

ABSTRACT

Title of Document: WHOSE AGENDA IS IT ANYWAY? U.S. NEWS COVERAGE OF THE “HONOR KILLING” OF NOOR FALEH ALMALEKI AND THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF BOUNDARIES.

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This dissertation employs the method of critical discourse analysis to investigate the relationship among discourse, power, and knowledge in U.S. news coverage of the “honor killing” of Noor Faleh Almaleki. Building upon Western European research on “honor-killing” news coverage as a site for the discursive construction of boundaries, I employ the theoretical perspectives of Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, Edward Saïd, and postcolonial feminism to demonstrate how the social constructs of gender, sexuality, religion, race, ethnicity, culture, class, time, and space intersect to produce sharp boundaries of difference between Muslim,

Middle Eastern, and South Asian migrants and “dominant” members of the U.S. nation. As a result, the findings of this dissertation point to the presence of an overarching hegemonic discourse in the U.S. news’ coverage of Noor’s “honor killing” that rather than serving the interest of reducing violence against women, serves the agenda of excluding Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian migrants from the U.S. nation. Based on the findings of this study, I encourage readers to acknowledge the intricate relationship among discourse, power, and knowledge in “honor-killing” discourse. Furthermore, I invite readers to recognize their role as producers and consumers of discourse, and as change-agents, who have the capacity to transform these stigmatizing “honor-killing” discourses into a discourse that is inclusive of all the stakeholders, women and men, affected by these crimes.