Violence Against Women: Decolonizing Honor Killings

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Introduction

- Term honor killings first used by Leiden Ane Nauta in 1978, but many scholars disagree with using the term because of its controversial implications.
- I choose to compare the practice of honor killings in Palestine to the crimes of passion defense used in the U.S. because of their similarities, despite their differences in terminology and location.
- Many societies and the press have continually used the term honor killings only in reference to certain populations' involvement in these types of crimes, specifically Arab and Muslim communities.

Significance

- The term honor killings is used to further demonize and alienate populations and communities globally.
- Important to recognize and reshape our thinking on why we use different terminologies for these crimes to decolonize our thinking.

Methods

- Comparative study through laws in both countries and case studies.
- Using historical and feminist perspectives to show similarities and differences between two forms of violence, including their origins in laws.
- Statistics to discuss the frequency of crimes in societies.
- Building on past literature on honor killings and crimes of passion, including theories by Victoria Norse that perpetrators of these crimes usually target females.
- Analyzing the leniency allowed in laws for violence against women, since there are laws both in Palestine and the U.S. allowing for lighter sentencing or no punishment if a person is convicted of killing someone under certain circumstances.

Major Points to Support Argument

- Recent cases in both countries, including the case of Israa Ghrayeb (killed by family members in July 2019) and case lead to increased awareness of violence against women through protests and social media campaigns.

Conclusion

- Developing recommendations based on current trends and activism occurring internationally on how to decrease the frequency of violence against women through identifying cultural norms that maintain patriarchal systems of repression and changing criminal justice laws on honor killings and crimes of passion.

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