

DAMLA ISIK

THE MULTIPLE GEOGRAPHIES OF VIOLENCE AND  
THE ISTANBUL CONVENTION: INTERSECTIONALITY  
OF NATIONALISM, PATRIARCHY, AND GENDER IN  
TURKEY

*Introduction.* – Ozgecan Aslan, a 20-year-old university student, went to a shopping mall with a friend and, after spending some time at the mall, they took the minibus to get back home. Aslan’s friend last saw her when she got off the minibus at her stop, leaving Aslan as the only passenger on the minibus. According to reports, the minibus driver tried to rape Aslan, but she resisted by using pepper spray and fighting back, which resulted in her death by beating and stabbing with an iron rod. After this, the perpetrator drove to his father and a friend to ask for help. In turn, the three men decided to burn Aslan’s body in the forest and cut off her hands since they were afraid of being identified through DNA tests as the fight left traces of their skin in Aslan’s fingernails and body. Her burnt body was discovered two days after her murder on 13 February 2015. Due to the brutality of her murder, the case of Ozgecan Aslan not only sparked national outrage, and protests, but also became a symbol of ongoing violence against women<sup>1</sup>.

What was interesting in the nation-wide coverage and government responses to the incident was the fact that some reportage of the murder implied that the violence Ozgecan suffered was outrageous due to the fact that she was an innocent “girl” from a good family, so, she did not deserve such violence. I would argue, indeed, part of the outrage over Ozgecan’s death was due to the fact that she came from a good family;

---

<sup>1</sup> Research shows that in Turkey 40% of women are exposed to physical and sexual violence, but only 10% of women exposed to violence actually seek help (Yuksel-Kaptanoglu et al., 2015). 41% of the 1481 female respondents in another recent study had experienced domestic violence (DV) and «the majority (89%) had been subjected to violence by their spouse» (Basar, Demirci, 2018, p. 660).

fought back her attackers like an innocent victim would; and prevented her rape and faced death in order to defend herself and her family's honor. A post-mortem autopsy showed that she was not raped and this became a big part of her story. A man was quoted saying in a protest against the killing: «I am also a mother's son. Like every man I also have certain needs. However, what is important is that I don't take care of these needs through doing this to a normal daughter, to a member of a family who values her honor» (Toplar, 2016, p. 20).

I wanted to start this paper with Ozgecan's story because it is a well-known case and a good representation of the contours of femicide and gendered violence in Turkey<sup>2</sup>. This article will specifically focus on violence against women and femicides. Research in Turkey have long shown that most femicides and violence against women take place behind closed doors of domiciles and the perpetrators are, for the most part, men whom the women know (Arat, 2009; Kandiyoti, 2007; Altinay, Arat, 2009; Yaman, Ayaz, 2010; Guvenc, Akyuz, Cesario, 2014; Basar, Demirci, 2018). A recent report released by Human Rights Watch (2022) gives a detailed account of the severity of violence against women in Turkey. As the report highlights, there is a steady rise in domestic violence recorded by police and government. In 2016 there were 162,110 recorded incidents and this had risen to 268,817 incidents in 2021 (Human Rights Watch, 2022, p. 9).

Due to years of feminist literature, it is perhaps easier to understand why women suffer violence in the hands of their own families and partners. However, it is harder to comprehend the kind of random and public violence we see women increasingly face in Turkey like the case of Ozgecan. Additionally, in Turkey, femicide is intimately tied to the nation-state's conceptualization of honor, family, and proper gendered comportment of its citizenry. Talking about the women who protested Ozgecan's murder by dancing, President Erdogan criticized their non-conforming behavior as women: «If you know how to, say a prayer, if not, say your condolences. Say condolences to her family. They are dancing. How is this part of our culture? It looks as if they take pleasure

---

<sup>2</sup> As Ozgecan's case made headlines and resulted in continuous protests, other deaths go unnoticed or do not receive any coverage – especially trans and queer bodies who face death and violence at the hands of toxic state structures and practices.

in the death»<sup>3</sup>. This was not the only governmental statement that has been critical of what is deemed as non-conforming behaviour of women; I will document and analyse more of these statements later in the article. However, it is important to note here how state and societal narratives and responses surrounding Ozgecan's murder never once identified it as femicide and, instead, framed the incident within the context of the socially, culturally, and governmentally appropriate and inappropriate behaviors for women, as exemplified above. Additionally, even in an abhorrently violent murder that did not directly relate to family honor, her case was received and presented as the case of an honorable girl besmirched by a few bad guys.

Government discourses and practices shape how nation-states react to violence and how violence is seen by the general public. Various forms of violence, whether visible or invisible, have been extensively used by nation-states to delineate and defend national culture, tradition, and territorial integrity while spurring nationalist fervor against real and imagined threats. Today's nationalist leaders are experts at utilizing fear of diversity in defense of the nation-state. Whether it be Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, or Viktor Orban, the arguments tend to be similar: defending the nation demands a strong leader who will mobilize their base to fear the other whether that be women, people of color, Jews, Muslims, LGBTQ activists, so-called anarchists, migrants or refugees. The message is the same: support us or see "our" way of life destroyed.

Ironically, this presumed destruction points to a violent scenario where nationalists indicate this dangerous and violent «other» as legitimization for vigilance and vigilantism by state actors as well as the local populace. If bodies cannot be destroyed and violated, then they need to be controlled and governed by state structures and practices. As Galtung (1969) reminds us, violence is continuously produced and reproduced and, as I will argue, this production and reproduction happens in the intersections of heteronormative and homogenizing concepts and practices of national identity, governance, patriarchy and gender. This article will specifically focus on the Istanbul Convention and the repercussions of

---

<sup>3</sup> (<https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-president-erdogan-slams-women-protesting-ozgecans-murder-by-dancing--78423>).

Turkish government's decision to leave the convention. Protection of a national moral identity in light of presumed immoral incursions of the "West" itself becomes a tool for various types of state-sanctioned and populist violence against those who are deemed as dangerous.

Studying the premise and effects of an international convention on violence against women contributes to a study of geopolitics from above and also from below. Although the convention is international in scope and goes beyond nation-state boundaries, its implementation and reception happen nationally and locally. It is a good example of how individual scale acts/actions can influence and be influenced by national and international campaigns and legislative actions (Fling, 2017). This examination will add onto the literature that question and analyze geographic scale by bringing in the relevance of gender when understanding and combating violence (Brenner, 2001; Marston, 2000; Silvern, 1999; etc.). As feminist researchers have long argued, both in geography and in anthropology, the personal, the private and the local is intimately connected to the political, and the global; in fact, «personal is political» has become a mantra for researchers studying gender and politics (Braithwaite, 2002; Cahill, 2007; Martin, 2004; Abu-Lughod, 2002; Tsing, 2005). Staeheli (2014, p. 344) challenges the false dichotomy of personal/political and asks us to politicize the personal, which is relevant in understanding violence against women within and outside of the family space. Understanding the discourses and biopolitics affecting women's bodies, corporeal lives and the everyday, targeted violence they encounter in an individual scale is integral to making sense of the complex, interrelated and at times contradictory workings of nationalism and patriarchy (Hyndman, 2004; Roberts, 2004; Staeheli, 2004; Oswin, Olund, 2010).

First, I will discuss the larger context of Turkish state's increasing reliance on family as a concept and a reality to try to enforce an unstable and defunct patriarchy. After this contextual examination, the article will discuss the Istanbul Convention and the logics and logistics of both its implementation and its abandonment by the Turkish government. Next, I will discuss the rising numbers of femicides with a focus on organizations that continue to challenge the government to report women's deaths as femicides. The paper argues that state violence against women continues to be part of a bigger national strategy that tries to feed and perpetuate an increasingly dysfunctional and unstable heteronormative

patriarchy. This violence is intimately tied to a national discourse that foregrounds a heteronormative understanding of family and treaties such as Istanbul Convention become national targets in this environment.

*Methodology.* – The impetus for this study came as a result of the rising public violence against women in Turkey since the 1990s. As Turkey withdrew from the Istanbul Convention in 2011, government and media coverage of violence against women continued to downplay the significance of such violence and paint it as the doing of disturbed individuals or angry family members. The purpose of this study is to analyze governmental discourse and press coverage of violence against women in Turkey and the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. To do this analysis, I collected data from online versions of well-known and circulated Turkish and international newspapers (Hurriyet, Milliyet, Aksam, Sabah, The Guardian) as well as official government websites and the text of the Istanbul Convention itself. I focused on news reports and government discourse from the last 15 years. I also discuss the various laws and regulations passed by the Turkish government concerning violence against women and examine their framing and intent.

*Embodied Geographies of Violence and Gender: The Family and the State.* – Through their research both feminist geographers and anthropologists address the reality that although women fear public spaces, there is a much higher likelihood that they will encounter violence in the domestic space by a known aggressor – usually through familial and/or romantic attachment (Valentine, 1989; Pain, 1991; Pain, 2014b; Mehta, 1999). It is also known that domestic interpersonal violence is largely invisible and ubiquitous (Pain, 2014a; Pain, 2014b; Pain, 2015; Tyner, 2016). In Turkey, gendered violence is predominantly perpetrated by family members in the privacy of domestic spaces, though Ozyegin’s case shows that women are not safe in public spaces either (Kandiyoti, 1988; Kandiyoti, 1998; Smith, 2008). Also, the institutions of state and family work to control and govern female bodies through disciplinary power and discourse. The family institution is closely intertwined with concepts of chastity and honor.

An individual’s honor is linked to family and neighborhood honor. Protecting honor and morality of a family and a community is a male

task and the biggest threat to family honor is an unprotected female. In January 2015, Ismet Ucma, a parliamentarian and one of the founders of the JDP, stated that «neighborhoods could protect their own honor to eliminate increasing number of violence which could also be supervised by the Religious Affairs Directorate»<sup>4</sup>. He suggested creating model families as a first step. Another recent example of how honor is linked to controlling women's bodies and behaviors is when Bulent Arinc, the then Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey, noted in a public address how «[the woman] will know what is haram and not haram. She will not laugh in public. She will not be inviting in her attitudes and will protect her chasteness» and added: «[w]here are our girls, who slightly blush, lower their heads and turn their eyes away when we look at their face, becoming the symbol of chastity?»<sup>5</sup>.

Within this nexus of honor, family, and state, despite ongoing efforts (both legally and culturally) to end domestic and interpersonal violence, this type of violence, and, increasingly, more public violence against women continues to be a key form of disciplinary power in Turkey. Enforcement of laws against domestic violence is challenging because police hesitate to intervene in family matters (Baldry, Pagliaro, Porcaro, 2013). Prosecuting domestic violence also remains difficult because judicial authorities have often ignored laws that protect women and have subsequently punished women or returned them to abusive households. In Turkey, perpetrators tend to get lowered sentences or are not sentenced at all due to good behavior and even wearing proper respectable clothing to court. Reports and research show that despite having been granted protective and preventive orders, the state and the courts fail to prevent femicides and escalation of violence against women (Human Rights Watch, 2022; Baydur, Ertem, 2006; Daily Sabah, 2020). The reason largely lies in the ongoing failure by public authorities, courts, and prosecutors to intervene with sanctions against the perpetrators. There is lack of pretrial detention, proper coordination between various agencies, and a lack of will when it comes to holding perpetrators accountable.

---

<sup>4</sup> (<https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2015/gundem/akpli-ismet-ucmadan-mahallenin-namusu-teklifi-726535/>).

<sup>5</sup> (<https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/women-should-not-laugh-in-public-turkish-deputy-pm-says--69732>).

Prosecutions take a long time after the commission of the offense giving ample time for the perpetrator to reoffend (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

Feminist geographers' research on domestic violence also emphasizes the links between state, structural and intimate violence, showing how multiple forms of interwoven violence make some bodies even more vulnerable (Piedalue, 2017; Tyner, 2012; Sweet, 2016). For example, Smith (2016) investigates the multiscalar relationship between state violence and domestic violence amid low-income residents of Cairo, Egypt; his research shows the ways in which violence of the state shapes and occurs simultaneously with domestic violence. In turn, Cuomo (2017) highlights the interconnected nature of political violence and patriarchal ideology and coercive control when it comes to domestic violence and its recognition. Other feminist researchers argue that to understand violence against women, we must be in constant conversation with other systems of oppression, such as race, class, and sexuality (Brickell, Maddrell, 2016a; Brickell, Maddrell, 2016b, Fluri, Piedalue, 2017). The key to this research is a clear understanding that violence against women is intimately linked to other institutional and structural violences, including economic vulnerability. When it comes to analyzing and understanding violence against women and femicides in Turkey, one key institution stands out: family.

In Turkey governance of the family unit is critical in the formation of national unity. Family, in the Turkish context, involves a legal marriage between women and men. Homosexual marriages are illegal and homosexuality is seen as a sign of abnormality. By seeing homosexuality as abnormal and by lacking a gendered perspective, national responses tend to gravitate towards regulating women's bodies and lives. Women are usually seen as a unit (all women) and interventions are directed towards them as victims rather than as agents. Topalan (2015, p. 39) examines the National Action Plan of AKP (NAP) in detail noting how «men are not a subject of the analysis in regards to the problem of 'family violence' whereas women are the only focus, subjects who need to be changed». One excellent example of this was when several municipalities belonging to AKP started campaigns to have pink busses, which would be designated solely to women so they travel safely and without the fear of harassment (Diken, 2018). Aside from the idea of a separate busses for women, there have been other proposals such as having girls and boys

be taught in separate classrooms in Konya, Turkey (Konali, 2017). This attitude towards segregating the sexes and treating women as second-class citizens as a solution to violence against women showcases how a gendered response is desperately needed when it comes to understanding violence against women and femicides.

Indeed, over the years, national responses to violence against women have continuously lacked a gendered perspective in Turkey. Hence, national interventions on violence against women tend to largely see women as powerless victims and lack any accountability and discussion of men's roles in the perpetuation of such violence. Women are seen as holders of family honor; as mothers and silenced, victimized family members rather than female individuals facing gendered violence in the hands of men (Saktanber, 2002; Ayata, Tutuncu, 2008; Acar, Altunok, 2013; Sirman, 2014). We see this problem concretely and openly when we examine national laws and regulations. In 2012, the new Law on Protecting Family and Prevent Violence against Women (Law No. 6284)<sup>6</sup> was passed in the parliament. This was an amended version of 1998 Law on Protecting Family. Even though the new law has major improvements on protecting women against violence, it continues to define them only as family members and not individuals facing gendered violence in the hands of men and, once again, all interventions are directed towards women without mentioning men's responsibilities and roles in perpetuating such violence (Acar, Altunok, 2013). Even when a violent act occurs outside of family unit, descriptions and discourses about the case once again focus on the family as a unit. In Ozgecan Aslan's case, which was mentioned in the introduction, politicians condemned what happened to Ozgecan by stating that «[i]t could have happened to our daughters; therefore, we should take a step to fight against violence» (Hurriyet, 2015a).

---

<sup>6</sup> In Turkey, prior to ratification of IC, VAW was handled under the 4320 Numbered Law on Protection of Family. Ratification of the Convention prompted the adoption of the 6284 Law which is far more progressive than its predecessor, «its first provision clearly states that its purpose is to protect four groups of people; women, children, family members and victims of stalking, who are subjected to violence or at risk of being subjected to violence (Article 1(1)). In this context, women are protected within the scope of law solely because they are women, i.e. outside the realm of family violence or DV, and under any circumstance. In addition, the 6284 Law provides a new comprehensive array of prevention and protection orders» (Meurens et al., 2020).



In addition to the new laws that squarely focus on a heteronormative family, other institutional changes that happened after AKP came to power also showcase the prevalence of family in government's response to women's rights. In 2011, the year the Istanbul Convention was signed, the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs was replaced by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. This same ministry became the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services in 2018. Erasure of women from the ministry's name has been a clear marker of the ascendance of family-oriented policies. In 2010, the then-prime minister, now-president Erdoğan noted that he did not believe in equality between men and women because of their inherent differences – he stated as a result he believed in equity not equality– a statement he came to repeat often publicly. In 2014, he stated how the equality between men and women is against «fitrat» (meaning the essence and purpose of creation)<sup>7</sup>.

As Erdogan noted, feminists did not understand the special status attributed to mothers in Islam and that they rejected motherhood highlighting that «our religion [Islam] has defined a position for women: motherhood». According to him men and women cannot be treated equally because «their characters, habits and physiques are different....You cannot make women work in the same jobs as men do, as in communist regimes. You cannot give them a shovel and tell them to do their work. This is against their delicate nature». He continued on to note how what women really need is «to be able to be equivalent, rather than equal. Because equality turns the victim into an oppressor and vice versa» (The Guardian, 2014).

To further institutionalize this understanding of equity over equality, KADEM (The Women and Democracy Association) was established as a GONGO in 2013, adopting the rhetoric of promoting equity and complementarity instead of gender equality. Equity/complementarity entails up front that women and men are not equal, for they have not been created equal, but must be treated justly and fairly taking into consideration their «natural» and «unique» differences. Following up on the institutionalization of equity over equality, in 2015, AKP set up a parliamentary commission in order to prevent divorce and protect the family. Over the

---

<sup>7</sup> (<https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/kadin-ile-erkegi-esit-konuma-getiremezsiniz-fitratina-aykiri-148663>).

years, there has been a continual weakening in the already inadequate implementation of the Law no. 6284 and the Istanbul Convention and governmental rhetoric prioritizing the family has grown stronger. The government's approach to combating domestic violence is based on preserving the family instead of empowering women to escape the violence they face within the family unit. There have also been challenges to women's alimony rights, to the age of consent in the law on child sexual abuse, and to the Law no. 6284 alongside governmental opposition to the Istanbul Convention, which resulted in the eventual abandonment of the Istanbul Convention in 2021.

*Implementation of and Resistance to the Istanbul Convention.* – The Istanbul Convention (IC) is the first international treaty and legally binding mechanism that deals directly with violence against women. The convention took place in 2011 and since then several countries have signed the convention (34 members of the Council of Europe and Turkey; however, Turkey withdrew effective July 2021). It aims to combat violence against women and sees such violence as systemic and structural; it foregrounds the fact that this violence is gender specific (Meurens et al., 2020; Leye et al., 2021). It also defines a broad understanding of violence including psychological, physical, sexual and economic violence as well as forced marriage, forced sterilization, sexual harassment, stalking, and female genital mutilation. What makes the convention especially important is the fact that it has a comprehensive view of policies, prevention, protection and prosecution (Council of Europe, 2011). It emphasizes the need to address the root causes of such violence with a multi-agency approach that aims to do risk assessment and monitoring (Meurens et al., 2020).

Just like other international conventions, the Istanbul Convention presents a dilemma. On the one hand, recognition and implementation of conventions act as a reminder of the problematic nature of territorial claims to violence. It encourages signatories to go beyond such territorialism to embrace human rights as concept and practice. In this specific case, the Istanbul Convention foregrounds women's rights to a life free of violence as a moral imperative that transcends borders and breaks the principle of absolute State sovereignty. It points to the need to reconsider structures of the State and build an international system in order to uphold and protect women's rights and dignity. On the other hand, the

interactions between this international system and territorial states and governments continue to be rampant with problems. States see state sovereignty as overriding global moral and ethical concerns. Hence, the Istanbul Convention, despite its aims to foreground the moral imperative that violence against women needs to be stopped, remains largely a declaration and implementation continues to be a challenge. However, even when implementation remains a problem, the signatory nations of IC have all taken some steps towards acknowledging and dealing with VAW. This, on its own, is one of the many reasons why being a signatory to IC matters (FRA, 2014; Leye, Sauza, Meurens, 2021)<sup>8</sup>.

Indeed the IC is one of the major steps forward in dealing with violence against women (VAW). Acknowledging that violence is not gender-neutral is one of the most important contributions of the IC in understanding and tackling various forms of violence against women (Meurens et al., 2020). According to the convention, violence against women is understood as a violation of «human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women» (CoE 2011, article 3, p.3). Related to this, it clearly, and in much detail, describes the types and forms of violence women suffer<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, it is established that the implementation of the Convention by the signatories «shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation,

---

<sup>8</sup> The Istanbul Convention tackles violence in a comprehensive way, through a focus on integrated policies, prevention, protection and prosecution. The Convention further develops international human rights law on the issue of VAW and brings distinct features, such as its gendered understanding of violence, the explicit reflection of due diligence, preventive measures addressing the root causes of violence, and an effective multi-agency approach to protect high-risk victims through risk assessment/management and an independent monitoring mechanism (Meurens et al., 2020).

<sup>9</sup> Types of violence that are detailed in the IC are: VAW; DV; physical and psychological violence, coercion and arbitrary deprivation of liberty, sexual violence and harassment, stalking, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, abortion and forced sterilization, and sexual crimes committed in the name of so-called honor (CoE, 2011, articles 33-42, pp. 10-11).

gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or other status» (CoE 2011, article 4, p.3).

Secondly, IC plays a significant role in the development of international law. It requires nation-states to protect women against violence. The goals it proposes are far-reaching, impressive and relevant, as defined in article 1: a) protect women against all form of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence; b) contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women; c) design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence; d) promote international co-operation with a view to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence; and e) provide support and assistance to organisations and law enforcement agencies to effectively co-operate in order to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence (CoE 2011, article 1, p. 2).

Thirdly, the IC demands states to offer a range of general and specialized support services, essentially promoting the offering and broadening of such services. Since the ratification of the IC, 10 countries established new specialized support services. Rape crisis centers or sexual violence referral centers have been established in 14 ratifying countries (Leye, Souza, Meurens, 2021, pp. 12-13). In the countries that have not ratified the IC, only the Czech Republic and Hungary have both general and specialized support services in place. Aside from these services, there is also an established monitoring mechanism constituted of experts in the field (GREVIO) and a political body which release regular reports. By becoming signatories, states and national authorities are expected to offer a multidisciplinary response to VAW through preventing violence; protection of survivors and reparation; prosecution of perpetrators; and integrated policies. Last but not least, as an international instrument, the Convention promotes and provides a legal basis for international cooperation in the protection of victims and in the investigation and prosecution of crimes covered by the Convention (CoE 2011, article 62, pp. 17-18).

Despite its importance, there has been growing backlash against the convention in Turkey – especially from the conservative AKP government and NGOs which eventually resulted in Turkey pulling out of the

convention in 2011. This happened within the context of rising femicides and conservative and controlling state discourse in Turkey. Eslen-Ziya (2022) documents the continuous rise of conservative and polarizing anti-Istanbul convention discourses in social media. According to her research, hate groups have used online platforms such as Twitter and Instagram to spur misogyny and hatred towards fight for women's rights and, importantly, she sees this effort as just one example of public fervor against the convention as well as against women's rights. More importantly, these groups' actions and words are legitimized by the government's own discourse. Increasingly, the public discourse of the Turkish state highlights and underlines women's main function as reproducers of the nation and as mothers who need to be protected by the males in their lives (Korkut, Eslen-Ziya, 2011; Korkut, Eslen-Ziya, 2016; Cosar, Yegenoglu, 2011; Kandiyoti, 2016). One example of the way governmental discourse shapes understanding and reaction to the IC is ongoing commentary by Erdogan and other government officials on reproduction and abortion.

In 2008 in a public speech in Usak that was to celebrate women's day, Erdoğan, then prime minister, declared that every woman should have at least three children (Hurriyet, 2008). This statement put women's reproduction center stage and started heated public discussions on this topic. Since then, he has repeatedly stated this line in several other public appearances. In one speech, he specifically linked birth rates to the future of the institution of family and the future of the country which shows how these three issues: women's control over their bodies and reproductive choices, the survival of the family institution, and the future of the Turkish nation are all intimately linked in the minds of not only Erdogan, but also many of his AKP deputies and ministers. To quote him:

«To cause the family to atrophy, to destroy the family....We never looked kindly to this and never will. If Tayyip Erdogan says "In this country every family has to have three children", he is saying it with this in mind. He is saying it thinking of Turkey in 2040-2050. I am saying this to protect a young and dynamic Turkey and take it further. You know there are those excuses....those excuses are all coming from foreign places and aim to darken the future of my country. I don't believe in these. I say it openly and I stand behind what I say» (Bianet, 2008).

These are not solely Erdogan's thoughts. In 2014, Kahramanmaras

AKP deputy Yildirim Mehmet Ramazanoglu stated at a wedding of 22 couples organized by the municipality, that each woman needs to give at least 2.5 births to develop the population of Turkey (Cumhuriyet, 2014). This continued conversation concerning women's reproduction and the future viability of the nation resulted also in a discussion of abortion. In 2012, Erdogan declared that «I am against births that take place with cesarian sections. I see abortion as murder. No one should be allowed to have this choice. You kill the child in the womb or you kill it after birth. There is no difference between the two» (Milliyet, 2012). Many AKP supporters and MPs backed this statement. In fact, in the same year, Kurdish civilians who had crossed the border were being killed by Turkish war planes in Uludere and Erdogan linked this squarely to abortion. In his words, both the Kurds and women who have abortion aim to destroy the Turkish nation:

You keep saying Uludere this, Uludere that. Every abortion is an Uludere. I ask you: what is the difference between killing a child in the womb of the mother versus killing them after birth? We have to fight this together. We have to acknowledge that this is a sly plan to erase the Turkish nation from the world arena. We never give into these games (Bianet, 2012).

Continuing his desire to control women's lives and choices, in yet another public appearance Erdogan urged all Muslims to refrain using contraception and to have as many children as they can and stated that no Muslim should use family planning (Euronews, 2016). It is important to state here that abortion is still officially legal in Turkey. Ironically, as Baytok (2021, p.15) notes, some conservative groups are actually against these statements of Erdogan and oppose a state intervention on abortion as they consider this a private matter and see it as state intrusion into the family institution. This is especially interesting considering Erdogan's continued linkage of the future of the Turkish family and the Turkish state/nation. What also shows this as more of an agenda of the state rather than the public is the fact that there has not been a bottom-up outcry or demand to illegalize abortion; there has not been public protestations either. It is AKP and the Turkish state that made this an issue, not the public.

These continued public declarations work to legitimize the Turkish state as a patriarchal institution as well as inciting violence towards wom-

en and children (Kandiyoti, 2016). Kandiyoti names this constant move to further enshrine patriarchy through public violence and discursive governance of the AKP a «masculinist restoration». As she perceptively notes, when patriarchy is threatened, those in power feel the pressure to continue its existence (Kandiyoti, 2016, pp. 111-112). I would also argue that, in this specific case, the withdrawal from IC was closely linked to the waning power of AKP as a ruling party due to the failing economic outlook of Turkey and the hyperinflation the public is facing as a result of bad economic decisions Erdogan has made. Withdrawing from the IC and weaponizing discourses around family, nation and women's bodies has become Erdogan's and AKP's playbook in order to distract the public from the economic situation and fan the flames of nationalism and patriarchy. In fact, a poll in 2021, close to the withdrawal, clearly showed the eroding support for AKP and Erdogan. According to the poll conducted by Istanbul Economics Research, on its own, AKP can only muster 35.4 percent of the votes (Duvar, 2021). When it comes Opinion polls showed that 84 percent of Turks were actually against Turkey withdrawing from IC (T24, 2020). Despite this, Erdogan's government still chose to withdraw from the convention. Kandiyoti (2016, pp. 109-110) sees this as a perfect storm:

Women's rising aspirations and determined male resistance create a perfect storm in the gender order that manifests itself in both semi-official attempts to 'tame' women and uphold men's privileges (contra the letter of written laws, hence attempts at by-passing and eroding them), and in the unofficial excesses of street-level male violence (which the judiciary often meets with leniency).

The withdrawal from IC comes at a great cost to women's rights and their demand for equality under the law. As the above discussion shows, the grounds of the withdrawal has been laid by the discursive governance of the state that prioritizes patriarchy and enshrines the heteronormative understandings of family and gender. In fact, one official reason for withdrawing from the convention is clearly stated by the Directorate of Communications for the Presidency:

The Istanbul Convention, originally intended to promote women's rights, was hijacked by a group of people attempting to nor-

malize homosexuality – which is incompatible with Türkiye’s social and family values. Hence the decision to withdraw. President Erdoğan strongly emphasizes that Türkiye will continue protecting the safety and the rights of all women. He underlines that fighting domestic violence with the principle of zero tolerance will remain on top of the government’s agenda (“Presidency” 2021).

As the state highlights domestic violence, it erases the rising public violence women face; however, both research and the reality of women’s experiences of violence show that violence against women happen regardless of where women are. Femicides, the ultimate violence against women, are also not recognized by the Turkish state.

*Contours of Femicides and Violence against Women in Turkey.* – Feminist research long argued that along with economic factors, violence is one of the key ways that a patriarchal society subordinates women while maintaining sexism and homophobia (Pharr, 1997; Alat, 2006; McDonald, 1999). As Pharr powerfully notes, men can inflict physical and psychological violence on women simply because they can, «because they live in a world that gives them permission» (1997, p. 14). Femicide is the ultimate form of violence. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) defines femicide as «the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender, and can take different forms, such as the murder of women as a result of intimate partner violence; the torture and misogynist slaying of women; killing of women and girls in the name of honour; etc.» As they note, femicide does take several different forms such as killing a woman for their gender identity, in name of honor, for her sexual orientation or through intimate partner violence. No matter the form, naming it as femicide is itself a political act because «the gender-neutral term of homicide overlooks the realities of inequality, oppression and systematic violence against women» (EIGE, n.d.). As several researchers point out, it is important to use the term femicide in order to acknowledge the gendered nature of the crime (Campbell and Runyan, 1998; Lagarde et al., 2010; Radford and Russell, 1992; Russell and Harmes, 2001).

The Turkish state needs to openly call femicides for what they are. In the Turkish case, researchers have worked with and identified the various reasons and reasonings of femicides. Scholars have noted how, for example, femicides as a result of domestic violence can happen due to



women earning more money and having more prestige than their husbands (Altınay and Arat, 2009). The majority of those who commit femicides also note that they do this in order to protect family honor and see the acts of women as a challenge to their position as male heads of households (Altinoz, et.al., 2018; pp. 1-8; Afsar 2016, p. 78). Hence, as women increase their own bodily autonomy, earn money on their own, and pursue a career or a life in public space away from the domestic sphere of the home, the risk of violence increases. More importantly, the rising femicides, the clamping down on women's bodily autonomy are both intertwined with neoliberalization of governments and public spaces. As Kandiyoti argues (2016), AKP's politics of gender and its neoliberal approach to governing the country are intertwined. According to her, AKP's ideology marries «the use of gender as a central pillar of populism and a marker of difference [...] the marriage of convenience between neoliberal welfare and employment policies and neoconservative familialism, and finally, the normalization of violence in everyday political discourse and practice» (p. 103). Proper comportment, behavior, and control of women's bodies becomes a political tool in the hands of the AKP government and the Turkish state to consolidate and naturalize a heteronormative gender regime (Cindoglu, Unal, 2017; p. 39-40).

Although the Turkish state has not been reliable in documenting violence against women and femicides, thankfully, women's NGOs, feminist researchers and journalists continue to document and report such violence. Founded in 2010, the independent feminist platform of *We will Stop Femicide (WWSFP)*, continuously monitors numbers and cases in femicides and collects data from news reports and victim stories published in the media. Part of the reason the platform was founded was to demand justice against the victims and to monitor the continuously rising VAW in Turkey. The platform defines its mission as striving to stop «femicide and ensuring their protection from violence. It fights against all types women's rights violations, starting with the violation right to life» (WWSFP, np.) In order to accomplish this, aside from publishing regular reports, the platform provides legal assistance to women, joins court cases via its representatives, and organizes meetings in various cities and venues. It has local branches in 22 cities and informal participation from abroad. The platform's demands from the government are telling of the situation in Turkey:

- 1- The president, the prime minister and the leaders of all political parties should condemn violence against women.
- 2- The protection law No. 6284 should be efficiently implemented.
- 3- Our legislative proposal to add an additional clause to the Turkish Penal Code regarding “aggravated life imprisonment” should be accepted.
- 4- A Ministry of Women should be founded.
- 5- We demand a new constitution that prioritizes gender and sexual orientation equality (WWSFP, np.)

As *We Will Stop Femicide* platform notes, sometimes women are found suspiciously dead without mention of motive; other times, women’s deaths are reported as suicides (Karakas, 2021). The platform, categorically across all its various reports, keeps stressing the legal obligation of the Turkish state to protect women. Signing and ratifying the IC and the Turkish law of 6284 puts the onus on the Turkish state and government to make sure women are protected from gendered violence. Even with Turkey out of the IC, Law 6284 still stands. 6284 clearly stipulates and names many precautions such as the close protection towards women and restraining orders of perpetrators, empowering women financially, and allowing them to change their credentials. Through their ongoing work and reports, the platform argues that if the state implements Law 6284 effectively, women can be protected and less women will be victims of gender-based violence and femicide. There are several cases where the victims had asked for state protection and did not get any which resulted in violence and death (WWSFP, n.d).

*We Will Stop Femicide* platform has been continuously demanding that the government officially recognizes femicides as what they are and abolish all forms of leniency for good behavior when it comes to femicides (WWSFP, n.d.). Reductions of sentences for various forms of good behavior has been a travesty of justice in Turkey. Examples include showing a respectful appearance by being dressed well in court or expressing regret and stating it was a «momentary» reaction. Even bringing up the besmirching of men’s honor can lead to lower sentences for killers (Kandiyoti, 2016; p. 109). One very recent case that caused uproar was the femicide of Pinar Gultekin where the perpetrator kidnapped her and then, after strangling her unsuccessfully, burned her first with a wood

fire and then with gas, put her inside a barrel, and buried her with concrete. During the sentencing, where the demand was aggravated lifetime jail without the possibility of parole, the judge reduced the sentence to 23 years in prison due to not finding the act was done with what is termed as «monstrous intent» meaning the level of aggression was not really planned but spontaneous. The lawyer of Gultekin's family stated incredulously how such an act cannot be called monstrous and decried the sentencing and noted how the sentencing feels like a legitimization of male violence and the murder of women in the hands of men. Additionally, the close relatives of the perpetrator who remained silent and hid his acts walked free. As I write this, the Gultekin family is challenging the ruling (Akgun, 2022).

The situation has gotten so bad in Turkey that not that long ago interior minister Suleyman Soylu linked what he called low incidences of femicides during March-April 2021 to the AKP government's decision to withdraw from the IC. He gloatingly noted how only 25 women have been killed as opposed to 34 women in the months prior. Soylu linked the protests against the withdrawal from the IC to police hatred and claimed that the government was doing everything to combat VAW without the need for IC (Independent, 2021). Regardless of Soylu's comments, as noted earlier, research clearly shows the rising number of femicides. In 2019, the number of femicides had reached 474 – marking it as one of the deadliest years (WWSFP, 2021). This ongoing rise in numbers of femicides can be blamed on AKP's conservative discursive, political, and practical strategies of promoting the heteronormative family unit to reinforce hegemonic understandings of gender norms. Heterosexual normativity and the heterosexual family have been weaponized under AKP rule.

*Conclusions: Looking Beyond and Within Turkey/Intersectionality of Patriarchy, Violence and Gender.* – As I was visiting Turkey this summer on 25 July 2022, Burcin Akca, a bus driver in Izmir, Turkey, my hometown, was assaulted by a male passenger on the bus that she was driving. The trade union representing bus drivers, Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK), made a statement concerning Akca's assault with several female drivers present:

We are making this statement with our members because we believe this violence will not stop. Due to affirmative action we have female drivers who try to work under these exploitative conditions and we condemn these attacks. If these attacks are the gameplay of AKP; if they do not take care of our drivers they will know our answer both as Izmir Municipality and as ESHOT General Directorate. None of our friends are alone when they serve this city. We are together; long live solidarity. I also would like to state here that we will not give up on Istanbul Convention (Ekmeç ve Gül, 2022).

The statement of DISK clearly linked Akca's assault to AKP, current government, and to the withdrawal from the IC.

In all the countries that signed it, the IC has helped with the regulation of violence against women. Turkey's withdrawal serves a direct example to other nations such as Poland and Croatia that see the IC as against their own cultural and moral laws. Hence, in that sense, Turkey's withdrawal legitimizes the backlash against the IC in other nations. Leye, Souza, and Meurens (2021) put Turkey's withdrawal in a larger context by a critical reading of a recent report tendered by the European Parliament on the implementation of the IC. As they note, and as the report shows, even in countries that implement the IC, there is gender-neutral approaches that fail to acknowledge that a gender perspective is fundamental to combating VAW. Resistance to IC is closely intertwined with resistance to abortion, same-sex marriage, sex education in schools. The report also notes the alarming nature of VAW in Europe. Nearly one in four women (22%) have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of a partner since the age of 15, and nearly half (43%) have experienced psychological partner violence. Among women in top-level management 74–75% report having experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime (FRA 2014).

Turkey's decision of withdrawal is stark; however, it is not the only way to curtail the implementation of the IC in countries that signed it. Governments can issue declarations that highlight national interpretations and can choose not to implement the IC fully due to conflicts. One example is Croatia. Croatia's declaration stated that «the provisions of the Convention do not include an obligation to introduce gender ideology into the Croatian legal and educational system, nor the obligation to

modify the constitutional definition of marriage» (quoted in Leye, Souza, Meurens, 2021, p. 4). Hence, governments and states use these declarations to go against full implementation of the IC in their countries. Here, the concept of gender itself is portrayed as a Western encroachment. As Bosak and Vajda (2019, p.78) note, «the process of ratification of the Istanbul Convention in Croatia has revealed considerable gender-phobia within the Croatian society. Conservative activists have been trying to persuade the public that the Istanbul Convention disturbs national, cultural, and religious identity and family tradition».

These reactions to the IC and Turkey's withdrawal showcase how femicides and VAW are intimately intertwined with national ideologies and the identity of the nation-state as a bordered, patriarchal, individual entity. This creates a regulatory landscape that institutionalizes gender hierarchy and violence. As writer and activist Elif Shafak states, «pulling out of the Convention has a double message. You are telling women that their lives are not important. And you are telling perpetrators that their crimes will be legitimized. It emboldens perpetrators of violence» (Duvar, 2021).

On the positive side, even after Turkey's exit from the Istanbul Convention, the convention's main imperative to end violence against women continues to rally both men and women who organize against such violence. It affirms the interconnected nature of violence against women and the patriarchal nation-state while reminding all actors that ending violence against women should be a global moral imperative that reverberates beyond national borders and identities. The IC provides a benchmark and declares the ubiquity and gendered nature of femicides within an international platform.

Only very recently, in March 2022, the Justice Committee of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) approved a bill that introduced heavier sentences for violence against women. The bill aims to limit legal interpretations that allow reductions of sentences based on good behavior of perpetrators, raises the minimum sentence for deliberate injuries from four to six months, and classifies stalking as a separate crime for the first time. The bill also proposes that the minimum sentence should be raised if the perpetrator is the former spouse or the current spouse and if the victim is a child. Additionally, the bill provides free legal counsel to women who are victims of violence (Daily Sabah, 2022).

It remains to be seen when and how this new bill will be implemented, but the bill clearly shows the internal pressure Turkish government is facing after leaving the IC to deal with VAW effectively through reforming current laws and regulations.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABU-LUGHOD L., *Do Muslim women really need saving?*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2013.
- ACAR F., ALTUNOK G., “The ‘Politics of Intimate’ at the Intersection of Neo- Liberalism and Neo-Conservatism in Contemporary Turkey”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 2013, 41, pp. 14-23.
- AFSAR S., “Violence against women and femicides in Turkey”, *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 2016, 2, 1, pp. 70-80.
- AKGUN C., “Son dakika... Pınar Gültekin cinayeti davasında gerekçeli karar açıklandı”, 25 June 2022  
(<https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/son-dakika-pinar-gultekin-cinayeti-davasinda-gerekceli-karar-aciklandi-42090526>).
- ALAT Z., “News Coverage Of Violence Against Women”, *Feminist Media Studies*, 2006, 6, 3, pp. 295-314.
- ALTINAY A., ARAT Y., *Violence against Women in Turkey: A Nationwide Survey*, Istanbul, Punto, 2009.
- ALTINOZ S.T. ET AL., “Femicide: Psychosocial Characteristics of the Perpetrators in Turkey”, *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 2018, pp. 1-13.
- AYATA A.G., TUTUNCU F., “Party Politics of the AKP (2002-2007) and the Predicaments of Women at the Intersection of the Westernist, Islamist and Feminist Discourses in Turkey”, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2008, 35, 3, pp. 363-384.
- BALDRY A.C., PAGLIARO S., PORCARO C., “The Rule of Law at a Time of Masculine Honor: Afghan Police Attitudes and Intimate Partner Violence”, *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 2013, 16, 3, pp. 363-74.
- BASAR F., DEMIRCI N., “Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey”, *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*, 2018, 34, 3, pp. 660-665.
- BAYDUR E., ERTEM B., “Kadına Yonelik Evlilik Ici Siddetin Hukuki

- Boyutlari”, *Türkiye Barolar Birliği Dergisi*, 2006, 65  
(<http://tbbdergisi.barobirlik.org.tr/m2006-65-240>).
- BAYTOK C., *The Istanbul Convention, Gender Politics and Beyond: Poland and Turkey*, Berlin, Hafıza Merkezi, 2015.
- BBC NEWS, “Erdogan: Kadın Erkek Esitliği Fitrata Ters”, 24 November 2014,  
([https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2014/11/141124\\_kadininfirati\\_erdogan](https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2014/11/141124_kadininfirati_erdogan)).
- BIANET, “Basbakan 5 Çocuk İstiyormuş Ya Emine Hanım?”, 14 May 2008,  
(<https://m.bianet.org/bianet/print/106943-basbakan-bes-cocuk-istiyormus-ya-emine-hanim>).
- BIANET, “Başbakan “Her Kürtaj Bir Uludere’dir” Dedi”, 26 May 2012,  
(<https://m.bianet.org/bianet/toplumsal-cinsiyet/138644-basbakan-her-kurtaj-bir-uludere-dir-dedi>).
- BOSAK M., VAJDA M.M., “The Reality Behind Istanbul Convention: Shattering Conservative Delusions”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, 2019, 74, pp. 77-83.
- BRAITHWAITE A., “The personal, the political, third-wave and postfeminisms”, *Feminist theory*, 2002, 3, 3, pp. 335-344.
- BRENNER N., “The limits to scale? Methodological reflection on scale structuration”, *Progress in Human Geography*, 2001, 25, 4, pp. 591-614.
- BRICKELL K., MADDRELL A., “Geographical Frontiers of Gendered Violence”, *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 2016a, 6, 2, pp. 170-172.
- BRICKELL K., MADDRELL A., “Gendered Violences: The Elephant in the Room and Moving Beyond the Elephantine”, *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 2016b, 6, 2, p. 206-208.
- CAHILL C., “The personal is political: Developing new subjectivities through participatory action research”, *Gender, place and culture*, 2007, 14, 3, pp. 267-292.
- CAMPBELL J.C., RUNYAN C.W., “Femicide: Guest editors’ introduction”, *Homicide Studies*, 1998, 2, 4, pp. 347-352.
- CINDOĞLU D., UNAL D., “Gender and sexuality in the authoritarian discursive strategies of ‘New Turkey’”, *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 2017, 24, 1, pp. 39-54.
- COCKBURN C., “The Continuum of Violence: A Gender Perspective on War and Peace”, *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones*, 2004, pp. 24-45.

- COUNCIL OF EUROPE (CoE), *Istanbul Convention*, 2011, (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=210>).
- COSAR S., YEGENOGLU, M., “New grounds for patriarchy in Turkey? Gender policy in the age of AKP”, *South European Society and Politics*, 2011, 16, 4, pp. 555-573.
- CUMHURİYET, “AKP’li vekil: “Her kadın en az 2 buçuk çocuk doğurmalı”, 29 December 2014, (<https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/akpli-vekil-her-kadin-en-az-2-bucuk-cocuk-dogurmali-175677>).
- CUOMO D., “Calling 911: Intimate Partner Violence and Responsible Citizenship in a Neoliberal Era”, *Social and Cultural Geography*, 2017, 20, 7, pp. 1-20.
- DAILY SABAH, “Report Sheds Light on Domestic Violence Profile in Turkey”, 21 December 2020, (<https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/report-sheds-light-on-domestic-violence-profile-in-turkey/news>).
- DAILY SABAH, “Turkey Passes Bill on Violence against Women, Healthcare Workers”, 30 March 2022, (<https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/turkey-passes-bill-on-violence-against-women-health-care-workers/news>).
- DIKEN, “Kampanyacı Erkek, Imzacı Erkek: Kadınlar Pembe Otobuse Binip Rahat Etsin”, 5 January 2018 (<https://www.diken.com.tr/kadinlar-pembe-otobuse-binip-rahat-etsin-kampanyaci-erkek-imzaci-erkek/>).
- DUVAR, “Angelina Jolie, Elif Shafak discuss Turkey’s withdrawal from Istanbul Convention”, 18 April 2021 (<https://www.duvarenglish.com/angelina-jolie-elif-shafak-discuss-turkeys-withdrawal-from-istanbul-convention-video-57126>).
- DUVAR, “İstanbul Ekonomi Araştırmaları anketine göre İYİ Parti yükseliyor”, 12 March 2021 (<https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/istanbul-ekonomi-arastirmalari-anketine-gore-iyi-parti-yukseliyor-galeri-1515869>).
- EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR GENDER EQUALITY (EIGE), “Femicide”, ([https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/femicide#:~:text=PrintDownload%20as%20PDF,status%20for%20men%20and%20women](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/femicide#:~:text=PrintDownload%20as%20PDF,status%20for%20men%20and%20women))).



- EKMEK VE GUL, “İzmir’de Kadın Sofor Darp Edildi: Biz de Evimize Ekmek Goturuyoruz”, 25 July 2022, (<https://ekmekvegul.net/gundem/izmirde-kadin-sofor-darp-edildi-biz-de-evimize-ekmek-goturuyoruz>).
- ESLEN-ZIYA, H., “Establishing networked misogyny as a counter movement: The analysis of the online anti-Istanbul convention presence”, *Convergence*, 2022, 28, 6, pp. 1-17.
- EURONEWS, “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: “Müslüman ailede doğum kontrolü olmaz”, 30 May 2016 (<https://tr.euronews.com/2016/05/30/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-musliman-ailede-dogum-kontrolu-olmaz>).
- FLING, C., *Introduction to Geopolitics*, Oxon, Routledge, 2017.
- FLURI J.L, PIEDALUE A., “Introduction: Embodying Violence: Critical Geographies of Gender, Race, and Culture”, *Gender, Place & Culture*, 2017, 24, 4, pp. 534-544.
- EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS (FRA), “Violence Against Women: An EU-Wide Survey: Results at a Glance”, 2014 (<https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>).
- GALTUNG J., “Violence, peace, and peace research”, *Journal of Peace Research*, 1969, 6, pp. 167-191.
- GUVENC G., AKYUZ, A., CESARIO, S.K., “Intimate partner violence against women in Turkey: A synthesis of the literature”, *Journal of Family Violence*, 2014, 29, 3, pp. 333-341.
- HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, “Combating Domestic Violence in Turkey: The Deadly Impact of Failure to Protect”, 26 May 2022, (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/05/26/combating-domestic-violence-turkey/deadly-impact-failure-protect>).
- HURRIYET DAILY NEWS, “Turkish President Erdogan Slams Women Protesting Özgecan’s Murder by Dancing”, 16 February 2015, (<http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/turkish-president-erdogan-slams-women-protesting-ozgecan-murder-by-dancing.aspx?pageID=238&nID=78423&NewsCatID=338>).
- HURRIYET, “Basbakan Uc Cocuk Dogurun Diyor Ama”, 8 March 2008, (<https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/basbakan-3-cocuk-dogurun-diyor-ama-8407613>).
- HYNDMAN, J., “Feminist geopolitics revisited: body counts in Iraq”, *The Professional Geographer*, 2007, 59, pp. 35-46.

- INDEPENDENT, “Süleyman Soylu: İstanbul Sözleşmesi feshedildikten sonra kadın cinayetleri azaldı”, 22 April 2021 (<https://www.indyurk.com/node/348901/siyaset/s%C3%BCleyman-soylu-i%C3%87stanbul-s%C3%B6zle%C5%9Fmesi-feshedildikten-sonra-kad%C4%B1n-cinayetleri>).
- KANDIYOTI D., “Bargaining with Patriarchy”, *Gender & Society*, 1988, 2-3, pp. 79-90.
- KANDIYOTI D., “Gender, Power, and Contestation: ‘Rethinking Bargaining with Patriarchy’”, (edited), *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Policy*, London, Routledge, 1998, pp. 135-151.
- KANDIYOTI D., “Locating the politics of gender: Patriarchy, neo-liberal governance and violence in Turkey”, *Research and Policy on Turkey*, 2016, 1, 2, pp. 103-118.
- KARAKAS B., “How Many Femicides in Turkey are Covered up as Suicides?”, 03 March 2021, (<https://www.dw.com/en/how-many-femicides-in-turkey-are-covered-up-as-suicides/a-56752194>).
- KONALI D., “Pembe Otobus Gibi Kadınları İkinci Sınıf Vatandaş Haline Getiren 11 Utanc Verici Uygulama”, 13 June 2017, (<https://listelist.com/kadinlara-yonelik-yasaklar/>).
- KORKUT U., ESLEN-ZIYA H., “The impact of conservative discourses in family policies, population politics, and gender rights in Poland and Turkey”, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 2011, 18, 3, pp. 387-418.
- KORKUT U., ESLEN-ZIYA H., “The discursive governance of population politics: the evolution of a pro- birth regime in Turkey”, *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 2016, 23, 4, pp. 555-575.
- KOSKELA H., “Gendered Exclusions: Women’s Fear of Violence and changing relations to space”, *Geografiska Annaler*, 1999, 81, 2, pp. 111-124.
- LEYE E., D’SOUZA H., MEURENS N., “The Added Value of and Resistance to the Istanbul Convention: A Comparative Study in 27 European Member States and Turkey”, *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, 25 November 2021, (<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fhumd.2021.697331/full>).
- MARSTON S., “The social construction of scale”, *Progress in Human Geography*, 2000, 24, 2, pp. 219-242.
- MARTIN P. M., “Contextualizing feminist political theory”, (edited), *Mapping women, making politics: Feminist perspectives on political geography*, New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 15-30.

- MCDONALD M.G., “Unnecessary roughness: gender and racial policies in domestic violence media events”, *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 1999, 16, pp. 111-133.
- MEHTA A., “Embodied Discourse: On Gender and Fear of Violence”, *Gender, Place, and Culture*, 1999, 6, 1, pp. 67-84.
- MEURENS N., ET AL., “Tackling Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence in Europe: The Added Value of Istanbul Convention and Remaining Challenges. Report Requested by the European Parliament Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality”, 2020, ([https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/658648/IPOL\\_STU\(2020\)658648\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/658648/IPOL_STU(2020)658648_EN.pdf)).
- MILLIYET, “Erdoğan: Kürtaj bir cinayettir”, 26 May 2012, (<https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/erdogan-kurtaj-bir-cinayettir-1545254>).
- OSWIN N., OLUND E., “Governing intimacy”, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 2010, 28, 1, pp. 60-67.
- PAIN R., “Space, sexual violence and social control: integrating geographical and feminist analyses of women’s fear of crime”, *Progress in Human Geography*, 1991, 15, pp. 415-31.
- PAIN R., “Everyday Terrorism: Connecting Domestic Violence and Global Terrorism”, *Progress in Human Geography*, 2014, 38, 4, pp. 531-550.
- PAIN R., “Seismologies of Emotion: Fear and Activism during Domestic Violence”, *Social and Cultural Geography*, 2014a, 15, 2, pp. 127-50.
- PAIN R., “Intimate War”, *Political Geography*. 2015, 44, pp. 64-73.
- PAIN R., STAEHELI, L.A., “Introduction: Intimacy-Geopolitics and Violence”, *Area*, 2014, 46, 4, pp. 344-347.
- PHARR S., *Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*, Berkeley, CA, Chardon Press, 1997.
- PIEDALUE A., “Beyond ‘Culture’ as an explanation for intimate violence: The politics and possibilities of plural resistance”, *Gender, Place & Culture*, 2017, 24, 4, pp. 563-574.
- PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKIYE: DIRECTORATE OF COMMUNICATIONS, “Statement by the Directorate of Communications on Turkiye’s Withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention,” 21 March 2021 (<https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/duyurular/detay/statement-by-the-directorate-of-communications-on-turkiyes-withdrawal-from-the-istanbul-convention>).

- RADFORD J., RUSSELL, D., *Femicide: The Politics of Woman Killing*, New York, Twayne, 1992.
- ROBERTS S., “Gendered globalization”, *Mapping women, making politics: Feminist perspective on political geography*, New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 127-140.
- RUSSELL D., HARMES R., *Femicide in Global Perspective*, New York and London, Teachers College Press, 2001.
- SAKTANBER A., *Living Islam: Women, Religion and the Politicization of Culture in Turkey*, London, I.B Tauris Publishers, 2002.
- SILVERN S. E., “Scales of justice: law, American Indian treaty rights and the political construction of scale”, *Political Geography*, 18, pp. 639-668.
- SIRMAN N., “Contextualizing honour”, *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, 2014, 18, pp. 1-6.
- SMITH C.E., “Caring Practices: The Connection Between Logics of State and Domestic Violence in Cairo, Egypt”, *Gender, Place & Culture*, 2016, 23, 9, pp. 1227-1239.
- SMITH D.J., “Love, Fear, and Discipline: Everyday Violence toward Children in Afghan Families”, *Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit*, 01 February 2008 (<https://areu.org.af/publication/804/>).
- STAEHELI L., KOFMAN E., “Mapping gender, making politics: towards feminist political geographies”, in L. STAEHELI, E. KOFMAN, L. PEAKE (ed), *Mapping women, making politics: Feminist perspective on political geography*, New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 1-14.
- SWEET E., “Carceral feminism: Linking the State, Intersectional Bodies, and the Dichotomy of Place”, *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 2016, 6, 2, pp. 202-205.
- THE GUARDIAN, “Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: Women not equal to men”, 24 November 2014 (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/24/turkeys-president-recep-tayyip-erdogan-women-not-equal-men>).
- TOPALAN Z., “Governing Gendered Subjects through Political Islamist Discourses: A Social Policy Analysis on Gender-based Violence in Turkey”, Master’s Thesis, 2015 (<https://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=7792070&fileId=7792072>).
- TOPLAR K., “Online Newspapers’ Coverage of Femicide in Turkey: The Analysis of the News Concerning the Murder of Ozgecan Aslan”, Research Gate, 2016

- ([https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304284581\\_online\\_news\\_papers'\\_coverage\\_of\\_femicide\\_in\\_turkey\\_the\\_analysis\\_of\\_the\\_news\\_concerning\\_the\\_murder\\_of\\_ozgecan\\_aslan](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304284581_online_news_papers'_coverage_of_femicide_in_turkey_the_analysis_of_the_news_concerning_the_murder_of_ozgecan_aslan)).
- TREMBLAY P., “AKP’s Views on Sexuality Create Uproar”, *AlMonitor*, 9 February 2015, (<https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2015/02/turkey-sexuality-creates-uproar.html>).
- TSING A.L., *Friction: an ethnography of global connection*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 2005.
- HURRIYET, “Turkish President Erdogan Slams Women Protesting Ozgecan’s Murder by Dancing,” 16 February 2015 (<https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-president-erdogan-slams-women-protesting-ozgecan-murder-by-dancing--78423>).
- TYNER J., “Herding Elephants: Geographic Perspectives on Gendered Violence”, *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 2016, 6, 2, pp. 190-197.
- TYNER J., *Space, Place and Violence*, New York, Routledge, 2012.
- T24, “KONDA araştırmasından çarpıcı sonuçlar: ‘Türkiye İstanbul Sözleşmesi’nden çıkmalı’ diyenler yüzde 7’de kaldı”, 01 September 2020 (<https://t24.com.tr/haber/konda-arastirmasinda-carpici-sonuclar-turkiye-istanbul-sozlesmesi-nden-cikmali-diyenler-yuzde-7-de-kaldi,900510>).
- VALENTINE G., “The geography of women’s fear”, *Area*, 1989, 21, pp. 385-90.
- WWSFP, “Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu” (<https://kadincinayetleriniurduracagiz.net/for-english>).
- WWSFP (*Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu*), “2020 Raporu”, 2021 (<https://kadincinayetleriniurduracagiz.net/aciklamalar/2948/2020-yilinda-islenen-kadin-cinayetlerini-isim-isim-paylasiyoruz>).
- YAMAN E.S., AYAZ S., “Domestic violence against women and women’s opinions related to domestic violence”, *Anatolian Journal of Psychiatry*, 2010, 11, 1, pp. 23-29.
- YUKSEL-KAPTANOGLU I., CAVLIN A., AKADLI ERGOCMEN B., “Research on domestic violence against women in Turkey”, Hacettepe University, Institute of Population Studies, 2015 ([http://fs.hacettepe.edu.tr/hips/dosyalar/Ara%C5%9Ft%C4%B1rmalar%20-%20raporlar/Aile%20i%C3%A7i%20%C5%9Eiddet%20Ara%C5%9Ft%C4%B1rmalar%20-%202014\\_english\\_main\\_report\\_kyais.pdf](http://fs.hacettepe.edu.tr/hips/dosyalar/Ara%C5%9Ft%C4%B1rmalar%20-%20raporlar/Aile%20i%C3%A7i%20%C5%9Eiddet%20Ara%C5%9Ft%C4%B1rmalar%20-%202014_english_main_report_kyais.pdf)).

*Abstract.* – L'articolo sostiene che la violenza di Stato contro le donne in Turchia continua a far parte di una strategia nazionale più ampia che alimenta e perpetua un patriarcato eteronormativo sempre più disfunzionale e instabile. Lo studio analizza il discorso governativo e la copertura giornalistica della violenza contro le donne in Turchia e l'attuazione della Convenzione di Istanbul. Per fare questa analisi, lo studio si basa sui reportage delle versioni online di noti giornali turchi e internazionali (Hurriyet, Milliyet, Aksam, Sabah, The Guardian) e sui siti web ufficiali governativi e non governativi. L'articolo si concentra sulle notizie e sui discorsi del governo degli ultimi 15 anni. Inoltre, analizza le leggi e i regolamenti approvati dal governo turco in materia di violenza contro le donne, esaminandone la struttura e gli intenti.

*Keywords.* – Convenzione di Istanbul, Genere, Medio Oriente

*Denver, CO, Regis University, Department of Anthropology, Sociology, and Criminal Justice  
disik@regis.edu*