

FEMALE FALCONS:
AN EXPLORATION OF FEMININE HONOR
IN SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITIES

By

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**A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Wesleyan University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Psychology**

Sooraj ki baahon mein, ab hai yeh zindagi,
Kirnein hain saason mein, baton mein roshni.

Jo bhi badi dil ki taal hai,
Yun hi aaya eik khayal,
Paate hum hai zindagi eik baar,
Kyun na kare khulke hum isko pyaar?
Jaane kiska hai humhein intezaar?
Ke zindagi yehi hai aur yahin.

In the embrace of the sun, there is now life,
The rays of the sun are in our every breath, there's a glow to conversation.

As the tempo of the heart has changed,
A thought came across me,
We only get one chance to live,
Why don't we love it openly?
Who knows what we're waiting for?
This is life, and it is here.

-Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara
Life doesn't come twice

DEDICATION

H: Mama i miss you.

Z: Yeah, what happened

Z: How much money do you need

H: I was writing my grad school app about doing research on feminine honor in pakistani women, and i think youre the most honorable woman i know

Z: Farah says you DO want something

Z: But thank you Beta

H: Farah is lying -_-

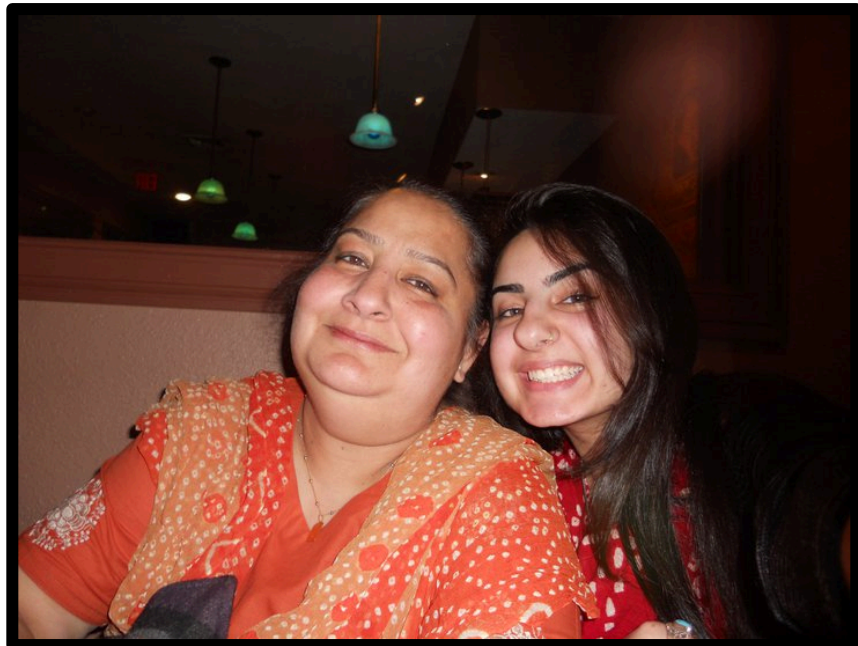
This was the first conversation (via text) we had as I embarked on this project, and though it pains me beyond reason to know that you, as the guiding light behind everything I've done, aren't with me to see the end result; I know that your spirit lives in every word and every notation on every page.

This project is a celebration of and thank you to my mother, role model, and friend, my female falcon:

Zehra Batool Jafri
(Pinkey)
1964-2013

The woman who first introduced the notion of honor to me and has been my constant and everlasting model of all it means. I miss you and I strive to embody your extraordinary grace, your passion and your whimsy.

With all my love.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many things we accomplish in our lives that are less about what we are independently able to achieve, but more so about those who you share that journey with. The following words are for those who made this a meaningful and memorable experience for me. Thank you.

I'd first and foremost like to thank my advisor, *Dr. Patricia Rodriguez Mosquera* for her unwavering enthusiasm and support. From the day I met her as an overzealous freshman, I credit my pursuit of cultural psychology to our fortuitous meeting that one evening. Even as I navigated through challenging times, she always knew how to be the most helpful. I could not have even considered doing this project without you. Thank you, always. If I do say so myself- it's been an *honor*, working with you all these years.

I'd also like to thank my family for giving me the strength and willpower to see through my aspirations. If there's ever even a sliver of doubt that crosses my mind all I have to do is look to you and your never ending love and encouragement will lead me to the light each and every time. There's no way I can ever repay you, I just hope that I can give you some light when things are gray. *Abbu and Farah*, may you be forever blessed.

Next, I'd like to thank quite possibly the best motivational speaker and gift giver to have ever walked this Earth - my cherished friend, *Gaby Chavez*. Gracias a ti, for always being by side. Goodness knows how many times your creativity and words of wisdom guided me. You beautiful, brilliant musk ox.

A special note goes to my BA/MA partner in crime and statistician extraordinaire, *Eric Stephen*, without whom this journey would have far more difficult and far less enjoyable. I hope you're always boppin' it.

I'd also like to thank all of my friends who have backed me up all these years and have been nothing but loving and helpful. A few special shout outs go to *Zainab Khan, Elizabeth Damaskos, Malik Ben-Salahuddin, Anike Arni, Simoneil Sarbh, Shayoni Nair, Aditi Kini, and my Jafaria girls*. Thanks to *Lisa Chamberland and Bobby Spignesi* for staying strong for so long.

Last but not least I'd like to thank my thesis committee members *Dr. Robert (Bob) Steele*, and *Dr. Clara Wilkins*. It was in your classrooms that I had some of my most transformational moments, and I have the learning environment you created to thank for that. It's been an absolute pleasure getting to know you and learn from you. Thank you for making the college experience just what it should be: eye-opening, engaging, and empowering.

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ABSTRACT

Honor is a very complex system of values, norms, and social practices that can be categorized under four themes. Each of the themes signifies specific qualities of honor. The current study presents a further exploration of the concept of feminine honor, by exploring the experience of feminine honor in individuals of South Asian descent. Participants were asked to define honor, describe honorable women, and to give anecdotes of “good” and “bad” experiences with honor a woman they know had. The present study aims to contribute to the literature on honor in two important ways. First, the present study collected data from an underrepresented population in research on honor. Second, the present study focuses on the understudied topic of feminine honor.

INTRODUCTION

The invocation of the word “honor” brings forth a plethora of imagery. This alone reveals its presence and prevalence in common consciousness. Although academic inquiry of honor did not develop to great magnitude until the mid-20th century, there is a wealth of literature illuminating the concept of honor across several disciplines, the most prominent of those being anthropology and psychology. They differ largely in their definitions of different phenomena, the methodologies which they use with which they conduct their research, and the specific nuances of honor they research. The definitions of honor tend to vary among the academic fields in which it is studied, and thus research conducted on the topic is vastly different. Honor is a very complex system of values, norms, and social practices that can be categorized under four themes. Each of the themes signifies specific qualities of honor. These four themes of honor, also known as honor codes are: morality-based, family-based, masculine and feminine honor (see e.g., Abu-Lughod, 1986; Gilmore, 1987; Peristiany, 1966; Rodriguez Mosquera, Liskow, & DiBona, 2012). Cultures in which these honor codes have a strong presence are called honor cultures. The current study presents a further exploration of the concept of feminine honor.

Honor in the Field of Anthropology

Much of what has been written on honor is through the field of anthropology, the keystone studies of which have been conducted primarily in the Mediterranean. One of the first of these studies was by the anthropologist J.G. Peristiany whose work is considered to be some of the hallmark research on honor due to its extensive examination of how honor is upheld in society. He considered honor to be a key element of social evaluation in that the qualities that make one honorable are those that are most desired by society (1966). With that reasoning, a person's honor becomes an indicator of their adherence to societal values. Peristiany reasoned that since all societies have their own distinct rules of conduct, as well as techniques with which to evaluate concordance with those rules, that "Honor and shame are two poles of an evaluation. They are the reflection of the social personality in the mirror of social ideals" (1966, p. 9). He introduces here several interesting points about honor- first, that an individual has a social personality that seeks to mimic social ideals. This means that in order to be honorable, one actively makes the decision to abide by social codes of conduct and present oneself with an image that conforms to those ideals. Second, that honor exists on a *scale* of social approval- the most desired end of this scale being honor, and the least desirable being shame. Shame in anthropological literature is an emotional acknowledgment that one has betrayed societal expectations (see e.g., Baroja, 1966; Brandes, 1987; Gilmore, 1987; Peristiany, 1966; Pitt-Rivers, 1966).

Peristiany's in-depth field observations of the Greek Cypriot village of

Pistilloi offered a vantage point through which to explore honor and its social implications. He studied honor and shame in the village to examine their use in social evaluation, and to see how the experience of honor was influenced by factors such as age, gender, position, and family status. He found that in a community that emphasized social group membership (such as a family or village) honor could extend beyond the reflection of an individual, and can represent a greater social identity. It is in this way that an individual can become, as Peristiany puts it, a “protagonist,” (1966, p.11) becoming a figurehead for a particular identity. While honor could so easily apply to a group based off of an individual when they are the protagonist, the same cannot be said in reverse. One does not simply inherit honor through social group membership; they must constantly prove themselves as being honorable. Honor is not permanent, or earned just once, but rather something that must be sustained. The maintenance of honor requires a constant vigilance and adherence to social norms.

The first level of social group membership where an individual becomes honorable is at home within one’s family. Thus, in families, hyper-preventative measures to preserve honor and keep the honor of dependents safeguarded come into play. In particular, a family will exhibit gendered honor¹ in order to maintain family honor. Masculine honor is honor specific to men in which values like strength, valor and autonomy are emphasized. Feminine honor is honor specific to women where

¹ In the Mediterranean context in particular, as well as in other places honor has been studied (i.e. North Africa and South Asia), gender exists primarily in a male/female binary, as is reflected in gendered forms of honor.

values such as sexual shame² are encouraged. In Pistilloi, a woman's preeminent responsibility and claim to honor was to upkeep a reputation of sexual modesty (1966), a reputation that male family members would go to great lengths to ensure as well. While maintaining the honor of a female family member may rest upon the entire family, the ultimate responsibility for protecting or avenging her honor is her father's, or in a married woman's case, her husband's. The route to shame for women is much faster, more public, and has more at stake for the family because masculine honor is tied so closely with women's roles. Social evaluation becomes a deeply gendered process under these presumptions.

Julian Pitt-Rivers, a contemporary and anthropological colleague of Peristiany's echoed similar notes about the importance of honor as a tool for social evaluation in his observational field work in the pueblo of Sierra de Cadiz in Spain³. He stated that the pursuit of honor is the driving force behind an individual's strives to personify social ideals. He emphasized that people do not adhere to those codes of conduct for any other reason but to be entitled to a certain treatment. To be considered honorable is an entry into a social class of those with honor- and in anthropological literature, a right to status is a right to pride (Pitt-Rivers, 1966). Though one can claim to be honorable, one does not achieve it unless they are given the right to it by their social peers. What distinguished Pitt-Rivers' work from Peristiany's was his emphasis on what the social utility honor offers, and how this

² Sexual shame entails virginity before marriage, decorum, and modesty in social interactions with men.

³ Sierra de Cadiz is a province in Andalusia towards the South of Spain.

interacts with those in different socio-economic classes. Honor interacts with socio-economic class in that those who are well-off financially and are influential are perceived to have conformed to societal codes of conduct and their current position is a reward for that social adherence. Furthermore, these societal expectations and codes of conducts are themselves derived from those individuals within positions of power and socio-economic wealth. While this may be true, those who fall within an elevated socio-economic status have a greater ability to conceal any of their own deviation from the social norms that form honor due to their status. Their position offered maneuverability within social expectation that allowed them to act in otherwise dishonorable manner without sanctions that members of other socio-economic status would be subjected to.

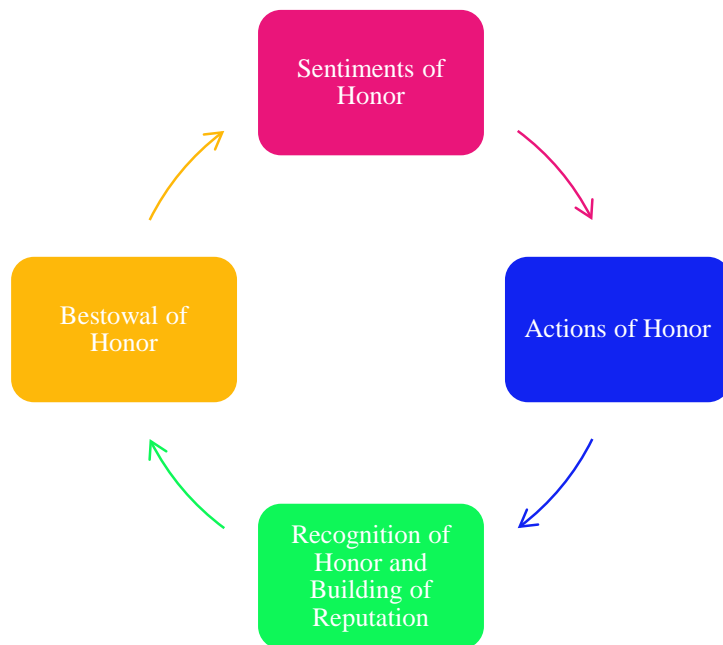


Fig. 1 Honor Cycle

Pitt-Rivers also suggested a cyclical nature of honor discussing the transformation of a sentiment of honor, into an action of honor, into recognition of honor and a building of reputation that leads into a bestowal of honor, which then again informs sentiments of honor (Fig. 1). The cycle also clarified the ways in which honor can be seen as a sentiment, a concept, an action and a status. One can feel a sense of honor, consider honor, act honorably, and bestow an honor. In this way, an already complex topic to discuss becomes even more convoluted. This cycle works primarily in those contexts in which most individuals are in a similar social standing. This provides evidence that the standards of honor to which one member of society is held is not necessarily the same as other members of that same society. In fact, it is this very social class hierarchy that dictates what the appropriate gestures of honor are from individual to individual. People are only answerable about their honor to those who are their social equals (Pitt-Rivers, 1966).

This reigns particularly true for women in the pueblo of Sierra de Cadiz, who unlike the women of the Greek village Peristiany conducted research in, had clear distinctions between women in different social classes. While Pitt-Rivers supported the idea that a woman holds not only her own, but her social group's honor in the reputation of her social conduct, if they were members of a higher social class, women were able to maintain their honor with far less dependence on their male relations. Pitt-Rivers' research also deviated from that of Peristiany's in that he discussed a structure by which honor can establish status, where the vice versa is also true, that entrance in a certain status means the inherent acquisition of a certain level

of honor as well (1966). This phenomenon in honor acquisition strongly supports a hierarchy consciousness in societies where much importance is placed on honor. This hierarchy consciousness refers to the acknowledgment of class allowing an expedited path to honor and also delineating how honor is upheld depending on social class. Not only is honor a demarcation of one's own accomplishment or progress, but it's a societal recognition of that honorable status represented through one's reputation.

Anthropologist and linguist Julio Caro Baroja studied honor in great depth, examining both the history of the study of honor, and the language that is used in relation to honor. Through the usage of legal texts, theological writings, literary works and historical texts, he drew several conclusions as to what can be gleaned from the study of honor (1966). His research was developed in accordance with his belief that literary traditions strongly inform contemporary propagations of honor, and he used his observations in the Basque region of Northern-Central Spain to further his understanding of social phenomena, particularly honor. He insisted that while variations in societal norms may change the perceptions of honor, contemporary notions of honor will always carry its historical background, despite the emergence of other qualities and definitions (1966). His work was some of the first in the field of anthropology that implied that honor cannot be examined with a reductionist lens focusing on a particular time and place, but rather should develop with a consciousness of societal framing and history. His research is important due to its acknowledgement of the variety of social factors that come into play in the evolution of honor, including the political, economic and religious which are often

left unconsidered.

Perhaps one of the most iconic and pervasive public images of honor is the legend of Don Juan, a fictional libertine who was known for his womanizing ways. Baroja used the image of Don Juan to critique the obsessive manner in which the quest for honor and avoidance of shame have taken over society. His ruthless acquisition of money, power, and sexual partners both intrigues and intimidates those who emulate his life choices and fear the wrath he faced at the end of his story. His repentance and belief that his intentions were all honorable justified his actions and enable Don Juan's story to remain in popular literary lexicon as a revered and honorable character, despite his otherwise questionable traits. Baroja used his story to illustrate the social implications of allowing the ruthless pursuit of power (even permitting violence, wildness in behavior, and complete womanizing) to continue in the name of honor as a failing of the foundations that honor should actually stand for (1966). He felt that it was too simplistic to just become honorable by claiming honorable intentions and it is because of this that he suggested further research on honor should broaden the ways in which it is studied. The multifaceted lens with which Baroja suggested studying honor can be seen in the work of other anthropologists as well.

Up until the late 20th century, much of the literature produced on honor from the Mediterranean implied a pan-Mediterranean⁴ conception of honor with a uniform application of honor, in particular gendered notions of honor. Those academics whose

⁴ From here on, also known as Mediterraneanist.

research on honor was conducted in that region (e.g., Baroja, 1966; Peristiany, 1966; Pitt-Rivers, 1966)⁵ saw their findings regarding values, honor codes and the experience of shame as unique to the Mediterranean region, crossing national and ethnic boundaries. Anthropologists who studied honor following the inception of this concept problematized this field and established noteworthy findings, particularly related to masculine and feminine honor. One of the first to do so was David Gilmore, an anthropologist who worked closely with the residents of Fuenmayor, a small town in Northern-Central Spain and looked at male status as a feature not just based on honor, but more complex gendered norms as well. His research acknowledged gendered honor as previous research had also noted, identifying masculine honor as focusing on strength and power and feminine honor as focusing on decorum, docility and sexual repression. However, he thought that the gendered notions were not quite so simplistic, and reducing gendered honor to these two stratified qualities did not do it justice. He insisted feminine and masculine honor not be studied individually but together in order to discover the more nuanced ways in which they are connected. In particular, he sought to deconstruct the monolithic approach of viewing a woman's sexual repression as inherently tied to shame.

Gilmore sought to explore why the differences between masculine and feminine honor exist so profoundly. The results of his observational work indicated a very fluid and pragmatic understanding of the way in which masculine honor functions. Far more than any other quality he found, honor is tied to honesty, and the

⁵ See also the work of Pierre Bourdieu, 1966; J.K. Campbell, 1966; and Ahmed Abou-Zeid, 1966.

adherence to and expectations of honor earned develop from the emphasis on trustworthiness. He also discovered experiences of shame amongst men that had no relation to women and therefore challenged Mediterraneanist associations between sexual shame and women. He also studied the ways in which men socialized and discovered that when a man failed to fulfill his duties in his friendship with male colleagues, it was a cause for dishonor and shame⁶. Though more competitive strength and power related honor did exist (i.e. masculine honor), it was overshadowed by an honor that was dependent on cooperation and camaraderie. Others also shared his critique of a far spread generic understanding of gendered honor in the field.

Anthropological researcher Maureen Giovannini was also an advocate to diversify the study honor. She characterized honor as having a “chameleon-life” in that it adapts to accommodate societal ideals (1987, p.61). Though her research challenged pan-Mediterranean developments on honor, she chose to pursue female chastity, a parallel in all Mediterranean honor codes. The Mediterranean at the time of Giovannini’s research was a largely gender-segregated region, and thus little research had been done specifically examining women in the male dominated field of anthropology. Giovannini criticized the male lens through which honor was defined, and the fact that the male anthropologists who studied feminine honor had restricted access to women’s lives. Other researcher’s positioning as male researchers may have compromised what female participants may tell them, and so her research had

⁶ This was particularly the case in more committed friendships that involved the exchange of more valuable goods, money or that gained higher levels of trust.

great importance in including a female voice in anthropological research on honor. Her fieldwork conducted in the small Sicilian town of Garre explored female chastity codes as a predominant influence in the development of gender ideology and social practice. Female chastity in the region focuses on community linkages, class relations, and the politics of gender. Giovannini recounted an experience in her field site in Sicily (1987) where a young woman discovered her sister exchanging love letters with a boy and reported it to her parents. The implication here is that the young woman's honor was not entirely under her control, but was also developed from the image of her family as a whole. In this case, if her sister's honor was to be tarnished in one way or another, it would have a ripple effect and affect her herself, regardless of her own actions. This story alludes to the concepts of family and feminine honor discussed previously (e.g. Peristiany, 1966; Pitt-Rivers, 1966). This story also represents the unique research experience that Giovannini as a female anthropologist conducting fieldwork was able to accomplish- to collect narratives of women in society. This example of social status and gender playing interlocking roles only arose out of her ability to enter the women's sphere and gain some insight on the women's experiences with honor. Giovannini insisted that honor should be explored from both a male perspective and a female perspective, citing her own limitations as a woman to be able to enter the men's sphere and report on it equally. She felt that future research on honor should vault a more sundry manner of examining the subject.

Anthropologist Stanley Brandes thought that the study of honor in the

Mediterranean had become somewhat cliché, in that so many researchers used the honor and shame binary without any further exploration. Brandes pursued the understudied complexities of honor (e.g. distinguishing honor and shame, cross-cultural studies of honor and morality on honor), and found through his field work that honor and shame function as a barometer for where people stand in a social group. He emphasized the influence that class can have not only on societal expectations, but also on access to different resources to disguise one's actions. Those with more wealth have a greater ability to conceal things which they may see as dishonorable, a finding that aligns with past research (see e.g., Baroja, 1966; Pitt-Rivers, 1966). However, Brandes' findings from his research in the two small municipalities of Becedas and Monteros in Northern Spain diverge from previous studies in that honor disregarded social status in a way that had yet to be seen elsewhere. The small agrarian societies in which Brandes conducted his research certainly consisted of a variety of social classes but the acquisition of honor was not dependent on and was actually independent of collective material wealth. His approach to studying honor was to put it in a greater context of human experience and to eliminate all implicit associations that one may automatically associate with honor. Brandes considered the meaning of honor and how research on the topic had continued blindly without questioning previous findings. He felt that current research was out of touch with what honor actually entailed. He encouraged intellectual exploration and curiosity to lead future research into new dimensions of honor that were unexamined.

Considering honor as a basic human experience as well, anthropologist Frank Henderson Stewart's work was meant to debunk what honor actually is, something he felt anthropological writing often skirted (1994). He strongly criticized anthropologists for failing to utilize ancient writing that discuss honor to inform their anthropological studies, and for feigning that the study of it is more recent. He also criticized members of the field for staying rooted to simply one geographic location (the Mediterranean) when there is a wealth of other research that could be done elsewhere. For his research, he analyzed and compared literary traditions (old laws, epics, legends and folklore, works of literature, and historical records) of the West and of Bedouins of Northern Africa (1994). He used these writings to solidify the meaning of honor, something which had not been done concretely, and had been left vague. The greatest lesson from his work was his definition of honor as the "right to respect". This meaning allows for certain paradoxes (like the honor and shame binary) of honor can be understood with greater clarity. He also introduced a different perspective on social status dynamics in honor that had not been considered. He proposed that honor ran in two directions to create a horizontal honor and a vertical honor. Horizontal honor is that which is set by an individual, while vertical honor is that which is granted by a superior. This differed from social status driven honor research (Baroja, 1966; Gilmore, 1987; Pitt-Rivers, 1966) in that it suggested that one has control over at least some of the honor that they have, unlike previous definitions which have stressed that honor does not exist unless it is established by ones' social peers (Baroja, 1966; Brandes, 1987; Gilmore, 1987; Giovannini, 1987; Pitt-Rivers,

1966). Honor when broken down in vertical and horizontal honor does however support that there are two distinct spheres at work at the same time: a public and a private. No individual can suffice with approval of one's honor based on only one of the aforementioned. An identity as an honored individual is constructed both by the self and by the others and cannot be maintained by one alone.

Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod is one of the first researchers to explore the experience of honor in largely female contexts, with her work with the 'Awlad Ali, an Egyptian Bedouin tribe near the Western Desert and Libyan border (1986). Abu-Lughod's work flourishes particularly due to her ability to enter the women's camp with transparency and comfort unlike any of her male predecessors, similar to Gionannini (1987). She originally entered the tribe in order to examine the interpersonal relationships between men and women, but her focus quickly changed as she discovered the great lengths through which the Awlad 'Ali communicate through pseudo-confidential poetry and decided to pursue that instead. It is through the community's poetry that Abu-Lughod learned the most about honor. She found that men and women developed the same qualities to be honorable, but those qualities take form in gendered social roles (1986). An example of this is taking care of one's family. A man will fulfill this by providing financial stability and protecting the family from any harm. A woman will fulfill this same role by bathing and feeding her family. This finding distinguishes Abu-Lughod's work from others in the field- it had not previously been considered that men and women can embody honor similarly. This makes for a more feminist argument of gendered honor, in which women are far

less passive and intentionally behave in a manner that fits societal ideals of a woman with honor. In the Bedouin context, honor can often be boiled down to the concept of self-mastery, which women at different stages in life⁷ and with various other circumstantial differences can see a shift in their ability to gain a sense of honor in a manner similar to men.

Abu-Lughod's work added yet another perspective on the panorama of research conducted to better understand honor. Though researchers explored numerous communities, there was still a lot left. Anthropological findings have just scraped the surface of feminine honor, and many academics to follow will continue to study it.

Honor in the Field of Psychology

While the majority of work on honor began in anthropology, research on honor in psychology has blossomed and has presented new and innovative methodologies through which to study it. Honor has an important place in social-psychological processes like morality, sexuality and gender, in-group identification and biculturalism (Rodriguez Mosquera, 2013). It is a multifaceted construct that is of concern to individuals across cultures to varying degrees of importance (Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002b). It also should be noted that similar definitions of honor across cultures do not imply equal importance of honor (Rodriguez Mosquera, 2013). This is significant when studying the meaning and

⁷ There are periods of time in a woman's life however when she is less in control of her body, like during menstruation and pregnancy that keeps this status from remaining for the long term.

degree of importance of honor on a societal level. Honor is tied to reputation; more specifically the maintenance of a good reputation, thus social approval becomes essential to establishing honor in honor cultures (Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002a).

Reputation and Honor

The wealth of anthropological literature on honor in the Mediterranean has indicated that honor is of great importance in that region. Though little research had been done in anthropology to delve into the rest of Europe, psychologists set out to breach that gap. Spain and the Netherlands (countries where honor research has and has not been conducted respectively) were the focal point in a study that sought to compare notions of honor between a Mediterranean and a Northern European country (Rodriguez Mosquera, et. al., 2002b). The first portion of the study replicated previous findings on cultural priorities (like honesty, altruism, loyalty etc.), and asked college-aged participants to rate the extent to which those values were essential in their culture, and following this they also listed to what extent those values would enhance one's honor. The second portion of the study examined notions of honor more thoroughly by allowing participants from a variety of age groups to respond to open-ended questions about honor. They hypothesized that notions of honor are closely tied to esteemed values in society. There was evidence of cross-cultural similarities and differences in terms of value priorities. In particular, results showed that values related to family and social interdependence are more important in Spain, whereas values related to achievement and self-direction are more important in the

Netherlands. While these suggest public image is important in both, social approval of behavior is emphasized more in Spain. Meanings of honor reflect these same values, where honor is more strongly associated with family and social interdependence in Spain than the Netherlands, where honor was more strongly associated with self-achievement and self-direction with greater frequency. This study points to diversity in the cultural meaning of honor and how closely tied honor is with societal values.

Honor and Emotion

What distinguishes research on honor in psychology from the work that has been done in anthropology previously is the emphasis that is placed on the study of *emotion* in association with honor. Though honor itself is not an emotion, it is often understood in association with emotions that are felt when experiencing honor (see Peristiany, 1966). More specifically, threats to honor values typically elicit strong emotional reactions in individuals in honor cultures due to the concern that the individual has for maintaining the status of his or her honor (Rodriguez Mosquera et. al., 2002a). Emotional reactions to honor threats were studied in an experiment where college aged Dutch and Spanish participants answered questionnaires that inquired about honor values. They then gave their emotional responses to threats to a randomized assortment of honor values. Dutch participants reported more intense anger and shame in response to insults that compromised their autonomy versus their Spanish counterparts, who felt the most intense shame when their family honor was

violated (Rodriguez Mosquera et. al., 2002a), findings which bring to attention the values that each culture holds, and the emotional experiences that those encourage.

Multiple studies bring to light the emotions tied with honor, including a field study where the affects of honor-related values on pride, shame and anger were examined (Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2000). Children, adolescent, and adult participants of Spanish or Dutch descent were either interviewed or given a questionnaire about autobiographical experiences of pride, shame and anger. These cultures were selected because honor-related values are relatively more important in Spain, whereas individualistic values are relatively more important in the Netherlands. Following the interview, participants were presented with vignettes that were meant to arouse each of those three emotions (pride, shame or anger) and were asked what they would feel in those situations. The results indicated cross-cultural differences in the emotions tied to honor. For example, Spanish participants expressed feelings of shame far more frequently than their Dutch counterparts. Shame is an important emotion in honor cultures as it highlights that one cares about one's reputation (and hence about one's honor). Dutch and Spanish participants felt equal levels of anger in response to the vignettes (Rodriguez Mosquera, et. al., 2000). The findings of this study reveal that honor shapes emotional experiences. Yet another curious finding this study presented was the familiarity that young children have with different kinds of emotional vocabulary. The youngest Dutch participants (7 years-old) were unable to identify what shame actually was, and had difficulty in giving examples of it. Spanish participants in that age group however, had no problem with

identifying shame and giving anecdotes related to it though they did struggle with defining pride. This gives further evidence that cultural values are transmitted to children through socialization, and set the basis for honor.

Emotional reactions to insults were further studied in an experiment conducted on male Dutch train passengers (IJzerman, van Dijk, & Gallucci, 2007). A confederate, verbally assaulted the participants, and also bumped participants during their train ride. This study sought to further develop an understanding of how affronts to honor can affect one's emotional experience and actions. To do this, they followed up with participants after they were bumped and first asked about their adherence to honor norms, following which they presented them with a face-rating task where they were asked to indicate which emotion (of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise or disgust) was expressed in a series of photographs, and how intense those emotions were. Most participants correctly identified the emotion in the photographs they were presented, and those who were insulted in their conditions and indicated stronger adherence to honor norms perceived more intense anger. Participants with a stronger adherence to honor norms felt angrier, less joy, less fear and less resigned following the incident. The researchers concluded that participants who value honor more may perceive situations in which they receive an affront to be more unexpected, unpleasant, and obstructive of their goals which would lead their evaluation of both that circumstance as well as any other that would follow with an amplified sense of negativity (IJzerman, van Dijk, & Gallucci, 2007).

Collective and Family Honor

Collective honor refers to honor that is shared by a group. In Mediterranean cultures, the family is a group of individuals that have a common identity.

Anthropological literature on honor has identified the family as the group that one essentially shares honor with most strongly (see Peristiany, 1966; Pitt-Rivers, 1966).

A more specific form of collective honor, family honor, is how others perceive a family's value and status (Rodriguez Mosquera et. al., 2002b). Honor then is something that is both personal, and shared with one's family. As a consequence, personal honor becomes interdependent with family honor.

The influences of family honor are particularly observable when the family members of Pakistani and European-American individuals are insulted in an experimental design (Rodriguez Mosquera, Tan, & Saleem, 2013). In the first portion of the study, students were asked to narrate experiences of family members being insulted. Pakistani participants valued family honor more, and felt more intense negative emotions in response to insults to the family. In a second study, the target of insult was manipulated, and participants were asked to respond to an insult to their parents, or to an insult to themselves. Pakistani participants demonstrated that a provocation directed towards their family was taken as a personal attack. They valued the self and their family equally, and thus felt an insult towards the family very deeply. European-American participants demonstrated that they valued the self more than family (Rodriguez Mosquera, et. al., 2013). This study shows the importance of family honor for self-concept and social relations.

Emphasis on family honor also posits as explanatory reason for cross-cultural differences in reactions to insult, in this case, aggression. Researchers sought to find a connection between family honor and aggression in a study comparing Dutch, Turkish, and Dutch-Turkish students, thus comparing a non-honor culture, an honor culture, and an intermediary (respectively) (van Osch, Breugelmans, Zeelenberg, & Boluk, 2013). Participants were first presented with a scenario in which someone in their family was insulted and they were asked if they would act aggressively in response. Masculine honor in psychology is defined and measured as it was in anthropology, where there is a focus on strength and protection (Abu-Lughod, 1986; Gilmore, 1987; Pitt-Rivers, 1966). Results of the study demonstrate that Turkish students reported wanting to display more aggression in response to an insult, and that Dutch-Turkish students wanted to display aggression more than the Dutch students, but less than the Turkish. This suggests that the cultural context from which the students were coming from thoroughly influenced their choices. If cultural context were not a factor, then Turkish-Dutch students would have responded more like the Turkish sample. Because they were currently residing in the Netherlands, Dutch culture affected them in a way that influenced their reactions to insult. Most importantly, results showed that the defense of family honor was an important motivation for those participants who reported wanting to use aggression most in response to insults (van Osch et. al., 2013).

Masculine and Feminine Honor

Masculine and feminine honor define attributes that are desirable for the preservation of men and women's honor. These are gender-specific honor codes that develop based off of societal expectations of specific gender roles. For example, in the Mediterranean, masculine honor is centralized around virility and a reputation of toughness. Feminine honor is based upon virginity before marriage, decorum, and conforming to authority in one's family (Rodriguez Mosquera et. al., 2002b). A variety of research has been done in psychology exploring masculine and feminine honor codes cross-culturally.

A series of studies on Southern white men in the United States explored gendered notions of honor, focusing on masculine honor. In the first of these, a confederate bumped into Northern and Southern students and insulted them verbally (Cohen, Nisbett, Bowdle, & Schwarz, 1996). They were then set up in a "chicken" game where they were meant to try to establish their toughness for status and strategic advancement by charging at the other confederate and seeing who would "chicken out" or give way to the confederate. Of the participants, Southerners were more likely to think their masculine reputation was insulted by the confederate, were more upset and stressed⁸, were more physiologically primed for aggression⁹, more cognitively primed for aggression and more likely to engage in aggressive and dominant behavior, demonstrated through their engagement in the "chicken" game (Cohen, et. al., 1996). This study sought to highlight how concern for one's masculine honor

⁸ As shown by a rise in cortisol levels, for more details see Cohen, et. al. (1996).

⁹ As shown by a rise in testosterone levels, for more details see Cohen, et. al. (1996).

could lead for seemingly insignificant altercations to provoke more serious action.

Research on aggression has extended beyond examining potential future aggression, and has burgeoned into exploring how previous violent acts are accepted and perpetuated by institutions. Employers across the United States were sent letters from fake applicants who had allegedly killed someone in an honor-related conflict (Cohen & Nisbett, 1997). Southern and Western employers were far more likely to respond sympathetically to the applicant than Northern employers. As a follow-up, newspapers around the country were sent facts for a fabricated story about a stabbing in response to a family insult. Southern and Western reporters wrote articles that justified the actions of the perpetrator more than Northern reporters were (Cohen & Nisbett, 1997). The institutionalization of honor norms in public practice also leads to the development of cultural scripts that normalize certain behaviors implicitly in society.

Adherence to masculine honor codes that are related to female fidelity is one such cultural script. A 2003 study by Vandello and Cohen finds support that female infidelity can be harmful to masculine honor, especially in honor cultures. They establish that reputation that has been tarnished can be regained through acts of violence, and that women are considered more honorable if they remain loyal to their male partners when they act violently out of jealousy. The first portion of the study asked participants from Brazil (an honor culture) and the United States to respond to vignettes that involved infidelity and jealousy induced violence. The second portion

of the study presented members of an honor culture (Southern Anglo¹⁰ and Latino participants) and members of a non-honor culture (Northern Anglo participants) to a live situation where they witnessed a confederate acting aggressively against a woman (another confederate) and subsequently interacted with her. Results of the first study indicated that participants who were part of an honor culture responded more favorably to a man who was violent in order to maintain his reputation. The second study introduced a real life situation with simulated aggression, and sought to see how participants would respond to such situations in person. They found that participants who were part of an honor culture were more likely to voice tolerance for the violence, and the perpetrators of violence treated those who permitted them to be violent more favorably (Vandello & Cohen, 2003). This study illuminates ways in which masculine honor can motivate violence in order to maintain one's sense of honor. In the quest for honor, actions are justified by their intentions. A man can be aggressive when it is in order to establish their masculine strength and honor, a phenomenon that can be seen in honor cultures in particular.¹¹

A similar response to violence can be seen in a study that first had Latino and Southern Anglo (honor cultures) participants and Northern Anglo (a non-honor culture) participants view videos where a woman described an abusive relationship she was in (Vandello, Cohen, Grandon, & Franiuk, 2009). Participants who came

¹⁰ Anglo in this case, and henceforth refers to Anglo-America, a region in the Americas that was heavily influenced by British culture and is primarily English speaking. It is distinct from Latin America, where other romance languages had a greater influence. Northern Anglo and Southern Anglo then refer to the Northern and Southern regions of the English speaking Americas respectively.

¹¹ For more research on honor, intention and violence, see Pitt-Rivers (1966) and Rodriguez Mosquera (2013).

from honor cultures favored the women who demonstrated that they remained in the relationship. Feminine honor here was reflected in the woman's loyalty and warmth. Because masculine honor has seemingly been so dependent on feminine honor, a woman's actions are often rewarded more generously when they allow for a masculine honor to exist with more ease. A woman who allows for a man to reclaim his honor when it is affronted is considered more honorable. In a follow up portion to the study, Chilean and Canadian (an honor and non-honor culture respectively) participants listened to tapes of a man describing violent interactions with his wife. Violence that was contextualized as coming from jealousy (from alleged flirting) was accepted with far more ease from the Chileans, than when the violence was unrelated to jealousy (overspending on shopping) (Vandello, et. al., 2009). These studies establish the importance of a woman to the family's honor, and emphasize that the responsibility for keeping that honor falls to the man of the household. There is a connection to female purity and familial protection that masculine honor maintains that inherently ties a man's honor and reputation to the female members of his family. It also becomes apparent that qualities in women such as self-sacrifice and suffering for the family are celebrated.

Further evidence about cultural norms that perpetuate masculine honor codes can be observed in expectations of peer advocacy of violence. Psychologists set out to explore why masculine honor related aggression persisted in the South (Vandello, Cohen, & Ransom, 2008). The first portion of the study involved questionnaires that were distributed that described an aggressive situation, and participants from three

major universities in the North and South were asked to fill out what they would do in response, and what they think their peers would do. Men rated other men as being more aggressive than they were more generally, though it was particularly Southern men who saw a greater discrepancy in their own levels of aggression compared to their peers. The second portion of the study simulated an argument between two confederates that resulted in the victim of the situation probing the participant for advice. The confederate victim interacted with the participant in one of two conditions- in an apologetic manner towards the aggressor, or in a hostile role, following which the response of the participant was recorded. There was very little variability between Northerners and Southerners who responded similarly in discouraging violence in this situation, presumably because they didn't think this was an important enough reason to react with violence. Southern participants in particular thought that peers would promote aggression, which is a prominent enough finding suggesting that individuals perceive greater levels of aggression in their peers.

While most of the studies done on gendered honor in psychology have focused on masculine honor, there are a few that have begun to explore feminine honor specifically. In a study that did a cross-cultural analysis between Spain and the Netherlands, participants were asked about their attitudes towards a variety of sex-roles (Rodriguez Mosquera, 2011). They were then asked to rank the desirability of various masculine and feminine honor attributes. The answers were then examined to see if the desirability ratings predicted attitudes towards sex-roles. While the Spanish participants exhibited a preference for gender-neutral honor attributes, both Spanish

and Dutch participants rated masculine honor attributes as more desirable for men, and feminine honor attributes more desirable for women (Rodriguez Mosquera, 2011). These findings provide support for gendered honor codes that are pan-cultural, rather than being restricted to particular geographic regions, further challenging Mediterraneanist honor studies.

Yet another study focusing on feminine honor came from psychologist Cihangir in 2012, that investigated cultural and gender honor codes between highly honor valuing cultures (Morocco and Turkey) and lower honor valuing cultures (The Netherlands). In the study, school-aged participants were first admitted to a training program through a local non-profit group that offered youth education programs empowering students against harmful traditions like honor related violence¹². The three schools at which the study was conducted each had a different ethnic majority (Moroccan, Turkish or Dutch). A pre-study survey was administered to assess gender and ethnic differences in attitudes towards honor. An identical survey was administered following the conclusion of the training program. The survey examined what social and cultural factors affected honor (like religion, parents, friends and peers etc.) and how important female and male sexual purity was for their honor. They also explored what forms of violence were considered related to honor, and if

¹²Honor related violence here could mean domestic violence in order to maintain a man's honor, it can also relate to honor killings. Honor killings are a popular topic when it comes to the study of honor, as it is a form of violence that would otherwise be considered socially unacceptable but has historically taken place in honor cultures around the world to varying degrees. There is a great amount of cultural and linguistic baggage that honor killing brings to a conversation, and thus it has been consciously omitted from the present study as a direct conversation point in order to deconstruct how honor can and does exist without the preconceived notions that honor killings will often confer about honor. For more background, visit Jafri, 2008 for further reading.

they would endorse violence if someone challenged their family honor. Turkish and Moroccan students saw their ethnic and religious identity as primary determinants for their honor, unlike the Dutch students. Cross-culturally however, the study indicated that male students saw culture, parents, friends and peers as determining their concept of honor, differently from the female students. The study also revealed that male participants from cultures that value honor see the purity of female family members as important to their own honor, but did not see the purity of male family members as having the same affect. However, women from cultures that value honor saw the purity of male family members as important to honor. Dutch men and women displayed no significant differences in roles of male and female purity in honor, likely because cultures like the Netherlands don't depend on sexual purity in order to achieve honor. This study is very important in that it indicates a difference in opinion about the role of both male and female purity in honor. The additional educational component that was a part of this study also identified social campaigns and conversation as effective tools through which to have candid conversations about honor.

OVERVIEW OF PRESENT STUDY

The present study explored the experience of feminine honor in individuals of South Asian descent. Participants were asked to define honor, describe honorable women, and to give anecdotes of “good” and “bad” experiences with honor a woman they know had. Research was conducted among men and women of South Asian descent from across the United States, with a majority concentrated in the Northeast.

South Asian cultures, which in this circumstance are encompassing of all the countries located in the general subcontinent including: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (United Nations) are considered honor-oriented cultures where emphasis on honor is greater than in other places (like North America, and Northern Europe) (Baroja, 1966; Fischer, Manstead, & Rodriguez Mosquera, 1999; Rodriguez Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2000). To date there is a lack of systematic research on honor among South Asians living in the United States (for an exception, please see studies on family honor among Pakistani-Americans by Rodriguez Mosquera, et.al., 2013). Furthermore, research on feminine honor in psychology is also scarce (for exceptions see Rodriguez Mosquera et. al., 2002a; Rodriguez Mosquera 2011). Thus the present study aims to contribute to the literature on honor in two important ways. First, the present study collected data from an underrepresented population in research on honor. Second, the present study focuses on the understudied topic of feminine honor.

The study of feminine honor as it is done in the present study becomes of

monumental importance when taking into consideration the rates at which South Asian women are emerging in American public media. In more contemporary times in particular, there has been a spotlight directed toward women's issues, catalyzed by high-profile events like the 2012 gang rape of a 23 year old woman in Mumbai, India, the 2012 assassination attempt of young Pakistani student and activist Malala Yousufzai and the rise to Hollywood acclaim of writer, producer and actress Mindy Kaling among others. With such an intensive focus on South Asian women on an international scope, it is incredibly timely to examine feminine honor and its implications for people of South Asian descent. Honor plays such a major roles for individuals from honor cultures, that though certain actions may not claim to be related to honor, they often have more discreet and implicit connections to honor due to cultural context.

Hypotheses

Our study begins by asking participants to define honor. We hypothesize that men and women will respond similarly when defining the qualities that make up honor, indicating a similar understanding of what the root meaning of honor is, derived from the findings of Abu-Lughod (1986). We think that there will be an abundance of references to moral behavior and societal recognition and distinction due to the consistent references made to social codes of conduct in both anthropology and psychology research (Abu-Lughod, 1986; Baroja, 1966; Brandes, 1987; Gilmore, 1987; Giovannini, 1986; Peristiany, 1966; Pitt-Rivers, 1966, Stewart, 1994). We then

ask participants to give examples of “good” and “bad” experiences with honor that women they know have had. We also hypothesize that when describing good and bad incidents regarding honor in people they know that answers will also generally align. Considering we predict definitions will be the same, we will assume that “good” and “bad” would be based off of similar definitions, and thus result in similar narratives. We predicted the greatest disparity in male responses versus female responses in relation to descriptions of qualities that define famous women that have honor, and familiar women who have honor. This would be demonstrated through questions we propose that ask for examples of women with honor, both famous and family members. We foresee that for men, women in the public sphere who would be selected as “famous women with honor” by them will have demonstrated greater amounts of professional success, societal distinction than their “family women with honor” counterparts who we foresee will exhibit greater amounts of moral based behaviors. We also foresee that for men, women would be considered honorable for their commitment to their family. We predict these responses because men would have a more limited view of women’s roles as outgroup members, whereas women would be able to detect a greater depth of roles that women can take on due to their insight as ingroup members.

METHODS

Participants

One hundred and three South Asian (57 women, 35 men, 1 other, 10 unidentified) individuals participated in the study. All participants self-identified as South Asian, and demonstrated at least one parent's ethnic ties to South Asia in order to qualify. South Asia for the purposes of this study was a self-identifying group, with all participants adhering to the regional guidelines as set forward by the United Nations. Participants were from across the United States, with a greater concentration in the Northeast, Midwest and South. Participants were recruited through the use of social networks. The survey was first distributed in the South Asian student group at Wesleyan University called Shakti, where students were asked to participate through the group's online listserv. Students were then requested to pass the survey on to other eligible participants. The survey was disseminated through the social networks of those in the Wesleyan community who took the survey. Participants were between the ages of 18 and 35, the average age of participants was 22.25. Three participants were from outside the United States, currently residing in South Asian countries. Their narratives were included in the proceeding analyses of the study because their responses did not differ in content from those which were submitted by those in the United States.

Measures

Participants were asked to answer five longer open-ended questions about

honor. They were first asked to define honor (e.g. *'What does honor mean to you?'*). This was to establish a basic understanding of how the participants defined honor. Following that question, in a randomized order, participants were asked to tell us about women they believed to have honor, and to describe what justification they had for picking them. In one question, participants were asked to describe famous women they thought had honor (e.g. *'Think of a famous woman who has honor, who is she and describe why you picked her'*), and in the other question, were asked to describe female family members they thought had honor (e.g. *'Think of a woman in your family who has honor, who is she and describe why you picked her'*). These questions were asked in order to develop a better idea of how a person's social context can influence the attributes of honor ascribed to them. We also asked participants to describe a positive and negative experience a woman they knew had had with honor (e.g. *'Think of a good experience with honor a woman you know had. Please tell us what happened'* and *'Think of a bad experience with honor a woman you know had. Please tell us what happened'*). These questions were asked in order to characterize specific incidents of feminine honor, both positive and negative to extract real life applications of feminine honor. These questions were also randomized. At the conclusion of the survey, they were asked for basic sociodemographic measures including their age, parent's birthplace, sex, religious identification and current occupation.¹³

¹³ Participants also listed colors that they associate with honor. This question was simply for exploratory reasons, to surmise if there are immediate connections that participants make between colors and honor. It was created in response to the research of Abu-Lughod (1986) in which she finds that the color of women's garb in her field site of the 'Awlad Ali tribe have different meanings. No

Procedure

Participants took part in the study by filling out an online survey hosted by the data collection program Qualtrics. All participants included consented to participate, and completed the survey¹⁴ in order to be considered in the study. Of the one hundred three surveys completed for the study, those participants who disclosed their biological sex as other¹⁵, or declined to answer that question¹⁶ were excluded from any future analysis. No financial compensation was given to participants for their participation.

findings were presented because the findings were inconclusive and would need to be researched in greater depth. Please see Abu-Lughod (1986) for more information.

¹⁴ Completion of the survey was determined with participants who answered a minimum of 75% of the open ended questions.

¹⁵ Only one participant answered their sex as other.

¹⁶ Ten participants declined to answer their sex.

RESULTS

Content Analyses of Narratives

Content analysis was conducted in order to extract meaningful information from the narratives participants wrote in response to the survey's open-ended questions. Narratives were content analyzed by three coders, one of whom was a blind coder (an individual with a background in psychology but no previous knowledge of the nature of the project or familiarity with the subject of honor). The first coder, a non-blind coder (an individual who has both a background in psychology and previous knowledge of honor) read through narratives and created response categories by identifying recurring themes between participants' narratives, and continued this process for each question. Coders were blind to participant sex. The second coder, a blind coder read through the narratives and underwent the same process. The third coder, a non-blind coder repeated the process yet again. Thus, each coder created a coding system with response categories. Each coder content analyzed participants' narratives following the same general procedure: each narrative (for each individual question for each participant) was coded statement by statement. Statements that shared the same themes from narrative to narrative were combined to form a category (Smith, 2000). Coders used a bottom-up model in which they went through each narrative for each question statement by statement and used the details in the responses themselves to create larger response categories under which they could be categorized. Each coder created their own coding system. Next, the three

coding systems that were created by the coders were compared. Less than 5% of differences in response categories emerged between the three coding systems. These differences were discussed and resolved by the coders. Subsequently, a final coding system was created by integrating all three coding systems. Following this, the first coder went through the entire set of narratives, coding with the final response categories and calculated frequencies for each.

To better illustrate these categories, take for example, when a participant defined honor as ‘to make my parents proud.’ This response was coded as being *personal relationship based* due to its direct connection to those close to the participant’s life. Accordingly, other statements that defined close personal relationships were coded in this category. Another example, in which a participant describes their mother as being honorable she is portrayed as “a great mother, [who] also balance[es] her work at home along with being a physician’ a response which can be deconstructed into two distinct statements. The first statement was coded as *personal relationship based* due to the participant’s emphasis on her role at home and its influence on the family while the second was coded as *professional life based* because of their mention of her balancing her professional life along with her personal life well. Because responses were coded statement by statement, the frequency of reported themes does not match the number of participants in each category. Each statement was coded only once. Table 1 reports observed frequencies of responses in each of the five aforementioned categories per question and biological sex.

The content analysis revealed five derived response categories. The first of these was *morality based*, in which responses contained allusions to morality based qualities including but not limited to honesty, respect, and charity. Responses that were coded in this category either mentioned morality as a general practice, or mentioned individual qualities that involve ethical decisions. The second was *professional life based*, in which responses discussed a dedication to one's academic or professional success, and a commitment to balancing a professional life with other personal aspects of one's life. Responses that were coded in this category directly mentioned the work ethic and development of skill that comes through a commitment to an academic or professional field. The third was *social status based* in which responses discussed societal distinctions, adherence to social codes of conduct, and reputation. Responses that were coded in this category included a wide range of social distinctions, including awards and acknowledgements of one's personal or professional successes, and also addressed one's public image. The fourth was *personal relationship based* in which participants mentioned things related to a personal relationship such as family, marriage or more intimate relations. Responses that were coded in this category referred to specific qualities that are observed in close personal relationships like when dealing with close family members or a significant other like supporting one's family, or getting married. Responses mentioning domestic violence and abuse were also incorporated in this category. The fifth and final category created was *autonomy based* in which responses hinted at qualities of independence and self-sufficiency. Responses that were coded in this

category mention being true to one’s self, to be dedicated to one’s own self, and to display qualities like responsibility and maturity¹⁷.

Table 1
Categorical Frequencies of Honor Descriptors

		Morality- Based Qualities		Professional Life Based Qualities		Social Status Based Qualities		Personal Relationship Based Qualities		Autonomy Based Qualities		Total	Total %
		Observed	Observed %	Observed	Observed %	Observed	Observed %	Observed	Observed %	Observed	Observed %		
Q1. What does honor mean to you?	Male	33	45.8	0	0	12	16.7	4	5.56	23	31.9	72	100
	Female	64	44.1	2	1.38	46	31.7	8	5.52	25	17.2	145	100
	Total	97		2		58		12		48		217	
Q2. Describe a famous woman with honor.	Male	27	38	5	7.04	10	14.1	4	5.63	25	35.2	71	100
	Female	48	35.6	4	2.96	32	23.7	13	9.63	38	28.2	135	100
	Total	75		9		42		17		63		206	
Q3. Describe a woman in family with honor.	Male	28	35.4	7	8.86	7	8.86	13	16.5	24	30.4	79	100
	Female	57	41	5	3.6	16	11.5	27	19.4	34	24.5	139	100
	Total	85		12		23		40		58		218	
Q4. Describe a good experience with honor a woman you know had.	Male	22	43.1	5	9.8	9	17.7	5	9.8	10	19.6	51	100
	Female	21	23.1	17	18.7	24	26.4	18	19.8	11	12.1	91	100
	Total	43		22		33		23		21		142	
Q5. Describe a bad experience with honor a woman you know had.	Male	19	42.2	0	0	14	31.1	11	24.4	1	2.22	45	100
	Female	35	47.3	0	0	10	13.5	27	36.5	2	2.7	74	100
	Total	54		0		24		38		3		119	

An overview of Table 1 shows that from question to question, there is a consistent presence of morality as a topic interrelated with honor. Nearly half of both male and female participants in the study noted morality based qualities as the defining features of what honor means to them. There is also a fascinating relationship between questions posed in similar manners, such as between Questions

¹⁷ A more detailed breakdown of the individual statements used to determine these groups can be found in Appendix A.

2 and 3 which explored descriptors of women with honor, and between Questions 4 and 5 which explored positive and negative experiences with honor. When looking at the question regarding famous women who have honor, far more were described with qualities that related to their social status by both male and female participants compared to the question about female family members. Female family members of participants were much more likely to be described as honorable due to qualities that are related to how they maintain personal relationships. There is also a pronounced leap in the acknowledgement of professional life based qualities when female participants described good experiences with honor than in any other question.

The data produced in Table 1 is intriguing and contains extensive amounts of information that can be used to better understand feminine honor in South Asian American communities. In order to extract as much information as it has to offer, it is important to focus on particular aspects of the data that appear to be the most striking. In this case, there are two types of narratives that appear repeatedly. The first is morality-based qualities. In order to better understand the relationship between feminine honor and morality, we will explore the binary of morality based statements versus non-morality based statements. The second is group-based qualities. Though this is not one of the greater response categories that were created, so much emphasis has been put on societal influences on honor in literature (Abu-Lughod, 1986; Baroja, 1966; Brandes, 1987; Gilmore, 1987; Giovannini, 1986; Peristiany, 1966; Pitt-Rivers, 1966, Stewart, 1994) that a more thorough examination of group-based statements versus individualized statements would be very informative and would help draw

connections to previous research on honor.

Morality Based and Non-Morality Based Statements

Table 2
Morality Based Statements Compared to Non-Morality Based Statements

		Morality Based Statements			Non-Morality Based Statements			Total	Total %	χ^2	df	p
		Expected	Observed	Observed %	Expected	Observed	Observed %					
Q1. What does honor mean to you?	Male	32.2	33	45.8	39.8	39	54.2	0.81	100	0.07	1	0.81
	Female	64.8	64	44.1	80.2	81	55.9	145	100			
	Total		97		120			217				
Q2. Describe a famous woman with honor.	Male	25.9	27	38	45.2	44	62	0.73	100	0.13	1	0.13
	Female	49.2	48	35.6	85.9	87	64.4	135	100			
	Total		75		131			206				
Q3. Describe a woman in family with honor.	Male	30.8	28	35.4	48.2	51	64.6	0.42	100	0.64	1	0.42
	Female	54.2	57	41	84.8	82	59	139	100			
	Total		85		133			218				
Q4. Describe a good experience with honor a woman you know had.	Male	15.4	22	43.1	35.6	29	56.9	0.01	100	6.23	1	0.01
	Female	27.6	21	23.1	63.4	70	76.9	91	100			
	Total		43		99			142				
Q5. Describe a bad experience with honor a woman you know had	Male	20.4	19	42.2	24.6	26	57.8	0.59	100	0.29	1	0.59
	Female	33.6	35	47.3	40.4	39	52.7	74	100			
	Total		54		65			119				

The first coder created two higher order response categories: morality based statements, and non-morality based statements. The morality based statement frequencies were the same as those seen in Table 1, while the other non-morality based group frequencies are a summation of the other four response categories from the first round of coding: professional life based, social status based, personal

relationship based and autonomy based¹⁸. The frequencies per question can be seen in Table 2 as well as the results of chi square tests that were conducted, degrees of freedom and *p* values calculated for each question in order to explore how morality and non-morality and the participants' sex are related.

There is no statistical significance between sex and morality based qualities when defining honor nor is there one when describing qualities in famous women or relatives (see Table 2) but there is a statistically significant relationship between sex and the qualities that describe a good experience with honor (see Table 2). There is no statistical significance when looking at descriptions of bad experiences with honor (see Table 2).

The statistical significant result for the question describing a good experience with honor a woman they know had suggests that interpretations of what is a good experience with honor is gendered. When looking at morality versus non-morality based qualities as essential to the understanding of honor, there is an inconsistency in responses between male and female participants. Male participants place far more importance on morality as a quality which explains positive experiences with honor than female participants. Far greater quantities of female participants' responses indicate non-morality based statements as being related to positive experiences with honor. This result is important because it introduces that the readings of situations vary between men and women. It suggests that a man is less likely to recognize a good experience with honor a woman he knows had that does not involve morality in

¹⁸ A more detailed breakdown of the individual statements used to determine these groups can be found in Appendix B.

any way as being a positive experience. It also suggests that a woman is less likely to perceive good experiences with honor a woman she knows had that involves morality as being positive.

Group Based and Individualized Statements

Table 3
Group Based Statements Compared to Individualized Statements

		Group Based Statements			Individualized Statements			Total	Total %	χ^2	df	p
		Expected	Observed	Observed %	Expected	Observed	Observed %					
Q1. What does honor mean to you?	Male	29.9	26	36.1	42.1	1.28	63.9	0.26	100	1.28	1	0.26
	Female	60.1	64	44.1	84.9	81	55.9	145	100			
	Total	90			127			217				
Q2. Describe a famous woman with honor.	Male	44.5	43	60.6	26.5	0.2	39.4	0.66	100	0.2	1	0.66
	Female	84.5	86	63.7	50.5	49	36.3	135	100			
	Total	129			77			206				
Q3. Describe a woman in your family with honor.	Male	51.1	49	62	27.9	0.37	38	0.54	100	0.37	1	0.54
	Female	89.9	92	66.2	49.1	47	33.8	139	100			
	Total	141			77			218				
Q4. Describe a good experience with honor a woman you know had.	Male	35.6	28	54.9	15.4	8.28	45.1	0	100	8.28	1	0.004
	Female	63.4	71	78	27.6	20	22	91	100			
	Total	99			43			142				
Q5. Describe a bad experience with honor you know had.	Male	33.7	35	77.8	11.3	0.34	22.2	0.56	100	0.34	1	0.56
	Female	55.3	54	73	18.7	20	27	74	100			
	Total	89			30			119				

The first coder created two higher order response categories: group based statements, and individualized statements. The group based statement frequencies are those that relate to response categories that are inherently dependent on others to cultivate, witness, or acknowledge. Some of those included receiving societal distinction or awards, the development of a reputation, and nurturing familial

relations. The individualized qualities are those that can be developed, and expressed on one's own. Some of those include maturity, religious practice, and intelligence¹⁹. The frequencies per question can be seen in Table 3 as well as the results of chi square tests that were conducted, degrees of freedom and p values calculated for each question in order to explore how group and individualized statements are related to the participant's sex.

There is no statistical significance between sex and group based or individualized qualities when defining honor nor is there one when describing qualities in famous women or relatives (see Table 3), but there is a statistically significant relationship between sex and the qualities that describe a good experience with honor (see Table 3).

The statistical significance when describing a good experience with honor a woman they know had suggests that interpretations of what is a good experience with honor is gendered. When looking at group based versus individualized qualities as essential to the understanding of honor, there is an inconsistency in responses between male and female participants. Male participants place far more importance on individualization as a quality which explains positive experiences with honor a woman they know had than female participants. Far greater quantities of female participants' responses indicate group based qualities as explanations for positive experiences with honor. This result is important because it introduces that the reading of situations drastically between men and women. It suggests that a man is less likely

¹⁹ A more detailed breakdown of the individual statements used to determine these groups can be found in Appendix C.

to recognize a good experience with honor a woman they know had that does not involve individuality in any way as being a positive experience, while a woman is more likely to perceive good experiences with honor a woman they know had that involve group based qualities as being positive. Take for example, a man is more likely to identify exhibiting a great deal of intelligence as honorable, while a woman would be more likely to identify a woman she knows who stopped continuing her education in order to take care of her family as honorable.

Descriptions of bad experiences with honor suggests that there is a less pronounced relationship between bad experiences with honor and group versus individualized qualities, and though there isn't a statistical significance to these results, there is an indication towards a relation.

DISCUSSION

The goal of the present study was to explore the meaning of feminine honor in South Asian communities living in the United States. Feminine honor is a generally understudied topic, and this study sought to add to the literature on the topic. This was done through the administration of a survey which explored the meaning of feminine honor through examples of individuals who exhibited honor, as well as through narratives of events in which honor was experienced. Male and female participants reported morality equally as a defining quality to honor, a finding which aligns with previous research on honor (see e.g. Rodriguez Mosquera 2011, 2013). However, male participants also emphasized autonomy based qualities while female participants placed more emphasis on social status based qualities. A possible explanation for these gender differences is the emphasis of these qualities in traditional gendered social roles. American culture emphasizes a heteronormative nuclear family in which the father is typically the primary breadwinner, and the mother is the homemaker. The father's breadwinner role is one which emphasizes autonomy, and this image of expected behaviors for men could be the influencing factor that produced the results of this study. Though contemporary families are slowly shifting from this norm, the remnants of this standard have left a mark in the ways in which men and women expect they should act. The breadwinner/homemaker model leads for men to place greater levels of importance on being the sole provider for their family, and leads for women to see their place in cultivating the family at

home and to use their role as homemaker and mother to best enhance the lives of their family.

Yet another explanation that may account for this difference is a growing feminist movement in America, which recognizes the limitations that traditional gender roles have set on women, and the greater quantity of responses indicating a social status based quality in defining honor could be the result of a community that is beginning to challenge the expectations that have traditionally been socially demanded of it, and exhibit those things which have as of yet been denied to them. A similar quality of responses was seen in Cihangir's 2012 study in the Netherlands, where the Moroccan and Turkish male and female participants espoused very different ideas of the role male purity and female purity have in honor. Both that study and these results support that gendered aspects of honor are evolving.

A similar trend can be seen in the narratives describing "good" experiences with honor that women that the participants knew had. Women placed more emphasis on social status based qualities that were the basis for a good experience (i.e. a woman getting recognized for her hard work at her job) (see Table 1 and Table 2). Men on the other hand, placed far greater emphasis on morality based qualities as the basis for a good experience (i.e. a woman is honest with her friends) (see Table 1 and Table 2). Women have traditionally (in particular in the United States) not had equal status or opportunities as men, and have often been restricted within certain social roles with designated behavioral expectations. These roles are those that encompass more nurturing and compassionate traits, like homemaking, childcare and education.

There were not chances to rise to leadership positions, and acting outside of those social roles was discouraged. In more recent times, this has been changing however, and though the social status of men and women is not equivalent by any means, there are movements that have led women to enter social roles that have otherwise been off limits to them. It is because of this that women who are able to gain recognition and rise to success publically were reported more frequently as good experiences with honor. These women represent for the female participants of the study individuals who were able to break the mold and establish a different standards by which to be recognized. It is possible that men as out-group²⁰ members were less cognizant of this relationship between traditional gender roles, and new developing roles which women as in-group²¹ members are more conscious of. It would also explain why male responses about good experiences with honor included morality based statements just as much as it did in their definition of honor.

Yet another possibility, is that good experiences with women and honor are just not a topic of conversation, and so this question compelled people to think about something they hadn't ever considered- even some of the participants prefaced their answers with "wow I haven't thought about this before." This gives evidence that it's a question that people don't often consider, especially compared to some of the other discussion points that arose from the questions of the survey that was offered. It appears that other answers that may be more trained, or more rehearsed because those conversations exist already both culturally and throughout American society, This

²⁰ A social group with which an individual does not identify.

²¹ A social group with which an individual identifies.

survey, though made for a new conversation where good experiences with honor and women are the focus. Starting from Peristiany's research where women were considered tied to a man's shame (1966), to Cohen's research on masculine honor and violence against women (Cohen et. al., 1996, 1997), there are few instances where positive representations of feminine honor have been able to prosper and tell their stories. Positive feminine honor is definitely something interesting to consider for future study because of its apparent absence from conversation about honor.

Biculturalism

One characteristic of the sample of individuals who participated in this study is important in developing an understanding of their responses- the acknowledgement that the majority of the participants have a bicultural background coming into this study. Even though the majority of participants had both parents who were ethnically South Asia, most of them²² were currently located in the United States, and roughly half of them were born in the United States as well. With the knowledge that South Asian cultural ideals differs greatly from that which exists in the United States, it is curious to see such consistent answers for the most part amongst those involved in the study. Knowing that participants with only one South Asian parent, who were born and grew up in the United States and perhaps had varying levels exposure to South Asian culture were answering similarly to those who only located to the United States more recently and have both parents of South Asian descent presents the idea that perhaps the moderating affects of biculturalism should be explored in greater depth. In the van Osch study (2013) Dutch, Turkish and Dutch-Turkish students gave evidence to the affects of cultural priming for bicultural people in that the primary cultural context that one is coming from will have an overwhelming influence on how the social world is perceived. This study can only speak for the individuals of South Asian descent in America who participated, but it would be interesting to see how South Asian participants in South Asia, and non-South Asian participants in America would respond to the same questions along with the sample we had.

²² All but three participants were currently located in the United States.

Poetry and Visual Commentary of Honor

Abu-Lughod brings forward an interesting concept in relation to honor when in her field site with the Bedouin tribe the 'Awlad Ali (1986). She found in her research that men and women were both more compliant and responsive to her interviews about honor when they responded in the form of poetry, versus when they responded more candidly in their own words. Keeping in mind the methodological differences of the current study which was done through an online survey and that which Abu-Lughod conducted, which was an in depth ethnography where she resided with the community for a year, there are some similarities that can be found in how people responded, and how the Awlad Ali gave a physical representation of those same qualities. Social performance, as mentioned earlier is essential to honor more generally, but especially to feminine honor because societal standards for women have globally been different. The expression of societal values through poetry enabled the 'Awlad Ali to discuss honor without the pressures of social expectations and actual execution of those ideals because there was no actual link between the poetry and their own actions, though it may accurately display their sentiment. The internet in the case of the current study served the same purpose, allowing for participants to respond to the questions as they wished without thinking of the social implications of what they wanted to say. Simply looking at the question that asked them to define honor versus the representation of good experiences with honor, shows that while men and women's definitions of honor may share foundations, they have different perspectives on how people act upon those definitions.

The poetry elicited from the 'Awlad Ali also kindles an intrigue towards the creative metaphorical level of understanding honor. The community signified honor in ways beyond poetry, in the manner in which women in the community dressed. Women who were married, and thereby considered honorable in that cultural context began to wear red belts to signify this social status (1986). It was this passage that inspired the question in the survey as to what colors are associated with honor. Color seemed like such a culturally significant reference to honor in the Bedouin tribe, it seemed worth exploration in the South Asian context. People responded with a surprising variety of responses, and though this data doesn't currently indicate any connections to honor theories, it is something that could be considered for future study. The great propensity and enthusiasm with which people responded indicate that there is a great enthusiasm and level of consciousness about the interaction of colors and status, like honor, that would make for a fascinating research topic.

Female Falcons: What is Feminine Honor?

What has emerged from the narratives that the participants in this study offered is that feminine honor is less about a definition that changes, but more so that it is a public execution of ideals. Feminine honor exists in a framework where men and women both share understandings of honor, and also demonstrate very clear differences.

In her 1986 ethnography, Abu-Lughod presented the symbol that contained the most significance in the 'Awlad Ali tribe- the falcon. That bird stood for everything that an honorable man would want: wisdom, dedication and strength. They are cherished creatures in society due to these humanistic personality traits that are attributed to them, and in many ways, they are able to inspire the male members of the 'Awlad Ali society to emulate them.

The findings in this study suggest that understandings of feminine honor very well include the same qualities to varying degrees. In the South Asian American context, a woman is revered and honored for her display of an assortment of qualities from her intelligence, to her moral standing, to her professional achievement and her ways of caring for her family. Time and time again, research on honor emphasizes the dynamic definition of honor, and the multidimensionality of honorable figures. Yet again, these results point to the same, but this time it is with confidence that a study about feminine honor, by men and women of South Asian descent allows for this underrepresented community to be heard, and represented in research.

Female falcons do in fact exist.

Limitations and Further Study

The first and perhaps most noticeable limitation of the current study is the sample size. While the participants who were included in this study gave vivid and thorough vignettes to analyze, more validity could be derived from having a greater depth of participants. Recruitment methods were a challenge, because there just aren't set South Asian networks that can be utilized in order to get this survey out to a wide audience. Perhaps in the future if such networks have been developed, or there are other collaborators to the study, it would benefit greatly.

In order to explore the role that biculturalism may have played in the responses participants offered, as suggested earlier, it may be helpful to conduct the same study in South Asia, and in the United States, excluding those who generally fit under both of those categories. This would enable the role of biculturalism as a moderator in the understanding of any of the questions to become more evident.

A further study would be required to examine masculine honor as well. Though it is not possible to observe thought processes of participants, it would be curious to see especially for male participants if there was a difference in response due to the different thought processes it takes to think about a situation from a gendered perspective, especially if the questions apply to an outgroup. To see female responses to what masculine honor is and to compare them to what male participants may think would also be fascinating.

It would additionally be interesting to limit future participants to selecting only famous women of South Asian descent who demonstrate honor. Though the

current pool of responses did mention a variety of both South Asian and non-South Asian women (from Hillary Clinton, to Beyoncé, to Mother Teresa), it would be interesting if there is a difference beyond sex that is more about ethnicity and social stature that influences the sorts of qualities that define honor. In this responses received for this study, numerous individuals mentioned the likes of Malala Yousufzai, the young education activist from Pakistan and Lakshmibai, the Indian mutiny leader Queen of Jhansi, stories of both which elicit similar ideals of self-sacrifice and devotion to the betterment of the greater good. It would be interesting to see if restricted to only South Asian women, if the definition of honor would widen or narrow.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, further study on positive feminine honor seems absolutely necessary due to the fascinating results of this study, and the clear lack of consciousness of positive female honor in participants.

CONCLUSION

Feminine honor has been studied in a multitude of cultures, but has yet been studied in South Asian culture. There has also been a lack of focus on feminine honor, specifically in psychology research. The current study sought to define feminine honor more broadly and gain insight on the roles that biological sex has on perceptions of feminine honor. What we found was that more generally honor is defined similarly by both men and women, but there are clear distinctions when it comes to qualities that describe individuals with honor, and to describe situations involving honor. Particularly when it comes to describing positive feminine honor, there is a clear lack of understanding, and general levels of discourse which should be pursued further.

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Q.1 What does Honor Mean to You?	Q.2 Describe a famous woman with honor.	Q. 3 Describe a woman in your family with honor.	Q. 4 Describe a good experience with honor a woman you know has had.	Q. 5 Describe a bad experience with honor a woman you know has had.	Coding Category
Morality Based	Morality Based	Morality Based	Morality Based	Morality Based	Social Justice Selflessness Chastity Lack of Chastity Religious Practice Morality Respect Disrespect Honesty Dishonesty Pride Shame Avoid Shame Humility Compassion
Professional Life Based	Professional Life Based	Professional Life Based	Professional Life Based	Professional Life Based	Professional Disruption Dedication (Professional/Academic) Balance Talent
Social Status Based	Social Status Based	Social Status Based	Social Status Based	Social Status Based	Societal Distinction (Moral) Societal Distinction (Professional/Academic) Lack of Societal Distinction (Professional/Academic/Personal) Societal Distinction (Family) Adherence to Code of Conduct (Societal) Reputation (Positive) Reputation (Negative) Decorum Gender Relations Defense
Personal Relationship Based	Personal Relationship Based	Personal Relationship Based	Personal Relationship Based	Personal Relationship Based	Familial Distinction Familial Support Male Relational Personal Relationship Disruption Marriage (Unwillful) Marriage *(Willful, Agreement) Marriage (Willful, Disagreement) Abuse Bestow Honor
Autonomy Based	Autonomy Based	Autonomy Based	Autonomy Based	Autonomy Based	Dedication (Personal) Adherence to Code of Conduct (Self) Importance Beauty Intelligence Personable Silence Responsibility Maturity Autonomy

Appendix B:

Q. 1 What does honor mean to you?	Q. 2 Describe a famous woman with honor.	Q. 3 Describe a woman in your family with honor.	Q. 4 Describe a good experience with honor a woman you know has had.	Q. 5 Describe a bad experience with honor a woman you know has had.	Coding Category
Morality Based Qualities	Morality Based Qualities	Morality Based Qualities	Morality Based Qualities	Morality Based Qualities	Social Justice Selflessness Chastity Lack of Chastity Religious Practice Morality Respect Disrespect Honesty Dishonesty Pride Shame Avoid Shame Humility Compassion
Non-Morality Based Qualities	Non-Morality Based Qualities	Non-Morality Based Qualities	Non-Morality Based Qualities	Non-Morality Based Qualities	Professional Disruption Dedication (Professional/Academic) Balance Talent Societal Distinction (Moral) Societal Distinction (Professional/Academic) Lack of Societal Distinction (Professional/Academic/Personal) Societal Distinction (Family) Adherence to Code of Conduct (Societal) Reputation (Positive) Reputation (Negative) Decorum Gender Relations Defense Familial Distinction Familial Support Male Relational Personal Relationship Disruption Marriage (Unwillful) Marriage *(Willful, Agreement) Marriage (Willful, Disagreement) Abuse Bestow Honor Dedication (Personal) Adherence to Code of Conduct (Self) Importance Beauty Intelligence Personable Silence Responsibility Maturity Autonomy

Appendix C:

Q. 1 What does honor mean to you?	Q. 2 Describe a famous woman with honor.	Q. 3 Describe a woman in your family with honor.	Q. 4 Describe a good experience with honor a woman you know has had.	Q. 4 Describe a bad experience with honor a woman you know has had.	Coding Category
Group Based Qualities	Group Based Qualities	Group Based Qualities	Group Based Qualities	Group Based Qualities	Societal Distinction (Moral) Societal Distinction (Professional/Academic) Lack of Societal Distinction (Professional/Academic/Personal) Societal Distinction (Family) Familial Distinction Familial Support Adherence to Code of Conduct (Societal) Reputation (Positive) Reputation (Negative) Social Justice Decorum Selflessness Male Relational Personal Relationship Disruption Professional Disruption Chastity Lack of Chastity Gender Relations Marriage (Unwillful) Marriage *(Willful, Agreement) Marriage (Willful, Disagreement) Abuse Dedication (Professional/Academic) Dedication (Personal) Balance Defense Bestow Honor
Individualized Qualities	Individualized Qualities	Individualized Qualities	Individualized Qualities	Individualized Qualities	Adherence to Code of Conduct (Self) Religious Practice Morality Respect Disrespect Honesty Dishonesty Pride Importance Beauty Intelligence Personable Talent Silence Shame Avoid Shame Responsibility Maturity Autonomy Humility Compassion

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