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DIFFUSION OF RESPONSIBILITY: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF *THE TORONTO STAR'S* PROTRAYAL OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY

by

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B.A. (Hons), York University, 2005

A Major Research Paper

Presented to Ryerson University

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in the Program of

Immigration and Settlement Studies

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ABSTRACT

Literature on domestic violence in the South Asian community demonstrates that there is an over emphasis on dismissing violence as a 'cultural' phenomenon. Likewise, literature on media's portrayal of violence against women tends to reinforce patriarchal ideologies by blaming the victim, excusing the perpetrator, and reporting violence as a private, individual matter rather than a larger, social problem. Using discourse analysis, my findings illustrate that the portrayal of domestic violence in *The Toronto Star* reinforces racism and sexism when framing the problem. In doing so, responsibility is diffused and therefore the solution to violence against women becomes limited, if not non-existent.

Key words: South Asian; Domestic Violence; Discourse Analysis; Anti-Racist Feminism; *The Toronto Star*

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Literature Review

South Asian women who have endured violence committed against them by their spouse have suffered various forms of abuse, including physical, emotional, financial, verbal, and/or sexual abuse (see Smith, 2007; Abraham, 2000; Dasgutpa and Warrier, 1996; Huisman, 1996; Shirwadkar, 2004). For this project, the terms abuse and violence will be used interchangeably. Abuse will be defined and measured as used by Yoskioka et al., (2003). In their study on disclosure of abuse and social support among South Asian, African American and Hispanic women in the United States, the authors used the Physical Assault subscale of The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale to define what constitutes abuse. Abuse was divided into two categories: minor violence and severe violence. Minor violence consists of throwing objects, twisting arm or hair, pushing, shoving, grabbing or slapping. Severe abuse involves using objects such as knives or guns, being punched or hit, choked, slammed against the wall, beat up, burned or scalded and/or kicked (Yoshkioka et al., 2003).

While recognizing that South Asia is a social construction, authors have argued that it includes people from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhuttan, Nepal, and more recently, Afghanistan (Gupta et al., 2005; Abraham, 2000; Das Dasgupta, 2000). Although, religious, political, historical and other differences exists, these countries have been labelled as having "undeniable cultural commonalities among various groups clustered under the label "South Asia" (Das Dasgupta, 2000:173). Literature on domestic violence in the South Asian community falls into broad themes such as culture, religion, ideologies and structural factors.

Cultural and Religious Factors

Literature focusing on micro analysis examines cultural and religious factors that render women susceptible to violence. To elaborate, studies have shown that traditional values of an 'ideal Indian woman' expressed in daily interaction, tend to worsen the power imbalances between men and women (see Raj & Silverman, 2002; Das Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Mehrotra, 1999; Das Gupta, 1997; Naidoo, 2003; Preisser, 1999). The aforementioned authors found that the South Asian community of recent immigrants upholds strong family values rooted in the homeland. These values prioritize the family over the individual and the community, as well as prioritizing the traditional patriarchal system that renders the husband as superior to the wife. Consequently, part of being an 'ideal Indian woman' entails obeying husbands and conforming to ideologies that subordinate individual rights and freedoms to the family and community expectations and traditions. Some of the behaviours expected of these women include having to gain permission to work outside the home, to socialize with other people, and in some cases to get an education (see Ayyub, 2000; Das Dasgupta 2000; Macey, 1999).

Some authors argue that cultural factors that sanction violence against women are backed up and reinforced by religion (Das Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Shirwadkar, 2004; Ayyub, 2000). These studies have suggested that religious interpretation of Islam and Hinduism has been distorted to sanction violence against women. In Hinduism, for instance, womanhood is defined as good, benevolent, dutiful, and being a controlled wife (Das Dasgupta & Warrier, 1996; Shirwadkar, 2004). These ideologies contribute to the vulnerability of women to violence because they indicate that women are supposed to endure the abuse. These studies have

suggested that deviation from women's role as being submissive and inferior not only worsens the possibility of getting abused, but also justifies it on those grounds.

Ayyub (2000) expands on these findings by discussing how Islam allows women to divorce and remarry, but that cultural beliefs make it difficult for women to remarry as they are frowned upon for divorcing their spouses. Hence, Muslim women are told to sacrifice themselves for their families, and hence stay married even when there is violence in the home (see Ayyub, 2000). Even if Muslim women want to seek employment, some religious leaders argue that they must have permission from their spouses (Ibid, 2000).

Overall, religion is interpreted to justify abuse. This is done primarily by dictating that both Muslim and Hindu women must be dutiful to their spouses. In addition to being exposed by restrictions from their religious communities, seeking help from outside of their religious affiliations is difficult due to racism and wide spread anti-Islamic sentiments (Macey, 1999).

Structural Factors

Moving beyond cultural and religious phenomena associated with violence against women among the South Asian community, scholars have emphasized the importance of structural factors that exacerbate violence. Diverse literatures in this area have been able to connect immigration status with domestic violence (see Dasgupta, 2000; Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004; Merali, 2006; MacLeod and Shin, 1990, 1993). Studies have demonstrated that generally South Asian women who enter Canada do so as financial dependents of their husbands (Dasgupta, 2000; Merali, 2006). Such dependency leaves women vulnerable to threats from their husbands and if they do not have means of support, it is

impossible for some women to leave their marriage. Studies have illustrated that host society plays a significant role in perpetuating this dependency. Discussions on this area are centered around two common themes: discrimination in the workforce and language barriers.

Existing research on how dependency on a spouse is supported by the state makes connections between racism and employment opportunities among immigrant women. Poor job opportunities can intensify violence against women because women's choices to gaining independence are limited (Status of Women, Canada, 2003; Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004). The over-representation of immigrant women in low paying jobs with minimal job security has been widely documented (Status of Women Canada, 2003; Canadian Council in Social Development, 2004, Galubuzi, 2001; Abraham, 2000). Without making specific reference to South Asian immigrant women, Galubuzi (2001) argues that racialized immigrant groups experience unequal access to the workplace: "the gap in economic performance between racialized and non-racialized immigrants is growing with a double digit gap in incomes of 28% over the period 1991-1995". Similarly, in a recent study for the Status of Women Canada, Townson (2003) demonstrates that immigrant women are more likely than other women to be employed in precarious labour with limited bargaining power, low pay and no upward mobility. The reason is that they tend to have limited knowledge of their rights and are therefore easily relegated into menial positions (Townson, 2003). This in turn has dire consequences for women in abusive situations since lack of or poorly paid employment renders them powerless and dependent on their spouses.

Knowledge of English or French language is another common and complex issue that keeps arising in many studies linking immigration with domestic violence. For example, in a

recent study in the Canadian Council on Social Development (2004), focus group sessions were held with frontline workers assisting immigrant and racialized minority women who have been subjected to violence. The frontline workers from various cities (including Vancouver, Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax) identified the language barrier in their discussion of barriers and gaps in obtaining services.

In addition, lack of official language proficiency may result in misunderstanding of one's rights. To exemplify, Merali (2006) states that South Asian women who participate in arranged marriages are sponsored by their spouses. The sponsorship application is written in English and the women are required to sign it indicating that they understand their status once they arrive in Canada. One problem with this, according to Merali (2006) is that one-third of the South Asian women who came to Canada from India did not speak or write English. Consequently, the women tend to misunderstand their rights in Canada, as well as the power that their husbands have over them. Merali (2006) notes that women, in turn, become vulnerable due to lack of awareness of their rights and status' in Canada.

The language barrier and misunderstanding of rights have also prevented abused immigrant women from seeking help due to the fear of being deported (MacLeod and Shin, 1993; Merali, 2006; MacLeod and Shin, 1990). To elaborate, MacLeod and Shin (1993) interviewed Chinese, Polish, Italians and Indo-Canadian women (all of whom viewed themselves as immigrants) and found that there was a low level of knowledge of both mainstream and ethno-specific community services. The reason why this is significant is because having limited access and knowledge of these service organizations only endorses false beliefs among the women, such as facing deportation if marital break down occurs. The

immigration system needs to be problematized for its potential in increasing the fear. MacLeod and Shin (1990) demonstrate that immigrant women are given insufficient information by Employment and Immigration Canada about their rights in Canada. Added to this, immigrant women are not given adequate information about work, family and living conditions in Canada before immigrating here.

Another theme that arises in relation to structural factors is racism in the area of police involvement (or lack of) in disputes associated with domestic violence (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004; Wachholz and Miedema, 2000; Currie and MacLean, 1992; Chan and Mirchandani, 2002). To elaborate, in a recent study of partner violence against immigrants and visible minorities, the Canadian Council on Social Development found that although immigrant groups are not homogenous, there were lots of commonalities in terms of issues, needs and barriers related to the problem of partner violence (2004). The study illustrated the destructive effects of racism and associated forms of discrimination on the lives of immigrants and visible minorities in Canada. Interestingly, the findings indicate that although certain cultural practices and beliefs condone violence against women, it is largely societal issues ingrained in mainstream culture that exacerbate violence against them. Hence, the study illustrates that it is imperative to understand both racism and domestic violence because racism increases immigrant women's vulnerability to domestic violence.

Literature on policing domestic violence shows that police intervention does not address the structural problems of women abuse. In fact, the intervention not only exacerbates fear and isolation, but it also individualizes the problem (Wachholz and Miedema, 2000; Currie and MacLean, 1992). Thus, rather than looking at structural factors and seeing violence against

women as a systemic problem, policing violence merely demonstrates that it is an 'ethnic or cultural issue'. The key issue is that police intervention leads to more isolation from community and friends, as well as unequal power dynamics and fear of authority (see Waccholz and Midema, 2000; Kirkwood, 1993; Bannerji, 1999; MacLeod and Shin, 1993).

Studies have demonstrated that one consequence of police intervention is isolation. For example, the participants in Wachholz and Miedema's (2000) study stressed that since they were already isolated due to language barriers, they feared that coming into contact with police would only lead them to be further isolated from their community, as the abuse would become public. Furthermore, they would then be controlled by police authorities (Wachholz and Miedema, 2000; Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004). Another theme associated with the consequence of police intervention is unequal power dynamics (Kirkwood, 1993; Wachholz and Midema, 2000; Bannerji, 1999; MacLeod and Shin, 1993). Discussions around this issue are premised on institutional mechanisms that reinforce male domination over women. Wachholz and Miedema (2000) confirm this in that the participants in their study indicated that the reason police intervention is not favourable is due to a fear of being ridiculed by the justice system. They argue that police belittle the women and make comments like "why did you marry him?" (Wachholz & Miedema, 2000: 312). In addition to this, women did not trust the police force and felt powerless. The study presented by the Canadian Council on Social Development (2004) adds to the picture. This study demonstrates through the participants' narratives that racism allows the judicial systems to blame the immigrants' "backward, barbaric" culture for the violence.

Literature that attempts to explain why men commit violence against women tend to answer questions such as "is it cultural or situational factors that cause men to commit violence against women?" In terms of cultural factors, literature tends to focus on patriarchy as the main factor of violence (Jiwani, 2006, Duffy & Momirov, 1997; Johnson, 1996). As mentioned earlier, patriarchy is based on assumptions and practices that render women inferior to men (Jiwani, 2006). Examples of patriarchy among the South Asian community were already cited.

Literature focusing on situational factors looks at the psychological and societal role in exacerbating violence against women by their husbands. Hence, economic conditions are viewed as one of the main causes in family violence. Studies have demonstrated that there is a correlation between low socio-economic status and abuse (Duff and Momirov, 1997; Johnson, `996; Hampton et al., 2003; Raj & Silverman, 2002). Poor financial situation tends to increase stress and frustration, which in turn tend to become factors that increase abuse. Other studies have also found that abuse is evident among the educated and upper class as well (Duff & Momirov, 1997:132). This idea is common among proponents of "resource theory", who argue that 'men have power over women by virtue of income and expertise' (Johnson, 1996:153).

Role of Media

Literature on media and racism tends to be bracketed into two general themes: ethnic-minorities under-representation in media and ethnic-minorities mis-representation in media (Mahanti, 2001; Henry and Tator, 2006). Discussions of under-representation of ethnic minorities argue that they are not only absent in television (for example, soap operas and movies), but they are also absent as producers, and anchors, amongst other things. Due to the

nature of my analysis, I will focus mainly on the mis-representation of ethnic minorities in media.

Ethnic minorities have been portrayed in a negative and distorted manner in media (Jiwani, 2006; Henry & Tator, 2001; 2006; Mahtani, 2001; van Dijk, 1991, 2000). The distorted images of ethnic minorities in media serves a purpose that is biased and not neutral. Scholars have argued that the media reinforces binary oppositions of "us" versus "them" (van Dijk, 1991, 2000; Jiwani, 2006; Henry and Tator, 2001, 2006). This construction sets up values that label "Whiteness" as a tool by which "others" (and thus, "them") become pitted against. To elaborate, Whiteness is defined as a "set of locations that historically, politically, culturally produced and moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of dominations" (Frankberg, 1993 in Henry & Tator, 2006:25).

These relations of domination are exercised through racism, but not the overt 'scientific racism' that categorizes groups as inferior based on biological differences, but in subtle forms commonly known as 'cultural/ideological racism' (van Dijk, 1991, 2000; Henry & Tator, 2001; 2006). Cultural racism "consists of the tacit network of beliefs and values that encourage and justify discriminatory practices" (Henry & Tator, 2006:55). It operates in subtle forms and perpetuates at the discursive level, in other words through talk, text and representation (Jiwani, 2006; van Dijk, 2000). This "new racism" (van Dijk, 2000) serves to establish Whiteness as a universal norm by constructing 'others' as 'different' and therefore, 'deficient' (van Dijk, 2000; Henry and Tator, 2006). This is accomplished by, among other things, portraying what is labelled to be the 'culture' of ethnic minorities and contrasted it with the dominant White culture (Ibid, 2000; 2006). Hence, stereotypical images are portrayed (and discussed) in the media in

ways that render the ‘Other’ culture as pathological. By being marked the ‘Other’, the White society can justify racism simply by deeming it as ‘different’, ‘pathological’ and therefore undeserving (Ibid, 2000; 2006). We can see the same patterns developing in literature on media and domestic violence, only this time, sexism plays an integral component. I will now turn my discussion to this.

Media and Domestic Violence against Women

Literature on violence against women generally agree on two reoccurring phenomenon. First, news coverage on violence against women tend to blame the victim for the abuse; and second that violence against women is an exemplification of patriarchy set up to control women (Berns, 2001; Myers, 1997; Lamb & Keon, 1995; Jiwani, 2006). Myers’ (1991:8-9) demonstrates that the stories portrayed through text reinforce male supremacy because “the links between sexist violence, social structures and gendered patterns of domination and control are disguised”. To elaborate, authors have noted that news coverage of violence against women reminds women of their ‘appropriate’ role and place in society (Myers, 1991; Berns, 2001; Lamb & Keon, 1995). One of the ways this is discussed is by perpetuating notions of ‘male and female family roles and the position of wives as bounded to their husbands’ (Myers, 1997:26). Another way media dictate women’s gendered ‘appropriate’ roles is by arguing that women reinforce their victimization because they are equally violent (Berns, 2001; Lamb & Keon, 1995). These depictions and ‘warnings’ set out by media serve a bigger social and ideological purpose. According to the aforementioned authors, it is a reinforcement of patriarchy, hence, the belief that women who are deemed inferior can be subject to control through violence.

Another common theme that arises in talking about male violence against women is the pathologization of the perpetrators (Berns, 2001; Meyers, 1997; Lamb & Keon, 1995). When reporting the cause of the violence committed against women, media tends to focus on the individual and the family, while ignoring the systemic causes of violence (Ibid, 2001; 1997; 1995). The violence in this context is discussed as if the incident was spontaneous, random rather than a reflection of patriarchal ideologies.

In engaging in discourse analysis of how domestic violence is portrayed in *The Toronto Star*, I hope to explain how racism and sexism are reinforced through text. From an anti-racist feminist perspective, one of the ways to examine this is to determine who is claiming responsibility and who is being blamed for it. The literature presented about domestic violence in the South Asian community is indicative of how complex these issues are. In doing so, my main argument is that the discursive element used to discuss domestic violence among the South Asian community has a racist undertone that presents violence as a cultural phenomenon. In other words, religion, culture, and their 'way of life' is being displayed as the sole cause of violence against women. Hence, given the complex factors associated with the social, structural and ideological aspects that exacerbate violence against women, I will be exploring whether or not these issues come out and how they are represented in the press.

Theoretical framework

In addition to analyzing *The Toronto Star* based on critical discourse analysis, I will be adopting an anti-racist feminist framework. Proponents of anti-racism are not only weary about the marginalization of racialized and gendered minorities, but they also "question White power and privilege and their rationale for dominance" (Yee & Dumbrill, 2003:111). As such, antiracism, as a practice and discourse (see Calliste & Dei, 2001) both acknowledges the multiple forms of oppression racialized and gendered minorities face and advocates for social change. When applying critical discourse analysis, my goal is to examine how racism and sexism are visible and perpetuated through discourse by *The Toronto Star*. One of the ways to explore this, according to anti-racist feminist proponents is by looking at whether or not cultural and structural factors are acknowledged. From an anti-racist feminist perspective, it is too simplistic to argue that the sole contributor to women becoming victims of abuse is due to cultural factors (Jiwani, 2006).

Methods

The purpose of this project is to examine how violence against women among the South Asian immigrant community is portrayed in *The Toronto Star* from 2000 to present. My intention is to analyze text using critical discourse analysis both as methodology and a framework. According to Henry and Tator (2002:27),

> Discourse is a way of referring to or constructing knowledge about a particular topic or practice: a cluster or formation of ideas, images, and practices that provide ways of talking about forms of knowledge and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity, or institutional site in society.

In following van Dijk's (1991, 1997) approach to critical discourse analysis, I will be analyzing how racism is reinforced through text. I will be using van Dijk's (1991) methods, which I will elaborate on in the forthcoming sections of the paper.

The importance of analyzing discourse is its discursive formations, which according to Henry and Tator (2002:26) are defined as:

> The totality of ordered relations and correlations of subjects to each other and to objects; of economic production and reproduction; of cultural symbols and signification; of laws and moral rules; and of social, political economic, or legal inclusion or exclusion.

These discursive formations have important ideological implications which reproduce racist discourses and inequality. Ideologies, as a general definition refers to "those beliefs, perceptions assumptions and values that provide members of a group with an understanding and an explanation of their world" (Ibid, 2002:21). Ideologies are exercised effectively through language/text and contribute to the formation of racist ideologies, which in turn, create and reinforce hierarchies between groups based on race (Ibid, 2002:23). I will elaborate on this in the forthcoming section of the paper.

A discourse analysis of how violence is portrayed in the media (*The Toronto Star*) is particularly important because media are not overtly racist. By this it is meant that media do not deliberately and overtly encourage racism, but rather do it in subtle ways. Literature labels this as 'democratic or polite racism' (see Henry and Tator, 2002; Fleras, 2001). For this paper, I will borrow Fleras' (2002:33) definition of racism:

> as a set of ideas and ideals that asserts or implies the superiority of one social group over another on the basis of biological or cultural characteristics, together with the institutionalized power to put these racialized beliefs into practice in a way that has the intent or effect of denying or excluding minority women and men.

My keen interest is to explore how *The Toronto Star* deals with violence against women in the South Asian community. Previous studies have looked at the issue of racism in media in the Canadian context (Henry & Tator, 2002; Jiwani, 2006). To elaborate, Henry and Tator (2002) look at how racist ideologies legitimize inequalities in national coverage of issues surrounding race relations in the media. In applying critical discourse analysis, Henry and Tator (2002:4) show how the Canadian press "gives voice to racism, and how the media marginalize, denigrate, and silence ethno-racial minorities". Their book is valuable because it lays out the foundations of anti-racism and critical discourse analysis. In addition, the case studies provided in this book exemplify how the aforementioned conceptual frameworks can be utilized. The two case studies demonstrate the bias in news and how it can be acknowledged as such. Hence, the methodology, adopted heavily by, among others, van Dijk (1991) will be the basis of my project as well. I will elaborate on van Dijk(1991), but before I do, I will discuss Jiwani's (2006) work on the portrayal of violence against women in the media. This is missing from Henry and Tator's (2002) analysis of racism in media.

Jiwani (2006) looks at how race, gender and violence are "mediated" in the print media. She also applies critical discourse analysis to two case studies and illustrates how "denial of racism and sexism is expressed and how discourses of denial contribute to the erasure, trivialization or dismissal of racism as a form of violence" (Jiwani, 2006). The case studies include the story of Reena Virk, a South Asian girl who was beaten to death in British Columbia by her peers and how gender and Islam were depicted in media post-September 11, 2001. In addition to case studies of how violence is portrayed in media, Jiwani (2006) discusses violence and sexism in the health care and school systems. Sexism is defined "as a system of beliefs and attitudes based on alleged inferiority of women" (Jiwani, 2006:15).

Both of Jiwani's (2006) case studies deal with violence committed against racialized groups by 'outsiders', not by members of their own community. What needs analysis is how domestic violence committed by members of the family and community, is portrayed by media.

Jiwani's (2006) work is important for this project because, among other things, she talks about the "power of whiteness" which is basically exercised through being unnamed, through creating binaries that lead to othering of groups and by categorizing "the Other" as a universally accepted norm. She defines power of whiteness as having the ability to remain unnamed, while creating racial categories as visible and 'Othered'. The term refers to creating binaries of "us versus them" and universalizing the other as inferior (Jiwani, 2006:5. This is important for my project since the "power of whiteness" is exercised through discourse in media.

Discourse analysis as a methodology has been laid out by van Dijk (1991) by looking at how racism is reinforced in the British and Dutch press. He analyzes discourse in the press by

looking at headlines, subjects, and among other things, the use of quotations and sources. I will be using this strategy for my project and will elaborate on the terms in the forthcoming section of this paper. Equally important, van Dijk (1991) looks at style and structure of news, which allows for an examination of word choices, metaphors, and opinions. This is important because in the press, issues surrounding race are described in subtle ways. Through discourse analysis, as well as an anti-racist framework, van Dijk (1991) demonstrates how racism in the press can be exposed. I will be applying his ideas and contributing to it by looking at how domestic violence and portrayed in the Toronto Star.

The Main Research Focus

Taking this into account, my project will seek to demonstrate that the discursive elements used to discuss domestic violence among the South Asian community have a racist undertone that excuses violence as a cultural phenomenon. Using critical discourse analysis, with particular reference to van Dijk (1991), the questions I will be exploring will be replicated as it applies to violence against women in the South Asian immigrant community. After stating what the questions are, I will explain the specifics of them. The questions are the following:

1. What does the newspaper write or not write about racial or ethnic affairs and why? In other words, what themes re-occur when reporting ethnic affairs?
2. Who does the newspaper relate positively or negatively to and why?
3. Who is being represented? Male/female? Victim/survivor? Etc.
4. Does the newspaper sympathize with one news actor or the other?
5. How are patriarchy and sexism reinforced in The Toronto Star?

While van Dijk (1991) presents various ways that news can be analyzed, I will be limiting my analysis to the headlines, quotations and sources, meanings and ideologies and topics/themes. The usage of headline is important for this project because it consists of what the writers think is the most important part of the news (Ibid, 1991, 49). Having said that, van Dijk (1991) also denotes that headlines are what the editorials, not necessarily the writers view as important. It is important to lay out the headlines because it reflects the ideological stance of the newspaper's editorial board (Ibid, 1991). Headlines are also important because the words in it can bias the story. Journalists, as demonstrated by van Dijk (1991) may exaggerate or downplay important points about the story. With regards to ethnic groups, topics are important because they "reproduce the concerns and agenda of the prevailing ethnic consensus of the White majority" (Ibid, 1991:71). Topics and themes are used interchangeably (Ibid, 1991:71). It is

important because the topics/themes are a summary of what the writer views as the highlight of the story. It presents an opportunity to illustrate how ethnic relations are portrayed and what the writer presents as the most important part of the story (van Dijk, 1991:71).

I will also look for verbal reactions, which consist of opinions, as well as the actors involved in making the opinions. This in turn will reveal how certain groups are represented and why. Biases and statements are made generally through the usage of quotations. The 'micro' or 'local' levels of news discourse, as described by van Dijk (1991) will also be examined. Here, the focus is on "the meanings, style and rhetoric of its actual words and sentences" (Ibid, 1991:177). It is about how coherent the sentences are with one another and thus will determine how the story can be interpreted by readers. This is important aspect of discourse analysis because it allows an understanding of the underlying beliefs, assumptions and ideologies of the writer. The techniques outlined by van Dijk (1991) may not be evident in all the stories presented by The Toronto Star, hence, I may eliminate some aspects, if needed.

Keeping in mind the aforementioned research questions, A computer search was utilized in the Toronto Star index using the search engine, "Proquest":. Under "general keyword" search, I typed keywords such as "wife abuse and immigrant" and "South Asian and violence" and "girl killed by father". Following this, I was able to find numerous articles about two different incidents of domestic violence. The first case study involves a father/husband, an immigrant from Bangladesh who hit his wife twelve times with a hammer until she died. The incident occurred on Sunday July 17, 2005. The articles I used for my analysis started in July 19, 2005 until December 22, 2007. A total of five articles were used for this case study. The second case study involves what is titled as a 'massacre' by *The Toronto Star*. Here, the estranged husband,

whose native home is India shot his wife along with her mom, dad, five sisters, brother and brother in law. The incident occurred on Friday, April 5, 1996. The first article used for my analysis was reported on Sunday April, 7, 1996 and the last one I used was dated September 24, 1996. The articles came to a total of seven for this case study. Both of these cases took place in Canada, with the former in Toronto and the latter in Vernon, British Columbia.

The coding procedures followed using themes arising from the literature review. I chose this procedure because the literature demonstrates that there are multiple, complex factors that may exacerbate women's vulnerability to violence. Given these factors, my intention is to explore what is considered prominent by *The Toronto Star*. As such, the following themes were used as an analysis:

1. Victim Character
2. Perpetrator Character
3. Role of Police
4. Description of Culture
5. Family Context

My rationale for choosing these categories, very generally speaking is because according to van Dijk (1991:71), the themes outlined in the press about ethnic minorities reflect the general configurations of them produced by the White majority. They are in turn, a reproduction of the beliefs, attitudes, and stereotypes of the minority groups. Hence, some of the themes may overlap, for instance, the culture and family contexts may be described in similar manner if the text configures groups as 'different'.

According to the aforementioned literature on domestic violence in the South Asian community, there is an over emphasis on the cultural factors that render women susceptible to

violence. Hence, if one of the requirements of an 'ideal Indian woman' is to prioritize the family over herself, then we can argue that if she does not conform to these ideals, she will be more likely to become a victim of abuse. I will explore this as a sub-category of "Victim Character". Here, I will look for sentences indicating how the victim defied patriarchal norms and whether the victim was blamed. I will also look for general description of victim/wife as well as the perpetrator/husband. One of the reasons why this merits analysis is to explore how they are stereotyped and whether or not their characteristics are viewed as the cause and/or consequence of the abuse. Equally importantly, it allows for an examination of what The Toronto Star determined to be a motive for the crime.

Since media portray the "internal cognitive representation of blacks, Asians, the police, government and/or other social actors" (van Dijk, 1991:147), it is important to look at the role of police from the perspective of The Toronto Star. Under this category, I will be looking at how the police were defended and/or blamed. In like manner, since some of the themes may overlap, I wanted to see how the South Asian culture was described, according to *The Toronto Star*. My intention was to determine if racism is reproduced, not only by constructing the culture as 'different' and/or Othered, but also to determine if the South Asian culture was the pivotal point of reference in the process of the diffusion of responsibility of violence against women. Here, I also extended my analysis to the family context to explore how family relations and demographics are discussed when reporting the crime.

Results

I will now elaborate on how the variables/themes are defined, as well as how the sentences taken from the articles. The following sentences will be direct quotes from the articles. Subsequently, I will provide table of my findings, followed by an analysis of the findings.

(1) Victim Character was broken down into the following categories:

(a) Defying patriarchal norms:

Discussions around divorce and any expressions of independency by the victim were examined. Independence will be defined as the ability to exercise decision making without the consent of the husband. In the first case study, article 1.3, the readers are informed that the killer could not recall hitting his wife 12 times with a hammer. He was apparently provoked after he learned that the wife received a letter from her 'former sweetheart explaining that despite her wishes, they could no longer be together.' When the wife, Hafiza returned from her trip to Bangladesh, she allegedly told her husband she no longer wants to be with him. The quotes portray the victim as having disregard for her marriage and wanting to end her marriage because of a former lover.

For case number 1, the following sentences were included:

- He opened the letter, which he discovered was from his wife's former sweetheart in Bangladesh..(1.3)
- She asked for a divorce..(1.2)
- ..threatened to leave him..(1.3)
- She wanted to sell their business and move to Bangladesh..(1.3)
- She made it plain she no longer wanted to be with him…(1.3)
- When she returned to their east Toronto home, they argued about her wishing to end the marriage..(1.5)
- When Hafiza returned from Bangladesh, she told her husband she no longer wanted to be with him and the couple quarrelled often…(1.4)

The second case study, the listed articles describe the marital breakdown between Rajwar Gakhal and Mark Vijay Chahal. The quotes illustrate that the victim was suffering abuse by her husband, as well as how 'difficult' it is to get a divorce in the Sikh community. The husband is viewed as reacting from her decision to leave him.

Case number 2, the following sentences were included:

- A divorce would have been finalized next month and police believe the deranged Chahal was bent on revenge against Rajwar and her family as a result…(2.2)
- Rajwar left her husband because of this abusive situation and in the Sikh that took a lot of doing. (2.2)

- Rajwar ran away from this man and thought she was safe with her family, but she wasn't (2.2)
- Chahal distraught over the breakdown of his marriage to Rajwar Gakhal in December, 1994, went to her parents' home armed with two handguns (2.7)

(b) Blaming the victim:

Here, I looked at how the violence is personalized and viewed as a private matter. In other words, the focus is on discussions on what the victim did to provoke the crime. To provide a brief description of what was being discussed, for case number one, article number three, the writer was providing readers with what was being stated in the murder trial, as well as what was being discussed between the lawyer and the perpetrator. The sentences described from this article are an indication of the alleged conversation between the husband and wife before her death.

The sentences from article 1.4 describe the reasons as to why the husband killed his wife. Interestingly, two years later, this story is talked about again in The Toronto Star. Here, in article, 1.5, the writer sums up the case by arguing that the wife got killed by her husband after she told him she wants to end the marriage. The main theme here is that the victim was inconsiderate and was emotionally abusing her husband.

For case study number 1, I found the following sentences:

- On the night of her death, as they lay on their bed with their younger daughter, 11 between them, she asked him to sponsor her sweetheart, who was married with children, to come to Canada…(1.3)
- She told him her lover would live upstairs..(1.3)
- Defence lawyers Aitan Lerner and Emma Rhodes argued he snapped after being provoked beyond endurance as his wife of 17 years announced she wanted to leave him for another man…(1.4)
- Chowdhury said he and his wife had a good marriage for 17 years until June 2005, when she visited their native Bangladesh on short notice, taking the younger of their two daughters with her…(1.3)
- In 2005, while the wife Hafiza, 41, was visiting their native Bangladesh, he discovered she was in love with an old flame there…(1.5)
- Victim wanted to place kids in foster care…(1.2)
- She told him she never wanted the eldest daughter to be born…(1.3)
- When Hafiza told him she tried to end the pregnancy, it was the final provocation..(1.4)
- ..when she revealed she had twice tried to abort their elder daughter, Chowdhury became enraged…(1.5).

For case number two, article 2.1, the writer states the motives for the killings. Subsequently, the second article focuses on providing some background information on how the wife and husband met and why they split up. Rajwar Gakhal (who endured abuse during her marriage) left her husband, Mark Vijay Chahal. Evidently, it was a marriage, regretfully arranged by the

victim's parents and as stated in the article, extra precautions were taken when describing Balwinder's potential husband. Balwinder is Rajwar's sister. Discussion here is heavily focused on arrange marriage and the precautions families, as well as individuals must take to avoid abuse and tragedy.

For case number 2, I included:

- "The Gakhal family went to extraordinary lengths to prevent a second daughter on the verge of marriage from enduring the marital abuse suffered by her older sister" (2.2)
- "they didn't what had happened to Rajwar to happen to Balwinder…(2.2)
- "they checked the man she was marrying out in Toronto and even in India, his history, his personality..(2.2)
- "the lesson here for all women is that even if the bruises are over, make sure you are safe (2.2)
- "everyone, family, everyone must make sure they're safe" (2.2)
- "the motive we're pursuing is that he chose to take revenge on entire family (2.1)
- …we think his decision to commit suicide is a result of what happened in the house (2.1)

(c) Description of Victim/Wife:

For this category I looked for characteristics, hobbies, and demographics such as age, and career. The first article in case number one describes the victim as a mother, very sweet, and someone who did not work outside of the house. These descriptions were stated by her neighbour. In the second article (1.2), the victim's daughter describes what she witnessed,

according to Crown prosecutor, Greg Schott. The description of the victim is set up to gain sympathy for the victim(s).

For case number one, I included the following sentences:

- She (Hafiza) was very sweet(1.1)
- 41-year-old woman (1.1)
- ..the wife did not work outside the house (1.1)
- ..it's a shock to think those girls are motherless (1.1)
- She rushed upstairs and found her father, hammer in hand, standing over her bleeding mother…(1.2)

The following sentences for case number two describe the victim/wife. The underlying message here is that the victim was independent and well educated.

For case number two, it included the following sentences:

- Beautiful person. Wasn't safe..(2.2)
- Second daughter…(2.4)
- Very accompolished, had university degree..(2.4)

(2) Perpetrator/Husband Character:

Description of the male perpetrator:

Here, I looked for the same descriptors as I did for the wife/victim category**.** For case number one, article 1.2 starts the story by describing the husband as "Toronto businessman

smashed his wife's head 12 times with a hammer.." When police showed up at the home, police Const. Baheer Sarvanandan argued that he 'appeared calm and in charge'. Sarvanandan is also quoted saying that Rafat Chowdhury said, "I hit my wife and she's upstairs". The headline for this article reads: "jealousy fuelled attack Crown; Prosecutors allege man hit wife on head with hammer 12 times because she wanted to leave him for another".

In the subsequent article, readers are informed that Rafat cannot remember hitting his wife and the writer lists how he felt when he read the letter from his wife's former 'sweetheart in Bangladesh, explaining that despite her wishes they could no longer be together.' The fifth article quotes the judge as 'even after Chowdhury regained control, he showed callous disregard by not calling 911 for at least 30 minutes". The theme that kept arising when describing the perpetrator is that he was provoked and the incident was spontaneous. The text also portrays him as a victim and hence, readers are supposed to feel sympathy for him.

Case number one, the husband was portrayed as:

- Toronto businessman…(1.2)
- Appeared calm and in control (after police showed up)..(1.2)
- Jealously fuelled..(1.2)
- Says he can't remember hitting his spouse 12 times with a hammer..(1.3)
- After discovered letter, he was surprised, angry, sad, depressed, resentful…(1.3)
- An enraged man..(1.5)
- Showed callous disregard by not calling 911 for at least 30 minutes…(1.5)
- a sobbing Chowdhury…(1.3)

In case number two lists the descriptions of Mark Chahal. The articles repeatedly mention Chahal as ‘deranged and enraged’ in the context of his wife leaving him. Article 2.4 provides a background of Chahal before his marriage to Rajwar. The writer in all the articles focuses on the psychological description of the perpetrator.

For case number two, the following sentences were included:

- An amateur boxer, described as friendly man, not violent at all and had no criminal record…(2.1)
- But Chahal had history of abusing and intimating his wife..(2.1)
- Deranged Chahal (2.2)
- Killer obsessed with firearms (2.4)
- Was a loner and obsessed with guns..(2.4)
- 30 year old accountant had few friends, tightly focused on making money and determined to find “right” wife through arranged marriage..(2.4)
- Earned well above the average salary…(2.4)
- Enraged…(2.3)
- Estranged husband…(2.5)
- Distraught..(2.7)

(3) Role of Police:

(a) Blaming the police:

Here, I will be looking for sentences that insinuate that the tragedy could have been prevented if the police were more careful. In article 2.1, the readers get a sense of who the victims are. Nine members of the Gakhal family were killed by Mark Chahal, including the father, mother, five daughters, son and son-in-law. This article also marks the beginning of blaming the police. It is further explored in article 2.3. Later on in the report, we see that the debate as to whether or not Chahal should have been given the gun registration is explored in more detail in article 2.5, 2.6, and 2.7. The theme here is the demonstration of the carelessness of the police.

For case number 2, it included:

- B.C. bloodiest mess might have been avoided if police refused to give a gun license to the killer.. (2.3)
- That is bizarre, especially when there's report on violence (2.3)
- …guns were registered all legally to him ..but Cahal had history of abusing and intimidating his estranged wife, who complained to police in B.C's lower mainland….(2.1)
- Why did police issue a firearms permit to a man they knew had threatened wife? (2.3)
- We are pretty concerned how he got the guns if it came after the complaint (of abuse from the gunman's estranged wife), what kind of a system have we got? (2.3)

- Police issued permits for the weapons to Chahal even though his ex-wife had visited the Vernon RCMP detachment in January, 1995, to complain he had threatened her (2.3)
- RCMP twice approved paperwork that allowed an estranged husband to buy the restricted weapons he used to commit British Columbia's worst mass murder (2.5)
- When Mark Vijay Chahal got the restriation permits for two handguns in March and June, 1995, the Criminal Code entitled police to deny him a restricted-weapons permit "in the interests of the safety of..any other person" (2.5)
- The permits were granted despite complaints from Chahal's wife, Rajwar Gakhal, to the force in January, 1995, that he had threaten her shortly after the couple separated (2.5).
- ….he (Chahal) applied for the restricted weapons permits-which entitled him to purchase the handguns he used in the killings-after his wife first complained to RCMP (2.5)
- Mark Chahal was given a permit for a restricted handgun even though police computer records showed he had made at least two threats against his estranged wife (2.6)
- Even though police took the threats seriously enough to warn Chahal to stop calling his former wife, by June 21 he walked out of the Burnaby RCMP detachment with his new legally registered revolver (2.6)
- The .40 calibre handgun, one of two Chahal used in the attack, was purchased Feb. 22, 1995, just six weeks after Gahkal and her mother reported the threats to police (2.6)
- …why was a distraught Mark Chahal allowed to have the guns he used to slay his estranged wife and her relatives? (2.7)
- The acquisition of firearms and their involvement in this matter are of concern…(2.7)

- Restricted-weapons permits can only be issued to people who demonstrate they need a gun for their job, a gun collection or target practice at a registered gun club…it's unclear how Chahal, a resident of suburban Burnaby, qualified under these counts (2.5).

(b) Defending the Police:

I used any sentence that excused police behaviour. This was usually evaluated on the basis of placing blame on someone else. We see it come up very clearly in article 2.3. Here, as the headline states "…B.C police say hands tied after wife requested no investigation". The focus was on the wife/victim and her refusal to allow the police to investigate Chahal. In the article 2.5 we also see a different approach to defending the police. Here, through quoting , Sergeant Murray Ross of the RCMP detachment in Burnaby, the writer illustrates that it was out of the polices' control to trace Chahal's gun registration application. Similarly, protecting the police is also taken up in article 2.6, in this case RCMP Sergeant Peter Montague was heavily quoted. The writer(s) of the various articles defends the police by portraying them as a being benevolent to the victim's request. By doing so, blame is placed on the victim. They are also protected by demonstrating the willingness of the perpetrator, and by implication the powerlessness of the police to stop him.

For case 2, it included the following sentences:

- Police say they were powerless to deny the firearms because wife asked not to conduct full investigation.. (2.3)
- Inorder to turn down a firearms permit request, police must have evidence of a criminal record, charge history of violence…none of that applied (2.3)

- Mark got his Firearms Acquisition 6 years ago (2.3)
- Wife did not want an investigation. She said there were no witnesses to the abuse she suffered..and only wanted police to be aware (2.3)
- that happens a lot, but its not as effective as allowing police to do the investigation (2.3)
- Even if he had been denied the gun, he could buy it from black market (2.3)
- No matter how many laws we bring in, if a person's intent on getting a gun and using it illegally…there's very little we can do about it… (2.3)
- …did not know whether RCMP were aware of the complaint.. (2.3)
- But even if they knew, it wouldn't have mattered…(2.3)
- A gun itself is an ignorant instrument. It's the person with the gun who's in danger…(2.3)
- …the killer applied for a Firearms Acquisition Certificate in 1993..(2.5)
- ..that was before he would have been asked questions considered "red flags"…(2.5)
- The gun registration paperwork that Cahal completed in January 1995, after the break up with Rajwar did not include an extensive list of questions about the individual because he had already been screened by police and granted the right to purchase a firearm…(2.5)
- Police must comb their archives to learn weather Cahal's 1993 application was for a new or renewed permit…(2.5)
- I'm pretty sure its going to come back as target practice…(2.5)
- Police don't have the resources to conduct the interview for every weapons…(2.5)
- There has to be a reason to do that to do that….police had no reason to refuse Chahal a permit because his ex-wife asked the RCMP not to investigate her complaint…(2.5)

- Had police denied Chahal a permit, he would have been entitled to appeal and would have been forced to prove he deserved a permit. (2.5)
- However, he would also be entitled to find out the reason for the denial..(2.5)
- Legislation also entitles the police to apply to revoke the previously issued gun permits of anyone who is considered a safety risk (2.6)
- ….Had police denied Cahal the gun permit, the 30 year old accountant would have successfully appealed the decision because he had no criminal record..(2.6)
- We tried to convince the wife allow us to us pursue this….(2.6)
- We did not want to go against the wishes of the victim..(2.6)
- Gakhal told police she did not want Cahal to know she had complained for fear the threats would escalate…(2.6)

(4) Description of their Culture:

Here, I looked for any description/explanation of what the victim's culture is perceived to be. The purpose is to see how the community is constructed and whether or not they are being viewed as 'different' and/or Othered. In article 2.1, readers are introduced to 'Canada's second-worst shooting rampage' committed by Mark Vijay Chahal, the husband of one of the daughters/victim. In describing the grieving process, the writer discuses what the Sikh community does when mourning victims. Likewise, in article 2.4, we get background information of the process of arrange marriage, as described by the Toronto Star. This story is being told when describing how the perpetrator met the victim. The main discussion here is on the writer's perception of what arranged marriage is.

For case study number two, the following sentences were cited:

- Residents of this scenic wine-country city hung white wreaths yesterday in sympathy with the grieving relatives of nine people killed here Friday.. (2.1)
- White is the colour of Sikh community when they mourn..(2.1)
- In Balwinder's culture a white horse was a romantic symbol…(2.2)
- ..its the biggest tragedy in the Sikh community (2.4)
- Entire community is in deep shock…(2.1)
- In the months preceding the arranged marriage of their daughter…(2.2)
- Cahal let it be known in B.C's tight knight community that he was looking for a bride..(2.4)
- Word gets out pretty fast if someone is looking to get married and someone else has lots of daughters…(2.4)
- They meet, and if they are compatible, they get married…(2.4)

(5) Family Context:

I looked at sentences describing the members, family relations, lifestyles and any information about their residence**.** The first article in case number describes what the family context was from the perspective of various neighbours. Overall, the family is described as a quiet, middle-class family. It seems that they did not integrate themselves with the rest of the neighbours.

For case number one, I included the following sentences:

- The couple's two daughters were in the home on Scotia Ave., a quiet residential street between Danforth Ave. and Danforth Rd. just east of Warden Ave..(1.1)
- …the two daughters are about 9 and 15 years old…(1.1)
- ....to me, they were a very good family…(1.1)
- They were very much to themselves..(1.1)
- Kueneman added she was not aware of any previous trouble inside the home..(1.1)
- They were so happy they bought the house..(1.1)

In the second case study, article 2.1 identifies the family members that got killed by Chahal. Article 2.2 discusses the survivors of the 'rampage' as well as who will be looking after them. For this case study, not much was stated about the family, instead the focus, as mentioned earlier was on the culture.

For case number two, it included the following sentences:

- …their home in B.C (2.2)
- Justine Kaur, 6 and her two little sisters Brittany and Courtenay—nieces of Balwinder who lost their mother Jasbir, and father Balgit (Roger) Saran in Chahal's rampage—will be looked after by relatives…(2.2)
- Grandmother in Abbotsford..(2.2)
- Dead are:… (2.1)

The following tables present the data in a visual format indicating the number of articles in which each of the themes are presented. Appendix one lists the articles referred to in the tables in numerical format. Table 1A shows clearly the number of articles that fall within each thematic group. Table 1B illustrates the sub-themes for 'victim character' and Table 1C breaks down how the role of police was portrayed.

Table 1A How is domestic violence in the South Asian community portrayed?

Themes	Case # 1 (N=5)	Case #2 (N= 7)
1). Victim Character	1.1(4x); 1.2 (3x); 1.3(8x); 1.4(4x); 1.5(3x)	2.1 (2x) 2.2(8x); 2.3; 2.4 (2x); 2.5
2). Perpetrator Character	1.2(3x); 1.3(3x); 1.5(2x)	2.1(2x); 2.2; 2.3(2x); 2.4 (4x); 2.5; 2.7
3). Role of Police	N/A	2.1; 2.3(15x); 2.5(13x); 2.6(9x); 2.7 (2x)
4). Description of their culture	N/A	2.1(4x); 2.2(3x); 2.4(2x)
5). Family Context	1.1(6x);	2.1; 2.2(4x)

Source: The Toronto Star.

* x= the number of times sentences appeared in the article

Table 1B Victim Character

(a) Victim defied patriarchal norms	1.2; 1.3(4x); 1.5	2.2(2x) 2.3; 2.7;2.4; 2.5
(b) Blaming the victim	1.3(3x); 1.4(4x); 1.5(2x) 1.2;	2.2 (5x) 2.1 (2x)
(c) Description of wife/victim	1.1(4x)1.2;	2.2; 2.4(2x)

Table 1C Role of Police

(a) Blaming the police	N/A	2.1; 2.3(5x); 2.5(5x); 2.6(3x); 2.7(2x)
(b) Defending the police	N/A	2.3(10x); 2.5(8x); 2.6(6x);

Discussion

Out of the five articles in case number one, for theme number one, three of them entailed examples of how the victim defied patriarchal norms. Four sentences came up in article 1.3. Interestingly, in this article, the headline reads: "Can't recall killing wife, man says woman who wanted to be with former sweetheart was struck 12 times with hammer, trial hears". This article speaks heavily from the perspective of the perpetrator. He is either quoted, referenced and/or written about from the perspective of his lawyer. The article portrays the husband as pathological by dismissing the crime as an occurrence beyond his control. The claim that he cannot remember hitting his wife 12 times with a hammer, describing him as a "sobbing Chowdhury" (1.3) are some ways the writer plays with the sentiments of the readers. Hence, the press generates feels of sympathy for the husband. Another indication of this is the constant referral of the wife's "former sweetheart" (1.3) and how when she returned from her trip to Bangladesh, she "made it plain she no longer wished to be with him" (1.3). Thus, by using the words, "she made it plain…", the writer is essentially portraying her as having minimal regard for her marriage, and inadvertently using language that takes away any remorse for the victim.

Similarly, it seems that in this case, the general motive for killing his wife is because she defied patriarchal norms in the context in which divorce is unacceptable. In articles 1.2; 1.5; and 1.4, we are faced with the same trend. Discussions here are focused on her 'threatening to leave him " (1.3); and both of them arguing because of it: "when Hafiza returned from Bangladesh, she told her husband she no longer wanted to be with him and the couple quarrelled often" (1.4). If you recall back to the literature on cultural factors exacerbating violence against women,

obeying husbands consist of conforming to ideologies that subordinate individual rights and freedoms to the family and community. The articles for this theme are set up so that the killing occurred as a consequence of not conforming to these ideologies. To elaborate, the expression, “she wanted to sell their business and move to Bangladesh” (1.3); as well as the various indicators of her wanting a divorce all signify that the victim expressed her individual rights and suffered harsh consequences are a result of it.

We can also see similar patterns arising for case number two. The articles for this theme make it explicit that divorce was the only cause of the husband killing the family members. What is illuminating about these articles is that the writer reinforces cultural stereotypes in an overt manner. To exemplify, in article number 2.2, it states “Rajwar left her husband because of this abusive situation and in the Sikh community that took a lot of doing”. Another example is indicated in article number 2.7, whereby the writer argues: “Chahal distraught over the breakdown of his marriage to Rajwar Gakhal in December, 1994, went to her parents’ home armed with two handguns” (2.7). Once again, the crime is pathologized by portraying the husband as suffering from psychological trauma leading to mass murder.

In line with the aforementioned argument, description of the male perpetrator/husband has been evident in several articles. There are a lot of common descriptors for both case studies. First, abusers are described as middle class: “Toronto businessman” (1.2); “30 year old accountant, tightly focused on making money…”(2.4); “earned well above the average salary” (2.4). Hence, by stating their income and social class, the writers are in turn, dismissing any structural factors that may have led to the killing. The claim that economic factors contribute to family violence and that poor financial situations leading to stress may result in increase in

violence in the home, in these two case studies are dismissed. Instead, what the articles focus on is the individual characteristics and/or the psychological factors. As you will notice in theme number five, the common characteristic include “enraged” (“an enraged man” (1.5); “Deranged Chahal” (2.2); “enraged” (2.3). Sentences that demonstrate that the husbands were psychologically impaired include “appearing calm and in control, (1.2); “jealous” (1.2); “after he discovered the letter, he was surprised, angry, sad, depressed and resentful” (1.3); “killer obsessed with firearms” (2.4); and “was a loner and obsessed with guns” (2.4).

The aforementioned sentences describing the perpetrators seem to be in line with Myers (1997) analysis on how violence against women is depicted in media. To elaborate, Myers (1997:43-45) indicates that obsession seems to be a common focus when reporting the incident. She argues that the male perpetrator’s mental state as well as his obsessions is conveyed as the cause of the violence. In this process of removing responsibility away from the perpetrator, control is designated to the victim: ‘by labelling the perpetrator as out of control and obsessed, the victim is being reported as having control of the situation’ (Ibid, 1997:45).

Moreover, with regards to the assumptions being made about their income, readers do not know for certain what their income is, but the usage of words such as ‘Toronto businessman’ and “accountant, earning well above average salary” (2.4) glamorizes their financial statuses. According to van Dijk (1991:181), this is an exemplification of implicit meanings, which is defined “information/texts that are assumed to be supplied by the knowledge scripts and models of the media users, and therefore usually left unsaid”. Hence, by illustrating the perpetrators as middle class, the writer(s) inexplicitly focus on the psychological state of the husbands. Afterall,

if lack of finance/resources did not contribute to the killings, then, it is assumed it is because they are pathological.

While there have been extensive coverage on the description of the husband (N=19), not much have been stated about the victim. However, the sentences in the press about the victims generally reinforce the gendered stereotypes commonly used to refer to women. For example, in case study number one, the characteristics of the wife represent her life as living the typical heterosexual, nuclear family, whereby the father is the breadwinner and the mother, a home-stay wife. She was 'very sweet' (1.1), '41-year-old woman' (1.1), a 'wife who did not work outside of the house' (1.1). The tragedy is not that the woman was beaten to death by her husband, but that her role as a mother will now be forfeited: "it's a shock to think those girls will now be motherless" (1.1).

Myers (1997:9) argues that male supremacist ideologies are encouraged by the news of violence against women as "both a warning to women and a form of social control that outlines the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and the forms of retribution they can expect to transgress". Both of the case studies demonstrate this. In case number one, the wife was complying with the gender code of behaviour and the marriage was therefore "great for 17 years until June 2005, when she visited their native Bangladesh on a short notice" (1.3) in which case the husband discovered that "she was in love with an old flame there" (1.5). Thus, when Hafiza deviated from her 'proper' gender role as a complicit wife, she was murdered.

Interestingly, in case number two, the victim is described as "beautiful" (2.2); "very accomplished, had university degree" (2.4). These limited description of her also led to placing

blame on her because it inadvertently states that given that she was very accomplished, she should have known better.

Out of both case studies and all the themes, it seems that the most amount of sentences have been dedicated to defending the police. The police have been questioned about the mass killing in terms of possible negligence on their part, for instance: "B.C's bloodiest mess might have been avoided if police refused to give a gun license to the killer" (2.3); and among others," why did police issue firearms permit to a many they knew had threatened his wife?" (2.3). However, defending police was the major theme in this case study. Strikingly, defending the police meant blaming the victim: "police say they were powerless to deny the firearms because wife asked not to conduct full investigation" (2.3). These kinds of sentences reinforce the powerlessness of police because the claim that the wife did not want investigation reoccurred in 10 sentences [2.3(5x); 2.5; 2.6(4x)]. If you recall back to the literature on the problems of police involvement, one of the reasons why women are reluctant to report to the police is due to racism. In other words, police may individualize the problem by dismissing it as being 'part of their culture' and/or because the victim may not trust the police force, thereby, increasing the fear[1] . None of these ideas were mentioned in the press. Instead, we have discussions on the 'powerlessness of the police'.

By doing so, blame is placed on the victim. They are also protected by demonstrating the willingness of the perpetrator, and by implication the powerlessness of the police to stop him.

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[1] Please note that this case took place before mandatory charging was enforced in domestic violence cases

This also fits nicely with the previous articles that focus on the perpetrator's "obsession" with guns: "Even if he had been denied the gun, he could buy it from black market (2.3)"; "No matter how many laws we bring in, if a person's intent on getting a gun and using it illegally…there's very little we can do about it… (2.3)"; A gun itself is an ignorant instrument. It's the person with the gun who's in danger…(2.3)"; "Killer obsessed with firearms (2.4)"; "Was a loner and obsessed with guns..(2.4)".

Equally intriguing, the articles dedicated sentences to what they viewed as the victim's culture. Here, cultural descriptions for case study number two focused heavily on arrange marriage (2.4; 2.4; 2.4; 2.2). According to van Dijk (1991), these discussions on arrange marriage would be bracketed as "overcompleteness/irrelevance", which consists of unnecessary details. However, the details still have an ideological purpose. In this case, it seems that the process of arranged marriage is Othered. It reinforces the idea of 'them versus us' because in the western, mainstream culture, romantic love is the norm. To elaborate, in the White, western culture, 'real' love consists of rules that dictate that "genuine love is possible only when the couples know each other very well" (Reiss, 1960:139). Hence, love at first sight and/or arranged marriages are 'inadequate' because the couple is not given that 'intimacy and complex interactions' are lacking (Ibid, 1960:139).

Aside from describing what is being said, it is also important, as mentioned earlier to discuss what is not being said and why. In Table 1A, case number one, the role of police as well as description of their culture was not found. If we refer back to the literature, police involvement in domestic violence in the South Asian community has been deemed problematic. This case focuses heavily on the family and renders the violence as a private, individual matter.

For example, the role of the victim/perpetrator kept reversing on the various articles. To elaborate, while the writer(s) made it clear that the wife was the victim, they also portrayed her as the one causing the emotional abuse. This indicates that both parties inflicted the harm on one another, and therefore, implies a more individualistic approach to the cause of violence. On the contrary, in case number two, there seems to be a heightened awareness of gun control and role of police as well as discussion of their culture. Interestingly, this confirms the aforementioned literature because in case number two, the story took place in 1996, whereby media was not aware of issues of cultural sensitivity. The first case study engages in what was discussed as 'democratic racism', hence, leaves out cultural description, but blames the individual. It is also a form of democratic racism because culture is still described in subtle means since the article(s) is describing family context and gender.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings presented reinforce how violence against women is portrayed in media. Violence against women in the racialized community serves two purposes. First, it sustains patriarchy by warning women of the dangers of deviating from their gender roles (Berns, 2001; Myers, 1997). Second, it reinforces racism by dismissing violence as being 'part' of 'their' culture. Both Berns (2001) and Myers (1997) argue that both cultural and structural factors are ignored when reporting violence against women, however, my analysis demonstrates that when the reporting is on a racialized community, culture becomes the focal point of discussion. The five themes developed from the two case studies demonstrate this. The focus on the individual, the family, and among other things, the culture exemplifies what the underlying beliefs and ideologies of the writers are. As mentioned previously, Berns (2001:270), argues that

> *Womens' innocence is being challenged by employing the first two gendering strategies: highlighting women who are abusers and arguing that they are at least as violent as men and holding female victims responsible for their role in their own victimization*

This study confirms this in two ways. The first case study demonstrates that the victim emotionally abused her husband, while the second case study blames the victim for her own inactions, as stated in article 2.2, "the lesson here for all women is that even if the bruises are over, make sure you are safe."

Media analysis of domestic violence against women is important because media define the problems and by doing do, denote the solutions (Berns, 2001: 264). This study demonstrates that the structural factors are lacking in the reporting of domestic violence and therefore, the solution will remain limited, if not non-existent. Both sexism and racism need to be acknowledged when framing the problem. One of the most detrimental findings of this project is

the reinforcement of the diffusion of responsibility for violence against women (Berns, 2001, Myers, 1997; Lamb & Keon, 1995). This is detrimental not only because it is counter-productive in trying to remove patriarchal ideologies that enable men to view women as inferior, but also because it fosters violence by blaming the victim, excusing the perpetrator, and reporting the violence as a private, individual matter rather than a larger, social problem. Overall, since this study replicates other findings (Jiwani, 2006; Berns, Year; Lamb & Keon, 1997), we can conclude by stating that change is not only essential, but long over-due!

The debate about gun control seems to be a dominant theme for case study number two. This may be an important issue to discuss in the context of violence against women. Since it was beyond the scope of my project, it is worthwhile to explore this in the future. Another limitation for this project is the issue of generalization. The two case studies may be adequate for this project given the scope of it; however, to initiate change, I feel it would have been more beneficial if more than one case study was examined. For example, in the context of violence against women, it is important to bring in cases of child abuse and demonstrate how racism and sexism maybe reproduced in family violence. Lastly, due to time constraints, I was not able to fully follow and analyze van Dijk's (1991) methods of analyzing discourses. This will also be worth exploring in future studies.

Appendix 1: Article References

Case study number one:

Article 1.1:

Powell, B. (2005, July 19, 2005). Husband charged with murder; 41-year-old woman beaten in her Scarborough home two daughters were present at the time, police say; *The Toronto Star, B.01*

Article 1.2:

Small, P. (2007, October 30, 2007). Jealousy fuelled attack Crown; Prosecutors allege man hit wife on head with hammer 12 times because she wanted to leave him for another; *The Toronto Star, A.12*

Article 1.3:

Small, P. (2007, November 7, 2007). Can't recall killing wife, man says; Woman who wanted to be with former sweetheart was struck 12 times with hammer, trial hears; *The Toronto Star, A.13*

Article 1.4:

Small, P. (2007, November 15, 2007). Husband guilty of manslaughter; Testified he can't remember hitting his wife 12 times with a hammer. *The Toronto Star, A.16*

Article 1.5:

Small, P. (2007, December 22, 2007). Man gets 10-year term for killing wife with hammer; violent outburst in young daughter's presence came during fight aobut future of their marriage. *The Toronto Star, A.12*

Case study number two:

Article 2.1:

Mallan, C. (1996, April 07, 1996). White wreaths mark city's mourning; *The Toronto Star, A.1*

Article 2.2:

Gradon, J. (1996, April 08, 1996). Kin checked out husband-to-be Wanted to avert repeat of abuse; *The Toronto Star, A.1*

Article 2.3:

Bell, S & Kines, L. (1996, April 08, 1996). Family asks why killer got gun permits B.C police say hands tied after wife requested no investigation. *The Toronto Star, A.1*

Article 2.4: Mallan, C. Killer (1996, April 08, 1996). Killer obsessed with firearms; *The Toronto Star, A.8*

Article 2.5:

(1996, April 09, 1996). Gun paperwork approved twice Permits okayed despite report of threats; *The Toronto Star, A.1*

Article 2.6:

Mallan, C. (1996, April 10, 1996). RMCP told man to stop threatening ex-wife; *The Toronto Star, A.3*

Article 2.7:

(1996, September 24, 1996). B.C inquest investigates why mass murderer allowed guns Okanagan Valley killer shot 9 on wedding eve; *The Toronto Star, A.11*

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