

# In the Name of Fathers: Honour Killings and Some Examples from South-eastern Turkey<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Starting from patriarchal power and authority, this article explores the control of girls/women under classic patriarchies, particularly virginity, forced virginity tests and honour killings (HK); that is, murder of a woman by her male kin after something she has done is interpreted as tainting her family's honour.

## Résumé

En partant du pouvoir et de l'autorité patriarcale, cet article explore le contrôle des filles et des femmes sous les patriarchies classiques, particulièrement la virginité, les tests de confirmation de virginité forcés et les mises à mort pour l'honneur, c'est-à-dire, le meurtre d'une femme par un homme de sa parenté, pour avoir fait quelque chose interprété comme ayant souillé l'honneur de sa famille.

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## Introduction

This paper focuses on honour killings (HK) and some examples from south-eastern Turkey. Examples are selected from court transcripts and local and national media coverage. These events are rare in Turkey (estimates are 25-75/year), and confined to a small region, but honour crimes kill many thousands of women across the world each year. To understand the cultures where such killings take place, we will have to analyze dowry and bride-price systems. As the examples from south-eastern Turkey demonstrate, the goal of these practices is to control the bodies and sexuality of women. Loopholes in the criminal justice system often make a mockery of the prosecution of these heinous crimes. Even in a modernizing, secular state like Turkey, the workings of the criminal justice system are infused with patriarchal biases.

First, I review some key literature on power and patriarchy, paying specific attention to "classic patriarchy" (Kandiyoti 1988). A detailed discussion about dowry and bride-price systems, forced virginity tests and HK follows. Then, I introduce some facts about Turkey, which is a modern democracy with serious aspirations to European Union membership. However, as the case studies of HK show, there remain pockets of patriarchal crimes against women. Finally, I make suggestions for change from the international women's rights perspective and through local initiatives and law reforms.

## Power

"Power" is the ability to assert one's own will

on others (Homans 1974). Power is relational since one cannot have it without also having someone or something to have power over. Power is "dormant" and lies within the "ability" of the powerful. He<sup>2</sup> may translate the ability into action (influence), or he may force others to submit to his will (coercion). Generally, holders of power do not need force: power is recognized and rarely challenged. Instead, the powerless will try to appease the power holder, so that he does not hurt them (physically). Moreover, the powerless often serve the powerful by enforcing rules and punishing the deviants.

Weber (1968) introduces an important trajectory: "authority" is bestowed upon those who possess legitimate power. The behaviour of those who have authority is sanctioned by rules, regulations and laws. Moreover, those in authority are able to stretch the existing rules, and still preserve legitimacy. Those in authority also benefit from voluntary compliance. Of course, abuse is possible even when the holder of power has authority. Moreover, sexuality often permeates power differences.

### Patriarchy

Patriarchy subsumes power differences that systematically occur at the social, legal and cultural levels and bestow authority on men. The term captures the amorphous nature of male power and domination in a given society. Male authority is so ingrained, unquestionable and effective that it permeates all other social realities and institutions. Thus, the amorphous nature of the term is both a weakness and strength. Male domination gets so infused into values, norms, behaviour and the socio-religious outlook that one can rarely defy that power. Thus, trying to dissect patriarchy into observable pieces will indeed miss the all-encompassing nature of that power. Frye (2000) uses a birdcage analogy to denote the insidious nature of patriarchy. She says that by examining a single strand

of wire, one can never understand why the bird is trapped. The entrapment can only be understood when individual wires are seen within the network of other strategically placed wires. It is due to this complexity that patriarchy escapes a clear definition.

A particularly vicious type of patriarchy is "classic patriarchy" (Kandiyoti (1988). Classic patriarchy spans North Africa, the Middle East (including non-secular Iran and parts of secular Turkey) and South and East Asia (most specifically India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and rural China). Thus, classic patriarchy crosses over geopolitical regions and religious boundaries (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Sikhism, and even orthodox pockets of Christian and Jewish faiths). Given the variation, to argue that a particular religion gives rise to classic patriarchy is over-simplistic. Instead, in strongly patriarchal cultures, the interpretations and practices of any religion come to reflect male domination, privilege and control.

Classic patriarchies flourish in agrarian societies with labour-intensive farming. The subsistence pattern requires large families and male labour (Kagitcibasi 1982). The key elements to the reproduction of classic patriarchy are: patriarchal households where decision-making is vested in men; patrilineal tracing of descent and inheritance (preference for sons and the proclivity to curb female inheritance); and patrilocal extended households (where young women, sometimes child-brides, are betrothed). Taken together, these elements skew gender relations and give unprecedented power to men over women (Kandiyoti 1988). Moreover, male power is sanctioned and legitimized.

Walby (1989) theorizes patriarchy within six interrelated structures: the mode of production, relations in waged labour, the state, male violence, relations in sexuality and culture. What is important is the relentless control of women's behaviour and sexuality where violence is a condoned tool of control. Preference for sons translates into domination over women who

bear these sons. Male domination permeates all cultural norms, values and rituals. Women's worth is equated with marriage and motherhood. As Puri (1998) observes, the three statuses open for women are: that of some man's virgin daughter; another man's pious wife; and the self-sacrificing mother of sons. Women learn that any deviation from rules can trigger violence against them. Kate Millet eloquently summarizes this vicious cycle:

We are not accustomed to associate patriarchy with force. So perfect is its system of socialization, so complete the general assent to its values, so long and so universally has it prevailed in human society, that it scarcely seems to require violent implementation ... and yet ... control in patriarchal societies would be imperfect, even inoperable, unless it had the rule of force to rely upon, both in emergencies and as an ever-present instrument of intimidation.  
(1970, 44-45)

#### Dowry / Bride-price Systems and Their Consequences

In classic patriarchies, daughters are a burden (Jasam 2001). They are seen as an unfair competition for male siblings because of dowry. Defenders of the system argue that dowry is a form of transmission of wealth to females, since patrilineal inheritance bars women from inheritance. In reality, women seldom benefit from dowry since most or all of it gets usurped by the patriarchal household. In India, there are many sayings that depict the perceived futility of investing in girls, such as "raising a daughter to watering a neighbour's plant" (Hegde 1999). Moreover, dowry has taken on crushing proportions as an obligation (Bhattacharya 2004; Puri 1998). Women whose families are reluctant or unable to fulfill these obligations are vulnerable: they may be forced to marry undesirable

men, they may be sent back to their families (which makes them a social pariah), beaten or even killed (Jasam 2001; Mayell 2002; Shah 1990). It is estimated that 15,000 dowry deaths occur in India every year. This estimate is conservative, since most murders are successfully disguised as accidents (UNIFEM 2003b).

Other patriarchal societies practise "bride price." Although this practice has been legally banned in Turkey since 1926, it is still common in the rural/feudal south-east. The burden is on the patriarchal household to pay the bride's family for the marital rights over a daughter. Although one might think that this system would raise women's status, in practice, women are commodified. What they do, how they dress, where they go, who they see, how they act, who they marry...all become guarded and oppressed aspects of their lives. From birth onwards, girls are groomed to fetch the highest bid. Potential buyers (men) do not want unruly, unclean, unmanageable, tarnished or used (read: sexually experienced) women. Men who lack means to pay for the "girl" they want may kidnap her. Men also rape girls, hoping to get them for free when their value diminishes. The Turkish Criminal Law (TCL) historically reinforced some of these practices. Until 2002, section 434 allowed the charges to be dropped and sentences to be suspended if the rapist married his victim (Arin 2002). In case of a gang-rape, charges against all rapists were dropped if any one of them married the victim. Although section 434 of TCL has been repealed, the Indian Penal Code (IPC) still allows dropping charges against rapists who marry their victims (Don't Entertain Marriage Offer 2005; Manufacturing Consent 2005).

#### Forced Virginitiy Tests

Sexual and reproductive control of women is closely tied to rules of honour and marriage. The most nonnegotiable expectation is virginitiy before marriage. In classic patriarchies, surveillance of women's

whereabouts, curfews, and complex chaperonage systems are the norm. Pre-marital girls are barred from mixed-sex groups, at the cost of education or work opportunities. Loss of virginity outside of marriage is considered a catastrophe for the girl, her family, clan or tribe. Grooms may require proof of virginity as a condition of marriage and girls can be subjected to forced virginity tests. The required proof may be a report from a physician (usually a male) about confirming that the hymen is intact. Proof may also involve inspection of bloodied sheets after the first night of marriage. In Turkey, the first night is so important that it has its own name (gerdek). In patriarchal regions, older women keep vigil throughout gerdek for proof of virginity (blood). Moreover, the bride's body may be examined (again, by elder women) for fresh cuts in case she was trying to fool the examiners. These practices reinforce the belief that women are untrustworthy and set women against women. More serious perils await brides who fail such tests. They may be ostracised, sent back, replaced by a new wife, beaten or even killed (Cindoglu 2000; Mernissi 2000).

#### Some Facts about Turkey and Honour Killings in South-eastern Turkey

Turkey's war of independence was won against corrupt remnants of the Ottoman forces as well as the invading allies of World War I, and it became a democratic, secular republic in 1923. From its inception, Turkey has aspired to establish a westernized state with a constitution which gives equal rights to all its citizens, regardless of gender, race or religion (since 1924). In the mid-1920s, Turkish civil and criminal laws were westernized (Arat 1996; Arin 1996; Orucu 1996). Women became entitled to vote in 1930, and have been elected to the Parliament since 1934 (Kidog 1998; Kislali 1996). In the 1990s, Turkey elected its first female Prime Minister. Moreover, since the late 1990s, Turkey has accelerated its westernization due to its

aspiration to join the European Union (EU). Bold initiatives in its penal and legal systems, improvements in its human and political rights stance, and becoming a signatory to various United Nations (UN) conventions including CEDAW and DEVAW<sup>3</sup> - are unquestionable affirmations of this modernization. Turkey has also made, with noteworthy success, 100% literacy of its girl children a top priority.

Despite accomplishments, economic, social and structural challenges persist. For example, a large population, modest land-base, high birth rates, high infant and maternal mortality rates, low life expectancy and extreme regional variations remain as problems (Table 1), as do loopholes in the Turkish civil laws concerning marriage and criminal laws concerning honour-related crimes. In the patriarchal south-east lacuna, women and girls basically remain at the mercy of their male kin. The state has not been successful in protecting women from honour-related crimes.

Turkey also battles European prejudices that possibly date back to the Crusades. Regardless of its modernization efforts, and despite its staunch commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the war against terror and its pro-Israel stance in the middle-east conflict, the EU has given Turkey the cold shoulder, and repeatedly raised the bar for its full membership. The EU justification has always been Turkey's human rights record, and it is true that Turkey's record needs much improvement. Nevertheless, it is quite dishonest to welcome numerous post iron-curtain states to the EU despite their recorded human rights atrocities, while singling out Turkey's appeal for membership. Given the hard-to-explain silence against other violators, the EU's stance against Turkey reflects a thinly disguised prejudice. I fear that marginalization by the west may lay the ground for a fundamentalist insurgency. A regressive backlash in Turkey is neither in the EU's nor in Turkish people's interest. Turkey's economic, political and social problems

are much more likely to be resolved with incorporation into the EU rather than in its humiliating rejection. I would also extend this assertion to the human rights of Turkish women. Within this socio-political backdrop, I will now turn to the discussion of HK.

Patriarchies that practise dowry or bride price have harsh rules to regulate girls/women's bodies and sexuality. Women are cajoled or forced to wear garb that covers their bodies and limits their vision, movement and freedom. South-eastern Turkey is no exception. Rules stem from an elaborate conceptualization of "honour" where women's and girls' behaviour is subjected to relentless evaluation (Duzkan & Kocali 2000; Maris & Saharso 2001). Elders and younger men (as potential purchasers) are conscripted into controlling girls and women, around the clock. Those who are seen as tarnishing their family honour may be locked up, beaten, induced to commit suicide or killed. Marrying without parental consent, pregnancy outside of marriage, divorce or being a victim of rape or incest may be construed as dishonour, punishable by injury or death (Sev'er & Yurdakul 2001; Turk Hukuk Sitesi 2004).

A family council of males decides on HK. Usually, the youngest son carries out the gruesome deed. His age will assure leniency, if the murder gets to a trial (Maris & Saharso 2001; UNIFEM 2003a). Strong kinship ties and taboos deter witnesses from testifying against the murderers. Perpetrators also benefit from the patriarchal attitudes of the police and the existing loopholes in the TCL (Arin 2002; Ilkkaracan 1998). The TCL allows extraordinary discretion to the judge in cases where the offender is under 16. Even when prosecution succeeds, legal provisions are used to reduce the sentence. However, most murders are registered as accidents or suicides, and never reach the criminal justice system (Ilkkaracan 1998; Turk Hukuk Sitesi 2004).

Although the Constitution protects all Turkish

citizens (Arin 2002), honour-related crimes often escape the full force of the criminal justice system. Section 51 (subsections 1/2) and section 59 (subsections 1/2) of the criminal code allows reduction in sentencing on mild or intense provocation, as well as on evidence of the good behaviour of the offender. Sentences for crimes of passion have been traditionally reduced by 7/8ths. Section 462 was activated when perpetrators were seen as protecting their family honour, especially in cases of rape, impregnation, adultery or elopement. Sentences of under-age perpetrators are still substantially reduced or transmuted to community service. Often, these reductions are applied sequentially. For example, a life sentence may be reduced to a six-year sentence for an adult (three with good behaviour), or to just community service for a teenager. Although section 462 has been repealed (2002), Table 2 shows the irreparable legal and social damage created by protecting honour killers.

#### Methods

The following is a qualitative exploration of recent HK cases in south-eastern Turkey. The sources used are the news media, notorious cases discussed in local publications and 10 completed court case files from the Diyarbakir region.<sup>4</sup> Rather than seeking oversimplified causality, I intend to show the complex interactions amongst social, cultural, religious, economic and legal processes. Direct translations from Turkish are provided by the author.

#### Semse (Age Estimated as 35)

Semse never had a birth-certificate.<sup>5</sup> In November 2002, her undocumented life ended after she was stoned, resulting in a coma. Events that precipitated this grisly attack were as follows: first, Semse was accused of having sex with a married man (Halil). Although she claimed that the intercourse was not consensual, but constituted rape, her family accused her of tarnishing their family honour. Moreover, Semse

was pregnant (Gunay 2003; Nihayet Gomuldu 2003; Yavuz 2003). In the region, children born out of wedlock are considered bastards. Unmarried women who give birth are taunted, become unmarriageable or may be killed. Thus, in order to save Semse's life, her already married rapist agreed to marry her.<sup>6</sup> Halil's offer originally appeased Semse's family. However, when rumours started about the advanced pregnancy, her family decided to kill her (Gunay 2003; Yavuz 2003). Five men, including her father and brothers, stoned her and slashed her throat.

After the pregnant Semse and her unborn child clung to life for six months, her amazing struggle ended in June, 2003. Her family refused to claim her body from the hospital. They also refused a funeral service for Semse, and insisted that she should be buried in an unmarked grave, and her headstone should be painted black to show that she died in disgrace (Acay 2003a/b; Nihayet Gomuldu 2003). Such practices carry major religious significance for devout Moslems. They are employed to degrade women spiritually, even after death, and to deter other women from deviating from the patriarchal norms. No comparable degradation exists for men.

After the mandatory 10-day wait for a family's claim, a grassroots women's NGO (Ka-Mer) gave Semse a decent burial and a white headstone. In Islam, a burial service is a ritual that is reserved for men. However, in this extraordinary case, Ka-Mer women carried Semse's simple casket, and performed the prayer. In the same week, the Turkish parliament repealed section 462 of TCL which reduced HK sentences by up to 7/8ths (Acay 2003a/b). Sadly, the decision is not retroactive and Semse's killers will still benefit from section 462.

Guldunya (22)

Guldunya was raped by a relative, but kept silent about the violent intrusion. The secret was broken

when the rape resulted in a pregnancy. First, her family shipped her to Istanbul to fend for herself. Despite countless dangers a mega-city poses for a rural woman, Guldunya was able to find a shelter for herself and the daughter that arrived. Unfortunately, her male kin decided to kill her to "cleanse" the family honour. Two of her brothers (ages 20 and 24) were sent to Istanbul to hunt her down (Kimse sahip cikmadi 2004).

Sensing the approaching danger, Guldunya placed her tiny daughter for adoption. Her fears were justified. Her brothers tracked her down and shot her on the street. Amazingly, she survived the close-range attack. From her hospital bed, Guldunya asked for police protection, arguing that her family would try to finish the job; to kill her. Given the credibility of her story, she was moved to another hospital, and placed under police protection (Kimse sahip cikmadi 2004). Unfortunately, these precautions did not save Guldunya. Obsessed with a warped conceptualization of honour, the brothers stabbed her in her hospital bed.

Guldunya's family refused to claim her body from the morgue, and refused to bury her in their village. Thus, Guldunya is buried in a pauper's grave miles away from home. As long as her child remains anonymous, her family will claim a cleansed honour, and fly a white flag on their roof.

Kadriye (15)

Kadriye's short life ended when her brother Ahmet (19) crushed her head with a stone and slashed her face with a meat cleaver. Kadriye's demise was precipitated when she was raped and impregnated by her 18-year-old cousin (Cakan 2003). Kadriye's rapist/cousin skipped town, to escape the pressure to marry her. Although Kadriye's father denied his role in the murder, neighbours' reports left little doubt that this was an HK. In an interview, Kadriye's sister also justified the killing.

When Kadriye's parents were asked what they

thought about their guilty son, they said he did what any young man would do to cleanse the family honour. When asked how Ahmet should be punished, his mother replied: "I wish they would send him home...I don't want him to worry and get upset...I already buried a daughter, what is done is done...Maybe his father would slap him on the face twice, and that will be the end of it!" (Translated from Cikinca buyukler 2003, 8-9).

Kadriye's family did not claim her body from the morgue. Like Semse and Guldunya, Kadriye's body was also subjected to social, familial and religious rejection. Like the others, she was buried by women who carried signs which read "stop killing us in the name of honour!" (Cakan 2003).

#### Hatice (12)

Hatice was the youngest of 11 children of impoverished parents. At 11½, she was married off to a 17-year-old. Hatice did not want to be a "wife," she wanted to play with her friends. Sometimes, they begged on the street to get small treats with the proceeds (Farac 1998).

In December, 1996, Hatice's teen-husband stabbed her to death. That day, Hatice had begged for a while, and then gone to a movie theatre with her friends. A friend, who was also seriously wounded in the incident, claimed that the movie was not on, and they were just using the bathroom. The husband claimed provocation. When asked what she was doing at the theatre, Hatice allegedly replied "I am prostituting myself." The killer was sentenced to 24 years, reduced by half because of his age. The sentence was further reduced by four years for "slight provocation." He will be eligible for parole in four years (Farac 1998).

#### Semse (19)

In February, 1998, Semse died under the wheels of a farm tractor. The event was considered an accident, since there were six adult witnesses (and a

small child) on the tractor. All claimed that they were returning from a family gathering. The truth came out when an anonymous call sparked an investigation. As it turns out, Semse was raped by her cousin, and was 6-7 months pregnant. Although she had recently married her cousin, the rapist, rumours about the date of pregnancy were relentless. Her family had consulted two different physicians, both of whom refused to perform an abortion because the pregnancy was so advanced (Farac 1998).

The court documented that Semse feared her male kin and refused to go out with them. The outing which involved the tractor ride with men, women and a child was concocted to counteract her fears. The autopsy report showed that her brother, aged 26, had driven the tractor over her body more than once (Farac 1998). This was no accident, yet the punishment was minimal (Table 2).

What is also noteworthy is that Semse was married through berdel (bride-exchange) (Farac 1998, 109). The exchange is carried out by two consenting families that avoid bride-price by giving a daughter to the other's son. However, if one of these brides is unacceptable - not a virgin, the other family may retroactively insist on bride-price. In such cases, either family may consider killing the woman who spoiled the deal. Berdel is yet another corruption of the bride-price system.

#### Songul (28)

Songul was stabbed six times. Her assailant also severely mutilated her face, to delay identification (Diyarbakir Criminal Court 2002a).

It was argued that Musur (the brother-in-law), Cuma (the father) and Vedat (the brother) had decided to kill Songul for dishonouring the family by "talking" to numerous men. The assailants drugged Songul, drove her out of town, stabbed her repeatedly, mutilated her face, and left her to be devoured by wild animals. The

trial revealed that five days earlier, Songul was hospitalized with severe head injuries inflicted by her father. However, she had refused to lay charges. According to the TCL, a formal investigation is contingent on a victim's charges (Ari 2002).

The brother was not tried (he skipped town), and the father was acquitted due to lack of evidence. Only the-brother-in-law was found guilty. However, his life sentence was commuted to 24 years on the basis of section 51/2 (severe provocation) and further reduced by 1/6th for section 59/2 (Table 2). Despite the grisly, premeditated murder, Musur will be eligible for parole in 10 years (Diyarbakir Criminal Court 2002a).

#### Arife (44)

Arife and Ahmet (45) were divorced, but this fact did not prevent Ahmet and his brothers Seyfettin and Mahmut (35) from stabbing her to death (Diyarbakir Criminal Court 2002b). When Seyfettin skipped town, only Ahmet and Mahmut were tried.

Ahmet had deserted his wife and children to find work in another city. He remarried and fathered numerous other children. Yet, Ahmet returned to the village, accusing his ex-wife of infidelity. Although Arife's infidelity was never proven, Ahmet's constant harassment of her was clear. The last time around, he had hid in the basement of the building overnight, and had stabbed Arife from the back as she was leaving for work. Mahmut, (her brother-in-law) blocked her escape and stabbed her from the front. Arife's daughter, who witnessed the murder, testified during the trial (Diyarbakir Criminal Court 2002b).

Ahmet received a life sentence for the brutal murder. However, the sentence was reduced to 20 years on the basis of section 51/2 (severe provocation), and further reduced to 16 years and 8 months, on the basis of section 59/2. The judges openly admitted that Arife, a legally divorced woman, had done nothing to dishonour her (ex)husband or her children. Nevertheless,

they justified the designation of severe provocation by saying that "Ahmet strongly believed that Arife dishonoured him" (Diyarbakir Criminal Court 2002b).

Mahmut's attack on Arife brought him a life sentence, which was reduced by half for severe provocation (51/2), and further reduced to 10 years on the basis of 59/2. He will be eligible for parole in 5 years (Table 2).

#### Emine (14)

Emine got pregnant after being raped. Initially, her father (Ismail, 44), avoided a family decree to kill Emine by sending her out of the village. However, in the third month of pregnancy, uncles and cousins convinced Ismail to kill his daughter. A 20-year-old cousin (Mahmut) was selected as the executioner, and the chosen method was stabbing. As a pretext, Ismail asked Emine to clean his house. When she arrived, Mahmut stabbed her. When Emine fought back, he strangled her.

In the trial, brother Halil (17) and cousin Ibrahim (17) were acquitted. Interestingly, the court refused to activate sections 462 or 51 in Mahmut's case. His life imprisonment was reduced to 20 years through section 59/2. Six other defendants (ages 20-77) received life sentences. Each sentence was reduced to 6½ years (Turk Hukuk Sitesi 2004b).

Although generalizations on a few cases are difficult, the discussed cases highlight the distinctive nature of honour crimes. First, these crimes are committed against young women for their alleged sexual activities. Second, there is no sympathy even when these girls and women are subjected to cruelty, incest or rape. Third, there is enormous kinship pressure on fathers and brothers to kill them. Attempts to marry their "tainted" daughters off, or to send them away, do not resolve the matter. Fourth, families are more punitive when victims are pregnant. Fifth, the HK decision is taken by numerous men, but women

(mothers and sisters) also collude in the decisions. They remain silent, serve to confirm an alibi and protect the killers. Always, the executioners are men. Sixth, although these are premeditated murders, killers manipulate the justice system to get away with murder. Seventh, the court system is lenient to the offenders.

#### Discussion

Despite Turkey's modernized laws, the south-east remains patriarchal. Marriages involve bride-price, girls are bartered, and subjected to the shame of virginity and bloody-sheet tests. If they fail, if they act defiantly, or if they are raped and impregnated, they may be brutally killed. Their death may be staged as an accident and the killers might go free. Their assailants may escape to avoid trial, be acquitted for lack of evidence or receive reduced sentences due to loopholes in the justice system.

One problem is the economic worth/worthlessness of women. In dowry-based societies, only pious girls can be married off to good families who also expect a hefty price. In bride-price societies, only virgin girls bring money and land or goods. Rituals of honour barely hide the fact that 'tainted' girls become worthless. Ironically, these so called honour systems fail to protect women from male transgression. Girls are vulnerable to malicious rumours, sexual attacks, rape or incest. Patriarchal systems attach no dishonour to men who violate women while they re-victimize the victims. Women also collude with patriarchal practices, possibly because men's authority demands their submission. As Jasam (2001) observes, women's compliance and consent are the basis of classic patriarchies. The rules set older women against young, rich women against poor, and women associated with grooms against women related to brides (Brown 1997).

Knowing the legal system's mercy towards young offenders, the youngest males are chosen as executioners. One day, they may also force their own

sons to replicate their sins. Classic patriarchy inflicts untold misery on women, but in a diabolical way, it also disgraces and depraves its male benefactors.

To loosen the chokehold of patriarchal oppression, we should start by seeing violence against women as a continuum. Fragmenting violence against women by culture, or by individual failures will blind us to the pandemic power of patriarchy. Fragmenting violence by region or religion also engenders the undesirable outcome of seeing the problem as us (whatever "us" is) against them (whoever "them" are). It is true that classic patriarchy is unique to certain parts of the world, as is amply discussed in this paper. However, patriarchy is also a global problem. Therefore, we must seek its solution at the global level. Since violence can take on unique forms, we must also seek local solutions. Overall success demands multiple approaches.

In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights codified the principles of life, liberty, security and freedom from torture as indivisible and non-reducible rights for all people. Ironically, application of these fundamental rights to life conditions specific to women and girls had to wait another fifty years (Bond & Phillips 2001). Even now, some UN declarations such as CEDAW (1979) and DEVAW (1993) remain as guidelines without any means of enforcement. Even when patriarchal states sign these protocols, violation of women's rights continue to be overlooked (Abramson 2003).

States that fail to protect women from violence must be held accountable. If they systematically fail in their responsibility, there should be international investigations and sanctions. Notwithstanding the difficulty of enforcement, the principle is that the states must feel moral, political, legal and economic pressure from the community of nations to protect their own citizens (especially women and children). These basic humanitarian standards are already underway in human

rights courts and commissions that look into matters of political crimes and genocide. However, with few exceptions (such as the Hague trials of war-time rapes), the international community has been reluctant to deal with crimes of honour. What is equally troubling is that the international community has not been even-handed. For example, while vociferously holding Turkey responsible for its treatment of prisoners, the international community has been inexplicably silent on the tortures at the Abu Ghraib prison and at Guantanamo Bay. The moral authority of nations requires a little more uniformity.

With regard to Turkey's membership bid, the EU has been adamant about the human rights record of Turkey while remaining silent on honour crimes. Could this be an oversight or due to the recognition that honour crimes are also on the increase in countries like Britain, Germany, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands that open their doors to immigrants and refugees from the east? So far, none of these respectable EU members have been able to prevent such crimes from being committed under the protection of their own laws. I think that EU members recognize that laws, albeit important, are not sufficient to deal with such crimes. Instead, the resolution lies in unified rather than divisive efforts.

In making and reinforcing state laws, sensitivity to women's vulnerabilities is crucial. As discussed, there are loopholes in Turkish laws and in their enforcement. However, punishing states through marginalization, declaring wars, or subjugating their innocent people to hardship through long-term sanctions are not ways to desirable change. Those who believe that punishment jolts states into improving human rights need only look into the fallout from recent wars. Instead, states respond best to positive incentives. For example, Turkey's update of its stance on women's and children's rights is directly correlated to its EU aspirations. Ignoring such positive efforts may cultivate

a dangerous slip towards cultural and religious fanaticism that is abundant in the region. Although the EU has much to contribute to Turkey, it also has much to gain from Turkey's unique position as a secular democracy in the Moslem world.

At the local level, top-down foreign interventions do not work. Traditional societies are suspicious of the west, and there are ample historical reasons for this mistrust. In the middle east, suspicions have multiplied since the two Gulf wars, and the uneven-handed US foreign policy. Given the deep-rooted mistrust, international laws, treaties and agreements are not sufficient to eliminate cultural practices. To preserve their cultural identity within a westernizing world, orthodox patriarchies may even respond with rigidification of their practices (comparable to resurgence in religious extremism). Thus, although international pressure on the state is absolutely necessary, such pressure is counterproductive at local levels. Instead, the legal and moral fabric of the country must lead the way in reversing biases in crimes against women. Turkey has been going through this transformation. For example, both section 434, whereby rapists go free if they marry their victims, and 462, allowing for 7/8ths reduction for honour crimes, have been repealed. Other sections, such as routine age reductions, provocation (section 51) and conduct (section 59) remain in full practice.

States must also reform their inheritance and land-ownership laws. Perhaps more than any other dependency, economic dependence increases vulnerability. States must be beckoned to invest in health-care, education and programs to curb birth rates. Women who have no control over reproduction are saddled by traditional views that exclusively define them in their reproductive roles. Without dismantling the reverence for motherhood, creating alternate paths for respectability will reduce the patriarchal chokehold on women's lives. Turkey has made successful inroads in all these

dimensions except in the south-east region.

Solutions may also involve working with the positive aspects of the culture from within. I believe that it is crucial to enlist the authority of the local elders, both men and women, into the process of social change where change will come along with rather than despite them. Without the help and cooperation of the elders, patriarchal systems will sabotage efforts to create positive change. As a final point, the west must learn to recognize and reward positive change rather than seeking a capriciously applied perfection.

uneducated, rural men marry multiple wives through a "religious" rather than a "legal" ceremony.

#### Endnotes

1. This research has been made possible by a generous grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.
2. Since the focus is on men's power over women, I will use the male pronoun for power.
3. CEDAW (1979) is the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, and DEVAW (1993) is the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women.
4. Court decisions are public documents in Turkey. I am grateful to Honourable Serife Kirbiyik (2<sup>nd</sup> Criminal Court Judge, Diyarbakir) for providing nine and Leyla Pervizat, a feminist activist, for providing one additional copy of court documents.
5. In rural/tribal areas, parents may omit applying for birth certificates for their daughters. It is also common that a child receives the birth certificate of a dead sibling. So, a number of rural women live and die without an existence in official statistics.
6. In Turkey, polygamy has been outlawed since 1926. Yet, in patriarchal regions, it is common that poor,

TABLES

Table I. South-eastern and overall Turkey on Sociodemographic Variables (2001)

Demographic Variables	TURKEY	South-east Region
Population	65,293,000.0	6,613,000.0
Annual Population Increase	1.5	2.5
Birth Rate/1000	21.5	35.9
Fertility Rate	2.5	4.2
Infant Mortality/1000 live births	35.3	60.0
Life Expectancy (Men)	66.9	60.9
Life Expectancy (Women)	71.5	65.1
Proportion of 0-14 age group	29.9	41.2
Proportion of 65+ age group	5.6	4.1
% of urban population	Not Available	67.5

Source: Akyildirim, 2001, p. 2-6.



Songul Yucel (28)	Musur Guntur (36) Cuma Yucel (63) Vedat Yucel	2001	brother-in-law father brother	stabbing	--	Yes		by 1/6	life ⇒ 20 yrs acquitted escaped/not tried
Arife Arslan (44)	Ahmet Arslan (45) Mahmut Arslan (35) Seyfettin Arslan (?)	2002	husband brother-in-law brother-in-law	stabbing	--	Yes		by 1/6 by 1/6	life ⇒ 16yrs 8 months from 24 yrs to 10 yrs escaped/not tried
Melek Iylek (22)	Abdul. Ilyek (28)	2001	brother	stabbing	--	--			acquitted (on mental grounds)
Bahriye Gecer (49)	Shabettin Umur (16)	2001	brother-in-law	shot gun	by ½	--		by 1/6	from 24 yrs to 104.000 TL x 24 months (about 10cents per month)
Remziye Yaman (33) Hatun Yaman (23)	Ramazan Basibuyuk (49)	2001	brother-in-law	shot gun	--	by 2/3		by 1/6 by 1/6	life ⇒ 20 yrs (for Remziye) from 24 to 6yrs and 8 months (for Hatun)
Emine Kizilkurt (14)	Mahmut Kizilkurt (20) Ismail Kizilkurt (38) Halil Kizilkurt (17) Ibrahim Kizilkurt (?) Mehmet Kizilkurt (77) 7 other suspects	2002	cousin father uncle uncle great uncle cousins						life ⇒ 20 yrs. acquitted life ⇒ 6 ½ yrs life ⇒ 6 ½ yrs acquitted
Nilgun Karabulut (30)	Huseyin Karabulut (40)	2002	husband	shot gun	--	--		by 1/6	from life to 12 yrs and 6 months

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