are not allowed to take part of. We have the restrictions on leisure activities, they are not allowed to go out or meet their friends. Their leisure time is often the time they spend in school. That oppression against these girls is not much written about. There is talk about those severe crimes – and those are fortunately not that common. But those other crimes, that may be serious too, are that they are not allowed to live.*

He also suggests that it's not that more crimes are being committed with honour related motives, 'but that more are coming to our knowledge'. Also, the police, social authorities and educational institutions have a greater awareness of HRV. And finally, girls and women are more aware about the nature of help and support that can be sought if the need arises:

*Question: But is that considered a crime?*

*Well, if the girl were to report it, it may be classified as a crime. I don't dare to go into details, because the distinctions are subtle. It may be deprivation of freedom. But... none of these girls have any interest in contacting police, when it is on that level... Usually the girls loyally obey the family rules and find their own happiness within these rules, marries the one daddy wants them to – often a cousin in the country of origin, to give him the opportunity to move here. Another one may lead a double life. But when you make resistance within certain limits...at the top of the scale is somebody like Fadime who even goes out and talks about... There you have a range. If more begin to make resistance it may lead to more crimes, but it may also lead to a change in attitude of the men. It is there I suppose we would like to concentrate more efforts, and then one would wish that other authorities would fight more for a change of attitude of the men.*

Claes Rydgren from the County Police raises some interesting points, which are reiterated by non-governmental activities. He argues that besides honour related violence, honour related oppression is being discussed as a useful and, in many ways, a more relevant category of analysis. The latter can include restrictions on a girl's leisure activities, not being able to meet friends or denied life's basic freedoms. However, girls can react to honour related oppression in several ways. First of all they might obey the rules in the household and conform to parental expectations. Secondly, they may lead a double life, i.e. conform and resist at the same time. Finally, girls may publicly resist the oppression, like Fadime Sahindal did. One of the reasons that the term 'hidden statistics' is used is that while acts of violence are reported, they are relatively less as compared to oppression, which is often not reported to the police.

Yuksel Said at Linnamottagningen raises similar ideas to those of Claes Rydren from the County Police, and suggests that the 'hidden statistics are considerable:

*I have youths in my family, around 20 years, and I hear from them all the time: “yes, we are going out with some friends, but we are not allowed to do that” so they come home to our house, and change clothes there. Or: “Her mum and dad can absolutely not get to know that we are doing this or that.” At the same time I am against this opinion that all Kurds, Turks or Iranians practise this kind of...well...that they have to have this view. You can’t just say that this is culture – and then tar everyone with the same brush. You have to ask: what is culture? How does the group affect the individual? We [at Linnamottagningen] meet a lot of girls that live under the most terrible conditions; still they are so afraid of the consequences that they don’t dare to do anything. We meet girls that are desperate. But as soon as they can fix, for example a certificate of their virginity, they want to live at home again. And there are many girls that mean: “No, I am not prepared to take these consequences; I try to find my own strategies to survive.” That is rather common. To live a double-life is very common.*

Yuksel Said also suggests that one critique of the County Administrative Boards’ survey is that since they account for the girls’ contacts with different authorities, it might be that the same girl has been trying to get help from several different organisations, such as the social service and the police. It is thus possible that some girls may have been counted several times.

Greta Johansson from Terrafem also reiterates that when you talk about the extent of the problem, it is also important to define what we are talking about:

*The risk of honour killing comes up when you challenge norms, and to challenge norms is unusual, because a great strength is needed and you have to be prepared to pay a very high price. So in that way I don’t think that the extent and the risk of honour killings are that big, because the girls aren’t prepared to break norms. They don’t have the energy. But then, if we do another analysis: what does their “life space” look like? Then we will see a totally different extent, just as when it would come to any women’s “life space”.*

*You mean that we are blind...?*

*We are blind when it comes to oppression, and women do also maintain traditions.*

Greta Johansson from Terrafem does raise the issue that working at a woman’s shelter raises, or makes one aware of issues differently. For example, she suggests that many women have a more narrow ‘life space’ just because they are women. ‘Honour’ might be only one explanation of this fact. It is quite clear from the above quotes that there is no single reality or truth to honour related violence or honour related life. Girls (and to some extent boys) take different positions and resist differently according to their individual circumstances – from the loyalty that the family demands from them, to leading a double life, or openly resisting like Fadime.

Arhe Hamednaca, Sharaf Heroes suggests that:

*It is common. When I say to you that tens of thousands of minority women don’t have the set of rights that you have. It is widespread.*

*Women living in Fittja and Rosengård and Rinkeby<sup>89</sup> [suburbs where mostly people with an immigrant background live] – There is still control of the women. When discussing matters of equality in Sweden, we aim far: Afghanistan, Kurdistan, the Middle East. But the problem exists here in Sweden as well. There are even women that can't go to Skärholmen to shop without their men. Then the man must accompany her. And then I wonder how will this woman be able to live in this society? How will she become independent and work? Will the man follow her all the time? Should we create workplaces where there are only women and no men? Do you understand? And it is a huge problem. We have even some private schools – they are not real schools, they are created to preserve, contain the girls in order to control them. And they are financed by tax money. I think it is... The problem exists, it is a huge problem, but perhaps it is difficult to admit. Maybe we don't want to see that it is a part of Sweden's problems, perhaps, just because they are immigrant girls or immigrant women.<sup>90</sup>*

## Summary

In Sweden no concrete statistics are available at present. A number of issues also need to be or are in process of being addressed. First of all, the statistics need to draw a distinction between women under the threat of HRV and those who have been killed due to HRV. The former category would not only include those who might face physical violence in the near future but also those who may currently be suffering psychological violence. Secondly, the statistics should reflect the numbers of men living under the threat of HRV or killed due to HRV. In Sweden, the discussion at both governmental and non-governmental organisational level has not focused on identifying specific ethnic groups or communities that might be at greater risk of HRV. The concern has rather been to identify 'young people', irrespective of ethnicity or cultural background, who might be suffering HRV due to their gendered or sexual orientations. Also, no official figures are available on the incidence of violence, though there is a general consensus that the 'hidden statistics' could be higher due to underreporting. Some individuals also point out that it could be that it's not the incidence of HRV that is increasing, but the increase in actual reporting. But what we are exactly looking for in official figures of the incidence of honour violence? This debate partly reflects the dilemma of how one quantifies the oppression of living under fear.

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<sup>89</sup> Skärholmen, Fittja and Rinkeby are residential suburbs of Stockholm and Rosengård of Malmö. It is worth mentioning that often immigrant communities live in ghetto-like residential areas with often very little interaction with the Swedes. In such circumstances their 'own culture' becomes a life support and life-line.

<sup>90</sup> For example there are schools (friskolor) with a Muslim profile. And there have been a debate in Sweden about if these schools are following the national curriculum. Another example that was discussed by Yuksel Said of Linnamotagningen was that many teachers go against the School curriculum and follow the wishes of parents that their children should not attend certain classes. It may concern swimming, physical education or sex education. This means the children won't get the education they are entitled to, which ought to be reported to Board of Education.

## The United Kingdom

### Governmental Organisations

If we follow the discussion on honour killings as a form of VAW, as outlined in the previous chapters, the British Crime Survey (BCS) data is useful. The British Crime Survey (BCS) findings reveal that almost one in two (45 percent) women has experienced some form of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking (Walby and Allen, 2004).<sup>91</sup> 'If we were to include sexual harassment and all other forms of violence, this issue directly touches more than half of the female population' (ibid). More importantly, the report identifies 'honour killings' (such as trafficking for sexual exploitation, FGM, forced/child marriage) as a form of violence. While this is naturally important, there is 'less reliable data', which 'is often marginalised in policy and practice' (2005). According to the Kvinnoforum Shehrazad Project, 2004,<sup>92</sup> 'one in four women (and one in seven males) will be a victim of domestic violence in their lifetime, one in ten experience violence in any given year, and domestic violence has the highest repeat victimisation of any crime...and 'female victims of domestic violence in ethnic minority communities may be discouraged from speaking out about violence for fear of bringing dishonour upon their family or community'.<sup>93</sup> The above statistics are not specific to HRV, however, and can be only relevant to this study if we agree on a specific definition of HRV, i.e. HRV as a specific form of violence or as another category of VAW.

Ghazala Rizvi<sup>94</sup> from the Metropolitan Police argues that we should not focus on any one particular community but rather establish that all communities are affected so that the best possible service can be provided:

*that most of the data we have around forced marriages is from South Asian communities, predominantly from Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. I think that is due to a number of reasons. First one needs to look at the history of immigration of these communities into the UK, secondly the support networks of these communities for young women that are accessible and available and thirdly, the perceptions and understanding of arranged/forced marriages in these communities. 'But the direct focused approach on South Asian communities is not the whole picture'. We have cases from the Middle East for honour-based violence. You can get forced marriages/HBV from the Somalian countries and the East Horn of Africa. You have FGM going on in these communities and that's a manifestation of HBV. There are also the Chinese and Eastern Europe's newly arrived communities...there are no established support networks for these communities. Ghazala Rizvi says that the government should not focus just on South Asian communities, but on all the communities.*

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<sup>91</sup> 'What a Waste' (2005): The Case for An Integrated Violence Against Women Strategy' by Liz Kelly and Jo Lovett. Document prepared for the Women's National Commission, UK.

<sup>92</sup> Cited in Honour Related Violence: European resource Book and Good Practice, Based on the European project, 'prevention of violence against women and girls in patriarchal families, Kvinnoforum, Stockholm, 2005

<sup>93</sup> Kvinnoforum, Shehrazad Project, 2004.

<sup>94</sup> Sally Stanko, from the Home office<sup>94</sup>, supports the MET Police opinion.



On the issue of immigration, academics such as Shaheen Ali<sup>95</sup> have argued that the immigration clampdown of the 1970s in the UK made it imperative for many immigrant men in the UK to bring their families from their country of origins. Many women and children who came to the UK had little point of reference other than their own clan. 'Clannishness became the norm'. A few households became very important. Many of these people were hard-working, and with the strong pound they made money and naturally wanted to keep it inside the clan. In such circumstances, 'the religious beliefs that help to bind the community are co-opted as justification for honour –related violence' (Shaheen Ali, Nov 21st 2004).

The Northumbria County Police representatives suggest that they have some indication of forced marriage rather than HRV, even though they believe that forced marriage is a form of honour based violence:

*We are not aware of a particular incident of honour based violence. Normally, the incidents we would get reported are forced marriage incidents...so I would regard it as a forced marriage incident rather than HRV. We take advice and give advice on cultural issues. It is difficult to get statistical data on these issues because the figures of forced marriage and honour related violence would be included in incidents of domestic abuse...we don't have incident codes for forced marriage and HRV but we do have codes of domestic abuse. Even nationally there is no incident code for HRV and forced marriage for the police force.*

The Northumbria Police are clear that they do not have statistical data that specifically relates to HRV. The Northumbria Police work very closely with Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), which suggests that HRV is a widespread issue, and although most of the cases come from South Asian communities in the UK, it is also prevalent in Eastern Europe, South America and the Middle East.

In relation to forced marriages, Ashish Chaddha, from the Forced Marriage Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, suggests that the cases they get are mostly from BME communities, and mainly South Asians. However, Ashish Chaddha points out that there are also cases from Eastern Europe and East Asia. Ashish Chaddha states:

*We have got cases of forced marriage that are as young as 11 years. It mostly happens to women, but 15% of cases are men. Most cases are of young people- the majority of the cases are between 15-35 years of age. 30% are under 18 years. We get cases from all over the the UK although the cases are mostly urban based.*

Ritu Singh and Maria Parkinson<sup>96</sup> suggest that while it is essential to educate lawyers, social workers, police officers, juries and judges about HRV, there could be an inherent danger of stereotyping communities. They suggest that:

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<sup>95</sup> First female professor of law in Pakistan, first female government minister in the North West Frontier Province, first female Pakistani to become a professor of law in the UK.

<sup>96</sup> They specialise in child law, international child abduction and the repatriation and protection of children and adults from domestic violence within the context of forced marriage. Ritu Singh is a Barrister at Renaissance Chambers and Maria Parkinson is a Partner at Dawson Cornwell Solicitors.

*During the 150 or so forced marriage cases that the author has been involved in, the families mostly come from Pakistani, Bangladeshi, African and Sikh communities. Does this mean that such people are more likely to commit such crimes, or does it rather mean they are more alive to them and are more literate and litigious and consequently they report them more often? What about Chinese and South East Asian Communities? One factor is for sure, this is not an issue confined to just one religious group.*

Echoing similar sentiments, Adam Wilson, an Advocate from Renaissance Chambers, suggests that:

*Because of the system of commonwealth immigration into the UK and because we have in the UK a fairly established Indian Asian originating community who are reaching a stage of being far more vocal....the problem in that community has been the subject of consideration and publicity... far more than other communities. I don't recognise quite such a focus in other communities but it does not mean that it does not exist in other communities. The key factor is the strict sense of honour that permeates any particular community...if you don't have a society based on strong relationships rooted in cultural and religious milieu...then you won't use that as a justification for honour related violence.*

Adam Wilson also argues that:

*From my experience, possibly because of Commonwealth Immigration in the UK and because we have an established community originating from the Indian sub-continent who are now reaching a stage of being far more vocal than they were 15-20 years ago. I think the problem within that community has been the subject of a lot of consideration, perhaps more so than other communities. But I am not sure whether that means it does not exist in other communities, especially those that adhere to a strict sense of honour. For example, the Jewish community has a strong sense of honour but we may not hear about those cases the way we do for the South Asian community*

## **Non-Governmental Organisations**

Non-Governmental organisations, including charities, have a difficult role in relation to combating HRV. While the responsibility mainly lies with the state, NGO's can assist the state in making its efforts more effective through assisting 'victim's and survivors' of the state policies and legislations that are in place and informing them of their rights. Also, NGO's provide services and can be a route through which women access the right kind of service. Thus the interaction between governmental and non-governmental bodies becomes really important.

DIVA is a charity organisation (in the voluntary sector). It is a Domestic Violence Forum. DIVA helps agencies to develop training, policies and practice on domestic violence and to work with survivors within the community. DIVA is funded by grants from Newcastle City Council, Northumbria Police and Health Action Zone.

Paramjeet Ahluwalia and Deeba Rizvi of DIVA suggest that:

*We don't know the extent of what's happening. Women are taken from here to abroad. But HRV is hidden...there are no statistics on it, even*

*though we think it's quite widespread...and also it could be hidden but widespread at the same time is because the system is in place which does not allow people to disclose anything in case it brings dishonour to the family. We have to ask whether it's a BME issue only. If you look at the Jewish community or the Chinese community or even the white community, honour is an issue there as well.*

On being asked whether HRV had an ethnic connotation, they said 'yes'. However, they also mentioned that the word 'honour' is being used to distinguish violence in ethnic communities from violence in white communities, and that this may not give a true picture.

In relation to men being affected by HRV, Paramjeet Ahluwalia and Deeba Rizvi suggest that they have never come across any case of violence against men. They say that:

*Men tend to dishonour women much more...also if men have relationships outside marriage or before marriage that is considered to be more acceptable than if women did the same. The repercussion is not the same for men or women.*

Karma Nirvana is an Asian Women's project in Derby that mainly supports women from South Asia, India and Pakistan, women who were born here or come here from India/Pakistan. The project was formed in 1993/1994. A representative from the project, Baljinder Singh, from Derby says,

*I am one of seven sisters and basically at the age of 14, I was presented with the picture of the man (from India) I was expected to marry. I ran away from home in Derby and basically my parents could not accept the fact that I had refused to marry this person and their key motivation behind them not accepting my answer as no was that I would bring 'shame' to the family. So my whole experience was rooted in the whole notion of 'izzat' (honour). So when I went away from home, I was told by my family, that I was dead in their eyes. My sister, Rubina who was 24-years-old and who had an arranged marriage (she married the man I was supposed to marry) committed suicide. My sister was exposed to domestic violence in her marriage and every time she approached my family she was sent back because my parents would say that if you don't, you will dishonour the family. My parents also asked my sister to see a community leader, who was an Asian male, a local mayor, who basically ratified what my parents had said and that she should go back because otherwise she would bring shame to the family. Soon after she set herself on fire and for me that was a turning point because I realised the power of the concept of honour in my family.*

Baljinder Singh is of the opinion that her experiences are shared by many women in the UK and says that, on average, Karma Nirvana receives 18 cases every week (they receive 40 direct calls per month) that are rooted in the concept of 'Izzat'. She narrates an incident where a girl was sent to the local General Practitioner (GP) for a virginity test because her parents suspected that she had a boyfriend. The GP refused to do the test and her parents are now planning to send her abroad to get married.

This incident resonates with the opinion shared by DIVA that one of the reasons why so many incidents go unnoticed is because women are sent abroad, and, if they do not comply with the wishes of their parents, they may be killed. As Ritu Singh and Maria Parkinson from Renaissance

Chambers also point out, the working group (established in 1999 by the Home Office Minister for Community Relations) on Forced Marriage stated in their findings that, 'young women have not been allowed to return to the UK until they are pregnant, to make it even more difficult for them to escape the relationship...forced marriage can result from false imprisonment and can lead to rape and forced impregnation' (Working paper, 20th June 2005, p.7).

Another Asian Women's project is the Newham Asian Women's Project (NAWP) in East London, which supports black and ethnic minority women. They have been working on the issue of HRV for the last 7-8 years. Mini Sinha, who co-ordinates the advisory service, believes that:

*IT varies with how you define the whole term. Most clients say that there is an element of honour related abuse at some stage, even when they don't call it HRV... I mean a lot of Asian women cannot even access the services, cannot report violence because of pressure from family or community that it's not proper to report, that itself is a form of HRV...continuing perpetuation of abuse...it also depends on how you define the term.*

In her analysis, Mini Sinha supports the view that the numbers could be considerable, and maintains that what is projected in the public domain may not reflect the real numbers due to an under-reporting from a fear of more violence. In her response to the question about which ethnic groups are most exposed to violence she says that:

*it all depends on how you define honour. You don't talk about minority cultures only in our work. The definitions and reactions change but it's not a Turkish, Jewish, Asian problem. HV happens everywhere – it cuts across class, religion and ethnicity. The way the media picks up the debate pinpoints particular communities but it's a cross-cultural issue and policies on it have to be cross cultural as well.*

Drawing on their experiences from the north of the UK, some individuals, such as Saba Johri from Imkaan,<sup>97</sup> suggest that Pakistani Muslim women are more affected by HRV.

## Summary

The overall picture that we get in the UK suggests that while individuals and organisations do suggest the likely prevalence of HRV in South Asian families, particularly those of Indian and Pakistani descent, they also point out that it's not confined to these communities alone or to any specific religious groups. There are also incidences of HRV in communities from Eastern Europe, South America and the Middle East. Also, the idea of HRV does include issues of forced marriage, domestic violence and FGM. On the issue of domestic violence, it is increasingly debated that it may

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<sup>97</sup> Imkaan is a national policy training and research initiative in the UK dedicated to providing support and advocacy to the specialist refuge sector, supporting Asian woman and children experiencing violence. Imkaan has raised awareness and helps with the capacity building of individuals. Imkaan has not received any funding from the government.

include an element of ‘honour’ and is as prevalent in white communities as it is in BME communities.

## Turkey

### Governmental Organisations

Unlike their counterparts in Sweden and the UK, government representatives in Turkey do not have a hands-on approach when it comes to the issue of HRV. However, while Turkey was represented at the CEDAW committee and discussed the prevalence of violence against women in Turkey, it did not exclusively focus on honour killings. For similar reasons to the United Kingdom and Sweden, no government statistics on honour related violence are available in Turkey.

### Non-Governmental Organisations

Although there are some instances of HRV in West Turkey, most of the murders that are documented are in communities from East and South East Turkey. The victims are mainly Kurdish and have also recently migrated to large cities (e.g. Istanbul, Ankara). Some individuals from the NGO’s argue that the recent incidences of HRV in larger cities have been in communities (mainly Kurdish) that have migrated from East and South East Turkey. This point has been supported by academics and researchers, such as Yakin Sadak, who maintains that ‘migrants’ in the ‘metropolis may commit honour violence, as they did in the countryside’.

Some respondents argue that it is also taking place in Turkish families. It would thus appear that violence committed in the name of honour cannot be just described as a Kurdish or a South East Turkey problem. The NGO, Flying Broom, suggests that it is widely believed that honour killings are more common in the less developed eastern regions of Turkey. However, they argue that this is not the case, and although the feudal dynamics and tribal relations in eastern regions strengthen the problem, honour related violence is not unique to the eastern rural regions but is also committed in the larger metropolis.

The organisation KAMER suggests that as the educational and economic levels of the women and family decreases, the frequency of physical violence and number of honour killings increases. Of the 54 women aged between the ages of 16-45 who had applied to KAMER for help in 2003-2004, 15 were illiterate and 8 knew how to read and write without having attended school, 16 were elementary school graduates, 3 were middle school graduates and 12 were high school graduates. KAMER did not receive any applications from those who had received higher education or attended university.

## Conclusions

Just who is affected by HRV varies in all the three countries, according to representatives from governmental and non-governmental organisations. In Sweden, mapping the prevalence of HRV could be governed by debates articulated by analysts that we should not focus on any particular ethnic

group or culture, but on violence against women in its totality, thus also focusing on violence in mainstream Swedish families. There are also parallel arguments from individuals working 'practically' with this issue that there are differences between 'modern' and non-modern' families; the latter being more prone to HRV. How individuals/groups are slotted into those communities is not clear cut and highly controversial.

In the UK, organisations and individuals are reluctant to mention any particular community because they feel that it stigmatises and essentialises specific cultures. However, they do accept that a majority of the 'victims' have a South Asian background. The reluctance could be due to the specific ideological stance that some feminists working on this issue have taken, i.e. seeing it more as a Violence Against Women strategy, rather than identifying the specificities of any form of violence. As VAW affects women regardless of race, class, religion and caste it means that no particular community is identified. On the other hand, organisations are aware that specifying which communities are affected is also dependant on how one defines the problem.

Opinion among academics and NGO's in Turkey is split into two camps, although no-one strictly adheres to any one position. One opinion focuses on the problem as being largely located among the Kurdish communities in South East and East Turkey. They also see it largely as a problem of 'rural' Turkey and as a 'tribal' custom (some organisations in the UK, such as Muslim Parliament of Great Britain, also view it in the same way). The other opinion aligns somewhat with the first opinion but also suggests that while the problem of honour killings is not restricted to any specific areas, it is increasing in major metropolitan cities (such as Ankara and Istanbul). They associate this change with the increasing flow of migrants into the cities.

## Initiatives to Combat HRV

The aim of this chapter is to present some preliminary observations of the initiatives that have been taken by the three countries in their attempts to monitor and reduce the incidence of honour related violence. It is clear from the previous chapters that honour related violence is being seriously recognised and debated in all the three countries.

### Sweden

Viewing honour related violence as a 'societal' issue. The Swedish Government strongly supported the adoption of the UN 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which among other things states that no human rights can be disregarded for any individual in any country by invoking custom, tradition or religious consideration.<sup>98</sup>

Cabinet Minister Mona Sahlin also stressed the importance of working with the issue at an international level. In a press release before an expert meeting on the subject of honour related violence (December, 2004) she is quoted as saying: 'In Sweden we have made some headway, but at the same time we have seen that on this issue the solution must be found at an international level. The culture of honour knows no nation borders, that is shown by the cases of girls being taken away to forced marriages or the murder of Pela.'<sup>99</sup> The concluding document stressed that states have the responsibility to exercise due diligence to prevent and punish perpetrators, in accordance with their duty to protect and promote human rights.<sup>100</sup> Due diligence refers to the fact that states should 'prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetuated by the state or by private persons'<sup>101</sup>.

In the summary report of the conference "Combating Patriarchal Violence Against Women – Focusing on Violence in the Name of Honour" in December 2004, Foreign Minister Laila Freivalds and Jens Orback, Minister of Integration, Equality and Major Cities, write that violence against women is often given low priority on political agendas around the world:

*[T]his type of violence is too often surrounded by silence – a silence that is coercive, and a form of consent. We will not accept this. As pointed out in the closing statement of the conference: We will bring violence against women and violations of human rights into the public debate. We will not be silent. And we hope that you will not be silent either.*

<sup>98</sup> [www.manskligarattigheter.gov.se](http://www.manskligarattigheter.gov.se)

<sup>99</sup> Pressinbjudan: Yakin Ertürk medverkar på expertmöte om hedersrelaterat våld. Pressmeddelande 29 October 2003, Justitiedepartementet

<sup>100</sup> Combating Patriarchal Violence Against Women – Focusing on Violence in the name of Honour, Government offices (2005), p 7

<sup>101</sup> UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

One of the issues that arose from the conference was that it was necessary to map the measures taken against patriarchal violence and the necessary protection that needs to be carried out.<sup>102</sup>

At the national level, and in relation to male violence, the Swedish Government has strengthened the existing laws. In 1998, the **Women's Protection Reform (Kvinnofridsreformen)** was introduced. This is a comprehensive programme of measures to counteract violence against women. An important part of this reform was to improve legislation, to work with preventive measures and towards a better reception of subjected women. Subsequently, a new category was introduced in the Penal Code called the **Gross violation of a woman's integrity**.<sup>103</sup> Under this new category, systematic violations and violence on women, in intimate relationships, will be punished.<sup>104</sup> Even though the above category has been criticised as toothless by an evaluating report 'Ett slag i luften' (2004), it recognises the long-term oppression that a woman can be subjected to inside the home.

On April 1st 2005, the **Sexual Felony Act**<sup>105</sup> extended its understanding of rape and in turn strengthened the rights of its victims. This means, among other things, that a perpetrator who takes advantage of a person rendered defenceless by sleep, severe intoxication or disability shall be convicted of rape.<sup>106</sup>

In 2006, the Swedish Government planned to launch a major programme to improve the support "for women exposed to violence, and their children", to reorganise Rikskvinnocentrum (the National Centre for Battered and Raped Women) into a national knowledge and research centre, and to support women's organisations. The Government also decided to allocate 135 million kronor to these projects.<sup>107</sup>

In the following sections we will highlight some of the debates that emerged and also the rationale behind the government initiatives that were discussed and implemented.

## The Rationale Behind Government Initiatives

At the end of 1997, the former Minister of Integration, Leif Blomberg, and the Minister of Equality, Ulrica Messing, organised a meeting to discuss integration and equality with representatives of the social authorities, schools and immigrant organisations. In the spring of 1999, following the media debate on the subject of arranged and/or coercive marriages, the government initiated a dialogue with representatives from different organisations, religious communities and authorities on possible measures that would improve the situation of the group at risk and to further governmental

<sup>102</sup> Regeringskansliet, 2005, En översiktlig kartläggning av åtgärder mot patriarkalt våld och förtryck i hederns namn, mot kvinnor och homo- och bisexuella samt transpersoner.

<sup>103</sup> Näringsdepartementet, faktablad 2001, Uppföljning av Kvinnofridsreformen,

<sup>104</sup> Kvinnofrid – faktablad 1999 (Brottsbalken 4 kap. 4a §)

<sup>105</sup> In 1976, the Commission of Inquiry on Sexual Felony presented its report Sexual Assault (SOU1976:9 Sexuella övergrepp) and women's organisations criticised the old-fashioned view of women present in the report, where the attitude of the woman or her actions before the assault were used more or less in defence of the man committing the rape.

<sup>106</sup> 6 kap. 1§ Brottsbalken. Previously it was called Sexuellt utnyttjande and not rape.

<sup>107</sup> Utsatta kvinnor får utökad stöd, Pressrelease 050414, Justitiedepartementet



understanding of the issue.<sup>108</sup> In August 1999, The Swedish Integration Board (Integrationsverket) was commissioned to study “the extent and frequency of generational and cultural conflicts that result in making girls of a different ethnic and cultural origin from the majority population either seek ‘support from society’ to leave home or being affected by mental ill-health.”<sup>109</sup> The commission resulted in the report “Let’s talk about girls.” and may be regarded as one of the early attempts by the Swedish Government to define and understand the issue at hand. The report speaks of lack of integration as a key to why oppression and violence against girls and women occurs in certain families.

In 2000, a new economic initiative was taken that specifically targeted projects with the aim of “improving the condition of girls”. (The issue seems to have been defined in a more general way). The funds were allocated to the National Board for Youth Affairs (Ungdomsstyrelsen) from the Inheritance Fund (Allmänna arvsfonden) and consisted of 7 million kronor up to the turn of 2002/2003. According to the Government’s fact sheet of 2002, ”Regeringens insatser för flickor i patriarkala familjer”, measures specifically targeted at girls and women of immigrant origin have been taken since 1998 (from the Government subsidy Special Equality Actions (Särskilda jämställdhetsåtgärder)). The Integration Board also has contributed financially to projects with the broader aim of gender equality.<sup>110</sup>

In 2002, the same year that Fadime was murdered, a more comprehensive and targeted project was initiated. Ten different initiatives are mentioned in the summary,<sup>111</sup> as compared to the 1-2 initiatives per year mentioned from 1999 to 2001. Three days after the death of Fadime, on the 24th January 2002, the Government contributed two million Swedish kronor to projects supporting “girls in patriarchal families”.<sup>112</sup> Comprehensive projects for 2002 involved authorities such as the National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen), the Swedish Integration Board, the Board of Education, the Municipal Board of Stockholm, County Administration Boards, the Swedish Commission for State Grants to Religious Communities and the National Board for Youth Affairs (Ungdomsstyrelsen)<sup>113</sup>. Socialstyrelsen was commissioned to create written information about working with vulnerable girls in patriarchal families based on existing laws and knowledge and primarily aimed at social workers. The result of this was the information leaflet (Meddelandeblad) issue 6/02 entitled “Girls living under threat and coercion in families with strong patriarchal values”.<sup>114</sup> The Board of Education was also commissioned to create informa-

<sup>108</sup> Låt oss tala om flickor, Integrationsverket (2000:6) p 9

<sup>109</sup> Låt oss tala om flickor, Integrationsverket (2000:6) p 10

<sup>110</sup> Näringsdepartementet, Fact Sheet, Feb 2002. Regeringens insatser för utsatta flickor i patriarkala familjer

<sup>111</sup> Justitiedepartementet, Översikt – vissa av regeringens insatser för ungdomar som riskerar att utsättas för s.k. hedersrelaterat våld, sammanställt av Eva-Lotta Johansson, Enheten för integration och mångfald, 2005, unpublished document.

<sup>112</sup> Regeringsbeslut IV1 N2002/2114/JÅM

<sup>113</sup> Justitiedepartementet, Översikt – vissa av regeringens insatser för ungdomar som riskerar att utsättas för s.k. hedersrelaterat våld, sammanställt av Eva-Lotta Johansson, Enheten för integration och mångfald, 2005

<sup>114</sup> Socialstyrelsen, Meddelandeblad nr 6/02. Flickor som lever under hot och tvång i familjer med starkt patriarkala värderingar.

tional and supportive literature aimed at schools. This resulted in the information material *Starkare än du tror* (2003) (*Stronger than you think*).<sup>115</sup>

The major County Administrative Boards of the major city counties were commissioned by the Government in 2002 to hasten the work of finding a solution for sheltered housing for the group defined as “girls in patriarchal families”.<sup>116</sup> The surveys were presented in 2003 and indicated that several hundreds of girls had applied for aid.<sup>117</sup> The voluntary organisation, Terrafem, received money in support of organising a national emergency telephone line for women and girls of foreign origin.<sup>118</sup>

In 2005 the Government planned to allocate a total of 180 million Swedish kronor to County Administrative Boards in order to disseminate funds to organisations working against HRV.<sup>119</sup> According to the Government’s guidelines, preventive projects run by a public authority, municipality, or an organisation/a foundation may apply to the County Administrative Boards.<sup>120</sup>

- In June 2003, the Government allocated around 20 million SEK to the County Administrative Boards, mainly for the creation of shelter homes for youth facing violence. The money was divided as follows: the County Administrative Boards in three major city counties received 4.5 million SEK each, mainly to establish shelters. The remaining County Administrative Boards received 300,000 each, to survey and analyse the needs in each respective county.

In March 2004, the County Administrative Boards presented an interim report of the results to the Government and proposals for how the continuing work should be carried out. For example, the County Administrative Boards stressed the need for preventative measures, such as the education of personnel in contact with vulnerable youth. Based on the County Administrative Boards’ report, the Government, in June 2004, resolved to allocate 34.5 million SEK to the County Administrative Boards for the provision of shelter homes and continued work against ‘so-called honour related violence’. The three major city counties of ----- also received 7.5 million SEK each. The remaining counties received money for preventative measures.<sup>121</sup> In September 2004 it was decided that an extra 60 million kronor should be allocated in support of youth vulnerable to honour related

<sup>115</sup> *Starkare än du tror*, Myndigheten för skolutveckling, (2003) p 9

<sup>116</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholm, *Rätten till sitt eget liv* (2002) förord.

<sup>117</sup> Kvinnoforum (2005) *Honour related violence. European resource handbook*, p 39

<sup>118</sup> Government measures have been referred to as pre-emptive measures or ‘shelters and related measures.’

<sup>119</sup> Riktlinjer för fördelning av stöd till insatser för ungdomar som riskerar s.k. hedersrelaterat våld, JU2004/5777/IM. The following section is mostly based on a Government fact sheet (2002 and 2004) and on a summary of Government initiatives, compiled by Desk officer Eva-Lotta Johansson, Ministry of Justice. Justitiedepartementet, *Översikt – vissa av regeringens insatser för ungdomar som riskerar att utsättas för s.k. hedersrelaterat våld*, sammanställt av Eva-Lotta Johansson, Enheten för integration och mångfald, 2005

<sup>120</sup> Riktlinjer för fördelning av stöd till insatser för ungdomar som riskerar s.k. hedersrelaterat våld, JU2004/5777/IM

<sup>121</sup> 34.5 miljoner till arbetet mot sk hedersrelaterat våld Pressmeddelande 20040623

violence. This made a total of 180 million kronor.<sup>122</sup> The County Administrative Boards have administered money to projects and organisations engaged in the prevention of HRV. Many of the voluntary organisations are immigrant organisations (based on ethnicity and/or nationality)<sup>123</sup> or women's organisations, such as "Irakiska kommittén för kvinnors rättigheter" (Iraqi Committee for Women's Rights). However, it has been argued that a number of immigrant organisations working with the issue of HRV tend to be dominated by men.

- In March 2005 Socialstyrelsen presented an interim report on County Administrative Board work concerned with honour related violence. It stated that 70 places, in different shelter homes, had been established by the three counties of Stockholm, Västra Götaland and Skåne.<sup>124</sup> Socialstyrelsen's goal is to eventually undertake a comprehensive follow-up of the work carried out between 2003 and 2007.<sup>125</sup> More specifically, Socialstyrelsen has been granted funds by the Government to investigate how a national consultative support could be designed. This support is primarily intended for use by workers in the social services, and also by school personnel. The Socialstyrelsen report "National Consultative Support" states:

*The Centre could give consultative support and supply of educational materials at the local level. The education of the field, e.g. lectures, needs to be quality assured. There is a need for the coordination of shelter vacancies. A common database would enable an overview of the available vacancies. There is a need to coordinate the work with action plans and guidelines in healthcare on matters related to so-called virginity examinations, hymen reconstructions, parental contact, abortion etc.*<sup>126</sup>

The main intention with national support is to meet the need for coordination. The Socialstyrelsen report stresses that activity at a national level also serves as a government statement of the equal rights of all youth and the society's non-acceptance of honour related violence. It will also promote a common view on national activities.<sup>127</sup> The report recommends that some kind of national consultative support could be included in the proposed National Centre for Children at Risk (Nationellt riskbarncentrum). As boys and girls are both subjected to honour related violence, the issue may be difficult to include in the proposed National Women's Centre. There the

<sup>122</sup> Ytterligare 60 miljoner till insatser för ungdomar som riskerar att utsättas för s.k. hedersrelaterat våld. Pressmeddelande 20 September 2004, Justitiedepartementet

<sup>123</sup> For example, following immigrant organizations received money from Stockholm County Administrative Board in 2004: Iranska riksförbundet, Irakisk lkomitté för kvinnors rättigheter, Kulturella föreningen för kurder i Sverige, Kurdistans kvinnoförbund i Sverige, Mandeiska-Sabeiska samfundet i Sverige, Marockanska kvinnoföreningen, Somaliska riksförbundet i Sverige, Sveriges muslimska råd, Turkiska riksförbundet.

<sup>124</sup> Socialstyrelsen (2005) Länsstyrelsernas insatser mot hedersrelaterat våld, delrapport 2003-2004, p 10

<sup>125</sup> Socialstyrelsen (2005) Länsstyrelsernas insatser mot hedersrelaterat våld, delrapport 2003-2004, p 9

<sup>126</sup> Socialstyrelsen (2005), Nationellt konsultativt stöd p 18

<sup>127</sup> Socialstyrelsen (2005), Nationellt konsultativt stöd s 26

focus will be on the adult woman over 18 years of age. No decision on the matter has yet been made.

- A resolution was announced on July 7th 2005 to allocate 48.3 million kronor to projects that “can improve the situation of youth exposed to so-called honour related violence.”<sup>128</sup> Of these, 34.5 million kronor were allocated to the ongoing work of the County Administrative Boards. The major city counties again received 7.5 million kronor each, in part for shelters, while the remaining counties received funds for pre-emptive measures. In addition to this, IMS, “an institute for research and for knowledge dissemination on the effects and values of social work to clients and users” under Socialstyrelsen, will receive 3.5 million kronor to evaluate and follow up methods and work in countries with a long experience of supporting youth exposed to honour related violence. “The Swedish Commission for State Grants to Religious Communities” (SST) will receive 300,000 kronor for a continued dialogue with religious communities concerning the basic values of society. The Swedish Police Board (Rikspolisstyrelsen) will receive 5 million kronor to carry out a survey of the police’s need for education, and for educating its personnel. The Public Prosecutor’s Office will receive 5 million kronor to examine and analyse legal cases concerning so-called honour related violence against youth, and compile educational materials and increase the general awareness of the issue among prosecutors.<sup>129</sup>

It is clear from the quantitative figures presented above that the Swedish Government considers that HRV is a serious issue and has thus allocated a considerable amount of the Government’s budget. The money allocated can be seen as primarily for:

- Education on issues of HRV
- Dissemination of funds at both national and county administrative levels.

Some of these initiatives have been reviewed critically. For example, according to Kvinnoforum’s survey, *Honour Related Violence. European Resource Handbook*, there still seems to be a shortage of action plans and guidelines within authorities and schools.<sup>130</sup> The report points out that:

*The Swedish Government has, for the past couple of years, openly talked about HRV as an issue that needs to be taken seriously and has also allocated funding for projects focusing on supportive or preventive measures. Despite this, there still seems to be a great lack of guidelines, policies and/or plans of action within the different authorities and schools in regard to HRV. In some municipalities they have started to work on plans of actions and there are discussions in some parts of the country to work on guidelines or plans of action. --- A*

<sup>128</sup> Stöd till ungdomar som riskerar hedersrelaterat våld Pressmeddelande 7 July, 2005 Justitiedepartementet

<sup>129</sup> Stöd till ungdomar som riskerar hedersrelaterat våld Pressmeddelande 7 July, 2005 Justitiedepartementet

<sup>130</sup> Kvinnoforum (2005) Honour related violence. European resource handbook. p 38

*couple of County Administrative Boards have been, or are in the process of, setting up plans of action in regard to HRV.*

For example the counties of Blekinge, Kalmar and Kronoberg have produced a handbook,<sup>131</sup> “Handbok i hedersproblematiken” (2005:5) (“Handbook in the complex of problems of honour”), as has the county administration of Södermanland and Östergötland.<sup>132</sup> Östergötland has also created a website about the issue.<sup>133</sup> These handbooks are mostly directed to personnel within the social services and schools. For example, the Blekinge/Kalmar/Kronoberg handbook gives more practical advice about how to tackle a situation when a young person needs help as a result of to honour related violence. In Stockholm County, several municipalities have produced specific action plans for how the social services should treat youth affected by honour related violence, and how to deal with their families.<sup>134</sup>

But according to the Kvinnoforum report, the majority of local authorities, such as the police, social authorities and schools, do not have any local guidelines and therefore often have to establish their own material on how to deal with cases of HRV.<sup>135</sup> This, the report suggests, leads to ‘individual interpretations’ and the arbitrary handling of such cases.<sup>136</sup> The report also points to a lack of political will, and that in Sweden decentralisation makes it very difficult to enforce any implementation, for example, in all schools.

### **Comments on the Above Measures**

At the legislative level and from a government perspective, Anna Jacobson states that the Marriage Act was discussed with a view to revision, the main reason being that this Act allowed girls that were citizens of a country where child marriages are legal to be married in Sweden before the age of 18 years. However, from May 1st 2004, the legal age of marriage was raised to 18 years for anyone wanting to be married in Sweden. The law also makes it clear that child marriage and forced marriages entered into in another country are not valid in Sweden. According to Swedish legislation, if there are obstacles to the marriage the couple will not be regarded as being legally married.<sup>137</sup> However, as Anna Jacobson points out, the change in legislation was more a matter of principle, because it is difficult to identify marriages that are not legal since they often have the support of the community in which they are performed. The researcher, Astrid Schlytter, has criticised the Marriage Act as “toothless”, particularly in relation to the Aliens Act. There is legitimacy for arranged marriages in the Aliens Act, according to Schlytter. Arranged marriages receive special treatment from the law in the fact that the ‘criterion of seriousness’ does not apply to

<sup>131</sup> Länsstyrelserna i Blekinge, Kalmar och Kronoberg (2005:5) Handbok i hedersproblematiken.

<sup>132</sup> ”Om våld i hederns namn” Länsstyrelsen i Östergötlands län. ”Förtryck och våld i hederns namn” (2005) Länsstyrelsen i Södermanlands län

<sup>133</sup> <http://www.e.lst.se/e/Hedersförtryck/>

<sup>134</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholm, STINA IV (2005) Länsstyrelsens arbete mot hedersrelaterat våld, p 10

<sup>135</sup> Kvinnoforum (2005) Honour related violence. European resource handbook, p 38

<sup>136</sup> Kvinnoforum (2005) Honour related violence. European resource handbook, p 38

<sup>137</sup> Justitiedepartementet, Äktenskap – Nya regler om äktenskap med internationell anknytning. Utgiven 23 April 2004.

individuals in an arranged marriage who are applying for a residence permit, as ‘this is a consequence of the marriage being an alliance between families.’<sup>138</sup> The consequence of this, according to Schlytter, is that women (and we assume that the same also applies to men) living in Sweden can be metaphorically given away in marriage. Schlytter argues that the reasoning behind what is and what is not accepted is based on traditions as practiced in the immigrants’ countries of origin.<sup>139</sup> In an article, Schlytter argues that forced marriage is a form of rape and that in Sweden there is a gullibility and ‘exaggerated respect and tolerance of ethnic traditions that are purely oppressive.’<sup>140</sup> In a media interview, Mona Sahlin countered the criticism of Schlytter by saying that neither she nor her officials have found ‘any exception in Swedish law that gives parents from, for example, an honour culture, the right to marry off their children who have not yet attained 18 years of age.’<sup>141</sup>

On the issue of forced marriage, the Rikskriminalen investigator, Kickis Åhré Algamo, suggests that forced marriages should be criminalised in order to protect those that are forced to marry. Many girls are subjected to strong pressure even if they are above 18 years of age. She adds that ‘right now, it is only a matter of civil law, not a crime.’<sup>142</sup> Criminalisation may involve punishing not only the parents, but also the community leaders who have an important influence on families and can sometimes be implicated in the crimes. There is also another dimension to forced marriages, namely, that some individuals understand that when they were, say 15-years-old, they had been forced into marrying, whereas some do not realise that they are in a forced marriage until they are much older, i.e. they only become conscious about it much later. In other words, the individuals ‘are brought up in the system, so they do not question the system’ but as they get older, they realise that it was a forced marriage. Kickis Åhré Algamo states that:

*The pain to say no to forced marriage is harder than to accept the marriage. Some are thrown out of society, kicked out of the family...they are told that they are not a good or nice girl, their status will be low if they say no to the marriage and of course...the majority accept forced marriage because they feel the need to ‘belong’ somewhere, a right that would be taken from them if they did not agree to the forced marriage.*

Åhré Algamo feels that forced marriage is an important issue since the majority of crimes are conducted during the time of negotiations around

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<sup>138</sup> Yuksel Said from Linnamotingen questions the views held in Sweden, with a lot of talk about “a multi-cultural society”. What does it really mean, and what effect has it had on legislation, for example, she asks. “I think that so far the rights of the group have had precedence over the rights of the individual. I mean, for example, this law that wasn’t changed until 2004, that is not even the nineties!”

<sup>139</sup> Schlytter, Astrid (2004) ”Rätten att själv få välja” p 50f

<sup>140</sup> ”Mona Sahlin anser nog att jag är för provocerande” [www.paraplyprojektet.se](http://www.paraplyprojektet.se) Publicerat 2004-08-09

<sup>141</sup> ”Det är Masoud som ska få kritik för vad han tycker” [www.paraplyprojektet.se](http://www.paraplyprojektet.se) Publicerat 2004-09-20

<sup>142</sup> – Jag har träffat tjejer som uppmanats begå självmord. Kvinnotryck 6. October 2004

marriage. The girls are beaten and thrown out of the family and ‘treated like a dog’ until the girl agrees to marry.

In relation to HRV, many respondents mentioned that the application of laws was a serious issue. For example, Karin Sant at Gryning Vård AB suggests that the Care of Young Persons Act (LVU<sup>143</sup>) should be discussed. When a young person is taken into care on the grounds of his/her environment (i.e. when the environment is a danger to the young person rather than a person being a danger to the environment) it must always be voluntary if the person is over 18 years of age. Karin Sant also thinks that it should be considered whether the LVU law could be used for the group 18-20 years old, i.e. when the environment is a danger to the young person. She argues that it is sometimes a problem that young people have to search for help on their own, despite the fact that they may not have the psychological strength to do so. As an example, she mentions a 19-year-old girl that is pregnant, lives with her parents and tries to hide her condition. Her situation could be very dangerous. The problem is also that at the shelter homes, rules have to be followed for the girls’ own safety. If a girl is there of her own free will it is much more difficult to make her follow the rules. The researcher Astrid Schlytter has also criticised the LVU law from a gender perspective, in that it is first and foremost designed for boys.<sup>144</sup> The ‘girls’ perspective’ and specific problems, like self-harm or self-mutilation, are not visible in the same way. We would suggest that the situation could also vary from one ethnic group to the other, and that laws have to be formulated after a thorough needs assessment.

Greta Johansson from Terrafem brings up the “two-year rule”<sup>145</sup> in the Aliens Act in order to point out some of the difficulties. This means that if a citizen of a foreign country is having a relationship with a Swedish citizen they must stay together for two years in order to avoid the risk of deportation, unless, that is, one of the individuals is being beaten or threatened. Many of the criteria are almost impossible to meet for someone who might not know the language, the laws of society, or whom to contact to report the perpetrator.

In a parliamentary interpellation about ‘the responsibility of the equality politics for immigrant women’, Ulla Hoffman of The Left Party (Vänsterpartiet) criticised the so-called two-year rule of the Aliens Act. She argues that if the woman reports abuse during the trial period, she is at risk of being sent back to the country of origin, where she is also at risk of being rejected by her family. Hoffman points out that in the pre-legislative documents of the Act it is stated that there must be repeated abuse in order for the woman not to be sent back. Hoffman argues that it would appear as though the law says that foreign women can take more beating than others. Hoffman’s question to Jens Orback is whether he plans to do anything to include these women in the politics of equality.<sup>146</sup> Hoffman also brings up another part of the legislation where she argues that foreign women are

<sup>143</sup> LVU – lagen med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga. De inledande bestämmelserna i lagen med särskilda bestämmelser om vård av unga.(1§ )

<sup>144</sup> Shlytter, Astrid ”Flickor på undantag” Socionomen 2, 1999

<sup>145</sup> Utlänningslagen 1 Kap 4e § (Har ett förhållande upphört, får uppehållstillstånd ändå ges, om 2: förhållandet har upphört främst på grund av att i förhållandet utlänningen, eller utlänningens barn, utsatts för våld eller för annan allvarlig kränkning av sin frihet eller frid. )

<sup>146</sup> 10 § Svar på interpellation 2004/05:105 om jämställdhetspolitikens ansvar för invandrade kvinnor.

excluded from the politics of equality. She argues that some women seek refuge in Sweden as a result of being subjected to so-called honour related violence in their country of origin. Most of them are denied refuge. Hoffman also argues that women subjected to persecution, for example for not wearing a veil or having acid thrown in their faces, should be granted shelter in Sweden. If the issue of violence is political, Hoffman argues, we need to re-consider the legislation on refugees, which needs to have an equality perspective or a 'feminist perspective'.<sup>147</sup>

In an article in the publication *Kvinnotryck* (Pressure on Women), Kickis Åhré Älgamo comments on another issue that she argues may affect those subjected to so-called honour related violence. During the course of her work she has met girls who are coerced into committing suicide by their families. This, she argues, is something that is very difficult to combat. She suggests that one possible solution could be that the charge of "gross violation of a woman's integrity" could be used in these circumstances.<sup>148</sup>

The 2004 Government fact sheet also mentions that the Restraining Orders Act (1988:688) was amended and enforced on September 1st 2003. In practice, this enables the state to prohibit visits when parties have a shared home if there is a manifest risk that the person to whom the prohibition applies will commit crimes against the life, health, freedom or peace of a cohabitee. According to an article written by Thomas Bodström, Minister of Justice, the law should protect the person that is under threat of violence and make it possible for that person (i.e. the one at risk) to stay instead of being compelled to leave the home.<sup>149</sup> The law will mostly affect married couples and those cohabiting, but also other groups in society "such as old people threatened by their grown-up children and vulnerable girls in patriarchal environments".<sup>150</sup>

Assessing the effectiveness of the State initiatives is difficult, partly because they are still in progress and also partly because the matter of so-called honour related violence concerns so many different areas. The responses of our informants may also be seen as an expression of the current discussions within the field.<sup>151</sup> For example, Karin Sant at Gryning Vård AB suggests that the government has a keen sense of realisation that it is dealing with a serious issue, and has thus allocated money for different projects, such as building shelters. However, while agreeing that a lot of funds have been granted, Yuksel Said from Linnamottagningen/Kvinnors

<sup>147</sup> 10 § Svar på interpellation 2004/05:105 om jämställdhetspolitikens ansvar för invandrade kvinnor.

<sup>148</sup> – Jag har träffat tjejer som uppmanats begå självmord. *Kvinnotryck* 6. October 2004

<sup>149</sup> Viktigt steg för att skydda kvinnor mot våld. *Folket* 20030903.

<sup>150</sup> Bättre skydd mot våld i hemmet, *Pressmeddelande*, 20 March 2003, Justitiedepartementet

<sup>151</sup> It is still too early to evaluate the projects that have received funds or the result of the government initiatives. In this report we have highlighted the opinions, problem areas and discussions among the interviewed informants. Among our informants are a number that have been granted project funds from the county administrations: the women's emergency line *Terrafem* (was granted funds in 2003 and 2005, has also received direct state funds in the past), *Linnamottagningen/Kvinnors nätverk* (received grants in 2003 and 2004), *Sharaf Hjältar/Fryshuset* (2004. Has received state funds in the past). Among the informants are also examples from an initiative in the county of Västra Götaland: *Karin Sant, Gryningen Vård AB* and the county of Östergötland (*Sensus studieförbund, Gina Hyllan*).



nätverk is quite ‘sceptical’ of the way the money is being used. She thinks that ‘the problem’ is a lack of long-term vision and is critical of the decisions made by the County Administrative Boards which go against the long-term work. Yuksel Said adds that too many projects that have been funded; so many that each of the projects has had to share the same pot of money. There have also been differences in how Västra Götaland, Stockholm and Skåne have been allocated the money.<sup>152</sup>

Camilla Salan at Save the Children<sup>153</sup> is also critical when it comes to long-term thinking and long-term goals. When talking about the implementation of the government’s initiative, she argues that although the Swedish state has allocated ‘millions’ for several projects and sheltered housing, ‘there isn’t any long-term planning or any comprehensive thinking’. She gives the example of the psychotherapeutic work, where more state attention needs to be directed. She also adds that at Save the Children they ‘work for free’. Camilla Salan believes that the girls at risk need help to rebuild their lives over a long period of time. They need to be supported by networks, even after the immediate threat has passed. But she is also critical that a lot of the projects that receive money aren’t integrated in ordinary activities and thus cannot be sustained. She adds:

*A project dies if it is not included in the ordinary activity. That is why I think that one should integrate the public authority level as well. But meanwhile one must get help from professionals, from reports, from projects, I don’t know. But it isn’t enough there, one must think of the long-term. To gather: what have we invested in? Have we covered preventive work? Long-term work? What are the needs of the girls? Have we covered all these areas? That is the way to work, be more systematic.*

Greta Johansson at Terrafem has a similar criticism and suggests that, for example, Stockholm County Administrative Board has invested in a wide range of projects with the result that none of them will be able to accomplish very much. She thinks that the money would have been better spent on a few well selected projects that could accomplish something worthwhile. Johansson also thinks that funds are allocated very unequally in that ‘one association wanting to work against honour related violence received 10,000 kronor, another 20,000, and yet another 200,000. There is no general rule’. Greta Johansson suggests that in relation to violence in the name of honour, it is good that funds are allocated to ‘education and the improvement of knowledge and work against the prejudice that surrounds the matter’, it seems that ‘everybody has free rein and that there are no guidelines or any ruling documents’.

Also she feels that every County Administrative Board seems to have their own interpretations and ‘their own handbook’. This, according to her, is a waste of time and resources. She suggests that instead one should ‘create one handbook for the entire country, and have appendices with addresses of where to turn to apply for funds in each county’.

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<sup>152</sup> The joint venture between the organization Kvinnors nätverk and the healthcare company Världus, that Yuksel Said has been involved in starting up, broke down after only one year and the funds from the County Administrative Board of Stockholm were reduced by half to the organisation they were trying to create.

<sup>153</sup> Their project did not receive any supporting funds from the County Administrative Boards.

Gina Hyllan, from Studieförbundet Sensus (the Adult Education Association) in Östergötland, articulates some of the hitches in implementing initiatives that she thinks has more to do with the ‘hierarchy of understanding’ in Sweden and little to do with the ‘problems with work and living areas’ that Integrationsutredare Masoud Kamali talks about. Gina Hyllan thinks that although Sweden wants to project itself as a country of ‘good people...and we understand everyone’, the problem is that:

*We always listen to people at the top of the hierarchies. We listen to them, but we don't see the girls or the boys in the bottom of the hierarchy. So I say that we are racists here in Sweden, because we don't listen to... We say that this is a group of people, and that the group has the same wishes. It's not like that! But it looks so good. And that's why I think when Mona Sahlin was like: Oh we have to do things for these girls! And then the politicians were like: Oh, no go back! This means problems, because we are supposed to be a country where we have cultural freedom and all of that...and makes problem for them'.*

This is an important point and highlights another dimension of the problem. It would seem that we are swaying from one side of the pendulum to the other. In our efforts to be culturally sensitive and project Sweden as a ‘good’ country, we perhaps listen to those that have power within a particular group. Also, in these dialogues ethnic minority groups are constructed as homogenous.

Gina Hyllan also criticises Sweden for what she perceives as racist practices. She draws on an array of issues. Firstly, she wants society to be aware that because we don't see the girls at risk, we don't hear their voices either. Secondly, if there is a drug problem and one does not take any measures, it will cost society a lot of money because ‘they will go out and do a lot of criminal stuff’. However, the girls will ‘just have to pay with their own lives. Not because they will just be killed but they don't have a life...so they don't cost society any money if we don't do anything for them’. She thinks that society sees this as a cultural problem, i.e. something inherent in their cultures that cannot be changed. This, she thinks, is racist.

Gina Hyllan is also sceptical about whether the county police will have enough information to deal with HRV if the work is devolved from the Rikskriminalen. Kickis Åhré Ålgamo from Rikskriminalen is critical of a model in Sweden called the ‘closed principle ideology’ model, in which the social services believe that they can solve the problem of HRV by talking to the family. Sometimes individuals in these services think that they should remove the girl from the immediate family and place them with a relative until the issue has been solved. But there are additional risks in this because an extended family network also brings extended loyalties. Unlike a mum-father-child Swedish model, the former could place the woman at increased risk.

## Summary

From the discussion above it can be ascertained that although specific legislative acts are in place, such as the Marriage Act and the Aliens Act, they have been questioned on the grounds of first, whether they fulfil the purpose of protecting the most vulnerable, and second, whether they could prevent honour related violence. In Sweden, the report “Ett slag i luften”

(SOU 2004:121) that evaluates the reform "Kvinnofridsreformen" (a Government programme consisting of measures against violence against women) points out that violence against women is still an issue that is not prioritised within authorities. It also criticises the fact that the authorities have not created any policies that relate to how the problem might be handled. Having laws in place that legislate both the protection of and punishment for those that experience violence or are vulnerable to violence is one way (though not the only one) of successfully combating the issue. Careful consideration of two issues will be useful. First of all, citizens should be made aware of these laws and encouraged to use the laws more. Secondly, it is important that all the governments critically analyse how the laws are being implemented.

Some organisations, such as Terrafem, have raised the issue that encounters of 'foreign women' with Swedish authorities often expose them to further discrimination. For example, when women have approached policemen for help, according to Terrafem, it has led to the girls being told by the policemen that they cannot help them because 'I don't know your culture at all'. Also, some respondents believe that more research is needed on HRV if the allocation of funds is to be effective. Furthermore, there is a definite need for clearer guidelines for the authorities as to how they should work.

A theme that is reiterated is that long-term funds are needed if there are to be any sustainable achievements in combating honour related violence. Projects are often given funds but then after a while the funds are discontinued, thus threatening the continuity of the projects. It has been suggested by the respondents that different County Administrative Boards have very different priorities, and this has been reflected in how different counties have allocated money to various projects. We would suggest that it is also important to ensure that everybody follows one 'handbook'. We suggest that a closer evaluation and review of the money invested is needed in order to ascertain the direction of strategic work to combat HRV, otherwise we may be confronted with a numerical list of "projects" that 'die' when the money runs out.

There should be more inter-agency co-operation through the creation of a knowledge/resource centre that shares the nature of the research being carried out, strategic objectives and planning. This could also benefit the wider community so that there is more awareness as to how and where information can be accessed. At the same time we need to ensure that women who experience HRV are included as part of these high-profiled political campaigns. Two benefits can be foreseen from this: firstly that it will enable these women to have much greater control over educating and raising awareness within their communities; and secondly that these women will feel safe/protected as part of government led campaigns in that they can debate issues in a public forum, rather than having to tackle it at an individual or isolated level in their own families.

Furthermore, it could be conjectured that the Social Democrats have funded NGO's working on HRV because they can trace their political origins to popular movements. However, do the Social Democrats fund the NGO's because of tradition or because of political will? If there is political will, it should necessitate a systematic feedback on the progress and achievements of the NGO's.

## The United Kingdom

Honour Killings in Turkey were discussed on the BBC Radio 4 programme, 'Women's Hour', and followed by a discussion with Hanana Siddiqui (SBS) and Nasir Afshal (CPS). Nasir Afshal was asked which initiatives had been taken to combat the problem. He suggested that the issue of HRV was at the forefront of the Government's agenda, even though there was no specific legislation on HRV.

In the UK, funds have not been made available to the same extent as in Sweden. The Home Office has funded the Steering Group on Forced Marriages and Honour Based Violence, which has met twice since 2003. The Steering Group brings various organisations, both governmental and voluntary groups, together to discuss the issue of HRV. The Steering Group has initiated discussions on the following key objectives:

- **Communication and Dissemination:** The necessity of having a central database on resources (such as laws and policies) on Forced Marriages and Honour Based Violence. This is primarily to bridge the gaps in knowledge about these issues in various parts of the UK, particularly in the North East.
- **Monitoring Impact of Existing Policies:** The current discussion is on forced marriages (also seen as constituting Honour Based Violence) and to see forced marriages as part of the national governmental strategy against Violence Against Women.
- **Identifying and Co-ordinating New Areas of Policy Development:** This was identified as providing support to 'Victims' Voices'.

This is the only national steering group looking at honour related violence, although Baljinder Singh from Karma Nirvana identifies three difficulties: firstly, there is no acknowledgement by the Government on the difficulties of tackling HRV; secondly, the Government has not channelled enough resources so that the waiting list for support is increasing; and thirdly, there is no support from the South Asian community.

Baljinder Singh is a member of the National Steering Group and feels that while it is a national group, it is 'predominantly London-led' and Wales and Scotland are not represented at the table. Also, she feels that Scotland is way behind in terms of a lack of awareness of these issues at the same time as Scotland is home to many Asian communities. She also reiterates that the connection between high-level decision-making people in power and grassroots women has still to be made, although she does make every effort to represent the 'victims' voices'.

Baljinder Singh believes that such steering groups should be established regionally in order to have a regional perspective on the issue, rather than everything being London focused. In talking about the large communities of Asian people in the North of England she adds:

*As long as it does not connect with the communities, it does not connect with women working on the ground and also impacts on that level, I don't see how the work on the ground is being fed in the strategic group. You can sit with these powerful decision makers but where is the voice of the victims in terms of decision making. You can sit there and make decisions and write policy but if you do not feed the experiences of women, it is a waste of time.*

In relation to the Forced Marriage Unit at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Baljinder Singh appreciates the work that they do in connection to forced marriages. She does, however, raise the following concerns:

*I personally believe that the Forced Marriage Unit has to sit regionally, in Scotland, Wales and North of England. The Forced Marriage Unit has a duty to inform people of their services to the whole of the UK. The second thing is that their focus is repatriation, bringing back British subjects from the sub-continent where they have been forced into marriage but there is huge work that needs to be involved in the prevention work...to do prevention before they are taken abroad. The Home Office figures of forced marriage is around 250 cases a year but to me even that is quite a lot, because what are we doing in the UK to prevent these people from being taken out in the first place?...You can focus on bringing them back after they are married as the FCO does, but we need to do more work on the prevention side. After they are married, they are at more of a risk from HRV because they have a greater duty on the girl to preserve the family name.*

There has been considerable discussion through documents written by governmental and non-governmental organisations. The document prepared for the Women's National Commission<sup>154</sup> (2005) clearly states that when analysing violence we need to be clear that those who first come to know about VAW are not governmental/non-governmental agencies but friends, family and even neighbours and colleagues, i.e. informal networks. These informal networks are important because the way they respond can have broadly two consequences: they can empower the 'victim' or they can entrap the 'victim' in shame and self-blame. 'This is attenuated where the cultural context of a woman's life includes beliefs about the honour/purity/control of sexuality' (2005). The latter can justify and nurture honour-based violence. It's not the immediate family but the community that is implicated in perpetuating forms of violence. Secondly, the report alerts us to the fact that UK policy, practice and training still tend to focus on domestic violence, rape, or sexual exploitation, i.e. that few workers can work across these boundaries.<sup>155</sup> One has to view honour killing as one extreme form on a continuum of violence. Within that could be degrees of violence, both physical and sexual, such as incest within families, which often goes unnoticed because of our over-focus on the physical nature of killings. Another issue also needs to be highlighted, namely, that women who experience abuse and assault within the natal or married family are often afraid from disclosing because of the 'shame' and stigma' that would fall on her. By working with these communities on a long-term basis, we could demonstrate that it's not the victim who should feel shame, but the perpetrator!

In taking an integrated approach to violence, the Women's National Commission report (2005) suggests that:

*Not only is the prevalence of violence and abuse serious – affecting at least half of all women over their lifetime – but it shows no sign of de-*

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<sup>154</sup> 'What a Waste' (2005): The Case for an Integrated Violence Against Women Strategy' by Liz Kelly and Jo Lovett. Document prepared for the Women's National Commission.

<sup>155</sup> They give the example of a young woman in prostitution that may have a history of childhood abuse, a recent rape and violent boyfriend/pimp to deal with.

*creasing. Whilst men and boys are also subjected to some, although not all, of the forms of violence, the scale of victimisation is far lower than for women. The vast majority of perpetrators in all cases are male.*

Ritu Singh and Maria Parkinson of Renaissance Chambers suggest that a combined civil and criminal approach should be adopted. They suggest that the ‘publicity of the criminal and civil legal sanctions available to women in these communities has a twofold effect: first, it provides information for the victims and those at risk. Secondly, it deters the offenders. However this must be counter-balanced against the privacy and onward protection of victims’. They also suggest that honour based crimes committed in one generation are behaviour and modes of conduct that are necessarily passed on to the next generation. Thus, the education of men who are at risk of learning and believing that this type of behaviour is *de rigeur* is vital.

Khalid Ali, of the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain (MPGB), who works on forced marriages and honour based violence, says that they are looking at the Muslim Marriage Contract and trying to persuade mosques to register their premises for civil ceremonies so that civil and Islamic ceremonies take place at the same time. He says that ‘we have convinced most clerics that they should not perform Islamic marriage unless they have actually seen the certificate from the civil ceremony, because many people often go through an Islamic marriage ceremony but do not follow it up with a civil ceremony, which means that in the event of the marriage breaking down, women have no protection whatsoever. Also, British law does not recognise Islamic marriages.

There are no concrete laws in place in relation to honour related and forced marriage. It is argued that while the MET Police have a homicide prevention strategy, they do not have a similar strategy for HBV or honour killings. Are there police forces across the UK that acknowledge honour-based violence as a recorded crime category? That is a question that is repeatedly asked by several respondents. Currently there is consultation in the UK as to whether to make forced marriage a criminal offence. Opinions are mixed, however, as some feel that it’s right to have forced marriage acknowledged as a crime category, whereas some suggest that having a forced marriage law may force the issue underground,<sup>156</sup> and others feel that factors that force an individual to marry are rooted in notions of honour.<sup>157</sup>

Many respondents analyse Honour Based Violence within the remit of Domestic Violence. The government definition of Domestic Violence suggests that ‘domestic violence includes female genital mutilation, forced marriage and so called ‘honour crimes’.<sup>158</sup> In November 2004, the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act was institutionalised. The key provisions of the Act are as follows:

- The definition of co-habitants has been broadened to apply to same sex relationships
- The definition of ‘associated’ persons has been broadened to include partners or ex-partners, who may not have lived together but have been in a relationship that was or is of significant duration

<sup>156</sup> Interview with Ashish Chaddha.

<sup>157</sup> Ideas presented by Baljinder Singh.

<sup>158</sup> Domestic Violence: Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Domestic Violence, Crown Prosecution Service. February, 2005.

- Breach of non-molestation injunctions has been made a criminal offence.
- Common Assault has been made a detainable offence
- The Protection from Harassment Act has been amended to give courts the power to issue ‘restraining orders’ at the end of a criminal prosecution on conviction or acquittal if they feel that there is evidence of any continued risk to the victim.<sup>159</sup>

The Newham Asian Women’s Project believes that the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act has failed to include a definition of domestic violence, which incorporates specific forms of abuse faced by women from minority communities, including forced marriage, honour related violence, dowry abuse and female genital mutilation. In addition, the Act does not provide equal access to protection for all women regardless of their immigration status.<sup>160</sup>

Although the above points are insightful, tensions are reopened in the debate as to whether to associate the specificity of HRV with any specific ethnicity, or whether we need to understand it as Violence Against Women (VAW) regardless of cultural or ethnic differences.

On the subject of immigration and asylum, people who enter the county as spouses of a UK national have to wait for two years before they can apply for permanent residency. During this time they cannot claim benefits and remain dependent on their spouse (sponsor). Through their campaigns, the Southall Black Sisters have been instrumental in securing the Home Office’s agreement that a person has the right to remain in the UK indefinitely if their marriage breaks down as a result of DV<sup>161</sup>. The SBS have also been campaigning that spouses entering the county should be informed of their rights both in terms of applying for permanent residency and also in relation to domestic violence.

## Summary

Unlike in Sweden, UK initiatives to combat HRV have not had the financial backing of the government, even though the issue of HRV is high on the Government’s agenda. The National Steering Group is a fairly new initiative on the part of the Government to form a national platform on combating Violence against Women. Since HRV is closely associated with Domestic Violence and Forced marriages in the UK, efforts are being made to make an impact through legislation.

Organisations and individuals who have worked with women experiencing violence suggest that women victims feel that the role of government and non-governmental organisations should be more interventionary. Often women experiencing violence approach the police as the last resort, that is, after they have contacted family, friends, work colleagues and social service. This was particularly noticed in the UK and we suggest that it’s important that women get support earlier, before they approach the police.

<sup>159</sup> Newham Asian Women’s Project, Annual Report, 2003/4.

<sup>160</sup> In Turkey, the Law for the Protection of the Family, is a Domestic Violence law (in 1997), and it is quite an up to date code that obligates the police to ensure that the wife/victim is protected and the violent spouse to be removed from the house.

<sup>161</sup> Southall Black Sisters National Conference, Nov 2004.

There is the issue of ‘structural duplication’ since organisations do not take an integrated VAW approach. A non-integrative approach could make one lose the whole perspective of the “gender power structure” (the whole patriarchal structure) that affects men and women. These issues were raised in a UK report, ‘What A Waste’ (see Chapters 3 & 4). This debate is particularly visible in the UK.<sup>162</sup> For example the Women’s National Commission Report in the UK mentioned that:

*The focus on Domestic Violence has grown over the last couple of years with a number of Women MPs becoming more powerful champions in Parliament and Ministers for Women repeatedly citing it as a priority. On a smaller scale, a noticeable shift has taken place in relation to rape and sexual assault and trafficking, especially in terms of legal reform. As a consequence there are now two inter-ministerial groups operating in parallel – on domestic violence and sexual offending – alongside entirely disconnected developments with respect to forced marriage and FGM. The recent review of child protection was not linked in to VAW work, and the prostitution review was associated with a different team (2005).*

## Turkey

Despite a lack of wholehearted support by the Turkish Government, women’s organisations have kept the issue of HRV alive, and have successfully lobbied and forced the government to recognise the issue.

Although the issue of HRV has been a subject of concern, it was only in 2002 that women’s organisations started working with this issue in ways that would make an impact on the lives of women at risk. It was in 2002 that Semse Allak and her husband were stoned in Mardin-Yalim. While Semse’s husband was stoned to death, Semse was left to die after being severely stoned.<sup>163</sup>

The agitation has been strongest by organisations such as KAMER and Women for Women’s Human Rights. The chairwoman of KAMER is an educationalist, Nebahat Akkoc. KAMER-KA is short for KADIN, which means woman and MER is short for MERKLEK, which means centre.

Another organisation, Women for Women’s Human Rights (WWHR), suggests that one of their initiatives, involving the implementation of a training programme for police officers and security forces (through seminars) in the two cities of Ankara and Canakkale (West Turkey), has yielded good results. However, they are aware that training at city/local level is one thing and implementing it at the state/national level quite another, primarily because the latter is much more challenging and requires resources from the state. A representative from WWHR states that:

*I think the Government should give resources, be open to reform, and gender sensitivisation from women’s organisations...and not participate not just for the show her. We are not very happy with the Minister*

<sup>162</sup> For a detailed discussion refer to ‘What a Waste: Women’s National Commission, UK.

<sup>163</sup> Semse Allak was the first member of the project ‘Killings Committed in the Name of Honour Project’ that KAMER started in January 2003. Semse died soon after.



*of Gender Equality, Ninet Cubukcu, who does not support us very much. Apparently, she has not engaged in a dialogue with women's organisations and even when the penal code was going on, she was an MP, she was not supportive of our demands.*

Yakin Sadak, an academic, views the role of the police critically:

*After the 1997 Domestic Violence law was passed, I did quite a lot of training for the police and security forces...to familiarise them with the domestic violence law. The domestic violence law is there but it has to be implemented. The police leadership is committed to it but the lower you go down in the police ranks, it sometimes becomes quite problematic. The traditional attitude of the lowest level police, when a woman runs to the police station for help is that ...well it's a domestic issue...why don't you solve it with your husband...tries to calm her down and make her a cup of tea. There is a difference in the attitudes between lower and higher police officials.*

Yakin Sadak continues, and suggests that:

*though the law is there but there are no supporting mechanisms. The law suggests that the man should be kicked out of the house if he is violent and a restraining order put on him. But the point is that this is a country where only a small number of women work (15%)...so if the man goes out of the house, the money goes out as well. There are no support mechanisms that she can turn to to maintain herself and the children. Thus in many cases his monetary contribution is needed and the man moves in. There is no good social service system...so to just have the law and the good intentions to implement those laws are not enough.*

As the result of a successful three-year campaign by the women's movement (2002-2004), the Turkish Penal Code Draft Law was accepted in the Turkish Parliament Grand National Assembly on September 26th 2004. The new Turkish Penal Code includes more than thirty amendments and constitutes a major step towards gender equality and the protection of sexual and bodily rights of women and girls in Turkey. It could be useful to compare the differences in the old and the new Penal Codes.

## **Penal Codes**

The Turkish Penal Code was adopted in the 1920s from the Italian Penal Code, and while some articles have been amended, very little has been done in relation to gender.

The previous Penal Code allowed for some perpetrators of honour crimes against women receiving lesser punishments or sentence reductions if they provided a defence of tradition or provocation (through adultery or the improper behaviour of women). One general 'unjust provocation article' of the Penal Code was applied to honour killings in order to give perpetrators a reduced penalty.

The general philosophy of the old Penal Code was patriarchal and discriminatory against women. In other words, it was gender-blind. For example, sexual crimes were classified as 'crimes against society' in the subsection 'crimes against public morality and family', rather than 'crimes against individuals'. In relation to these crimes, the woman's body was

projected as belonging to the man, the family and society, and not as her own.<sup>164</sup>

### Amended Penal Code

In the Amended Penal Code (passed in September 2004; implemented in June 2005), sexual offences are now regulated as 'crimes against persons' in the subsection, 'crimes against inviolability of sexual integrity'. This constitutes a major shift, because women can now acknowledge ownership of their bodies and their sexuality.

The new Penal Code also changed some of the patriarchal terminology, 'for example, sexual crimes, sexual assault/rape were not defined as such in the old law and also included references to chastity, honour, shame or decency. For example, crimes of rape and sexual abuse were defined as 'forced seizure of chastity and attack on honour'. All these were removed, so the law established non-discriminatory, gender sensitive and human rights based terminology'.<sup>165</sup>

The new Penal Code makes it obligatory to give the highest penalty in case of honour related violence. Also the new law has removed the justification of 'unjust provocation' and explicitly states that this article cannot be applied to honour killings.

Further issues arise in relation to gender equality in connection with the terminology of honour crimes. The amended Penal Code mentions *Töre Cinayeti* (crimes of tradition) and does not use the term *Namus Cinayeti* (honour murders/crimes). Women's Groups/NGO's are dissatisfied with this, because they wanted the Government to use an internationally accepted terminology of honour crimes/killings and not just 'crimes of tradition'/customary killings'. WWHR say that:

*it is easier for the government to include this in the law because everybody views 'custom' and 'tradition' as obsolete terms and that killings on the basis of custom are seen as much more serious human rights...but when it came more broadly to the question of honour, the Government was very resistant and still maintains a patriarchal outlook.*

But women's organisations argue that 'crimes of tradition'/customary killings' does not include all forms of honour killings. 'Customary Killings' are restricted to certain regions or certain family assemblies. Also:

*if a murder through 'custom' was conducted, the lawyer has to first establish that the killing has taken place through 'custom' (mainly in rural areas). But in reality, an honour killing is a broader term. For example, not all honour killings take place by invoking custom or tradition. It could be that a brother in a big city could murder his sister because he believes that she is engaged in some kind of sexual relations.. However, time and again the Turkish government/parliament has in-*

<sup>164</sup> Aytekin Ozturk, Co-ordinator, Women for Women's Human Rights- New Ways Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey

<sup>165</sup> The Success of the Campaign for the Reform of the Turkish Penal Code from a Gender Perspective (20002-2004), Summary Outcome Report, 2005, WWHR.

*sisted that the two terms are the same and interchangeable, i.e. honour crimes are crimes of tradition.*<sup>166</sup>

The new Penal Code includes new measures to prevent sentence reductions granted to perpetrators of honour killings, and ‘killings in the name of customary law’ are regulated as aggravated homicide. The latter ‘does not encompass all honour killings, however still constitutes a significant advancement’.<sup>167</sup> Thus, in their statement, ‘Remaining Demands and Further Necessary Amendments to the New Turkish Penal Code’, WWHR state:

*Honour Killings have to be explicitly defined as aggravated homicide to include all murders in the name of honour, not just those in the name of customary law.*

## Summary

Women’s organisations have been successful in bringing about some changes in the Turkish Penal Code. There is a national women’s platform on the amendment of Turkish Penal Code, which is the platform for several women’s organisations/groups. All the amendments have been put forward by these women’s organisations. There is also a platform called Women for Women’s Human Rights in Istanbul and Ankara.

While women’s groups have been pleased with the changes in the Turkish Penal Code, they do express some concern about the implementation of these laws.

KAMER, along with WWHR, have been very active in changing the Penal Code. Some important work is also being done by the municipalities and the Government’s own Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.

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<sup>166</sup> Interview with Yakin Sadak. Similar views are held by the organisation WWHR.

<sup>167</sup> The Success of the Campaign for the Reform of the Turkish Penal Code from a Gender Perspective (20002-2004), Summary Outcome Report, 2005, WWHR.

# Protective Measures

## Introduction

In this chapter we analyse initiatives taken by the governments of Sweden, the UK and Turkey to secure sheltered housing for individuals who have experienced HRV or are at risk of HRV.

Women's shelters, with their roots in voluntary commitment, still shoulder a major responsibility in efforts to help women who are subjected to violence. Women's shelters or refuges are expected to be a 'safe haven' for women and children who either decide to leave a violent situation, are forced into making that decision, or who are coerced into leaving their families.

In Sweden, the organisation of voluntary sheltered housing has existed since the 1970s, when the first women's shelters established voluntarily organised sanctuaries for women exposed to violence. In Sweden, knowledge about violence against women was still very limited in the 1970s. There were, for instance, no official statistics on male violence against women, and the existing statistics were gender-blind.<sup>168</sup> In 1976 many women's organisations came together, primarily around the Sexual Assault Bill ('Sexuella övergrepp') and it was an important year in Swedish politics with regard to violence against women. The coming together of women's organisations was the beginning of a new movement for women's shelters.<sup>169</sup>

Similarly, in England the movement for women's refuges grew out of the women's liberation movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. During those decades it was impossible to receive help to leave a violent situation on the basis of protection under civil or family law. At the same time, the police viewed these issues as 'domestics' and adopted an approach of non-interference. Some of the early refuges, run on the basis of voluntary help, were set up in England to support women who were in need of a safe refuge. Women's Aid is one of the important organisations that has provided consistent support to women and children experiencing domestic violence, irrespective of race, ethnic or religious grouping, class, sexuality, disability or lifestyle. In England, the Government funds some shelter homes, and others are run independently by non-governmental organisations.

In Turkey the situation has been quite different. Most of the shelter homes have been run by the Government, and one of the bones of contention between the Government and women's organisations has been that shelter homes should be run independently by the women's NGO's. So, unlike the UK and Sweden, the shelters in Turkey have not emerged as a result of the needs of the women's movement. In an Amnesty International Report (June 2nd 2004) entitled, 'Turkey: Shelters not Cemeteries', it was stated that 'Turkey, with a population of 70 million people should therefore

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<sup>168</sup> Eduards, Maud (1997) *The women's shelter movement I*: Gustafsson, Gunnel (red) *Towards a new democratic order: Women organizing in Sweden in the 1990s*, p 89

<sup>169</sup> Eduards, (1997) p 122

have approximately 7,000 shelters. In reality, there are approximately 14 “guesthouses” and 19 community-based services to support women experiencing violence at home. Two independently run shelters performing invaluable services to women escaping violence and providing community education, including an effective police education campaign, were closed in 1997 and 1999 due to lack of funding’. This was an issue that was brought up repeatedly by respondents in Turkey.

## Sweden

Before talking about sheltered housing, it is important to suggest that although women have the option of moving to a shelter home, many women prefer (or should have the opportunity) to talk to somebody in order to express their sentiments and explain their situation before taking the radical step of moving away from home. The organisation *Orienthälsan*, in Stockholm, attempts to solve the problem together with the girl’s family. On their website they mention that some of the most important relation-related crises are conflicts between parents and young people. *Orienthälsan* tries to strike a balance by on the one hand supporting the young people’s ambitions and on the other maintaining positive contact with the family as far as that is possible.<sup>170</sup> In an article, Riyadh Al-Badawi, CEO and psychiatrist, explains that in their work the personnel at *Orienthälsan* draw on their background as immigrants and refugees. He argues that patients can thereby more easily identify with the personnel and stresses the importance of being able to interpret cultural and social codes.<sup>171</sup>

Similarly, the Save the Children’s project [www.flicka.nu](http://www.flicka.nu) is a channel for both a more anonymous kind of communication by email and is also a psychotherapeutic reception, where girls can come to talk about their situation. At *Linnamottagningen*, run by Kvinnors nätverk, Yuksel Said told us individuals with very different needs come to the reception centre and states that:

*We have contact with those who have not yet decided and want to continue to stay at home. But they want a place where they can come to talk, with an adult to listen to them. Then they come here for advice and possible alternatives. What is the problem? Then they make the decision. The main thing is that, I think, that there is a lack of grown-ups for children affected by this problem – grown-ups they can discuss with, without fear of expressing their feelings, such as about your sexuality or to tell that you’ve met a nice guy. It is not strange either that you turn to those of the same age as yourself for advice, but if you have a grown-up to exchange thoughts with, it will be completely different.*

Greta Johansson at *Terrafem* also says that the women’s shelter has many contacts with young people who prefer to stay at home, but under different circumstances:

*There are many for whom it is not possible to leave home. They sometimes call us because they are trying to find a different solution that does not exist. Sometimes you want to believe that something magical*

<sup>170</sup> <http://www.orienthalsan.nu>

<sup>171</sup> Kunskap om kulturella koder – *Orienthälsan*. [www.paraplyprojektet.se](http://www.paraplyprojektet.se)

*is going to change the situation. Many girls have tried several strategies to test: "if I do this maybe my dad will respect me, or that, maybe I'll get to go to university or move to another town." That is how many have been thinking and pondering, and then they are very disappointed when things don't turn out that way. Then there are many that call us because they have had sexual intercourse with their boyfriend but are going to marry another man. Then they call us to ask for help to get the hymen stitched up. They adjust to the norms. It is not possible for them to say: I can do what I want; I have a right to my body. And in that way one could say that they are carriers of their culture, and they don't see any other chance either.*

Thus, there are several reasons why women contact organisations such as Terrafem. Young women are caught between lifestyle choices (i.e. where they have chosen to engage with sexual activities before marriage) and cultural expectations (i.e. to be virgins when they get married).

The Government's 2004 fact sheet talks in terms of pre-emptive measures and the increased protection of the individual. One priority that has been delineated has been to provide shelters for girls subjected to honour related violence. However, it should be noted that most of the sheltered housing that is specifically intended for and suited to young people exposed to so-called honour related violence has not existed for very long.

On the issue of the allocation of funds, the Government resolution 27<sup>172</sup> says:

*Many girls and women are today at risk in their home environment and many of those are in need of sheltered housing. This is part of the male violence against women that is present in the whole of society. The awareness of this violence, and its different manifestations, must be improved in order to give every girl and woman at risk sufficient protection and a good reception. Special efforts must be made to protect girls and women of foreign origin exposed to threats or violence from close relatives.*<sup>173</sup>

*It is primarily the responsibility of municipalities to solve the matter of protective housing and it is urgent that the development gets started. It is, however, difficult to assess the local need for places in sheltered housing. At the same time, it is important that established places are not left vacant. It is therefore the Government's view that a special allocation of funds to municipalities to start up this kind of sheltered housing, primarily should be concentrated to the County Administrative Boards of the three major city counties, where a need has been identified and where the conditions therefore are favourable to uphold a good competence.*<sup>174</sup>

<sup>172</sup> Regeringsbeslut 27 2003-06-18, Skyddat boende mm för flickor och unga kvinnor som riskerar att utsättas för hedersrelaterat våld.

<sup>173</sup> Regeringsbeslut 27. 2003-06-18, Skyddat boende m.m. för flickor och unga kvinnor som riskerar att utsättas för hedersrelaterat våld.

<sup>174</sup> Regeringsbeslut 27, 2003-06-18. In the Stockholm County the municipalities (except from Stockholms stad – Kruton) are not active in "building up" shelter homes. They are not showing any interest in running shelter homes under their own auspices. The active operators are still non-profit organisations (volunteers and so on).

The intention is that other municipalities of the country will also have access to the sheltered housing places created in the major city counties. The allocation of funds is mainly intended to help the municipalities to start taking responsibility for the issue.

The County Administrative Boards' allocation of funds to sheltered housing has been given both to voluntary organisations and care companies owned by the municipalities.<sup>175</sup> For example, since 2002 the municipality of Stockholm has been running a crisis centre and collective sheltered housing, Kruton, for young women and girls subjected to honour related violence. In 2004 (with economic support from Stockholm County Administrative Board), a support and advice centre was also opened. The purpose is to establish early contact with girls who experience oppression.<sup>176</sup> From the survey carried out by the County Administrative Boards it has been calculated that about 150-300 shelter places are needed.<sup>177</sup> The Socialstyrelsen report, "County Administrative Board efforts against honour related violence, interim report 2003-2004", shows that by March 2005 some 70 different institutions had been established, such as foster homes (familjehem), homes for care and living (hem för vård och boende), sheltered flats (skyddslägenheter) and support flats (stödlägenheter). In addition, auxiliary reception centres are associated with certain housing categories where there is a need for longer-term support. The most common arrangement for financing the homes is that the responsible municipality pays a small fee that contributes towards the rent for the young person's stay at the shelter homes.<sup>178</sup>

Some of the bodies that are responsible for sheltered housing are Terrafem<sup>179</sup>, Gryning Vård AB<sup>180</sup> and Linnamottagningen, which has its roots in the voluntary sector (it often helps people to find a place to stay). Kvinnors nätverk (Women's Network) originally provided sheltered housing in cooperation with the municipality-owned care company AB Vårlljus. This cooperation has now come to an end, however, and Kvinnors nätverk has sole responsibility for the running of the reception centre, where one can come and talk (no accommodation is provided). Yuksel Said from Linnamottagningen suggests that sheltered housing could be a way of protecting vulnerable young people in different ways:

*It may be a solitary living that is still sheltered, it may be living with support, it may be in the home of a family, it may be that they have to be at an institution with some personnel.*

<sup>175</sup>The partial report of the National Board of Health and Welfare shows that the economic distribution of the funds allocated in 2003 and used in 2004 was: Sheltered housing ca 7 million, Preventive measures/surveys ca 5 million kronor, Administration/personnel ca 5 million kronor, money transferred to following year: ca 2 million kronor, Socialstyrelsen (2005) Länsstyrelsernas insatser mot hedersrelaterat våld, delrapport 2003-2004, p 9

<sup>176</sup>Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005), 18 projekt till stöd för flickor och unga kvinnor p 10

<sup>177</sup>Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län 2004, Nationell rapport om skyddat boende m.m., p 56

<sup>178</sup>Socialstyrelsen (2005) Länsstyrelsernas insatser mot hedersrelaterat våld, delrapport 2003-2004, p 10

<sup>179</sup>Terrafem is a voluntary women's shelter intended for women of foreign origin.

<sup>180</sup>As compared to a voluntary organisation such as Terrafem, Gryning vård AB is more of an official centre.

Karin Sant at Gryningen Vård AB is hesitant about the allocation of responsibility to municipalities for dealing with this issue for three main reasons. Firstly, she suggests that at the municipal level the issue will just “disappear in the general chaos”. Secondly, the issue may easily be oversimplified and thus not seen as the complex issue it is. Thirdly, the municipalities are not familiar with the issue and it will therefore be difficult to provide the necessary competence. Karin Sant thinks that it is important to continue the national cooperation that has been started – and that the protective measures created are actually used. She looks positively at the Government proposal for a national consultative support as a way of bringing national attention to the issue.

Karin Sant also brought up some of the problems she experiences at the local level:

*When we have received money for our projects it has been for the sheltered housing – not for other purposes such as ‘treatment’. The idea has been that the responsibility lies with the municipalities, but they have not taken that responsibility. Not to the extent that is needed, at least. When they [the girls] stay with us we meet them more frequently than social workers do. And short stays don’t work. How will the girls dare to begin a treatment and talk about what they have been through when it is only for two months? But I myself know what the work conditions are like at the social services. When a person is placed one takes a deep breath and moves on to other issues. But there are yet those that have very good methods, and that really do follow-up on the girl. Then it is also difficult for municipalities that only encounter this once a year or so, they have no knowledge. This is a difficult issue for all authorities. So everybody must work together. We have a fantastic cooperation with the police of Västra Götaland County. Mostly the cooperation with social services works pretty well, even if they are not always very knowledgeable of the field. But we can’t ask that of them, I think. Still, many are very engaged.*

Karin Sant points to three potentially difficult areas:

- Besides sheltered housing, women also need treatment that will enable them to re-build their lives.
- HRV is a particularly difficult area for municipalities since they may not encounter the incidence of HRV frequently enough to develop the relevant competence.
- There is a need for better co-ordination between the various agencies, so that through knowledge sharing, greater competence is achieved.

Reiterating some of these points, Yuksel Said at Linnamottagningen (The Linna Reception Centre) stresses the importance of keeping track of individuals placed in sheltered housing:

*It is not enough just to help with new housing, but all the consequences it brings must be covered: breaking with your family and so on. And how to protect oneself? To avoid being at different locations, to be prepared if anything should happen. How should one act then?*

Carin: *Do you talk about such practical things?*



*Yes, a lot. It is not just about this physical confinement, but a whole lot more.*

Karin Sant at Gryning Vård AB also points out the importance of providing support in many different ways. She maintains that the most important thing is to help the young person to want to go on living. She also suggests that the biggest security risk is often the girl herself, who, on missing her family, reveals her current location (at the sheltered housing):

*Prerequisite to their protection is making them feel good enough. That is the most important thing. There we also have a task to examine what works. We have to develop good practices if we are going to make them stay, and then we have to work with their psyche.*

Karin Sant at Gryning Vård AB agrees that it is important to see sheltered housing as a long-term process. She thinks that sheltered housing, together with a serious and qualitative activity, may make it possible for women to rebuild their lives. During this time they should also be helped to learn what is expected of them:

*It is important to show what society demands: to go to school, get a job and so on. It is freedom, but under responsibility, both when it comes to your own sexuality and your own safety. This is often the hardest part for the girls.*

Camilla Salan, a psychotherapist at Save the Children, also stresses the need for long-term support for the girls even after they have left the sheltered housing. She says that problems often occur when the girls are to move somewhere else. It may be difficult to get hold of a permanent residence, and this situation of uncertainty is not good for a person that is already in an unstable psychological state:

*They need an environment that is stable. They meet a new social secretary, a new school, all those are to be established. So all this work is needed. And these supportive reception centres come in, Linnamottagningen, for example, where they are seen as a resource towards the girl. But then when some time has passed, when the girl feels that now I've had all this help – if she has received all this help, it is not always the case that she does – 'Now I have received all this help, and so much time has passed, but I don't feel well anyway. Now I need help.' That is when the psychotherapy should come in. That will be the last effort, one could say. But that is not the way it is working today: the girls are in a crisis, they feel bad and there is... The problem complex is patched all the time I think: one band-aid here, one band-aid there. That is why I say the overall thinking is not there. It is not obvious to the girls when they have arrived at a sheltered housing, what it will be like afterwards. There is always this uncertainty. We use to say that: if you are to get psychotherapeutic help – people who are in a crisis – then you must have a stable environment. And these girls very seldom have this stable environment. And then there will be problems, problems, and problems.*

*Then I also think that school becomes a problem, especially for those that have changed to a new identity, because they have no grades, or they can't take references. They can't get their grades from school because they have changed their name.*

Camilla Salan points out that girls experiencing any form of violence, abuse or threat of violence need a holistic system to support them. Besides a sheltered environment, girls also have the 'stable environment' of psychotherapy. Camilla Salan's opinion is that a band-aid method of engaging with problems will not be enough.

In Sweden, a new identity could perhaps be seen as the ultimate form of sheltered housing. In certain cases the threats against the girl/woman are of such a serious nature that she has to be given a new identity – a new name and a break with everything associated with her former life. Salma Riyadh at Integrationsverket talks about the problem:

*I think that they [shelter homes] are doing a really good job, because when it is crises, they have to have these shelter homes. They can't just leave the girl there. But it's temporary. I'm talking about the solutions that they sometimes have: to move the girl from her family, from the municipality and try to give her a new identity. And she hasn't the possibility to contact her family, her friends and so on. And I think that isn't a so good solution, because it has an effect on the girl herself and the girls' integration process.*

Camilla Salan also talks about the problems that can arise when a girl gets a new identity. She mentions a case where a girl started attending a new school without having prepared herself well enough, and was questioned when her classmates realised that she was her lying about her background and herself:

*A girl told us that when she came here to our clinic [Save the Children]: she had been living in sheltered housing and had got a new identity. But she didn't know how to handle the situation, the fact that she had just been given a name. And then she was coming out into school, and she met other students at school and she was also supposed to present herself. She made up a story fairly quickly. And then the mates said: 'But that doesn't sound plausible! But what? Where do you live?' 'Well, I live in a room in town.' 'Alone?' 'Yes, I live alone.' 'Well, that sounds crazy, how have you been able to get hold of an apartment in the middle of the city?' 'What about your parents? Where do they live? She wasn't prepared [for all the questions], so she tried to make things up that didn't add up. And then she said that she had gotten a reputation of lying – which was true, in a way – but it was really tough for her when she had to find a new environment and she was caught lying. And then she hadn't had any help either... I don't mean that there should be a rule that 'now we make up a lie together with the social secretary' but one can at least be prepared... one maybe can think about consequences of changing an identity. What I am supposed to tell other people?... It is only a small detail, but I still think it's important.*

Kickis Åhré Älgamo from Rikskriminalen is of the opinion that the issue of identity is quite tricky, and that the Government has not done enough in terms of handling the issue:

*The identity has to be secret...if women graduate from one kind of school...it's hard to make them move from one identity to another...also if you have experience, skills and education in one profession...if you change her identity, then you cannot use those skills again. If you have been in line to get a work/project for nine*

*months...and if you change the identity, then you will at the bottom again to get the project. Áhré Álgamo suggests that it could be a destructive way of living and the government has to think carefully about it but the system has not been built up for that.*

In general, while most informants are positive to the Government's support of sheltered housing, they indicate that some difficult hurdles need to be crossed. The Stockholm County Administrative Board report "18 projects..." (2004) states that: "Sheltered housing is in itself not a good solution and may not be applied as an isolated measure; it is only an intermediary step in a state of emergency."<sup>181</sup> Gina Hyllan, at Norrköping Shelter, is critical and argues that the Government's reaction is late:

*Because we [in Sweden, the Swedish Government] have to do something... We have to solve this problem when it's burning. We have to do something. But this is not the right way of acting. We have to work more preventatively.--- But what the Government does is, that we don't talk about this problem, but when the problem is too big, when a girl is jumping from the window, we can't say that you have to go back to your family again, then we have to take her to a safe place. So, we [the Swedish Government] do things when the problem is really big, when we can't close our eyes any longer. And the problem is so big so we have to put her in a safe place, and it costs a lot of money.*

Cecilia Axelby at the Foreign Ministry also argues that sheltered housing is somewhat problematic, because it may be a form of "band-aid", where the perpetrators and, most of all, the structures behind the violence, remain invisible.

Some question the "solution" that is in place, which in practice consists of a continued confinement of the girls. Ahmet Benhur Turkoglu from Sharaf Heroes suggests that more preventative measures are important:

*If you ask me – let's mention a number, 50,000 girls. Should we create a sanctuary for them? Is that the solution? Won't there be more? To isolate them – is that the solution? What then is the difference between us, and Jordan, that locks women up? Is that the way it should be? No! That is not the solution. The solution is not sheltered housing. Okay, they are emergency measures. But, if we are to get to the roots of the problem it is long-term solutions and that we have proved is – the solution is not stricter laws or tougher punishment for domestic violence. I'm all for that, but that is not the solution. It won't deter.*

Arhe Hamednaca sees that working primarily with sheltered housing will not prevent violence; one also has to work preventatively:

*Okay, it is right to protect. And I also thought that sheltered housing is right. But in my opinion it is not enough. We really ought to lock up the men, not the little woman. Not because, I mean, we must protect her somehow. But still, to isolate – that's not enough – the problem is left at home, it is not just because through sheltered housing we'll solve the problem. And then, we have to work with the men. The men are the sick ones, not the women. The disease is with the men. Who takes care of the men? And when I brought up the word 'men', many reacted against me in a negative way. They say that as soon as you*

<sup>181</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005), 18 projekt till stöd för flickor och unga kvinnor, p 14

*talk about men, it dominates. The name of the male is always dominant and then the women fall behind. But I don't agree in this particular case. Because I say the men are sick, I don't say that they are the best. I say that it is their attitude that the women suffer from. We don't solve the problem by building sheltered housing. Then the case is that we have to work with the men somehow. But it wasn't easy at first. I met with a massive resistance: one woman yelled at me in a seminar that I shouldn't [use] the word 'man', she said to me. Then I replied 'Damn, in that case, if we are to live in this world, as equals, then in fact... the men are needed too.' To me, feminism is both parts. We must live as equals, and if we don't change the men, we can't do anything. For how long can we protect the women?*

By suggesting that the 'problem is left at home', Arhe alerts us to the idea that HRV has to be tackled both structurally and socially. HRV is a lucid example of structural violence, i.e. violence rooted in social structures. We would suggest that structural violence supports interpersonal violence. However, since the workings of structural violence are often not visible, it is more difficult to tackle. Removing a woman from home to sheltered housing will not solve the problem of violence, since the home is a place where different power relationships are forged. These power relationships are not only between men and women in the family, but older women in the family can often exercise control over younger men and women, particularly in a joint family system.

Gina Hyllan at Norrköping Shelter raises some related issues:

*Yes, and I think that it's not good for these girls to come to these places. Because I think that even if they are 18 or 19 or even 21 years old...If they are taken from a big family where they are used to live together with a lot of people, they will be so lonely at a shelter home. Maybe it's a good place in the beginning, when it is still an emergency situation for a couple of weeks. But then they need to find a new family for these girls, so they can live together with other people. Because the loneliness will make them...You know, if you have lived in a family where you have no rights, and you are protected, and then you come to these places where you can't go out as you want, there's a new protection. But the protection is from the family now, and the family protected the girl from the society. So you always have to protect these girls! It's the same problem, but now you are totally lonely.*

Gina Hyllan thinks that the best solution is rather to find 'new families' for the girls. According to the Stockholm County Administrative Board report, after the first-year initiatives the demand for sheltered housing was also different from expectations. The institutional places at AB Vårlljus were, for example, in little demand and only then for short and urgent placements. AB Vårlljus and Kvinnors Nätverk were previously co-operative partners, and created Linnamottagningen. AB Vårlljus was responsible for the sheltered accommodation, but has now withdrawn. Instead Linnamottagningen, through its contacts with Kvinnors nätverk, has created a number of foster homes (familjehem) for young people in need of sheltered housing. The report states that foster homes seem to be the form of housing

that is best suited to the target group following an emergency phase that sometimes only lasts for a couple of days.<sup>182</sup>

However, Greta Johansson at Terrafem is critical of the suggestion that sheltered housing is a way to continue confining and locking up a young person:

*I think that within social services there is a conviction that the family is best. An expert has written that: – and I think many are inspired by that – “the solution is not sheltered housing for a girl. The girl lacks inner freedom, and the inner freedom she will not regain in a sheltered housing – it only provides outer freedom, not inner.” The trouble is that if she does not have an outer freedom, then it is fruitless to try to gain inner freedom. If I have outer freedom I may start to think about a lot of things. If it means that staying there [in the family] and “solving the conflict” will solve the inner freedom. And it is that... If it is seen as a conflict between two equal parties, then you will get to that kind of conclusion. But if you have a girl whose freedom is constantly limited, both inner and outer, and we say that she has a right to this freedom – then we would act differently. And there are professionals that do that, they realise this. And they help the girl to make that difficult decision because they can see that it leads nowhere to stay there and feeling bad.*

Greta Johansson at Terrafem thus argues that sheltered housing may help people to create a more independent life and enable them to gain an ‘outer freedom’. She also suggests that social services staff, usually very ‘family orientated’, often see the conflict as a conflict between two equal parties. But, according to her, that is not true, because the power dynamics are not equal. In this respect Greta Johansson thinks that the encounter with the social authorities may still be problematic. She says that not everybody understands that although the girls would like to choose their own way, they can often harbour contradictory feelings of guilt towards their families. Greta Johansson believes that the authorities should support the girls in making their own decisions:

*To me such remarks seem as if you ally yourself and take a stand as an adult, and not with the girl who is the one in the situation....that, you don’t let her talk about what she wants to talk about, and when she brings up question that she want to go back [to her family] Because that may happen too. I think that among the social workers there is a firm belief that the family is the best.*

Camilla Salan at Save the Children suggests that agencies’ lack of trust towards girls who seek help is a recurring issue:

*That they haven’t been believed I think. These girls have maybe said this to some teacher who hasn’t understood. So they have gone to the social services, and the social services have said: But then we’ll go talk to the parents. So they have talked to the parents and matters have become worse for the girl. So many, yes, maybe you should not say many... but of those that come to me, many girls are in contact with the social services where they have been going this way and that, back to the home again until it wouldn’t work any more. The problem of*

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<sup>182</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005), 18 projekt till stöd för flickor och unga kvinnor, p 7

*[the girls] is that they have met people who have not understood what they have said and then they have not been believed or taken seriously. And it is also the case that these girls have very nice parents, they are functioning families. It is not the case... like the social services are used to: criminal families, or families with social problems – the social services' usual clientele. It isn't those but these girls are not in the social registers: fine, well-functioning family. So the girls say: This is the way it is. Then [the social services] go back home and meet very nice parents and think that it can't be true. And they let it go. So the girls' problem is that they are not believed. And then one has this kind of family perspective – and is very right in having that. But sometimes it goes wrong.*

The above quote articulates some of the issues that need to be resolved. First of all, the social services have to be careful that they do not approach the parents when the girls have approached them. Often, for the girls, talking to the social services has been a way of dealing/coping with their situation as well as of avoiding a sense of isolation. The threat of violence, or direct violence, can make an individual feel vulnerable and isolated and many girls/women often cannot express their feelings to an extended family member since this may then be relayed to their parents. Thus, they might be approaching the social services with the expectation that what they say is confidential. There is, of course, another issue here in that if the parents are approached by the social services and forewarned, they might remove the girl from Sweden and take her to another country.

Karin Sant, at Gryning Vård AB, suggests that sheltered housing may work preventatively, since it symbolises help and safety for a young person who wants to leave their family. She suggests that it may make a family rethink, because there is a huge price to pay if the girl chooses to run away to a shelter. Karin says that “many of these families naturally feel very bad, because of the circumstances of life, they can't take the pressure of honour. I see the parents as victims too – even if you can't take away their responsibility of oppressing their son and daughter”.

### Issues for Further Consideration

The fact that places in shelter homes (especially considered for HRV victims) are vacant is a recurring problem and mentioned in some of the reports we have looked at.<sup>183</sup> Several reasons are given as to why sheltered housing has so many vacant places. **Firstly**, the municipalities cannot afford to pay for the housing. The financially tight position has made many municipalities abstain from buying sheltered housing and there are no current solutions on this issue.<sup>184</sup> Yuksel Said at Linnamottagningen suggests that one of the consequences of this would be that it will be more difficult for young people to get help from municipalities with poor resources. **Secondly**, in a presentation made by a Stockholm County Administrative Board resource team, it was pointed out that local authorities often choose cheaper and/or more established traditional solutions than sheltered hou-

<sup>183</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005) Resursteam mot hedersrelaterat våld, p 11

<sup>184</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005), 18 projekt till stöd för flickor och unga kvinnor, p 19

sing and that have special competences relating to HRV.<sup>185</sup> **Thirdly**, the social services are only willing to pay for a few selected people, even though it is against the ethics of some organisations to exclude people or refuse help. Yuksel Said at Linnamottagningen (whose foundation is in the voluntary organisation, Kvinnors nätverk) suggests that:

*If the social services won't pay we won't, of course, refuse to let the person come here. Presently we have two boys for whom we do not get any support from the social services and some girls – we want to fight for a reception centre where everybody is welcome. We have our heart in a voluntary organisation. You should absolutely not exclude anyone.*

**Fourthly**, the 'budget crisis' of the municipalities in combination with the fact that the HRV programme has received a large allocation of funds has, according to Yuksel Said and Greta Johansson at Terrafem, paradoxically contributed to the development of a 'market' of private companies that provide sheltered housing and foster homes:

*There are many private ones that say that they can work with this matter and to me that seems a little... We have tried ourselves to work with private companies because our foster homes were not sufficient. And now when I look back after a year, I see that in many circumstances it has not worked, because there are many differences between this issue and ordinary teenage rebellions. At such placements, it is largely about establishing limits; there is a lot of destructive behaviour. But here it is the other way around. Here it is girls, for the most part, who have not learned to say no. So they have to be taught self-confidence that will help them re-shaping their lives. So it is a big difference compared to the traditional placements we have.*

The issue here is that not everybody has the required knowledge about people's specific problems and Yuksel Said at Linnamottagningen worries that this may lead to the young people not receiving the care they need. That is also why she thinks that it is necessary to make very clear what shelter homes mean for this group – and most of all to establish "quality criteria" for shelter homes.

Tangential to the above raised issues is the fact that politicians at municipal level often avoid placing vulnerable individuals in secure housing because it is expensive, according to Eva Lotta Johansson, Departmental Secretary at the Ministry of Justice. Moreover, if politicians at the municipal level gave clear signals that HRV should be prioritised, civil servants would also prioritise the issue. For example, a lawyer, Elizabeth Fritz, who has been working with the issue of HRV for 17 years, says that when youths have to be re-located for reasons of security, the Socialjänsterna (Social Services) at the new and old locations are not very co-operative and instead question whether it is necessary for them to be re-located, and also raise the issue of cost.<sup>186</sup>

<sup>185</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län (2005) Resursteam mot hedersrelaterat våld, p

11

<sup>186</sup> SvD, 18th January, 2006:6

## Men and Sheltered Housing

Recently, more attention has been given to men as victims of violence in the name of honour, although in this context there is not much mention of boys or men when it comes to the issue of sheltered housing. According to Yuksel Said, boys are not exposed to violence to the same degree:

*The problem is for example that they are married away at a young age. They don't want to be married. But the consequences for boys are different than for girls, because for girls the physical violence is ongoing, but for the boys its more about isolation and social exclusion – there is no housing for boys. We have had some talks with Stora Sköndal, and so far they want to work with us on girls, not on boys. So we try to help them in other ways, to find housing in different ways. They really don't need sheltered housing of the kind that girls need.*

Karin Sant tells us that Gryning Vård AB is presently hiding two couples:

*I think the problem is equal; there is no big difference. Men and women may handle the problem in different ways, and sometimes they are exposed to different kinds of oppression from the family. But when it comes to the psychological effects, I can't see much of a difference.*

The report, "Honour Related Violence Against Young People Related to Sexual Orientation" (2004:24), produced by Skåne County Administrative Board, points out that boys have no real possibility of obtaining a place at a shelter home today.<sup>187</sup>

It is more common to talk of men as perpetrators, however. A recurring paradox that is often pointed out is: Why it is always the woman, the "victim", who must run away and leave everything behind? Cecilia Axelby, from the Government, comments:

*Yes, why remove the woman... and maybe, well, not getting access to her belongings or to her children. It is not at all obvious that it is the women who should be transferred to sheltered housing. Perhaps the men should live there instead.*

## Summary

In the Swedish context, it is clear that many young women would prefer not to leave their homes and instead have somebody to talk to first. Thus, centres such as those provided by Orientalsan and the Save the Children project are extremely useful for providing support. It has also argued by some representatives that sheltered housing is a form of band-aid treatment and that two main reasons for this can be outlined. Firstly, it is seen as band-aid because girls need a more complete approach when dealing with their situation. For example, sheltered housing without psychotherapy or a stable environment may not be able to provide sustainable benefits to women. Secondly, it is important to tackle the problem at the structural rather than only at the individual level, because structures have to be changed first in order to prevent further violence. However, some see sheltered housing as a preventative measure because it opens up an alternative for young

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<sup>187</sup> Länsstyrelsen i Skåne län (2004) Hedersrelaterat våld mot ungdomar på grund av sexuell läggning, p 134



women and makes their family rethink the huge consequences that they will have to shoulder if a girl decides to leave/run away.

Resources have been channelled in building secure shelter homes for young people at risk of HRV. Also, it has been emphasised that there could be the possibility to build separate shelter homes for ethnic minority women. But does this meet the needs of those affected? For example, separate shelter homes for BME women may make them feel that they are 'special cases', and make them feel further stigmatised and discriminated. On the other hand, new residents in shelter homes may find it extremely hard, since they have not been allowed to take responsibilities in their families, and to suddenly become an 'individual' and lead an 'independent' life in a shelter home could be difficult for many young girls.

Another feature that sheltered housing reveals is that organisations and the social services do not only have to deal with girls, but also with young boys and couples seeking protection from HRV. However, there are opinions that suggest that men experience oppression and violence differently from women. There is opposition in some ranks about providing sheltered housing for men and, when the issue is brought up, it is more in the context that men should be on the run and not the women. Women should be allowed to stay at home. Also, some organisations suggest that if women leave their homes, the problem still remains and is not resolved.

## The United Kingdom

On 1st April 2003, on a Women's Aid Federation 'Census Day', it was calculated that 2,786 women and 3,609 children were living in their affiliated 400 refuges/shelters in England. Women's AID Scotland has 37 refuges and there are 42 refuges in Wales and 11 in Northern Ireland.<sup>188</sup> Unlike a decade ago, when violence of any kind was a taboo subject, there is now a growing awareness among women of the necessity of refuges as a 'safe haven', and many more campaigns provide women with greater choices.

In the UK, unlike in Sweden, there is no provision for separate shelter homes for women suffering honour related violence. The pre-dominant feeling is that there are not enough refuges in the UK. Without undervaluing the importance of shelter homes and refuges for women, three dominant perceptions can be discerned. The first is that shelters are seen by some as a short term 'sanctuary' on which we should not be dependant. We should instead be looking at the deeper causes of the problem. Thus, refuges should be accompanied by advocacy and psychological support<sup>(189)</sup>. Secondly, the ideology and principles that govern refuges/shelters can sometimes lead to a questioning and scrutiny of the 'victim'. As Dobash and Dobash argue, shelters provide a pragmatic response to the problem (Dobash/1997/273). Dobash and Dobash (1992) distinguish between 'phil-

<sup>188</sup> Kvinnoforum, (2005) Honour related violence. European resource book and good practice, p.95

<sup>189</sup> Development and Capacity Building Officer, Imkaan. Worked for 15 years at women's organisations, especially with Asian women. Her professional history encompasses development and management of the Keighley Domestic Violence Services for Asian women and Services Management of the Black Women's Support Project. Imkaan works with refuges that work with abused women. Some of these abused women suffer abuse as a result of honour related violence.

anthropic shelters' and 'activist shelters'; the former focusing on 'restructuring the individual' rather than the social and legal institutions and practices.<sup>190</sup> Thirdly, some women may not want to leave their homes and, in such cases, more outreach work is required. On the other hand, there is some concern among communities that by creating the shelters, we generate more conflict, because women then think that it is easier to leave their home than try to resolve the issues.

Representatives from Karma Nirvana, who run a specific South Asian women's refuge, supported by the government, suggest that:

*when a woman seeks a refuge, she has come at the end of the line...she has made a decision (or the decision put upon her) that there is no where else to go but I need to be safe and need a roof over my head...she is totally destitute and homeless.*

However, Karma Nirvana strongly believes that the experiences of women in refuges governed by Karma Nirvana were rooted in honour. So they believe that there is no need to have separate refuges for women experiencing honour based violence. An individual at the Greenwich Women's Refuge, a statutory organisation, articulated opinions similar to those of Karma Nirvana that 'violence is violence – whether its rape, forced marriage, incest, so why is there a need to have separate refuge for HRV'.

Karma Nirvana suggests that re-building women's lives is important. However, women who come to refuges do not have 'outside support'. 'Outside' support, it is argued, lacks government support and is under-resourced – support in terms of exploring options, counselling, befriending – even though the government is aware of this. Ashiana, a small charity based in East London, works as an outreach service and has in-house psychotherapists who run a counselling service for 16-30 year old Asian and Iranian women. A spokeswoman suggests that 'there are long-term psychological effects of HRV, even after women escape it'. Also, shelters are seen by Greenwich Women's Refuge as a short-term solution, although what they do see as important is:

*education – the way mothers are bringing up their sons and daughters...to talk about gender issues...so that they don't grow up thinking that they are no less of a human being as a son. We need to get that message across to students at a very young age. There are programmes that are going on to educate children – a child can never be too young to have positive messages taught to them. They (children) absorb a lot around them.*

These issues are important, because it is now realised that there is a greater need to educate children and youth around issues of violence, especially if they themselves experience violence at home. According to the Education Act (1996), parents can be prosecuted if their children fail to attend school or if they deliberately withdraw their daughters from school. Also, children can occupy various subject positions – as victims, perpetrators and witnesses.

However, some voluntary organisations also highlight specific issues in relation to forced marriage:

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<sup>190</sup> Dobash and Dobash, 1997, 'Violence Against Women' in O'Toole, Laura and Schiffman, eds. *Gender Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, New York: New York University Press.

*There are not many options for a BME woman – there are not enough women refuges and there are no provisions for women with insecure immigration status.*

Another issue is that while young people would like to escape from a situation where, for example, they are being forced to marry, they are not very keen to go to a refuge. In such circumstances more outreach work or an independent helpline could be very useful. A Home Office representative suggests that 50 percent of BME women would not seek out refuges, but would welcome more outreach provisions.

The further issue, raised by a couple of refuges, is that the outlook of first generation immigrant women is often different from that of younger women in the refuges. ‘Both groups have the same ethics but different boundaries’. Some believe that younger women suffering HRV and forced marriages prefer to go to separate refuges rather than be with older woman who may not fully comprehend their experiences. However, there is also a general fear among organisations that separate refuges could lead to greater stigmatisation.

Another important issue is that some women who have accessed refuges in the past find, on reflection, that their experiences were not always pleasant. For example, an individual said that she was questioned and had to narrate her experience to three separate workers in the refuge before she was offered a place. She<sup>191</sup> felt that she was disclosing something ‘private’ and ‘hurtful’ to different individuals when she should have been believed in the first instance. Also, at times the staff at a refuge might treat you like a little ‘girl’ rather than as an adult. Finally, it has been suggested that very few refuges are run by women who have themselves been ‘survivors’. More often they are run by upper/middle class women who are either distant from the reality or do not have a ‘hands on approach’.

## Summary

We suggest that there is a need for a greater harmony between the discourse articulated by those who experience violence and the discourse of organisations/agencies that have been set up to combat violence. Women who experience violence at times feel ‘shortchanged’, i.e. they are expected to leave their homes when what they really need is individuals from the relevant services to speak to and educate their families on issues that might range from participation in higher education to refusal to marry when they are not ready to do so. While there is a unanimous opinion from representatives of all three countries that the family is the site of most of the violence,

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<sup>191</sup> This particular individual works for the Turkish-Kurdish community centre and brings in her own experiences of domestic and honour related violence to help others in need. She suffered domestic abuse at the hands of her Turkish mother and brother who were against her getting higher education and also insisted on an early marriage, which she refused. She managed to put herself through university education and on return to her home, the violence continued. She then decided to go a refuge. She works with Turkish-Kurdish women who come from Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Armenia. Most of the Turkish-Kurdish communities come from rural Turkey. Currently she is involved in the project SURE START (a national campaign), in which she visits families with the E8 address in London to facilitate the appropriate upbringing of their children – so that the children get the right ‘start’ to their lives.

it is important to highlight that family also constitutes the building block for 'victims' of violence. Many women do not want to be removed from familial surroundings and their networks. These needs are more crucial if one is an immigrant in the country. On the other hand, some organisations feel that they cannot provide the mediating role between the victims and the families (particularly the perpetrators). Some organisations also feel that they cannot intervene in 'generational and cultural gaps'.

## Turkey

Turkey is making structural changes in line with impending EU integration. The Turkish Government, allegedly, has not been supportive of women's issues or has not 'prioritised women's issues'. Respondents who were interviewed reiterated that shelters could be supported by the Government but run independently by women's organisations. An academic, Yakin Sadak, states the reasons for this:

*There have been cases where a municipality opens a shelter but the shelter is open out there...everybody knows where it is...there is not enough protection and the attitudes of the people....they don't have the right kind of training. We need training for the people and the right attitude, i.e., people should view HRV as very serious and that it would not go away till we tackle it seriously.*

*An ideal situation would be if screened/qualified women's organisations to be responsible for these shelters and the central government or municipalities should provide funds to women's organisations as well funds to build the capacity of these organisations.*

However, Yakin Sadak agreed that shelters are short-term measures. 'What is really needed is a real change of attitudes... a change of mentalities...all over the world...whether in Turkey, or in Sweden'.

Some of Sadak's concerns were articulated by the Flying Broom, a non-governmental organisation.<sup>192</sup> They suggested that:

*Local governments have a responsibility to establish women's shelters because of changing legislation. However, they choose staff randomly and it is not right. Government can open women's shelters but they should take the advice from women's organisations. Women's shelters are necessary but they should be run with social responsibility, with advice taken from women's organisations.*

The organisation WWHR also suggests that:

*The Turkish Government has not been very sensitive to shelter homes in the past. There are very limited shelters in Turkey and even those limited ones, there are limited resources, no sufficient privacy and security, or the right trained staff. But shelters have been a crucial point of advocacy for the women's movement in the last 10-15 years. And what is happening is there has been very slowly, there are some col-*

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<sup>192</sup> This organisation is called 'ucan supurge'. Their main base is in Ankara. This organisation began its activities in 1996. Flying Broom aims at contributing to the overall gender equality in Turkey and the institutionalisation of gender equality. Flying Broom works in three main areas: Networking, Communication, and Capacity Building/Empowerment.

*laboration with state over the last years... there has been collaboration with local municipalities to open up a few shelters...but we are not sure how sustainable or efficient they will be. But more importantly and more recently, some women's NGO's are running the shelter homes but they are being funded by the state. The Purple Roof Foundation will manage the most recent shelter (in Istanbul) and will receive some finds from the government.*

Having outlined some of the difficulties, WWHR argues that shelter homes are an initial, short-term but a crucial step in solving women's problems.

## Conclusions

It is evident that women's shelters are seen as both important and of assistance in protecting women who experience violence, although not specifically honour-related violence.

In Sweden the issue around sheltered housing has raised the following points:

- It is seen as important that women should be given an opportunity to talk to qualified personnel before they make the decision to leave their families. Leaving one's family is a big step and many women often cannot go back once they have made the decision to leave. Establishments such as Orienthälsan do talk to girls and use personnel drawn from a largely immigrant background. However, it would also be useful if Orienthälsan could train individuals drawn from the mainstream Swedish society as well. The main reason for this is that one has to view any struggle as a joint effort and not as something specific to certain cultures and which only specific 'ethnic' people can handle. Shared ethnicity is a resource that the staff at Orienthälsan draw on, however. Also, many women do not want to leave their families but prefer to conform to tradition, while some would rather live a 'double life'.
- Another related issue is that both the family and the 'victim' have much to lose from a critical situation. For the girl it might mean leaving the family and re-building a new life, while for the family it may mean having to watch their family break up due to the pressure of maintaining honour.
- Shelters are seen as a short-term measure and it is felt that women 'victims' should be expected to re-build their lives. Associated with this idea is that sheltered housing is like treating a symptom but not the fundamental problem. A more holistic understanding would treat the individual at the same time as providing them with shelter.
- Another issue raised is that the social services are unable to understand the problems of the girls and may at times unduly emphasise the importance of the family.

In the UK, issues that arise in relation to sheltered housing are quite different, and include the following:

- Organisations and individuals are uncomfortable with the idea that we should have separate refuges for women experiencing honour based violence and for those experiencing other forms of violence. Also, victims of HBV are currently using the existing refuges, so it

makes little sense to have separate ones in the future. They also view the issue of separate shelters as discriminatory. Also, some individuals argue that women who are currently using the refuges share experiences that are 'honour related'. There are also issues raised about generational conflicts within the refuges, i.e. older women not understanding the needs of younger women in these refuges.

- The refuges in the UK seem to be better equipped to provide additional practical and emotional support to women who seek refuge, in the form of counselling, therapy and putting women through productive channels in order to help them re-build their lives. This still needs to be developed in a more significant way in Sweden.
- It is also argued that those with hands-on experience of violence (i.e. the survivors) would be able to bring a fresh perspective on running refuges than those with little experience.

In Turkey there is not the same level of shelter homes as in Sweden and the UK. Also, in Turkey, there is no adequate discussion about the specific characteristics or needs of shelter homes. There is one salient issue:

- There is widespread agreement among academics and NGO's that while they would appreciate the Government's financial support of the refuges, they would prefer the refuges to be run by the women's organisations.

# Preventive Measures

## Introduction

A SIDA funded study entitled,<sup>193</sup> 'Ending Gender Based Violence: A Call for Global Action to Involve Men' (2004), states that it is important to develop 'analytical frameworks for understanding gender and violence and policies that engage men are crucial' (Ferguson, 2004:34). The study highlights that one needs an 'accountability model that will engage such men initially through criminal justice systems'. At the same time, the study suggests that 'the aim should be rehabilitation rather than simply retribution and containment' (Ferguson, 2004:36). The study is unique because it outlines concrete plans for combating gender-based violence. It does, however open up more questions than it answers. First of all it is not very clear what the authors mean by the following: 'In addition to supporting larger scale social movements that would reduce gender inequality and promote alternative masculinities – anti-war, anti-conscription, civil rights and peace movements – as well as the further economic integration of marginalised men, we here suggest a framework that engages both violent men and engaging all men and boys as well – with public campaigns to raise awareness and ultimately to change the social relations of power and complicity among men – relations that sustain violence.' In our understanding the idea of alternative masculinities overshadows the transitory nature of masculinities, i.e. masculinities that become violent at certain historic and social junctures. Also, it is important to understand that men can occupy various subject positions – as perpetrators, witnesses and victims. The latter also highlights the idea that some groups of men can also occupy positions of vulnerability and powerlessness in relation to HRV within dominant cultures (see also Pringle, 1995).<sup>194</sup> Secondly, it is not very clear what lies behind the idea that 'accessing men's own lived experiences of material insecurity and vulnerability is an important way into mobilising action against violence and inequality on behalf of the self and others' (Ferguson, 2004:37). While there are useful links between material deprivation and men's violence, they may not always capture the complexity of certain forms of violence, such as HRV, which may not have any direct links with material deprivation.

In this project we believe that although research and policy has focused on the needs of the 'victims' of violence, in some ways it has taken the responsibility away from men. As Jeff Hearn (1998) argues, 'if men are to take feminism seriously, as within a pro-feminist perspective, then one of the most urgent tasks is for men to change men, ourselves and other men' (Hearn, 1998:2).<sup>195</sup> It is also important that if we engage men as agents in combating violence, we also need to know more about their attitudes to this social issue. In addition, we would suggest that seeing HRV solely in terms of a women's issue, or only focusing on women, will not lead to a sustain-

<sup>193</sup> Ferguson et al (2004), A Call for Global Action to Involve men, SIDA, 2004.

<sup>194</sup> Pringle, Keith (1995), Men, Masculinities and Social Welfare, London, UCL Press.

<sup>195</sup> Jeff Hearn (1998), The Violences of Men: How Men Talk and How Agencies Respond to Men's Violence to Women, Sage: London

able solution. If we are to combat what we recognise as gender-based violence, then men should have a political responsibility to combat violence.

The involvement of men in combating violence is not observable in either Turkey or the UK, although the media (written and spoken) has increasingly debated the issue of HRV and the initiatives that are (or need to be) in place for combating violence. An example of this is the BBC Radio 4 programme, 'Women's Hour', when Honour Killings in Turkey were discussed and followed by a discussion with Hanana Siddiqui (SBS) and Nasir Afshal (CPS). Also, an example of combating HRV was drawn from the work of Fatima Shaheen, a Member of Parliament who heads a new parliamentary committee on combating HRV in Turkey. Her new approach is to have a more 'pragmatic' approach, and to stress the fact that honour killings can 'tear a whole family apart, putting the men in jail and children in jail'. She has been visiting prisons talking to men about their honour killings, emphasising that 'it's not a man vs. woman conflict'. She says that 'you have to get the message across that this is a family's problem, a society's problem'. The programme did not take the latter issue further, but it is still significant that some individuals in government positions do realise the significance of opening a dialogue with male perpetrators of violence. The 'Women's Hour' programme mentioned above also emphasised that Turkey (as compared to Pakistan) had been encouraging women's education since the 1920s and it was therefore surprising that it should lag behind on the issue of violence against women.

The Turkish discourse on men's involvement in combating violence is emerging in discussions among and between non-governmental organisations, although this is still not reflected in strategic government planning to combat HRV. The issue of whether or not to involve men is highly controversial among feminist academics and activists. Turkish organisations also recognise that the work being carried out in Sweden by men's organisations should set an example for other countries. There is still uneasiness in terms of the role of men, however. It is therefore important to move beyond statements such as 'HRV is a problem created by men' and explore the complexity of this deeply entrenched social issue. We would also suggest that, as identified earlier, the community or collective is also complicit in honour crimes, which means that we also need to be working in/with the community. Furthermore, whilst largely operating within a patriarchal framework, women can also be complicit in honour crimes. Although they may not conduct the actual killing, they can act as informers, or encourage and endorse a killing. But in most instances women have to shoulder the responsibility for their own death, as is implicit in statements such as 'she brought dishonour and shame to the family'. Thus, paradoxically, honour is something that is often only associated with women.

Besides the preliminary initiative in Turkey, we are not aware of any organisations, groups, collectives or advocacy work that are involved in combating honour-based violence in a more pro-active manner. A representative from WWHR (Women for Women's Human Rights-New Ways Foundation), Aytakin Ozturk, suggests that 'recently, there has been an argument that men should be trained and to make them part of the efforts'. On being asked whether women's organisations would be open to men getting involved, Aytakin Ozturk responded: 'that would be a major question...it is still being debated, I would say'. WWHR suggests that in Turkey, unlike Sweden, no men's organisations are combating HRV.



Yakin Sadak, a political sociologist in Turkey, takes a more optimistic approach and reiterates some of the ideas discussed in the BBC Radio 4 'Woman's Hour' programme:

*When I look at other reflections of mentality change since the 1920s/1930s/1940s... since Modern Turkey was built... education of women and professional activities for women was possible because educated men were convinced by the political leadership of the time on the merits of educating their daughters and felt the need to have educated wives. The system promoted this and men were recruited to this ideology. That's why today we have a high percentage of women in academia, as politicians, academics, public professions. So it's important to have men involved as agents of mentality change, particularly in a patriarchal society and it's important to have men involved (just as they were involved in education), in a similar manner, on issues of violence...so in a parallel way men should be involved in combating violence.*

On the issue of whether men should work closely with the government, Yakin Sadak is of the opinion that men should work more in the community; in particular men should work with men, because this would be more effective.

Flying Broom,<sup>196</sup> a lobbying and advocacy organisation, is of the opinion that although Turkey does not have men's organisations, there is a need for organisations similar to those in Sweden. They say that 'Honour Related Violence is a problem that men create and it should not be difficult for them to become aware of it'. In 2005, Flying Broom organised a series of exhibitions of the work of Ulla Lemberg, a Swedish feminist photographer, entitled 'Dear Child: Men, Children and Gender Equality'. The exhibition consisted of photographs of men and their children and aimed at raising questions in order to encourage men to take a more active role in child-bearing, to make men become more aware of women's rights and to take the responsibility of being a father.

In the United Kingdom, the debate and initiatives, in relation to the involvement of men, have moved a bit further than in Turkey. However, on being asked the question, it is emphasised by individuals and organisations, that men and women face honour violence differently. The dominant opinion in the UK is that men can be victims as well, although not necessarily on the same scale as women. As Saba Johri from Imkaan states, 'men also come under pressure for upholding honour and respectability but not to the same degree that women are expected to uphold. Women experience penalties for transgression that men don't always'. A representative from CPS suggests that 'even when the male was a victim of HRV, the motivation for the attack was the woman...but the bulk of cases would involve women'. Adam Wilson from Renaissance Chambers argues that in the context of HRV:

*There are male victims ...i.e. the males who are associated with the female who is the primary victim...so far example in an adulterous relationship...or an elopement...the male victim would not be the immediate family member but the man outside the family, the outsider who is threatening the honour of the family by associating with the woman victim...it is also hard to believe in a male victim of violence within the*

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<sup>196</sup> Refer to Chapter 2 for details.

*home...so for example, if a wife beats her husband....I doubt that the reason for that would be justified through some code of honour. (It is clear that the Swedish definition talks about young men being at risk because of their sexual orientation but I think the point is that those men who have relationships with women are also at risk).*

From the ideas raised by individuals and that have bearing on the earlier discussion in Chapter 2, it can be argued that four main themes are emerging in relation to men as victims of HRV. Firstly, men can be victims of HRV based on their sexual orientation (**sexual**); secondly, in relation to economic issues, such as theft or other economic violations (**economic**); thirdly, by being associated with the woman victim (**interpersonal**); and fourthly, as victims of gender patriarchal norms which disciplines younger members of the family irrespective of their gender (**gender**).

However, the Southall Black Sisters argue that there are also differences between men and women 'victims' of honour. First of all, men tend to have greater power within the community and tend to be able to escape certain pressures. Secondly, when men transgress, the family is quicker to forgive them, and thirdly, men have more economic freedom than women and can take decisions to leave their family more easily than women if things start going wrong.

In the UK, unlike in Sweden, there is no organised involvement of men in combating violence. As a respondent explains:

*There are male-dominated organisations such as the Muslim Parliament and The Council of Sikh Temples but they are male-based organisations who have spoken out eloquently on the subject of HRV. They argue that HRV is unacceptable and faith cannot be used for committing violence. However, these organisations work largely in male-dominated environments but they are very different from the men's groups in Sweden. There are very few males who stand up on the stage that condemn the issue of HRV. So I don't think that as yet, that we will find large numbers of men will come out and speak on the subject. It will happen with time. But there is a desperate need in the UK to have male-role models but these role models should come from the community themselves and not have individuals, such as me, from a government authority who imposes their ideas on them. Also men who have a personal reason (being victims themselves) for getting involved.....one example being that the man has his sister murdered in the family she married.....men should have a personal willingness.<sup>197</sup>*

In the above quotation, Tahir Rizvi, a representative from CPS, suggests that we can have role models 'from the community', but an immediate concern would be whether community leaders could serve as role models. It has been articulated by practitioners and by those in the field that community leaders in the UK are mostly male and can be extremely patronising to women working on HRV. Also, as Tahir Rizvi has pointed out, community leaders respond better to government officials who work on different subjects, including honour related violence rather than just HRV, and that

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<sup>197</sup> CPS, Tahir Rizvi

'it is easier sometimes for men to work on this issue because they do not have the same obstacles put in their way as women activists experience'.<sup>198</sup>

Some cohorts and initiatives, such as the UK Men's Movement and Sure Start,<sup>199</sup> gave a very disappointing analysis of HRV. For example, statements such as 'I understand honour killings as related to Indian notions of honour', or that 'I feel hesitation to talk about violence with Asian men'.<sup>200</sup> One of the respondents also said that 'I am not sure what HRV means but there are two women in the office of South Asian extraction – you can speak to them'! Two dominant ideas emerge from these statements that reiterate essentialist-culturalist ideas about HRV: firstly, that honour violence is a feature of other countries and not the UK, and secondly that ethnic groups can only talk about it since they are exposed to it in their culture.

In Sweden, during the course of the interviews it was articulated by several respondents that it is of primary importance to work preventively with men and boys, who, to an increasing extent, are regarded as both potential victims and perpetrators. The Swedish Minister, Lise Berg, suggests that men should be just as involved in the work of gender-equality as women. For some twenty years now groups closely aligned with the government and whose purpose has been to engage men in gender-equality work have been in operation. Examples include a 'Fathers's Group' (1994-5) and a 'Men and Gender Equality Project' (1999-2003), both working on issues related to masculinity (Berg, 2004:198).<sup>201</sup> The expanded definition in the 2004 Swedish fact sheet also identifies men as victims of violence, and not only as perpetrators. Building on this idea, Arhe Hamednaca of the Sharaf Heroes Project suggests that men can be victims of honour based violence:

*The boys are the extended arms of the dads. The dads just call and say: 'Mohammed, where is the girl, have you seen her?' That is a problem. If we work with boys, it means that we change the boys so that they dare to say no. The other reason also being that the boys themselves, most of them, in fact, want to lead a modern life. The new generation, not all of them think in this way, but they have to, they are afraid. The pressure, the cultural pressure is huge on them. They need somebody to give them support, then maybe it would be possible to distance themselves from this. The third thing: they are also victims in some way. They are forced to marry cousins or girls they don't love. There are arranged marriages. In another way he is also a victim, even if he isn't killed, right? The worst thing that could happen to a boy, when a sister commits a crime according to their norms, is that the entire family sits down and decides that it is his task to kill the girl. He is forced to do it. And I think that most of them do it against their own will. And then is the case that there is nothing worse than killing your sister, to be forced to do this. What a hell of a life to live all your life. When you analyse all that, the boys are victims too. The grade of victimhood may not be the same as the girls', but they are victims too.*

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<sup>198</sup> CPS, Tahir Rizvi

<sup>199</sup> Sure Start is partly funded by the Social Services.

<sup>200</sup> Interviews with Alex Smith and George Dermot.

<sup>201</sup> Berg (2004), 'Swedish Government Initiatives to Help Young people at Risk of Honour Related Violence' in *Violence in the Name of Honour: Theoretical and Political Challenges*, ed. Shahrzad Mojab and Nahla Abdo, Istanbul Bilgi University Press.

*And then I think it is worth it to work with boys, but the most important part is two things: the boys of today are the future husbands of these girls and the future dads.<sup>202</sup>*

What comes clearly through in the first project is that men are often coerced to kill their own sisters, and many men commit crimes under fear or threat of violence. The family often makes this decision collectively. Secondly, men themselves are forced to marry their cousins or girls ‘they don’t love’. Thirdly, due to cultural pressure they often do not dare to say ‘no’, even when they feel that things are not right. Fourthly, men can be ‘victims’, although they may not suffer atrocities to the same extent as women. This was an opinion that was also expressed by certain organisations in the UK and in Turkey.

In the next part of this section we will talk about specific initiatives in Sweden that have received international attention. Particular focus is given to changing the values held by men in all age cohorts in Sweden and who, in the last couple of years, have chosen to organise themselves. One such frequently mentioned initiative is the so-called Piteå Rebellion (Piteupproret).<sup>203</sup> This male network for the protection of women against violence was created after a woman in Piteå was beaten to death by a male relative in the autumn of 2004. The Piteå Rebellion received a lot of attention in the media and a number of male networks were created throughout Sweden to combat violence. These networks are, however, are not specific to combating so-called honour related violence.<sup>204</sup>

Groupings of men against violence have also received attention at government level. The Sharaf Heroes (Sharaf hjältar)<sup>205</sup> Project was the only Swedish project to be given an opportunity to present itself at the aforementioned international conference, ‘Combating Patriarchal Violence’. Arhe Hamednaca was working at the Government Offices (Regeringskansliet) when the conference was organised, and wanted the idea of working preventatively with young boys to be visible at the conference. One of his goals is to make the Sharaf Heroes Project internationally recognised:

*And then I succeeded in getting Sharaf Heroes [invited]. And they came... and almost everybody [at the conference] wanted to cry when they listened to them. Then talk in corridors and such. And more countries were turned on by this idea. It also started from England; they invited them. And Holland. But the best thing was – before the conference – when I was at the Government Office, then I got email from the Dutch Foreign Ministry that asked: ‘Will these boys called Sharaf Heroes come to the conference?’ So they are even asked for! So I thought that ‘Aha, now we have to somehow create a movement and an idea not just in Sweden, but that may also get out to work [on a international level]. – I feel that we have started with the right method of fighting patriarchal, but in particular also honour related, oppression. There are many male networks against violence – but that is only the*

<sup>202</sup> Interview with Arhe Hamednaca.

<sup>203</sup> [www.piteupproret.se](http://www.piteupproret.se)

<sup>204</sup> For example, in Norberg there is a network ‘Manligt nätverk för Kvinnofrid’

<sup>205</sup> Sharaf Heroes is a group of mainly young immigrant men who work closely with other young men and women with the purpose of educating them on honour violence and human rights. Sharaf is an Arabic word that means honour.

*violence when women are beaten to death, it is not that. We work with the groundwork against this life, against this oppression.*

Arhe is not only interested in opposing the visible violence, but also the invisible oppression that affects the women's/girls' lives.

In the spring of 2005, the Swedish Minister, Jens Orback, called for a joint meeting of various men's organisations with the aim of building a common platform and sustainable commitment from men.<sup>206</sup> Representatives from women's shelters were also invited. In the press release, Orback is indicated as saying that:

*In order to find solutions, men must learn to see how they are themselves part of the problem. If they don't see the superiority and subordination they are a part of and don't commit themselves to break down structures, these structures will remain. Equal men don't hit, don't threaten and don't insult women and they don't tolerate that happening in their neighbourhood, Minister of Equality Jens Orback says.*<sup>207</sup>

In an article in the Swedish daily newspaper, Dagens Nyheter, Orback called the meeting 'one of his most interesting as a Minister.'<sup>208</sup> Importantly, Orback is also referring to the importance of tackling the problem at its roots, i.e. inequalities in the structures. This argument can be taken further to suggest that honour related violence and oppression can be seen as a form of structural violence (violence rooted in social structures), and before we can deal with direct violence in the form of killings, we have to work preventively by dealing with structural violence.

In an interview Jens Orback said that:

*It is important to use men in combating violence.... because most of the violence is done by men.... the Government has done too little about men who repeatedly use violence. Men have to take responsibility...either they are part of it or they have to struggle against it...men cannot remain neutral. If men are the core that we have to tackle ...then they have to be involved. Some might argue that men may not change but my social democratic, humanistic upbringing suggests that everybody can change.*

Jens Orback mentions separate but interconnected levels of work that are being undertaken in Sweden. He mentions the national organisation, 'Mens Network' (Manliga nätverket), which serves as an 'infrastructure' for other organisations developing in other parts of Sweden, (such as in Piteå, Malmö, Lund and Västervi) to combat men's violence against women. These men, according to Jens Orback, have voluntarily come together because they 'have had enough'. The second set of related work is with individuals like doctors and psychiatrists who are working with men 'who are losing their control'. Orback articulates, 'I want to strengthen their infrastructure... so that they strengthen their methods... that includes all men, not just immigrants'. Finally, there are specific groups called Sharaf Heroes whose work is concentrated on honour related violence. In mentioning these cohorts, Orback was relating to activities that have different objectives but that nevertheless all work towards combating violence.

<sup>206</sup> Ny plattform för män mot kvinnovåld, Dagens Nyheter, 20050318

<sup>207</sup> Inbjudan till presskonferens – Män om mäns våld mot kvinnor, Pressmeddelande 17 March 2005

<sup>208</sup> Ny plattform för män mot kvinnovåld, Dagens Nyheter 050318

A representative at governmental level, Cecilia Axelby, also thinks that it is important to work preventatively with men:

*Then, as I said, all those different men's groups, is a kind of measure that is very important. For example, this Ethiopian colleague that I was talking about before ...she believes that a large number of men are against men's violence against women. Without having to take to violence against women themselves, one could say that many men benefit from the [patriarchal] system. That problem also exists, but that is like the way we, who are white, have benefits that we won't admit. That is quite a good thing in the debate now: that we admit that as a white woman you have a lot of advantages, so that you don't sit on "too high horses".*

Cecilia Axelby refers to both racism and sexism as being integral to an understanding of violence in every society. Two inter-related ideas can be discerned from the above quote. Firstly, while few men are actual perpetrators, the rest, by being silent witnesses, could also benefit from the patriarchal system. Secondly, it brings into focus how the 'collective' works in sustaining HRV practices, thus distinguishing it from specific forms of spousal domestic violence. Although Cecilia Axelby is referring to a universal patriarchal system, it is still important to highlight that we do not lose sight of the specificity of HRV violence within the universality of a patriarchal system.

## The Sharaf Heroes Project

Sharaf Heroes cannot be regarded as a men's organisation, but rather as a men's project that works preventatively in changing attitudes towards honour related violence. It is organised on a 'voluntary' basis, and the initiative actually comes from an established group, Elektra (which works to prevent honour related violence and help youths exposed to violence), at Fryshuset in Stockholm. Through some of its practices and ideas, this men's project is able to challenge the established ideas of 'masculinity' and values, which it views as inherently patriarchal. Most of the interview material is derived from conversations with the initiator and project leader, Arhe Hamednaca and Ahmet Benhur Turkoglu, respectively.

Sharaf Heroes (SH) received money from Stockholm County Administrative Board. The first group was created in 2003 by the initiator Arhe Hamednaca. He also named the group Sharaf Heroes.<sup>209</sup> Arhe Hamednaca states that he has been trying to work against different kinds of oppression and is committed to the issue of honour related violence.<sup>210</sup> His goal is to gather young men and boys (who are educated in human rights) to work preventatively and change attitudes related to HRV. These young men then educate others through lectures in schools for example, and the plan is to create more Sharaf Heroes to serve as role models and continue the dialogue on HRV. The project is aimed at youths (seventeen years onwards) living within an "honour culture".<sup>211</sup> In supporting this idea, Kickis Åhré

<sup>209</sup> New groups have been started in Södertälje and Sollentuna.

<sup>210</sup> He also fought as a guerrilla soldier in Eritrea for many years before coming to Sweden.

<sup>211</sup> [www.elektra.nu/db/artiklar/sharaf.htm](http://www.elektra.nu/db/artiklar/sharaf.htm) Not available at the moment.

Älgamo from Rikskriminalen suggests that ‘you need to have 100% of the community to combat violence, not only 50%’. Åhré Älgamo also believes that the government should take responsibility and implement the Sharaf Heroes Project in every school. She says that ‘One Sharaf Hero Project is a good start, but it will not solve the problem in the whole country’.

Arhe Hamednaca first approached Fryshuset with his idea of working with boys in 2003, and was told to get in touch with immigrants’ organisations in order to meet young people. But Arhe says that he was sceptical, because he thinks that organisations ‘based on ethnicity’ tend to view culture as an unchanging fixed entity:

*Many have told me that it is easy to contact immigrants’ organisations, then you can find [contacts] there. That’s bullshit. I as an immigrant know how they work. When it comes to matters of integration and when it comes to honour related life, they [immigrants’ organisations] are destructive.*

How do you mean?

*The most – I don’t want to generalise – partly they are based on ethnicity and culture. And then it is constantly that the culture should be preserved. It has become a matter of identity, and this matter is a part of that. You can’t break in. And then when you go there and talk to them and talk about culture for instance: I have to preserve my Turkish culture; I have to preserve my Eritrean culture. Really, what is culture? They keep claiming that culture, language... or that they don’t mix with the Swedish culture. They don’t want to be assimilated. They don’t want to be Swedish, they say. What I thought is partly, if we’re going to talk about culture, culture is always flexible, it switches, changes and adapts over time.*

The above quotation expresses the anxieties around assimilation that immigrant organisations would view as losing one’s identity, losing one’s culture and other idioms that constitute culture, such as language. There is another dimension to assimilation, however, which could be interpreted as adapting to universal human rights as upheld by the ‘Swedish culture’. Unni Wikan (2004) claims that respect for cultures has been central to the integration policies of most western societies and that if you don’t respect other’s culture you risk being called a racist. The intent has been good: to create equality between different groups and avoid stigmatisation. Ethnic groups should not assimilate and feel forced to become “Swedish”. They should be able to keep their culture, within certain limits. However, Wikan says that this intention is easy to follow in theory but at a practical level becomes very problematic. She argues that the debate following Sara’s death was won by those who denied that there was a connection between culture and violence against women. They were the ones that the politicians listened to, according to Wikan. “The honour culture is an ideology, it was what Fadime wanted to talk about, says one of her friends. But how do you talk about that in a country that doesn’t want to see that ‘culture’ can be a problem?” (Wikan, 2004: 249).

Rather than building contacts through immigrant organisations, Arhe Hamedneca instead chose to contact young people through field assistants in suburban areas and held the first meeting at Fryshuset. Forty boys par-

ticipated initially, followed by a firm commitment by eight people. Arhe comments:

*The group shrank, but in the end there were eight boys. And I'll be honest. These guys have been destructive, they have been delinquents, and school didn't work out for them; they hated the Swedish society. They belonged to a no-mans land. They did not belong to Sweden, they did not belong to other countries; they had not been there. But they are in-between. They are called Turks, Arabs or something else, but when they go back to their home countries] they are called Swedes. So they are in-between.*

Whilst Ahre Hamednaca draws attention to the issue of these young men's lack of integration and that they didn't feel a part of Swedish society, it is not very clear what specific political motivations led them to participate in honour related work.

These boys are trained as project leaders to help start up new groups. The goal is to create a Sharaf Heroes (SH) group at municipal and local levels, and later on in every school. One of the advantages of establishing a SH group at school level is that first of all, school is a pivotal place in terms of change of attitudes and an understanding of honour related violence. Secondly, it means that young people can be role models that understand and can communicate with each other, and that often share the same vocabulary. Thirdly, it creates a gendered dialogue in school on the subject of violence.

Ahmet Benhur Turkoglu also points out that it is most important to aim towards changing the attitudes of young men. Older people can be influenced, but not changed, he says. He thinks that the boys in the group have undergone considerable change. Ahmet suggests that:

*I now have a group with the right values. They have influenced their surroundings. Even the family. It has not changed completely, but it won't hinder [the boys]. It gives them the space they need. The families are influenced and treat their children differently. And that is because of one [individual] in the family. And they can do a lot more. They influence segregated immigrant-dominated areas; they influence that area! They change the attitudes of their friends. They act when they see a girl treated wrongly. So they really can influence. We have changed some of them totally...some of them cheered when Fadime was killed. But now they fight for women's rights. So the change may happen.*

Several issues are raised in discussions and meetings when Sharaf Heroes make contact with individuals and groups; particularly the thorny issues of power and control. Often, when men and boys discuss the issue of violence and the oppression of women, the black and white distinction of men always having power and the women being powerless is challenged. However, those who adhere to a more radical feminist ideology also have difficulty in incorporating men as 'victims' of a patriarchal structure. But as Cecilia Axelby mentioned earlier, power relations also exist between women. The researcher Paulina de los Reyes (2003) points out that power relations are affected by ethnicity and class (for example between men of different ethnicities and men and women of different ethnicities).

It is important to be aware of the fact that individuals and social groups can understand 'oppression' differently. Assigning the category 'op-



pressed' to individuals who perceive their social reality differently can be disempowering. Ahmet talks about an exchange with a girl in Rosengård, in Malmö, who did not want to be perceived as oppressed. She was also opposed to the ideas of the Sharaf Heroes:

**Girl:** *Here I come, fighting for the rights of woman and then I get attacked by a girl. I just could not understand why it happened: but as soon as I started to talk to her I understand that they are so oppressed – they don't understand that they are oppressed. She sees it plainly as the way it should be. That it is right. So, she says to me: I'm getting married soon.*

**Ahmet:** *Oh yeah, that's good! Have you been going out for long?*

**Girl:** *No.*

**Ahmet:** *But then how are you going to get married?*

**Girl:** *Well, dad showed me three guys and I got to choose which one to marry!*

**Ahmet:** *That is her freedom. To choose one out of three. That's her interpretation of freedom. That just gives a quick picture of how they live.*

Although the above quote raises interesting ideas, we think the discussion is problematic, because we cannot impose notions of freedom and equality on individuals whom we perceive as 'victims'. The meaning of 'freedom' and 'equality' is subjective and time-related. It also raises the question: On whose terms are we talking about freedom? According to Ahmet, many of the young girls and boys he meets do not associate positive qualities with being 'Swedish':

*You don't defend yourself but you defend your family. Because you are brought up to defend the family. The family is the most important thing, more important than society, in their opinion. That is why. And the first argument you hear when talking to boys is: 'But what do you mean? Should I make my sister a whore? Let her out to fuck whoever she wants? Is that what they're after? If it is a girl, it is the same. 'What, are we bad because we don't behave like Swedish girls?'*

Several ideas are intertwined in the above quote. Firstly, we don't think it's problematic, as Ahmet thinks, that his respondents defend their families. Making judgements or adopting an oppositional discourse to that of 'defending your family' can be perceived as a 'cultural attack' by some immigrant groups. Also we need to bear in mind that, for immigrant communities, familial networks are often the chief building blocks of social capital. Secondly, there is a risk that if some affluent families move away from 'deprived' residential areas, they leave a section of Swedish population who are deprived. The latter then constitutes the Swedish norm and the reference point for immigrants living in the same areas. Without making generalisations, it could be argued that what immigrants in depri-

ved/distressed areas regard as ‘Swedishness’<sup>212</sup> (e.g. drugs, alcohol, social exclusion, single parent families or families that have no control over their children) is what they see around them in their own sphere, and that this does not necessarily reflect the wider society. Thirdly, it is understandable that given this social context, if an ‘immigrant’ girl has a ‘Swedish’ friend and then acquires a bad reputation, this may generate future problems. As Ahmet affirms:

*So in these areas there is a rumour that if these immigrant girls have Swedish friends, then the girl gets a bad reputation. And she will find it difficult to get married in the future. So they didn't want their daughters to have anything to do with the Swedish girls, which is a pity.”*

Discussions sometimes become tense when the Sharaf Heroes approach school audiences. Ahmet describes a tense encounter during a two-hour school lecture in Gothenburg, which Ahmet partly attributes to the way the teachers had prepared the ‘class’ to receive the Sharaf Heroes, and partly to the nature of the discussion:

**Ahmet:** *Have you understood what I have said?*

**Response:** *No*

**Ahmet:** *Then I just picked a guy and asked a straight question.*

*You have a sister, right?*

**Response:** *Yes.*

**Ahmet:** *Your sister goes out, and when you pass by, you see your sister sitting hand in hand with a guy in a cafeteria. What do you do?*

**Response:** *I slit her throat and then cut his head off. End of story.*

According to Ahmet, at the end of the discussion the boy who was prepared to decapitate his sister ‘wanted to be a Sharaf Hero’. The main reason for the change in attitude was attributed to the fact that the Sharaf Heroes were ready to respond to the questions that were raised.

## **Responses to the Sharaf Heroes Project**

Both Arhe and Ahmet suggest that their positionality as immigrant men has facilitated their interaction and the dissemination of their ideas among their audiences:

*Suburbs, so-called ghettos, not many can reach in there. But we can reach them. We work at the level of the people. When I come to Norrborg, Hallunda, I can move freely about there, despite the fact that what I do is against much... despite that, I can move freely. A Swede would not do that. Imagine a Swede talking about these things at a youth recreation centre with immigrants. The first thing he will en-*

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<sup>212</sup> This presents the paradox – ‘Swedishness’ or ‘Swedes’ is not a homogeneous term but presents deep fractures on the basis of inequality of opportunity, marginalisation and discrimination.

*counter is: What the hell do you know about that? You are a Swede! What do you know about it? With me they can't say that.*

Sharaf Heroes have encountered mixed responses from the public, however. They have been threatened and many social groups have viewed their efforts as 'working against culture and religion'. They have also encountered statements such as: 'You are a traitor; you betray your own people; you betray the culture you grew up in.'

Women have also spoken out against their efforts. This for us is an interesting observation, because it questions the discourse of HRV, which in Sweden, Turkey and the UK has primarily constructed women as 'victims' of HRV and lacking any form of agency. However, in questioning the Sharaf discourse and in defending their religion and culture, women could be seen as exercising agency on behalf of their communities.

In the autumn of 2005, the Södertälje Sharaf Heroes group were forced to take a temporary break in their work because the project leader was threatened with death. "Our women should not play sex as Swedish women" was the message in the letter to the project leader. Eduardo Grutzky (responsible for social projects at Fryshuset) comments in an article that, 'when you try to question the power relationship between men and women you get opposed'.<sup>213</sup>

An issue that has surfaced in the ongoing work is that few men and boys choose to commit themselves to speaking out against the oppression of women. Yuksel Said at Linnamottagningen comments on this:

*And the only problem, I think, is that too many women are engaged at the expense of men. Yes, groups have been created such as Sharaf Heroes, but that is from above. They have gone in and worked with boys and helped them organise. This group has not been created from the inside, men have not come out saying: We are against honour related thinking, we are against discrimination and oppression of women, and we will create a voluntary organisation like Kvinnors nätverk and have this platform – It is because it mainly concerns the woman. It does not concern [the men] directly. That's why you don't see many organise voluntarily – And at the same time it takes a lot of courage, because maybe you will be questioned a lot. We were called whores. I miss men that will say: You may call us without honour, whore customers or I don't know what... anything, but we believe in ourselves and well... We think that it should be changed. But they are missing. That is a fact.*

On the Elektra website, Sharaf Heroes are presented under the banner headline: 'Brave young boys or men get positive attention when daring to reject honour oppression'.<sup>214</sup> And just as Yuksel Said points out in the above quote, even men will be questioned if they reject the patriarchal structure, and their identity and sexuality as 'real men' will be challenged.<sup>215</sup> Ahmet supports this and comments:

<sup>213</sup> Sharaf hjältar mordhotade, Arbetaren Nr 45, 2005

<sup>214</sup> [www.elektra.nu](http://www.elektra.nu) Not available at the moment.

<sup>215</sup> Ahre in the interview draws a distinction between patriarchalism in Sweden and patriarchalism in 'home countries'. In the latter, where the central power is strong (like dictatorship) there is no democracy and human rights are not honoured. Here society and small communities make their own rules – to defend themselves. HRV is a feature of these rules and norms. However, in Sweden, patriar-

*... most of them think it is strange when I say that I work at a feminist organisation, and that I am a feminist. Then the first thought is: Is he a fag? Is something wrong with him?*

Finally, Sharaf Heroes also discuss issues associated with racism and discrimination, and Ahre Hamednaca suggests that he wants the boys/young men to reflect on what racism might mean. Ahre emphasises that fear of the ‘unknown’, or, in many circumstances, ignorance of the other, could also be interpreted as racism. As he stated:

*Fear exists in all societies. You don't feel safe if you don't know me. And then that fear may be sometimes interpreted as racism.*

Scotland Yard has invited Sharaf Heroes to the UK, but they generate mixed reactions among individuals from both statutory and voluntary organisations in the UK. Some individuals working in organisations such as Imkaan see the Sharaf Heroes as ‘vigilantes’, and while these organisations see the contribution of men as important, they suggest that ‘men’s engagement should not be at the cost of women’s involvement’. And there is always the important issue of representation – ‘who speaks on behalf of whom?’<sup>216</sup>

## Conclusions

Both Turkey and the UK draw on the positive experiences they shared with the Sharaf Heroes of Sweden. In both the UK and Turkey, no organisations been initiated by men in an attempt to combat honour related violence – as they have in Sweden – although the two countries believe that the participation of ‘youth’ is important in both preventing HRV and protecting other young people at risk. However, while the UK is receptive and open to the idea of men getting involved in combating violence (more specifically domestic violence), in Turkey there is still some hesitation as to the exact role that men can play. Thus, most of the points raised in the conclusion relates to the work conducted by Sharaf Heroes, which commendably borders on prevention rather than protection. Their work complements the Government’s initiative on shelter homes. However, we would suggest that the Sharaf Heroes are doing valuable work for several reasons. Firstly, their conceptualisation of ‘honour related life’ is important because it views it as a continuum of violence, where different forms of oppressive behaviour – other than physical violence – can be identified. Secondly, the Sharaf Heroes also identify boys as victims of HRV. They also recognise and try to address the gender issues and challenge the tradition of men being seen as exercising total control over women’s bodies and existence. Within honour related cultures, women are not regarded as owning their own bodies and have no right to choose their partners or form their own futures. Boys, on the other hand, have more freedom and control over their lives.

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chialism works differently. It is an individual society, you can stand on your own and society gives you support. We would suggest that while these observations are useful, we cannot use them to contextualise all experiences of HRV. For example what explains HRV in Turkey or for that matter India- both long standing democratic governments.

<sup>216</sup> Nalini Sinha is a member of Imkaan and Forced Marriages Unit.

However, we would suggest that in the comments made by Sharaf Heroes, there does seem to be a lack of clarity about words/sentences such as 'culture' and 'clash of cultures'. It is also implied that assimilation refers to not becoming Swedish, but adopting universal human rights that are shared globally. But more importantly, the question that arises is whether people are aware of these rights? Also, we would suggest that the meanings of 'freedom' and 'equality' are subjective and time-related. We cannot make judgements on an individual's ideas about freedom if they do not conform to our notions. Finally, a paradox arises in these interviews. While the Sharaf Heroes are critical of 'immigrant' mentalities, they also forge their 'immigrant' identity in accessing public forums. This paradox remains unexplained.

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