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Defining Recent Femicide in Modern Turkey: Revolt Killing

Ihsan Cetin¹

Abstract

This paper aims to question recent increasing femicides in Turkey through the examination of their reasons and dynamics. Therefore, it starts with analyzing current terms such as “honor killing”, “*töre* killing” and “crimes of passion”. The article claims that the recent description of the murder of women in Turkey as “honor killings” is misleading. Turkey must employ finer distinctions among types of femicide so as to prevent murderers and the larger society from justifying such actions through claims of honor. This paper thus asserts that the analysis of femicide in Turkey, as a Muslim country, should go far beyond the context of honor killing and argues that such examination must consider new social and economic changes as well as the new status of women in modern Turkish society. Thus, the article raises a new argument by suggesting a new term, “revolt killing”, for conceptualizing femicide in Turkey in tandem with recent social change and the increasing status of women. It argues that revolt killing is the concept of conflict between tradition and modernity, and it claims that recent increasing femicides in Turkey are closely related with the changing status of women towards modernity in contrast to the stability of men’s status in tradition.

Key Words: Femicide, Revolt Killing, Honor Killing, *Töre* Killing, Crimes of Passion, Modernity, New Status of Women, Turkey

Introduction

The murder of Ayse Pasali that was committed by her divorced husband in 2010 has become a turning point for femicide in Turkey. After the murder of Pasali, femicides, which have been on rise in the last five years, have become more visible in media and caused the government to make new regulations against those murders of women. Before being murdered, Ayse Pasali had submitted her petition for divorce with the justification of her husband’s violence committed against her. Before and after the divorce she had demanded official protection, but Pasali never got any response, and finally she was left alone in the hands of her killer husband. The murder of Pasali was obviously approaching, but no precautions were taken by the authorities. Ayse Pasali was not only the woman who was killed by her husband. Furthermore, according to statistics that were collected by women’s organizations, women who were killed by their husbands, ex-husbands, and partners as result of their demands to divorce or separate constitute the majority among all femicides that occurred in the last few years. Statistics show that the demand for divorce or separation is one of the highest reasons for femicide in Turkey. That can be easily seen in the news stories in print and in the media. The article starts from this point and claims that current terms are inadequate to explain those murders, thus they need to be understood in a new concept. The article suggests that recent femicides should be considered apart from the terms honor killing and *töre* killing, which are related to traditionalism. In the article, those

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murders are examined in the sense of the dilemma between tradition and modernity and with the conflict between the new status of women, which is built as a result of success gained in the last decade and the traditional status of men that defend the patriarchal system. As result of this argument, the article raises a new term, “revolt killing”, for defining those femicides.

The arguments that are discussed in the article are based on literature review related to the topic. Statistics on femicide in Turkey are obtained from state institutions and particularly from “The Platform of We Will Stop Femicide”, which is an organization that works for women’s rights in Turkey. Aiming to analyze recent femicides in Turkey, this article acknowledges the data of this platform as a base, and takes news of murders of women that happened in September 2013 as a sample.

Honor, *Töre* and Crimes of Passion

Broadly defined, honor means “the quality of knowing and doing what is morally right” (Oxford Dictionary). From a social perspective, honor is a sense of worthiness that affects both individuals and groups. In this respect, acting with honor elevates one’s self-worth, as well as provides him/her with respect from the surrounding society. In addition to individuals, honor can profoundly affect social groups, namely family. When a member of a family faces a problem related to honor, the problem concerns the whole household. Issues pertaining to honor, then, are generally family and not individual matters.

There are many forms of honor in Turkey, such as *seref*, *onur*, *haya*, *izzet* and *ar*, each reflecting specific social values. The term *namus* corresponding to honor in Turkish language refers to fidelity, chastity, honesty, and righteousness and most closely applies to female sexuality. In his research on Turkish migrants in the Netherlands, Clementine van Eck (2003) identifies the fervent protection of *namus* by both women and men; once the *namus* of a family is lost, it is impossible to fully restore. Potential solutions to the loss of this kind of honor include marrying the person who violated the *namus* or for the woman involved to commit suicide. Even if such measures are taken, the family will be known as *namussuz*: lacking *namus*. It is the responsibility of male family members to protect and restore the *namus* of the family.

As such, honor killing becomes a way of restoring a family’s reputation. It can be described as a “visa” that allows the family to again participate in social life and maintain its existence in society. Otherwise, the community might force the family from their home. Thus, “honor killing” and “restoration of honor by blood” can be described as cultural phenomena, inscribed in customs and mostly situated in collectivist societies.

Many cases of “honor killing” refer to “*töre* (custom) killing” in Turkey. The Turkish Language Institution defines *töre* as “in a community, the total name of rooted practices and lifestyle, norms, customs, traditions, common habits and routines”. In English “custom” sounds the closest term to *töre*. However, it does not give the exact meaning; that is to say, it does not connote *töre*’s power to sanction. *Töre* refers to customs and traditions that are transferred over generations and rooted in the culture of a community, thus it has an ability to enforce behaviours and practices within the community. In this respect, it differs from custom and tradition. The sanctioning power of *töre* not only manifests in femicide, but also functions as a main motivator in bloodshed. Justified by the custom of “as *töre* requires,” blood feud can last for years among extended families and tribes and cause many men’s deaths. Instead of “restoring honor,” this type of killing claims that “blood cannot be left on the ground,” thus legitimizing revenge and subsequent death.

In Turkey, both “honor killing” and “*töre* (custom) killing” describe homicide related to tradition. Both of them have strong connection on the traditional cultural system, thus carrying strong social pressure. However, “*töre* killing” applies mostly to communities that still maintain a tribal social structure, as the larger tribe will conspire in the killing. For instance, if a man kills his wife for adultery of his own accord, this could be considered an honor killing but not a *töre* killing. Conversely, *töre* killing does not include the killer alone, but the entire family, who organize, make a decision about the woman in question, and plan to carry out that decision. They determine who is going to kill the woman and how it will be done. This type of femicide is committed because “*töre* requires it,” making it sound as if there are no other options. Thus, this term justifies the murderous act—even making it “righteous”—and in some cases allows the killers to take pride in their actions. This illustrates how the term “honor killing” discussed in Western literature finds its reciprocation in the Turkish term “*töre* killing.”

According to a report released by United Nation Development Programme on the dynamics of honor killing in Turkey (2005), Turks’ perceptions of honor killing range from traditional to liberal. One important finding in the report is that people tend to differentiate between killing for the sake of honor and “*töre*” (custom) killings, where family council decisions come into play. In particular, Istanbul respondents talked about custom-based killings as quite distant from them and as a problem of ‘others,’ namely the people of Turkey’s eastern and southeastern regions due to their social structure, underdevelopment and various deprivations. Respondents viewed other honor-related murders as primarily individually based actions that could happen anywhere, such as a jealous man’s impulsive murder of his unfaithful wife being ‘something that could happen to anyone.’ Therefore, custom- and honor-related killings differ based on the conditions under which the murders are committed rather than their reasons and consequences (UNFPA, 2005).

Another prominent term in the femicide literature is the crime of passion. Crimes of passion or “crime[s] committed because of very strong emotional feelings, especially in connection with a sexual relationship,” are often fuelled by rage, jealousy, madness, and/or obsession with someone. In this type of crime, the perpetrator kills someone (a lover or a third party engaging in a relationship with the lover) as a result of strong emotional impulse—not premeditation. According to Tim Healey (1990) the term crime of passion covers any crime due to lovers’ jealousy or despair. It is particularly used to describe any kind of offense rooted in the frenzies and frustrations of love. Jealousy, of course, remains a recurrent theme in real life, as well as in folklore and literature. Since jealousy can lead to rage and impulsive actions, the perpetrator often has the chance of a reduced penalty. Healey gives the example of an outraged husband: if he shoots his wife’s lover, he may secure a complete acquittal. The assailant is seen as defending the sanctity of his marriage, and the law is prepared to be flexible (1990:7).

The victims of both honor killing and crimes of passion are most often women. However, while in honor killing the victims are exclusively women, in crimes of passion men can also be murdered. Furthermore, honor killing has strong ties with tradition, while crimes of passion emerge from individualistic relations. Abu-Odeh (1997) offers another important difference between the two, claiming that, generally, crimes of honor are associated with the ‘East’ and crimes of passion with the ‘West’ (1997:297). Moreover, according to Welchman and Hossain (2005), one difference often assumed between crimes of ‘passion’ and of ‘honor’ is the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim. The difference here lies in the murder of women by those who are or have been their sexual intimates (husbands, lovers) and those who have not (close blood relatives). Accordingly, in crimes of passion the perpetrator is generally an intimate

partner such as husband, wife, or lover, but in honor killing the perpetrator can be either an intimate partner or a close male relative such as a father, brother, or cousin.

Unlike honor killing, crimes of passion are an individualistic issue rather than collectivist one. Simply, crimes of passion occur as a consequence of dispute between couples or partners. Crimes of passion do not have roots in traditions, but are generally linked with furious and extreme feelings. They highly correlate with obsessive love, and arise from the emotional reaction to being cheated on. Crimes of passion are transnational and transcultural, as common as conflicts in every society. While jealousy is a shared feature of honor killing and crimes of passion, Turkey—its government, media, and public—must employ greater distinctions among types of femicide so that murderers cannot hide behind misleading claims of honor.

Recent Femicide in Turkey

Femicide in Turkey has more than doubled in the past five years; almost every day one comes across news of the murder of at least one woman. As stated in the news a day after the murders of four separate women:

The murder of women in Turkey does not slow down. Almost every day news about the killing of women or violence against women is received from all around the country. Just yesterday four women were killed for various reasons.”
(www.milliyet.com.tr, September 2, 2013)

One can easily claim that there is an obvious confusion about statistics on murdered women in Turkey. In a response to a parliamentary question, the minister of justice of that time provided some statistics which showed a 1400% increase in women murdered in five years. Correspondingly, numbers of murdered women by year follow: 2002, 66; 2003, 83; 2004, 128; 2005, 317; 2006, 663; 2007, 1011; 2008, 806; 2009, 953.

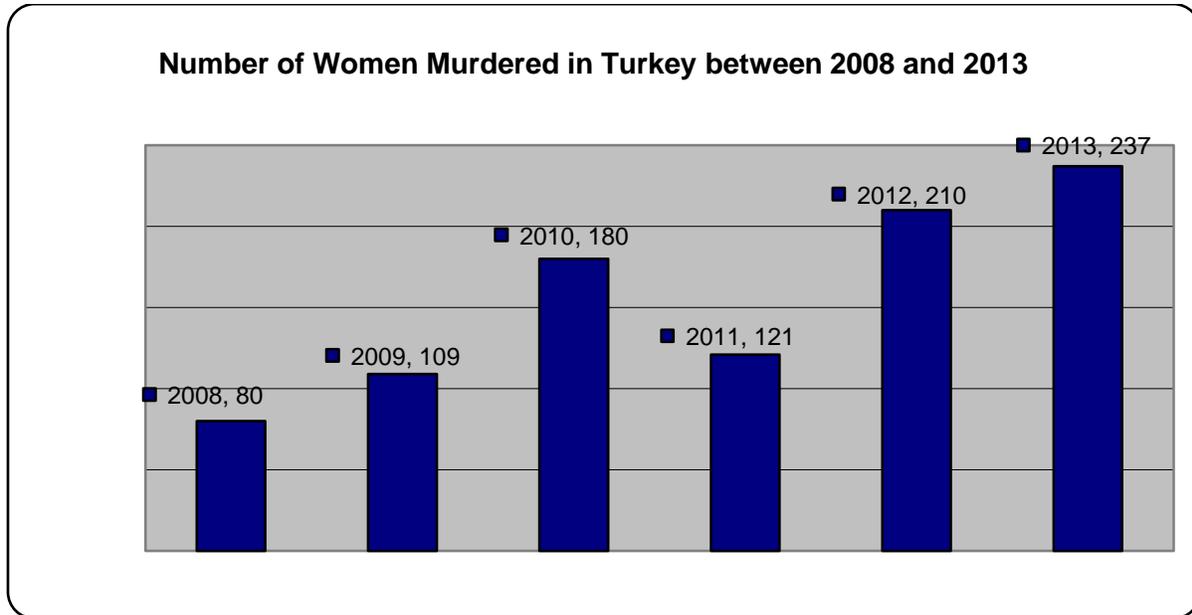
On the other hand, according to official statistics provided by the Directorate General on the Status of Women, 802 women were killed in the last five years. The data that illustrates the number of injured and murdered women between 2009 and 2013 is given in the table below. According to statistics, a woman is murdered, on average, every two days.

Table 1: Directorate General of Security and Commandership General of Military Police. Statistics on Domestic Violence between 2009-2013. Directorate General on the Status of Women. 11.07.2013)

| | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 (The first 10 months) | Total |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------------|---------|
| Injured Women | 18.293 | 24.920 | 29.301 | 39.321 | 70.112 | 181.947 |
| Murdered Women | 171 | 177 | 163 | 155 | 136 | 802 |

According to the “Platform of We Will Stop Femicide” (founded by a group of activist women in Turkey in 2009), 237 women were killed in Turkey in 2013 alone. Statistics provided by the Platform, which has been collecting its own data and fighting against femicide since 2008, are illustrated below. Unlike the numbers put forward by the government, these statistics are collected both via families that applied to the Platform directly and through the press.

Table 2: Number of Women Murdered in Turkey between 2008 and 2013 (Source: www.kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.com, October 4, 2013).



Resources on femicide are generally limited to the news that appears in the press and to reports produced by women’s organizations. Therefore, there is a considerable disconnect in defining types of femicide in Turkey. While some percentage of these murders fit the definition of honor killings and crimes of passion, when we examine them carefully, we see that more than half do not fit into the current terms.

In this context, an examination of murders in Turkey reveals that intimate partners constitute the majority of murderers in cases of femicide. The main reasons for these killings, as detailed below, are separation/divorce, jealousy, unemployment, rejection, and the victim making her own decisions about her life. Among these reasons, only jealousy also applies to honor or *töre* killing. However, there are no formal standards for actions that merit honor killing, and thus everything can be given as a reason by the murderer and his surrounding society. For instance, the murder of a woman caught cheating on her husband could be considered an honor killing in Turkey, as the murderer husband could attempt to justify his crime with claims of “restoring honor.” However, a similar crime occurring in other societies might just as well be called a crime of passion, and would apply if the perpetrator was a woman who killed a philandering husband. While crimes of passion claim mostly female victims, both men and women can be murderers and murdered.

Table 3: Reasons for Murder of Women in Turkey between 2008 and 2013 (Source: www.kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.com, April 24, 2014)

| 2008-2013 Reasons for Femicides in Turkey | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Demand for Separation/Divorce | 17,5 | 28,9 | 16,4 | 25,4 | 29,2 | 30 |
| Jealousy | 8,75 | 33 | 11,1 | 16,7 | 22,95 | 13 |
| Refusal of Man's Will | 25 | 1,8 | 16,1 | 14,2 | 0,04 | 6 |
| Unknown | 18,75 | 10 | 25,5 | 11,7 | 10,15 | 5 |
| Honor Killing | 0 | 0,9 | 0 | 9,2 | 3,2 | 0 |
| Psychological Crises and Unemployment | 5 | 2,7 | 6,1 | 6,6 | 10,5 | 7 |
| Rejection | 8,75 | 4,5 | 10,5 | 6,7 | 6,25 | 6 |
| Burglary—Money—Drug Addiction, etc. | 7,5 | 8,2 | 7,7 | 5,1 | 0 | 0 |
| Woman's Decision about Her Own Life | 3,75 | 6,4 | 5,5 | 3,6 | 10,15 | 26 |
| Crime of Hatred | 0 | 0,9 | 0 | 0,8 | 1,04 | 0 |
| Sexual Attack | 3,75 | 2,7 | 1,1 | 0 | 0,01 | 0 |
| Forced Suicide | 1,25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6,51 | 0 |

As shown above, femicides in Turkey generally arise as a result of divorce, a woman's decision about her own life, jealousy, rejection, psychological crises and unemployment; actual honor or *töre* killing comprise a small percentage of all femicide. Most cases stem from the husband's jealous, proprietary, violent response to the wife's (real or imagined) infidelity or desertion. Wilson and Daly (1992) find similar reasons for femicide among other societies; thus, these motivations for femicide are not unique to Turkey but are global. They may fall under the name of "crimes of passion" in Western literature and generally occur after infidelity, cheating, leaving the home/lover, rejection of the relationship, etc. Feelings of jealousy, possessiveness, and extreme attachment motivate femicides, which thus arise from personal feeling rather than traditions or social pressure.

However, justifications for murders of women correspond to the motives discussed above for femicide in Turkey. One of the primary underlying reasons for these crimes is the possessiveness of men's views of their "ownership" of women. As a result of these sentiments, a man cannot accept rejection such as divorce or termination of the relationship, leading him to kill. Recent news on the murder of women in Turkey, presented below, illustrates this idea.

Here we take femicides that occurred in September 2013 as a sample. According to the "Platform of We Will Stop Femicide," just in September 2013, 18 women were killed in Turkey. Of these murders, six were committed by husbands, two by ex-husbands, four by lovers, two by fathers, and four remain unsolved. Five of these femicides resulted from the demand for divorce/separation, four from jealousy, three from the woman's decision about her own life, one from rejection, and one from an economic situation. Reasons for four of them are unknown.

Several news stories detail the murder of women in Turkey during September 2013:

Terror of Husband: Husband H. T. (37) became angry after his wife, Ümmühan Türkmen (36), demanded a divorce and left to go to her father's home. He stopped her on the way and rained bullets on her and her family. After surgery, Ümmühan Türkmen's left leg, İbrahim Türkmen's right leg and both of Durmuş Türkmen's legs were amputated below the knee. (www.hurriyet.com.tr, September 9, 2013)

Policeman Spread Terror; 3 Death: A policeman in the city of Van spread terror after his wife petitioned for divorce, accusing him of using violence against her and requesting a restraining order. He went to the home where Zeliha Meral's lived with her parents, killing her and his mother-in-law, and badly wounding his father-in-law. (www.aksam.com.tr, September 28, 2013)

Women Murder in Dalyan: Caterina Anna Bury who was living in Dalyan county in the city of Muğla, was killed by her partner V. A. because she wanted to leave him. He also badly injured her mother Cecilie Bury (87) and her son Alexander Gerhar Bury (24). (kadincinayetlerinidurduracagiz.net/haber/674/dalyanda, September 11, 2013)

A Bullet of 'Do not leave me' to Karin: On Friday night, Gazaros Muratçioğlu followed his girlfriend, Karin Sucu, who wanted to leave him. After shouting "Only death can part us!" he fired the gun and killed her. Then he put the gun barrel to his own head and pulled the trigger. Karin Sucu died and Muratçioğlu was taken to the hospital. (www.hurriyet.com.tr, September 02, 2013)

Murders such as these—impulsive crimes that result from a sense of possessiveness and ownership of men over women demonstrate the conflict between new status of women and the established status of men. Here, the point is that men cannot stand the idea of being left, which stems from the established values of the patriarchal system.

A murder which occurs as result of rejection can be also considered with this system. A Western motto often used in cases of unrequited love, "If I can't have you, no one can," has a Turkish counterpart, "Either you are mine or the ground's" (*ya benimsin ya da toprağın*). Crimes resulting from obsessive love call to mind a well-known verse from Oscar Wilde's poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*: "Yet each man kills the thing he loves." Slogans used during the protests against femicide, such as "Men's love kills three women each day" and "Can love end with death?" reflect the dilemma of love and crime against women (Esgün, 2013). One can read stories of men who regret killing their wives, sitting beside the dead bodies, wanting see their beloveds' faces for the last time, or proclaiming their love. In considering murder committed by ex-husbands, conflicts about custody of children, property, or the woman's dating of somebody else can be reasons for her death.

Council Member of BDP Nazliye Sincar killed by her ex-husband: Peace and Democracy Party's (BDP) council member Nazliye Sincar was killed by her ex-husband, whom she divorced 5 years ago. Şehzade H. had been having financial problems and was accusing her of not dividing properties fairly. He demanded his

properties back. According to witnesses, it started with an argument then turned into homicide. (www.konya.net.tr, September 04, 2013)

Ex-husband Terror; 3 deaths, 1 injured: A man in Burdur having problems with his ex-wife regarding custody of their children shot her, her brother and his own father, who was trying to make him calm down, killing all three. He then tried to commit suicide by shooting himself. (www.medyatrabzon.com, September 10, 2013)

In another femicide, the murder of a woman by her husband had no clear motivation, but her husband justified his actions as “restoration of his honor”:

He killed his wife of 16 years: Canan Tanış was killed by her husband of 16 years in Diyarbakır. When surrendering to police, he claimed, “I restored my honor.” (www.cnn.com.tr, September 15, 2013)

During September 2013, there was only one femicide that arose from traditional codes of honor. Emine Özcan was killed by her father for marrying without his permission:

He killed his daughter because she ran away and got married: In Osmaniye, 51 year-old Müslüm Fırat murdered his 24 year-old daughter Emine Özcan by shooting her seven times. The event happened at 9:00 pm on September 23th. According to witnesses, Emine Özcan eloped with her boyfriend in Kırşehir. Her father told her to come back in order to avoid gossip. He lured Emine Özcan with promises of a proper wedding. When she arrived home, her father shot her seven times, injuring her badly. Although she was taken to hospital, Özcan couldn't be saved. (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr>, September 25, 2013).

These stories depict just a few of the numerous femicides happening in a single month in Turkey, and of them only one can be analyzed in traditional codes of honor/*töre* killing. The rest are strongly related to women's decisions about their own lives. Petition for divorce, leaving home, breaking up with a boyfriend, and dating somebody else all have a common link: they display decision-making by women. They reflect women's rejection of their circumstances, amounting to a declaration of will by these women.

Revolt Killings: Conflict between Tradition and Modernity

When the statistics on recent murders of women in Turkey are examined, it is seen that demand for divorce/separation and a woman's decision about her own life come first as the reasons for femicide. In my opinion, those murders should be understood apart from the terms *töre*-honor killing and crime of passion. Thus, I suggest the term *revolt killing*² in order to define those types of murders.

The term revolt killing basically means a woman's murder is a result of her objection, of coming up against the ongoing system, rejection of the man and statement of her will.

²This term was developed with inspiration from Albert Camus's book *L'Homme Révolté* (The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt). His definition of the metaphor of man in revolt is the person who says “no” formulated as “I reject” in the concept of femicide.

Specifically, revolt killings describe the murder of a woman, by her husband or her partner, who demanded divorce or separation. Those types of murders, unlike honor and *töre*, are not unique to certain class, ethnic-religious or social groups. The main fact that distinguishes revolt killing from others can be formularized as a woman's murder as a result of her attempt to cut ties with a man and her objection to the current situation. That objection refers to a statement of will that cannot be evaluated apart from the emancipation of the woman. For the main dynamic of revolt killing can be shown as the reflection of the dilemma between tradition and modernity on the relationship between man and woman. The point in question describes the conflict between a woman's role that attempts to go out of her traditional pattern thanks to economic, social and cultural emancipation and a man's role that is situated in traditional values. Reasons that make revolt killings common in Turkey can be understood in the concept of this conflict. This conflict can be examined more clearly in the changing status of women in Turkey. Unlike in men's role, change is occurring in women's roles, which goes against the patriarchal system. Men's roles are surrounded with traditional codes; however, the changes that have occurred in women's roles enforce the limits of masculinity. Thus the traditional code develops a defiance in order to maintain the status quo. The murder of woman who demand divorce/separation or make decisions about their own lives is the farthest point of this defiance.

One can claim that women in Turkey have started to break out of traditional codes largely due to the rapid modernization process that took place over the last decade. During this time of change in society, a woman might easily find herself in conflict with a man who maintains traditional codes, and such a conflict can lead to her to death. As Italian journalist Cinzia Tani notes, "all statistics suggest intimate partner violence is on the rise. Often the victims are working women, whose husbands or boyfriends cannot tolerate their economic independence...Paradoxically, emancipation has increased this kind of violence against women" (Mamigliano, 2010). It seems beyond coincidence, then, that the increased rate of femicide in Turkey in recent years arises from the conflict between women's new status and men's traditional status, the latter of which defines women by traditional codes and thus seeks to keep women subjugated.

Dynamics of Revolt Killing

To illustrate this point, we must examine the dynamics enabling women to break out of traditional codes. Firstly, consider rapid urbanization. Today more than 70% of the Turkish population lives in urban areas. People who migrate from rural to urban areas experience many social and cultural changes, including increased opportunities for women to join the labour force. The rate of women's participation in the labour force has increased from 23% to 30% in last decade (TSI, 2013). By a change made in 2009, article 192 of the Civil Code has been reedited in a way to be more explicit in favour of women. According to its new form, the article brings in that either spouse does not have to get permission of the other in choice of profession or employment. This amendment has brought an important emancipation for married women in particular.

Secondly, as a result of this increased participation, women have obtained greater independence, economically, socially and politically. Compared with previous years, the number of women parliamentarians has increased systematically. Currently there are 77 women parliamentarians, which correspond to 14 percent of total. Whereas the total number of women majors was 17 as a result of the previous election in 2009, this number has reached 31 in the

election of 2014. Among both the parliamentarians and majors, the highest rate of women is in the Democratic Peoples' Party (HDP) which receives a big majority of its votes from Kurdish people. The HDP applies the quota of at least 40% women in organizations and elections.

The changing status of women can be observed best upon the examination of Kurdish women. When *töre* killing is mentioned they are the first to come to mind. They are known to be closer to traditional social structure than any other groups. The geographical area that Kurdish society commonly lives in is the east of Turkey, acknowledged as a place where patriarchy is still being maintained with its strong tools. For instance, according to Turkish Statistics Institution (TSI), in that region 37% of people do not approve of the idea of women's participation in the labour force. Likewise, the employment rate is 14%, and the housewife rate is 50% (TSI, 2011). On the other hand, Kurdish women are the most politicised group, especially after the 1980's Kurdish movement, and the most visible group in the public sphere, with their colourful dresses, among women in Turkey. As Handan Caglayan, a Kurdish activist and writer, points out, in last decade plenty of women attended protests and meetings and participated in political parties and organization with the identity of Kurdish women. For Kurdish women who carry traditional codes commonly this is a new development, and it has opened a new way for them in participating in social movements. As a result of this participation, Kurdish women established a foundation named KAMER in 1997 in Diyarbakir, which is accepted as a capital for Kurdish society, particularly to defend women's rights. Today, with being organized in 23 cities, KAMER is one of the biggest women's foundations in Turkey.

In addition, after the Justice and Development Party, a tendentious Islamic party, came to power in 2002, developments acquired in Turkey's economy affected women's status change. Thanks to a growing economy, a new middle class has become bigger and richer than before. In tandem with Sherif Mardin's analysis, the "centre-periphery" model uses it for explaining Turkish modernity, this new development, which can be explained in the context of mobilization of periphery to centre, has brought many improvements for conservative women. For example, the public sphere, which is described as secular, is mostly argued upon women's identities, specifically upon their headscarves. As a result of being described as a secular state, the Turkish government has banned women who wear headscarves from studying in universities and working in the official sector for many years. After a long and tough controversial process, this ban was finally lifted in 2010. Thus, the participation of conservative and devout women in the public sphere has increased. This increased participation also has given women greater visibility in the public sphere than before. As Nilufer Gole (2002) points out, this increased participation both in Europe and Turkey provided women with more visibility in public spaces.

The combination of Kurdish women and devout-conservative women constitute the majority of the women's population in Turkey. Therefore, changes occurring in those groups provide many clues for understanding the changing status of women in the country.

Thirdly, urbanization and increased participation in the labour force have empowered women to more frequently seek divorce, thereby signalling an important cultural shift. In traditional social structures, a divorced woman is seen as weak, vulnerable and in a subordinate position. Being divorced was something shameful for women in traditional Turkey. Therefore, many women would avoid getting divorced because of that cultural system. A divorced woman is a potential sex object for men in the neighbourhood. There are expressions used to indicate the lower positions of divorced woman in Turkey such as "short skirted" (*eksik etek*). The increase in the number of petitions for divorce indicates that women no longer have the same fear of unmarried life or of the labels that traditionally accompany the single state.

Fourthly, an increased number of non-governmental organizations and research centres focused on women's issues have also helped women change their position in society. Today there are at least 525 organizations related to women's studies (STGM, 2013); these organizations work to improve women's social status and boost women's rights and equality in society. These efforts have, in turn, enabled a fifth factor: governmental arrangements and legislation instituted to protect women's rights.

As part of The Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the Directorate General on the Status of Women mainly works to increase women's status, leading to important changes in the law. For instance, with the constitutional amendments which were adopted by the Parliament on 7 May 2004, Article 10 of the Constitution entitled "Equality before the Law" was amended. The phrase "men and women shall have equal rights. The State has the duty to ensure that this equality is put into practice" was added to the article. About the violence issue, one of the major legal acts has dealt with honor crimes with the new Turkish Penal Code, which entered into force on 1 June 2005. The de facto reduction of sentences in the case of "honor killings" was abolished with the new Code. The Law 4320 on the Protection of Family changed twice in 2007 and 2008 by adopting new statutes protecting women against violence (The Law 4320, 2010). Additionally, the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Agreement) was signed in 2011. Lastly, 2012 saw the enactment of a new law, number 6284, the Law on Family Protection and Preventing Violence against Women (The Law 6284 and Istanbul Agreement, 2013). As required by this law, Centres of Preventing and Monitoring Violence (*ŞÖNİM*) were established to support the law within society. Such centres mainly employ women and are open 24 hours a day.

All these factors have provided women with increased individual functioning in urban life and have opened new doors for women to determine the course of their lives. However, the already established forces based on patriarchy protest this new situation through the infliction of violence on women, including murder. Furthermore, women in Turkey are still in a disadvantaged position compared to men. According to World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index 2012, with a score of 0.601, Turkey ranks 124 out of 135 countries (WEForum, 2013). While women in Turkey remain in a disadvantaged position, many actively struggle to overcome this subordination. In objecting to the strong patriarchal system—and thus rejecting it—women expose themselves to reactionary responses, resulting in increased rates of violence and even murder.

Women's increased participation in the labour force and their resulting extended visibility in the public sphere, the effect of a growing number of non-governmental organizations related with women's issues, and changing legislation have all equipped women with increased social standing—a new role that breaks with tradition. Modern women's increased demands to be subjects rather than objects conflict with established social structures that uphold traditional social institutions. Thus, femicide in societies that maintain and reconstruct encompassing identities and ideologies represent a conflict between modernity and tradition that must be faced.

Conclusion

The murder of Ayşe Pasalı by her husband in 2010 was a turning point for femicide in Turkey. After suffering her husband's continuous violence for years, she struggled for a divorce—an assertion of will that enraged her husband enough to kill her. Since her death, the well-known picture of Pasalı with a bruised eye has become one of the main symbols in the

protests of violence against women, as her murder could have been predicted, and neither the system nor society tried to save her. After her tragic death, new legal regulations about violence against women were enacted and new preventing statutes were put into force, but femicide in Turkey has continued.

In generally referring to multiple forms of femicide as “honor killing,” the media has blurred the true situation. In fact, honor killing has strong cultural ties and derives its power from centuries-old tradition. In considering commonalities, one can claim that the term “honor killing” as used in western literature actually corresponds to “*töre* killing” in Turkey. In other words, a murder arising from the involvement of the larger family, a sense of great shame for the family where they might be considered dishonored, the effects of social pressure, and premeditation, are all factors of *töre* killing. Crime of passion, on the other hand, corresponds to honor killing, with its meaning used in Turkey. Both of them find their common ground in jealousy and adultery against women. If a husband kills his wife in *flagrante delicto* that will be named an honor killing in Turkey, while it would be defined as a crime of passion in Western countries.

In Turkey, femicides arising from petition for divorce, separation, rejection, breaking up and other related reasons are often referred to as honor killings; however, they are actually revolt killings. Being left can cause men not to accept these demands, making their violent, extreme reactions revolt killing, not honor killing. An examination of femicides occurring in the last few years in Turkey shows us the relationship between the increasing number of murdered women and the reaction of men to women’s growing autonomy. As seen from statistics and from the stories of murdered women in September 2013, many women are killed due to their demands for dissolution of a marriage or other romantic relationship.

While the majority of femicides in Turkey may not be honor killings, their occurrence still merits critical examination. Because revolt killings discussed in the context of Turkey are particularly about men who kill their intimate partners, recent occurrences of femicide reflect the conflict between the traditional status of men and the new status of women. Accelerated participation in the labour force among urbanized women and greater visibility of women in the public space have enabled women to move away from traditional codes toward greater individualism and personal agency. A growing number of women’s organizations and research centres coupled with new legal regulations have strengthened this growing social position. Thus, revolt killings have emerged from the conflict occurring between the new status of women and the established social structure that is the patriarchal system.

In spite of juristic regulations and precautions made to prevent violence against women, femicide in Turkey has not stopped—proof that the problem is structural in nature. Thus, ending this problem requires additional reforms and the establishment of new policies with the ultimate aim of reconstructing society. Recognizing and accepting the new status of women—and then integrating women into all aspects of social life in Turkey—can help ensure the successful creation and implementation of such reforms.

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