

## Dimension of Violence Against Women: Customary And Honor Killings

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### Abstract

**Objective:** The aim of this study is to analyze honor and homicide, which is a kind of violence.

**Method:** This is a descriptive retrospective study. The population consist of five large-spread newspapers that were published in the year of 2007 with total of 1825 daily newspaper and can be read via the Internet.

The content analyses of the news ( $n_{news}=161$ ) and events ( $n_{event}=87$ ) have been separately carried out by the researchers.

**Result:** The researchers have encountered 87 honor and homicide news in these newspapers, and these scanned newspapers have carried news of such events 161 times (an event can be found in other newspapers as well). It has been determined that 33.3% of the honor and homicides occurred in southeastern Anatolia Region, the causes of 19.0% of the violence were “lodging a police complaint against her husband/wanting to get divorced”, 29.5% of the homicides were committed with “firearms”, and the suspects were arrested at a rate of 48.3%. It has been determined in the study that homicides were committed at a rate of 67.8% and there was an attempted murder in 10.3% of all the cases.

**Conclusion:** It is of crucial importance that visual and print media should convey all kinds of events with violent content to the community properly and with right messages. Honor and homicide, which is a serious human rights violation, should be emphasized by means of using mass media effectively and scientific activities; this problem should be pointed out through other studies, as well.

**Keywords:** Homicide, newspapers, domestic violence, battered women.

## Kadına Karşı Şiddetin Bir Boyutu: Töre ve Namus Cinayetleri

### Özet

**Amaç:** Çalışmada; şiddetin bir çeşidi olan töre ve namus cinayetlerini incelemek amaçlanmıştır.

**Yöntem:** Araştırma tanımlayıcı retrospektif bir çalışmadır. Evreni, 2007 yılında yayınlanan, internet aracılığı ile ulaşılabilen, tirajı en yüksek beş gazetede bir yıl içindeki toplam 1825 günlük gazete oluşturmuştur. Haberlerin ( $n_{\text{haber}}=161$ ) ve olayların ( $n_{\text{olay}}=87$ ) içerik analizleri araştırmacılar tarafından ayrı ayrı yapılmıştır.

**Bulgular:** Araştırmacılar tarafından taranan gazetelerde 87 töre ve namus cinayetine rastlanmış olup, incelenen gazeteler bu olayları 161 kez (bir olaya birden fazla gazetede rastlanmaktadır) haber yapmışlardır. Töre ve namus cinayetlerinin %33.3'ünün Güneydoğu Anadolu bölgesinde gerçekleştiği, %19.0'unun yaşadığı şiddetin nedeninin "eşini şiddet nedeniyle polise şikayet etme / esinden boşanmak isteme" olduğu, cinayetlerin %29.5'inin "ateşli silahla öldürme" şeklinde işlendiği ve %48.3 oranında zanlının tutuklandığı tespit edilmiştir. Çalışmada %67.8 oranında cinayet işlendiği, %10.3'ünde cinayete teşebbüs edildiği tespit edilmiştir.

**Sonuç:** Görsel ve yazılı basının, şiddet içeriği olan her türlü olayı en uygun şekilde ve doğru mesajlarla topluma aktarması çok önemlidir. Etkin kullanılan kitle iletişim araçlarıyla, düzenlenen bilimsel etkinliklerde büyük bir insan hakkı ihlali olan töre ve namus cinayetleri vurgulanmalı, yapılacak başka çalışmalarla soruna dikkat çekilmelidir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Cinayet, gazeteler, aile içi şiddet, hırpalanmış kadınlar.

### Introduction

The word of violence has emerged from "violare" which is a Latin word and has got a meaning which affects a physical and sensual.

The violence concept contains attack, stroke, torture, suicide, terrorism and war. In this scope, the violence is identified as doing or making a person do an intentional action or an action not based on his demand by using force and applying pressure on a person, group of persons or a society. The violence is held as a way of special behavior and it is accepted that a physical injury resulting from such violence is considered as bearing a wrongful intention (Emiroğlu 2008).

Depending on violence events increasing all over the world, the violence theories have begun getting expanded as result of the fact that the reason of violence are begun to be investigated. Biological, psychoanalytical, feminist and social learning theories taking place among violence theories approach the prevention of violence, from different viewpoints, by explaining the violence through different reasons. The Social learning theory handles the importance of learning in violence display and considers the violence as preventable (Hitchcock et al. 2000).

While the violence is studied with its cultural roots on one hand, it is compared to honor killings (such as the ones based on morals or honesty). As this kind of format, the honor killings emerge from culture of the societies, especially from their social values. The most important factor in occurrence of honor killings is the brutal and pitiless morals. The morals take place within the social "norm" which is a social concept (EARGED 2008). As for killing on basis of morals, it is a violence action which is culturally approved by the local community, which is directed to family members, especially to women, corrupting the structure of morals.

It is a kind of violence being applied against girls and women putting a strain on the role of sedate and honest person which is expected within the family (Kocacık 2000, Kardam 2005, Özdilek 2006).

The violence used against women, with a preamble of killing them for sake of morals and honesty is in undeniable dimension in our

country, even if this fact cannot be generalized nation widely. As result of the analyze work covering 81 provinces, conducted by the Public Order Department Presidency of General Security Directorate; in total 1091 honor killings were committed for the sake of morals within the years 2000 and 2005 (Fendođlu 2008).

Necessary codes and regulations are still under construction with a purpose to take measures for this fact. By virtue of the Convention of the United Nations for Prevention of All kinds of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Turkey Shadow Report was issued on January 2005 by the Foundation of Human Rights of Women–New Solutions and this report was supported by the Women Platform of Turkish Penal Code (CEDAW 2005).

By this way, some dispositions of the Turkish Penal Code devoted to prevention of social discrimination on sexuality have been protected against amendment or change. A public mandate was published on the Official Gazette dated July 4th 2006 and numbered 26218, with regards to “Prevention of actions of violence, honor killings for sake of morals or honesty, which are used for children and women” (Resmî Gazete 2006).

By virtue of the stated public mandate, the General Directorate of Woman’s Statute of Prime Ministry of Republic of Turkey is mandated as a coordinator organization for the issues such as prevention of violence, honor killings for sake of morals or honesty, directed to women.

This General Directorate has prepared the “National Action Plan of Fighting against the violence in the family directed to Women 2007-2010” (KSGM 2006).

All these realized studies aim, through the issued codes and public mandates, to research the reasons of violence, honor killing for sake of morals or honesty directed to women and to make away with them, to upgrade the juridical, social, political and economical statutes of women.

In prevention of honor killings, beside all these criminal and juridical measures, it is

required that the citizen identity described in framework of individual rights be acquired to everybody, in other words, that proper social circumstances be created so that the people could individually realized themselves. Of course, reaching these purposes requires without doubt, that everybody could benefit efficiently from basic services such as education, employment, justice, security and health. By this way, it would be possible to get out of from very stiff honesty understanding; to limit applications to morals, even to prevent their execution (Özdilek 2006, Resmî Gazete 2006).

In parallel to the acts of violence gradually increasing in recent years, this subject is handled in both verbal and visual media. However, these events are reflected by the media, from time to time without observing ethic rules; by this way, the society watching the media beside the injured party and the perpetrator intervening the acts of violence are also seriously affected from the spectacles (Ankara Ticaret Odası 2005).

Violence is a complex concept having different meaning on basis of time and society. Stimulation of offensiveness taking place in base of violence could be learned in course of socialization of the individual as explained on the social learning theory. And also mass communication has an accelerating effect on this learning. Disintegration of conflicts caused by behavior of offensiveness is as much important as revealing such a behavior which should be learned easily by effect of the mass communication in course of either childhood or adulthood within framework of socialization (Kocacık 2000). In this point, the role of newspapers having a great force within the mass communication appears efficiently. While the quantity of newspaper per 1000 persons was 44 pieces in our country in the year 1994; this figure has risen to 111 when coming to the year 2000 (Ankara Ticaret Odası 2005). These rates show that the people are increasingly going under effect of the newspapers interpreting the social events gradually getting complex.

## **Purpose**

In this study; the news of honor killings taking place on newspapers which are one of the mass communication were examined and it is aimed to draw attention to violence used to women.

## **Methods**

The research is a descriptive retrospective study. The universe and sampling of the study consists from daily newspapers in circulation between January 01<sup>st</sup> 2007 and December 31<sup>th</sup> 2007, having highest circulation and being accessible through internet. In scanning the newspapers, we have benefited from the Ege University Local Land Network (EUNet-TR). The survey form formed by researchers was used as measuring instrument. At the survey form, the information composing the content analysis, such as the newspaper publishing the news related to honor killing (for sake of morals or honesty) and the date of publication, the page including the news, the dimension of the news, the relationship between the deceased and the alleged criminal was investigated.

Necessary permission was received from the newspapers by sending a relevant e-mail to the communication departments of the internet pages. The names of the newspapers were not used in the research and they were indicated as newspaper numbered 1.,2.,3.,4.,5. With an assumption that an act of violence might be available on more than one newspaper; any scanned news and events were separately considered and they were meticulously examined by a sole researcher.

Five newspapers having high circulation have been scanned between the dates of January 15<sup>th</sup>–February 15<sup>th</sup> 2008, in scope of the year 2007 (01.01.2007-31.12.2007) by using key words such as “murder, women, honesty morals” on internet pages and the content analysis of these included events ( $n_{news}=161$ ) and of the events composing a source to these events ( $n_{event}=87$ )

were individually done (BIAK 2005). In terms of searching, total 5 newspapers with with cumulative 1825 days were evaluated and those are accepted as study population.

Disconnection of internet access and problems in finding full lengths of the news could be defined as the limitations of this study.

For ethical reasons, an email letter has been sent to all newspapers administrative offices for permission, but we could not have any replying. Local ethical committee has provided the information confirming that there would be no ethical problem since the newspapers have been open-access publications.

## **Results**

In total, 87 events were established for a period between January 01<sup>st</sup> 2007 and December 31<sup>th</sup> 2007. Given the way of consideration of these events as being reported as news by newspapers; it is established that such events were reported as news just 161 times on five newspapers. Therefore, findings were considered in context of news and events.

### **A. On Basis of News**

It is established that 37.9 % of the examined news were published on 5 newspapers and 24.2% thereof on 2 newspapers (Table 1). It is established that the key words of the research (murder, woman, honesty, morals) were used on the headings of these newspapers (Table 2).

When classifying the news as per the divisions of the newspaper that they were published; it is established that they were given place on the actual division of the newspapers with a rate of 59.6 %; on the annexes of the newspapers with a rate of 12.4%; on the world division with a rate of 3.1% and on health division of the newspapers with a rate of 3.1%.

41.6% of the news was supported with an image-photograph, in 79.5% of the news, names were used and the pictures used on this news

**Tablo 1:** The Distribution of Published by Newspaper

Newspapers	n	%
1 <sup>st</sup> Newspaper	16	9.9
2 <sup>nd</sup> Newspaper	39	24.2
3 <sup>rd</sup> Newspaper	26	16.1
4 <sup>th</sup> Newspaper	19	11.8
5 <sup>th</sup> Newspaper	61	37.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100.0</b>

belong to the deceased and in 87.0% of the news, the deceased one is a woman.

While it is stated on the 41.6% of the news that the murder has resulted from “killing with a firearm”; from “stabbing” on 12.4 % thereof and from “forcing to committing a suicide/making it look like a suicide” on 7.5% of the news; not any

information was given on this subject on news and the murder was not handled on 13.7% of the news (Table 3).

**B. On Basis of Events**

When examining the honor killings in respect of regional distribution of our country; it is established that 33.3 % of 87 honor killings were

**Tablo 2:** Some of The News Headlines That is Inspected on The Newspapers

Some of the example from news headlines
The public prosecutor saved him from honor
He choked to his baby due to the fear of honor
You die or your family will kill you
The execution of honor in forbidden love
Six lead is threw to sister due to the honor
The new name of honor
To stabbed his wife over 12 because of much flirtatious speaking
A woman at the tip of the barrel
There isn't your honor which kill to she because of infertile
The execution to new lover from brother
To stabbed over 20, anyone interfered
Do you think a mom who kill daughter for son should be appreciated?
The Taş Family took decision about the honor for their daughter
She gave up to her baby in trash
Honor the defendants have got reputation in prison
He was killer at teenage
While she escape from honor, she was raped three times
My tension went up and I killed
At first I stabbed than I killed because of he had not to grind
He stabbed 20 times to his wife in middle of the street
The honor victim of Yasemin who is pregnant for 1.5 month
The honor murder got out from trash



**Tablo 3:** The Distribution of Reasons of Murder on The Inspected News Which are About Honor and Murder

The main reasons of murders	n	%
To kill with burning gun	67	41.6
There is no murder	22	13.7
There is no information	22	13.7
To stab	20	12.4
Enforce to suicide/ To look like a suicide	12	7.5
Beating with stone-stick to kill	9	5.6
To choke	6	3.7
Beating to kill after the rape	2	1.2
To poisoning	1	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100.0</b>

committed in South-Eastern Anatolia, 13.8% thereof in Marmara and 12.6% in Eastern Anatolia and Mediterranean Region.

It is established that the average of age of female deceased was  $25.62 \pm 9.27$  (min: 12-max: 51) and that 12.6% of these women were pregnant.

While a murder is in question in 67.8% of the events, an attempted murder is in question in 10.3% of these events.

When examining the events causing a murder; the principal reasons in 19.0% of the events were such as “that his wife has complained to the police station due to violence used on her/that his wife has desired to get divorced” and, “forcing to marriage/ abduction of girl” in 13.3% of the events and, “becoming a prostitute/commitment of adultery” in 10.5% of the events; the rate of outrage is at a rate of 9.5% (Table 4).

There is a line of descent between the deceased one and the alleged criminals at a rate of 78.2% and it is established, in 20.6% these events, that the alleged criminal was the big brother / brother of the deceased on and, it was the spouse of the deceased one in 19.5% of these events.

The average of age of alleged criminal was fixed as  $29.12 \pm 11.28$  (min: 15-max: 70). It is established that the alleged criminals were arrested at the end of such an event with a rate of 48.3%.

### Discussion

According to the estimations of the United Nations Population Fund, nearly 5000 women are victim of an honor killing every year, all over the world. With about 500 events per year, Pakistan is one of the countries where honor killing is mostly committed. Beside Pakistan, the other countries are Brazil, Equator, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Turkey and Morocco, where honor killing committed for sake of morals or honesty prevails. Therefore, it is seen that the honor killings are seen not only in Moslem and Arabic Countries but also in Latin American Countries such as Brazil and Equator. As honor killing is mostly committed in Moslem Countries, all over the world, this application is generally assumed to be in relation with the Islam Region. However, there is not any explication in religious theoretical knowledge related to Muslimism, with regards to honor killing for sake of morals or honesty. This described honesty complex comes in sight in places where the social structure is patriarchal

**Tablo 4:** The Distribution of Action Which is Reason of Murder on The Inspected News

<b>The action which is the reason of murder*</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Complain to the police man to her husband because of violence/Want to divorce	20	19.2
Enforce to married / To kidnap a girl	14	13.4
Go astrey / Commit adultery	11	10.6
Rape	10	9.6
Escape with other man / To leave from home	9	8.7
She has got a boy friend / fornication- pragnancy before married	8	7.7
Not to behave suitable to ethic principle /Behavior of unsuitable	2	1.9
She has not got a son / The hymen is torned	2	1.9
Feud	2	1.9
Do not want to "berdel"	2	1.9
Unknown	9	8.7
Other	15	14.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*More than one reasons are informed for a murder.

and where religion has got an intense effect on society (BIAK 2005, Cavalcanti et al. 2006, Moussaoui 2007, Lettiere et al. 2008, Griffith and Tengnah 2009).

According to the Reports of Honor Killings committed for sake of morals or honesty, issued by the Human Rights Presidency of Prime Ministry of Republic of Turkey, conducted in our country by Public Order Department Presidency of General Security Directorate; the results coming from the Human Rights Council of 81 provinces between the years 2003-2007 were considered. On the report; while the number of victims due to honor killing committed for sake of morals or honesty was 159 in the year 2003; this number has risen to 233 in the year 2006 and to 231 in the year 2007 (Fendoğlu 2008). However, on five newspapers subjected to research, it is seen that only 87 of these events were given place. This situation makes us think that there were also honor killings committed for sake of morals or honesty, not reported as news or not included into research and taking place on newspapers.

On the Report of Honor Killings committed for sake of Morals or Honesty, issued by the Human Rights Presidency of Primary Ministry of Republic of Turkey; it is seen that the numbers of people having dyed due to honor killings in the last 5 years have exceeded 1100. These murders have come true in South-Eastern Anatolia of our country with a rate of 17% and in Eastern Anatolia with a rate of 19%. As for the murders faced in the Western Anatolia, it is assumed to be resulted from immigrations to this region from the Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia (Fendoğlu 2008). It is fixed at the research that the 33.3 % of the honor killings committed for sake of morals or honesty has come true in the South-eastern Anatolia.

According to the records of honor killing of the Istanbul Security Directorate; as result of honor killing; the numbers of killed women are as follows: 18 persons in 2000; 19 persons in 2002, 24 persons in 2003, and 17 persons in 2004, 24 persons in 2005 and 25 persons in 2006. While examining the killed women people; it is determined that the age group of women exposed

to honor killing was the group of 19-25 ages with a biggest rate of 20%. And also according to resources, the fact that the women being delivered to their families are mostly killed or forced to commit a suicide demonstrates that these figures are actually, only the apparent face of the iceberg (Fendoğlu 2008).

At the studies conducted with regards to violence all over the world, the dimensions of violence in family are discussed and, it is announced that the rate of women exposed to violence before pregnancy was 13.4% and, the rate of women exposed to violence in course of pregnancy was 4.67% (Espinosa and Osborne 2002, Sarkar 2008, Audi et al. 2008, Ergöner et al. 2009). A national pregnancy-related mortality ratio of 38 ( $\pm 2.5$ ) and a maternal mortality ratio of 29 ( $\pm 2.5$ ) per 100,000 live births were found. The National Maternal Mortality Survey (NMMS) shows that 59% off all pregnant women died from direct maternal causes, 16% from indirect causes and 23% from co-incident causes. These are data related to known and recorded women deaths (Türkyılmaz et al. 2009). As on the news examined in course of study, the rate of deceased women is 87.0%.

It is seen that the honesty is described as something very important for which a person could be killed, which is the meaning and purpose of life for persons being observed that the Honesty is perceived by them, under the influence of various factors such as social sexuality of persons, their ages, the place of settlement where they subsist, their education, their tribal relations and lines of descent, and put in a very important place of the their lives. Especially in the lives of families or communities to which such people are a part; which have got a rural origins, which are under influence of strong tribal relations and lines of descent; whose social environments have not changed considerably even if they had immigrated much before (Kocacık 2000, EARGED 2008).

Even though the honesty is perceived differently among persons and societies, it may be stated that the strongest tendency is to keep woman, the bodies of women, the sexuality of woman and women. When looking from this framework, comes in sight a point view such as “honesty is the wife of a man, namely, lawful spouse or his sister, mother, other women in his family, furthermore, the women in near environment” (Kocacık 2000, Kardam 2005, Ergöner et al. 2008).

When examining the occurrence reasons of honor killings; they range, in executed researches, such as the fact that the young girl have got a sentimental relation with a person without approval and desire of her family, the fact that she gives a unlawful birth to a baby, the fact that the young woman has quitted his husband and run away with another man, the fact that the young girl falls in love with a young man/the fact that she becomes pregnant before marriage / the fact that she runs away with such a young man / the fact that she went astray which is not socially acceptable (Kardam 2005, Özdilek 2006, EARGED 2008).

As for the persons committing the murder or attempting to kill are generally their husbands married generally upon a decision made by the Family Assembly; their ex husbands, their fathers, their brothers and other male relatives (paternal or maternal uncle etc) (Kardam 2005, EARGED 2008). Aslan and Avcı (1994) have emphasized that the violence is generally applied by male spouse, too.

In direction to the prevention of honor killings, in context of a fact that this is a great problem affecting the society; news taking place nowadays in press organs and especially discussion panels on televisions and TV series have got a rather great importance on subject of emphasizing the importance of the subject. However, the phenomenon of honor killing bears a risk for certain social sections, in a way to be perceived and considered “normal”, supposing



that the society is given wrong messages by the press-media organs. The number of newspapers and periodicals being published in 2007 has increased 22.2% compared to 2006 (Orkan 2008).

In Turkey, between 18 and 20 millions people read newspaper every day (Semerci 2004). In order to render newspapers attractive, either a adjudging style is taken on or the words used to draw attention to the heading of the news are not meticulously determined or a mocking or dramatic style is used. The fact that the newspapers allocate special place to most attractive news in the divisions which are read most is another method for sake of increasing the selling circulation (Yeaton et al. 1990). As result of executed studies, it is demonstrated that all kinds of media instruments having a content of violence have got short and long term effects not only on children but also on adults. For this reason, it is important that all foundations taking place in visual and verbal press handle all kinds of events having violence content in a most proper way and transmit them to the society with true messages (Kardam 2005, Resmî Gazete 2006).

### **Conclusions**

The media is responsible for informing the society about any developments in every field. Besides, the media has to undertake a critical mission making you think, which tries to reflect to the society with different dimensions, through society leaders, religion officers, popular persons from science-arts-sport world and other persons that the society being appreciated by the society, that the violence and the act of murdering for sake of honesty do not comply with human rights; which is informative in field of fighting against violence (Kardam 2005, Resmî Gazete 2006). On the other hand, the enhancement of education level of people, especially of women through social responsibility projects would also

be influential in decreasing the dimension of violence directed to women and in dissolving the honor killings committed for sake of morals or honesty.

Customary and honor killings are the most seen especially in the Eastern part of Turkey. The victims opposed to the murdering action are the women and they have been firstly evaluated by nurses and midwives working in these areas. Having enough information on the situation, legal procedures and supporting organizations for midwives and nurses would be helpful in controlling the circumstances and sometimes to save the lives.

### **Contributions**

Study design: A H,B K-S,Y Ç-K,Ö D-B,Z B-A

Data collection and/or analysis: Y Ç-K,B K-S

Manuscript preparation: B K-S, Y Ç-K, A H, Ö D-B, Z B-A

### **Explanation:**

The study was presented as verbal announcement in the 1st Women's Health Congress (from March 20th to March 22nd 2008, Ankara) and published as a summary text on the scientific meeting book.

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