

Culture of Honor, Culture of Change

A Feminist Analysis of Honor Killings in Rural Turkey

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This article presents a feminist analysis of honor killings in rural Turkey. One of the main goals is to dissociate honor killings from a particular religious belief system and locate it on a continuum of patriarchal patterns of violence against women. The authors first provide a summary of the defining characteristics of honor killings and discuss the circumstances under which they are likely to occur. Second, they discuss modernization versus traditionalism in Turkey, emphasizing the contradictory forces in a culture of change. Third, they discuss conflict orientations in understanding violence against women, starting from some of the assertions and assumptions of the Marx/Engels hypothesis and socialist feminism, and comparing and contrasting the radical feminist orientation with the materialist orientation. Fourth, the authors give examples of honor killings in Turkey that have been recorded in recent years, specifically highlighting the common threads among these heinous crimes. The patterns observed are more supportive of the radical and socialist feminist orientations than the Marx/Engels hypothesis. The article ends with modest suggestions about breaking the cycle of violence against women, emphasizing the personal, social, structural, and global links in engendering positive change.

*The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing ("Long Talks," 1995) turned the global spotlight on a wide range of violence that women and girls suffer throughout the world and approved an Action Plan to enhance women's status (Bunch & Frost, 1997). Unquestionably, one of the most extreme forms in the identified continuum of violence is honor killings. An *honor killing*¹ is a generic term used to refer to the premeditated murder of preadolescent, adolescent, or adult women by one or more male*

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members of the immediate or extended family. These killings are often undertaken when a family council decides on the time and form of execution due to an allegation, suspicion, or proof of sexual impropriety by the victim (Amnesty International, 1999; Pervizat, 1998). The family council typically includes the father and brother(s) of the victim, and may also include uncles, grandfathers, and male in-laws. Definitions of impropriety can be extremely amorphous, often subsuming sexual or sensual acts, allegations, or rumors. Acts or accusations may range from going to the movies without approval or a chaperon to kissing, holding hands, dating, or having intercourse with a man who is not one's culturally or legally sanctioned husband (Pervizat, 1998). In one extreme case, the husband dreamed about the unfaithfulness of his wife and used his dream as a justification to arrange her murder (Amnesty International, 1999). The decision for executions may be given in cases of eloping with a lover, even if the girl/woman may have legally married the man. Executions may also take place after an incestuous, acquaintance, or stranger rape, even if the girl/woman was extremely young or was forced to marry the offender after the rape. Executions may even be carried out when the rape victim is mentally challenged or seriously injured during the assault (Amnesty International, 1999).

Indeed, since the mid-1990s, numerous humanitarian organizations—such as Amnesty International, the United Nations, and its branch that deals with women's issues (UNIFEM)—have devoted time, energy, and money to raise awareness about these gendered atrocities. Respected news media have joined the compassionate chorus by publishing newspaper articles, news reports, and television series on honor killings (e.g., Sawyer, 1999). Thus far, the hub of the international inquiry and media attention has been honor killings in Pakistan, Jordan, Egypt, Aman, and a few other Islamic states.² This attention is well placed when one considers the estimate of 200 to 300 women annually falling victim to honor killings in Pakistan alone. It is reported that Jordan, Egypt, and Aman each record 25 to 30 honor killings a year (Goodenough, 1999; Sati, 1997). However, these numbers may grossly underrepresent the reality. Like most other violent crimes against women and girls (e.g., wife abuse, rape, child sexual abuse), the reported cases of honor killings may constitute only a small

fraction of a culturally submerged iceberg (Amnesty International, 1999; Sev'er, 1998; Solomon, 1992).

Another bias in the humanitarian reports also needs to be mentioned. Although these reports are written with sensitivity toward religious differences, they nevertheless leave the impression that there may be something wrong with Islam or its practice. Especially in the televised reports, a sobering discussion about honor killings is frequently juxtaposed over a silhouette of a mosque or a soundtrack of a Moslem call for prayer. The outcome of these visual and auditory cues is to inseparably tie the crime with the already negatively stereotyped Moslem world. In fact, honor killings predate Islam and are not consistent with the Qur'an (Goodenough, 1999; Muslim Women's League, 1999; Queen Noor, 1999; Rodgers, 1995; Sati, 1997; Turgut, 1998).³ Moreover, we argue in this article that honor killings are not confined to a few, fragile, nonsecular democracies such as Pakistan or to patriarchal monarchies such as Jordan. Honor killings are one extreme in the worldwide patriarchal violence against women. They also occur in better established, developing, democratic, and secular states, and regrettably the incidence of such killings may be on the rise. We do not need to single out Islam (or another religion) to understand the epistemology of killing women for honor.⁴ Instead, we can seek an in-depth understanding of honor killings (as well as other ways of killing women and female children) through a careful application of feminist perspectives without invoking religiosity or religion. We will use Turkey to exemplify these assertions.

TURKEY: CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN TRUE MODERNIZATION AND PATRIARCHAL CONTROL OF WOMEN

SURGE IN MODERNIZATION IN WOMEN'S STATUS IN THE 1920s

To most of the general public and many academics in North America, Turkey is a little-understood enigma in the global puzzle. With the exception of negative stereotypes fueled by controversial films such as *Midnight Express* and, more recently, some pity due to the wrenching images of three devastating earthquakes in its heartland, Turkey remains obscure.

In fact, Turkey is a vibrant democracy (Arat, 1996). Within the past 77 years, Turkey has moved away from an imperialist, non-secular, patriarchal, and increasingly corrupt Ottoman empire and its successive male sultans to a democratic, secularized (since 1924) republic (since 1923) with a modern constitution (since 1924). Both the multiparty political governance and the educational institutions (since 1924) have been completely dissociated from Islamic rule and law (Shari'ah), despite the fact that more than 99% of the Turkish population is Moslem (*Worldmark*, 1998, p. 790).

For the purpose of this article, the social, cultural, and legal modernization of Turkey is as important as its political transformation. Between 1926 and 1928, Turkey adopted (with modifications) and successfully implemented civil, family, and contract laws from Switzerland, criminal law from Italy, business administration laws from France, and commerce laws from Germany. Again, this systematic Westernization in political and legal thought and practice has set Turkey apart from other primarily Moslem states that have retained much closer links between religion and other institutions including politics, education, and justice systems (Arat, 1996; Orucu, 1996). Moreover, the modernization in Turkish women's rights should be underscored (Arin, 1996). Through the adaptation and implementation of the Swiss-originated civil and family laws (1926), polygamy, betrothal, and bride-price—common practices under Ottoman rule and in many contemporary Islamic countries because they are permitted under Shari'ah—have been outlawed in Turkey. The modernized civil and family laws provide equal rights to women and men in education, employment, and inheritance, and equalize women's and men's rights and obligations in divorce (see Arin, 1996). In contrast, under Ottoman rule and in the majority of the Islamic world, divorce was/is strictly a male prerogative, with devastating social, cultural, and economic consequences for women.

Turkish law sees the family as the cradle of the society, and thus harshly criminalizes violence among close family members. For example, assault of a family member increases the codified term of punishment for common assault anywhere between one third to one half (Arin, 1996, p. 132). This means that if killing a non-family member will bring a 10-year sentence, killing a family member may bring up to 15 years. Turkish law even protects women

(and young men) from public harassment and stalking by criminalizing both of these activities (Arin, 1996, p. 134).

In the political arena, Turkish women received the right to vote and be elected in municipal, state, and federal elections between 1930 and 1934. After the 1935 national elections, there were 18 elected women ministers in the Turkish Parliament.⁵ This number translates into 4.5% women parliamentarians in 1935, as opposed to only 1.7% women parliamentarians in 1991 (Kidog, 1997, p. 8). These are noteworthy developments if one considers that women's right to vote was legalized in England in 1928. French women had to wait until 1944, and their Quebec sisters until 1940 for the same political right (Kislali, 1996; Nelson & Robinson, 1999). It should also be noted that in the early 1990s Turkey had a female prime minister (Tansu Ciller), even before an advanced society such as Canada had one⁶ and in contrast to the United States, which has yet to elect a female president or vice president.

INHIBITING FORCES AGAINST MODERNIZATION IN WOMEN'S STATUS

Nevertheless, the head start of the 1920s has not assured Turkey a secure place among the First World countries, nor has it assured Turkish women parity with their male counterparts. Some of the lag can be understood in terms of disadvantages in the country's demographics. Turkey occupies a land equal to 7.8% the size of Canada or 8.3% of the United States, with a population density of 78.2 people per square kilometer. The population is approximately 64 million, and the country is plagued with a very high growth rate (see United Nations, 1997). Per capita annual income is around US\$1,400, and the per capita gross domestic product is slightly more than US\$2,200. Like other economically struggling nations, the population distribution is flat and disproportionately bottom-heavy, with approximately 30% of the total population consisting of people younger than age 15, and less than 4% of the population older than 65 years of age. Life expectancy remains substantially lower than in highly industrialized societies (66 for women and 63 for men), and infant mortality rates remain high (39.9 per 1,000 live births) (see United Nations, 1997). Although the literacy rate is reported as 80% for people older than 6 years (89% for men and 72% for women) (Kidog, 1998; United Nations

Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1999), older people, rural residents, and women are significantly more likely to be illiterate.⁷

Correlated with the disadvantages in education, women's labor force participation is also problematic for two reasons. First, although the participation rates reach 50% in rural areas, women's work frequently involves unpaid contributions to the family farm or small business that are under men's control (Orucu, 1996). Second, although the labor participation rate for men reaches 98% in urban areas, women's rate is only 35% and women work in gender-segregated, low-paying service jobs (Kidog, 1998). Turkish customs explicitly emphasize the family roles of women and deem secondary any work or career aspirations women may have (Orucu, 1996). Having been carefully socialized into gendered divisions of labor, most girls/women learn to curb their career involvement or revisit their level of commitment after marriage. Until 1999, the legal retirement age for women was 45 years. Even for educated and career-oriented women, this young retirement age left very little time to establish independence after the natural process of childbearing and rearing that almost all Turkish women see as a must (Orucu, 1996). Although the age of retirement for women now has been raised to 58 (*Sabah*, 1999), the cultural expectations that cast women in a tangential relationship with the work world will continue to impact their choice (or lack of choices) for many generations to come.

Inhibiting forces to modernization can also be understood in terms of cultural factors, especially (but not exclusively) those that are rooted in law and customs. Although the official stance of the republic is committed to gender equality and secularism, these professed ideologies have not been able to dismantle the strong customary expectations about the mutual exclusivity of the public and private domains. Despite the rhetoric of equality, an overwhelming emphasis is placed on the caregiving, nurturing, and self-sacrificing roles of women. Marriage and motherhood are still the ultimate path to status attainment. According to Arat (1996), 49% of men who reside in western Turkey and 60% of those in eastern Turkey still believe that they are smarter than women; 56% of men residing in western Turkey and 73% in eastern Turkey believe that they should have absolute authority over

women and 36% of western Turkish men and 57% of eastern Turkish men believe that they have the right to punish women if they are challenged by them. These are far from egalitarian attitudes.

Not surprisingly, there is a cultural preoccupation with female propriety. Many patriarchal mechanisms and rituals exist for sexual and reproductive control of women (Yurdakul, 1999). Although patriarchal expectations (such as insistence on virginity before marriage) color all Turkish gender relations, they are particularly fierce and unforgiving among rural populations. Rural populations, especially in eastern regions, often occupy the lowest rungs on the socioeconomic ladder, are most likely to be undereducated or illiterate, and are most vulnerable to religious and cultural misconceptions or even extremism.

The Turkish legal system, which was progressive and revolutionary at the time of its inception in 1926, has grown stagnant, and thus has not kept up with the gender-based advances taking place in the modern world. Men are still considered to be the providers for the family. Although rape is considered a very serious offense, marital rape is not covered unless corroborated by serious injury (Kaya, 1996). Until very recently, the victim was the only one who could lay charges against an abusive partner (Arin, 1996). In a patriarchal society, this requirement assured women's silence in abuse cases. Although the onus of reporting abuse is now shared by the state prosecutor and the penalty for not reporting has been raised from 3 to 6 months ("Article 23233," 1998), patriarchal norms are likely to continue to protect abusing men rather than victimized women.

In Turkish law, nontraditional family arrangements have no recognition or protection. In legal marriages, the principle of property is one of separate ownership during and after marriage unless contractually stipulated otherwise by the partners (Arin, 1996). In practice, almost all property is registered in the man's name. Because separate contracts within marriage are seen as contrary to cultural norms, women's dependence on men is legally entrenched by separate ownership legislation. The existing family law also gives greater weight to the father's decision in disputed custody cases and still considers the sexual propriety of women (even after a legal separation) a factor in sustaining paternal rights over children (Kidog, 1997). A deep legal division continues to differentiate children from legal marriages from those

born out of wedlock (*pic* translates as "bastard" and is a degrading insult as well as a derogatory legal term for children born out of wedlock). Such designations, despite the overarching equality principle in Turkish law, continue to restrict women's sexual freedom and reproductive choice.

The process of law enforcement is even more problematic than the gender ramifications of legal statutes. The front liners, such as the police or gendarme (federal police/army combination), and the major players of the criminal justice system are either exclusively (the police and gendarme) or disproportionately (lawyers, judges, and legislators) male. Most of these men hold strong patriarchal stereotypes and expectations. Even in clearly abusive situations, a father's or a husband's right over his children or wife is seldom questioned and rarely criminalized. In a recent study, 66% of the police stated that women are responsible for attacks against them because they dress or act in provocative ways ("Polis Tecavuzde," 2000). In Turkey, the total respect for the privacy of the family and men's culturally legitimized superiority within it is an iron cage for many women and children. In extreme cases, the privacy of the family hides even the darkest customs, such as honor killings (Farac, 1998). Patriarchal discretions about family honor allow men to receive reduced sentences of one fourth to one eighth of the prescribed term ("Campaign," 1999; Turgut, 1998). The irony of this needs emphasis in terms of the contradictions in the Turkish law: As mentioned earlier, violence toward a family member (man or woman) increases the punishment anywhere from one third to one half. However, if it is honor-related violence (i.e., an honor killing of women), the sentences may be reduced by as much as seven eighths (Arin, 1996).

DETRIMENTAL FORCES AGAINST MODERNIZATION IN WOMEN'S STATUS: THE CULTURAL EQUATION OF MEN'S HONOR, FAMILY HONOR, AND SEXUAL PROPRIETY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

In the West, honor is often defined as moral integrity, the esteem accorded to virtue or talent. Both the depth and the breadth of an eastern understanding of honor is very different (Abu-Lughod, 1986). In its purest and most desirable form, honor is an integral dimension of Eastern culture, where one's honorable deeds are

looked on as a valued possession. In a way, neither the rich nor the poor are exempt from trying their very best to lead honorable lives and to protect their own as well as the family name from insinuations or open charges of dishonor.

In its positive manifestation, honor is a nontangible path for social status that can equate a very poor man or woman with a very rich one, at least on one culturally esteemed dimension. The negative side of this generally admirable Eastern tradition is when honor becomes an obsession, a biased scale men use to judge other men, and men and women use to judge women (Brooks, 1995; Goodwin, 1994; Yurdakul, 1999). Interestingly, the poor are even more possessive about their honor, because they have little else in the rigidly stratified societies in which they live. At the extreme end of this continuum, judgments about honor can and do become fatal.

Similar to other Middle Eastern and primarily Islamic cultures (Abou-Zeid, 1974; Abu-Lughod, 1986), Turkish culture is also tightly wrapped around sentiments of honor. The richness of the Turkish language in providing many different words for *honor* attests to its cultural importance. The term *onur* closely corresponds to the North American understanding of honor. *Seref* is linked to the glory derived from a man's own or one's male kin's accomplishments (Abou-Zeid, 1974, pp. 245-246) and thus represents an honor that is derived from an achieved status. In that sense, *seref* is almost exclusively possessed and controlled by men, an honor that they can increase or lose through their own or their male kin's accomplishments. *Haysiyet* is linked with an internal ability to feel shame, whereas *haysiyetsiz* refers to the absence of this quality. *Yuzsuz* literally translates as faceless, which makes a visual connotation to the absence of honor with the ability to feel shame. *Ar* is yet another word that links the ability to feel shame with the blood that circulates in the body. *Ar damari catlamis* are words that imply the symbolic event of a burst artery, where all honor has spilled. *Nam* and *san* are words for an honorable renown, *gurur* is an honorable pride, *prestij* is a borrowed term to refer to the Western concept of prestige, and *izzet* is the type of honor derived from being able to show generosity to others. *Gurur*, *onur*, *ar*, *prestij*, and *izzet* are usually gender neutral in their application, whereas *seref* is androcentric.

In contrast, *namus* is a type of sexual honor that presupposes physical and moral qualities that women ought to have. This type is associated with the shame of women and women's families (Yurdakul, 1999). Women must protect their *namus* for the duration of their lives—more specifically, before, during, and after marriage. Women are also expected to protect the *namus* of other women and girls related to them, for example, their daughters and granddaughters. Moreover, *namus* has an additional hereditary quality, whereby “the shame of mother is transmitted to the children, and a person's lack of [*namus*] may be attributed to his birth, hence the power of insults, the most powerful of all [relating] to the purity of the mother. After this, the greatest dishonor of a man derives from the impurity of his wife” (Pitt-Rivers, 1974, p. 52). Even after marriage dissolution⁸ men may feel threatened by the sexual behavior of their former wives and how it may cast a shadow on their *namus*. A woman's sexuality, therefore, is deemed a force to be controlled by the woman herself. However, *namus* is much too important to be trusted to women alone (Brooks, 1995). Fathers and other male kin before marriage exercise full rights to sanction women who deviate. Husbands and their male kin assume this task during marriage and even after its dissolution.

North American research provides ample documentation of men's control of women's sexual behavior because of jealousy and possessiveness (see DeKeseredy & Hinch, 1991; Dobash & Dobash, 1979, 1998; Sev'er, 1997, 1998). Yet *namus*-related control is substantially more all-encompassing, because it is derived directly from cultural perceptions, expectations, and judgments and is not based on the controlling behavior of an individual man. Presumably, a shamed man and his (or his wife's) kin, neighbors, sometimes whole communities, and the agents of law enforcement act as biased judges and juries against the offending woman by actively enforcing severe sanctions, remaining stoic witnesses, or failing to investigate wrongdoings (Farac, 1998; Turgut, 1998).

Even though other types of honor can be related to a variation of acts or deeds, *namus* is related to virginity and chastity of women before marriage or being the subservient recipient (not the initiator) of the sexual desires and advances of husbands during marriage. Brooks (1995) links this fear of women's sexual desire to a Qur'anic interpretation that women are endowed with nine parts of sexual desire (as opposed to one part in men).

Women are expected to protect their own as well as their husband's *namus* even if the husband may have died. The Islamic commonality among the Middle Eastern cultures⁹ contributes to the association of honor with women's bodies and selected men's rights over them. A more secular understanding of the same phenomenon is the commodification of women.

Commodification of women is reflected in the preoccupation with virginity. In Turkish, *bakire* means untouched and refers to a virgin (regardless of age). The term *kiz* means a girl but also infers virginity. The language differentiates *kiz* from *kadin*, which means woman (a married woman) by connoting lack of virginity in the latter. There are no comparable words to differentiate virginal and nonvirginal men or married and unmarried men, because the sexuality and marital status of men are not stringently monitored. The culture is exclusively consumed with women's sexuality. Words such as *kizligini bozmak* or *kizligini kaybetmek* translate as breaking or spoiling a girl's virginity or losing virginity. Both terms imply the irreversibility of the status passage. Terms such as *kizin bozuk cikti* imply lack of virginity (translated as "your daughter was spoiled or broken"). In short, the value of a girl is judged by the actual (as well as expected) intactness of her hymen.

The word *dusmek* (fall) signifies a woman's sharp descent on the continuum of *namus*. The only way a fallen woman can clean the *namus* of her family is through killing the man who defiled her or by taking her own life. In a well publicized case, 32-year-old Sukran Gonenc drenched herself in gasoline and burned herself to death in the presence of the Turkish media and hundreds of onlookers. The reason for this public suicide was her lover's refusal to marry her because she was not a virgin. In an interview, her lover said, "How can she expect me to marry a woman like that? My family would never allow such a thing!" ("Cakmagi Cakdigi An," 1999). Even when women kill themselves they will remain unclean, but their death helps clean the *namus* of their families. Men can also clean family *namus* by killing the woman who brought them shame.

The cultural obsession about women's sexuality in general and virginity in particular has created rich—and by Western standards, demeaning—rituals around men's initiation of the first sexual experience through marriage. Although there are wide variations according to class and geographic region, either symbolic or

actual droplets of blood on *gerdek* (the culturally sanctioned nuptial night of losing virginity) are linked to the evaluation of the worthiness of women. In western Turkey and most other affluent urban areas, the rituals are symbolic, such as wearing white (only virgins wear white wedding gowns) or tying a scarlet belt around the bride's waist (signifying the blood to be shed through penetration of the hymen). In more remote regions, the rituals can be much more graphic, such as girls being subjected to arbitrary virginity examinations (Turgut, 1998) or the bloodied sheets from *gerdek* being displayed on a clothesline or presented to the in-laws to prove virginity. There are reported cases of reversal of marital contracts due to lack of proof. Such reversals are deemed a grave dishonor to the woman and a greater insult to the *namus* of her male kin. In such cases, young women are known to have taken their own lives. Others kill children born out of wedlock ("Bebegini Kurtlara Yedirdi," 1995). Some are killed by their male kin (Turgut, 1998).

The cultural obsession with virginity also manifests itself in an obsession with women's infidelity. In Iran, adulterous women can still be buried to their chest and stoned to death, and even the size of stones is carefully regulated: not too small to unduly prolong the suffering, but not too large to end it too quickly (Brooks, 1995; "Iste, Seriatin Gercek," 1997). Secular and modernized Turkish laws have banned such barbaric practices since the 1920s, but the existence of laws is not necessarily a safeguard against male aggression.

In sum, according to cultural mores, men cannot have *namus* by themselves, because their *namus* is always determined by the *namus* of their mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters. Stated differently, men are vulnerable to the violations of their own *namus* through the impropriety of women in their current, extended, or even former families. Turkish language again richly reflects the ceaseless fear about losing *namus* and men's predatory prerogative to make a restoration. *Namusa laf gelmek* translates as other people's gossip about one's *namus*. *Namusu kirilenmek* or *lekelenmek* refers to one's *namus* being dirtied or stained, and *namusunu temizlemek* is a man's attempt (and obligation) to clean it. *Namussuz* signals a total loss of *namus* and, within the honor-saturated nature of Turkish culture, it is the equivalent of a moral purgatory. The amorphous moral quality of *namus* has led patriarchal

societies in general, and rural parts of Turkey in particular, to develop extreme sanctions to control the sexual behavior of women (Delaney, 1987; Farac, 1998). Under rare circumstances, these extreme sanctions include premeditated murder as an attempt to clean a dirtied namus, but perhaps more important to reestablish men's brotherhood with other men and to deter other women from engaging in similar behavior (Sati, 1997). Nevertheless, despite the overemphasis on honor,

The problem of "honor" killings is not a problem of morality or of ensuring that women maintain their own personal virtue; rather, it is a problem of domination, power and hatred of women who, in these instances, are viewed as nothing more than servants to the family, both physically and symbolically. (Muslim Women's League, 1999)

FEMINIST EXPLANATIONS OF WOMEN'S SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE CONTROL

TRADITIONAL MARXISM

According to Marx and Engels, men's patriarchal attempt to control women's sexuality and reproduction followed the advent of private property. In his controversial analysis, Engels (1993) argued that gendered relations were balanced in primitive hunting and gathering societies. If and when any deviation from this general balance occurred, it was in women's favor (matrilineal, matriarchal) due to their advantaged position in relation to their offspring. However, when rudimentary technology and knowledge about farming and domestication of animals allowed agrarian settlements, accumulation of wealth became a social preoccupation. Due to their physical strength and the skills developed in hunting wild animals, men were considerably advantaged in new agrarian settings. They accumulated wealth, and they wanted to ensure that their wealth passed to their legitimate offspring. Due to the long lapse between the sexual act and birth, and in the absence of biological knowledge or technological skills, the only way to assure paternity was to control the sexual behavior of women. In this transformation, "The overthrow of mother right was the *world historical defeat of female sex*. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to

servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children" (pp. 120-121).

According to Engels (1993), the process of industrialization and the ensuing accumulation of capital also have not been kind to women. In his view, the practice of monogamy and the equality it connotes is nothing but a sham, because monogamy "clearly reveals the antagonism between the man and the woman expressed in the man's exclusive supremacy" (p. 131). Capitalistic marriages among the wealthy are merely a contract to preserve capital and to ensure its smooth and undiluted transmission across generations. The bourgeois law makes sure that capital remains intact through monitoring work relations and inheritance (p. 135). For women, marriage is like prostitution, where the wife "only differs from the ordinary courtesan in that she does not let out her body on piece-work as a wage-worker, but sells it once and for all into slavery" (p. 134). In short, women are seen as mere vessels in this intergenerational transmission of wealth and power within a capitalist system. The capitalist machine also exploits women's caring proclivities by making sure that they recondition men each night after a grueling day of labor (Seccombe, 1980). Engels finds the salvation of women in their full labor force participation: "The emancipation of women will only be possible when women can take part in production on a large, social scale, and domestic work no longer claims anything but an insignificant amount of her time" (p. 221).

RADICAL FEMINISM

Marx and Engels never fulfilled the promise of developing a theory that fully accounted for reproductive activity and patriarchy. Radical feminists define patriarchy as a universal propensity of men to dominate women, and they see patriarchal control of women as the most important subjugation.¹⁰ Moreover, patriarchy is seen as invasively institutionalized within cultural rules and practices and openly manifested in all aspects of everyday life (O'Brien, 1981). The worst manifestation of patriarchy is centered around controlling women's sexuality and reproductive powers (Brownmiller, 1975).

Thus, radical feminism differs from a strictly materialistic analysis of power relations in a number of ways. First, radical

feminists claim that patriarchy preceded the invention of private property and continues to exist in all realms of micro- and macro-gendered relations regardless of wealth, property, or historical period (O'Brien, 1981). According to Charlotte Bunch (1975), men conquered women in prehistorical times: "We do not exactly know how this conquest took place, but it is clear that the original imperialism was male over female: the male claiming the female body and her service as his territory (or property)" (p. 37). Second, radical feminists see marriage and the family as "twin pillars" of all patriarchal cultures (Dworkin, 1989). This is quite different from the Marx/Engels focus on the relations between those who own the means of production and those who sell their labor power in exchange for wages. Third, radical feminists link the subjugation of women to childbearing (O'Brien, 1981). Fourth, radical feminists do not see the state as a benign power protecting and serving the accumulation of capital (Tucker, 1978). Instead, they see state authority as masculine authority actively and forcefully defending male rights and privilege (Brownmiller, 1975; MacKinnon, 1982). In Dworkin's (1989) words, "We see the joining together of politics and morality, coupled to produce their inevitable offspring—the oppression of women based on . . . a rampant sexual fascism" (p. 18). Fifth, radical feminists disagree with Engels's suggestion of full employment as a sufficient condition to emancipate women. Instead, salvation is deemed possible if and only if the chains of traditional, heterosexist marriage are broken. A revolutionary change in reproduction that currently enslaves women is also considered a must (Firestone, 1970; O'Brien, 1981). Others prefer establishing strictly female units and communities to countervail power and shelter women from male domination (Bunch, 1975; Dworkin, 1974, 1989; MacKinnon, 1982; Rubin, 1975). Sixth, radical feminists see a dimension of patriarchal forces that is totally omitted in the materialistic analyses of gender relations; they argue that in times of social change and upheaval (e.g., economic upheaval, ethnic wars, or globalization), patriarchal forces will tighten their control on women to reestablish historical male privileges (e.g., increased violence against intimate partners during economic slumps, or mass rapes during ethnic wars such as in Vietnam, Bosnia, and Kosovo) (see MacKinnon, 1993) or to eliminate possible competition from women (e.g., violence inflicted on women workers in Mexican

border towns where U.S. corporations have set up shop to exploit cheaper labor) (see "Murder Most Foul," 1999). Contrary to Engels's thesis, social change (such as increased female labor force participation) in traditionally patriarchal societies may increase violence against women rather than lead to their emancipation. Technological changes that bring challenging messages from a different gender order may also trigger men's attempts to push back their women.

In sum, although radical feminism may have many weaknesses and blind spots of its own (see Fox, 1988; Nelson & Robinson, 1999), it nevertheless provides a powerful framework for understanding violence against women (Solomon, 1992). Moreover, it is an important conceptual tool for understanding increased violence in times of internal turmoil or global change.

SOCIALIST FEMINISM

Socialist feminists argue that Marx and Engels and the exclusive reproductive labor focus of the radical feminists fall short of developing a theory that fully accounts for the interconnectedness of productive and reproductive activities (Flax, 1976; Gravenhorst, 1988; Mitchell, 1973). In socialist feminism, patriarchal and class components are considered inextricably intertwined in understanding any social problem, including violence against women (Jaggar & Rothenberg, 1984). For example, according to Mitchell (1973), women's problems can be analyzed in terms of four focal points: (a) production of goods and services to meet basic human needs, (b) sexuality and sexual domination, (c) reproduction as insurance for the continuation of the species, and (d) gender socialization, especially in terms of the division of labor relating to production, reproduction, and sexuality.

Like traditional Marxism, socialist feminists recognize the importance of class in determining the propensity of men toward violence (Rubin, 1975). Men who occupy the lowest rungs of the economic system—men who have very little power or say in the workplace or are cast outside of the economic system altogether (the unemployed)—may have a much higher propensity for conjugal types of violence. Like radical feminists, socialist feminists see the interaction of patriarchal patterns in male camaraderie. They see male bonding among equally oppressed men (such as

male laborers, soldiers, drinking buddies, and gangs). Not only are these men more likely to be socialized to see violence as a legitimate form of action, but they are also likely to subscribe to the belief that men are superior to women (Schwartz, 1988). This explosive mix may be due to perceptions of superiority as men and the vulnerability they themselves feel in a capitalist/imperialist system that subjugates them. Privileged men, who occupy higher rungs in the society, may not be as prone to engaging in such blatant forms of sexism because they feel much more secure about their own position in the system. Nevertheless, they are in power positions (e.g., lawmakers, judges, politicians, clergy) to preserve the continuation of the historical privileges of men for all men.

Unlike traditional Marxism, socialist feminists do not see the employment of women as a solution to their power disadvantages, although they see economic independence of women as one of the key factors. However, they also acknowledge that private and public spheres are problematic. There are layers of inequalities in pay, promotions, childcare, and housework that need to be resolved before women's work can bring them on par with their male counterparts. Unlike radical feminism, socialist feminists do not see the dismantling of the family as a solution. Instead, they seek state commitment to relieve some of the problems families, especially women in families, face, such as access to education, health care, and childcare. Socialist feminists are also sensitive to issues of culture and global change.

SOME EXAMPLES OF RECENT HONOR KILLINGS IN RURAL TURKEY

As discussed earlier, honor in Turkey plays a forceful role in all types of relationships, especially the relationship of women to men. Either real or presumed violations of *namus* may produce severe sanctions, especially among the rural segments of the population where people are much more likely to be traditional, patriarchal, nonsecularly married at an early age, and illiterate or undereducated (Acar, 1996; Arat, 1996; Elmaci, 1996). As Pitt-Rivers (1974) observes, "The ultimate vindication of honor lies in violence" (p. 29; see also Farac, 1998; Ilkaracan, 1999). According to Pervizat's (1999) careful research on this topic, there were at

least 20 reported honor killings between 1997 and 1998, but because this is not the type of crime that can be easily identified, the number may be higher. Although this number may not seem too alarming in relation to what is happening in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, we argue that even one case is too many. We now review some of the incidents that have found their way into the social-scientific literature or the mass media.

Vezire Kaya, aged 36, miraculously survived a murder attempt by her husband of 10 years. After a family council decision about her sexual impropriety (alleged adultery), she was driven to a remote place, her hands were tied, her eyes were covered, and she was choked until she passed out. When her persecutors thought she was dead, they threw her into Firat (the Euphrates), which is notorious for its rapid-flow and strong currents. She survived her ordeal and went to the police. Her husband expressed no remorse and claimed that "he was just cleaning his namus" ("Aile Meclisinin," 1998).

Gonul Arslan, aged 21, was raised in a relatively modern way in a southern Turkish resort, but her father arranged her marriage to her cousin even though Gonul was in love with another man. The cousin was from a conservative village of SanliUrfa. Gonul ran away from her husband/cousin, but she was hunted down and returned to her father by her male kin. When she refused to go back to her husband, she was forcefully taken for a ride by her husband and other male relatives, strangled until she was presumed dead, and thrown into Firat. She survived and is currently living under an assumed name under state protection (Farac, 1998, pp. 81-98). Her father, husband, and two other relatives stand charged.

Rabia Oguz, aged 25, was considered a spinster in a village of SanliUrfa where girls are married in their early teens. When her family found out about a romantic relationship she was having, her brother was instructed to arrange a mock car-tractor accident to kill her ("Koy Meydaninda," 1995). Two cousins helped stage the accident. They killed Rabia in the marketplace by repeatedly driving the tractor over her body. As it turns out, Rabia and her mother were taken for a ride, but the mother was dropped off shortly before the murder. At first, no witnesses came forward and the killers went free. The police reopened the case when

anonymous tips they received revealed that Rabia had initially escaped the mock accident and ran into a small shop crying for help. Unfortunately, her brother and a cousin grabbed her by her long hair and literally dragged her under the moving wheels of the tractor. After the Kafkaesque deed, the three men celebrated their success by shooting bullets into the air. An autopsy showed that Rabia was still a virgin, but the killers received reduced sentences (from life to 12.5 years) due to "severe provocation" (Farac, 1998, pp. 39-53).

Fatma Geyik, aged 22, was shot to death in the middle of the street. The execution order was given by a family council on allegations of Fatma's sexual relationship with a man and was carried out by her father ("Tore Icin Kizini," 1998). What is extremely interesting in this case is that Fatma had moved far away from her family of origin (from the eastern to the western part of Turkey), had gotten herself a job, and was fully self-sufficient and independent at the time of her death. Her father and uncle had traveled from one end of the country to the other to hunt her down. In her uncle's words, "Whatever happened happened after she got herself a job. She 'reduced our namus to a penny's worth' " ("Tore Icin Kizini," 1998).

Sevda Gok, aged 17, was publicly executed in the market area of SanliUrfa immediately after a midday Friday prayer (a particularly holy time in Islam) at the local mosque. Allegedly, she was running away from home to go to the movies (Kuyas, 1996). Her adolescent cousin, aged 14, cut her throat with a bread knife "like slaughtering sheep" (Farac, 1998, p. 63). Her executioner was caught a few blocks away with blood-soaked clothes and a knife. An autopsy showed that Sevda was a virgin ("Bir Namus Cinayeti," 1996). The adolescent cousin claimed that he loved Sevda and had intentions of marrying her, but it was his duty to clean the family honor. At least 100 people coming out of the mosque may have—indeed, must have—observed the slaughter, but no one volunteered details of the crime (Farac, 1998, pp. 57-65). Although this murder was premeditated and the cousin expressed no remorse, he received only a 7-year sentence.

Hatice, aged 12, and two of her female relatives had gone to a movie house in the middle of the day. Her jealous and suspicious husband, aged 17, "cut her throat like a chicken" and seriously wounded one of the other girls (Farac, 1998, pp. 73, 77). Although

the surviving girls claimed that they went to the movie house only to use its washroom facilities, the husband claimed that his wife was turning tricks, and he had to clean his *namus*. His sentence was reduced for "mild provocation" (Farc, 1998, pp. 69-77).

Oruc Serin, aged 16, was shot to death by her brother in the market area of the rural town of Gaziantep (a southeastern province). The weapon was a hunting rifle. Just before her murder, Oruc had given birth out of wedlock and in a wheat field; she had buried the infant among the crop. The baby was still alive when local farmers found her, approximately 36 hours after the birth. Oruc was taken into police custody for attempted infanticide, and the judge imposed a particularly large bail, suspecting that she herself was in danger of honor killing. Nevertheless, her family managed to bail her out, locked her up without food or water for 3 days, and, when she eventually managed to escape, shot her to death ("Torelerin Kurbanı," 1996).

Semse Kaynak, aged 19, was killed after allegedly falling under a farm tractor that was being driven by her brother in a rural town of SanliUrfa ("Yine Tore Vahseti," 1998). At the time of the incident, the victim's father, two brothers, sister in-law, and the latter's infant son were also on board. First, her brother was charged with "reckless driving" and was released after a single day in gendarme custody (Farc, 1998, pp. 101-112). Only after following an anonymous tip did the gendarme establish that this was yet another honor killing. In fact, the tractor had backed up a few times over Semse's body. Just before her murder, Semse was found to be pregnant and had claimed that she was raped by her cousin. When confronted, the cousin agreed to marry Semse in a religious ceremony¹¹ and had actually done so. However, when Semse's pregnancy became visible right after marriage, her male kin sought an abortion for her to end this embarrassment. When their request for an abortion was refused because the pregnancy was in its 6th month, the father and brothers decided to stage an accident to kill her. The fact that so many people were riding the tractor at the time of her murder (including the sister-in law and her baby) was done to reduce Semse's legitimate fear of her male kin and to provide numerous false witnesses of the "accident" (Farc, 1998).

Hacer Felhan was one of 11 children of Mustafa, who eked out a very marginal existence for his large family. However, through

the radio and neighbors' television, Hacer was increasingly tempted by a different, more colorful, and affluent existence. She sought out friends who gave her a glimpse of this "other" life, which involved fashion jewelry, high heels, and colorful dresses. When one of her (female) friends dedicated a love song to her on a local radio program, her family considered it to be an insult to their honor. Fearing falling victim to an honor killing, Hacer staged a mock suicide by leaving a note and her slippers beside a well in her back yard and sought refuge at a friend's house. However, police found out where she was and returned her to her family, despite her protest that her family would kill her. Indeed, the family had decided to clean their namus, and the executioner chosen was her 13-year-old brother, Muhammed. At his trial, Muhammed claimed that he did what he was told and, without emotion, related the long debate about which weapon he should use to ensure her death. The brother's sentence was reduced to 10 years due to his age and provocation. He was released after serving 2 years (Farac, 1998, pp. 25-36).

Aysel Dikmen, aged 18, was executed by her father. She had run away with the man she loved but was caught and placed in an orphanage by police because she was underage. When she was released to the custody of her father, he promptly took her life ("Campaign," 1999).

Cezvet Murat killed two of his sisters, Ayten and Gulden, because they came home late and he assumed they were seeing men ("Campaign," 1999). He said he was protecting his honor.

Suspecting infidelity, Abdullah Karadeve cut his pregnant wife's throat with a knife. She was expecting their eighth child ("Campaign," 1999).

Salih Esmer, aged 28, killed his sister, Semra, for dating. He also killed their mother for not keeping an eye on his sister ("Campaign," 1999).

Hulya Yakar was killed by her 11-year-old son for going out a lot ("Campaign," 1999). The son claimed that his mother was smearing his family name.

Selma Demir, aged 29, was stabbed 30 times by her father. The father said that he had to clean his namus because Selma was coming home late and she was separated from her husband ("Eve Gec Gelen," 1998).

DISCUSSION

Although there are numerous other examples, the summarized cases we have presented show several patterns. First, cultural elaborations of honor are gender based. Honor killings occur only on the basis of women's behavior and, in nearly all cases, women are the only ones who are killed, even though their assumed or acted on impropriety always includes a male partner. However, women who may help or be around the target may also get hurt or killed (e.g., Hatice's friend, Semra's mother).

Second, family councils and the actual killers invoke a cultural understanding of honor rather than a religious one (at least in Turkey). Of course, the sociological meaning of culture subsumes all forms of belief systems, but any connection between Islam and this heinous crime is by no means clear or direct. International coverage of honor killings that overemphasizes the role of religion fails to look at the more prevalent patriarchal legitimization behind violence against women. After all, femicide is a worldwide occurrence, whether it manifests itself as acid throwing or "kitchen deaths" in Bangladesh and India, female infanticide in China, rape-and-kill rampages in Bosnia and Kosovo, or wife murders in every other part of the world, including North America (see Note 4). The only common denominator among these diverse crimes against women is the talons of an aggressive patriarchal culture that subjugates women by depriving them of free choice and economic independence and by commodifying their bodies.

Third, the plans for the honor murders are made and executed almost exclusively by men. Often, the killer is chosen as the youngest male member of the family to obtain the sympathy of the courts in case of a criminal trial. Hatice's killer was 17, Sevda's 14, Hacer's 13, and Hulya's 11. Ironically, patriarchy also victimizes very young men by forcing them to commit heinous crimes against their loved ones (Gunenc, 1991). In addition, in pockets of rural Turkey, very immature youth are still being pushed to play adult family roles. Although it contravenes the secular laws of Turkey, early arranged marriages through religious ceremonies and even polygamy are common (Elmaci, 1996). These patterns are related to lack of opportunities, education, and an acceptable

standard of living, which gives support to the socialist feminist position. Moreover, and in line with radical feminism, there is a continuing powerlessness of women relative to men and an ease in transgressing women's rights. In sum, there are areas in Turkey that seem to be caught in a time warp of destructive gender relations.

Fourth, the discussed cases strongly challenge the link between subjugation of women and accumulation of private property. Indeed, if there is any similarity between most male perpetrators and women victims, it is their sheer poverty. In these tragedies, the only property that men seem to have is the lives and bodies of their women. Indeed, these observations give support to the radical and socialist feminist perspectives of gendered subjugation rather than a strictly materialistic explanation.

Fifth, all victims are young. Semse was 19, Aysel 18, Sevda 17, Oruc 16, and Hatice 12 when they were killed. It is almost as if the patriarchal culture seems to be frightened by the emerging sexuality of young women and their (potential) challenge to male rules. As the radical feminist theory implies, cutting down a few women in the prime of their youth is expected to deter other young women from expressing themselves in a sensual way (Sati, 1997). The two clear messages are that women are untrustworthy and women are dispensable. If other women partake in these tragedies at all, they are there for tertiary purposes, such as providing distraction, creating a false sense of hope or safety for the victim, or serving as deceitful witnesses to the crime. Semse's sister-in-law and her infant son were taken for the murderous tractor ride just to provide a false sense of safety for Semse and to serve as a false witness to her murder. Rabia's mother was also taken for the ride for similar reasons, but then dropped off just before her daughter's murder. Both Semra and her mother were killed, the latter for not keeping an eye on her daughter. In other words, either as victims or as accomplices, women in these tragedies possess no personal, social, or structural power to ask for justice or accountability. They are terrified victims or reluctant accomplices in male domination. They have neither the ideology of equality nor an economic independence to confront men.

Sixth, and very much in line with the assertions of radical feminists, men who engage in honor killings act within the boundaries

of male camaraderie. They get male kin support, community support (at least in the form of silence), and even support from the lower level police/gendarme and lawyers and judges (Krau, 1998; Muslim Women's League, 1999). Fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins, and other male kin take roles ranging from very active (e.g., in Fatma's, Rabia's, Semse's, and Vezire's cases) to quietly supportive. Some murderers make a rudimentary attempt to disguise their acts (e.g., the staged tractor accident in Semse's and Rabia's cases, or throwing Vezire and Gonul into the Firat after erroneously thinking they were dead). However, the deeply entrenched but misguided cultural norms and values that provide fertile ground for these murders also make some men extremely blunt (e.g., Fatma was shot and Hatice's throat was slashed in the middle of a street; Sevda and Oruc were executed in the marketplaces of their respective towns).

There are additional layers of patriarchy. In line with the radical feminist perspective, the state is not generally benign; it is often a biased force in preserving male domination and privilege. When women run away to hide (such as Hacer), police find and deliver them back to their parents, even when they are warned by the victim or know from experience that her life is in danger (e.g., Oruc's and Aysel's cases; see "Ayse Ve Oglunu," 1996). When suspicious accidents or drownings are reported, police usually release men who may have played a role in the incident (e.g., Rabia's and Vezire's cases). The police may even fail to carry out full investigations unless there is public pressure to do so (e.g., Rabia's case). If these cases come to trial, male judges are inclined to accept the honor dilemma of the murderers as a mediating factor. Often, killers receive a light sentence and further benefit from reduced jail terms under the auspices of provocation or tender age (e.g., Sevda's, Hatice's, and Hacer's cases). The fact that these killings are decided and condoned by a group of men (family elders) but carried out by younger members of the family also allows a diffusion of responsibility and provides further cover and legitimacy for killers of women. The killers may even receive a hero's treatment during incarceration ("Campaign," 1999; Cancel, 1999). Sati (1997) suggests that the level of respect shown to the killer is proportional to the brutality of the killing.

Finally, the aspect of social change may be considered one of the most important elements in honor killings in a country that has been on its way to modernization since the 1920s. As discussed, Turkish laws leave no place for blatant discrimination against women, let alone condoning their murder. Yet many women die horrible deaths at the hands of family members. It is our contention that the only way to make sense of this diabolic contradiction is to look at the perceived threat of social change, especially in backward, structurally disadvantaged, and rabidly patriarchal rural areas. A recent *New York Times* article addressed the severe impact of ethnic strife and internal migration on Turkish women's lives. According to the article, women in the southeastern part of Turkey are twice as likely to kill themselves as their male counterparts because of the resistance of their families to any kind of social change. For instance, a 22-year-old woman killed herself after being severely beaten by her parents for wearing a tight skirt, and a 20-year-old woman killed herself to protest her arranged marriage. According to experts, "They cannot control their lives, only their deaths" ("Turkish Women," 2000).

Through technological achievements and globalization, even extremely isolated parts of the globe are being bombarded with images of a different world than the one they have always known. Despite the burdens of her arranged child marriage and the economic destitution surrounding her life, Hatice wanted to go to the movies with her friends. Sevda was also infatuated with the movies and, at the cost of running away from her home, wanted to experience the different life they portrayed. Gonul, who was raised in a tourist haven, challenged her arranged marriage to her cousin from the rural SanliUrfa and insisted on pursuing a love relationship. Hacer, unlike many generations of women before her, had the opportunity to listen to a radio and experience the dangerous pleasure of hearing a love song dedicated to her. Fatma moved away from her repressive home, changed her city, found herself a job, and became totally self-sufficient. Yet none could escape the patriarchal web. In rigidly codified patriarchal systems, the awakening wants, desires, and independence of women are considered threats. There may indeed be a rise in crimes against women by men who resist these challenges and changes. Like a wounded dinosaur, the patriarchal strongholds are extracting a few more victims in the hope of preserving the status quo.

SOME IDEAS ABOUT BREAKING THE CYCLE

Although radical feminism can explain the threat women face in patriarchal pockets of the world, the types of remedies they encourage (e.g., dismantling traditional forms of heterosexual marriage, breaking the chains of reproduction, establishing exclusive women's communities) are not likely to help in the strongly entrenched Middle Eastern cultures. Engel's notion of women's increased labor force participation is also woefully simplistic. Socialist feminist ideas about state intervention in areas of education, health, and child care offer some hope but are not capable of dealing with the strength of the cultural domination of men in developing countries. For example, women's paid work and independence without other safeguards may increase rather than decrease the backlash in patriarchal bastions (e.g., Fatma's case). It is our contention that the solutions to these problems must be simultaneously sought at the personal, social, legal, and cultural levels and must somehow avoid destroying the social fiber of the societies in which these practices are cradled. This is, indeed, a tall order, because it demands multiple interventions and an in-depth understanding of what works in a given society and what may produce a complete rejection. Even feminist remedies, be they socialist or radical, that are advanced with the sole purpose of bettering women's lives cannot be transported to the non-Western world without a serious realignment.

In Turkey, honor killings are rare, but as we argued, even one is too many. They are localized in the most socioeconomically depressed areas where incomes are extremely low, formal education is lacking, and upward mobility is unthinkable. The epicenter of such killings is in rural areas with a feudal type of land ownership (Turgut, 1998), where there are early and sometimes arranged marriages, unchecked reproduction, and very little regard for human rights or women's lives. In these areas of severe disadvantage, women are disposable. A few men and their kin hold almost all available land, leaving nothing to the majority of disenfranchised men (except power over women and children). In this feudal-like existence, girls and women are sold like commodities under the "pride-price" norms, even though this practice is illegal. Turgut claims that "when she is dishonored, the family forfeits that income" (p. 2), highlighting the link between

patriarchal expectations and materialist considerations. A complicating factor is that these areas are also ripe with ethnic strife (Turgut, 1998; "Turkish Women," 2000). The national and international attention to politicized issues (ethnic conflict, minority rights) has swayed attention away from gendered violence. At the structural level, then, what must be done is to increase the standard of living and the socioeconomic opportunities in the area by initiating land reforms to break the chain of feudal patriarchal systems, by job creation programs with skilling or reskilling components for all rather than just privileging the already privileged, and by pouring substantially more resources into basic and higher education. The Turkish government has already poured substantial money into the development of dams, irrigation facilities, and hydroelectric plants in the area, but unfortunately only a small segment of the population seems to have benefited from this injection of new wealth (Turgut, 1998).

Reproductive education for men and women is also necessary. It may be undertaken by formal educational institutions and nongovernmental organizations. Unchecked reproduction results in untold difficulties for women and the children they bear, and additional mouths to feed worsens the existing socioeconomic deprivation of the Eastern regions. The preference for male children must be altered, because it gives a lifelong superiority to men relative to women. At the state level, one way of assuring this difficult transformation is to establish dependable and adequate old age pensions and health care for the elderly. In the absence of such benefits, parents are bound to favor their sons as an insurance against the perils of their old age (Kagitcibasi, 1993). Moreover, trying to educate the young on these matters is not sufficient if the reigning patriarchs continue to demand conformity and preserve the power to enforce their own rules. Education must target young and old, men and women, the propertied and the poor. In raising awareness, active cooperation or at least a silent blessing of the respected members of communities must be sought, and the negative male peer group pressure on other men must be eased. A farmer who killed his daughter expressed the devastating pressure he felt in these words: "I would not have want [*sic*] to harm my own child, but I had no choice. Nobody would buy my produce. I had to make a living for my other children" (Turgut, 1998). These sentiments do not excuse the crime, but they never-

theless illustrate the complexity of the issue for designing realistic intervention strategies.

The legal system in Turkey can also benefit from extensive reforms—for example, by updating its rules on custody and division of assets in case of divorce. Also essential is abolition of reduced sentences for honor-related crimes, or even making such crimes subject to a heavier penalty like the ones that apply to general violence among family members. Cognizant of the changes initiated by Ataturk¹² in the 1920s and 1930s, the law must again take on educative and standard-setting functions rather than falling behind current human rights considerations.

Due to the unique leadership of Ataturk, the Turkish army has retained the unusual distinction of being the protector of Turkish westernization and modernization. There is no reason why the modern outlook of the army cannot be reproduced in the police and gendarme forces through the requirement of higher levels of education tailored to an understanding and respect for human and women's rights. It will also help if the Turkish army, as well as police and gendarme, allow women to join these forces. Although this may be too radical a move to expect from a patriarchal society, it nevertheless may be one of the keys to erasing women's secondary citizenship, especially in rural domains. Enforcers of the legal system, such as the police, gendarme, lawyers, and judges, must also become reeducated about gender relations and the dangers women face in their lives (Krau, 1998; "Polis Tecavuzde," 2000). Pilot projects that attempt to raise awareness among legal and paralegal professionals are already under way in at least two large universities in Turkey (Ankara Universitesi, 1998; Middle East Technical University, 1998). Of course, the hard work and the good intentions of these new initiatives need to be applauded. However, they are too few and too centralized in highly secular and urbanized locations to have any discernable impact on remote, rural locations where women are routinely victimized. We will go a step further and suggest that the establishment of a higher court system with specially trained judges and personnel just to oversee lower courts' handling of gender crimes will help guard against the male biases that often color the delivery of justice.

The global community must play a stronger leadership role in bringing about social change. In her insightful analysis of

international human rights law and practice, Florence Butegwa (1999) claims that the international community has shortchanged social rights (which include women's rights to health, education, economic sufficiency, and even life) by disproportionately emphasizing civil and political rights. According to Butegwa, although the universality, inalienability, and indivisibility of human rights and their unisex understanding are well established, most states have opted to defend only political rights (e.g., freedom from torture, free speech) (see also Bunch & Frost, 1997). Butegwa claims that this may be because political rights are cost-free rights that only require governments to abstain from doing things that violate them. In contrast, the protection and preservation of social rights (which benefit mostly women and children) require substantial investments of money, time, and commitment, which undeveloped countries in particular cannot afford. Moreover, the unisex conceptualization of human rights has severely shortchanged women whose vulnerabilities arise from their culturally differentiated roles, biological differences, and socialization processes (Bunch & Frost, 1997; Butegwa, 1999). On the basis of these insights, the developed world has a responsibility to share the economic burden of protecting social rights across the world, especially in countries that are too poor to finance humanitarian safeguards. Moreover, there must be a realistic and clear sequence of expectations or else there will be "a real danger of states feeling overwhelmed by the task and just dismissing the entire Covenant as a mere statement of ideals rather than creating legal obligations" (Butegwa, 1999). The international community must also accept gendered violation as an unquestionable criterion for women's political refugee status. Among all developed nations, only Canada applies such a criterion (Canada Immigration and Refugee Board, 1993; Stanek, 1994).

To apply some of these ideas to Turkey, we suggest that rather than making utopian demands of gender equality or destructive criticisms of the state's failure to safeguard human rights or seeing honor killings as a fundamental flaw in Islam, it is crucial for the international community to work with enlightened Turkish women and men to initiate changes that are respectful of the cultural mores without being enslaved by them. Due to their long and complex history, Turkish people have developed not only a deep-rooted pride in themselves but also an equally deep-rooted

suspicion about crude and self-serving foreign interventions into their affairs. For these reasons, effective women's rights solutions must be developed within the social system of which they are a part, rather than through top-down attempts or culturally ignorant demands for change. For example, the Turkish culture is not going to give up on its insistence on privatizing family matters, nor is it likely to dramatically alter gendered role divisions within the family. Turkish culture is not likely to give up on its overemphasis on the concept of honor either, because honor is a fundamental part of its centuries-old moral landscape. Nevertheless, there may be ways of dissociating conceptualizations of honor with women's bodies and lives, and instead associating cowardice and dishonor with violence against women and girls. The point is that it is more constructive to creatively build on the positive aspects of the entrenched social system than to impose culturally irrelevant ideas or Eurocentric interventions. The best way to alter men's behavior is to make other men shame that behavior. So far, the shaming process is working to assure the subjugation of women.

These suggested reforms require long-term commitment and unwavering national and international will. At the time of writing this article, the United Nations was conducting its Millennium Summit in New York with 150 heads of state in attendance. Although political human rights was a major item on their agenda, social reforms dealing with women's rights were less visible. We are still far from a globally funded protection of women from poverty, ill health, and violence. There is no internationally agreed-on safe passage such as eligibility for refugee status on grounds of gender persecution. The onus of stopping violence against women belongs to the world collectively as well as to individual countries.

In the meantime, women continue to need more immediate forms of help and protection at the local level. Among the crucial forms of assistance are to provide safe houses for women, government-sponsored programs of safe passage to other cities and towns under assumed names, and intensive counseling and skills programs for women to regain psychological health and economic self-sufficiency. There are a few witness protection programs in Turkey, but the number of murders attests to the fact that there should be many more, along with a better coordination of the existing ones.

NOTES

1. Even the term *honor killing* is an oxymoron, because honor and killing should be mutually exclusive rather than interrelated concepts. A more appropriate term to refer to these murders is patriarchal killings.

2. Wife burnings (*suttee*) in India have also received attention (see Daly, 1989). Wife burnings share some similarities with honor killings. For example, in both cases, the victims are young or older women and the perpetrators are members of the immediate or extended family. However, there are also important differences. In their most traditional form, wife burnings are initiated (at least on the surface, although the entrenched customs may not give women alternatives) by the widow of a recently deceased man who throws herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. More recent variations are found to be related to dowry disputes where women suffer "accidental" deaths such as kitchen fires, while the husband and his family are conveniently freed to search for a new wife (and presumably a better dowry).

3. According to Yusuff (1998), even if women commit adultery, its proof is virtually impossible under Islamic Law because the proof requires "four witnesses who would have to testify that they actually witnessed the sexual offense, i.e., copulation." Suspicions, rumors, or hearsay are legally (according to the Shari'ah) inadmissible.

4. Historically, systematic murder of women has been common in different cultures. For example, women and girls have been systematically raped and killed during ethnic wars. In recent cases, such as in Bosnia and Kosovo, the victims were Moslems, but the perpetrators were not (MacKinnon, 1993). In China, female children are at risk (Landsberg, 1995, 1996; "Small Steps," 1996). Bangladeshi women are frequently disfigured by acid attacks ("Acid Attacks," 1999; "Vicious Twist," 2000). According to a 1991 Human Rights Watch report, there are similar practices in Brazil (Sati, 1997). In India, female children are systematically aborted, and some women are still subjected to ritualized deaths ("Ritual Death," 1999). In Saudi Arabia, adulterous women are stoned to death ("Zina Yapan," 1995). Even in so-called highly advanced societies such as the United States, Great Britain, and Canada, many women are stalked and killed by husbands, lovers, and ex-partners (Sev'er, 1997, 1998).

5. A detailed summary of Ataturk's political, social, legal, and educational reforms can be found online (<http://members.tripod.com/tarihweb/> and <http://www.Ataturk.com/index2.html/>). Lest the before-their-time nature of these reforms goes unnoticed, one needs to be reminded that Canadian women were not considered "persons" and were not allowed to be elected to the Senate until 1929.

6. Kim Campbell was never elected to office and served only 3 months after Brian Mulroney resigned as Prime Minister of Canada.

7. See United Nations (1997), United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (1999), and http://www.Turkey.org/f_library.htm for additional information. Also see Arat (1996) for a discussion of the higher rate of illiteracy of rural women.

8. At 5 per 1,000 marriages, divorce is still rare in Turkey (United Nations, 1997).

9. Myths about and fear of women's unchecked sexuality and men's legitimacy to curb that sexuality are not unique to Islam; they are a recurring theme in all patriarchal, monotheistic religions. Although the emphasis here is on Middle Eastern culture in general and Turkey in particular, it should be emphasized that the control of women's sexuality and cultural obsession with virginity and sexual purity are not confined to the Middle East. A glaring example of the overemphasis on women's purity is the 2,000-year-old attribution of virginity to Mary, mother of Jesus Christ.

10. We refer the reader to Fox's (1988) insightful and critical article on patriarchy.

11. Although marriages through a religious ceremony are not considered legal according to the secular Turkish laws, they are common among rural people.
12. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1939) is a revered national hero and the founder of the Turkish Republic.

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