

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Roehampton		
Unit of Assessment: 21 - Sociology		
Title of case study: Countering violence against women in Black and minority ethnic communities		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2013-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Professor Aisha K. Gill, Ph.D., CBE	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor of Criminology	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: September 2003 - present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2013-2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Professor Gill's research into domestic violence, child sexual abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage, 'honour'-based violence, and female genital mutilation in Black and minority ethnic (BME) communities has informed police, government and judicial policy, both nationally and internationally, including across Europe, the Indian sub-continent and Australia. She has raised global awareness of these crimes, and their root causes, among the public and relevant policymakers, which has led to better outcomes regarding support and justice for survivors. By drawing on her research into the social, cultural, and legal difficulties victims in BME communities face, Gill has actively improved victim-support policies, while her contribution as an expert witness has helped to achieve justice for a number of survivors, most notably in the UK's first successful forced marriage prosecution (Regina v RB).</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Using an innovative intersectional approach, Gill's work has both advanced current understandings of how and why crimes of violence against women and girls (VAWG) occur, and illuminated the complex intersecting socio-cultural forces at play when attempting to combat and prevent them (R1-R6). Gill's research draws on her experience of working closely with those on the frontline of efforts to tackle all forms of VAWG; this gives her both practical insights and a unique, empirically-based perspective on tackling such violence in BME communities. Gill's grassroots, action-oriented combination of theoretical and practice-based research continues to provide a solid platform for developing policies and guidelines on how governments can respond more effectively to VAWG on a national and international basis.</p> <p><i>Child sexual abuse and sexual violence in South Asian communities (2013-2015):</i> Research undertaken in collaboration with the University of Hull explored the factors that deter female British South Asian victims from reporting child sexual abuse and sexual violence to the police, and what actions and/or policies could encourage reporting. Interviewees were asked about the factors that inhibit disclosure to support agencies, police, and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). On the basis of this data, the research produced briefing papers for criminal justice support services, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and policymakers, including recommendations designed to encourage reporting. This, in turn, led to the development of new culture-specific support pathways (R1-R2).</p> <p><i>Forced marriage, honour based violence, and female genital mutilation:</i> In 2017 Gill worked with the University of Essex on research commissioned by Hertfordshire Constabulary to develop its provision for 'priority service' victims in cases involving these crimes. Secondary data was gathered from a wide range of national and local sources, while primary data was gathered from interviews with female victims of recent crimes of HBV, attempted FM, and/or attempted FGM, exploring both their experiences of these forms of violence and their engagement with support</p>		

services (R3). Gill's papers on this research noted that identifying and responding effectively to victims depends on consistent recording and mapping of offences, as well as sensitive sharing of case data – including victims' ethnic heritage. The recommendations emerging from this work recognised that it is vital to develop a shared understanding of HBV as a distinct form of VAWG if victims are to be successfully supported and crimes successfully prosecuted. In 2015, Gill worked with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and the University of Bristol on the first national project to assess policing responses to HBV, FM, and FGM; she and fellow researchers from the University conducted semi-structured individual and group interviews across England with fifty victims of HBV [<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/university-of-bristol-hbv-study.pdf>]. The research recommended giving victims information to promote their sense of safety and bolster their belief that they will receive justice when they report abuse. This study also stressed the importance of addressing how first-response procedures may help or hinder victims and, in turn, increase or decrease their satisfaction with the justice system (R4).

In September 2019, Gill was awarded a grant to improve outcomes for victims of forced marriage through conducting the first comprehensive study of Forced Marriage Protection Orders (FMPOs). This research commenced in March 2020 and addresses key gaps in knowledge regarding the impact and effectiveness of FMPOs during the last ten years. Gill's current research portfolio also includes a project examining the impact of Covid-19 on specialist BME 'by and for' services tackling violence against women and girls.

3. References to the research

All journal publications have been rigorously peer reviewed.

R1 Gill, A. K., Harrison, K. (2019) "I am talking about it because I want to stop it": An exploration of child sexual abuse and sexual violence against women in Britain's South Asian communities, *British Journal of Criminology*, 59(3), pp.511-529 <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azy059>

R2 Harrison, K., Gill, A. K. (2017) Breaking down barriers: increasing sexual abuse reporting rates in British South Asian communities, *British Journal of Criminology*, 58(2), pp.273-290, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azx027>

R3 Gill, A.K., Cox, P., Weir, R. (2018) 'Honour'- based Violence/Abuse, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation, *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 57(4),pp.576-595, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hojo.12287>

R4 Mulvihill, N., Gangoli, G., Gill, A.K., Hester, M., (2018). The experience of interactional justice for victims of 'honour'-based violence reporting to the police in England and Wales, *Policing and Society*, 29(6), pp.640-656, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2018.1427745>

R5 Gill, A. K., Gould, D. (2020) Gould, D. (2020) The role of family coercion, culture, expert witnesses and best practice in securing forced marriage convictions, *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*, 4 (1), pp.89-105, <https://doi.org/10.1332/239868019X15711199936183>

R6 Gill, A.K., Harvey, H. (2017) Examining the impact of gender on young people's views of forced marriage in Britain, *Feminist Criminology*, 12(1), pp. 72-100, <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1557085116644774>

G1 Nuffield. Forced Marriage: Enhancing protection and prevention responses (Co-PI; 26/03/2020 – 30/09/2022). £121,178.00.

G2 Hertfordshire Police Crime Commissioner research on honour - based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (PI; 2017). £32,000.

G3 British Academy small research grant, Sexual violence in South Asian communities in England and Wales (JI; 2013-2015) £10,000.

G4 Santander. FGM in Somali communities, (PI; 2015-2017) £5000.

G5 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary. Policing responses to honour-based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (JI; 2015) £40,000.

G6 Economic and Social Research Council. Outstanding Impact in Public Policy Prize, (2015) £10,000. <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/impact-case-studies/countering-honour-crimes-and-forced-marriage/>

4. Details of the impact

Gill's research on countering various forms of VAWG has had a significant impact on policy and legislation aimed at protecting women in BME communities in the UK and internationally. It has led directly to improved criminal justice outcomes for survivors in the UK.

Shaping policy in the UK: Gill's research (**IMP1; R1-R6**) has had a demonstrable impact on the development of the UK's national policy on VAWG through helping the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice increase the effectiveness of criminal and civil responses to FM, both in terms of protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators (**IMP2-IMP3**). The Deputy VAWG Strategy Manager for the CPS has stated that Gill's input has 'constructively challenged the CPS on how we implement our policies/guidance/products and how we work in partnership with the police and other agencies.' Gill has also been instrumental in ensuring that the CPS updates its investigative procedures regarding VAWG and HBV; since 2013, she has provided advice on the CPS's VAWG agenda, particularly around HBV and FM. In addition, as a key expert Gill sits on the national multi-disciplinary steering group that advises the CPS on the development of its HBV and FM legal guidance, the monitoring of cases, and the provision of training for specialist prosecutors: '*Gill has [to work] on the CPS VAWG Vision up until 2020... [Her] support should ensure the CPS VAWG approach reflects the needs of victims and society*' (**IMP3**). She has also helped The Home Office's Exploitation Projects Team. They used her research on sexual violence and HBV to develop a workshop-training event in August 2019 to enable more effective professional responses in this area.

Throughout her career Gill has called for consistent recording, mapping, and sensitive sharing of case data that includes victims' ethnic heritage, as well as the clear recording of all HBV and FM cases (R3; R5; R6), on the basis that, without such information gathering and sharing, the local scale and distribution of HBV and FM remains concealed, victims are often not identified, and their needs left unmet. This call to action was picked up by both Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in 2015 and Hertfordshire Police in 2017. Both have supported and funded Gill's research on countering VAWG in BME communities. The Constabulary used Gill's research findings on HBV, FM and FGM to enhance their understanding of victims' support needs and have since adapted their support procedures in line with her recommendations (**IMP1**). Gill's work since 2013 demonstrates the ongoing need to develop specialised services for BME victims and this has been recognised by the many statutory bodies she works with, leading to the development of more nuanced and inclusive policies and procedures (**IMP1; IMP3; R4**).

Shaping international policy: The reach of Gill's research and its contribution to shaping policy has had considerable impact on governments and NGOs across Europe, the Indian sub-continent, and Australia (**IMP4-IMP6**). Dame Vera Baird QC, Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, invited Gill to join the Victims' Commissioner's Advisory Group 2019-2021. This role involves giving policy advice to the Victims' Commissioner to ensure that the interests of victims and witnesses are fully considered at all stages in any proposals for development and/or change to the criminal justice system and its constituent agencies. Gill has advised Anti-Slavery in Australia (ASA) on effectively tackling FM, addressing over 150 attendees from 50 government agencies and community organisations as the keynote speaker at ASA's inaugural Forced Marriage Conference. The Director noted that her '*ongoing contribution to Anti-Slavery Australia's policy work on forced marriage is invaluable. She provides advice and support to our advocacy efforts [and] has made a significant contribution to raising awareness about the challenges of prosecuting forced marriage cases and the development of a forced marriage protection order scheme in Australia*' (**IMP4**). Between October and December 2018, Gill supported the work of human rights colleagues in Pakistan to design training for the Pakistani police and specialist NGOs. This work not only encompassed identifying key causal factors behind VAWG in Pakistan and internationally, but also led to the development of measures to assist victims of HBV, including in relation to reintegration into their communities. Dr Astrid Bosch, Head of Program of Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, stated that '*Gill assisted and supported the capacity development in relation to the criminal investigative services in Pakistan. She specifically advised on responses to enabling better preventative measures [in relation to the difficulties] that Pakistani women face*

as a victim, suspect or perpetrator in the criminal justice system. During this collaboration, she also designed materials for the German Society for International Cooperation and graduate students at the University of Punjab in relation to improving education and training to strengthen and increase investigative capacities in criminal investigations related to the murder of women in Pakistan' (IMP5). Her expert advice has also been drawn on by the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre, which is representing ethnic Azerbaijani applicants to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in an HBV case against the Georgian state; the Director notes that her research 'enabled us to support our legal arguments with expert statements' and 'In responding to a rebutting the [Georgian] Government's arguments we will again rely on Gill's very thorough and credible analysis' (IMP6).

Acting as an expert witness: Drawing on her extensive research (R1-R6), Gill has provided expert evidence in various UK courts on the cultural contexts at play in HBV and FM cases. In the case of *Regina v RB (name withheld)*, she worked with West Midlands Police and the legal team of Victim A between March and May 2018 to help secure the conviction and imprisonment of the defendant in the first successful conviction for FM in England. This landmark case attracted global media attention. The lead police investigator specifically identified the significance of expert input: 'Gill, in particular, explained the significance of the roles within the marriage ceremony, which was crucial at the trial stage' (IMP7). In 2015, she supported the defence team in the case of *Regina v Dharmasena and Mohammed*. The legal team remarked that they found 'Gill's advice invaluable in the preparation of the defence – particularly in understanding the client's instructions and, forensically, the cross-examination of the prosecution and co-defendant's expert witnesses, as well as illuminating the judge and the rest of us on a number of important cultural and contextual issues' (IMP8). Gill also advised in a 2018 case of a father accused of subjecting his daughter to FGM (*Regina v O [name withheld]*), providing expert input relating to national and cultural differences in FGM practices within Africa, including specifically within the Igbo tribe of Nigeria (IMP9; R5). The lawyer for the defence in the case remarked that Gill's input 'contributed in no small measure to the acquittal of the client at the end of nine days' trial and six hours' deliberation by the jury on all seven counts that he faced.' In 2016, she supported Bedfordshire Police in the case preparation for Operation Humboldt (*Regina v Khan*). Gill's expert role included data analysis of phone records and facilitating police understanding of both religious and risk-avoidance behaviours in relation to the socio-cultural context of the accused (IMP10). The defendant was found guilty of murder.

Raising public awareness and reshaping the public debate around HBV, FGM, and FM: In June 2017, Gill was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honour's List, in recognition for her services in tackling forced marriages, 'honour' crimes and violence against women. Gill has played a significant role in raising public awareness of, and clarifying the terms of debate around, HBV, FGM, and FM; she regularly comments on these issues in public arenas. Since 2014, Gill's research and professional activity have been featured in the press and broadcast media in outlets such as New Statesman, The Independent, The New York Times and ITV among others, which together have a combined reach of over 220,383,548 people per month. Her interventions have significantly impacted the approach of campaigns and individuals to VAWG, HBV, FM and FGM (R3-R5). For example, former Home Secretary Sajid Javid and his staff drew on Gill's work to design the first European conference on FM and FGM, held in London in November 2018 (IMP9). In December 2017, he wrote to Gill thanking her for 'helping us raise awareness of FGM and forced marriage and the devastating impact they have on people's lives. It is reassuring to know that there are allies like yourself in the fight against these horrific crimes.' Gill has also participated in numerous international debates on these issues; in May 2018 and May 2019, she featured as the leading expert in two documentaries (*Judge Rinder Crime Stories: Shafiea Ahmed* <https://trakt.tv/shows/judge-rinder-s-crime-stories/seasons/3/episodes/5> (2018); *Murdered by my husband* <https://www.my5.tv/murdered-by/season-2/murdered-by-my-husband> (2019) on the murder of women in the name of 'honour'; her research findings (IMP1; R3) substantially informed the direction of these documentaries (especially the latter), which have been aired in two main UK channels which have a combined audience of 20,876,000 people. Gill has also been involved in public awareness campaigns with the Victims' Commissioners office during the COVID-19 pandemic and is currently working with both the criminal justice system and front-line domestic

violence charities to address the significant public health consequences, as well as socio-economic implications, of the pandemic (particularly as regards the lockdown and self-isolation measures) for women and girls in BME communities. In short, Gill's work continues to have a major impact, nationally and internationally, in terms of both its significance and reach (**IMP1; R3; R5-R6**).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

IMP1 Professor Gill's press pack is composed of a range of items from local, national, print and online media outlets. Key sources to corroborate impact are listed below:

Experts slam government as forced marriage victims made to pay rescue fee

<https://www.easterneye.biz/experts-slam-government-as-forced-marriage-victims-made-to-pay-rescue-fee/> [3 January 2019]

Freed From Forced Marriages, U.K. Women Stuck With the Bill

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/02/world/europe/forced-marriage-payment-britain.html>. [2 January 2019]

Violence against women training in Pakistan, <https://dailytimes.com.pk/331781/giz-iscs-hold-workshop-on-gender-based-violence/> [9 December 2018]

Pair jailed over fixed marriage <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/996677/man-woman-jailed-forced-marriage-leeds-crown-court> [31 July 2018]

Forced Marriage, Australia debate with Director of Anti – Slavery, University of Technology, Sydney Law Faculty, <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/saturdayextra/australias-first-conference-on-forced-marriage/9875820> [16 June 2018]

Victims of so-called honour-based abuse to receive more support,

<http://www.hertscommissioner.org/2017-06-victims-of-so-called-honour-based-abuse-to-receive-more-support> [26 June 2017]

Murdered by my husband, Channel 5 Star, <https://www.my5.tv/murdered-by/season-2/murdered-by-my-husband> [9 September 2019]

<https://www.wandsworthguardian.co.uk/news/15364864.university-of-roehampton-professor-aisha-k-gills-fight-against-forced-marriage-and-honour-crimes-recognised-in-queens-birthday-honours-list/>

COVID-19 exposes failures to tackle violence against women in BME communities

<http://www.transformingsociety.co.uk/2020/04/25/covid-19-exposes-failures-to-tackle-violence-against-women-in-bme-communities/> [25 April 2020]

For some, domestic abuse has become 24/7 during the pandemic

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/bme-victim-domestic-violence-pandemic-b1806766.html> [25 February 2021]

IMP2 Testimonial from Rt. Honorable Sajid Javid MP, Home Secretary. 17/12/2018.

IMP3 Testimonial from the Crown Prosecution Manager. 20/10/2016.

IMP4 Testimonial from the Director of Anti-Slavery Australia. 06/08/2019.

IMP5 Testimonial from the Head of Programme at Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit. 28/01/2019.

IMP6 Testimonial from the Legal Director at the European Human Rights Advocacy Centre. 29/10/2019.

IMP7 Testimonial from DS 4896, West Midlands Police. 17/06/2018.

IMP8 Testimonial from the Principal Solicitor at AHS Law Solicitors. 27/01/2019.

IMP9 Testimonial from the Consultant at A2 Solicitors LLP. 11/11/2019.

IMP10 Testimonial from DCI 1335, Bedfordshire Police. 05/11/2019.