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Digi-Blogging Gender Violence: Intersecting Ethnicity, Race, Migration and Globalization in South Asian Community Blogs Against IPV

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Introduction

Many of us, as new media researchers and feminists, have struggled with understanding the contexts that frame discourses about women of color and the place of gender studies within global digital cultures and transnational communities. Digital spaces of socialization have been anything but gender-neutral places of dialog exchange (Gregg, 2006; Wilson, 2005). Recent research has pointed to misogynist and xenophobic tendencies of the global blogosphere, especially in blog discourses about racial discrimination and gendered violence (Wilson, 2005; Mathieu 2011). Those who believe there is no gender parity within digital dialogic spaces, suggest that the act of blogging only espouses 'a Utopian *equal turf* image,' when in reality they produce, recycle and replicate the same gendered and racialized hierarchies reflecting offline systems of heteronormativity (Wilson, 2005; my emphasis).

It happens to be 'this very notion of "recognition" on the Internet,' that has plagued 'blogs as a space that…to an extent continues this public-private dispute' along gender lines (Gregg, 2006; Mukherjee, 2013, p. 85-86). Yet, scholars have also explored how blogs mobilize discussions particular to minorities, women of color, feminists, as well as gendered, social, cultural and sexual issues (Gregg, 2006; Sink, 2006). Take the case of intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetration on immigrant women of South Asian origin in the United States (US). Not only is it a rampant criminal occurrence, but a horrific women's rights desecration that is habitually underreported to law authorities and silenced by ethnic minority communities for several reasons. Recently however, a break in the oppressive quieting is being rallied by a sub-population of the South Asian (SA) diasporic blogosphere who are digitizing their philanthropic commitment to advocate against IPV (gendered, ethnic and racial), enacted on SA women.

Gender-specific IPV has been a highly studied area within feminism, criminal justice and sociology. Yet, studies addressing the impact of such human rights issues on new media research or design have rarely been taken up. With the exception of research that explores feminist and legal theories of violence, or studies on cyber violence, cyber

harassment, cyber bullying and privacy (Adam, 2002; Citron, 2009; Dimond, Fiesler & Bruckman, 2011), there is rather limited work on violence against women (VAW) framed within the context of online and mobile techno-cultures. What makes the framing of this intersectional research much more pertinent is the severe underreporting of IPV by SA women to legal authorities, community based organizations (CBOs) and social interventionists in the US, for reasons including their fear that "they may be accused of bringing shame on the family, may not be believed by friends and family, and may also have concerns regarding their immigration status" ("South Asians in the United States," 2003).[1] To address these research interstices, I analyzed blog-generated themes from discussion threads found within three SA community blogs written between 2007-2011 (with emphasis on Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi diasporas) that have exposed intersections of gender/patriarchy, ethnicity/race, and immigration/globalization via digital narratives about IPV against SA migrant women.[2] Seeking theoretical grounding in postcolonial, *colored* theories of intersectionality (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Crenshaw, 1994; Knudsen, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2005), this essay will explore how ethnicity, race, immigration and experiences of IPV by SA women in the US intersect with/in the structure of gendered, global digital communities and diaspora blogs.[3] Turning to minority gender theories such as postcolonial intersectional feminisms would make communication researchers and social media designers think differently about 'who is being included, who are the digitally marginalized,' and it is through knowledge of their experiences that we could likely comprehend 'how those technologies…can be made more inclusive in scope and address a heterogeneity of human experiences' (Mukherjee, 2013: 12).

Gender Violence: IPV in the South Asian Diaspora

The **Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum** (http://www.apiahf.org/) (APIAHF) has reported that IPV within the SA diaspora in the US is carried out in ways that supersede mental, physical, sexual, and fiscal forms of abuse (Dabby, 2007). In addition to social/familial isolation and economic incarceration, the dependent legal status of SA women who are in the US on dependent visas such as the H-4 spouse category, is more often than not used as a weapon of oppression by abusive male partners who have been known to make threats of deportation and withholding green card (permanent residency) applications (Dabby, 2007; Das Dasgupta, 2000).[4] This form of IPV that is unique to SA immigrant females becomes much more relevant within the frames of 'immigration and transnationalism, where women find their identities doubly

displaced: by the politics of race/ethnicity, and the constructs of gender' (Mukherjee, 2013: 24).

A survey of SA women in Massachusetts revealed that of the 40.8% of the sample who admitted being IPV victims/survivors, 65% were physically, mentally and sexually violated, yet only 30.4% of those who reported their battery were able to seek medical assistance (Raj & Silverman, 2002). For instance, a study comparing IPV perpetration on African American, South Asian and Hispanic women in the US reported that even though the number of known IPV cases within the three racial minority communities were quantitatively similar, the severity of battery and abuse was found to be greater among SA women, as well as the finding that African American and Hispanic women left their abusers more often than battered SA women (Yoshioka, Gilbert, El-Bassel & Baig-Amin, 2003). What also differentiates the case of SA IPV perpetration in the US is its unprecedented underreporting (Das Dasgupta, 2000; Mukherjee, 2013). Not only does this coerced and/or willful hushing of spousal violence impede IPV intervention, but it also points to a schism of traditional-global gender expectations that forces battered SA women 'to view it as their own fault/fate, their cultural moorings that teach them to be subservient to their husbands/in-laws,' not to mention 'their fear of community or cultural rejection, and their desire to uphold an ideal ethno-racial image' (Sthanki, 2007; Shiu-Thornton, Senturia, & Sullivan, 2005; Mukherjee, 2013: 25). Despite there being well over twenty South Asian Women's Organizations (SAWOs) and IPV shelters/services in the US for supporting women from this ethno-racial diaspora, 'South Asian women are usually disinclined to get help or report the violence for many reasons,' including feelings of shame, isolation and fear of losing their immigration status or sponsorship (South Asians in the United States, 2003; as cited in Mukherjee, 2013: 26).

Ethnicity, Race and Globalization

Systemic pressures from oppressive families, immigration laws, assimilation expectations and communal denial of IPV exacerbate battered conditions of minority women (Kasturirangan et al., 2004). Currently, research on SA IPV has been accused of blurring ethnic with racial differences, ignoring linguistic distinctions, religious beliefs, gender expectations and being *culturally unmindful* of the heterogeneous meanings of IPV in the SA migrant community (Lee & Hadeed, 2009; Kasturirangan et al., 2004). They fear that a western feminist approach to understanding ethnic gender-abuse in a post-globalized developed context will pedagogically 'ignore the intersectionality of social identities and force women to prioritize their gender identity over their racial or ethnic

identity when dealing with domestic violence' (Kasturirangan et al., 2004; Mukherjee, 2013: 41-42).

As a dominant discourse of immigration, globalization can be comprehended as an 'historical narrative based on shifting notions of power, identity, belonging, place, displacement, nationality, globalism and hybridity' (Mukherjee, 2013: 46). Researchers of globalization, transnationalism and gender violence have found that immigration-related isolation becomes an inseparable part of the abuse experienced by SA women, 'majorly due to the invisibility immigrant women experience because of their ethnicity and gender status in the US' (Abraham, 2000; Mukherjee, 2013: 30). Additionally, the communal labeling of IPV as a private issue has done a major disservice to creating consciousness about its perpetration in the US, and has 'disempowered many South Asian women from speaking out and seeking help' (Goel, 2005; Das Gupta, 2006; Das Dasgupta, 2007; Mukherjee, 2013: 30). This tendency to render *private* an essentially *public* (racial, ethnic, gendered) form of oppression warrants 'a need for gender- and culture-specific feminist discourses and paradigms to address local gender issues that occur transnationally,' in the context of the intimidating conditions that are imposed by *push* and *pull* players of neo-liberal globalism (Mukherjee, 2013: 47-48; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; King, 1990, 1991; Ong, 1991; Stalker, 2000).

The temporary-dependent legal status of several SA females permits their abusive partners/spouses to ensure 'control through financial and legal means with severe consequences for the safety of victims/survivors of battering' (Bhuyan, 2007: 229). We must reevaluate the scope of this form of gendered violence from within the cross-cultural frames of transnationalism and global migration (Ahmad, Riaz, Barata & Stewart, 2004). The fact that the migration of SA women to other geo-political spaces as lawful, yet dependent immigrants (in most cases) does much to increase their vulnerability to patriarchal violence is no surprise (Ahmad et al., 2004). The pressures of acculturation seem to weigh heavier on people from minority groups, particularly for women, because of gender status and also because their traditions 'are markedly different than the culture of the host country' (Mukherjee, 2013: 52). Intersectionally speaking, the pressures of cultural, legal, global, social, racial, ethnic, and gendered expectations results in 'stress and tension within immigrant families…*and* studies also report a trend for domestic abuse to either start or become worse after couples' immigration' (Ahmad et al., 2004: 265; my emphasis).

Digital Communities: 'Sense of Community' in Blogs

Globalization does not necessarily create social alienation. It creates a form of ambivalent anxiety because of constant changes in one's location – a happy and nervous mix, such as the ambivalence one often encounters in digital communities comprising globalized relationships (Tomlinson, 1999). Digital communities have added a feather to the time-tested cap of public participation (boyd, 2006; Castells, 2001; Jones, 1999). Spatio-temporal limitations to meeting face-to-face have left it to weak ties to create affective strength in numbers via digital communities (Jones & Mukherjee, 2010). This digital philosophy of socialization implies not an individualistic sense of social capital (accusations, apart), but 'rather a community of like-minded people who create social patterns of networking through CMC' (Jones & Mukherjee, 2010: 22).

Though not bodied in palpable, geo-political spaces, participants of online communities ascribe meanings to their *em*-bodied interactions through collective sharing of relations, affect, beliefs and a sense of commitment to their current discursive investment. They are interactive digital spaces connected via some 'sense of community' that are as fluid, as they are committed to shared values (Blanchard, 2004; Sink, 2006; Mukherjee, 2013). In particular, for digital natives who are geo-physically distanced from their families and national moorings, participation in 'a virtual community functions as an alleviator of homesickness, partner in culture shock, and helper with assimilation into the new culture,' whether it is for 'connection, support, and political activism among migrants' (Hiller & Franz, 2004).

Social narratives creating a *sense of community* around the politics of nationalism, migration, post-colonial globalization, and developmental marginalization, have often found empowering spaces within weblogs authored by communities and individuals belonging to minority publics in the US, including the SA diaspora (Gajjala, 2006). In fact, the evolution of the locational digi-phrase 'cybernetic safe spaces' can be ascribed to the works of Ananda Mitra (2006) who used it to explain the 'sense of "safety" that real spaces cannot produce,' a familiar 'sense of community' that so many SA migrants seek online, as attempts to place-make their culture and traditions in foreign lands (265).

Feminizing Blogging

Amidst legitimate accusations of misogyny, it is also true that digital media in their developmental stages had assured a certain amount of gender-neutral recognition for its participants, however implicit. Gregg (2006) takes us back to the beginnings of essentially 'gender free' web rings and web hosts, made popular by feminist blogs like Ms. Musings, The Progressive Women Bloggers Ring and Feministe. Sink (2006) studied the ways in which Muslim women in the US, particularly of Middle Eastern descent, renegotiated a strong sense of gender, ethnic, and cultural identities through their personal blogs by sharing their narrative take on the role of relationships and marriage, family values, and the impact of religion.

The democratic possibility of blogging for gender empowerment has created 'independent alternatives to the malestream media,' according to these feminist communication scholars (Greg, 2006; Sink, 2006). Affective engagement offered by the blogosphere can act something like a digital safe house, particularly for vulnerable populations who want to be freed from 'difficulties and dangers of non-normative gender identification offline' and who also wish to find a 'safe and fairly anonymous forum in which issues of concern and potential threat can be raised and discussed without fear' (Gregg, 2006: 152-53).

Theories of Intersectionality

Gender, culture, minority identities and ritual meaning-creations in postcolonial contexts of social interchange have jointly lent form and substance to theories of intersectionality. If, indeed, blogs make public the ways in which culture, gender, race, class, ethnicity and/or oppression cross paths, in no particular order, to shed light on the 'what, why and how' of IPV on SA women, then I concur that 'approaching the problematic from a race/gender and cultural studies perspective will theoretically corroborate the expected findings' (Mukherjee, 2013: 88).

White, western feminism has repeatedly been accused of favoring gender over race. Post- postcolonial and cultural studies scholars from developed and developing contexts have reacted by turning their attention to 'people of colour *(sic)* cross gender' (Knudsen, 2006: 62; Mohanty, 1994; Suleri, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 2005). Many of them started by turning to theories of intersectionality, originating in the works of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1994) and other Black feminists of the late twentieth century. Starting with Crenshaw's explication of violence against minority/African American women as a 'product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism' (1994), postcolonial feminists started recognizing the need for a *transversal* form of intersectionality to understand the issues

underlying ethno-cultural patterns of VAW, a theoretical approach that they believed could 'not only pose questions about how ethnicity is gendered, but also how masculinity and femininity are racialized and ethnicized' (Knudsen, 2006, p. 64). Postcolonial gender scholars building on transversal frames of intersectionality theories started researching disability and sexuality studies, colored and minority postcolonial feminisms, queer feminism, and also, the relation between gender/feminism, socialism and nationality that came in later to further transversalize and complicate the theory (Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Knudsen, 2006; Meyer, 2002; Yuval-Davis, 2005).

Postcolonial discourses on intersectionality that in the last three decades have particularly concentrated on women of color, minorities and migrants provide 'a devastating critique of socio-political, economic and cultural processes of "othering",' while also focusing on the 'simultaneous importance of subjectivity – of subjective pain and violence that the inflictors do not often wish to hear about or acknowledge' (Brah & Phoenix, 2004: 83). As is apparent in this case, the *othering* that abused women of color/minorities/migrants encountered have been exacerbated by the 'cultural myths that incarcerate them within the normative confines of their own communities' (Mukherjee, 2013: 89). In certain instances, linguistic impediments have also prevented non-English speaking SA victims of battery from seeking help in governmental and/or non-profit CBOs (Das Dasgupta, 2007; Dasgupta, 2006). According to postcolonial feminist scholar Yuval-Davis (2005), the host and migrant community's commitment to 'curtail the politicization of domestic violence in non-white communities are often times undergirded by the workings of an internally operative patriarchal discriminatory politics and an overtly-masculine de facto nationalism,' intersectional practices that operate together with the forces of heteronormative racist politics (Mukherjee, 2013: 90). Moreover, intersectional feminists, who focus on postcolonial and colonial gender discourses, also often dissect diaspora politics, particularly for examining 'the mobility of peoples, commodities, capital and cultures in the context of globalization and transnationalism,' as well as the *categories* and 'configurations of power – both productive and coercive – in "local" and "global" encounters in specific spaces and historical moments' (Brah & Phoenix, 2004: 83).

We all categorize, for better or for worse. That is our chosen way to make sense of a world that we can barely make sense of, even with the tools of categorical explication. When patriarchs or first-world, privileged feminists have categorized colored women, immigrants, refugees and oppressed minorities as 'object or Other,' they have attested

to dominant ideologies of representation, forcing us to perceive 'how things are is how they ought to be and that the place provided for us is the place we ought to have' (Brummett & Bowers, 1999). This forced stasis is indicative of the alienation of engaged subject positions and their relegation to locations of object-positions. The postcolonial and *colored* intersectional theoretical frame contextualized for this case study espouses that everyone has a story to tell – even those who are systemically muted across gender, cultural, racial and ethnic boundaries. When people engage in active storytelling, it creates narrative opportunities to resist passive objectification via 'explanation(s) for why people are doing what they are doing, how they got "here," and where they are going' (Brummett & Bowers, 1999: 131; Brah & Phoenix, 2004; Yuval-Davis, 2005; Knudsen, 2006). Such active, subjective storytelling is what we will explore in the following section via narratives digitized by several SA immigrants within three representative SA community blogs in response to the epidemic of heterosexual IPV perpetrated on socio-legally dependent women from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh living in the US (Mukherjee, 2013).

The Case Study: Analysis and Discussion

The majority of the current study's blog sample identified *marriage, patriarchy and gender* as systems of 'power, privilege and control that [are] at the base of such abusive behavior' (Mukherjee, 2013: 166). Explicit and implicit references to various marital and patriarchal institutions such as arranged marriages, forced marriages, gendered expectations of husbands, male partners and in laws, as well as the stigma of divorce/separation within the SA community were often discussed themes that emerged from threaded blog discussions.

In *Where's the Garam Paratha, Bahu?*, one of the sampled SA community blogs, the oppressive fallout of SA patriarchal privilege that exacerbates domestic abuse against women is narrativised:

> *The South Asian-American society boasts of some gender prejudiced practices such as separating women to be seated opposite from men in the Sikh Temples [Gurdwara]. The women are often financially manipulated by their husbands and are considered economically non-adept by their male partners…*
> *The male-dominated Sikh American society has created these ill-informed conceited norms when it comes to so-called gender roles…there is nothing called gender equality if you are a South Asian immigrant woman…the men hold all the power (2007, cited in Mukherjee, 2013: 166).*[5]

Several blog posts shared horrific stories describing how migrant SA women were victimized by immigration-related IPV. Many highlighted specific concerns like the epidemic of familially-enforced fraud and forced marriages among SA immigrants as unethical shortcuts to gaining lawful citizenship through matrimony, all reasonable explanations 'for understanding, tackling and analyzing the occurrence of this human rights aberration against South Asian woman in the US' (Mukherjee, 2013: 170). The 'dependent visa status of abused South Asian women were also taken into consideration,' in several blog discussions in order to 'explicate, justify or predict (on occasion), the prevalence of this form of partner abuse' (Mukherjee, 2013: 170). A digitized example of this thematic prevalence was found in a blog post from *Way to Wisdom*, another SA community blog excerpted from the sample:

> *The problem is further complicated for migrant South Asian women because if they want to divorce their abusive husbands, they also often lose their legal status in the US and will have to forcibly return to their own nation – be it Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, or some other country. These women will have to manage to run away from the abuse, get enough finances to catch a plane back home, and safely reach their families, which is also not completely safe for them as they have to face the plight and stigma of their family and community (2011, cited in Mukherjee, 2013: 170).*

The possibility that some of these abused immigrant women, if forcibly sent home, would face threats of 'honor killings'[6] by family members, for potentially ending a marriage, is not to be dismissed. Honor killings, battery and subordination of women, both in their marital and biological families continues to be regularly perpetrated, particularly on SA women of Sikh religious following, including those who have spent most of their married/partnered lives in western host countries (Gangoli, Razak & McCarry, 2006). The unfortunate irony is that within the frame of globalized transnationalism this very condition of legal dependence for spousal visa-holding SA women becomes a bane and boon that creates 'more spousal abuse on one hand, while also proving to be the only way they can still live in this country in case their own families back home don't accept them' (Mukherjee, 2013: 171).

Of the many fallouts of globalization, one is a tendency to homogenize human experiences and relations. A handful of blog threads wove discourses around the macro-context of developing- and developed-nation economies, their impact on *push* and *pull* forces of labor migration and the resultant dis/possessions of human and financial capital, which to a large extent are related to the legal-financial and socio-cultural limbo that several dispossessed and oppressed minorities find themselves in. A

scathing comment that criticizes the neo-global homogenization of battered SA women's experiences by, of all places, a few SA intervention services in America, is evidenced in the blog *Where's the Garam Paratha, Bahu?*

> *The South Asian IPV advocacy organizations aren't really as radical, and if questioned, I don't believe that they would admit that their foundation is grounded in the politics of America… that is, encouraging pro-employment pro-migration policies that leads to these human rights violations in the first place… policies that lie at and stem from the very core of capitalistic globalization (2008, as cited in Mukherjee, 2013: 178).*

Another recurrent theme found in the blog sample addresses how external manifestations of *racial stereotyping* and *ethnic marginalization* exacerbates internal oppression within communities of color, such as the profiling of IPV within SA diasporic communities as an ethno-racial misdemeanor. A self-identified IPV advocate, 'argues passionately against the internal (intra-community) and external (host nation's) racial profiling' (Mukherjee, 2013), in *A Brown Battleground*, another representative SA community blog from the study sample:

> *I am not saying that DV is not a major human rights violation that plagues my Indo-Jain community or for that matter any other culture, because know that if our community refuses to address the issue, it will refuse many of the people that I have personally known the fair scope to escape a violent household. However, I absolutely detest the racial stereotyping that is done around this topic, which is completely inappropriate and actually multiplies the abuse faced by these ethnically marginalized women (2009, as cited in Mukherjee, 2013: 192).*[7]

Other digital discourses that were commonly mobilized as historically intersectional themes underlying the prevalence and maintenance of SA spousal violence in the US addressed: xenophobic and ethnic alienation by law enforcers, US government's inflexibility to ease legal immigration clauses, growing anxieties of minorities and those who are socio-economically dispossessed, dominant national discourses that have un/consciously institutionalized ethno-racial profiling against SAs, an issue that seemed particularly salient for Muslim SA female survivors of IPV in the US, who may have been consciously reluctant to report/seek help from law enforcement officials for fear of accidentally contributing to the stereotype that all Muslim men are likely armed and violent (if in their particular case, the intimate abusers are/were also of Islamic faith), not to mention 'internal caste based *(sic)* racism (intra-communal differences that sometimes work to ostracize certain members from within the community)' (Mukherjee, 2013: 192).

Conclusion

To situate digital communities within the logic of globalization, we must evaluate its social impact on interconnected members of a *deterritorialized* public sphere. Deterritorialization suggests that our cultural experiences, locations and/or identities are 'in various ways "lifted out" of its traditional "anchoring" in particular localities… being increasingly "penetrated" by the connectivity of globalization,' a contemporary ambivalent space of interconnection that takes for granted notions of physical distance, cultural specificities and technological ubiquity, including 'our interaction with globalizing media and communications technologies – television, mobile phones, email, the Internet… which brings globalized influences, forces, experiences and outlooks into the core of our locally situated lifeworld' (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 273). Currently, as is our socially mundane custom, most of us are 'members of multiple communities: global, social, cultural, religious, gendered, racial, economic, national, geo-political, digital, and the list goes on.' Despite that, many of us feel 'alone and disjointed, communal only in parts' (Mukherjee, 2013: 57). Add to this the debasement of essential human rights, freedoms and lives via habitually perpetrated physical, mental and sexual domestic abuse, and 'the sense of spatial and temporal belonging and…freedom of communication also get obliterated for the ones abused' (Mukherjee, 2013: 276). The victims, survivors and advocates need a space where they can engage in intersectional discourses about IPV in ways that are relatively secure, deterritorially accessible and useful, 'a space that has been evolving for a while now within the discursive interstices of blogs' (Mukherjee, 2013: 276).

Minority and migrant group politics are fluid. We cannot attempt to understand their cultures in 'temporal fixity' because their performativity is within locations, which are most often characterized by intersections, ambivalence and mobile probabilities (Bhabha, 1994; Odin, 2001; Mukherjee, 2013). Postcolonial theories of intersectionality attempt to make sense of minority problems from inside their peripheral locations, and challenge 'the critical view of becoming "the other" in a normative setting' (Knudsen, 2006: 62). In the case of intimately abused SA migrant women in the US, this 'othering' is intersectional: it is ethnic, racial, gendered, and cultural, as these battered, yet resilient migrant females hold the 'potential of being labeled troublesome within their own community, primarily due to the threat that they pose to the model minority image' (Mukherjee, 2013: 89-90).[8]

Male- and state-entitled oppressors have done their bidding to relegate migrant, minority women as 'the symbolic repository of group identity' (Kandiyoti, 1994: 382), in

misguided efforts to conflate their public identities with 'the private domain [that] reinforces the merging of the nation/community with the selfless mother/devout wife' (Kandiyoti, 1994: 382). Yet, as bell hooks (1990) argues, ever so neatly, 'margins have been both sites of repression and sites of resistance' (151). Histories of suppression have, at opportune social intervals and through empowering networks of communication, metamorphosed into her-stories of contemplation, active engagement and awareness-creation. I believe that this study opens up the floor to a performance space for promoting discussions on the untapped ethno-cultural potential of blogging, communal consciousness-creation about intersectional, migrant minority issues, and a furthering of the debate on digital democracy, which in this case has helped to mobilize 'a public forum of consensus and empathy around the issue of domestic violence to hear, heed and help those affected' (Mukherjee, 2013: 276).

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Footnotes   (returns to text)

1. The national IPV/DV hotlines are 1-800-799-SAFE or 1-800-787-3224 (TDD). A few helpful South Asian community based resources in the United States that can provide help and safety for victims of IPV/DV are: SAWERA, Oregon (South Asian Women's Empowerment and Resource Alliance; **http://sawera.org** (http://sawera.org) or call 503-778-7386); Apna Ghar, Chicago (http://www.apnaghar.org or call 773-334-4663); Saheli, Boston (**http://www.saheliboston.org** (http://www.saheliboston.org) or call 1-866-4 SAHELI); Daya, Houston (**http://www.dayahouston.org** (http://www.dayahouston.org) or call 713-981-7645).

2. The original qualitative study (doctoral dissertation) used data from ten selectively sampled general-interest SA blogs that discussed several community-specific social, political and cultural issues, including the problem of heterosexual intimate partner violence against adult, South Asian immigrant women in the US, a few posts/comments from which have been presented here as evidentiary data.

3. South Asian im/migrant women will be used as a general term to signify women from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh who are legally dependent on their male spouses/partners for residing in the US.

4. The H4 visa is offered to dependent spouses of H1-B (temporary, employment-related) visa holders who are residing in the US. The H-4 visa operates on three conditions: first, it stays valid as long as the marriage between the primary H-1B holder and the dependent spouse holds good. Second, it relies on the continued employment of the principal H-1B worker in his/her employment organization. Finally, and perhaps the most double-edged condition is that the H-4 dependent visa does not allow its adherent to work legally in the US.

5. The blog posts used in this essay constitute relevant data that have been excerpted from the original dissertation research study. The real/user

names of the blogs, bloggers/commentators and victims have been changed and/or anonymized, and the posts have been paraphrased for reasons of privacy and security. The author's university-affiliated IRB has approved this study.

6. Honor killing refers to a particular kind of intimate familial homicide. South Asian women have on occasion been murdered by their marital or biological families, as a way to restore the family's honor. It is a crime that is also globally rampant in South Asian immigrant communities.

7. The terms IPV, DV (domestic violence), spousal/gendered abuse/violence, battery, etc. are used interchangeably in this essay to signify the various forms of violence that is perpetrated by male partners/spouses/husbands of South Asian women immigrants in the US.

8. 'The Model Minority stereotype has been applied to Asian Americans since the 1960s. This stereotype suggests that Asian Americans as a racial/ethnic group are achieving a higher level of success than the population average, along dimensions such as educational attainment and income' (Counseling Center at UIUC, 2007). This stereotype, however, is flawed as it ignores ethno-cultural specificities and at times encourages racial and ethnic profiling.

BLOGGING ‹ GENDER VIOLENCE ‹ GLOBALIZATION ‹ INTERSECTIONALITY
PEER REVIEWED ‹ SOUTH ASIAN DIASPORA

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ONE THOUGHT ON "DIGI-BLOGGING GENDER VIOLENCE: INTERSECTING ETHNICITY, RACE, MIGRATION AND GLOBALIZATION IN SOUTH ASIAN

COMMUNITY BLOGS AGAINST IPV"

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