

# **GENDER-BASED JOURNALISM**

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NADİRE MATER – İPEK ÇALIŞLAR

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IPS Communication Foudantion Publications: 10

Rights Journalism Series: 2

**GENDER-BASED  
JOURNALISM**

(C) IPS Communication Foundation

First Edition: October 2007

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With gratefulness to the Consulate of Sweden in Istanbul for its  
support

Cover design: Emine Bora  
Offset preparation: Metis Yanyıncılık Ltd.

Printing and binding:  
Yaylacık Press Limited, Topkapı, İstanbul  
Tel: 0212 567 8003

ISBN-13: 978-975-01484-1-5

Translation of this book is provided by Interpretation and Translation Facility introduced within the context of CSD Project.



Interpretation and Translation Facility is funded by the European Union.



Contents of this publication are not the responsibility of the CSD Project and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

CSD Project is implemented by Secretariat General for EU Affairs



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## FROM THE FOUNDATION

*Gender-based Journalism* is the second book of the new series “Rights Journalism”. The books *Human Rights Journalism*, *Gender-based Journalism* and *Child-based Journalism* are the totality of all the work, hurrying, excitement, anxiety, thought, debate and joy of the three year period from 2003 to 2006. We share this totality with you rights defenders, prospective journalists, journalists and all readers. We are happy!

*Gender-based Journalism* is the tenth book from the IPS Communication Foundation. Our Foundation was founded in 1993 by Şahika Yüksel, Füsün Özbilgen, Tuğrul Eryılmaz, Ertuğrul Kürkçü and Nadire Mater in pursuit of the dream of “the possibility of doing something” outside the mainstream media.

These dreams did not go unrealised. With the completion in 2006 of BİA<sup>2</sup>, the “Media Freedom and Independent Journalism Monitoring and News Network” we have carried on the argument for the “possibility of another journalism” into its seventh year. The series of which this book is a part is just one

of the products to come out of sharing this argument with our colleagues.

At the centre of our efforts which we continue with the call “Journalism for Rights, Rights for Journalists” is bianet ([www.bianet.org](http://www.bianet.org)) which for seven years now has been producing news through the “rights journalism” perspective. We continue to report news with the focus on the freedom of women, people, children and expression through productive solidarity established with local journalists, rights defenders and independent journalists. We engage in journalism trying to be the voice of those who are excluded, ignored, whose rights are abused and who have been silenced. We look at the current affairs in Turkey and in the world from this point and offer another world every day.

The sub-sites Women’s Window, Children’s site and News in English complement the main news page on bianet news website. The weekly on-line magazine BiaMag is available every Saturday.

When the foundation was first set up in 1993, its offices were in Sultanahmet. It was there that the first ideas and research which gave clues to the possibilities which led us to the Independent Communication Network (BİA) emerged. As newspapers and journalists left Cağaloğlu we moved to our offices on Kallavi Street, Beyoğlu in 1999. Having moved to and fro between 2000 and 2006 as the volume of work fluctuated we arrived at our present premises in Çukurcuma. Even though over the years the news broadcast started and ended at the offices of bianet, always with us were the articles, news, cartoons, photos and drawings coming from journalists, followers, enthusiasts and anyone who wished to contribute, whether we knew them or not, from cities and towns around the country and the world. We benefited greatly from the labour of local newspapers and radios and local journalists and tried to make them benefit from ours. In short, in everything we did there was sharing and solidarity in everything we did, just as we had imagined or even more so.



As we look back, we see that it has been 14 years since we set up our foundation. Unbelievable. The year 1997 was probably the most critical moment of those 14 years. That year in April the first step was taken towards coming together for what would eventually be come to known as the Independent Communication Network (BİA) which was initially motivated by the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB). Representatives of local media, academics in the field of communication, representatives from TMMOB and the Turkish Medical Association (TBB) discussed “the problems of the local media and solution possibilities” at the “National Conference” held in Ankara and formed the skeleton of BİA. The task of developing the idea to its conclusion fell to the IPS Communication Foundation. We had to wait for three years for resources to create BİA. In 2000, sufficient financial resources were secured through a grant from the European Union secured by TMMOB’s initiative. With BİA’s “Founding Conference” held in Izmir in January 2001 our search for “another communication” began to take its first practical steps; the project which consisted of bianet, local media training, radio programmes fro local radios, legal support unit for journalists in trouble and the Journalist’s Guidebook Series which develops the understanding of new journalism was followed by BİA<sup>2</sup> with the further enrichment of each field. As this series is published we are commencing work on the “Journalism for Rights, Rights for Journalists” (BİA<sup>3</sup>) project. It will carry on thus: BİA<sup>4</sup>, BİA<sup>5</sup>, BİA<sup>6</sup>...

We may not have been so sure of following a “timely idea” when we first set out. However, over the past seven years we saw that many publishers, journalists, reporters and communication professionals trying to realise the same dream, if in different scope and ways. In November 2006 we held the “International Independent Media Forum” in Istanbul with those “BİAs” from Turkey and the world that we could contact; and we once more affirmed internationally that “a different communication” than the one dominant today is possible.

Now we are far more hopeful. From all around the world, we have come together with journalists who create the independent media, with academics who open up the field to discussion and constantly work on it, with communication students who will soon be in the field of media and with people going after their right to receive news. We will continue with increasing numbers, until the silent get their voices.

Nadire Mater – Ertuğrul Kürkçü

## ON BIA<sup>2</sup> AND RIGHTS JOURNALISM TRAINING ACTIVITIES

### Sevda Alankuş

As those who have had the opportunity to read books previously published by the IPS Communication Foundation or those who follow *bianet* will know, a part of the Independent Communication Network (BIA) project, which started out in 1997 as a dream shared by the IPS Communication Foundation, two professionals associations: the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) and the Turkish Medical Association (TTB), local media organisations and a few academics in the field of communications and was realised in 2000 with support from the EU, was training activities directed at the local media. The local media was directed because on the one hand BIA was a local media initiative and on the other hand the other stakeholders of this initiative who were not happy with the journalism provided by the mainstream media thought it essential for the pluralisation and democratisation of the journalism scene in Turkey that *the local media should gather around and independent communication network and strengthen in terms of content and quality, thus forming an alternative to the mainstream media*. So, as the project transformed itself together with local media organisations into

an independent communication network (*bianet*) it also started training work in order to ensure that the local media taking part or wanting to take part in the network would be able to continue its activities with an understanding of publishing based on high quality and shared news production in the framework of ethically and politically responsible reporting.

The first stage of the training activities organised into two stages was completed with the participation of 270 journalists from 141 local media organisations in urban centres in nine regions and the second was completed with the involvement of 213 participants from 169 local media organisations in urban centres in three regions, thus a total of 483 journalists were approached. The texts used in the seminar and workshop activities of the training programme carried out by communication academics and journalists who shared BIA's conception of journalism were published as books forming the Journalist's Guidebook Series in 2003; namely *The Media and Society*, *The Media, Ethics and the Law*, *Journalism and Reporting*, *The Radio and Radio Broadcasting*. In 2005 a second edition of the said books were released, with updates to some of the text.

The story of the three book series, of which this book is a part of is similar to, or better still, a continuation of the story of the first series. For the Journalist's Guidebook Series also forms an important leg of the project which became BIA<sup>2</sup> in 2003 by presenting in print the texts and additional material used in training activities directed at local media workers and is formed of three books called *Human Rights Journalism*, *Gender-based Journalism* and *Child-based Journalism*. However, that is not all! For that reason let me elaborate on the second part of the story.

As stated on the *bianet* website ([www.bianet.org](http://www.bianet.org)) , the aims of BIA<sup>2</sup> , also known as Media Freedom and Independent Journalism Monitoring and News Network were determined to be to inform society on the social and cultural worth of information, to monitor and report on rights abuses in all fields and the implementation of regulation aiming at broadening the

freedom of expression, to be able to continue to support and strengthen local media in order to increase the multiplicity of voices and participation in public administration, to inspire more often and higher quality coverage of human, women's and children's rights in the media and to put in place and further develop journalism standards and an understanding of professional ethics. Thus carrying out rights journalism, it was aimed that this concept and practice would become openly discussed in the academic field and practiced in the mainstream/local media, while on the other hand public awareness regarding the matter would be formed and the media would become an observer on the issues of the protection, practice and development of human, women's and children's rights.

At the focus of BİA<sup>2</sup>'s training activities was the local media. However, besides the local media which represents ethically and politically responsible reporting lacking in the mainstream media in Turkey and is expected to carry out rights journalism as a result, training was also initiated with rights organisations and lawyers which have an important part to play in rights demands and the protection and proliferation of rights journalism. The content of training activities was selected according to the roles the three groups focused on, namely the *local media*, *rights organisations* and *lawyers*, took up or were expected to take up in rights demands and the protection and development of rights.

*The training activities directed at rights organisations* targeted the strengthening of the organisations in documenting and reporting the rights abuses which they observe and relations with the mainstream/local media. The texts used at these training sessions which took place in four centres were published just like this book under the editorship of BİA trainer Gülgün Erdoğan. *The activity directed at lawyers* was designed an eye to developing the support lent to local media organisations by the "legal support team" which the BİA project had established right from the start in order to aid local media in legal problems they encountered. At the meetings held in Istanbul in 2004 and 2006 with the participation of 57

lawyers working on the freedom of expression from 34 provinces, the aim was to update the expertise of lawyers interested in the communication law in line with the implications, for situations which might be encountered by the local media in pursuing rights journalism, of the new legal regulations which have arisen as a result of Turkey's EU accession talks and are generally known as "accession laws".

On the other hand the target of the training activities organised for the local media which culminated in the publication of the Rights Journalism Series was to ensure that journalists in the local media would think on and carry into practice the reasons for and forms of rights journalism as a logical result of ethically and politically responsible reporting and to prevent the occurrence of often unrealised rights violations caused by journalistic activity.

During the 2003-2006 period we came together with 227 journalists in "Human Rights Journalism", 248 in "Gender-based Journalism" and 257 in "Child-based Journalism". In these three training tours covering 19 provinces in Turkey over three years we reached journalists from respectively 42, 47 and 62 provinces. *Human Rights Journalism* training was delivered by Çiler Dursun, Gülgün Erdoğan Tosun, Hüsnü Öndül, Levent Köker, Murat Çelikkan, Oğuz Haksever, Ömer Madra, Ragıp Duran, Şerif Erol; *Gender-based Journalism* by Aksu Bora, Beyhan Demir, Eser Köker, Filiz Kerestecioğlu, Hülya Gülbahar, Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver, İpek Çalışlar, Nadire Mater, Nermin Yıldırım, Selen Doğan; and *Child-based Journalism* by Ahmet Şık, Ezgi Koman, Gülgün Erdoğan Tosun, İncilay Cangöz, Kemal Özmen, Ragıp Duran, Seda Akço, Sema Hosta, Serdar Değirmencioğlu, Tuğrul Eryılmaz and Yasemin Onat. All in all a total of 28 trainers who are academics, people of the law and journalists took part.

In short a total of 34 meetings were held and 1271 journalists benefited from BIA training activities carried out by 51 trainers as a result of the training directed at the local media within the scope of the 80% EU funded projects which started out in 1997 at the Ankara meeting which is very significant for those

who know how it all started and continued with the *Independent Communication Network* (BİA) in the 2000-2003 period and with the *Media Freedom and Independent Journalism Monitoring and News Network* (BİA<sup>2</sup>) in the 2003-2006 period. To put it immediately and with pride, this is unparalleled in all respects in Turkey. Due to the number and diversity of participants and trainers, the issues covered and the mutually interactive and practical workshop nature of the activities, BİA/ BİA<sup>2</sup> has now transcended being an independent new site and has become an alternative journalism/reporting school. It further has the quality of not only being a school of practice for local media employees many of whom did not receive communication education and cannot get in profession training due to budgetary constraints but also for students at Communication High Schools and Faculties, complementing the education they receive.

Yet this is not all: the BİA/ BİA<sup>2</sup> projects had promised the publication of the presentations of BİA trainers reshaped with the contributions of participants at the end of the sessions and of the working texts of seminars/workshops formed together with participants. It has honoured this promise first by the five book *Journalist's Handbook Series* and it is now publishing the three book *Rights Journalism Series*. Thus the number of books to come out of BİA-IPS Communication Foundation has become 11. This just goes to show that I was right when I said above that BİA has become a school.

For these books with their contents covering many issues which up until now have not or could not make it to the syllabus of many Faculties of Communication form an important educational library in Turkey which is taking its first steps in terms of the number of copyright books in the field of communication. Furthermore, because they have been sent to many individuals and organisations free of charge, are accessible at non-profit prices and can be procured from the "[www.bianet.org](http://www.bianet.org)" website, the readership numbers for our publications are already far above what we had envisaged. This means, to put it succinctly, that those who benefit from the training provided by the Independent Communication

School are not limited to those who attended the meetings and those students who drop by the BIA centre in Istanbul to receive vocational training.

Which others are among these books? The *Independent Communication Network/BIA: the National Conference and Documents* published following the 1997 Ankara meeting of BIA, two translated books: *Practical Guide for Journalists* and another first *IPS Gender and Development Glossary* the five books from the Journalist's Guidebook Series mentioned above: *Media and Society, the Media, Ethics and the Law, New Communication Technologies and the Media, Journalism and Reporting, the Radio and Radio Broadcasting*; the Rights Journalism Series books which amount to three including this one, *Rights Organisations, Being Visible in the Media* edited by Gülgün Erdoğan Tosun and finally *Another Communication is Possible*, edited by Sevilay Çelenk, which collects in Turkish and English, all the presentations delivered at the İstanbul International Independent Media Forum held in November 2006, which is the first/leading book published in Turkey on the independent media.

### **Rights journalism: Why and how?**

All the books in the Rights Journalism Series revolve around these two questions: “*Why* human, woman and Child-based journalism and *how* (should they be carried out)?” The fact that these questions or problems are approached and attempted to be answered together distinguishes this book from similar publications. In other words, in the books which form the series the discussion is not solely centred on why the widespread understanding and practice of journalism is flawed but a framework of the alternative is also given; new locations are pointed out to prospective journalists, young journalists and members of the local media who concerned with carrying out journalism differently than the mainstream media. Over the past years, the number of pieces of research on the content presented by the mainstream media in different ways/formats has increased with the influence of Critical Communication Theories and following the lead of a few primary works.



Despite this, a resource book dealing with “how journalism should differ from the activities of the mainstream media” which will replace the works of the first generation of academics which form the cornerstones of traditional journalism, is still to be written.

This is why the attempt by the Rights Journalism Series in trying to answer together the two questions of “why and how rights journalism” is an important contribution. The success of the series is in greater part due to the formation of the books among the accumulation of knowledge and practice BİA has realised as a news site directly targeting rights journalism, and in an environment which brings together academics and local journalists, which has over the last seven years become a school (of thought) through the training process.

Those familiar with the books forming the Journalist's Guidebook Series published previously by the IPS Communication Foundation will no doubt remember that while criticising that which is the case at present they were also put together in a manner searching for something to replace it with. Indeed, especially in the foreword to the *Media, Ethics and the Law* we had called the “new” understanding of journalism/reporting that is required by the general name “ethically and politically responsible journalism” in an attempt to open the path leading to it and we had mentioned by name two attempts which represent such an understanding of journalism/reporting in the book *Journalism and Reporting*. Based on the presentation texts “Citizen Journalism” by İncilay Cangöz and Ragıp Duran and “Journalism in Periods of Conflict and War” by Esra D. Arsan we had singled out Citizen Journalism and Peace Journalism as two waypoints along the road.

In the books of the Rights Journalism Series we are at an important “point on the itinerary” regarding the search. Because we now conceptualise as “rights journalism” something which *bianet* has been doing since it started reporting and while showing it as a model also take it as an indispensable part of *ethically and politically responsible*

*journalism. By detailing the concept of Rights Journalism under the three titles Human Rights Journalism, Gender-based Journalism and Child-based Journalism we*

*are contributing to the literature on communication these concepts which have not been used in Turkey before.* However this claim should not be taken as suggesting that our search which started with *bianet* and the Journalist's Handbook Series has come to an end. Therefore our texts on rights journalism should be seen as a “stop” on the way, but to continue the metaphor, they are a “major stop”, that is a sine qua non position without which one can not get to anywhere else. Due to the continuity which exists among them, the books of the two series should be read together. In other words if the first series opens doors in the field of reporting/journalism and points out a few places to go to the second consists of texts which show where one should necessarily stop after going through these doors and therefore we believe that read together the books will be more beneficial.

### **Why is there need for a new concept/practice of journalism?**

Just as some journalists and academics think “if good journalism consists of the suggestions of Peace Journalism, why look for a new concept”<sup>1</sup> while engaged in training work we might not have gone after new concepts and practices and could have spoken of the necessity of practicing “good journalism” instead of rights journalism. Yet then we would have to assume that “good journalism” was something that had lived its golden age in the past and then become corrupted or that there is an ideal of journalism which is applicable and unchangeable for all time, which is not “true”. Although some writers claim that “ideal/good” journalism existed for example in the 18<sup>th</sup> century but with the industrialisation, monopolisation, globalisation of the media as the outcome of a process starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century it had lost its way –become corrupted- I contend that the type of journalism which we suggest here has never been a

widespread journalism/reporting practice either at the start of the profession or afterwards and that whatever example of it may be seen existed in the “alternative media” understanding and practice. And this is natural, provided we see history –not through a progressive or teleological approach- but as a process which modifies the way in which we understand the world in economical, political and socio-cultural unity. Furthermore I share the opinion that the problems of traditional journalism are not limited to “developments” such as monopolisation and globalisation, in other words they stem from a “structural” problem. An example is the reproduction of everyday language with its openly sexist nature in news language –and in fact in all narrative- which leads to the most innocent choice of words becoming a violation of women’s rights and through the “contract” traditional reporting has established over what is newsworthy and what is not the poor, women and children only making the news when they are “guilty” or when they the “victim”. When listed like this, a provocative proposition becomes apparent: news itself

Is nothing but a rights violating fiction/scenario/construct<sup>2</sup>.

2. have listed all of these because in the different texts which take place in the Rights Journalism Series you can come accross one or the other and each of them denotes roughly the same thing: what is implied moving from a post-structuralist language/discourse approach is that despite all claims to “reality” the news item has no superiority over other narrative forms, that it is a “scenario” like the rest and is a method of telling a “story” which tells of other knowledge and also that social/political power is reproduced through this manner of telling this knowledge. Regarding these claims you may refer to the foreword for the first book of the Journalist’s Handbook Series *the Media and Society* and also to the articles of Ayşe İnal and Beybin D. Kejanoğlu therein and also to Çiler Dursun’s article in the fourth book of the series *Journalism and Reporting*. In this series, other than the debate contained in the article by Cangöz in *Child Based Journalism* we only touch upon the subject –as in this footnote- on the assumption that what we mean to say has been understood.

However, not all the writers who are featured in our series share my opinion that the news item itself is a narrative which produces a rights violation. They are probably right to do so, in that they can avoid the position I find myself in when I take language to be universally sexist (or in a certain feminist approach) “phallus-centred”<sup>3</sup> construction and therefore taking as all narratives, the news item as a “way of telling/known the social”<sup>4</sup> as “male” and therefore seem to suggest to the reader that “this” language and the news item should be given up entirely.<sup>5</sup> While on the one hand investigating who is (not) in the news and how this is done irresponsibly and in sexist, racist, discriminative forms when they make the news they move from the possibility of replacing it with what is “better” and light the way on with what the “worse” should be replaced with. The claims they share are these: Firstly, rights violations are not considered news worthy by the mainstream media. Secondly the mainstream media does not represent the “repressed/latent” (the poor, women, children) and when the “others” are the case it prefers to not to see and not to show. Thirdly, when the “others” are featured this is generally a representation of them as the “guilty/actor” or the “victim/object”. In this way the mainstream media violates rights when it does and does not feature as news –certain

3. I borrow this term from Luce Irigaray (*to Speak is never neutral*, London, New York: Continuum, 2002). For a more detailed explanation refer to the foreword for the present book.

4. For a discussion of the nature of the news item as a knowledge regarding the social cf. Çiler Dursun, “What Does It Mean For Reality to be Constructed in the News?”, Çiler Dursun (ed.), *The News, Reality and Power Relationship*, Ankara: Elips, 2004, p.37-67 and the article by the same author entitled “The Nature and Possibility of Rights Journalism” in *Human Rights Journalism*.

5. It goes without saying that I hold no such “position” but since this *text* is not the place for the relevant discussion I take the risk of being misunderstood.

issues and sections of society-. All this is generally explained in terms of the corruption of the ideal media through the dimensions assumed by monopolisation and globalisation today. However there are some among them, who like me think the problem is more of a structural/innate nature.<sup>6</sup>

### **What should be understood from rights journalism?**

As we have seen the first stop the journalist/reporter should stop by at the onset must be rights journalism in its three meanings. That is reporting *which does not ignore rights violations, which does not wait for them to become an*

*actor/subject of a rights violation in order to feature the "others" in the news and reporting which does not cause a rights violation while reporting the news.* However we have to elaborate on the "rights" component of rights journalism. Although we have given our series the general name of "Rights Journalism", as is apparent from the names of the books being *Human Rights Journalism, Gender-based Journalism and Child-based Journalism* we understand something greater in scope than human rights journalism. Could we not have carried out one kind of training entitled "Human Rights Journalism" and rested content with one book? Those who react reflexively to the tune of "we are all human before we are male and female" whenever women's rights and positive discrimination for women are mentioned might again say "Are not women and children human? Why do you think the journalism to be carried out for them should be different?" Our reason for this is the same as the acceptance of the Convention of the Political Rights of Women in 1952, Declaration of Children's Rights in 1959, Convention on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR) and the Convention on Economic

6 I have in mind the article by Çiler Dursun entitled "The Nature and Possibility of Rights Journalism" in *Human Rights Journalism*.

Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in 1966 as well as the further acceptance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 and the Convention Children's Rights on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1989 and all other documents accepted due to the worry that without economic, political and cultural equality and the existence of positive policies to provide them the rights and freedoms contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights accepted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1948 would remain on paper, as well as a lengthy feminist struggle. For despite all claims to “universality” the Universal Declaration of Human Rights *listed the rights and freedoms of the “white”, affluent, adult man.*<sup>7</sup> This being the case a need arose for conventions covering women and as a continuation of the logic, children.<sup>8</sup>

7. When I put “white” in quotation marks I mean to convey the affluent of the dominant nation, when I use it without, I mean the race. Thus, according to usage “white” passes a metaphor signifying those from among the others “for example blacks” who are dominant being affluent, male etc.

8. Regarding this issue the article by Levent Köker in *Human Rights Journalism*, outlying the entire series' problematic regarding rights journalism may be consulted.

It is for this reason that we found covering only *Human Rights Journalism* under the title of Rights Journalism inadequate. Because still mostly the “white” adult male is taken as the point of reference when one says “human” and because we think that women and children should be approached with positive discrimination because of the prevailing inequalities and also because we wanted to place special emphasis on women and children’s rights we felt the need for conceptual and practical differentiation.<sup>9</sup> Also because we move from the acceptance that the traditional news is a form of narrative which itself creates rights violation, despite naming our series Rights Journalism and the first book in it *Human Rights Journalism*, what we truly have in mind is not only responsible journalism which covers rights violations but also, in a manner which will transform the understanding of traditional journalism, journalism which does not commit rights violations while producing routine news. That is why the second and the third book are called *Gender-based Journalism* and *Child-based Journalism* and not Women and Children Rights Journalism. Assuming that every news item can be and should be rendered woman and Child-based we opened up for discussion how this would be possible – sharing with you experiences such as *bianet* reporting.

9. At this point one may face the question “why did you feel the need to separate just woman and Child-based journalism from human rights journalism” or one may be criticised for leaving out, for example, a concept/practice such as “minority rights reporting”. There are various reasons for this. The most important is that we had to stay within the scope and limits of our project and that is what we did. However I should add that as it can be seen from the *bianet* example we see rights journalism as a whole and do not think one aspect of it is more or less important than another. Besides when we take the word “minority” not solely in a quantitative sense, women and children also form *minor groups*. Secondly we know that the situation of the (quantitatively speaking)

minorities becomes layered in the case of women and children and that for example the cheapest of the cheap labour of the third world comes from the labour of women/children. Therefore with emphasis on women and children we cover the dimension of minority rights reporting in both senses (qualitative and quantitative). Another criticism may be “why have you elaborated (on women and children) but remained anthropo-centric?” It is true that we have to view the world as a whole system of living beings composed of humans, animals and plants and the ability to be able to think so should not afford us the privilege of looking at everything anthropo-centrally. However regarding this I should immediately emphasise that the journalism we practice and promote looks at all rights in unison and that our emphasis on women and children is due to the limitations of the project and not related to something like “it would be inappropriate to report on animal rights while there are so many violations of human, women and children’s rights going on” or to a particular ontological preference.





## **FOREWORD**

### **Why Gender-based Journalism**

Sevda Alankuş

The book you are reading is the second in our Rights Journalism Series and has emerged as a result of BİA<sup>2</sup> training meetings towards local media workers in an atmosphere characterised by gains in the field of women's rights in Turkey as a result in part of the years of struggle carried out by organised women's movements and partly of the Convention on the Elimination of All Kinds of Discrimination Against Women being ratified by Turkey in 1985 and later by requirements of the EU acquis. The said meetings took place during September-October-November 2005 in six regions, in the provincial centres of Çanakkale, Batman, İzmir, Adana, Eskişehir and Ordu and were attended by a total of 248 local journalists, 135 women and 113 men from 47 province and districts. All the articles in the book except one are formed of the texts reshaped during the educational meetings and workshops by nine women's rights defenders, activists, lawyers, academics and journalists, prepared with the understanding that under new conditions the media has

responsibilities in terms of women's rights which it can no longer avoid.

The texts in the book share a common objective, namely; to draw attention to the women's rights violations caused by the press and media which carry out journalism in the traditional conception of reporting and to lead the way in showing how the present practice of journalism may be transformed in the framework of gender-based journalism. The reason why we speak of "gender-based journalism" instead of "women's rights journalism" is that we foresee an understanding of journalism/reporting which goes beyond being informative on women's rights and strengthening of women, which follows the rights violations endured by women and which in its daily journalistic practice does not violate the rights of women. So, with gender-based journalism we mean journalism focused on solutions, in which each news item can lead policies and transformations benefiting women –just as it is with children<sup>10</sup>. Thus with the contributions of critical approaches which sees the news item itself as a rights violator and therefore sees it as a genre which abuses the rights of all "others", especially women<sup>11</sup>, we on the one hand try to reevaluate our set conception of "news" while on the other hand pursuing what should be done with the belief that it is possible to render news right focused in its present structure. In the texts in the book you can see what needs to be done urgently as well as clues as to what can be done in the longer run for breaking the resistance points of the patriarchy such as regulatory amendments to the law allowing interference with the media's

10. Child-based Journalism has been thoroughly discussed in the third book of the series of the same name.

11. I should remind the reader that the contribution or thread in question is not limited to the *Gender-based Journalism* but is to be found in all other books in both the Rights Journalism series and the Journalist's Guidebook series.

ownership structure, editorial policy changes and the effects of the women's movement.

In summary, as we did in our first series, in this one too we move from the comprehension of the necessity of a change of attitude and activity that will through short and long term potential transform the traditional understanding and practice of journalism which we see as flawed but in this book only we point to Gender-based journalism as one of the fields in which the present journalism must transform. One must immediately add that despite all our attempts at pointing out and direction we are not presenting you with a ready and finished panacea, which as a method we do not approve, but rather that what we are doing reflects a search which will lead to new places in the understanding of ethically and politically correct journalism and that we hope this search will take root and be enriched in individual and editorial journalistic practices.

This way we are trying to contribute in two ways, institutional and practical with the book *Gender-based Journalism*. Firstly we are contributing the concept and understanding of *Gender-based journalism* to the literature in Turkey, just as we did with rights journalism and Child-based journalism. By this we do not claim that there is no instance of human, woman and Child-based journalism in Turkey. We know that the non-mainstream left/opposition and alternative media rights violations focused journalism is carried out. We also know that in the mainstream media as well there are newspapers, even editors who follow up rights violations. For this reason, what we mean by a "conceptual/theoretical contribution" is the provision of paradigmatic framework which will allow a rethinking of situations in which the intent and the outcome do not overlap because the intent is motivated by an oppositional political stance whereas the outcome is affected by the continuity of, say, sexist or heterosexualist points of view. Secondly we aim to point out that the *news item is a masculine genre*, thereby carrying another step forward the arguments regarding the news item of the critical work in Turkey, which problematises the structure of the news formed

in the social power relationships and its claim to reality. To realise this second task, we have to undoubtedly venture into the field of language/discourse debate which was along with this book inevitably touched upon in the introductory article above and which allows the claim that the “problem of rights violation is inherent in the news item as well as all other forms of narrative”.<sup>12</sup>

### **The news item as a masculine genre or the phallus-centred language/discourse of the news...**

For a long while now, linguists, psychoanalysts, philosophers, sociologists etc. who represent the *structural* or the *post-structural* approaches have been investigating the structural form of langue and therefore the quality of the hegemonic discourse, in other words how language, discourse and power structures are intertwined. However among these researchers contributions towards explaining how women – although these are sometimes given special significance, regardless of the differences in age, class, ethnicity, colour, education and geographical differences among them – come to face such discrimination which cuts through the differences diagonally and is in a way “universal”, and the secondary status they have come from feminist researchers. One of these contributions is that which suggests womanhood is not a biological and essential/determined-at-birth fait accompli but is a cultural development in the widest sense and open to future transformations. According to this argument the identity gained by women or men during the socialisation process, that is gender does not need to overlap with sex. However, despite being initially applauded for drawing attention to environmental and cultural conditions or more generally the patriarchy in the formation of womanhood the separation of gender and sex has itself now become problematic due to contributions from

12. Having said that “the news item is a masculine genre” I should mention that what we will say regarding the debate on the language/discourse of the news in Turkey has connotations beyond the general statement that “the male dominant attitude is also dominant in the media” and that it touches on an area which has been as of yet unsatisfactorily taken up in the field of communication research in Turkey

those situated at the intersection of feminist and queer studies to the effect that sex itself is discursive and therefore a social construct.<sup>13</sup> The foremost implication to emerge from the related debate is to stop thinking of human sexuality as 'being' that is "essentially" or "socially" complete – thus displacing the heterosexual attitude in which human sexuality is attempted to be placed as either woman or man – and to rethink of it as 'becoming', an adventure. The part of this debate which concerns our book is its underlining *how the biological and/or social identity of the woman is written, stamped and disciplined in such a way that it will carry the signs of social power relationships (the patriarchy) on it.*

Another contribution made by feminist literature in relationship with Queer Studies comes into play at this point, saying that due to the *phallus-centred* structure of language the deployment of womanhood (and of course manhood and other sexualities/genders) often inevitably and unrecognisably carries a patriarchal quality. The *phallus-centre* concept is a critical concept which essentially describes the power language (and all of its narratives and acts) sets up over

13. For these discussions see Elizabeth Wright (ed.), *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, (3rd edition), Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, p. 140-45; and for the criticism of the sex and gender distinction see Moira Gatens (1996), "A Critique of the Sex/Gender Distinction", *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 3-20.

women through the so-called sexual superiority man represents over women as it defines her identity and posits her in daily life with that identity. In order to better explain it, one must dwell on Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory.

Let us take a closer look at Lacan's psychoanalytic explanations which form a starting point for structuralist/post-structuralist theories of language. For Lacan, identity is formed within/by language and therefore there is a direct relationship between the development of the baby's identity and its entry into the symbolic universe of language. The baby's entry to language during this process coincides with the process of separation from the mother which is perquisite for the formation of a separate/independent identity. Becoming aware through the existence of an "other"/father that it is no longer one with the mother the baby experiences the universal incest taboo (the father's ban) and therefore learns to unconsciously repress the desire for becoming one with the body of the mother and to channel this desire into other things. Hence, entry into language means entry into a symbolic order which is represented by the phallus as a cultural sign, a representative of the "universal" power (of the order in which the Father's ban operates and makes the rules and the rewards of which is an independent identity and attaining culture/civilisation) something much more than the father's penis which sets him apart.<sup>14</sup> Lacan's psychoanalytic explanations used also in understanding the 'social' has its feminist supporters as well as critics. Because while Lacan offers a framework for

14. These explanations have been put together from the writings of Lacan, who is considered to be a difficult writer, and other sources on him and they undoubtedly represent my "reading". However I recommend Saffet Murat Tura's *Psychoanalysis from Freud to Lacan* (3rd edition, Istanbul: Ayrıntı, 2007) which I find accessible and sufficient for an initial reading in terms of content.

understanding patriarchy and the status of women within it by stating that language is construed according to the phallus, which is a cultural and transcendent sign, and what it signifies, on the other hand he also says that the woman does not have a sign within language(s) and therefore there is nothing for her to do but to pursue a phallus (that is things which give her the power of the phallus, especially a husband, child) throughout her life. While he sanctifies the phallus as a cultural sign he sees the woman body/identity without a penis as deficient and incomplete and by accepting this deployment as universal he weakens women<sup>15</sup> by creating the illusion<sup>16</sup> that they will never be free from language(s) and therefore from the system of the patriarchy which they represent. However the main objection made to Lacan is that through his narrative he himself joins the discourse of the patriarchy – which he helped to understand- ; that is by creating a phallus-centred narrative he reproduced male power over women. Jacques Derrida who is one of his critics takes the claim of phallus-centricism which has tainted Lacan's narrative a step further. As he criticises Western Metaphysics he uses the concept in the form *phallogo-centricism* to denote the

15. See Elizabeth Wright (1995:316).

16. However, research points to women's ability to produce an identity and a language/discourse outside the narrative of the present patriarchy or to the fact that they have developed them although they were repressed/covered up/marginalised. An important figure who shares this claim is Luce Irigaray. Irigaray claims in a challenge to the phallogo-centrism of Lacan psychoanalysis that the woman's body has sufficient and in fact more signs for the creation of a different language. (See Luce Irigaray, *Toward A culture of Difference*, London: Routledge, 1993). Meanwhile, it is precisely for this reason that feminist methodology goes after the repressed discourse of women and by trying to uncover them calls on women to reestablish their own language. For these "hidden talks" of women see Eser Köker (2005), "Hidden talks", *The Public Sphere* (Meral Özbek, ed.), İstanbul: Hil, 539-50. And as an example of how women's talks can become a feminist strategy, a special mention must be made of the "Naughty Corner" in *Pazartesi* magazine which has been formed to free the eroticism and sexuality of women oppressed under the male dominant language and to promote their search for a language of their own.

relationship between logos and potency<sup>17</sup>, both attributed to the man in the dualities on which this philosophical tradition rests. He thus draws attention to how the patriarchy attempts to form a “whole” and displays the deconstructivist strategies that will displace it (Wright, 1995: 316-23).<sup>18</sup>

Having made these explanations we are now in a position to suggest that, due to the intertwined –that is each strengthening the power represented by the other – and structured according to the *phallus* and *logos* (*phallogocentred*) nature of language(s) and also due to their *constructive* quality mentioned above, the dominance of the patriarchy is applicable to all narratives of world knowledge – science, eroticism, religion, literature, the law and politics etc –. This being the case we do not have much reason to believe that the news item is any different than other narratives, despite its claims to objectivity, which we believe to be only a myth which it carries to shroud its sidedness. The news item reproduces the *phallogocentred* daily language in its own codes and indeed does this more “dangerously” than other narratives. Because due to the very rules which make a news item what it is we take it *more seriously* than say other forms of telling “stories” such as conspiracy theories, rumours,

17. The English word potent from Latin is used in the sense of “having the power to do some thing” as well as expressively for male sexuality. Meaningfully we use “iktidar” (power, rule, government) and “iktidarsız” for its opposite impotent in Turkish. However these words are never used in either language in the context of female sexuality and form a good example of the phallogocentricism of language. Other good examples from Turkish would be the shared root of er (man, conscript), erk (power, authority) and erkek (male, man).

18. An example of the narrative which Derrida sees as metaphysics and criticises surfaces in the manner of understanding/explaining the world in terms of dualities such as *the spoken-written word, mind-body, culture-nature, civilised-barbarian, White-Black, West-East*. Those parts of the dualities which remain on the “other” side are attributed to the female (in correspondence with the architypal duality of male-female) and therefore writing, the body, nature, the barbarian, the Black and East is viewed as female, reinforcing the power of the primary/male over the secondary/female.



astrology or again for example from other television programmes such as series or magazine. When we feel the need to validate a piece of knowledge in everyday life we say "I read/saw it on the news".

Now let us call to mind in this light the traditional codes which make the news item what it is and the news practices which function automatically, without giving them much thought. I mean what we have been taught about what is news and what not (and what we learned at school) and our reflexes which we have formed on the matter, who makes up the body of experts which we turn to for supporting views for our news, the narrative limitations set by the golden rules of journalism such as the six Ws and the inverse pyramid formulae and what we do not or can not write due to the system and hierarchy of journalism... I do not want to go into the matter of editorial policies which we have developed to determine which of our news will make it to publication/broadcast and the auto-control which results from us having internalised them...

All that I have said so far relates to our claim that for gender-based journalism not only the language/discourse of daily life but also the language and discourse of the news item and further the entire traditional understanding of journalism beginning with its definition must undergo a structural change. However we are aware that as this requires a transformation of the patriarchal mindset which with its millennia old stratagems takes up very "refined" faces it is very difficult to realise. Or when we think that the value of the news which is circulated by the mainstream media is justified by "this is what the viewer wants" and is determined according to the criterion of "what will sell" and when it comes to so called public broadcasting it consists of "protocol journalism" and a self-righteous "the public good" conception we are aware that what can be done for transformation can not go beyond the personal efforts of a few responsible reporters, columnists and

editors. This is why hopes are more tied to the field of the media which is called by the names “alternative”, “independent” or “citizen media”; it is also for this reason that *bianet* is an important effort along with the *Pazartesi* magazine and the Uçan Süpürge’s (the Flying Broom Association) “*Life is News*” project, perhaps a few more names we may add. Yet I should add immediately that this sort of non-mainstream media field always presents the risk of introversion in which the “others speak and the others listen” and for this reason transformation strategies which will intervene on the publishing/broadcasting understanding of the mainstream media from the inside should be given thought. In other words the overriding representation strategies of the mainstream media must also be displaced through “infiltration” (if that is the right expression).

### **On the representation strategies or the “representation politics” of the patriarchy in the news**

The concept of “representation” is a favourite concept of research focusing on the discursive analysis of media texts which have become increasingly widespread with the post-structuralist period of the fields of critical communication and Cultural Studies since the 1980s. The (Turkish) dictionaries give two definitions of the term: 1. To resemble, call to mind something 2. To replace something, to pass in place of something.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, there does not exist an “external world”/“reality” or meaning which can reach us

19. See. Michael O’Shaughnessy (1999), *Media and Society: An Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, p.40. This author, based on the re- prefix suggests that the concept also carries the further meaning of “to (re)present again” however the Turkish “temsil” bears this meaning only indirectly. The English word gives more clues as to what should be understood from the concept: it allows more for the emphasis to be placed on each representation being “a representation again” and that therefore a (true to the) original representation is not possible and also that a *non-representative knowledge/meaning is not possible*. In this framework, if representation is always formed through an intermediary it is not possible to speak of “true representation” or “false representation”. Between what we call “real/true” and *representatiton* lies an “emptiness/abyss/difference” which is never possible to cover completely. Therefore we always make a choice regarding the “truth” from a series of representations and within our own subjectivity when we form meaning.

without representations, directly/without mediation. Because language itself, which is the sine qua non of human communication, is a system of representation which replaces what we want to tell with sounds (spoken language) and shapes (written language) and all our world knowledge series formed through language.<sup>20</sup>

Given that the sole means of communication is this or that language<sup>21</sup> and these languages as tried to be shown above form the basis of a patriarchal world deployment; as media workers form their identities within this dominant discourse and learn the codes of journalism which have been formed in this discourse; and as mainstream media organisations are intertwined with the present economic, political, military loci of power as a result of their present ownership structure we can say that the mainstream media has *a certain strategy of representation*. We may further claim with a reference to Michel Foucault's arguments regarding a dominant regime of truth for a given period (episteme) that this forms a "*regime/politics of representation*" conjunctive with the hegemonic discourse.<sup>22</sup>

20. For the concept and theories of representation see Stuart Hall (ed.) (1997), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, London: Sage.

21. Undoubtedly there are more abstract representation systems such as dance, painting, music but as these are also products of a meaning forming/communication effort they only gain meaning with reference to *language*, through language.

22. For Foucault's concept of the "regime of truth" see Michel Foucault (1980), *Power/Knowledge*, Brighton: Harvester. For the use of the concept as "*politics of exhibiting*", see Henrietta Lidchi (1997), "The Poetics and Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures", *Representation: Cultural Representations and signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall (ed.), London: Sage, 153-208.

As can be expected research in the field provides results which points to the problematic nature of this politics/regime of representation for all “others”, women first and foremost. O’Shaughnessy (1999:20-1) forms an acronym, CRASH\*, and says the media represents *the middle and upper class, white, middle aged and non-handicapped male* to which we may add *heterosexual male from the dominant/majority ethnic group and religious background* and the like.

This book discusses the fundamental rights violation problem which we think needs to be addressed and transformed for ethically and politically correct or rights focused journalism, that is *the issue of the other not being seen/shown and not being represented in the context of women*. However the representation politics of the mainstream media has other problematic aspects and therefore rights violations it causes which stem from both the structure of the news item and editorial and individual choices added on top of it.<sup>23</sup> As I stated in the joint presentation text of our books and discussed under the former heading in the foreword, *women become the subject of rights violations when they are represented directly or indirectly as the subject of the news, at its worst when they are in the news for rights violations such as violence, sexual abuse and rape*. To avoid repetition I will leave it up to the contributors themselves to deepen and exemplify the

\*The CRASH acronym asused by O’Shaughnessy reads: Class Race Age Sex Handicapped.

23. For a study on the forms of representation of women in non-news visual media in Turkey see Nur Betül Çelik (ed.) (2000), *Television, Women and Violence*, Ankara: World Communication Foundation.

argument in the coming section where the texts forming the book are introduced and go on to give some figures which will give us an important idea of the necessity of this book or gender-based journalism.

The outcome of a study carried out in 76 countries on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2005, as part of the Global Media Monitoring Project being carried out every five years since 1995 by the World Association for Christian Communication is in itself enough to show why we are insistent on gender-based journalism. According to the study carried out in one day combing 13,000 television, radio and newspaper news the representation rate of men is 79 per cent, while that of women only 21 per cent ([www.whomakesnews.org](http://www.whomakesnews.org)). Besides these numbers show that what may be called an “improvement” is not the case, when compared with the 1995 figures of 83 per cent for men and 17 per cent for women. The proportion of gender-based news is 10 per cent. While the proportion of news in which women are represented as victims is 19 per cent, that for men is 8 per cent. Even without looking at other findings, this small amount of data shows the quality of the mainstream media’s representation politics of women and pushes forward the necessity of doing something about this situation. The research results which have been summarised do not cover Turkey which is not in the monitoring network however according to the results of a study conducted by Mine Gencil Bek in 2006 under the title *Media and Social Participation* ([www.britishcouncil.org.tr](http://www.britishcouncil.org.tr)) while women are underrepresented compared to men, they are “lucky” enough” to be the most represented group among all the “others”. Meanwhile a closer look at the way in which others are represented shows that within each group the female sex is again underrepresented compared to the male: for example

lesbians among homosexuals, Kurdish women among Kurds and girls among children. In addition according to data from the BIA<sup>2</sup> project, which carried out the most comprehensive media monitoring project in Turkey with respect to the number of newspapers monitored (12) and the period of monitoring (1 May 2004 – 30 April 2005), 3453 of the 493.103 news items published in 12 newspapers over a year are about women, which comes to 77 in 1000 news about women.

### Why women are not adequately represented in the news?

Newspaper	Total number of news items	Total number of woman news items	Percentage
Ü. Ö. Gündem	28.981	869	2.99
Birgün	40.291	349	0.86
G. Evrensel	40.386	340	0.84
Hürriyet	46.871	323	0.69
Vatan	42.670	265	0.62
Cumhuriyet	39.641	242	0.61
Milliyet	46.731	283	0.61
Radikal	39.994	230	0.57
Akşam	47.299	225	0.47
Sabah	45.193	203	0.44
Yeni Şafak	39.292	124	0.31
Zaman	35.804	97	0.27
Total	493.103	3453	9.28

In *Child-based Journalism*, the second book of our Rights Journalism Series, we had stated that despite forming two thirds of the world population, children featured in less than five per cent of the issues covered by the media, based on a report of the International Federation of Journalists. Now, with the figures above, we see that women who form half of the world population feature only in twenty two percent of media news. Again, in *Child-based Journalism* we had stated that at the root of the problem of inadequate representation of children lay “the banishment of children from the public sphere

dominated by adult men with the invention of childhood, insofar as children were seen as incomplete citizens” and that in this exclusion they were also joined by their mothers. However in the present book, although we see the problem of one of the main debates in feminist criticism, that of women’s “incomplete-citizenship” and their exclusion from the public sphere” –both of which problems continue despite the ground covered by women’s movements – as *a reason* for the “inadequate and problematic representation of women in the media”, we do not take it up as a point of in-depth debate.<sup>24</sup> With the knowledge that the “return” of women marked by un-reason (emotion/body)<sup>25</sup> to the public sphere, which is delineated as a debating field by the reason/word which is thought to be male and from which women are excluded in so far as they are considered dangerous/to be in danger in it, will not transform the patriarchal quality of the said sphere; we underline the fact that while an increase in the numbers of women working in the media is important, it will not be enough to affect a transformation of the mainstream media to the benefit of women.

All this gives us important clue as what should the counter-strategies which will displace the politics of representation with which the mainstream media reproduces the discrimination and inequality women face publicly. Thing that can be done include a series of journalistic practices and accompanying social activism along side the structural and long term

24. There are many studies on the matter which have been translated into Turkish.

25. It will be meaningful at this point to remind the reader of a critical note by Fraser regarding the dualism between the male signification of reason and the public sphere and female signification of un-reason/emotion and the private sphere: There is an etymological connection between the word ‘public’ and ‘pubic’ which makes one think that in order to speak in the public sphere one has to have a penis (2005: 107). This also presnets an example to what I have discussed above; namely the phallogocentricism of social power.

transformation of the phallogo-centric language and the traditional understanding of journalism shaped according to it, which I have discussed above, adding that it is a difficult task.

As is detailed in the texts by Eser Köke and by Nadire Mater and İpek Çalışlar, the contents of which I will discuss in the coming pages, there is a need on the one hand for increasing the number of women working in the media, the removal of “glass ceiling” which prevent women from advancing in the journalistic profession and becoming executives, an increase in the number of positive news regarding women, a journalism which will inform women of women’s rights and the introduction of the female language/narrative into the news. On the other hand –with the assumption that this will create a type of sensitivity- there is a need for an increase in the number of female entrepreneurs in the field of the mainstream media<sup>26</sup>, and an increase in in gender-based newspapers, magazines, radios etc. which are run by women and provide “alternative” quality journalism. Working with women’s rights NGOs the media should be monitored, journalists trained, alternative formats developed within the mainstream media and defended and by intervening in the rules which govern the activities of the media women/gender sensitivity should be rendered essential in policy changes to be carried out.<sup>27</sup> Besides while a part of things to be done in order to transform the masculinity of the media and the news fall within our

26. A discussion which emerged during our training work regarding this matter was the suggestion that the daily *Hürriyet* newspaper of the Doğan Media Group had become more sensitive towards certain issues regarding women materialising in campaigns against violence against women and for girls to be sent to school, following Vuslat Doğan Sabancı becoming a member of the executive board. A piece of “inside” information I can add to this claim relates to the contempt and resistance shown by other male executives and journalists towards these activities.

27. See. Carolyn M. Byerly and Jaren Ross (2006), *Women&Media: A Critical Introduction*, Oxford: Blackwell.



individual and collective fields of responsibility in our identities as individual/citizen, journalist and woman, another part falls beyond this, -as our contributors Hülya Gülbahar and Filiz Kerestecioğlu point out- into the field of social responsibility of the mainstream media which may now be subject to legal enforcement.<sup>28</sup>

In our book we have not touched on in equal measure on all these that need to be done, unavoidably we have focused on what needs to be done *right now* and *in terms of journalism*. Therefore in all the texts you will come across debates on the dual problematic of the present news language/discourse and the traditional understanding of journalism and –more so- what needs to be done for the displacement of the regime of representation of the news. I may now start to go over one by one the texts which are formed around what is to be understood by gender-based journalism, why and how gender-based journalism should be practiced.

28. As BİA we act with the knowledge that all these thing to be done are related to each other and as is detailed in the texts by Nadire Mater and by İpek Çalışlar and Burçin Belge we engage in rights focused journalism, we try to create alternative formats, balance the number of male and female employees, monitor the mainstream media in terms of rights journalism, we follow the agenda of women in cooperation with women's rights organisations and try to contribute to it. (See the texts by Beyhan Demir and Selen Doğan for the examples of the Pazartesi magazine and Uçan Süpürge.) Also as you know by now, training forms the most important part of our activities. At the time of writing we are giving the start to the training leg of our third project which will henceforth be known as BİA<sup>3</sup>. This time we shift our target audience from local media workers to newly graduated students from Faculties of Communication –in order to form another leg of the BİA School mentioned in the introductory text – and aim to present them with a week-long intensive rights focused journalism training before they go on to employment. (For the details of the project, see [www.bianet.org](http://www.bianet.org)).

The first framework article of *Gender-based Journalism* is “The Law-Press Relationship and Legal Changes Regarding Women” by lawyer Filiz Kerestecioğlu. Filiz devotes the first part of her presentation article to a discussion of the ratification of the new Civil Code No 4721 in 2001 to replace the Civil Code 743 of 1926, one of the first laws of the Republic and the changes made after 75 years thus displaying the level reached by the legal system in Turkey for women. She regards the new regime of the Law 4721 which removes the clause “the husband is the head of the household” and *accepting domestic labour as a value* brings in the system of property partition within marriage based on the consent of the sides and therefore defines the family as “*a partnership based on equality*” an important step forward, despite certain deficiencies. Another law Filiz brings up for discussion is the “Law on the Protection of the Family” No. 4320 of 1998. Although it should be questioned starting with its name and shows needs for certain amendments, according to Filiz the new law brings with it important measures which should be speedily implemented for prevention of domestic violence. These are nevertheless inadequate and measures need to be taken in line with the clause of the Municipalities Law which stipulates that “there should be one women’s safe house for each 50.000 unit of population”.

Another law the article touches on in terms of continuing the changes in the status of women in Turkey is the Turkish Penal Code No. 5327 which became effective in 2005. According to Filiz this new law shows progress in terms of removing discrimination against women because it does not distinguish between woman and girl and opens the way for social measures other than the marrying of young women with those who had raped them. More importantly with the new law it becomes possible to say: “*honour*” is not a ground on which  
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*he right to life may be taken away and that -before the law- women's bodies belong to themselves rather than society or prevailing morals.* Therefore one of the most important changes brought by the new Penal Code is the classification of "murders committed with the motive of tradition" as "serious forms of Offences Committed against Life" and the prevention of reduced sentences for the perpetrators of such crimes.

The second part of Filiz's article discusses the path taken to arrive at the concept of "*women's human rights*" and to this end evaluates certain texts including the Convention on the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW) accepted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, became a convention in 1981 and ratified by Turkey in 1985. CEDAW is one of the seven fundamental human rights conventions in the legal body of the United Nations and the implementation of CEDAW by countries party to it is realised through reports made to the CEDAW Committee. The evaluation of Turkey's report assesses the legal changes carried out over the past few years to eliminate discrimination against women as positive developments. However a demand is made for Turkey to live up to its responsibilities arising from CEDAW with "systematic and continuous" practice and the present situation is assessed to be lacking in this respect. According to what Filiz reports, there is emphasis on the addition of a definition of "*Discrimination against Women*" clause in line with the 1<sup>st</sup> Article of CEDAW to the Constitution and the laws and on measures to be taken by the state in eliminating "sexual discrimination" observed in the social, economical and political field.

Filiz's presentation text ends with an important point; despite the positive amendments made to the law, how they are interpreted and with what effectiveness they can be enforced

is also important. Further, there is need for a series of additional measures for the effective implementation of the laws. One of the most important factors which will ensure that these measures will be taken is *women to continue their organised and critical struggle*. Because it is only in this way that the domestication of concepts used by feminists, particularly through the devices of the mainstream media, be prevented and the attitudinal change which can never be ensured by legal amendments be secured. In Filiz's words only when the phrase "you deserve a sound beating" is transformed into "you deserve a sound salary" or "you deserve a free life" can women's rights be said to exist.

The second article in the book belongs to another lawyer, Hülya Gülbahar. However this is not the text of the presentation which formed the framework of women's rights for training which our trainer delivered taking turns with Filiz at the BIA *Gender-based Journalism* training meetings. In its stead we are using an article she wrote for *bianet* which was published on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2006 on the subject of the 2006/17 numbered Prime Ministerial Order which came into force following its publication in the Official Gazette of 4<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and numbered 26218 and the full name of which is "Order on Measures to be taken for the Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children and Tradition and Honour Killings". In this way, Hülya's article complements Filiz's text which shows that despite progress made, legal amendments regarding women's rights are not sufficient and calls for necessary measures by discussing the Order which is one such measure. In discussing the order in her article entitled "The Order on Violence against Women and the Responsibility of the Media" Hülya draws attention to the following points. Firstly, with the issue of this order, the prevention of domestic violence has become "*a state policy*" which may be evaluated

in terms of the measures the state has been called on to take to eliminate “sexual discrimination” in the social, economic and political field in accordance with the 1<sup>st</sup> article of CEDAW, to which Filiz had drawn our attention. Secondly, the order separates domestic violence into its constituent parts of A) “Violence against Children”, B) “Violence against Women” and C) Honour/Tradition Killings” and foresees separate measures for each of these three important problem areas. Thirdly, alongside ministries and public organisations, *the order makes it compulsory for all written press and visual-audio media organisations, information services and news agencies and press professional associations to carry out their responsibilities in the prevention of violence.* Even more relevant for our subject is that media organisations have been categorised as “*institutions/organisations to cooperate with*” other organisations and that the fourth paragraph (D) of the order text has been devoted entirely to the media. Thus the media’s responsibility has been brought to fore to the extent that a separate heading was required. Another important aspect of the order is that it makes it obligatory for organisations “responsible” for the prevention of domestic violence to prepare detailed quarterly reports on their activities to this end and to present the report to either the Social Services and Child Protection Agency or to the General Directorate of the Status of Women which have been given coordinating responsibilities.

All its qualities, especially it reminding the media of its responsibilities and completing them with obligations makes the order very significant. Because, as Hülya points out, it had become a pressing need to remind the media, which, let alone following a responsible policy to prevent women’s rights violations and violence against women, commits rights violations itself and therefore “has taken a great role in the

continuation and diffusion of sexism” of its responsibilities and obligations.

When, following Hülya, we turn to the reminders for the media in the fourth part (D) of the Order; we see that the media is required, first and foremost, to develop ethical principals to regulate itself and mechanisms which will ensure auto-control in order to eliminate discrimination against women in every field within the framework of social responsibility, to realise equality policies, for the prevention of domestic violence and the strengthening of women and children who become subject to violence and to generate awareness and consciousness in society regarding this issue. Following this it is required to play its part adequately in informing, reporting and promoting within a framework of its own determination. These are also things the media is required to do in the context of the European Union acquis.

In addition to what the media has to do, the Order also calls on the initiative of academic organisations and NGOs for carrying out research to measure the effect of the media on the issues of general and domestic violence and more importantly media readership education to be delivered for viewers, readers and listeners in order to activate the mechanisms with which responsible citizens can effect the media and to this end the formation of media monitoring groups. In fact, an example of these media monitoring groups exists within the Istanbul Bar; the Media Monitoring Group (MEDİZ) of which Hülya Gülbahar is a member.

Finally the Order foresees “amendments to the law on the media with the addition of preventative and speedily executable sanctions”. However as Hülya points out, in the Order which throughout treats of professional associations and other NGOs –and the media- the necessity of consulting and cooperating with the media and related NGOs was omitted

when it comes to legal regulation. So the media has the additional responsibility of working for the formation of the main legal body which will regulate its own activities!

After this Hülya, just like Filiz, feels the need to state her worries on the implementation of the law and to reemphasise the importance of the women's movements' struggle and additionally that of monitoring groups formed by women for both the prevention of domestic violence and the responsibilities of the media in this issue. The complete text of the Order may be found at the end of Hülya's article.

The two presentation texts in the book, dealing with the progress achieved in Turkey over the past few years and the responsibilities undertaken by the media in this framework, are followed by Eser Köker's article "Women's Strategies for Dealing with Rights Violations in the Media" which presents us with a theoretical framework allowing us not only to understand the reasons and forms of rights violations experienced by women in the news item format, but the generally problematic quality of the women and the media relationship. A Staff Member at the Ankara University Faculty of Communication, Eser focuses on the historical development process of the women and the media relationship, first in the West and then in Turkey and the struggle strategies developed by the women's movements in this process, discusses how the status of women in the media and the news production process has changed in the light of these struggles and the aspects commercial publishing has acquired today. At the end of her article, she suggests strategies which for women to deal with rights violations in the media and in this way not only does she comprehensively remind us of our individual and social responsibilities but also makes concrete suggestions as to what can be done immediately.

According to Eser, one reason for women's rights violations seen not only in news items but all types of narrative in the media is the *media's masculinity* –as Hülya Gülbahar had pointed out and all our writers agree on –. However this is not just a problem related to the number of women working in the media. Because now in the 2000s, the *proportion of women working in the media has reached to figures of 40 per cent* as a result of the political targets determined by the equalist feminist movement which started in the west in the fifties but was especially prominent in the seventies. However looking at the qualitative data Eser provides regarding the age, social profile, working conditions of the women in the media and also regarding harassment and patronage relationships which arise as a result of the family like nature of the news room as well as the data regarding the units in which women work, we see little to suggest an improvement in the situation which benefits women.

Despite the increase in the number of women working in the media, “the sexist division of labour continues through new forms”; and with strategies promoting inter-female rivalry the lack of job security in the media sector is covered up. Completing the scene is the scarcity of high level woman executives, or to put it in another way, the *existence of glass ceilings* in the media sector –just like in any other- which only allows women to advance to mid-level management, causes the masculine quality of the media to continue. So as Eser puts it “the hypothesis advanced by *equalist feminist* in the 1970s that with more women working in the media the sexist moulds of the media would be broken has to a great extent been defeated by the prophecy of the *differentialist feminists* who suggested that new exclusionist tactics would be found by the domesticating and dissolving processes of the patriarchal capitalist powers”, for which reason it is necessary to come up with new strategies as well as increasing the number of women working in the media.



Another point underlined by Eser, which she thinks is unique to Turkey is the fact that we do not have numerical data on the number of women working in the media. According to the author this is in itself a limitation of the freedom of information and communication and constitutes another violation of rights. However we may hold that the portrait of the status of women working in the media gained from results of research carried out mainly in developed countries may give us an idea to complete our own observations and limited data regarding the situation in Turkey. However Eser thinks that there are other factors which render the condition of the women working in the media in Turkey different –specific and more difficult- than the conditions in developed countries: there are no women’s professional organisations and in Turkey women journalist are frequently tried because of their writings. Further, women journalists have to swing their pens in an environment in which the *Press Council* has delivered a warning to a woman columnist for “advocating childbearing out of wedlock”.

The second part of Eser’s article concentrates on the qualities of the news item as a “genre” and to women’s rights violations committed within the traditional understanding of journalism due to these very qualities. Following feminist media researchers, Eser says the news item is a “masculine type of story”. Because from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the news room transforms with the changes it –the media sector- is undergoing and as contracts such as what is news, what and who are the sources of news, how the page layout is prepared, how titles are chosen and the professional principals and ethic which code these contracts are formed while the isolation of women in professional practices increases, on the other hand, the news item *is made to be seen as “knowledge which is trustable/regarding the truth while the fact that it is a story like fiction*. There is another important point which the author makes at this point; while the news room loses its

political quality<sup>29</sup>, the reaction of commercial publishing to attempts made at re-politicising it in the twentieth century, especially to attempts by women, is to restate the professional ethos which holds that news is unbiased, objective etc.<sup>30</sup>

According to Eser the news item has a masculine narrative because this narrative/language is one which does not contain traces of female experiences and is a language which excludes narrative traditions unique to women, and therefore women themselves. Furthermore, within this language sexuality is attributed to every social crime, natural disaster, political scandal etc: which is woman/the female body. As this narrative which makes the woman “a scapegoat” continues as a sub-text in all news items, the woman is not made an object of positive news. Therefore the women represented by the media are mostly either criminals or victims and when these news are reported –for example when the woman is the victim- the violence directed at her is legitimised, made comprehensible or singularised with a narrative borrowed from pornography. The woman who is thus denied her right to communication through being denied learning about experiences which will strengthen her by being the subject of positive news is subjected to violations of personality rights and right to life by being portrayed as the subject of solely negative news. Yet this is not all; with the narrative of the patriarchal discourse which penetrates into the news items, dualities which will prevent solidarity among women, who are always thrown to the “other” side of the dualities used to understand life/society, (such as “ordinary woman – expert

29. To avoid misunderstanding, let us make a completing remark regarding the news room's “loss of its political quality” and clarify that what is meant is that the news item loses its political quality as a transformative, critical of those in power qualities as a genre/practice. Otherwise, as we know, the news item always continues to carry a political quality in the sense of reproducing present power relations or the status quo.

30. Let us take this opportunity to bring to mind the claim made in the Journalist's Guidebook Series, especially in the Foreword to the *Media, Ethics and the Law* in the form “there is a need for a new understanding of ethics in place of the present understanding of ethics of the journalistic profession”.

woman”, “shrewd woman – innocent woman”, “sacrificing mother – monstrous mother”) are set up and *produced*.

The conclusion which Eser draws from this negative portrait is important: the woman as a viewer/listener/reader is denied information on rights and freedoms she has as a citizen and on the functioning of the system. Although the right to information and to receive news of citizens in Turkey is protected by law the fact that the government’s responsibilities in the case of violation of this right is not regulated, the rights women possess as citizens are rendered meaningless. Another problem related to this, for Eser, is the continuity of the widespread understanding which sees the reader/viewer as just a consumer or a purchaser with freedom of choice. The problem lies at the definition of the freedom of communication and expression in being defined only through the right to speech and as a personal right in the present liberal system of law. To the contrary *it is necessary for listeners to be defined as subjects with rights for only in this way it is possible to re-organise the situation of women as readers/listeners and to transform this from the passive consumer to the active citizen.*

The article “Forms of Representation of Women in the Media and Women’s Rights Violations” by Galatasaray University Faculty of Communication member of staff Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver is the second in the book to problematise the forms of representation of women in the media and the rights violations this leads to. Hülya (UT) begins her article with the by determining how *women’s rights is hidden behind human rights discourse* through the claim of the understanding of journalism dominant in the mainstream media to the effect that “there can be no differentiation between women and men due to the objectivity and the truth of the news item”.<sup>31</sup> Thus she

31. Let us answer the question of why we did not limit our training work and naturally the contents of this book to “human rights journalism” once again by also calling to mind the

explains why we did not content ourselves with the concept of “human rights reporting” and brought forward women’s rights journalism, and even beyond that the concept of gender-based journalism.

According to Hülya the women’s rights violations which arise in the journalistic practices of the mainstream media stem from the quality of the “*field*” of the media in which the journalists practice their profession through their own (and that of the media organisation in which they work) *habitus*, a concept of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. If we put it another way here by looking back at the previous article by Eser this is caused on the one hand by the contracts of the journalistic profession which were formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the professional principals or the “professional ideology of the journalistic occupation” and is thus internalised by young journalists while learning the ropes. On the other hand, as it is not possible to understand the media and society by separating them<sup>32</sup>, the ideology of journalism always appears entwined with the dominant patriarchal ideology. Progressing through this explanatory framework, in as much as femininity is not a biological but a social construct, a “*habitus*” to use Bourdieu’s term again, the increase in the numbers of women journalists in the media is not sufficient in itself to prevent the women’s rights violations within journalistic practices; as Hülya (UT), just like Eser, feels the need to point out. This needs to be accompanied by an activism which will break sexist attitude moulds, including those of women themselves.

daily reflex of “there is no men and women: we are all human” which has penetrated the discourse of many women: Because as Uğur Tanrıöver highlights above, as to speak of just human rights in many cases leads to a cover up of women’s, children’s and ethnic minorities’ rights insofar as they are treated as “incomplete-humans”.

32. We had discussed this point in the first book of the Journalist’s Handbook Series: *Media and Society*.

In addition, Hülya (UT) suggests that women's rights violations in the media may be understood in terms of an interconnected nine-layered hierarchal system which is formed by the structure of the local/global social and media organisations and the dynamics of these organisations and covers everything down to the socio-demographic characteristics of the lowest tier journalists, as suggested by feminist researchers. In this framework it becomes easier to understand why –as research suggests- the women's rights violations record of the media around the world and in Turkey is similar. This is the general picture: when it does not, to use Gaye Tuchman's term "symbolically destroy", that is ignore women it shows them in traditional roles, as sex objects, victims and in the meanwhile represents the "best off" women in a "deceptive equality" with men and each other. In fact Hülya (UT) puts the examples she gives for problematic forms of representation which emerge in the journalism of the mainstream media under these headings. She also adds that *encountering* representations of women who are different and even the opposite of each other in different media narratives/genres does not change the general picture that the media commits women's rights violations.

While Hülya's (UT) article takes up one by one the rights violations committed in our main problem area of journalistic practices such as: *the formation of the news language, the choice of visual material, the development of expert opinions used to support the news*, she also gives us examples as to how gender-based journalism should be practiced; for instance, women not being photographed or the omitting of images of women when visual material is being chosen is an example of women being "symbolically destroyed". For this reason if for example a demonstration is being reported on,

photos taken from angles which show women should be used. Meanwhile the way in which journalists commit rights violations by choosing images of women which have no relevance to the news item or do not have news value should also be held in mind. The other articles of the book are articles which exemplify how gender-based journalism can be and is practiced. The text produced by BİA Advisor Nadire Mater and BİA<sup>2</sup> Project Execution Board member İpek Çalışlar as a result of the training work they carried out bears the title “Reversing the Situation in the Media” and as is apparent from its name, shows how an alternative journalism to that of the mainstream media may be carried out. According to Nadire and İpek, what is primarily meant by gender-based journalism is a journalism which frees women from the women’s pages, women’s corners and women’s hour of the media and therefore from being stuck into a page, a corner or an hour and to spreads them to all the pages of newspapers and all news and programmes of radios and televisions. For “women’s pages” and “women’s corners” create the illusion that special attention is being paid to women, while actually the whole of life is turned over to men with women being almost totally ignored. *Thus, in keeping with history/the past having been written without women, the present day is also being written without women.*

Yet as all our authors agree, since the news item is a masculine genre with its subject, source, language and image and since the media is a male institution, what needs to be done for gender-based journalism is not limited to this. It is for this reason that Nadire and İpek first open up to discussion how to deal with what may be called the “symbolic destruction of women” using the concept Hülya (UT) borrows from Gaye Tuchman and then, focusing specifically on examples of news reporting violence against women, rape and murders of women called “honour/tradition killings” show how this type of rights violating news, which often only puts another layer of

the violation, ought really be done. In the meanwhile, they remind us of the call to governments, the civil society and international organisations to 1. Increase the participation and access of women to decision making and self expression positions within the media and new communication technologies and 2. To disseminate balanced and non-clichéd images of women in the media, in order to develop and ensure women's equality, made at the Fourth World Women Congress of 1995 which convened in Beijing.

The data regarding the media sector in Turkey which Nadire and İpek summarise in their article, in addition the research results of the *Global Media Monitoring Project* carried out in 1995 across 76 countries as well as the monitoring reports on human, women and children's rights violation news featuring in 12 national newspapers in Turkey over the 2004-2005 period as part of the BIA<sup>2</sup> project all support the conclusion regarding the *masculine quality of the media*. Therefore, if, as according to Nadire and İpek the primary cause of the women's rights violations of the mainstream media are these quantitative data and their qualitative reflections, then it is necessary that they should be overturned, which requires a series of measures ranging from the women journalists attaining the 33 per cent golden proportion as it is accepted to be in such cases to the destruction of the "glass ceilings" –as Eser had pointed out- which confront them when advancing in their professions and changes in the working conditions of woman journalists and the way they are viewed. However if another dimension to the problem, as emphasised by all our contributors is the penetration of the codes, principals, ideology and practice of journalism by sexist attitude moulds then undoubtedly what needs to be done goes beyond this.

The situation regarding the form of representation of women which is revealed by the discussion of women's rights violating

news carried out by Nadire and İpek shows similarities with the classification which Hülya (UT) made using the examples in her article and the parallels she drew between these examples and research carried out on the subject. What is striking is that the same similarity arises between examples given for the representation of children, especially girls in *Child-based Journalism*. Thus it becomes possible to once again emphasise that on the subject of the “others” the common denominator of the media’s “political/ideological regime of representation” in the patriarchal/sexist discourse.

Nadire and İpek select the examples they use to criticise the understanding of journalism of the mainstream media from among news items reporting on situations in which women are the victims, such as violence, sexual abuse, rape and murder. For as we know the rights violation of women who have been exposed to these most severe violations of personal rights and rights to life, the perpetrators of which are always men in patriarchal society, becomes multi-layered once they become the subject of news reporting because of them. Furthermore the structure of the journalism practiced which endorses, legitimises and naturalises the said violations of rights weakens women against patriarchal violence instead of strengthening them and so the arising results which point at acceptance rather than the way for resistance and salvation, are never limited to the individually victimised woman –who has become the subject of news- but is the concern of all women regardless of their differences in terms of class, ethnicity etc.

The news items which Nadire and İpek first asked participants to discuss and then to re-write during the training workshops are those regarding *the murder of women* which the mainstream media for a long time called “honour killings” and then reverted to “tradition killings”. The discussions involve a series of important news preparation and writing techniques such as how the photos should be used and how words



chosen, but begins with the very naming of the incident –for both “honour” and “tradition” are concepts which carry a positive second sense due to the dominant patriarchal system of values and the latter also presents the problem of attributing the murders to a specific ethnical identity-. In this respect, let us remind the reader that the examples given by Nadire and İpek should be read in conjunction with Hülya Gülbahar’s points on the responsibilities placed on the media by the Prime Ministerial Order regarding “Measures to be taken for the Prevention of Violence against Women and Children and Tradition and Honour Killings”.

Nadire and İpek also share with us the points raised during training by woman journalists and reporters on women related news in the areas where training took place, regarding the problems they experience and methods they have for dealing with them. Important clues are thus gained regarding the differences which exist among obstacles to practicing gender-based journalism in the national and the local media and in different regions. The allow participants to share experiences regarding the specific nature of the problems which changes from region to region and the methods developed and which can be developed to overcome them specifically.

Nadire and İpek’s article closes with a section listing a series of measures which ranges from questions the individual journalists must ask themselves to what should be done for an alteration of, in Bourdieu’s words, *the journalists habitus* and *the field of journalism* in order to render the news and journalism gender-based, referenced, with female language, subjects and sources; in short “woman right”. These measures are already implemented or are trying to be implemented by *bianet*. *bianet* journalism which forms an important example

for journalists in both the mainstream and the local media on what they can do on the issue, despite it not being an exclusively women's news site is the subject of the article by Burçin Belge, the first women's news editor of *bianet*. Under the title "*bianet* and Gender-based Journalism" Burçin shares with us the story of *bianet* journalism –and her own understanding of journalism- within the scope of what we now call the BiA project and its transformation while being renewed under the BiA<sup>2</sup> project of 2003. With Burçin's article we trace the development of *bianet* led "rights focused journalism" which is the new position the "ethically and politically responsible understanding of journalism" has found it self and also we find a roadmap for how gender-based journalism can be practiced.

According to Burçin *bianet* paid special attention to making woman new from the start and also has a women's page, "*Women's Window*" updated weekly (it is still going). The publication purposes of the *Women's Window* were listed as "forming a platform for the communication of women's thought accumulation"; "to take as a basis that women and men are not equal and to display this inequality and oppression from time to time but to mainly convey what is being done by those who are trying to topple this inequality as individuals or in groups". In this respect it was of course different from the women's pages in the mainstream media which Nadire and İpek have criticised, however, it came out with the intense efforts of just one person, Filiz Koçali and news regarding women, the visibility of women had to be spread out all over *bianet*. What needed to be done, as pointed out by Nadire and İpek was to turn inside out the practices of the mainstream media (something which women know well as part of their unrecognised daily life practices!). According to Burçin, the

areas in which the mainstream media especially ignores women are those which are considered to “belong to men” such as politics, the economy and sports and so women’s news are seen as a “side field” and women cannot find themselves a place in “serious issues”, among “serious men”. In other words in the traditional understanding of journalism women cannot become the focus of news because according to this understanding the news feature wars in which women do not fight, parliaments of which they are not members and businesses which they do not own and so forth. So when it is necessary to address women only subjects which are assumed to traditionally belong to women are treated and then by certain columnists in certain columns. In doing so women are squeezed into a field which consists of topics aiming at provoking consumerism; fashion, child and homecare, astrology, health and beauty.

For these very reasons, Burçin and her (female/male) friends with which she shared editorial responsibilities set out after news which follows and brings on the agenda women’s rights violations, problem fields encountered and resisted by women and in this sense is in close contact with women’s movements, which display that in fields considered to be “male” women are just as and ought to be present. They learn to write all news from the perspective of women (and all *others*), to put at the centre of their news different experiences of women from different classes and sections of society with the knowledge that women do not constitute a homogenous group, to increase the number of woman sources and experts in their address books and to not to consult them only in the fields considered to be traditionally female such as health, education, child and elderly care and most importantly to attain a language/narrative which displaces the patriarchal language and words. Burçin’s article ends with examples of how *bianet* has managed to open the door to rights journalism as a waypoint for ethically and politically responsible journalism and how it has began to move forward on the other side of it, to

use an expression I used before towards the beginning of the foreword.

However Burçin's article guides us in a sense beyond what she shares with us on the transformation of *bianet*'s woman sensitive journalism to women's rights journalism and gender-based journalism and regarding the changes in her own understanding of journalism and that of her friends who shared the same responsibilities. For she reminds us –through her own “learning” experience- that the practice of rights journalism or human, woman, child centred journalism is never just an editorial decision and therefore the subject of a policy determined at an upper level, but the subject falls primarily in the individual field of responsibility of the individual. On this pretext we should underline that the practice of woman (and all “others”) focused journalism is a responsibility which journalists in the mainstream media cannot postpone with editorial processes as an excuse, as not everyone can have the opportunity of practicing journalism in a medium which has defined its editorial policy as rights journalism and tries to practice alternative journalism, like Burçin. In other words, *the practice of rights focused journalism* is primarily an individually internalised personal ethical and political choice which is developed through thought, reading and experiences.

*bianet* is not a women's news website but it practices gender-based journalism and is one of the very few examples in Turkey of “alternative media”, “independent media” or “citizen's media” according to your choice of terminology.<sup>33</sup>

33. How the examples of non-mainstream media in Turkey – which display differences both among themselves and compared to other examples around the world –is an important area of discussion. An effort at forming a theoretical/conceptual framework to understand the non-mainstream media in Turkey may be found in my article “Democracy and the ‘Other-Media’ Relationship: A Theoretical Essay for Understanding the Non-Mainstream Media Environment in Turkey” in “Another Communication is Possible” which collects the texts presented at the *Istanbul Independent Media Forum* and was edited by Sevilay Çelenk, also published by the IPS Foundation.

The final two articles in this book belong to BIA trainers who come from a background of “alternative woman media” a term I choose to use in the context of these two examples. In both these articles you will find examples of experiences and discussions regarding how to conduct woman journalism as an alternative to traditional journalism represented by the mainstream media. We thus have two examples which give us real ideas regarding what alternative woman media should really be like from among the dozens of examples on the market which show how being woman media does not guarantee the practice of gender-based journalism/reporting which will open up new horizons for freeing woman –just as being biologically female does not guarantee that the woman will speak from a woman freeing discourse-.

In her article “An Example of Alternative Woman Media: the *Pazartesi* Magazine”, the editor-in-chief of *Pazartesi* magazine, Beyhan Demir presents their magazine which has been locked in an important struggle for existence and an alternative stance since its publication, as the continuation of woman magazine publishing which has been trying to promote the female point of view in this land and dates back to the 1880s. In a short summary of its history she draws our attention to the strong relationship between the development of the women’s movement and the development of the woman media. Indeed the *Pazartesi* magazine is a publication which has originated from such a strong bond, that is to say the original ideas for its publication and its labourers come from the women’s movement which in Turkey of the 1980s took to the streets with the issues problematised by the feminist movement.<sup>34</sup> Therefore it is a magazine which has determined its position with the openly anti-patriarchal political stance it

34. For a study in which the *Pazartesi* magazine is examined in terms of what should be understood from alternative woman media and as an example of it see Eser Köker, “On the Feminist Alternative Media”, *Annual Journal 1995-1996*, (Anakara University faculty of Communication), p.24-44.

has adopted and also proved with its own life practices that the alternative woman media can also exist alongside with the women's movement on the street.

As for the content of the magazine it is as Beyhan reports from Ayşe Düzkan who was with the magazine from the start; "a content which follows the agenda, analyses and comments upon this agenda from a feminist point of view and one which attempts to draw attention to male dominance which is covertly reproduced in popular culture". *Pazartesi* is very different than similar magazines. For example it does not look down on and turn its on popular culture which is one of the areas thought to belong to women but approaches it in a different way. In fact later on its style was often imitated by the mainstream media, as happens to many alternative media publications, its contents are "looted". Its political stance is very clear; it tries to shake the "woman's nature" fiction which is used to legitimise all negative discrimination by building an essentialist and homogenous image of women, and all the myths that this fiction gives rise to. *Thus says Beyhan, the important function of Pazartesi was to say that the female roles we are laden with can change and do not come from birth.*

Another political, editorial choice which renders *Pazartesi's* function distinct is that it is carried out with the understanding of "every issue is a women's issue", again in the words of Ayşe Düzkan, and therefore the pushing of boundaries for women by showing that they have thoughts and things to say on everything. Also women are made to try and look at the few fields into which they have been squeezed, such as "beauty" in a different light.

From what Beyhan says we understand that in short *Pazartesi* is a magazine which does for women everything that the

mainstream media does not. It practices a journalism which makes women the “focus” of positive news and –in a way expressed in Eser’s article- allows them to enrich and strengthen themselves through each others’ experiences of “success, resistance, liberation”. It ventures into the fields of humour, in which women are constantly degraded, and sexuality, on which it is considered taboo for women to talk, and therefore left wordless and forms new foci for women to rediscover their own narratives which have disappeared under the male language and to create brand new ones. It tries to be the voice of women from different classes, ages, educational levels, ethnic/religious backgrounds and sexual orientations and therefore of those among women who have been silenced the most. It especially displays a stance which activates the political power on all sorts of violence against women, abuse, rape and murder and takes to the streets to lead.

From what Beyhan has to tell we understand that another feature of *Pazartesi* which makes it alternative is its activities in getting many women to sit in front of a computer for the first time, to write their first pieces and to make their first news, thus forcing the mainstream media’s traditional journalist-reader model. We further learn that the magazine’s offices are used in a way which again makes it alternative media, that the door is open for every woman who wants to make a contribution and that it is not only a place where articles are written but where conversations take place, women’s movements contacted, where a network of solidarity which removes the hierarchy between the writer and the reader is created and homes for the homeless and jobs for the

35. For information and examples regarding the necessity that alternative media should not only be alternative in content but in terms of its organisational structure, the format used, methods of distribution, sources of income and the traditional reader-writer hierarchy see Chris Atton, *Alternative Media*, London: Sage, 2002. Also see Seveda Alankuş, “Local/Civil Media and Possibilities for a Democratic Media Environment” and Beybin D. Kejanlioğlu, “Media and Society Relationship and the Possibilities Offered to Local Media by Globalisation”, *Media and Society* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Seveda Alankuş (ed.), Istanbul: IPS Communication Foundation, 2005, p.99-132 and p. 81-98.

unemployed are tried to be found, that it is a place where feminism is learned/turned to action.<sup>35</sup>

The last article of our book is by Selen Doğan, who supported the BIA raining work as the representative of Uçan Süpürge (the Flying Broom), a feminist non-governmental organisation and is entitled “The Story of the Flying Broom Local Woman Reporters Network’ or ‘Life is News’”. Selen shares with us experiences related to the Flying Broom initiative “alternative women’s news network organisation” and the Local Woman Reporters’ Network set up to this end. She also comes up with suggestions based on the said experiences of what can be done to ensure that more news regarding women be featured in the local media and that the share of women’s representation be increased in local media organisations as well as in the news texts.

From what Selen has to say, we learn that the Local woman Reporters Network” of the Flying Broom, a first of its kind in Turkey, was born from objections to the *wrong and inadequate representation of women* in the mainstream media and at women and women’s organisations not making the news, therefore, like *Pazartesi* magazine out of an alternative search. The projects slogan is “Life is news” and is based on “women making their own news”.

The “Local Woman Reporters Network” project was begun by the workers of the Flying Broom association which aims to promote communication and therefore interaction among women and women’s organisations in eight pilot towns (Antalya, Çanakkale, Diyarbakır, Eskişehir, Mersin, Samsun, İzmir and Gaziantep) in March 2003 and was later extended with the addition of four more towns (Adıyaman, Van, Mardin, Şanlıurfa) in 2004. Today the scope of the network has gone beyond the said towns with the participation of volunteer women from within and outside Turkey.



As part of the project which represents a radical endeavour, aiming to remove the reader-writer hierarchy and to render women from different regions, sections and experiences who have been frightened away from and silenced in writing –just like speaking- in the public sphere both readers and writers, volunteer reporters are given training at regular intervals. Their reports are published on the website [www.ucansupurge.org](http://www.ucansupurge.org) which is updated every Friday. The ultimate aim of the project is to cover every province in Turkey with at least one reporter and thereby to make known and heard local women's news which are generally covered by male reporters who often ignore them.

At the end of her article Selen makes recommendations to local media workers for women to become visible in the local media and for gender-based journalism to be practiced and especially posits as a necessity the regular coverage of the local women's agenda and gives examples to issues which may be made subject of news and problem areas which may form an agenda. A point Selen has in common with the other writers in terms of gender-based journalism is that the number of women working in the local media should be increased.

If I may repeat in conclusion, this book on the one hand tries to answer the questions what is gender-based journalism; why and how should it be practiced; and on the other hand, like all books of the series, calls on the news producer, the prospective journalist the reader/listener/viewer to take up their responsibilities for the transformation of the present journalism of the mainstream media "*right now*". While doing this, it gives clues as to the long-run struggle and responsibilities which need to be embraced; that is we call to

mind *the necessity of acting together with global, national and local women's movements* in order to open up to discussion and challenge every field which the patriarchy had penetrated, including our own construction of gender, and to ensure that, while using every opportunity made available by the present system of law, its boundaries are shifted to the advantage of women.

Without delay then, right now...

Sevda Alankuş  
Gazimağusa, 5<sup>th</sup> June 200

## **THE LAW-PRESS RELATIONSHIP AND LEGAL CHANGES REGARDING WOMEN**

Filiz Kerestecioğlu

If I start off by saying “*Capital and dominance in the world are held by men and they do not want it to change hands and sex easily*” the male company present will not listen to the rest of my words or listen with prejudice! However, even if not at the beginning, I have to say this somewhere along the speech. For unfortunately, it is difficult to give another answer to the questions “What was the Civil Code and what has it become and continues to become” or “How did the law in Turkey regard woman sexuality and what have changed”. So it might be healthier if I began with “the present company excepted”.

### **The civil code and women in Turkey**

I will now try to present you with some evaluations taking a look at the new and old Civil Code together. The new Civil Code numbered 4721 which put an end to the superiority of

men within the institution of marriage or in family law was accepted by the Turkish Grand National Assembly on 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2001. Thus, after years of effort the Civil Code of 1926, numbered 743 was finally changed after 75 years.

I have from time to time worked in magazines and newspapers. At one point I had carried out a press review of the last ten years and written an article for the *Pazartesi* magazine by collecting the headlines on the issue. The headlines were of the form “Finally the (household) head will be no more”, “Its almost gone”, “At last the proposal is in parliament”... This lasted in similar fashion for 15 to 20 years I think. Through the years long effort of the women’s movement of course –some of you may think because of the necessities of the European Union process but I beg to differ- the Law was changed. Some changes had taken place before, for example, certain small changes such as the removal of the 159<sup>th</sup> article which required the husband’s permission for women to work or the change to the effect that the pre-marital surname could be used had been carried out before the complete overhaul. Today however there are more radical and important changes.

### **The family: Partnership based on equality**

The new Civil Code defines the family as “partnership based on equality” between woman and man. The equality of familial partners was given constitutional safeguard with the sentence “The family is based on the equality of partner” added to the 41st article of the Constitution. This new understanding reflects itself in the language of the law with “wife” and “husband” becoming “partners”. According to the new law the “husband” is no longer the head of the household; partners run the familial union as equal partners with equal authority on decision making. Furthermore the partners have equal right of representation. The concept of “illegitimate child” is now removed and the custody of the child born outside of marriage belongs to the mother. Instead of the article on custody which

took it as equal but enforced the father's decision in case of a disagreement now completely equal decision making is the case in issues regarding children.

At this point it is necessary to make a reference to another regulation which protects the children from their parents; the United Nations Convention of Children's Rights\* (UNCCR), which was ratified by Turkey in 1990 after its approval by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989 and therefore is of *international document enforceable as law* standard. The existence of this convention needs to be emphasised often. Because as children our not treated as individuals in our society, sometimes it is necessary to remind the court of the *necessity of consulting their opinion*. In the case of divorce for example, it should not be thought right to decide on who will get custody based on the situation of the mother and the father. *The view of a child who is mature enough to express his/her own will also needs to be taken.*

## **The surname issue**

As I mentioned earlier the woman can use her pre-marital surname but only alongside that of her husband. Unfortunately the necessary amendment on this issue is yet to be made. Yet there is a verdict by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) which you have perhaps followed, the ECHR accepted and gave a verdict on an application by Ünal Tekeli, an İzmir lawyer, and following her demand she was given a new identity card by the Population Directorate, based on the 90<sup>th</sup> article of the constitution. This procedure having taken place despite there not being a chance in the law is very significant; however an amendment to the law in accordance does not exist. It should be underlined that this is not a detail or a luxury but a problem of identity. You may not recognise

\*For the text of the convention and for assessments of the universal criteria formed by the convention see *Child-based Journalism* (editor's note.)

your friend of years because of their surname. That is why men should give some thought to this, especially on how they would feel if they had to undergo such a change. I think it has been ten years since that I made a case of unconstitutionality for a client who was a bank manager and presented the court with a long petition with attributions to international texts. The judge, looking at the petition which I don't think he had read asked "So what is it that you want". I told him seriously "it is unconstitutional for reasons of equality, identity etc. and we want our case to be taken to the Constitutional Court". As you know, you cannot apply directly to the Constitutional Court, it can only happen through a court. The judge said these exact words "It's not every time you have such luck" and rejected the case. Now, even though its "luck" I think we have taken steps to ensure that it can happen all the time.

### **The sharing of property in marriage**

*In the new Civil Code, partners have equal rights over the family residence.* The 194<sup>th</sup> article which regulates the family residence is one of the most important changes to the benefit of women. According to the article one of the partners may place a family residence condition on the deed, thereby prevent the sale of that property without their consent. The most important justification for this is as to prevent the serious inequality to the disadvantage of women caused by capital, deeds, cars being registered under the names of men, as I said at the beginning. Believe me when I say that this is not me speaking, the law maker put similar remarks in the justification.

Another important article is the 199<sup>th</sup> prepared on similar grounds regarding the "limitation of savement authority". This is an article which prevents the partners from keeping property

from each other and allows for the removal of savement authority with a judge's decision. The concept of "domestic labour" and the *acceptance of labour as a value* is again a very important change. I should like to touch upon a debate here which has been raging for years. "Should housework be paid" is a debate that has been undertaken among feminists. My personal opinion is that it would be wrong to do so. Because that is an approach which will reinforce the attitude at present, that is the "housework should be done by women" attitude which shuts women up in the house. However in terms of the regulation in the Civil Code today I think the part on labour is an important gain. Because articles 186 and 196 of the Civil Code bring to light and accept what has been until today an ignored, overlooked value. What is at stake here is the prevention of men being evaluated as having worked and women as if they had done no work in damage settlement claims. Childcare, ironing, cooking, cleaning etc. all have market value and real corollaries, therefore these articles which *accept domestic labour as a value* are significant for divorce settlement claims.

Another important change in the Civil Code regards *the equal rights partners have over property acquired in the duration of the marriage*. This is called the "Participation in Acquired Property Regime". Exceptions to acquired goods are assets called "personal property". The definition of "personal property" includes the following:

- Goods for the personal use of one of the partners only (women's jewellery, make-up items, men's cufflinks, the sides' clothes,
- Property acquired by the sides without labour (such as donations, inherences)
- The property possessed by the sides prior to marriage,
- Property to be received by one of the sides such as personal damages payments,

- Things which replace personal property (such as a new house bought in place of one owned prior to marriage or inherited),
- Property determined by the sides to be “personal property”.

The definition of “acquired goods” includes:

- Property acquired by the sides through labour from the onset of their marriage (that is property earned through the job and profession they are engaged in)
- Payments made by social security or social support organisations and institutions and those by funds and similar organisations set up to support employees (such as retirement bonuses),
- Damages paid for the loss of working ability
- Income from personal goods
- Property replacing acquired property.

However, in order to draw your attention to the implementation of the marital property regime and the related changes to the law, I have to go back to what I said at the beginning of my presentation. The new property regime brought by the new Civil Code was not implemented with regard to the past. It does not cover marriages of 20 or 30 years because this time *the members of parliament* did not want property to change hands. It is a fact that acquired goods are proportionally greater in old marriages (those from before 1<sup>st</sup> January 2002). However according to the new Civil Code in case of a divorce in the present day the Separation of Property Regime will be used for the period before January 2002 and the Participation in Acquired Property Regime for the period after. This of course makes things very difficult for persons, lawyers and judges. More importantly, we know that unfortunately, most often it is economic violence which forces the woman to put up with physical violence. For this reason the 10<sup>th</sup> article of the Implementation Law of the Civil Code is one which enforces



the victimisation of women who are already in that position and cooperative effort is needed for it to be amended.

### **The issue of inheritance...**

As a rule the surviving partner takes a share from the inheritance in proportion to the inheriting group of which he/she is a member. The surviving party:

- Takes a fourth of the inheritance if inheriting along with children of the deceased
- Half of the inheritance if inheriting along with the parents or siblings of the deceased
- Three fourths of the inheritance if inheriting along with grandparents or children of grandparents of the deceased
- All of the inheritance if inheriting along with none of the above (Article 499).

If the legal "*Participation in Acquired Property Regime*" is being followed among the sides then:

- The surviving partner or his/her inheritors have a right over half of the surplus value belonging to the deceased. The amounts to be received are traded among each other (article 236). So the surviving partner takes half of the surplus value and then takes a fourth of the remaining half (if inheriting along with children) and so takes three fourths.
- Also, should the surviving partner wish to carry on with their life as before, (s)he may demand the assignment of the house and furniture which had been shared with the deceased. However the stakes of other inheritors must be paid for this. The payment may be done by giving up the inheritance share or by the addition of a supplementary amount, should it not be enough (Article 240).

In the "*sharing property separation*" the surviving partner may again "ask for property rights over a shared house and shared furniture should they be among the goods subject to partition; these will be paid for by the share of the inheritance of the

surviving partner and by the addition of a supplementary amount should it not be adequate" (Article 255).

In the "*Property separation regime*" the surviving partner gets a fourth of the inheritance, if inheriting along with children, with no distinction between personal and partnership goods. All other proportions remain the same.

In the "*Property partnership regime*" neither of the partners may reject an inheritance which will be counted among partnership goods without the consent of the others and may not accept without consent of the partner if it will lead to debt (Article 265).

In the case of the end of the property partnership regime due to the death of one of the partners or the acceptance of another property regime each partner or their inheritors are given half of the partnership property (Article 276).

### **The law numbered 4320**

A law which came into effect in 1998, before the changes to the Civil Code and the Turkish Penal Code (TPC), which brought important measures to prevent domestic violence is the law numbered 4320 "on the Protection of the Family". Although this law needs to be questioned beginning with its name and requires certain amendments, it bears importance for women in that it brings measures which need to be speedily implemented for the prevention of violence. I want to share with you a new decision on this law.

In a decision given by the Kadıköy 1<sup>st</sup> Family Court (2005/11 D. İş) regarding the application of a woman who although unmarried was subjected to violence by a man she lived with, the court decision reads:

...With the acceptance on 04.12.1950 of the 8<sup>th</sup> article of the European Convention regarding the protection of human rights and fundamental

freedoms and the redefinition of the concept of the “family” by the European Court of Human Rights based on this article, it was foreseen that the co-habitation of parties and the acceptance of those around them that this is a marital institution, this should be viewed as marriage and that the parties should benefit from certain measures...

And continues,

...Although official marriage does not exist between the parties, the ban on violence against women according to international law and the undertaking of obligation on the prevention of violence against women and children with the conventions that Turkey is party to and that this type of violence is banned under domestic law as well...

It is emphasised how important and high priority the protection of the individual against violence is. An interpretation as shallow, easy and protectionist as “if they are not married, this law cannot be implemented” is not taken. Yes, the activation and effectiveness of such laws bears great importance when one considers that what matters is the protection of the right to life and the prevalence of violence against women. In fact the article 232 under the title “*Ill Treatment*” of the new TPC supports this decision with penal regulation for “A person who engages in the ill treatment of anyone with who they co-habit a dwelling”. The emphasis here is on legislative regulation, as well as on how the law is interpreted and what effectiveness it has. For despite much legislation, it is unfortunately not at the present possible to speak of effective implementation in the prevention of violence against women.

On the other hand while the measures brought by the law numbered 4320 is important, more so is the presence of women’s safe houses. According to the Municipalities Law there should be one women’s safe house per 50.000 head of population. In that case, this is one of the things which must be investigated and questioned.

## The benefits of the Turkish Penal Code

Discrimination against women in the old Turkish Penal Code made itself felt from the heading of the section which regulated sexual offences: the *“Acts Against General Good Conduct and Order of the Family”*... Therefore the title of this section which was primarily regarding women (for the understanding did not accept a woman engaging in sexual assault or being active in a sexual relationship) and therefore we can think of as “sexual assault crimes against women” was written in such a way *which did not accept that women have a personality or a body of her own*. The women’s bodies belonged to family and society! This understanding in the Penal Code which was blatantly anti-female and discriminative in terms of woman and girl, prevailed unwittingly or not over all the regulation: that the punishment for the abduction of a married women could be greater than that for an unmarried woman and that when the victim of a rape was married to her assaulter the honour and pride of all the family, society and tradition except for that of the woman could be saved through a decision of non-punishment!

Therefore the greatest change brought by the TPC numbered 5327 in 2005 is that crimes are considered as having been committed against real persons rather than abstract and undefined concepts (or perhaps very much defined ones such as *tradition, morality, the family*). Now, before the law, the woman’s body belongs not to society but to herself. With crime being considered as committed against the person, (innately) sexist terms such as “violation of chastity, forceful knowledge of a woman” have given way to the term “sexual crime”. The law regulates sexual crimes under the title of “Crimes against Sexual Indemnity” and in the section “Crimes against Persons” (articles 102 and 105). In the “sexual assault” crime regulated by article 102 “the person who violates another’s bodily indemnity through sexual behaviour is punishable by a prison sentence of two to seven years pending the victim’s complaint”. In 102/2 “Should the act be carried out by the

penetration of the body with an organ or an independent object, the prison sentence is from seven years to twelve years. Should the act be committed against the spouse the investigation and punishment of the crime depends on the complaint of the victim". Although it is necessary to point out at this point that the old TPC's understanding of the crime being formed according to the intent and behaviour of the perpetrator (that is, the man) has been left behind, it is not sufficient. For although the statement reads "by the penetration of the body with an organ or an object..." the woman's sexual freedom, integrity of body and what she feels during the assault have not been given consideration in determination of the punishment and when compared with paragraphs 1 and 2 of the article that once again "penetration" has been taken as the principal factor.

However the most important regulation brought by this article is that inter-marital rape, which up until today has always been tried to be ignored and covered up for some reason by the sole inclusion of "inverse relationship) in article 478, that is ill treatment, (through the constant repetition of the 1996 decision of the High Court penal General Council) is now openly a crime. when one bears in mind that 75 per cent of violence faced by women comes from people they know and that 60 per cent of offences take place in the home of the victim; that this matter has been regulated as a crime should be seen as a positive step, although it is dependent on complaint.

Another important regulation brought in regarding violence takes place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Section under the heading "Torture and Cruelty". The regulation in Article 94/3 which states that "should the act of torture be carried out in the form of sexual harassment, the punishment will be ten to fifteen years of imprisonment" is an important change in terms of highlighting *sexual assault while in custody* which is a method of repression used mainly on women. The TPC also contains the crime of "Cruelty" which is regulated by article 96 and which especially supports the law numbered 4320 in terms of

toppling the legitimacy of domestic violence. Similarly, under the heading of “Crimes against Humanity” the presence of article 77 which contains regulation on “sexual assault, forceful impregnation and forceful direction to prostitution” is important when one bears in mind that rape is used as a separate weapon against women in a state of war.

In articles 86 and 87 which take place under the heading of “Crimes against Indemnity of the Body” it is stated that a person who intentionally causes physical harm to some else and causes damage to health or the ability of perception will be punished by a prison sentence of one to three years. Should the act be committed against parents, children partner or siblings the punishment will rise to from two to five years and should it be directed at a pregnant woman it will be doubled.

When the offences were against “General Good Contact and Order of the Family” the recognition of “honour” killings was inevitable and according to article 462 the guilty were given the benefit of the “necessary” reduction in sentence. One of the most significant changes in the Penal Code was the inclusion of those crimes committed “due to tradition” under the graver forms of “crimes committed against life”. The proposal of the TPC Women’s Platform which composed of tens of organisations which held a long campaign for the amendment of the Penal Code was that this article should be in the form “due to honour”. However, especially in relation to article 29 which regulates “unrightful provocation” which states that “for the acceptance of unrightful provocation the existence of an unrightful act is necessary” and the inclusion of “honour and “tradition” together in the explanatory note of the article makes us want to think that at least before the law, the door to new “honour” killings is closed. Indeed despite the old TPC being used for the trial over the murder of Güldünya Tören who has recently become a sad symbol of such murders, the fact that there was no reduction in the sentence due to provocation may be taken as a hopeful sign.

The new law regulates as a crime discrimination which women may face for economical reasons, such as in being employed, as a crime with reference to “discrimination due to language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, sect and similar reasons”. The law, while regulating sexual harassment takes sexual harassment as a graver form of this crime. Another much discussed regulation in the law, which hangs over the body of young women like a Damocles’ sword, the issue of “virginity” is treated under the “Genital examination” title. In 287/1 it is stated that “a person who sends someone for genital examination or carries out the procedure without authorisation by an authorised judge or prosecutor will be punished with three months to a year of imprisonment”. However as this regulation is one which ignores human, women and patient rights by ignoring personal will and binding the matter to a decision by a judge or a prosecutor will be one which will continue the trauma experienced by women in this respect.

In conclusion with the new Penal Code which we have treated in light of some of the regulation concerning women: the abolishment of the woman-girl distinction, ways may be sought for other social measures than marrying off young women with those who rape them, that “honour” cannot be the grounds for taking away the right to live and that women’s bodies, in terms of the law, belong to themselves rather than society and general morality become things which we may mention.

Inter-disciplinary cooperation is very important for the development of rights. We have tried to realise this since 1999 at the Women’s Rights Centre we have established in the Istanbul bar. We have carried out in-profession training and included people from different disciplines in those sessions. I believe that such training will benefit us in terms of some sort of inter-disciplinary cooperation. In fact we can think of ways of

developing this and forming a relationship between the members of the press and people of the law which go beyond seeking answers to questions such as “can you briefly tell me what has changed in the penal code” or “how did celebrity so and so get a divorce in a single hearing”.

In the Penal Trials Law our primary demand was regarding the situation of the intervener. This is a case which applies in some countries. For example, in France certain environmental groups have had experiences of intervening. In the case of Güldünya Tören who was the victim of an “honour” killing such an appeal was dismissed. The woman has been killed, she was killed by relatives? Who can intervene in this case? It is therefore very important *that non-governmental organisations are allowed as interveners in such cases*. That the press should cover these cases is also very important. However the Penal Trials Law did not bring any great changes except for the immediate appointment of a lawyer for the victim, like the accused. It was very hurried and we could not find the same atmosphere of discussion as we had experienced with the TPC –which was a first in terms of a law making process in which there was so much room for discussion and our views got heard to such a great extent-.

### **The human rights of women and the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women**

Finally I will touch briefly on how the concept of “*women’s human rights*” was attained and on some international legal texts such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW was accepted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 and became a convention in 1981. Turkey signed CEDAW in 1985. CEDAW is one of the seven fundamental human rights



conventions in the legal body of the United Nations. It carries significant weight for women. The endorsement of CEDAW by party countries is ensured through reports they give to the CEDAW Committee, in other words through them "handing in their homework" to the committee. The report presented by Turkey was examined by the committee in 2005. In the "Final Views" of the committee regarding Turkey's report, legal changes made during the last few years are taken as positive developments for the elimination of discrimination against women. However as the committee demands of Turkey that it carry out its responsibilities arising from the CEDAW Convention in a "systematic and continuous" implementation, it points to deficiencies within this area. It points to the necessity of a determination of "*discrimination against women*" in the constitution and other legislation along the lines of Article 1 of the CEDAW Convention. Furthermore the phenomenon of "sexual discrimination" observed in the social, economic and the political field is pointed out and a demand is made of the state for preventive measures.

In the words of Professor Feride Acar, who was UN CEDAW Committee member during the 1997-2005 period and acted as the committee's president during 2003-2005, the Final Views:

In this respect while on the one hand social awareness raising, sensitivity raising and mentality changing widespread and effective campaigns and programmes are foreseen, on the other hand emphasis falls on these first and foremost targeting state personnel, security personnel in the position of enforcing the law, health sector workers and most importantly legal personnel such as judges, prosecutors and lawyers in all fields ranging from violence to education and from participation in politics to employment. CEDAW which has determined that the widespread patriarchal attitude in Turkey and rooted traditional/cultural stereotypes in Turkey are effective in the belittlement and marginalisation of women ... and demands effective action.

Yes, legal regulation on its own is not enough. For laws to be implemented effectively there needs to be a series of other measures. It does not do to change the Civil Code and leave

alone article 10 of the Regulation law which continues economic violence and aggravates physical violence and thereby leaving millions of women unable to participate in the new property regime. It does not do to not to question why there are not enough safe houses when the Municipalities Law stipulates that there should be one per 50 thousand head of population. To not to be able to call "honour" honour but to distract with "tradition" and to call "virginity control" "genital examination" and then not to ask the opinion of the person concerned does not do. It does not do to not allow the room for discussion in the TPC when it comes to the amendment of the Criminal Trials Law, to ignore criticism and suggestions with the rush for the EU and to create permanent damage for temporary gains. It does not do to not to give the right of intervener to women and women's organisations while women are being killed in "honour" killings.

The next report to CEDAW will be presented in 2007. For all these changes and transformations neither CEDAW, nor the European Union "rapid" Concordance Laws are enough. Today, just like all the time and in every period, the organised and critical struggle of women needs to continue.

I tries to offer you a general panorama of legal regulations concerning women and what's new in them. However, I now want to ask a question. How many women today can say "I have the right not to make love" or "I have the right not to marry, not to set up a family"? How many of us can go after our rights without feeling afraid. People who come to testify in a court of law tremble in fear. Why?

In something that happened to me the other day, I was waiting outside the court room for a regular divorce trial. A woman entered and asked the court attendant whether she could go in and watch her sister's trial and got the response "no you can't". I intervened and said "all trials are open to the public,

off course you may enter”, but the attendant said “no, not here” and the woman obeyed the attendant despite my cloak and refrained from entering. Fear, in going after our rights, is everywhere.

I think for a journalist courts of law and how that system runs and how people react can be one of the best subjects there is. Rights and legitimacy are changeable phenomena. Journalists and writers experience this frequently when writing about “obscenity”. What is thought to be obscene in one country is not in another and what one judge deems to be obscene in one country is not for another. I want to underline this point: rights should not be treated of as written legal texts. Often, the written text is enough. In the old TPC and the Civil Code which we have criticised so much there were texts which could have been interpreted richly and used as rights. Or it was possible to take International Conventions as bases and argue that they were now considered to be a part of domestic law. What is really important is legitimacy. Today everyone might say “I’m against violence” and if truly not, when interviewed on the street people may say “of course it’s terrible! There should be no violence”. The political discourse which years ago when we took to the streets with “*the march against beating*” that opposed us with “it is private life”, it should not be intervened against, is not the same discourse today. Beating someone was not legal then, but it was legitimate. Yet has violence decreased since then? I don’t think so.

At this point it will be beneficial to touch upon another point. In the media, in adverts, the feminist discourse is turned upside down, emptied and used. Everyone is against violence, everyone celebrates the 8<sup>th</sup> of March Women’s Day and gives flowers to women. “Oh a blow of the hand, a bruise, how terrible!” A man says “I have never laid a hand on her; I just didn’t allow her to open the curtains.” A woman says “he did not let me out on the street but in God’s name he never hit

me". Yet all of these actions may constitute the crimes of "*limitation of liberty, cruelty*". I am not talking about an even fight, I am talking about systematically terrorising, being cruel to a human being. But can you at this point question the family in a street interview? Can you ask a woman what she thinks on whether she has the right not to make love, as well as her opinions on violence? If we can not address the more proper question to the father instead of asking a young woman victim of incest who has turned 18 and sued "But why did you not tell anyone, why did you not refuse before" and if the answer the father gives to the effect "But I did not beat my wife" satisfies us all; if not beating is enough; if we easily believe the myths "educated women are not subjected to violence" or "those who practice violence are psychologically ill" and do not choose to investigate the truth; then it must be said that we have a lot of ground to cover yet.

If, in a forensic medicine research 18 per cent of 85 psychologists, 27 per cent of 75 psychiatrists, 40 per cent of 305 judges and lawyers and 60 out of 100 police officers can say "the appearance and behaviour of some women will lead to rape" and if instead of asking "who are these judges, lawyers, psychologists and psychiatrists" we linger on the appearance of women; it means that there is still much to be told regarding rights. Otherwise what exists is just the written legal text. How many things we take as our rights, how much we can extend and fill the concept of rights; that is very important. We may potentially assume that we have rights and women's rights exist when we can transform the words "you deserve a sound beating" to "you deserve a good salary" or "you deserve a free life".

## **THE ORDER ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MEDIA\***

Hülya Gülbahar

The “Order on Measures to be Taken to Prevent Acts of Violence Against Women and Children and Tradition and Honour Killings” has become effective as following its publication in the Official Gazette number 26218 of 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2006 with the signature of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The Order numbered 2006/17 underlines that the prevention of violence against women is state policy in Turkey for the first time and obliges all (public-private, national, regional and local) written and audio-visual media, information services and news agencies and press professional organisations to carry out their part in preventing violence against women, alongside all ministries and public organisations.

The duty of coordination duty for the work to be carried out in which the media needs to participate has been given to the

This article was published on *bianet* on 15.11.2006 regarding the “Order on Measures to be Taken to Prevent Acts of Violence Against Women and Children and Tradition and Honour Killings” which became effective as of 4<sup>th</sup> of July 2006 following its publication in the Official Gazette number 26218. (*editor's note*)

General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SSCPA) as regards violence against children and to the General Directorate for Women's Status (GDWS).

Under the requirements of the order, all (public-private, national, regional and local) written and audio-visual media, information services and news agencies and press professional organisations have to report all the activities they have carried out and plan to carry out as “detailed quarterly activity reports” to the respective coordinating institution (SSCPA or GDWS).

In three sections of the Order media organisations are taken up as “cooperating organisation/institution”. However the fourth section (D) of the Order has been devoted entirely to the media and the media is defined directly as the “responsible institution” under this section.

### **The prevention of violence against women is now state policy**

The most important aspect of the Order which is composed of the sections Violence against Children (A), Violence against Women (B), Honour/Tradition Killings (C) and the Media (D) is that for the first time in Turkey it foresees:

- The implementation of “positive discrimination” for women until policy, legal regulation and practices *contrary to the equality of women and men* have been lifted and female and male equality has been attained to in society and;
- The acceptance as “state policy” the prevention of *every sort of act of violence against women*. As different from previous legal regulations, in many places in the order, material responsibility such as the provision of the “necessary budget”, setting up “women’s support fund” and the provision of “financial support” is included in order that the precautions

do not remain as wishes on paper and that their implementation can be truly realised.

As it is known, in the new Turkish Penal Code, systematic forms of domestic violence are treated in the section of “torture” and under the heading of “cruelty” and the punishment for this crime is foreseen as a minimum prison sentence of two years, without the possibility of postponement or paying a fine. Should the act of cruelty be also accompanied by crimes such as physical violence, rape etc. the punishment for these will be set according to their own articles. Therefore, violence against women is a “crime against humanity” which can in no way be accepted, tolerated, mitigated or left unpunished and it is a social and not an individual problem. Its solution requires realisation by all state units and the society.

The written and audio-visual media which people read/watch for hours everyday of their lives from birth to death has a role which can determine the process of creating a society a “society of violence” or, to the contrary “a society without violence”.

For this reason, a great duty and responsibility rests with the media for the success of the Order and an end to violence against women and inequality in our country.

### **There will be severe legal enforcement for the media**

Unfortunately, a few exceptional examples aside, the media, far from practicing a responsible policy for the prevention of the violation of women’s human rights and violence against women, itself has become a means through which the inequality and violence is taught en masse, supported and re-produced.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 4<sup>th</sup>

and 5<sup>th</sup> Integrated Country Report, the media in Turkey produces and continues gender patterns which are discriminative against women. According to the report which states that the low proportion of women employed in the various sectors of the media contributes to the sexist insistence of the sector, it is said that with the rise in the number of private media companies, the number of women employed especially in the television and cinema industries has risen. As the report determines, the proportion of woman employees is still at a low level. At the executive level women are employed as mid-level executives and hold only 1 per cent of positions at the higher executive level. In state TRT television channels the proportion of programmes aimed at women form 6.9 per cent of the total while this proportion is given as between the range of 15 to 17 for TRT radio channels.

As it can be seen the media as a means of power which is owned and managed by men has taken on an important role in the continuation and expansion of sexism.

By augmenting the roles of woman and man based on a distinction of sex, by repeating sexist prejudices against women, by promoting violence and making it magazine and erotic, by excluding women from news and commentary, by ignoring women in all aspects of life, by not bringing into the discussion women and women's organisations who have been struggling in their fields for years and who have a wealth of knowledge and experience in all issues even those regarding women and in hundreds of other ways which cannot all be enumerated here, the media itself violates the human rights of women. With the impact of the media, the manner of regarding women throughout society is becoming more sexist and violence and crimes committed against women are increasing.

Despite its heavy responsibility, the legal enforcement to ensure that the media changes its understanding of publishing is inadequate and those which exist are ineffective. For example in paragraph (d) of the "Law on the Founding and



Broadcasting of Radios and Televisions” numbered 3984 “that people should not be criticised or denigrated due to sex or similar reasons” and in paragraph (u) of the said law “violence and discrimination against women should not be promoted” have been guaranteed. But these clauses are not being implemented!

More importantly, Article 216/2 of the Turkish Penal Code foresees those who openly denigrate a part of the people based on difference in sex to be punished by imprisonment from six months to a year. Yet, it is not implemented!

It is for this reason that the first article of section (D) of the Order regarding the responsibilities of the media accepts that the legal enforcement regarding publications and broadcasts with “sexual discrimination”, “child abuse” and “violence content in the media are inadequate. Some of the initial work to be undertaken on the media will be the updating of the “Law on the Founding and Broadcasting of Radios and Televisions” numbered 3984, its powers of enforcement to be increased and that regulation change work should begin so that its clauses can be implemented without becoming out of date.

### **The media’s responsibility in the whole of the Order against Violence**

The media as among “organisations which must participate” in the tasks outlined in sections (B) and (C), should:

- For a systematic transformation of the mindset, a discourse which emphasises the negativity created by traditional gender roles and the social structure dominated by the male mindset in textbooks, daily talk, in visual and written media, in cinema movies and in fact in academic work and in preaches and sermons.

- Detrimental traditions and cultural norms in terms of violence against women should be identified and weaned out and education programmes which will make people change such behavioural patterns should be prepared. For the prevention of domestic violence against women all individuals of the family, especially male members, should be educated and the state should carry out the necessary work of widespread educational programmes on anger management and inter-personal communication skills.
- A national awareness drive should be held for the promotion of centres to which women who are victims of violence can apply, receive guidance and counselling from and regarding awareness raising and educational activities for women.
- A “2006-2010 Action Plan on the Prevention of Violence against Women” which will include all public institutions and organisations, universities, NGOs, the private sector and local government should be prepared and its implementation monitored under the coordination of the Office of the Minister without Portfolio Responsible for Women.
- Spot trailers regarding violence against women should be produced and aired in the national, regional and local media as part of a national campaign.
- The Presidency of Religious Affairs should deliver preaches and sermons, carry out publications and broadcasts and organise activities to inform society on violence against women.
- The reversal of preconceived notions and the traditional understanding rooted in society regarding tradition and honour should be ensured.
- It should be ensured that the state carries out its responsibilities arising from the law and international conventions, that the necessary training work for the reflection in implementation of the changes in the understanding of the

law be carried out and that the law is apply with zero tolerance.

- A “2006-2010 Action Plan on the Prevention of Tradition/Honour Killings” which will cover all civil and official organisations throughout the country should be prepared and its implementation monitored.
- The issue of violence against women should feature in educational programmes in the field of communication as well as in degree and on-job training programmes.
- The state, non-governmental organisations and local government units should run shared campaigns on the issue of tradition/honour killings. In these campaigns, men, as well as women should be made to receive awareness raising training. Programmes which allow for men and women to develop alternative forms of behaviour should be formed and programmes which treat of problem solving methods in order to discover ways of self expression and increase the possibilities of communication should be developed.
- Spot trailers regarding tradition/honour killings should be produced and aired in the national, regional and local media as part of a national campaign.

### **Special regulation on the media and violence**

I section (D) of the order initially, as has been mentioned above, the revision of the legislation regarding the media to be carried out in order for it to be able to carry out preventive and speedily implemented enforcement. In an order in which almost every line contains related professional associations and other non-governmental organisations the need to consult and cooperate with the media and NGOs seems to have been overlooked. We hope that even if the order has forgotten them, they will not themselves forget to get involved in the revision of the main legislation on the issue.

As we have completely included section (D) of the order at the end of the article, it will suffice to summarise the responsibilities here:

- That media organisations form their own auto-control mechanisms and at once start to take up their responsibilities regarding public publishing/broadcasting and set up their own principals of responsible publishing in line with European Union Acquis.
- The provision of the broadcast/publishing plan, the general course of the broadcast and the broadcast/published content does not contain sexual discrimination, violence, pornography and aspects demeaning, hurtful and prejudiced to women and that broadcast channels should establish their own “Ethical” rules and promote it in their broadcast identity.
- The prevention of child exploitation on the radio and during hours in which the family is together watching TV and “Children’s Programmes” and especially during “Advertising Sessions” during the general course of the broadcast,
- The promotion of informative programmes which will contribute to the social transformation of women, which takes as its target audience women at home and those who work in all broadcasting channels, broadcast contents and planning; and the implementation of such programmes during high viewer ship ours to reach greater numbers of women viewers,
- The production of replacement programmes of educational value which carry messages aimed at raising sensitivity against violence to be aired instead of programmes removed from the broadcast by the Higher Board of Radio and Television. (actually in the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph of the 33<sup>rd</sup> article of the law numbered 3984 which has been in effect for years the provision “in case of a broadcast violation the programme to be halted will be replaced by programmes on education..., women..., rights which the Higher Board will have prepared by relevant organisations and institutions. We have not witnessed its implementation. The mindset which did not apply the law will hopefully apply the order.)
- The provision of violence sensitivity raising “Gender Equality” training for all media workers engaged in the

production of TV programmes, especially those in production and management positions.

- The provision of “awareness” for the viewer in terms of the media and work to be carried out to form informed viewers (especially parents) and training programmes for the development of media literacy in viewers.
- The elimination of sexism in the media decision making processes in our country and the establishment of equality,
- The realisation of research into the effects of the media on the “consolidation” and elimination of violence against women and children for which there is a great need today,
- That non-governmental organisations should form “Media Monitoring Groups” and ensure auto-control of the media through constant monitoring.

As it can be seen the Order aims at the media correcting itself first and foremost by regulating legislation, and bringing in the principles of every worker in the media from the producers to employees at all levels receiving gender equality training, the provision of female-male equality in its own decision making mechanisms, the formation of its own auto-control mechanisms and the implementation of its own ethical rules.

It must be due to the fact that we have not witnessed the proper implementation of any law, guideline or order to the benefit of women in Turkey up until now that we meet this present far reaching order with reserved content.

Our hopes lie with the power of the women’s movement in Turkey and in the media monitoring groups which will be formed through it. Should you wish to communicate your views or suggestions to the Media Monitoring Group (MEDİZ) formed by women our address is: [medyaizleme@yahoo.com.tr](mailto:medyaizleme@yahoo.com.tr).

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**APPENDIX: THE ORDER ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Tuesday, 4<sup>TH</sup> of July, 2006  
The Official Gazette  
Issue: 26218

**ORDER**

From the Prime Minister's Office

**SUBJECT:** Measures to be Taken for the Prevention of Acts of Violence Against Women and Children and Tradition and Honour Killings

**ORDER  
2006/17**

Violence against women and children continues to occupy a place on the agenda of humanity. The most ruthless form of this violence are the killing of women known to the public as "tradition killings". That violence against women and children continues in our country requires new and urgent precautions be taken. For a solution to these problems which will disappear with the rise in the educational and cultural level parallel to economic development, great responsibility falls on public institutions and organisations as well as non-governmental organisations and individual citizens.

Indeed the Turkish Grand National Assembly has felt the need to stand on this phenomenon which constitutes a social wound and with its decision dated 28.06.2005 and numbered 853 has formed a research commission. This commission having completed its work, it has prepared a detailed report on the reasons of violence against women and children and measures which may be taken to prevent it.

The suggestions made by the said commission and accepted by our government regarding the measures to be taken on the issue and the organisations responsible for their implementation have been outlined in the lists in the appendix. In the work to be undertaken as regards these suggestions the duty of coordination will fall to the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency as regards violence against children and to the General Directorate for Women's Status as regards violence against women and tradition/honour killings.

The work regarding the measures, for which the responsible organisation and organisations which must participate with them have been listed separately, will begin immediately in cooperation with the General Directorates which have been assigned as coordinators. Detailed quarterly activity reports to be prepared by the responsible institutions regarding the fields which fall in their responsibility will be sent to the respective coordinating institution.

Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN  
Prime Minister

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**A. THE INSTITUTIONS WHICH MUST WORK IN COORDINATION FOR  
THE ACTUALISATION OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS REGARDING  
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

**PROPOSALS (a)  
THE RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION (b)  
THE INSTITUTION/ORGANISATION TO COOPERATE (c)**

**PROTECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

1.
  - a) The subject of approaches to violence against children should take place in the in-job training programmes of healthcare workers, members of the judiciary, teachers, social services experts, psychologists, child development experts, security forces and other professional groups.
  - b) The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the National Education Ministry, the Ministry of the Interior, the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Universities.
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Universities.
2.
  - a) The employment of more women personnel in the security and gendarmerie units and the training of these officials on the subject of violence against women and children should be procured.
  - b) The Ministry of the Interior
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, University Women's Issues Research and Implementation Centres.
3.
  - a) Training work to allow for the correct assessment of violence against children phenomena should be carried out in security and gendarmerie units.
  - b) The Ministry of the Interior
  - c) The General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Universities.
4.
  - a) The Presidency of Religious Affairs should deliver preaches and sermons, carry out publications and broadcasts and organise activities to inform society on violence against children.
  - b) The Presidency of Religious Affairs
  - c) The General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Universities.
5.
  - a) The preparation of leaflets and other informative material and their display in public spaces and in public services units by civil administration offices and local government should be ensured.
  - b) Governor's offices, Municipalities

- c) The General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Universities.
- 6. a) In urban planning social facilities for youngsters of all ages, and not just school children, to engage in various activities should be set up and those which do exist should be made active.
- b) The Ministry of Public Works, Governor's offices, Municipalities.
- c) The General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Universities, related professional Organisations and related Non-Governmental Organisations.

#### **INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES**

- 1. a) The state should ensure that measures to prevent every form of violence against children be implemented as state policy. A budget should be formed towards this end and the impact and results of the said budget should be rendered visible.
- b) The Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), office of the Prime Minister and all other related public institutions and organisations.
- c) Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
- 2. a) Consecutive and parallel regulation in the economic, legal, institutional, educational and cultural fields should be carried out in order to get to the root of the problem for the prevention of violence against children.
- b) The office of the Prime Minister and all other related public institutions and organisations.
- c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Local Government, Universities related Professional Organisations and related Non-Governmental Organisations.
- 3. a) The measures to be taken against children should be determined comprehensively and within the framework of the national plan. While being prepared the said plan should be made to adopt a gender viewpoint.
- b) The General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency
- 4. a) The integration of gender sensitive policies in the main plan and in programmes, the provision of cooperation between different sectors and disciplines, the formation of new mechanisms for the oversight and evaluation of programmes and results and the effective activation of the present mechanisms should be ensured.
- b) The General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, the General Directorate for the Status of Women.
- c) All related Public Institutions and Organisations, Local Government, University Women's Issues Research and Implementation Centres, related Professional Organisations and related Non-Governmental Organisations.
- 5. a) The "2006-2010 Action Plan for the Prevention of Violence against Children" to cover all related civil and public organisations in the country should be prepared and its activities followed.



- b) The General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency
  - c) All related Public Institutions and Organisations, Local Government, Universities, related Professional Organisations and related Non-Governmental Organisations.
- 6. a) Increased functionality and the adoption of necessary measures for the increased functionality of the "183 Family, Child, Woman and Social Services and Disabled People Call Centre" which operates within the Social Services and Child Protection Agency should be ensured.
  - b) The General Directorate of Social Services and Child protection Agency
  - c) The Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, Health Organisations Belonging to Universities and the Private Sector, Legal Bars
- 7. a) A country wide "VIOLENCE CALLLINE" which will provide its services throughout the day should be formed. The personnel to be employed in these lines should compose of people trained in the issue of violence.
  - b) The General Directorate of Social Services and Child protection Agency
  - c) The Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, Health Organisations Belonging to Universities and the Private Sector, Legal Bars
- 8. a) The institutions and emergency call lines which provide services for children who have become the subject of (physical, emotional and sexual) violence have not as of yet been fully institutionalised in our country. Institutionalisation in these fields should be pursued speedily.
  - b) The General Directorate of Social Services and Child protection Agency
  - c) The Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, Health Organisations Belonging to Universities and the Private Sector, Legal Bars
- 9. a) A national database regarding violence against children does not exist. The data at hand is very inadequate. For these reasons Ministries should gather data on the issue and the data should be stored in databases open to public access. For healthy results to research question sets directed at the data aimed at should be formed and results should be gathered and evaluated by a single organisation (the Turkish Statistical Agency).
  - b) The Turkish Statistical Agency
  - c) All related public organisations and institutions (the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the National Education Ministry, the State Planning Agency, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Universities etc.)
- 10. a) The deficiencies which prevent the functioning of child reformatories should be amended, controls should be imposed for provision of more efficient service and the necessary substructure for children not to be held in adult facilities should be put in place.
  - b) The Ministry of Justice

- c) All related public organisations and institutions, related non-governmental organisations

## EDUCATION

1. a) The duration of compulsory education should be increased to eleven years. All measures necessary for all children in the country to benefit from the said compulsory education should be taken and the realisation of controls in this field should be ensured.  
b) The National education Ministry  
c) Governors' Offices, Local Government, related Non-Governmental Organisations
2. a) As primary education is compulsory, in the event of a violation of this compulsion, the legal process regarding those responsible should be through. On this matter as well as the matter of monitoring and necessary measures of children being exploited economically all related organisations and institutions and local government must work in coordination.  
b) The National Education Ministry, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security  
c) Governors' Offices, Local Government, related Non-Governmental Organisations, the Social Aid and Solidarity Incentive Fund, the General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency
3. a) That girls should complete their education bears great importance. There should be special emphasis on the continuity of campaigns aimed at increasing the attendance rates of girls and the monitoring of the results and measures to provide for interrupted schooling of girls should be taken.  
b) National Education Ministry  
c) Governors' Offices, Local Government, related Non-Governmental Organisations, the Media
4. a) The establishment and increase in the numbers of girls' boarding primary and secondary schools is necessary, especially in rural areas which are economically backward and where traditional values are dominant in order to secure the participation of girls in education.  
b) The National Education Ministry  
c) The Ministry of Public Works, Governors' Offices, Local Government, Private sector organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations
5. a) The children of temporary agricultural worker families should be provided with complete primary education. To this end projects such as mobile education should be developed. Local government administrators should follow up and ensure implementation.  
b) The National Education Ministry  
c) Governors' Offices, Local Government, Non-Governmental Organisations
6. a) The aspects in education material which ignore, overlook or damage the equality of men and women should be weaned off.  
b) The National Education Ministry  
c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research

7. a) Education programmes targeting children at all stages of education from primary education onwards (including organised and public education) which include the subjects of violence and gender and which teaches children to get to know their bodies should be prepared and implemented.  
b) The National Education Ministry  
c) The Ministry of Health, the General Directorate for Women's Status, Universities
8. a) School administrations should raise the awareness of class teachers and guidance teachers in recognising violence against children and notifying authorities.  
b) The National Education Ministry  
c) The Ministry of Health, the General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Universities
9. a) The laws regarding violence against children and the Convention on Children's Rights should be taught in schools, a multi-dimensional campaign should be started to prevent violence in schools and this campaign should take the form of social mobilisation.  
b) The National Education Ministry  
c) All related public institutions and organisations, Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), Non-Governmental Organisations
10. a) The "Parents' Schools" programmes in which families are taught methods of child education and child education should be made widespread and an institutional substructure should be formed.  
b) The General Directorate of Family and Social Research  
c) The National Education Ministry, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Non-Governmental Organisations, Universities, Local Government
11. a) While rape and incest are serious issues in our country, the view of them as taboos should be fought against and work should be carried out on informing the public on forms of sexual violence, their reasons and ways of prevention.  
b) The General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency  
c) All related public institutions and organisations, Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), Non-Governmental Organisations, Universities
12. a) Education programmes which will facilitate a change in parents' and caregivers' attitude towards violence against children in the fields of approaches to children and child raising should be prioritised.  
b) The General Directorate of Family and Social Research  
c) The National Education Ministry, the Ministry of Health, the General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Non-Governmental Organisations, Universities, Local Government

13. a) Detrimental traditions and cultural norms in terms of violence against children should be identified and weaned out and education programmes which will make people change such behavioural patterns should be prepared.  
b) The Ministry of Culture and Tourism  
c) All related public institutions and organisations, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
14. a) An informative spot education trailer on violence against children should be made to feature regularly in the visual media.  
b) The General Social Services and Child Protection Agency  
c) Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local)

### **HEALTH**

1. a) In health related institutions of higher education, pre-graduation lectures on identifying violence against children, carrying out necessary interventions and activating the required mechanisms for the protection of the child subject to violence should be implemented.  
b) Inter-University Education Commission, Universities' Education Syllabus Commissions  
c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency
2. a) In planning protective and therapeutic health services to be afforded to child victims of violence who apply to health organisations, a model which includes service giving personnel in all health organisations, such as medics and nurses as well as social workers and psychologists trained in recognising, identifying and reporting violence against children should be adopted.  
b) The Ministry of Health, All Health Organisations belonging to Universities and the private Sector  
c) All related public institutions and organisations

### **The LAW**

1. a) Work on the implementation of substructure related to the Child Protection Law numbered 5395 should be given impetus.  
b) The Ministry of Justice  
c) All related public institutions and organisations
2. a) The framework for the speedy implementation of the regulation in the Penal Trials Code article 52, paragraph 3 entitled "the interrogation of child witnesses" which rules that visual and audio recording during the interrogation of child witnesses is obligatory should be ensured in accordance with the "article 12, paragraph 2 of the Law on the Implementation and Manner of Execution of the Penal Trials Law numbered 5320", given that clauses (a) and (b) of this paragraph will come into force as of July 2006.

- b) The Ministry of Justice
    - c) The Ministry of the Interior
  - 3. a) The perpetrators of violence and especially incest should be legally obliged to undergo rehabilitation and regulation should be imposed making the perpetrators account for the costs arising thereof.
    - b) The Ministry of Justice
    - c) The Ministry of Health, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Legal Bars
  - 4. a) The legal procedure in the process of seeking justice should be simplified for the benefit of the victims, the necessary paper work and admissions, especially those regarding health, should be made free of charge and the necessary regulation should be adopted for this purpose.
    - b) The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health
    - c) All related public institutions and organisations
  - 5. a) Legal regulation which requires the "informed consent" of the child for physical examinations should be enacted.
    - b) The Ministry of Justice
    - c) All related public institutions and organisations, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
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## B. THE INSTITUTIONS WHICH MUST WORK IN COORDINATION FOR THE ACTUALISATION OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS REGARDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### PROPOSALS (a) THE RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION (b) THE INSTITUTION/ORGANISATION TO COOPERATE (c)

#### PROTECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- 1. a) The state should take the necessary measures for the elimination of economic inequality between women and men.
  - b) The Ministry of Labour and Social Security
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations, the Private Sector, Universities
- 2. a) Measures to ensure equality in employment should be adopted and employers and managers should implement positive discrimination where necessary in order to prevent sexual discrimination in the workplace.
  - b) The Ministry of Labour and Social Security
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations, the Private Sector

3.
  - a) Regulation which will allow easier access to credit for employment opportunities and entrepreneurship for women should be implemented.
  - b) The Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Public and Private Sector Banks
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, Non-Governmental Organisations
4.
  - a) Multi-dimensional work should be undertaken to promote the Law on the Protection of the Family numbered 4320.
  - b) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations, the Private Sector, Universities
5.
  - a) On the issue of couples counselling prior to marriage the "marriage and marriage Counselling" services should be made widespread and institutionalised.
  - b) The General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Local Government
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
6.
  - a) Necessary measures should be taken to increase groups of men giving importance to male-female equality and support the development of women's rights.
  - b) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations
7.
  - a) Support services (such as kindergartens, crèches, day care centres) as required by women who have dropped out of education to continue their education and actively participate in employment should be provided.
  - b) The General Social Services and Child Protection Agency
  - c) The National Education Ministry, Local Government, Non-Governmental Organisations, the Private Sector
8.
  - a) The gender viewpoint training of members of the judiciary, pedagogues, social workers and psychologists to work at Family Courts and Juvenile Courts and the placement in courts of pedagogues, social workers and psychologists according to Law on the Establishment, Duties and Trial Procedures of Family Courts numbered 4787 should be realised as soon as possible.
  - b) The Ministry of Justice
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, Universities
9.
  - a) Activities targeting women should be carried out in Municipalities' and the National Education Ministry's Public Education Centres and the Social Services and Child Protection Agency's Community Centres. In cooperation with NGOs, activities for strengthening women in such fields as literacy, women's human rights, gender roles and self confidence should be carried out.

- b) The National Education Ministry, Local Government, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Non-Governmental Organisations
- 10. a) Spot trailers regarding violence against women should be produced and aired in the national, regional and local media as part of a national campaign.
  - b) The General Directorate for Women's Status
  - c) Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local)
- 11. a) The preparation of leaflets and other informative material and their display in public spaces and in public services units by civil administration offices and local government should be ensured.
  - b) Governors' Offices, Local Government
  - c) The Ministry of Health, the National Education Ministry, the General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
- 12. a) The Presidency of Religious Affairs should deliver preachs and sermons, carry out publications and broadcasts and organise activities to inform society on violence against women.
  - b) The Presidency of Religious Affairs
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local)
- 13. a) A campaign to raise sensitivity and responsibility on violence against women should be held in every public organisation and non-governmental organisation and information on the positive steps taken to this end should be spread.
  - b) The Private Sector, Trade's Unions
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
- 14. a) Services which will help prevent violence against women in urban areas such as better lighting of streets and parks and the placement of more booths to allow women easier access to emergency call lines should be provided.
  - b) The Ministry of Public Works, Local Government
  - c) The Ministry of Transport, the Private Sector

## **SERVICES ORGANISATIONS**

1. a) A permanent commission under the title "Female-Male Equality Commission" should be set up in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA).

- b) TGNA
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
2.
  - a) A "Women's Support Fund" should be set up in order to economically support women who have been subject to violence and especially those in safe houses and to allow for the resettlement of women who apply to counselling centres and safe houses and provisions should be made for suitable employment for such people.
  - b) The Office of the Prime Minister
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations, the Private Sector, Non-Governmental Organisations
3.
  - a) Our country should become party to the DAPHNEII (2004-2008) programme being run in the framework of the European Union which aims at the prevention of violence against children, youngsters and women.
  - b) The Office of the Prime Minister
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the State Planning Agency, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Local Government, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
4.
  - a) Policies, regulations and practices contrary to female-male equality should be abolished and until equality is ensured in society, positive discrimination should be made state policy.
  - b) The Office of the Prime Minister and All related public institutions and organisations
  - c) Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
5.
  - a) In the process of enacting legislation directly concerning women, law makers should consult not only with the related public institutions and organisations but also with the women's research and implementation centre's of universities and non-governmental organisations.
  - b) The Office of the Prime Minister and all related public institutions and organisations
6.
  - a) The state should accept as state policy the prevention of all forms of violence against women. A budget should be formed to this end, the visibility of the budget in terms of gender roles should be assured and budget analysis based on gender should be carried out.
  - b) The General Directorate for Women's Status
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
7.
  - a) A "Violence against Women Monitoring Committee" should be set up within the General Directorate for Women's Status.
  - b) The General Directorate for Women's Status
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations



8. a) The integration of gender sensitive policies in all the main plans and programmes of the state, the cooperation between relevant institutions and organisations, the formation of necessary mechanisms for the monitoring and assessment of programmes and their results and the activation of the existent mechanisms should be ensured.  
b) The General Directorate for Women's Status  
c) Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
9. a) Measures to be taken against violence against women should be comprehensively determined within the framework of a national plan regarding the legal, institutional, educational and cultural fields. This plan should have a gender viewpoint as it is being formed.  
b) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the State Planning Agency  
c) Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
10. a) "Gender Equality" training for all public institution and organisation, university and private sector workers in the country should be made obligatory.  
b) The General Directorate for Women's Status  
c) All related public institutions and organisations, Local Government, Universities' Women's issues Research Centres, the Private Sector
11. a) A "2006-2010 Action Plan on the Prevention of Violence against Women" which will include all public institutions and organisations, universities, NGOs, the private sector and local government should be prepared and its implementation monitored under the coordination of the Office of the Minister without Portfolio Responsible for Women.  
b) The General Directorate for Women's Status  
c) All related public institutions and organisations, Local Government, Universities' Women's issues Research Centres, Non-Governmental Organisations, the Private Sector
12. a) Coordination should be established among all public institutions and organisations, NGOs, women's studies research centres of universities and local government units working on the prevention of violence against women and a "services network model" should be formed.  
b) The General Directorate for Women's Status  
c) All related public institutions and organisations, Local Government, Universities' Women's issues Research Centres, Non-Governmental Organisations
13. a) Increased functionality and the adoption of necessary measures for the increased functionality of the "183 Family, Child, Woman and Social Services and Disabled People Call Centre" which operates within the Social Services and Child Protection Agency should be ensured.  
b) The General Social Services and Child Protection Agency  
c) The Ministry of Interior, the ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, All Health Organisations belonging to Universities and the private Sector, Legal Bars

14. a) A country wide "VIOLENCE CALLLINE" which will provide its services throughout the day should be formed. The personnel to be employed in these lines should compose of people trained in the issue of violence.  
b) The General Social Services and Child Protection Agency  
c) The Ministry of Interior, the ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, All Health Organisations belonging to Universities and the private Sector, Legal Bars
15. a) All the necessary legal and institutional framework should be put in place for the rehabilitation of individuals who resort to violence for improved results in the implementation phase of the Law on the Protection of the Family numbered 4320.  
b) The General Social Services and Child Protection Agency  
c) The Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health
16. a) The budget allowance allocated to the Social Services and Child Protection Agency should be increased, women's safe houses/guesthouses should be put in line with European Union standards in terms of both quantity and quality and the service giving personnel should be ensured to have a female point of view and the necessary care should be taken that the said centres operate according to the principle of confidentiality.  
b) The General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, the State Planning Agency, Local Government  
c) Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
17. a) The legislation on the establishment and management of women's safe houses/guesthouses reviewed and revised according to European Union standards, and local governments should be obliged to set up women's safe houses/guest houses. The suitability of established women's safe houses/guesthouses to the standards established by legislation should be subject to regular controls.  
b) The General Social Services and Child Protection Agency  
c) Local Government, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
18. a) The legal procedure in the process of seeking justice should be simplified for the benefit of the victims, the necessary paper work and admissions, especially those regarding health, should be made free of charge. Every phase of this process should be ensured to be respectful of the woman's private life and protective of women.  
b) The ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health  
c) All related public institutions and organisations
19. a) A general leaflet should be prepared regarding the procedure and the steps to be taken for women who have been subjected to violence at security units.  
b) The Ministry of Interior  
c) Legal Bars, related Non-Governmental Organisations
20. a) Independent women's safe houses and women's counselling centres already existent and efforts at establishing and managing such facilities

- by non-governmental organisations should be supported multi-dimensionally, including financially by local government and province special administrations.
- b) Governors' Offices, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Local Government
  - c) Non-Governmental Organisations
21. a) Temporary residences paid for by state resources should be afforded to women upon leaving women's safe houses/guesthouses in order to support them in attaining their independence.  
b) Local Government, the Mass Housing Administration  
c) The General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Non-Governmental Organisations
  22. a) A national database regarding violence against women does not exist. The data at hand is not healthy and inadequate. For these reasons Ministries should gather data on the issue. For healthy results to research question sets directed at the data aimed at should be formed and results should be gathered and evaluated by a single organisation (the Turkish Statistical Agency).  
b) Turkish Statistics Agency  
c) All related public institutions and organisations, Universities, the Private Sector, Non-Governmental Organisations
  23. a) Related institutions should be supported in the formation and realisation of projects regarding research into the prevention of violence and the causes, effects and the social cost of violence against women.  
b) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the State Planning Agency, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research  
c) Local Government, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
  24. a) For the speedier production of information which will support the development of domestic policies and programmes the Women's Issues research and Implementation centres of universities should be supported to carry out and publish research.  
b) Universities  
c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the State Planning Agency, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Local Government, Non-Governmental Organisations

## EDUCATION

1. a) Detrimental traditions and cultural norms in terms of violence against women should be identified and weaned out and education programmes which will make people change such behavioural patterns should be prepared. For the prevention of domestic violence against women all

individuals of the family, especially male members, should be educated and the state should carry out the necessary work of widespread educational programmes on anger management and inter-personal communication skills.

- b) The Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the National Education Ministry, the Ministry of Health, the General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research
  - c) Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
2. a) The establishment and increase in the numbers of girls' boarding primary and secondary schools is necessary, especially in rural areas which are economically backward and where traditional values are dominant in order to secure the participation of girls in education.  
b) The National Education Ministry  
c) Non-Governmental Organisations, the Private Sector
  3. a) Educational programmes which will affect a change in mentality in men regarding violence against women should be delivered during military service training, in mosques and coffee houses and in businesses which employ numerous male employees.  
b) The Ministry of National Defence, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, Governors' Offices  
c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Non-Governmental Organisations
  4. a) A national awareness drive should be held for the promotion of centres to which women who are victims of violence can apply, receive guidance and counselling from and regarding awareness raising and educational activities for women.  
b) The General Directorate for Women's Status, Governors' Offices, the Presidency of Religious Affairs, Local Government  
c) Non-Governmental Organisations, Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local)
  5. a) The subject of violence against women should feature in the degree and in-profession training programmes of healthcare workers, members of the judiciary, security forces, teachers, social workers, psychologists, child development experts and other professional groups.  
b) Inter-University Education Commission, Universities' Education Syllabus Commissions  
c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency

## HEALTH

1.
  - a) The necessary framework should be formed for healthcare personnel working in institutions offering healthcare services to be able to recognise, identify, carry out necessary interventions and to direct women who have been subjected to violence to suitable organisations and the issue of violence against women should feature in the undergraduate and postgraduate educational programmes of healthcare workers.
  - b) The Ministry of Health, Inter-University Education Commission, Universities' Education Syllabus Commissions, All Health Organisations belonging to Universities and the private Sector
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations
2.
  - a) The establishment of special units for women victims of violence in every healthcare facility should be made obligatory. The employment of social workers and psychologists, as well as of medics and nurses in these units should be ensured. The personnel of these units should be ensured to be able to recognise violence against women and to be able to make the necessary report in order to activate services offered against violence against women.
  - b) The Ministry of Health, All Health Organisations belonging to Universities and the private Sector
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations
3.
  - a) The provision of all reproduction system health, especially family planning, should be made available for women at primary level healthcare facilities and free of charge.
  - b) The Ministry of Health

## The LAW

1.
  - a) The "Framework Equality Law" should be passed post haste.
  - b) The Ministry of Justice
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Universities, all related public institutions and organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations
2.
  - a) According to article 10 of the constitution entitled "Equality before the Law"; "Everyone is equal before the law regardless of language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion, sect and other differences."

Due to (Appendix paragraph:7/5/2004-5170/l.md); "Women and men have equal rights. The state is obliged to see that equality is realised..." the state should take every measure to realise this overriding clause, legislation first and foremost.

- b) The Ministry of Justice
- c) All related public institutions and organisations

3.
  - a) The necessary work on the weaning out of regulation present in our current legislation which damages the equality of women and men should be carried out.
  - b) The Ministry of Justice
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Universities, all related public institutions and organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations
4.
  - a) It is thought appropriate that: the term "partner at fault" used in article 1 of the Law on the Protection of the Family numbered 4320 be replaced with "individual resorting to violence"; that the expression "should not come to the shared residence" be supplemented with "or to the place of work of the individual who was subjected to violence" as regards the measures that can be decreed by a judge within the scope of article 1 paragraph (f) of the afore mentioned law; that the protective scope of the law 4320 be extended to one of the partners who has been divorced by the court or has the legal right to live separately or their children and that regulation should be carried out to the execution of the courts protective judgment be exempted from payment.
  - b) The Ministry of Justice
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Universities, all related public institutions and organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations
5.
  - a) Legal regulation present in our current legislation which aims at holding the woman's body under control and therefore causes a violation of human rights should be amended post haste.
  - b) The Ministry of Justice
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Universities, all related public institutions and organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations
6.
  - a) Regulation which supports the participation of women in politics should be made in the Political Parties Law.
  - b) The Ministry of Justice
  - c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Political Parties, Universities, all related public institutions and organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations
7.
  - a) The necessary regulation should be introduced to the "General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency In Kind and Cash Aid Guidelines" for in kind and cash aid to women who stay in safe houses operated by NGOs for the duration of their stay.
  - b) The General Social Services and Child Protection Agency

### **C. THE INSTITUTIONS WHICH MUST WORK IN COORDINATION FOR THE ACTUALISATION OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS REGARDING TRADITION/HONOUR KILLINGS**

#### **PROPOSALS (a) THE RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION (b) THE INSTITUTION/ORGANISATION TO COOPERATE (c)**

#### **PROTECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

1. a) For a systematic transformation of the mindset, a discourse which emphasises the negativity created by traditional gender roles and the social structure dominated by the male mindset in textbooks, daily talk, in visual and written media, in cinema movies and in fact in academic work and in preaches and sermons.  
b) The National Education Ministry, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Turkish Language Institute, the Higher Board of Radio and Television, the Higher Education Board, the Presidency of Religious Affairs  
c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Universities, All related public institutions and organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local)
2. a) The Presidency of Religious Affairs should give preaches and sermons to inform society, should make publications and broadcasts and organise various activities for the prevention of tradition/honour killings. The Presidency of Religious Affairs, in organising such activities should make use of a language with a moral discourse which emphasises the traditional gender roles and the negativities created by the patriarchal structure.  
b) The Presidency of Religious Affairs  
c) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency
3. a) The state, non-governmental organisations and local government units should run shared campaigns on the issue of tradition/honour killings. In these campaigns, men, as well as women should be made to receive awareness raising training. Programmes which allow for men and women to develop alternative forms of behaviour should be formed and programmes which treat of problem solving methods in order to discover ways of self expression and increase the possibilities of communication should be developed.  
b) The General Directorate for Women's Status  
c) The General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Universities, All related public institutions and organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local)

4. a) Spot trailers regarding tradition/honour killings should be produced and aired in the national, regional and local media as part of a national campaign.
- b) The General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research
- c) Universities, All related public institutions and organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local)

#### INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES

1. a) The reversal of preconceived notions and the traditional understanding rooted in society regarding tradition and honour should be ensured.
- b) All related public institutions and organisations
- c) Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations, Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local)
2. a) It should be ensured that the state carries out its responsibilities arising from the law and international conventions, that the necessary training work for the reflection in implementation of the changes in the understanding of the law be carried out and that the law is apply with zero tolerance.
- b) The Ministry of Justice, the General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Universities
- c) All related public institutions and organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local)
3. a) A "2006-2010 Action Plan on the Prevention of Tradition/Honour Killings" which will cover all civil and official organisations throughout the country should be prepared and its implementation monitored.
- b) The General Directorate for Women's Status
- c) All related public institutions and organisations, Local Government, Universities' Women's issues Research Centres, Non-Governmental Organisations
4. a) A country wide "VIOLENCE CALLLINE" which will provide its services throughout the day should be formed. The personnel to be employed in these lines should compose of people trained in the issue of violence.
- b) The General Social Services and Child Protection Agency
- c) The Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, All Health Organisations belonging to Universities and the private Sector, Legal Bars
5. a) For the prevention of tradition/honour killings, committees should be formed at the local level with the participation of the Governor's Office, the Security Directorate, the Gendarmerie, the Clerical Office, Universities and non-governmental organisations.
- b) Governors' Offices



- c) the Province Security Directorate, the Province Gendamerie Command, Municipalities, the Clerical Office, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations.
- 6. a) A national database regarding tradition/honour killings does not exist. The data at hand is not healthy and inadequate. For these reasons Ministries should gather data on the issue. For healthy results to research question sets directed at the data aimed at should be formed and results should be gathered and evaluated by a single organisation (the Turkish Statistical Agency).
  - b) Turkish Statistics Agency
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations, Local Government, Universities' Women's issues Research Centres, Non-Governmental Organisations
- 7. a) Related organisations should be supported for the development and realisation of projects regarding the causes, effects, costs and ways of prevention of tradition/honour killings.
  - b) The State Planning Agency, the General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research
  - c) Local Government, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations
- 8. a) For inequality between men and women to be alleviated, women must be strengthened in every field. To this end the Women's Issues research and Implementation Centres should be given incentives to carry out and publish research.
  - b) Universities
  - c) The State Planning Agency, the General Social Services and Child Protection Agency, the General Directorate for Women's Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research

## **EDUCATION**

- 1. a) The establishment and increase in the numbers of girls' boarding primary and secondary schools is necessary, especially in rural areas which are economically backward and where traditional values are dominant in order to secure the participation of girls in education.
  - b) The National Education Ministry
  - c) The Ministry of Public Works, Governors' Offices, Local Government, the Private Sector, Non-Governmental Organisations

# **D. THE INSTITUTIONS WHICH MUST WORK IN COORDINATION FOR THE ACTUALISATION OF PROPOSED SOLUTIONS REGARDING THE MEDIA AND VIOLENCE**

## **PROPOSALS (a) THE RESPONSIBLE INSTITUTION (b) THE INSTITUTION/ORGANISATION TO COOPERATE (c)**

### **PROTECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

1. a) The update according to current technological developments of the present media law in our country, primarily the Law on the Establishment and Broadcast of Radios and Televisions numbered 3986 and Guidelines issued in accordance with this law, the increase in the power of sanctions given that the sanctions imposed for broadcasts with "sexually discriminative", "child exploitation" and "violence" content fail to be preventative and that regulation which will allow them to function without becoming out of date and an implemental legislation is created,  
b) TGNA, the related Office of the Minister without Portfolio, the Higher Board of Radio and Television (HBRT)  
c) All related public institutions and organisations
2. a) That media organisations form their own auto-control mechanisms and at once start to take up their responsibilities regarding public publishing/broadcasting and set up their own principals as foreseen by the Council Advisory Decision (31998H0560) of 24<sup>th</sup> September 1998 regarding the increase in competitiveness of the European visual/audio information services industry through the development of national frameworks in the protection of the young and human dignity; also continued under the section on priorities of the Turkish National programme Regarding the acceptance of the European Union Acquis Culture and Visual and Audio policy (the Official Gazette numbered 25178 of 24<sup>th</sup> July 2003) and the Council Final Decision (31999Y 1006(02) of 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1999 regarding the role of auto-control within the framework of the development of new media services,  
b) Written and Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), the Printed Press, Information Services and News Agencies  
c) The Secretariat-General of the EU, related institutions and organisations.
3. a) The provision of the broadcast/publishing plan, the general course of the broadcast and the broadcast/published content does not contain sexual discrimination, violence, pornography and aspects demeaning, hurtful and prejudiced to women and that broadcast channels should establish their own "Ethical" rules and promote it in their broadcast identity.  
b) Written and Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), the Printed Press, Information Services and News Agencies  
c) All related public institutions and organisations
4. a) The prevention of child exploitation given the widespread impact of the radio and during hours in which the family is together watching TV and

- “Children’s Programmes” and especially during “Advertising Sessions” during the general course of the broadcast,
- b) Written and Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), the Printed Press, Information Services and News Agencies
  - c) All related public institutions and organisations
5. a) The promotion of informative programmes which will contribute to the social transformation of women, which takes as its target audience women at home and those who work in all broadcasting channels, broadcast contents and planning; and the implementation of such programmes during high viewer ship ours to reach greater numbers of women viewers,  
 b) Written and Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), the Printed Press, Information Services and News Agencies  
 c) The General Directorate for Women’s Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, Universities’ Women’s issues Research and Implementation Centres, Non-Governmental Organisations
  6. a) Preparation work to be done on programmes with educational value which give violence sensitivity raising, high quality and positive messages to replace those programmes removed from view by the Higher Board of radio and Television.  
 b) HBRT, Visual Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), Information Services  
 c) All related public institutions and organisations
  7. a) The provision of violence sensitivity raising “Gender Equality” training for all media workers engaged in the production of TV programmes, especially those in production and management positions.  
 b) Written and Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), the Printed Press, Information Services and News Agencies  
 c) The General Directorate for Women’s Status
  8. a) The provision of “awareness” for the viewer in terms of the media and work to be carried out to form informed viewers (especially parents) and training programmes for the development of media literacy in viewers.  
 b) HBRT, Visual Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), Information Services and news Agencies  
 c) All related public institutions and organisations
  9. a) The elimination of sexism in the media decision making processes in our country and the establishment of equality,  
 b) Written and Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), the Printed Press, Information Services and News Agencies and Media Professional Organisations

10. a) The realisation of research into the effects of the media on the “consolidation” and elimination of violence against women and children for which there is a great need today,  
b) Written and Visual-Audio Media Organisations (National, Regional, Local), the Printed Press, Information Services and News Agencies  
c) Universities, Non-Governmental Organisations, the General Directorate for Women’s Status, the General Directorate of Family and Social Research, the Turkish Statistical Agency, the Turkish Radio and Television (TRT)
11. a) That non-governmental organisations should form “Media Monitoring Groups” and ensure auto-control of the media through constant monitoring.  
b) Media Professional Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations  
c) All related public institutions and organisations

## **WOMEN'S STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THE MEDIA**

Eser Köker

To form the relationship between women and the media through generalisations and descriptions often leads to the reproduction of misleading and simplistic conceptions. Therefore, despite the care taken, this presentation paper too shares the same risks as all other efforts at determining the coordinates of the relationship between women and the media. What exacerbates the said risk and makes me have to begin by apologising is the necessity of condensing all aspects of a relationship which has been experienced and discussed throughout the world for almost forty five years into three forty five minutes long sessions or a few pages.

The relationship between women and the media is multi-layered. For example, when we focus on women we are met with *different womanhoods and the plurality of different female experiences* which we may think of in terms of differences in race, ethnic background and class as well as in spatial terms, that is as differences at the local, regional, national and

international level. Similarly, when we approach the media we may form differentiation levels according to whether it is commercial or alternative due to its form of ownership, whether its form is written, spoken, visual or electronic, whether it is new or old based on its form of use of active technology, whether it is political or popular in terms of function and whether it is local, regional, national or international in scope. We may create further chains of differentiation by taking up the media in terms of the products it produces and the viewers who take in the product.

In this presentation which aims at a re-determination of the plurality of experiences in different geographies, cultural structures and socio-political conditions within the framework of rights demands along with the series of relationship between women and the media, I will choose to focus on the fundamental axis of the said series instead of experiences specific to location. As I will have to concentrate more on common and similar issues and make generalisations in doing so, I will only be able to partially cover female experiences or the plurality of experiences regarding women. To relatively compensate for this deficiency I will focus on the development of the relationship between women and the media in the historical process, touch on the dealing strategies of the women's movement and the feminist struggle with commercial publishing and trace the changes in the status of women working in the media along with that of the content of the stories produced in the news room. In the second part of the text will bring up for discussion a selection of texts chosen from the mainstream media in order to lay the grounds for the understanding which will lead us to women's rights journalism. My presentation will conclude with the part in which I defend and give reasons for the articulation and use of rights of women readers/viewers/listeners, connected through media products and arising from that very status.

## The media's sex

The final quarter of the twentieth century may be taken as a period of significant change in the professional practice of women in the field of publishing. Not ten years had passed since in *The Feminine Mystique* Betty Friedan advocated that more women should work in the commercial media in order to overcome the destructive effects of the representation of women as hopeful housewives of beautiful houses in women's magazines which made the middle-class American woman almost *agoraphobic*, an increasing trend appeared in the number of women employed in the commercial media. Women began to put to use their qualified labour, gained from universities which they were able to enter in large groups only after 1950, in the media. The necessity for new role models to change the told presentation or image of women and the claim that women working in the media would have a "natural" talent and consciousness in creating a new role model was put forward, especially by the feminist views of the 1970s which organised on a national scale and determined the realisation of equalist policies as their political goal. *Equalist feminists*, who put forward the view that the media, which in order to reproduce those forms of spoken and visual discourse organised and standardised by the dominant ideology, puts on new faces to the stigmatised judgments and acceptances of traditional culture; erased personal characters and traits and advocated that any media presentation produced in the duality of "docile woman – aggressive man" destroyed individual differences and limited the representation of women with housewives. Stating that the mentioned inadequate representation created an obstacle in the way of women realising their creative potential and by rendering working women invisible, paved the way for the continuity of dependence on men the transformed the necessity of more women working in the media into a political demand. What was expected of the realisation of this political demand was that with increased employment of women in the sector the masculinity of the news room would be compromised. Thus,

traditional patriarchal judgments would also yield and the independence of women would be accepted as a value. Uniting around this political demand would also allow for professional organisation of the rapidly increasing numbers of women in the sector and woman journalists' organisations would put forward the demand for the transformation of the media with effective calls at the national, regional and international level.

Committees working under associations and international organisations set up inline with the mentioned political demand published research and reports underlining the limit in the numbers of women working in the media sector around the world. They produced statistics showing that the proportion of women working in the media in Western capitalist countries in the beginning of the 1970s was below twenty per cent. They declared that proportion of women working in television, which back then was seen as the most effective means of socialisation and taken as the newcomer to the sector, did not even come to ten per cent. They showed with country specific examples that the number of women working in the sector was divided once more inline with the sexist division of labour and that all higher level executives, photojournalists and cameramen were male while all redactors and assembly workers were women.

Starting with the 1980s, during which women came to work in relatively greater numbers, we have observed that a new period of transformation had started in terms of media ownership and the technology used. For on the one hand capitalist democracies would at the end of the 1970s, meet once more after the seventeenth century with new liberal publishing unions demanding an environment freed of rules and the profitability of information flow exceeding national borders would lead to the power of capital flows in this field. Meanwhile this period of trial also gave rise to new communication tools and spaces which caused the book, newspaper, magazine, radio and even television to be classified as "traditional mass communication tools" and



computer based cyber publishing forms arose. As the new technology created a rapid flow it also had the impact of eliminating the necessity for determined space. A reflection of this on the media workforce –especially relevant to women’s status- was the change and a more elastic form of the relationship between workers and their employers as well as with the professional organisations which represent them. Thus as radio and TV broadcasting which was privatised in Western Europe and was immersed in broadcasting networks in the USA came under the control of monopolising international media barons, independent broadcasting began to seek itself a place among internet cables.

An important impact regarding our subject of the “elastic production” model which emerged through such developments was to make the field of media, one of the field in which it was practicable early on, *a place of work which treats the educated and expert woman newly joining it as a temporary employee, or in other words as an employee with no job security.* Because nowadays, employment in the sector is carried out through transfers and the condition of being a “freelance employee” which includes being away from the office for long periods of time sometimes contains “unemployment”. Meanwhile the high proportion of women working as freelance journalists points to the continuation of the preference for men as full-time employees. This in turn shows that while the temporary work is of a continuous nature, *the sexist division of labour continues under new guises.* Thus in a working environment in which lawlessness has become the law under the direction of new liberal policies, labour laws are ignored, unions which guarantee job safety have been distanced, the traditional sexist division of labour continues.

### **Other aspects of the photo of women in the media sector in the 2000s**

It is known that from the beginning of the 2000s, the proportion of women working in the media sector as journalists-publishers has closed on forty per cent. These figures are compatible with the increase in the proportion of female students in Communication Colleges and Communication Faculties. However the results of research regarding the social profile of women working in the media, being carried out more intensely in Western countries but also in other parts of the world in important quantities for thirty years now give important data. In very summary and generalised form: Most of the women working in the sector are under 25, have received higher education, live in urban areas, more likely to be unmarried compared to male employees, earn less than men and have more interruptions in their professional career. Similar research shows that women are more likely to work in monthly or weekly magazines, prefer positions in local and regional broadcasting organisations and that the number of women working in the radio has increased by a greater proportion than in other forms. It has also been recorded that there has been a much greater increase in the number of women TV presenters compared to other positions in that field. It has been determined that women employees which began to work on the women's pages of newspapers, which had closed themselves off for three hundred years and the rules and professional values of which have been formed without women, are more likely to be assigned to work on education, health and culture pages. It has also been determined that women, who rather than work in news rooms of radios and televisions prepare and present talk shows, do not give much importance to their professional independence, are more open to correction and cautioning and shoulder a

heavy work load. In the meanwhile, traditional and new forms of sexism are encountered in media organisations. It is possible to say that sexism is especially visible in the inter-profession division of labour. In fact the scene shows that reporting-writing fields which require cooperation with political and economical power circles, continue to be off-limits to women and thus the corporate power mechanisms can continue their sexist inclinations with support from fields of expertise. As before, fields of expertise of politics, economics, diplomacy and sport writing/programming are marked as fields in which fewer women work. Especially “serious” newspapers and magazines are “hesitant” in opening up the winding paths of political life to women and preferring the journalist to work for “the public good” be male they see this as a means of *preserving their so called objectivity*. On the other hand more women are able to work in reporting and programming on health, culture, tourism and education. The exclusion of women from the technical aspects of the printed press which has become more receptive to visual material and especially photographs and of the visual media which is focused on the moving image from a camera has rendered both photography services and cameras more masculine. It is also seen that the greatest number of women employed in media organisations work in advertising and notices services. That the sexist division of labour can be reshaped under new conditions in services set up to deal with requests and complaints can be seen in the media sector, as in all others.

Whether they be columnists, programme makers and presenters, women employees are expected to “undertake guidance for high quality and good lifestyle” and therefore they are mainly employed as “star or made into a star columnists or programmers”. As star (or made into a star) columnists and programmers, women voice their opinions in women’s pages or on women’s band hours with constantly new recipes, in

order to maintain their role as guides to the good life. They personalise news stories and opinions, that is give weight to personal and humane stories, prefer telling people's stories rather than problem based texts and in other words add a "feminine style" to story telling.

The types of women's programmes run by star women presenters/programmers which are broadcast especially during the day, of which we have so many examples in Turkey, come across as texts which show how easily the artificial boundaries set up between private life and public life spheres may be overridden. They display how private life is an inseparable part of public life and form a means for the pouring out of what has not been spoken in front of the public; they give permanence to the popularised form of the "diary" which is considered to be a feminine narrative type. These touches which lend the news story a "soft" form allow on the one hand the re-feminisation of views on food and fashion, which despite being accepted as traditionally female fields of interest have been dominated by the food and clothing industries while on the other hand they allow the renewal of domestic violence, ill treatment and old tales of the "holy family". Another impact of the employment choice of commercial broadcasting based on stars is to cover the prevalence of unemployment among young women who would have worked at lower levels. The insistence of star woman presenters working at high levels on presenting glitzy lives serve to render invisible sexist practices in conditions of employment.

On the other hand, the presence of women presenters representing the "star system" and so called "high quality life recipes" and the display of what is traditionally considered to belong to women in their new "packaged form" through the "public tea party" carried out collectively by "other" women running in between various shows has something to do with the changes brought by the transformation of the ownership

structure of the media in the 1990s. Therefore it should come as no great surprise that it results in an effort to cover up every sexist action. The new liberal media organisation is based on an understanding of the media that has dropped all its political functions and the problem of job security is the fundamental problem which this understanding entangles and covers up. In other words the reason which prevents the problem of the young woman reporter's job security being voiced was the understanding of the commercial media that interferes with the existence of the news room as a political space, that is void of news, that does not want to come across any form of regulatory power of a public authority and which disperses the distribution of information to informal economic sectors. In the framework of this understanding, those in control of the sector have brought to the fore women successful in the sector while on the other hand they started glorifying the significance of the profession's ethical values and contractual patterns –as will be discussed later on- in order to keep the problem of job security and the problem of organisation for professional gain.\*

### **Strategies promoting inter-feminine rivalry**

One of the reasons for the continuity of the sexist division of labour in its old guises despite the quantitative increase in the sector was the disruption of solidarity among women. Because the take up of working conditions –as described above- which make it easier for workers to form relationships with each other just on personal ties increased the power of relationships containing the traditional inter-feminine judgments and forms.

\*At this point it is worth noting that we had declared the present ethical rules to be problematic and opened them up for discussion in *the Media, Ethics and Society* title of the Journalist's Handbook series and in the texts of *the Media and Society* and that our claims there coincide with that of the author above (editors note).

This prepared the ground for the news room as the workplace to become “a space of competition in which women struggled against each other relentlessly, using every type of feminine weapon”. The competition thus provoked on the one hand fulfilled the function of rendering invisible the insecure workplace while on the other it occupied a central location in inter-professional relationships by assuming the guises of “young-old”, “experienced-inexperienced”, “school trained-workplace trained”: the stories of the “successful woman” who chooses to be the “beautiful woman”, “mistress”, “foxy girl” to advance in her career or to secure her job were brought into play. However I should add something here and say that the circulation of these stories not only covered up the lack of job security in the media sector but also *prevented sexual harassment being talked about* at the workplace.

As the prototype of the woman journalist who enters the profession through family ties and is protected by these ties changes –social profile research supports that as in politics, family ties, father and partner positions are influential in entry to the publishing field–, the sexual harassment experienced by women in the media sector allows for the continuity of patronage relationships which are claimed to be protective of women. For example, as the broadcast and news rooms are seen “as family”, a tradition has formed which prevents every misuse of power from being heard “outside the family”, that is outside the office. As the fear of rejection by the accredited news source makes woman broadcasters and reporters vulnerable to sexual ill treatment, the present professional organisations which have been rendered ineffective fail to adequately problematise sexual harassment in the workplace or related to work.

The constant violation of the social and economic rights of women working in the field of commercial publishing and the

condemnation to silence of these violations by squeezing them to the necessary rocky phase of the profession forms a pillar of the rights violations problem. The reason why women reporters and publishers who are denied nurseries and child care rooms at the workplace and are forced to work during the night choose to glorify their professional identity with such words as “I have never been discriminated against at the workplace, this profession does not have women and men, the golden rules of journalism bind all” is *the dissolution of the political quality of this profession* which came into being during the 19<sup>th</sup> century to provide justice for the public good and to institutionalise the public good, *and the corporative layer of the modern capitalist concealing patriarchal relationships*. As I have emphasised before, with the competitive atmosphere brought about during the last twenty years by a formidable intensification of capital has once more crowned professional principals and brought to the fore the requirement of excellent professional morality. This *glorified professionalism* forms one of the barriers drawn against the desire of workers for all forms of rights seeking policies and the display of rights violations.

### **The glass ceiling of media towers**

While there has been a significant increase in the number of women choosing to pursue the journalistic profession since 1975, now in the 2000s a very limited increase can be observed in the number of high level women executives. In order not to weight down the text with numerical data, we may say that the proportion of women with the status of high level executive in the media sector in Western capitalist countries is about 15 per cent. Using the term “*glass ceiling*” which points out the barriers in the way of advancement of women’s carriers in various sectors, we can say that *the thickness of glass ceiling in the media sector which prevent women from becoming high level executives is noteworthy*. The thick glass ceiling which is effective in the difficult transformation of the masculine character of the news room places women in the stage of the middle level executive. The choice of marital

status by women is not effective in the continuity of the career ladder from assistant to editor in chief. Despite their greater likelihood of being unmarried and without children compared with their male colleagues, who are more likely to be married and with children, women gain no advantages from this in their career advancement. When the maternal and birth leaves recognised by labour legislation meet with the judgments of the male world regarding the long working hours of the profession and that it requires working on the streets, these rights lose their condition of being rights for women and become reasons for women quitting or being made to quit the profession. Indeed many pieces of research have put forward that especially woman reporters and publishers at the local level see “pregnancy and the birth process” as a reason for an interruption of their professional career.

The glass ceilings seen in commercial publishing organisations also existed in organisations which institutionalise public service publishing. For example at the BBC which is taken as the exemplary organisation of public service broadcasting, the proportion of decision making high level woman executives at the onset of the 1990s was at below 10 per cent. However the BBC took the decision to implement positive discrimination policies for women and ethnic minorities in the early 1990s and aimed at raising the proportion of high level executive women to 30 per cent by the 2000s. This decision by the BBC exemplifies *the necessity of turning to positive discrimination through quota practices* in order to partially alleviate the unequal relationships which have historically developed in social life, as well as in political life. Also the said decision and practice points at the importance of a transformation of the mindset towards prioritising public service and the public good and does this through the a redefinition of public good to include the female public good and shows that this becomes thinkable only in the scope of public service publishing.



When the ownership structure of media organisations is taken up, it is seen that the proportion of women continues to be the lowest among all group proportions. It should also be noted that the quantitative increase in women reporters, advertisers and programmers of every religion, race and nationality in every country from those in Latin America to East Asia has to do as much with the structural changes in media organisation as it does with feminist activists openly pointing out the media as a target. Having said all this we can state that despite various gains up until now the hypothesis advanced by *equalist feminist* in the 1970s that “with more women working in the media the sexist moulds of the media would be broken” has to a great extent been defeated by the prophecy of the *differentialist feminists* who suggested that “new exclusionist tactics would be found by the domesticating and dissolving processes of the patriarchal capitalist powers”.

### **The woman working in the media in Turkey only has a column**

That statistical information which will verify the applicability of the information given above for Turkey has not been formed is a phenomenon which may almost be categorised as *the violation of the right to obtain information*. That one cannot access the numbers of women working in private publishing or in public service publishing in Turkey, or in other words the failure of the Turkish Statistical Institute and the General Directorate for Women’s Status in forming this information contains a limitation of the right of women to obtain information. It is to be seen that administrations which have taken up responsibilities in making women more able (in terms of furnishing them with information) have not taken up their positive obligations, which means that the right to freedom of communication of women is being prevented. Although the obligation of the administration to provide information has been regulated within the framework of the Law on Right to Obtain Information, it is clear that in their administrative structure the organisations do not have the necessary information and therefore cannot share it with the public.

Should the production of information be treated equally with access to information within the framework of the right to obtain information it becomes possible to state that being collective rights bearers, women's rights are being violated by this restriction. The second and third generation conception of human rights gives not only individuals, but collective identities as rights bearers the possibility of demanding from administrations to be made able and the provision of means of self expression. Both the freedom of expression and the freedom of communication are based on the necessity of legally protecting the "speech" of not only individuals but also of collective identities. That women are denied the means and the abilities with which to express themselves forms the basis of rights violations. In this context, the lack of database regarding women working in the media may be seen as an administrative fault.

That a database which will allow the determination of social profiles of women working in the media at both the national and the local level is a situation unique to Turkey. The fact that quantitative information regarding Turkey has not been collected does not even allow for international comparisons and renders impossible verifying observations regarding Turkey and explaining long term changes. Of course, the general situation in Turkey is not largely different from the rest of the world. The information accompanying descriptive sentences regarding Turkey come either from postgraduate work –of limited applicability- carried out with qualitative research techniques and therefore with a small number of interviewees or from data and observation gathered with the personal efforts of women working in the sector. Due to employment policies of commercial publishing organisations implemented especially since the onset of the 1990s and information regarding employees being kept secret such

information has not been shared with the public. Although the Turkish Statistical Institute has undertaken a survey containing information on women working in the media in 2005, the results of this research have not been published.

The employment policies of organisations providing broadcasting and regulatory public service in the sector, such as the Turkey Radio and Television (TRT) and the High Board of Radio and Television (RTÜK) are different to those of commercial broadcasting organisations. It is estimated that the proportion of women employed in these organisations, which have not held regular records of woman employees since their founding, is one in three. It is observed that in both institutions the proportion of women working as high level executives is only one per cent and that women condense at the mid management level. For public service broadcasting organisations to be oriented in the direction of true public service broadcasting social demand for the necessity of positive discrimination policies in order to remove the glass ceilings in place for woman employees is perquisite. The necessity for the strengthening of the woman employee through employment policies enabling thirty per cent female representation in decision making processes can be seen from the example of the BBC above and it can also be said that the primary problem of public service broadcasting is *to cover the will of the female public and in this context to fulfil the obligation of providing women with the means to express themselves.*

Another situation peculiar to Turkey is the lack of a women's professional organisation active in the field of broadcasting. It is observed that an important part of organisations forming an international platform against the rights violations of the commercial media is composed of local women's professional

organisations. The stakeholder organisations of media monitoring activities which show how commercial publishing structures sex based discrimination are also these bodies. It is also known that national level organisations form regional cooperation in conferences and meetings to render visible the sexist practices in the sector and to strengthen the solidarity of woman journalists and broadcasters. This situation of lack which points to the existence of invisible walls in the way of association rights of woman journalists and broadcasters makes clear the sexism of the sector.

News headlines are means for the disclosure of sexist conceptions. A series of news headlines selected randomly from the period since the 1990s have strengthened our knowledge of the language of sexist conceptions.

- "She cannot make time for her home, she cannot fulfil her duties as mother, the working woman is not a good partner" 4.12.1988, *Milliyet*
- "Men are more productive than women in business life 'Femininity is important'" 16.12.1989, *Milliyet*
- "The pillar of the family has changed hands, the working woman is a jewel" 7.3.1992, *Milliyet*
- "If you have a career you have a problem" 2.3.2004, *Radikal*
- "The OECD country with the lowest rate of female employment is Turkey" 25.10.2005, *Sabah*
- "There are women which want to be beaten" 7.4.1996, *Cumhuriyet*
- "Women are irresponsive to beatings" 7.4.1996, *Cumhuriyet*
- "Turkish culture accepts male violence" 29.11.2001, *Cumhuriyet*
- "Girl in a mini skirt set on fire" 20.11.2003, *Hürriyet*
- "I will be saved if I marry my rapist" 26.12.2003, *Hürriyet*
- "Rape suspect: I do not regret it" 24.10.2005, *Sabah*
- "'Unjustified housewives': We are not equal with men, beatings are normal" 2.11.2006, *Radikal*
- "Trusteeship against tradition" 11.3.1999, *Milliyet*
- "Tradition sermon to be delivered in mosques" 1.3.2004, *Radikal*
- "The state hid Fatma the tradition victim" 25.12.2006, *Hürriyet*
- "The usual suspects. Tradition killers still not found" 8.3.2006, *Radikal*
- "A funeral befitting tradition!" 17.03.2006 *Radikal*
- "No female voices in politics" 25.03.2000 *Milliyet*
- "Motherhood ended my anarchism" 20.03.2000, *Radikal*
- "8<sup>th</sup> of March World Women's Day like a HADEP rally" 8.03.2001, *Hürriyet*
- "Our parliament is male again", 5.11.2002, *Milliyet*
- "Ask women, hear complaints" 9.03.2004, *Radikal*
- "Pepper spray, batons, arrests in honour of Women's Day" 7.0.32005, *Sabah*

It will not be appropriate for an article on rights violations to not to touch on another peculiar situation of women working in the media in Turkey. Women working in the media in Turkey are often tried for their articles appearing in newspapers and magazines. Legal action is taken against them for reasons such as “To insult the intangible personality of Atatürk through the press”, “to insult Turkishness”, “to dissuade the public from military service through the press”, “to disrupt public order”, “to carry out divisionist propaganda” and the like. The anti-freedom and anti-democratic intent of the legislature which limits the freedom of thought and expression of women journalists is not only advocated by law makers and implementers but professional organisations also augment the sacred system of the legal structure and for example pass a warning sentence for an article by a women journalist on the grounds of “defending childbearing outside marriage”. The open and concealed censure mechanisms against the freedom of thought and expression continue to violate the fundamental human rights of women journalists.

### **The news item as a masculine story**

Second Wave Feminist movements defined the media as the cornerstone of cultural politics. Women with different feminist stances, having determined in the seventies that the strategic superiority of the masculine ideology of patriarchal society was nourished by the ability to create new stories, chose to first and foremost create their own means of communication in order block the way of dispersal of new stories and imaginations and to render visible how the stories qualified by the commercial media as the most widespread, most standard and most general are in reality stories belonging to masculinity. They became journalists and broadcasters, issued fanzines and magazines, prepared posters, created slogans, disrupted the duality between the reader and the writer, brought domestic and workplace sexual harassment

and ill treatment as political issues to the agenda and carried out dozens of pieces of research determining that the representation of modern story characters based on the middle class femininity are either deficient or exaggerated. The female public sphere enlivened for the first time for a century. They added another link to their struggle in which they had stormed newspapers, radios and TV organisations by forming media monitoring committees, organising protests against those broadcasting organisations which unashamedly displayed their sexism and by bringing out into the open the sexist attitudes of individuals and broadcasting organisations. Thus they made an attempt at reviving political journalism and broadcasting. By discussing the normative aspects of a fragment understanding of what is public through a redefinition of what is political and differentiating the political aspects of the bourgeois public sphere they discovered the publishing talents of those classified as the average reader and increased the attempts at overcoming the opposition between the reader and the writer. As different researchers in the field of communication have found, the decision by many educated women from within the feminist movement or very close to it to choose the media as their professional field caused the doors of this field, which had remained closed to women until the mid-seventies to open.

The acceptance of the news room as a political space belongs to the onset of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the period in which the profession rose to new heights. The representative power of journalism which is fitted with political functions serving the public good within the bourgeois public sphere and forms a means for the communication of the views and opinions of everyone within society stems from its supporters with whom it



### Newspaper (Milliyet)

Main headline: “Women have a day but no property!”

Sub-headline: “They gave up prostitution, landed a house”

Author's caption: The headline of *Milliyet* of the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2002 is aghast at the tiniest morsel being denied the woman without property, the anger this article will raise is well calculated. Right underneath, the way in which property is to be acquired is also carried to the headline: “They gave up prostitution, landed a house” headline shows that in order to land a house one needs to visit holy man's tombs and quit the prostitution sector.

is strongly connected. Publishers who want the right to speak freely for their supporters and everyone, placed their hopes on the news item in order to be able to speak together about every social issues and to exercise the right to judge and criticise. Speaking together and “the struggle for the freedom of press”, which is the name given to being opposed to all forms of censure in order to remove the obstacles in the way of gaining the ability to judge individually what has been spoken about are activities which render the news room political. What remains of these political functions and

activities which faded away at the end of the same century are the contract in the news room regarding what is news, what and who are news sources, how the page layout is prepared, how the headline is chosen, how photograph captions are placed. The peculiar responsibility of the news room to rapidly come up with decisions and writing, the professionalism of the field which has lost its ties to professional practices based on the reporters place being the street and judgment and criticism in the name of the public attempt to rectify the inevitable vacuum left in place of political journalism by attaching mythical meanings to speed, objectivity and neutrality. The profession which has all but isolated any form of female interest during the formation of its professional principals and values, chooses to glorify exaggerated forms of the "objectivity" and "neutrality" of the news item and commercial publishing tries to cover for its political weakness with professional ethos when in turn it is confronted in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the interests of women in the communication sector, or to put it differently, when it is confronted with women's attempts to revive political publishing. The significance of this contractual decision is that while it makes it easier for women to be excluded from the decision making and executive mechanisms of the profession, it also fades the finding that the news item is a fictional story. At the onset of the 1970s, feminist activists and researchers discussed the masculine quality of the news item which they saw as an effective story in the sharing of sentiments and thoughts in modern capitalist society. They debated the meaning of the news item's halo of objectivity and neutrality, which separated it from traditional stories. They emphasised the narrative of this story of new times which does not include the language of experience, but simplifies and makes absolute time as only the present and which domesticates the fear and anxiety created by disaster, violence and scandal by putting them in words. They advocated the inadequacy of existing forms of narrative in voicing experiences of daily life. They pointed out that women who had been distanced by the language stamped with these forms of narrative had turned to romances and series in order to accommodate their need and requirement to read and write timeless stories instead of that which takes place at present.





### Newspaper (Hürriyet)

Main headline: "Like a HADEP (political party) Meeting "

Sub-headline: "24 Hours Live Coverage from the Boudoir"

Author's caption: Covert sexism may be exemplified in the design of randomly selected newspaper pages: The masculine anxiety arising from Women's Day celebrations on the 14<sup>th</sup> page of *Hürriyet* of 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2001 is pacified with the allure of "Webcam Vildan's" body

However, beyond all this the fundamental problem pointed out by women was the constant re-declaration of the guilty in the new narrative of disaster, violence and scandal, which is the news item. The news item was constructing a body for the committer of the social crime in discreet and open ways in the spectrum ranging from political scandal to natural disaster, that is *it was choosing once more the female body as the perpetrator or the victim and thereby providing a new opportunity for the masculine unconscious to express itself in language*. Thus the news item was accepted as a trustworthy means of conveyance of the fiction of reality advanced by present power forms rather than a means of communicating what has been happening.

As the dominant power conception forms the news item's claim to rationality through short and simple answers to the questions of "who, where, when, how, what", feminist theorists who claimed that the news item's universally trustable aspect was based on the fiction of simplicity and of being standard, advocated the view that once the news story which had been standardised in form and impersonalised reached the editor's desk, it became "social" again and that the publishing environment lent it its ideological character.

The news item which is published in the newspaper or broadcast on television exists through bearing the narrative characteristics of the means through which it is conveyed. Although page formation and news programming have different characteristics, they both include choosing and offering from among hundreds of daily events. *The choice and placement of the news which gives the broadcast its character, makes it read and viewed are the editors' contractual approaches and the frameworks they set up.* The stability or the slow change of such contractual approaches is noteworthy. Throughout a century, the said approach has made possible women being featured in only twenty per cent of the news. The inadequacy of female representation in the news means a limitation of their right to communication which is a necessity for them to be aware of each other, to express themselves in order to find common solutions to problems which disrupt their lives and for their political legitimacy. In the choice for the first few pages of newspapers and the first ten minutes of news broadcasts, which are both devoted to national politics, women are featured by a proportion of 15 per cent; the rate of reaching the reader/audience of this said proportion comes up against two obstacles due to the ideological structuring of the page/programme. The first of these obstacles is due to the desire of newspapers/news programmes to form neutrality in order to reach out to the general: A news item which features women's issues is



### Newspaper (Hürriyet)

Headline: 100 Thousand Bid for PO Shares, 500 Million Dollars Raised

Author's Caption: The economy page of *Hürriyet* newspaper of 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2002. The gains to be made from PO (oil company) shares is clear: the body of the girl in the swimsuit with the pump has been assigned.

balanced with another which takes up women's traditional choices; a balance through which commercial publishing/broadcasting fulfils its function of guarding the system. The second obstacle is hidden in the language of the news item. The choice of words and sentence structure in the news item are organised so as to hide sexism. With passive sentences, the position as subject of women featured in the news is destroyed. They are passive, the indeterminate subjects of passive clauses. The activeness of their actions is imprisoned by sentence structure and choice of words. This becomes clearer in TV news broadcasting, that the eye behind the camera, presenting the visual language of news films

which are declared to represent the real world, excludes the spheres of life of women in passed over. With the eye behind the camera forgotten, back pages of newspapers purvey the often cut up segments of women's bodies for the pleasure of men. The technical and aesthetic structure of the visual language formed through the fantasies of the masculine world which hides the ideological character of taste does not cover the tastes of women. Aside from excluded female tastes, the dignity of women is also not recorded in the memory of visual language. An overwhelming majority of news which feature women include stories of women victims. The camera which freezes the nudity of the dead female body is not "aware" that it is violating the rights of women based on human dignity. The camera which fixes the bruised bodies of victims of violence and shows the bloody images in long intermissions is not "aware" that it is violating the rights of women. Editors do not "know" that the publishing or broadcast of long interviews conducted with women victims of violence straight after the attack constitutes a "sale" of the terror of women. The professional body is "neglecting" to discuss within its self that gaining advantage from women's terror is a rights violation. It is often seen that the name, workplace and daily habits of the woman raped by the burglar entering her house are featured in news items. That the authorities to be applied to in face of this violation of personality rights of women are seen to be complaints lines is tragic. Unless regulation which will allow not just victims, but women as a collective group, to be able to take legal action is settled in positive law, it is clear that the secrecy of personal life and personality rights of women will be damaged through publishing or broadcast. When stories regarding prostitution as a social problem are constructed in the third pages of newspapers or in television news programmes, the women's bodies are seen as anyone's game and photos and images of women trying to hide their faces in fear are used almost straight out of police cameras. That these photos and images are easily excused is based on the women in question being in the prostitution sector. Reasons which excuse the said violence start to be generalised from this sector onwards and in the end simplified

to individual psychological attitudes such as the man being aroused. The news item which features stories of arousal by describing perpetrators of violence as the “dangerous stranger”, “person who has become a savage because of sexual instinct”, and “monster”, re-constructs once again the opposition between “prostitutes – women of honour” and de facto approves that women of honour should render themselves and their bodies invisible. It must be that the contract which will equate the use of expressions which render common parlance reasons which excuse and legitimise perpetrators of violence and the violation of women’s honour, for just as in judicial mechanisms, spoken and visual details which constantly portray the perpetrator of violence as a victim of tradition are regularly brought into the media narrative. While what women have been exposed to is being reported on, the news narrative from time to time borrows the language of pornography and expressions which lead to an aesthetisation of violence taint the news. It will not be wrong to say that this strategy of selling news harbours the threat regarding personality rights and rights to life of women. Even the length of the period within the news which describes in detail the act of violence against women goes to show how the rationality of the news item has been compromised and how violence is normalised.

### **The editor’ address book**

The news narrative which is in danger of losing its rationality in relating violence and terror often applies to expert knowledge which has an important role in the construction of objectivity and neutrality to overcome this threat and it brings the woman expert in front of the camera in supplying expertise. The woman expert who takes her place in the editor’s address book and who is thus consulted regularly, embodies the claim that the news item and expertise have no sex through the aid of documents and figures, the close plan shots which create the illusion that she is within touching distance and through the behaviour of the presenter which implies her significance. Therefore, the woman politician, the woman judge, the woman

scientist, the woman doctor and the businesswoman are experts which the subject of the news demands and they own active clauses; however the price paid for being the subject and active is the enforcement of the patriarchal narrative of femininity. The patriarchal narrative of femininity is produced through opposed dualities. The duality of “ordinary woman – expert woman” which compromises the solidarity of women is followed by the dualities “innocent woman – foxy woman”, “sacrificing mother – monstrous mother”, “famous woman – victim woman”. Both the news story and the page formation tell the story of these dualities. The ideological choice which carries the said dualities to the headline or the caption is of a nature which renders women “them”. The masculine contract which forms the “us” of commercial national publishing and broadcasting voices the perversion and perversity, chaos and disorder which threaten public order in feminine terms. Commercial publishing which has until five years ago defined the feminist organisations which work for the common good of women with the adjectives “contrary, marginal, strange, ugly, Occidental, heathen, intellectual” and carried them to the headlines puts into its own sentences “their” perversity. With hopes placed on such names as “witch, sisters, anarchist, leftist, lesbian feminist” to cloud the negative expressions in the sentences the fear that “they” will infect social life “like a virus” is appealed to.

The news stories which create the character of the frightening feminist are never late to create its not frightening counterpart, and bring to the fore “names” from the women’s movement which struggles for equal rights and emphasises women’s education and health issues related to childbearing. It makes room for the voice of middle class femininity by defining women through their charity and conveying those who work for women with positive expressions in social news pages. That the place allocated to the woman “artist” in the new of commercial publishing is considerable is a result of trying to



### Newspaper (Milliyet)

Main headline: "Woman commanders will prevent wars"

Side-headline: "She bit and her luck turned"

Author's caption: *Milliyet* of the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2003 is not content with seeing woman commanders as the guarantee of peace with the headline "Woman commanders will prevent wars". In the previous page female aggression which has been cleansed of all danger and rendered comic is shown as the bringer of luck while the biting woman gets the change to be the active woman.

create an opposition between fame and ordinary womanhood. Every sentence which points to how different the famous woman is from the ordinary woman concludes with emphasis on how ordinary she is. The famous or the artist woman is placed on the front page for the presentation and outright acceptance of traditional patriarchal values. While questions regarding private life which the society has difficulty speaking about make the news through the ostentatious lives of celebrities, the emphasis is made that betrayal, divorce, violence and becoming subject to pornographic broadcasts are the problems of a “world apart” while the veneration of traditional values by celebrities who overcome such problems are given from the headlines. That commercial publishing has brought in domestic violence as negative news and the education of girls as positive news into the news circulation network alongside traditional news during the last twenty five years is the result of the attempt at disciplining the changing lives of women in line with traditional values.

The news stories of commercial publishing which is party to disciplining the changing lives of women attributes special importance to describing the relationship between crime and punishment. Despite the overriding clauses of the law, the trial and conviction of the suspect and the defendant by the media points to the media's partisanship in the disciplining of life. In this context the clauses of the Penal Code which stipulate that there can be no discrimination among defendants and suspects based on sex are openly overridden; the female defendant or suspect's rights are violated. In news stories, the guilt of the female bank manager who is accused of swindling funds is “innate”. The reporter who goes on to tell how she spent the money with her lover details her house, her letters, her close friends thereby not only to they violate her personal rights and the secrecy of private life but passes the sentence between the lines. The sentence which is hurriedly passed



from the century long history of considering the woman criminal or monster newsworthy not only becomes the subject of cinema and television movies based on news stories but becomes widespread as a figure consumed in pornographic publications. Like all stories centred on the woman criminal, news stories are also full of scaring aspects which threaten to bring innocent women "to line".

### **The rights of reader/listener/viewer women**

How can women who witness rights violations committed through the news exert their rights to express themselves and to stay in communication with each other through their status as readers or viewers? Perhaps one can start thinking about the issue of "*reader's rights*" which is unregulated in present systems of law through the problem of the denial of information to women who communicate over the media. While the news proclaim that "there are soap operas for men" it is to be seen that women's problems are not voiced. Women tend to meet female experiences which bring different solutions to problems experienced in daily life on women's programmes and women's pages. The talk shows attended by women which are aired especially during the morning band are as much a place where women discuss the problems of daily life as they are a space in which the communication of knowledge and information regarding women is limited. The inadequacy of the information which is circulated on these programmes regarding the organisation of power in which women live is noteworthy. Although television is the foremost means of information regarding both the system of law and the political system, this generalisation is not applicable to women. The limitedness of the communication of political knowledge and information on programmes preferred by women viewers presents an obstacle to the responsibility of the woman citizen to know the spheres of use of rights and freedoms. As a

*viewer the woman citizen is denied fundamental information regarding the manner in which the system operates.* As this situation prevents women's ability of self-expression it means the violation of rights which are based on the flourishing of abilities. Although the right of citizens to information and news is under legal guarantee, as the administration does not legally regulate responsibility in violations of the right to information, it is not possible to speak of the reader/viewer with rights. For the conception which defines the reader or the viewer as a consumer or buyer with the freedom to choose to change, the significance of their reading and viewing activities needs to be increased. The emphasis on the act of listening as well as on speaking will only become possible with the revival and discovery of traditions of democratic debate.

As democratic debate itself may only be founded on "I will put myself in their place, try to understand, try to hear those things which make us alike, I am going to listen for a common rhetoric which invites a common goal or a common good" inherent in listening, then the process of silence and listening is given as much as importance as that of speaking the rights of the reader or the listener will come to be seen as indispensable for modern democracies. The present liberal systems of law define both the right to communication and the right of expression through the right of speech and qualify this right as the individual's. Yet, defining listeners as subjects with rights goes hand in hand with defining groups, communities or collective identities as entities with rights. In this context, the re-organisation of the position of being a reader/listener which is united with the experiences of reading, listening and viewing which are led by women will make a contribution to the transformation of the passive character attributed to viewing. Should we give a hypothetical example to what is meant by the reader/viewer, if the distribution of a documentary film by a female director on domestic violence is being banned on the grounds of violating the "sanctity of family life", the rights of the

viewer are being violated and women as viewers should be able to take legal action to lift this decision.

While the dominant understanding which denigrates the choices of women and sees them as “commonplace, boring, sentimental” described the activities of women reading/viewing white series and soap operas as an escape from reality, feminist researchers questioned the meaning behind the attachment of women to these narratives. Research which uncovered that women discover the resentment they feel in being denied the possibilities of expressing themselves in the said narratives and that resentment and love in different guises brings in a potential state of resistance into daily life pointed out the continuity through these narratives of the feelings of abdication and commitment which cannot find themselves a place in this world and the necessity of the feminine need for arbitrary forms of love which go beyond the body. Do you not think that the emphasis made on the necessity for women’s stories comes to mean the same as the demand for administrations to subsidise women’s newspapers and magazines, the demand for permanent stands for women’s posters, declarations and brochures in public spaces in cities, the demand for books by woman authors to be bought in large quantities for public libraries, the demand for financial aid and support for a women’s radio, the demand for a square in which women can stage demonstrations, the demand for financial support for the republishing of stories by forgotten women authors?

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## **FORMS OF REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE MEDIA AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver

One of the most emphasised issues in the context of “rights journalism” which is today developing gradually is women’s rights journalism. Different and indeed opposed political inclinations and world views have for years been hidden behind a general discourse of “human rights” in terms of women’s rights and in terms of journalism it was argued that the “true” news item would not distinguish between women and men due to the fundamental professional rules of journalism and principals which can be found in the most basic “journalist’s handbook”.

However much research has come to question the concept of “objectivity” in terms of media texts generally and the discourse of news specific to journalism. The theoretical work of Bourdieu regarding the essence and method of social sciences and many concrete pieces of research he has undertaken in the light of these findings has pointed out the importance of the use of the concepts “space” and “habitus” in the context of the media (1998; 1999; 2006). To put it plainly,

the journalist's product is shaped by his/her own "habitus", and his/her position both in the "space" of journalists in general and in the "space" formed by the organisation which publishes his product and all other organisations, which we may define as "the economic-political atmosphere of the media".

Researchers who moved from the assumption that the presence of female journalists would change the general form of presentation of women by the media, following the work of Tuchman (1978a) and Ceulemann (1980) saw that this premise was very much open to question. For in terms of the space we interested in femininity (as well as masculinity) is not a biological, innate characteristic but a socially formed "habitus", a construct. At the roots of this construct lie, once more to paraphrase Bourdieu the "male dominance". The said dominance along with its extensions that are stereotypes, penetrate every layer of the social fabric and produce the result that life itself makes continual reference to same forms in a gigantic system of symbols (Bourdieu, 1999: 16-8, 24).

This observation has produced a discussion of a fact which had long since been felt in the field of media studies. Research which contradict the view that the determinant factor for the spread of journalism which is respectful of women's rights and sexually non-discriminative is the proliferation of woman journalists point out that "being female" alone is not sufficient. In other words, women who enter the profession of journalism as male dominated space and work in journalistic organisations do their work by picking up, *internalising*, the patterns of behaviour and work and indeed forms of mentality (Remy, 1995: 37).

Dimmick and Coit (1982: 3-32 in van Zoonen, 1995: 47-8) who have worked on this issue suggest that media production be

examined as a hierarchical system of nine conjoined layers. The ninth, that is the final layer among these is the communication specialist or the journalist themselves. On this layer which we may call that of the journalist as an individual the socio-demographic and cultural qualities of the said person undoubtedly take place: their age, sex, educational level, ethnic background etc. To put it differently, following the schema proposed by the authors, it is seen that the individual identity of the journalist affects production only at the lowest level. The other layers are as follows: the one on one communication of the journalists with colleagues, friends and other people within the framework of personal relationships (8), the interaction in formal groups such as the board of publishers or professional organisations and in informal groups of journalists which bring together various communication specialists (7), the policy, organisational structure, working routine and power relationships of the organisation to which they belong (6), the market position of the organisation (5), the ownership and management structure and competitive conditions of the organisation (4), the position and relationships of the organisation within the entirety of industrial production relationships and its horizontal and vertical connections (3), the policies of nation states and international organisations and conditions which for example regulate advertising policies in terms of the behaviour, possibilities and professional practice of communication specialists (2).

Looking at this way, neither the journalist is entirely free in work, nor are there "objective" rules which may be implemented equally or in the same way by anyone, anywhere at anytime.

The results uncovered today by work and research in this field and by the women's movement which is in struggle with this like all fields of life show us that; There does not exist a full fledged "objectivity" in journalism and even the "news item" as defined by the afore mentioned handbooks, let alone the "true" news item" reflects characteristics of the media industry in

general, of the media organisation and of those who have a say in that organisation in which it takes place and the political, cultural and “sexual” characteristics of the writer. The reason why the term sexual is in quotation marks is *that we are actually referring to gender rather than sex in the anatomical-biological sense*. Gender, to give an oversimplified definition of it, is a concept which states that sexuality is defined by social-cultural values, forms of division of labour, tradition etc, for to use Simone de Beauvoir’s famous line “one is not born, but becomes a woman”. What some people define as the “nature” of women (or men) or call “creation” with reference to religious allusions are not qualities possessed by people from birth but are models imposed on them entirely by social life and culture. In this sense *sexuality is a social construct just like nationality, religious affiliation etc*, it is an identity which is acquired through internalisation or even “intermixing” to use Bourdieu’s term (2006). In fact Bourdieu defines this identity as the sexual “*habitus*” (1999:16).

It would not be correct to move from what has been stated above to the conclusion that we are entirely powerless as communication specialists or journalists through a completely “deterministic”- constructivist logic. To know the full weight of the structural impositions and to be able to develop strategies for defence and resistance against it when necessary on the one hand; to carry out a constant struggle to break the hold of sexist forms which have become second nature with conscious action and decisions through the knowledge that being “woman” alone is not enough to practice women’s rights journalism... These are what we must do.

Sexist forms encircle us in every field of life and in every possible way. To clarify this matter we may give this example: We will have all seen a newborn in our own family or in our close social circle. The baby girl or boy who weight six to seven pounds are no different in appearance with the exception of their small genitals. Yet the difference begins as



soon as their baby suits are put on with the distinction of pink or blue. Indeed even at this, society is less contentious over baby girls than boys, no one will object much to a baby girl in blue but a baby boy in pink is inconceivable.

### **The significance of representation**

Even the simple example above shows us the significance of representation. Colours, shapes and words represent certain institutions, concepts and individuals. These representations reflect the place in our lives of and the meanings we attach to those being represented. Furthermore they legitimise this place or meaning. Taking a step further in the same direction we may say that: *different representations shape our view of the world, society and people by being juxtaposed on each other*. Representations contribute to the constant reproduction of the forms of this view and value in general and of behavioural patterns.

The relationship of “representation” with reality and its place in human life has been debated since the Greek philosophers, in every field of the social sciences stemming from philosophy. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, during which the work on different fields of communication sciences started to gather pace, it has been known that *collective representations arise as the main factor of the formation of stereotypes*. W. Lippman defines stereotypes as “images which form in our minds and which form the means of us relating to reality” (1946). For a very long time, examinations of art in general and literature in particular have made use of this concept even if they did not mention it by name, in order to explain the relationship between reality and representation and the different types of reflection. However as Amossy and Herschberg Pierrot (1997) underline research in the fields of sociology, social psychology, linguistics and semiotics have produced two important findings on *stereotypes*. The first among these is that they form a means of perception and

reading to some extent and the second that especially regarding the “other”, those identities different from ours, they form prejudices. This second finding has clearly demonstrated the determinant role of representations in forming stereotypes and thereby enabling the continuity of prejudices in the context of studies on racism and discrimination.

In the formation of value judgments and/or stereotypes we have regarding a viewpoint, a behavioural pattern, a sentiment or an identity group the primary factor is undoubtedly information gained first hand through direct experience or interpersonal communication. However it is known that the representations which have become widespread through the channels of information and communication which have developed over the last century are also very important in this process. Much research carried out in the field of communication sociology emphasises the importance of the media in the most general sense possible in terms of both the process of socialisation and opinion formation.

How women are represented in the media is important for this reason. *The form of representation of women shows not only how the media views women, but also how it views the world, it legitimises this viewpoint and functions to form society's perception of women along the same lines.*

### **Women's representation in the media**

Studies carried out on representation and stereotypes and the work carried out under the names “women's studies”, “feminist studies” or “gender studies” since the 1970s aimed at examining gender have focused on the different forms of representation of women in the media by bringing together feminist theories and communication theories. For example research work based on content analysis conducted on American television adverts at the onset of the 1970s by Dominick and Rauch showed that women were primarily represented as housewives and when they were portrayed as working women their work was in what is called “female

professions" (secretary, hostess, model etc) (1972). Many other pieces of research on media content have revealed similar findings.<sup>1</sup> In 1980 Butler and Paisley have produced a list of research carried out in the field, following which they formed a sexism scale on women's representation based on content analyses of daily newspapers, continuous series and the cinema and collected forms of women's representation under five categories. 1. The object-woman, stupid, silent, sexy or in the role of the moaning victim (the "*force down*" type) 2. The role fulfilling woman with her life centred of her home such as the wife, mother, secretary, nurse etc (the "*keep in place*" type) 3. The woman who manages her traditional role along with her profession (the "two places" type) 4. The woman equal to men (this type is very rarely seen on the television programmes of the 1970s and is always portrayed as unmarried) 5. The non-stereotyped woman (or man); here the roles might be reversed or unconventional. Although there are various aspects upon discussion which the authors accept, as there are in every categorisation, research like this has been a cornerstone of opening up the representation of women for discussion and the formation of an action plan.

Regarding Turkey, Ayşe Saktanber whose article is one of the first pieces of work in the field underlines that the representation of women in the Turkish media is not greatly different than that in the Western media; similarities in terms of general categories are plainly visible however socio-cultural characteristics affect the forms of presentation or the types of discourse. In fact the author herself makes reference to woman characters we have been accustomed to since the days of Turkish movie melodramas with the terms "free-available woman or the good wife, sacrificing mother" she uses (Saktanber, 1993). In a more recent study, Mine Gencel Bek and Mutlu Binark propose three categories of women in terms of the media's representation of them, namely the

1. For a collected presentation of these see Van Zoonen (1994); Rémy (1995).

woman as wife and mother, the woman as sexual object and woman as the subject of the act of violence and underline that the media functions to bring together these three types of women under the heading “advice to women” (2000: 4-15).

Undoubtedly there are differences in the forms of representation of women according to the textual and discourse characteristics of media products; the written press and the visual-audio media, the news item and the advert or for example the debating programme and drama (movie and serial) within television form the representation of women in line with their own characteristics. For example in our research on domestic television series which has been undergoing since 1996, continuous aspects of female characters’ qualities, as well as certain changes observed over ten years have been identified. Most important among them are that young women, although relatively domesticated are portrayed as freer than their mothers and more likely to have a profession and different opinions and that over the past years women in possession of authority such as the woman with a career, the business woman and characters such as “the mafia matron” have become more frequently displayed (Uğur Tanrıöver; 2003, 2004).

The existence of such examples related to textual characteristics does not annul the fact that women’s representation which are observed across the media in today’s Turkey form a continuous “rights violation”.<sup>2</sup>

2. As many pieces of valuable research underline, products of popular culture in general and certain types of these specifically are of an eclectic structure which allows them to reach large groups of people: Although quantitatively few and oppressed in terms of discourse they may feature woman characters or female realities which are different

In this framework we see, in light both of the findings of our colleagues in Turkey or abroad and our own work carried out on different media texts, that women are generally represented in the media as outlined below.

### *Women in traditional roles*

First and foremost among these roles are undoubtedly those of the wife and the mother, as noted by Saktanber. Mothers who make sacrifices for their children and the wives of famous politicians are “crowned” by our daily newspapers. That one of our most important political problems is taken up through “martyrs’ mothers” is the most glaring example of this and it furthermore shows how this representation/position is juxtaposed on the official-dominant discourse. Another striking example of this are the questions and photos used in interviews with business women or female politicians regarding which dishes she can cook the best and the time she spends with her children or husband. In the end the message is “whatever else they may be women are primarily wives and mothers” or that it should be so. In the same way the motherhood of woman celebrities is conveyed with embellishment, in fact often it is seen to that they become some sort of “sacred being” starting from the early months of their pregnancy. Even the popular magazine press which is so popular in our country “absolves” at the onset of their motherhood these celebrities which it had formerly attacked at every opportunity through real and false scandals, without the smallest regard being paid to the secrecy of private life or personal rights, because they have now arrived at the position “where they should be”.

from or may even be considered opposed to dominant representations. However the general dominant discourse has more weight and is determinant. For examples see Geraghty, 1987 and Kaplan, 1992.

### *Women as sexual objects*

There is no need for the slightest effort or research to be able to see how in our country's press, especially in the mainstream popular media, women are used as a "sexual object" aimed at satisfying the gaze of men. For in almost all newspapers, including those which call themselves "daily political newspapers" according to legal definition, weekly news magazines and in televisions there is nothing which takes place more regularly than examples of this. For example, as we have seen in the example of Hülya Avşar (a female celebrity) in the past few years, a movie star is divorced from her husband and in the photo accompanying the news item one can see the most décolleté poses of the said actress. The aim is to remind the reader that women are sexual objects under all conditions and to satisfy the voyeuristic needs of male readers. As the editor in chief of a high sales popular newspaper admitted for his own newspaper, on weekends when it is expected that conscripted soldiers will go on leave, as many "naked woman" photos as possible are included in newspapers, especially on the front page, to increase sales.

The end point of this form of representation is the phenomenon of the "back page girl" which is the "pride and joy" of Turkish journalism. It is to place the photograph of a woman, who is as naked as possible, on the back page of the newspaper everyday. It is usually accompanied by a caption which has no news value but functions as a "gap filler". Some newspapers have turned the phenomenon of the "back page girl" to such a source of profit that they have engaged in such "beneficial-important" activities as having the readers choose the "back page girl" of the month, or even the year on their internet pages and to announce the results and to actually invite the winner (who are always Western models) to Turkey. These two forms of representation present women as the "animalistic female" and contribute to them being always seen that way. However the representations which emphasise the quality of "sexual object" have one more aspect to them, that

is, to remind that every woman needs to be “beautiful”. Here beauty off course means the *dominant forms of beauty*. The media includes a publication and news field entirely devoted to this aim; all sorts of dieting recipes, suggestions for combating cellulite, advice on cosmetics and make up. In fact research we have conducted in the past year has revealed that an important part of health and medicine news in our daily newspapers is actually focused on cosmetics and dieting (Uğur Tanrıöver and Engindeniz, 2006).

This form of representation of the media which presents women as the animalistic female-sexual object through the reflection of dominant forms of beauty also has a supporter which is very difficult to shake in terms of “economy politic” in the cosmetic-dieting-care industry. In fact the adverts which take place in the pages of newspapers devoted to the said subject form ample proof of this point.

#### *Women as “victims”*

Women who have been cheated, raped or been through a lot are among material which is made the most use of by the media. However the aim of the forms of representation of women in this context, let alone being informative, is to secure maximum emotional exploitation. To put it succinctly, what is really being represented are the desperation, the misery and at times their “having deserved” that condition. Real problems of women are used as material for the third page or for magazine news.

A form of representation encountered very often is based on presenting women as both wife-mother and as “miserable-begging for mercy” together: should you take a look at news on wars and disasters, the photos from a bomb explosion or those of soldiers killed in battle, you will see clearly that the base “ingredient” are mothers weeping over the body of their children. For example, research we carried out last April

shows that even in daily political newspapers (these are *Evrensel*, *Birgün*, *Vakit* and *Milli Gazete* which due to their political views do not feature magazine style news and photos) women are presented almost automatically in the guise of the “mourner” in photos accompanying news regarding Iraq and Lebanon. Given the fact that the said news are usually from agency sources, this situation *shows that the representation of women as “victims”, just like in other forms of representation, is not a problem peculiar to Turkey, but a general problem.* Sometimes women are portrayed as sexual objects while women’s issues or the “victim” position of women are being reflected. The most striking examples of this could be seen in the news texts and photos related to court cases on celebrities being harassed or raped.

### *Women enjoy false equality...*

When media texts are examined sometimes it is seen that women are really portrayed as equal with men. This situation which is most often encountered when business women are the case makes it difficult for us to see the “latent discourse” behind the “apparent discourse”. However when one takes a closer look at the style of presentation and the qualities of the woman being presented it becomes clear that what is at hand is a success story. The news regarding Güler Sabancı (a prominent business woman) in economics pages in the scope of a study we have yet to conclude is an example of this. This situation creates a “kaleidoscope effect” as noted by Barré, that is, it gives the fallacious impression of improvement by making one or a few examples very regularly visible. In truth those who are represented as being equal with men are not women but successful women (or in those who had the opportunity of being successful). The latent discourse presents the condition of women being equal with men as “success”. This situation brings to mind the fact that all of the present woman members of parliament have a high level of education and an important proportion of them know one or more foreign



languages. Women who want to compete with men, who want to be equal with them have to be necessarily “better, more successful” than them (Uğur Tanrıöver and Danacı Yüce, 2006).

*“The symbolic annihilation” of women*

There is another problem in the forms of representation of women in the media which is just as important as those enumerated above but which unfortunately almost always evades attention. That is the “non-representation” of women. Gaye Tuchman has conceptualised this phenomenon as the “symbolic annihilation of women” in research she carried out at the end of the 1970s (1978b).

Women do not feature in certain spaces of life and the news, they are non-existent. Women do not even have a “symbol”, they have been destroyed. For example take news photos on subjects regarding industrialists, civil servants, doctors etc, most of the time you cannot see women. In fact the word “children” in Turkey actually comes to mean boys. For example on the issue of “working children” we mainly see photos of boys doing repair work, yet, with the exception of a very small minority, all girls in our country are in the position of unpaid domestic workers as they do housework and look after their siblings. Especially work such as “serving” the father and elder brothers is not even seen as work by the media. Perhaps one of the most important spaces in which women are symbolically destroyed is the field of their peculiar struggle: women’s organisations and the struggle of women through these organisations. Once in a while they are remembered in a series when a journalist gets the chance to present a “file” or on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March.<sup>3</sup>

3. The media’s revenge for these 8th of March files is exerted approximately two months later, on “Mothers’ Day”: this is done through “the mother of the year” selected from among sacrificing and victim women and interviews carried out with “sexy” celebrities who have attained the status of motherhood!

*All these representations of women constitute a violation of women's rights.* Although we may have touched upon them in our examples above, let us now take another look at the means through which these violations are made.

## **How does the media commit women's rights violations?**

### *Language*

The language used in the media *is generally a factor in the production of sexist representations.* Terms such as “the man of science” or the “statesman” which emphasise that the said activity is unique to men or expressions such as “he will bag women” used for a candidate before an election are examples of this.

Sometimes the sexist representation in the use of language takes on a very innocent form. For example the term “bayan”\* which is becoming increasingly widespread. The use of this term beginning in the mid-90s is not only against the rules of the Turkish language but it also bears the forms of representation mentioned above regarding women and by constantly re-producing a hidden meaning it stamps it on our minds. “Bayan”, just like “bay” (gentleman) is a form of address. You may start addressing a gathering of people by saying “bayanlar, baylar”, this is the correct usage. However if in a store you enter there is a “men's section” and a “bayan's section” or if you say “bayan drivers” if you start a sentence with “as a bayan”, these constitute mistakes. Why is this mistake made and since when has it been made? The answer to these questions will clarify the point we have touched on, namely the discrimination against women.

The start of the use of this term coincides with the period of government by conservative-religious parties. You will remember that these parties used terms such as “ladies' (hanım) commissions. Over time “hanım” became “bayan” but the problem

at the root of the mistake did not change. You may say a men's barber because being a man is flattering and the connotation is not solely that of "reproductive" function, however those who have spread this term bayan will tell you, to say "woman" (kadın) is impolite because the word woman is rude, it has connotations of the animalistic female". *Another reason which is not pronounced is that the most impregnable stronghold of the sexist-patriarchal mindset in Turkey is the distinction of woman-girl.* What if we say a "woman doctor" yet the doctor is actually a "girl", that is if she is unmarried and therefore a virgin? Can there be any greater insult? The most striking example of this we came across in a news item regarding an accident in a local newspaper. The headline was, "*Bayan* hit by *woman* driver dies", word for word. When we read the details the reason for this confusion of terms worthy of a humour magazine gave itself away all too clearly. The driver was 53 years of age and therefore married/not a girl in all probability and besides as she had hit a pedestrian and caused her death she is "evil" and therefore there is nothing in the way of calling her "woman". Yet the pedestrian who died was 25, she may be a girl and the poor girl is a "victim" therefore the term "bayan" has been preferred both to spare her honour of any potential harm and to emphasise that she is "innocent".

"Bayan" is akin to saying "women ("bayanlar" that is) are flowers"! This means, we men are human, we are men, we are empowered to do, rule and determine everything, it does not matter whether we are married, bachelors or virgins, whereas women are delicate, fragile "plants" whose sole *raison d'être* is to beautify life (meaning to function as a sexual object in the lives of men and then to bear and raise their children), who do not have the ability to do or make and which may be exchanged for another once they have shed their flowers and leaves.

During the "Gender-based Journalism" training programme organised by BIA those who had the greatest trouble in understanding the gravity of the distinction between "bayan" and woman were men. Especially certain older, conservative journalists were adamant that they could "not call the unmarried daughter of an important family in a small town in Anatolia a woman in the news item". However it is not necessary to call someone whose name is known either woman or "bayan", one

can use either their name or their initials depending on the scope of the news item. The resistance shown to the use of the word “woman” is no doubt rooted in the distinction of “woman and girl” taught over centuries and millennia or more properly the distinction between “woman and man” which lies at the root of the former, in other words *discrimination* against women. For this reason it is necessary to be careful with every word while practicing journalism.

### *The use of photographs*

We have mentioned that women’s rights violations can be seen concretely in photographs. The problem, however, is not only limited to the use of photographs which present women as sexual objects. There is also the issue of “symbolic annihilation” mentioned previously. In other words, when taking the news photograph of a professional association meeting or its annual congress the camera may be turned in an all male or all female direction. As we have mentioned above, that “objectivity” does not feature in the production of the news, that every news item, every text is a “construct” has been emphasised by communication theorists for a long time and therefore the “innocent” shot you may place in your paper may have bear sidedness which ignores women.<sup>4</sup> Therefore if you want to practice journalism which is sensitive to women’s rights your choice should be to use *angles in photos in which women can also be seen* to accompany the news regarding a meeting, a general assembly, a protests rally etc. For these photos will contribute to women being represented “naturally” in all spaces of life.

4. For two different examples on the subject see Tuchman (1978) and Aubenas and Benasayag (1999).

### *Sources and experts*

Another journalistic error which contributes to women's rights violations by hiding from sight the fact that women are present in every space of life equally with men and by not allowing them to be represented in this way *is the general preference for men in the choice of news sources or the expert to be consulted*. For some reason women only feature as sources or experts in newspapers on subjects like childcare, flowers and decoration, mothers' day, dieting etc. On "serious" issues such as domestic or foreign policy, economics and finance or the law there may be many woman experts but the choice made is usually male.

We have touched heavily on the news media and mostly the written press but we know that the same applies, sometimes in far worse ways for the television and the radio. Also not just in the news but in television series, music programmes on the radio and in health programmes which seem purely "informative", women's rights violations are carried out by the inclusion of the mentioned discriminative-sexist representations.

Conscious of all this, it is within our capability to contribute at least a small part, to the destruction of old representations by producing alternative forms of discourse and behaviour in everything we do and in every moment in life.... Although for the moment we do not have the authority to terminate the employment of "back page girls", when we have raised our voices loud enough they may quit of themselves... When those who defend gender-based journalism among newspaper executives, especially women with this quality become more numerous.

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## REVERSING THE SITUATION IN THE MEDIA

Nadire Mater – İpek Çalışlar

Has anyone heard of a panel, conference or training programme under the title of “man focused journalism” or “men and the media”? No. In that case what does it mean to debate “gender-based journalism” or to gather under the title of “women and the media”? Does “becoming a separate title” point to a problem? It is, at least for “women”. If the population of the world is composed 52 per cent by women yet women can exist in the news only by a proportional representation of 21 per cent *we have to accept the existence of a problem in the context of women without dispute.*

This low proportion of representation is most apparent in radio broadcasts where the seen image is not the case. Women who are featured to the proportion of 22 per cent on television and 21 per cent in newspapers feature only with 17 per cent in the radio, the lowest proportion in question.<sup>1</sup>

For the news item is masculine in terms of its subject, source, language, image and –in most cases- editors. So how can this “power” be dented, this unbalanced balance toppled? BIA<sup>2</sup> has taken the first steps for such a transformation with its woman

1. Global Media Monitoring Project ([www.whomakesthenews.org](http://www.whomakesthenews.org)) 2005 report.

focused journalistic practice and its gender-based journalism training programmes. With gender-based journalism we do not mean the women's pages, women's corners and women's hours in the media. What we have in mind is to spread women who have been squeezed into a page, a "corner" an "hour" to all the pages of newspapers and all the news and programmes on radio and television. For "women's pages" and "women's corners" create the illusion that special attention is being paid to women, while actually the whole of life is turned over to men with women being almost totally ignored and re-produces life through men.

### **With greetings to Duygu Asena...**

How can women who have been made invisible in the field of journalism by the newspaper, the radio, the television and the internet, in short the media be rendered visible?

First we will try to remind you of the general picture of the mostly the Turkish and in part the world media's "women news" and then we will focus on how this situation can be turned upside down. We will speak of and debate, with examples, the reporting on women's rights violations and violence against women, rape and the killing of women called "honour/tradition killings". We will then finish the session with work on the news item. The rest we hope to see in your news.

At the Fourth World Women's Conference which convened in Beijing in 1995 the following call regarding the media was made to governments, civil society, and international organisations to develop and procure the equality of women:

1. To increase the participation and access of women to positions of decision making and self-expression within the media and new communication technology.
2. To spread the balanced and non-cliché images of women in the media.<sup>2</sup>

2. See The General Directorate for Women's Status website ([www.ksgm.gov.tr](http://www.ksgm.gov.tr)).



Many years have passed since this call was made, yet not much has changed in this problematic field which had been called to attention. That is why it is of such importance that we look at the media with “woman focus”, that we journalists and editors review, re-evaluate and transform what we do in a professional sense from the women’s perspective.

Meetings such as this are beneficial for us, as journalists, to take steps to see, think about and begin to understand the behaviour, prejudices, schemata, codes regarding women and the humiliation and ignoring of women transmitted through the media. Let us send a greeting to Duygu Asena right at the beginning. As we are here together at these meetings, mostly female journalists and male journalists in lesser numbers it is just the place to remember Duygu’s words “*Ayşes wake up Alis*” and to promise never to forget them.

### **Woman journalists in the media**

In what kind of a media environment do we live and work in terms of gender? It is thought that about 30 per cent of journalists in Turkey are women. Of the yellow press card holders in 2005 only 15.9 per cent were women. To get a press card one needs to work with social security and in line with the law numbered 212 which regulates the rights of journalists as thought labourers. Does this information alone not confirm that woman journalists work with less security? Of the 3080 members of the Turkish Journalists’ Association 509 are woman journalists, and of the 2530 members of the Turkish Journalists’ Union, 520 are female.

There are so few women in executive positions of the mainstream media that it is almost possible to count them by name. There is not one woman editor in chief in the mainstream media. We see that woman can rise no further than positions such as “publishing consultant” or “news coordinator”. The High Board of Radio and Television (HBRT)

has no woman members. How many woman journalists can you recall from the news programmes of television channels?

As of August 2005, 40 of the 211 names which take place in the legend of six newspapers, that is 18.95 per cent were women, a figure which does not look bad at first: but what is the situation in detail?

The highest number of women take place in the legend of *Milliyet* (27/11), while the lowest are to be found in *Zaman* (36/2) and *Yeni Şafak* (23/1). With the exception of *Yeni Şafak*, women are in the advertising positions of all these newspapers. Obviously it is thought that advertising suits women. The foreign news editors of *Sabah*, *Vatan* and *Hürriyet* are women while the Ankara representatives of *Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Sabah* are also female. Magazine editor and editing of supplements are also positions which fall to women's part. In the legend of *Hürriyet* newspaper of 23<sup>rd</sup> of August there are 37 names of which six are women: the President of the Executive Board (part owner of the newspaper), the editor in charge of supplements, the foreign news editor, the advertising director, the advertising coordinator and the Ankara representative.

According to the Global Media Monitoring Project's "Who Makes the News" study woman journalists take place by only 37 per cent in the production stage of the news.<sup>3</sup>

The news by women who cannot find adequate place for themselves in the production process is on issues considered to be "light", such as education, familial relationships (over 40 per cent) rather than on politics and the economy (32 per cent). However when it comes to television news presentation women take the lead with 57 per cent, a situation in which rather than thanking the difference made by the visual image, one suspects other things. Given that only 29 per cent of newspaper news items are produced by women...

3. Global Media Monitoring Project ([www.whomakesthenews.org](http://www.whomakesthenews.org)).

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) with its research which was first conducted in 1995 and takes place every five years, therefore which was carried out in 2000 and 2005 is the most comprehensive study –that we could reach at least- questioning gender in media news. Hundreds of women and men from 76 countries have worked in the 2005 research of the project. Approximately 13 thousand television, radio and newspaper news items were examined.

According to research carried out by the International Federation of Journalists in 2000, 300 thousand journalists work in 40 countries, of whom 38 per cent are women. Only 3 per cent of these women work in decision centres where policy is determined, that is at the higher level.

The issue of decision mechanisms is important so let us give another example regarding a different field, that of the United Nations from 1984, to show that not much changes. This picture is taken from the “curious feminist” political scientist Cynthia Enloe’s book *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* which is considered to be a classic in the fields of both international politics and feminism:

*While 83 per cent of the Office of the Secretary-General was carried out by women that year, only 22.3 per cent of professional international state services officers’ posts were undertaken by women. Of the 35 undersecretaries who manage the worldwide branches of the UN only one was a woman and of the 49 deputy undersecretaries only 3 were women.*<sup>4</sup>

Therefore both in Turkey and the world at large to turn upside down this situation which is experienced in the media and in other fields confronts us as an absolute necessity. So we need to set up the balance from a viewpoint which first and foremost aims at gender equality among workers in newspapers, radio

4. See Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*

and television channels. For example when a new co-worker is to join us at *bianet* we select the woman applicant from between one male and one female candidate of equal suitability. When we often sit down at our large table in the mornings for news meetings, should we notice that the balance is tipping against women we are alarmed. Indeed to notice this one does not need to sit at the table, the news immediately give clues as to the balance of women and men at *bianet*. So as not to be very unjust to male workers let us note their efforts in filling the gap in such "uncontrolled" situations.

For the alleviation of this imbalance, the shaking, or rather the destruction of the male dominant power the proportion of female representation in the editorial process must rise to 35 per cent. Indeed in the Beijing Action Plan governments and the civil society are called upon to ensure this balance.

It is up to us whether the call is realised. Otherwise the woman journalist has to work harder in order to advance, with the hope of gaining a place in the decision mechanisms. As a result the number of woman journalists worldwide who are married or have a long term relationship or who have children is much lower than the number of men. Women who cannot take place in the decision mechanisms, who cannot become say, editors or columnists cannot continue in their jobs as reporters past a certain age; or, if they are in television for example they are not wanted on the screen after the age of 40 while their much older male colleagues enjoy their status as celebrities, and their risk of unemployment increases. Worst of all, woman journalists are exposed to more sexual harassment at the workplace than women working in many other fields. We say this based on what evidence? Unfortunately there is no work carried out on this issue at hand, and furthermore, we carried out research to see whether it existed in the world. For example we contacted the woman journalists' organisations and the media in Germany but could not reach any pieces of

research. The only study we could reach is from Greece. According to it, 46 per of women working in the media state that they have been harassed at the workplace. The rest experience shows, we know.

Let us now take a look at the media produced by this masculine environment; see and discuss when women do make the news.

### **With their “negative aspects” even in politics**

Women in media content are generally portrayed through the ready-made images of wives who are responsible for daily and boring chores, individuals who commit themselves to the success of a man and remain in the background and victims who have been exposed to various forms of violence.<sup>5</sup>

We take a look at *Milliyet* of the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2005. We see 12 news items and six photographs. The subject or the source of all but one of the news items is male. The situation does not change in photographs; women are photographed either as “shop window” or as “victim”.

Let us not be unjust and take a look at the headline<sup>6</sup>: it reads “The report card of the woman Mp is weak: none of the women MPs in parliament have spoken for the party group or a commission”. The rest of the headline news is given in the page 19 under the title of the “The quiet ones of Parliament” with the photos of the 24 woman MPs. The author of the news is also female. Women MPs feature in newspaper with a collective photo for the first time since the elections and they are being exposed with the claim of having a “weak report card” at that. As you know, there are 550 members of parliament and of those only 24 are women.

5. See Leyla Şimşek, *Günümüz Basınından Kadın(lar)* (Women from Today's Press), 2000 (www.altkitap.com).

6. <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/08/03/resim/birincisayfa.jpg>

The news item which is claimed to be based on research also contains mistakes and deficiencies. While the proportion of woman representation in the 550 strong parliament is 4.4 per cent, it is quoted as 4.1 per cent. While it is stated in the article that these women are not authorised to speak for party groups or commissions, they are introduced as silent and tried to be shown as passive. In the meanwhile we do not get to learn how “quiet” or “talkative” the 526 male MPs have been over the period in question. However, the report concerns the activity and inactivity of all of the MPs in parliament in the given legislative period. Therefore one of the first answers we will give to the question of “when women do make the news” will be, as can be seen from this article; “with their deficiencies”. We should add that the corrective letter sent by the women MPs regarding this news has not been accepted by the newspaper management and has not been printed.

Another example regarding woman members of parliament comes from *Akşam* newspaper of the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 2005: “The most beautiful Red”.<sup>7</sup> The first four lines of the news which takes place at the top right of the front page with a photo out of the “beautiful woman” allowance read: “Germany is talking about the fair faced girl of socialism Julia. The 19 year old Mp who has caused a storm in the political scene with her impeccable beauty and shiny intellect...” The “young and beautiful” female MP has obviously exited the male editorial board. In the meanwhile, we learn indirectly that the face of socialism is “ugly”.

### **When the woman is the victim...**

Three headlines from *Hürriyet*: “Jealous grandpa boils wife” (25.11.2000), “Husband tortures woman for 40 days” (19.11.2000), “he cut her wife into 538 pieces” (11.10.200).

These women who have been murdered and tortured would otherwise have never made the news. Therefore one of the

7. <http://www.aksam.com.tr/?tarih=29.08.2005>

principal answers to be given to the question of “when do women make the news” is, as seen from these examples “when they are victims”.

Leyla Şimşek in 200 study carried out with the analysis of five newspapers entitled “Women from Today’s Press” says that Turkey is the country in which women are most likely to be represented as “victims” in the news with a proportion of 34 per cent and gives the following proportions for this type of representation: *Hürriyet* 18 per cent, *Yeni Yüzyıl* 16 per cent, *Yeni Şafak* 14 per cent and *Cumhuriyet* 10 per cent.

According to research carried out within the framework of the GMMP women are twice more likely to be represented as victims than men. While portraits of victim women form 19 per cent, male portraits are at 9 per cent. According to the results of the study opinion formers are composed (86 per cent) of men. Men are also overwhelmingly consulted as experts (83 per cent) and witnesses (70 per cent). Women are visible in the media (by 31 per cent) mainly when they recount their own experiences.<sup>8</sup>

### **To be the perpetrator of violation while reporting violations**

The spot line of *Hürriyet* of 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2005 news item of the title “They raided a women’s tea party committed sexual harassment and theft”<sup>9</sup> is as follows “Six armed people who said ‘We are the police, there has been a report’ raided the house where a women’s tea party was being held. The perpetrators who committed sexual harassment and stole valuable property were caught in an operation.”

In the news item we first see the photo of women who are trying to escape while covering their faces as though they had not been the subject of an attack, but had committed a crime.

8. [www.whomakesthenews.org](http://www.whomakesthenews.org)

9. <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/09/08/698717.asp>



In the smaller picture there are three men whose faces are clearly visible, they seem young. When we read the article we find out that two of the perpetrators are 17 while one is 18. That means there is a violation here, for according to the law photos of those under 18 cannot be published without rendering their silhouettes unrecognisable. \*

*Hürriyet* must have really liked this news because it published it again on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September under the eye catcher “News of the day” and with “an additional twist”:<sup>10</sup> “Stop raping her, we’ll find better... The offenders who raided a women’s tea party and committed sexual harassment and theft also attempted rape. The accomplice of the thief in the hat who saw him hold one of the victims to the ground is reported to have said ‘Stop raping her, with all this money we’ll find better’”.

\* For a discussion of this issue see the debate contained in the *Child-based Journalism*, the third book of the Rights Journalism Series (editor’s note).

10. <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/09/10/6999760.asp>



At this point “rape” and “harassment” are naturalised and normalised, so much so that the *Hürriyet* newspaper by omitting to put the expression “stop raping her we’ll find better” which is not its own seems to share this approach. To become the perpetrator, one responsible for a new violation while reporting on another is precisely something like this. Unfortunately, we come across many similar examples in the media.

### **There should be a woman in the “shop window” mindset**

In journalism the question of which photo should be used where is very important. In top middle part of the front page of *Sabah* (24.08.2005) we see Hülya Avşar (celebrity) in stage costume: “Love is over the holiday is just beginning”. The news is about Avşar’s divorce. Of course, *Sabah* is not alone in this practice. Avşar’s divorce occupied the media for days and in photos of Avşar which accompanied these news we never saw her in daily clothes. And we cannot for the case here is to present Avşar in stage costume from the “beautiful woman photo/news” allowance. Besides the expression “...the holiday is just beginning” is not at all innocent!

We call this the woman’s “placement in the shop window”. It is not necessary to give numerical data regarding the “shop window” use of women, any newspaper at hand or any TV programme one may watch immediately shows us the level this has reached.

While a group of women are put on the shop window “often with their rights being violated”, the place in society, role, needs, problems, struggles and changes and developments in the life of “other” women are not considered news worthy.

### **When it comes to an unusual “position”**

*Hürriyet*’s headline and news from the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2005 are as follows:<sup>11</sup>

11. <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/09/08/698697.asp>

Female period in the National Security Council (NSC) – In NSC which has been made civilian as part of EU integration, now the secrecy of the appointments has been lifted and instead of the generals, three civilians, two of whom are women have been appointed. Füsün Arslantosun has been appointed as Deputy President of the Press and Public Relations Office while Asuman Orhan has been appointed as Deputy President of the Personnel Office. Along with Emel Budak who had recently been appointed as Legal Advisor, for the first time in its history women have come to occupy three important positions in the NSC.

While the spot line reads “president” we find out that the expert women have been appointed to positions of “deputy president”. In effect “public relations” and “personnel duties” are today seen as “female occupations” and therefore the appointments do not have news value, but that the case is women have been appointed as “deputy office presidents” in an institution such as the National Security Council confirms the finding that “women make do news when they come to unusual positions”, such as when they become taxi drivers or the president of the Constitutional Court.

### **The subject of the news is male**

The research carried out in 76 countries by the GMMP shows that only 10 per cent of the news’ subject is related to women. While women take the position of lead actors 17 per cent of the time in news on magazine, sports and social issues, this proportion falls much lower in economics (3 per cent) and politics (8 per cent). The research also shows that woman journalists attach more importance to news with female subjects than their male colleagues. While women are the subject of the news in 20 per cent of the news produced by men, this proportion rises to 25 per cent in the news of woman reporters.

To sum up, women are mostly in the news when they are the subjects of violence and death, the symbols of pain in war,

natural disaster and family suffering and examples of surprising accomplishments. When they make the news in any other way, the traditional roles seen fit for them are reproduced: they are presented in their indirect identity given them because of their position of being close to a famous "man" (his wife, daughter, lover etc). Women whose sexuality is made an object of may become magazine material while they are personally engaged in politics. And of course we should not skip over Mothers' Day, Women's Day and St. Valentine's Day when although choirs of women fill pages and hours the mindset and approach remains the same.

Therefore the media displays an attitude which re-produces the discriminative, unequal, in short the discourse which sees women's place as secondary and as dependant on men.

### **Women's rights in 12 national newspapers**

BiA<sup>2</sup> has scoured the pages of 12 national daily newspapers everyday for a year between 2004 and 2005 and by separating and enumerating the news regarding woman, child, human rights and the freedom of expression and comparing their number to the number of total news, has come up with a proportion.<sup>12</sup> In order not to overwhelm you with numbers we will only give the February 2005 data to give you an idea (those interested can reach all data on [www.bianet.org](http://www.bianet.org)).<sup>13</sup>

According to the results the newspaper which publishes the most news on women's rights is *Ülkede Özgür Gündem* with 3.9 per cent while that which publishes the least is *Yeni Şafak* with 0.08 per cent.

The report cards of the remaining ten papers are as follows *Günlük Evrensel* (0.82 per cent), *Birgün* (0.71 per cent), *Cumhuriyet* (0.65 per cent), *Hürriyet* (0.31 per cent), *Radikal* (0.30 per cent), *Vatan* (0.23 per cent), *Milliyet* (0.18 per cent),

12. <http://www.bianet.org/2006/05/12/hakhbrcig.htm>

13. <http://www.bianet.org/2005/03/22/57013.htm>

*Akşam* (0.18 per cent), *Sabah* (0.13 per cent), *Zaman* (0.12 per cent).

We only marked, counted, calculated the proportion in total, cut out and filed these news items, that is to say we did not carry out content analysis on them. Yet even the data at hand goes to show the severity of the situation. Therefore we have to repeat that there is much to do for us reporters and editors.

### The language of the news

"A gentleman's word", "a man of his word", "I'll wear a skirt if what I'm telling is not true", or "the sea is like a woman, she cannot be trusted" are all common expressions: what are those for someone who is not true to their word? Let us not repeat ourselves. Other examples are the adjectives "man of science", "businessman", "statesman" and the use of expressions such as "marriage", "divorce" and "loss of virginity" as metaphors in explaining daily life. That is to say, language is not at all used randomly; it bears an ideological quality and the media re-establishes the male-dominated world with its masculine language. As an example, take the news item from *Milliyet Ekonomi* (24.08.2005). The headline is "Steel men with evil-eye beads".<sup>14</sup> The article continues: "The Ereğli Enterprise Partnership Group which companies resident in Turkey have formed to enter the Erdemir Steel Plant tender has announced that they could buy the company in a single instalment. The EEPG which has an evil eye warding bead on its logo aims to buy factories in other countries in the region following Erdemir".

The problem with the headline becomes noticeable when we look at the photograph. There is a woman among "steel men". As you know industrial activity and economics in general are fields too important to be left to women. Therefore, as the

14. <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/08/24/ekonomi/aeko.html>



woman among these men is engaged in the steel business, she should at least “be a man”, should she not?

### **Woman as source/”opinion leader”**

We have spoken of the lack of “women” on the first pages of newspapers. For does not the first page mean “domestic and foreign policy” and “the economy” news? That is it is on “serious” issues which are presumed/imposed to fall in men’s field of interest, on which men think and traditionally assumed to be issues which women “would not understand”. Thus we see that when the issue is the energy crisis, global warming, the risk of an earthquake in İstanbul, relations with the EU, indicators of unemployment and poverty in Turkey etc. we see that the microphone and the camera are always in front of or turned to men. In news programmes on television it is mainly men who debate. Women can fill the screen only on the “(8th of March Women’s Day” for example.

So as women are not the subjects or the source of positive news, hey are also not reference people whose views or expertise is applied (especially if the issue is one which is not

within the field of responsibility related to or allocated to women). Yet women are the most affected group from problems such as high prices and poverty and changes in conditions in education and health. For this reason, whatever may be the subject of the news, the news item should be planned with the awareness that women will be one of the groups most affected, that is with woman focus and whether they be experts or not on the issue, the experiences, knowledge and expectations of women from different sections should be included.

### **The Woman as “positive” news**

Women have many problems, and is it not because of this that there is a women’s day? Yet there also exists a rising women’s movement towards the solution to these problems. The gains and accomplishments attained by women through years of organised and individual struggle also do not make the news. However reporting on personal or collective success stories and experiences can be encouraging for women.

Because what is “positive” does not offer a photograph with “blood and tears” it has little chance of making the news; therefore to find and report on what is “positive” requires effort and a certain outlook on life. Let us make this effort.

### **Workshops and two negative examples**

During our workshops we worked on two news items. The first concerns the murder of a woman due to “tradition” as the mainstream media defines it and the second is slightly “unusual” in that the perpetrators are female and the “victim” is male. Both of the news items, let alone being gender-based, exhibit the characteristic mistakes made in terms of women’s rights violations.

*When women are murdered: "Tradition/honour killings"*

He 23 year old Hatun Sürücü was murdered by gun in Berlin on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2005. The news was of the form that Sürücü had been killed by her 19 year old brother with the approval of the "family council". Hatun Sürücü had been married to her cousin at the age of 15 with the pressure of her family, had had a child, had been divorced due to the marriage not working out, had started living alone with her child and in the meanwhile had taken of her headscarf. During the first hearing the German court arrested three brothers on charges of murder.

In the workshop we discussed the news regarding the murder of Hatun Sürücü as they were given in *Hürriyet* of the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2005<sup>15</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2005<sup>16</sup>. Given that there was a very clear violation of women's rights and that a woman's right to life had been taken away, how had the news on the issue been given, had new violations of rights been committed in the planning of the news and how should this news really have been given?

The news with the *Frankfurt-Berlin* location published on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2005 says "This photo caused tradition killing" and the problem is taken up starting from the photograph. As the newspaper takes on the role of the detective who discovers the reason for the murder, the article accompanying a photograph showing Hatun Sürücü "kissing with her German lover" is exactly as follows.

"A photograph of Hatun Sürücü, 23, who was allegedly killed on the street in Germany by her brother Ayhan Sürücü, 19, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2005 following a decision of the family has emerged showing her kissing her German lover. It has been alleged that the tradition killing has been committed due to this photograph.

According to *The Bild* published in Germany, in the events leading up to the tradition killing which has raised great reaction, the murder suspect younger brother Ayhan Sürücü warned her elder sister Hatun Sürücü, who had married three times, about her frequent change of boyfriends and asked her to quit such a way of life. According to the same claim, Ayhan Sürücü was very angry with the images showing her elder sister kissing with her lover Sascha. It has been revealed that following these images, her family came to the decision of

15. <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/02/15/599836.asp>

16. <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/09/16/702563.asp>

death regarding Hatun Sürücü and that Ayhan Sürücü went to confront her elder sister in keeping with the plans made.

It has been stated that Ayhan Sürücü warned her elder sister regarding her relationships and that she in turn responded "I will lie with whom I want" in the middle of the street and that following this Ayhan Sürücü drew his gun and rained bullets on his elder sister.

Hatun Sürücü had been married with and divorced from İsmail A., Sadık A., and finally Cem K.. The young women had four boyfriends Ö.T., S.K., O.K. and M.C.. It has been stated that Hatun's lovers will be heard as witnesses in court. Meanwhile in the first hearing of the trial held the day before the siblings of Hatun Sürücü, Arzu and Emrah Sürücü joined in the case of the three brothers arrested on charges of murder as interveners. "

In six training meetings we tried to analyse this news item in discussions held by the participants in line with the problems detailed below.

1. How should this murder be named? When such murders are committed in the Eastern and South Eastern Anatolia regions in Turkey where Kurds live in large numbers they are called "tradition" killings and when they are committed in other parts of Turkey they are called "honour" killings. This denomination is problematic both legally and socially. The new Turkish Penal Code which came into effect on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2005 carries the punishment of severe imprisonment for tradition killings. This punishment takes place in the form "with the motive of tradition" in paragraph j of article 82 under the title of "murder with intent" in the section severe forms of crimes committed against persons.

Although the mentioned regulation is inadequate and does not cover all "honour killings" it was assessed as an important step. Although the Turkish penal Code Women's Platform



spared no effort during the discussion phase of the draft to ensure that “murder with the motive of honour” be taken under this scope, this was not realised. That in trials now the claims of “honour motivated...” are raised shows just how right women were when warning of a “legal loophole”. At present there are demands to benefit from “unjust provocation sentence reduction” in article 29 of the TPC with the claim that what is at hand “is not a tradition but honour killing”.

(As it was especially discussed at the training meeting in Batman) by naming it “tradition” murders of women are attributed to Kurds on the assumption that tribal relationships are still more determinant among them. On the other hand, calling it “honour killing” is equally problematic, for this time the murders of women are legitimised indirectly through the word “honour” –due to the positive connotations it continues to carry in a patriarchal society-. So what should we call it instead? One suggestion which came up during training was “murder committed with the pretext of honour” while an alternative qualification, which we use is the “murder/massacre of women”.

2. Why is the manner of use of the photograph problematic? The photo used in the news item has been selected for the sole purpose of scandalising the “incident” thereby gaining ratings through magazine news. However its effect is not limited to this, as is usually done when women are harassed and raped or murdered by their husbands, fiancés or lovers due to jealousy, betrayal etc, the photo in question is also used in a way which will “make one think that the perpetrator’s crime is excusable and therefore lighten it and to show the victim as guilty”. With the photo accompanying the reporting on the murder of Hatun Sürücü, the reader/viewer whose mindset has been shaped by patriarchal thought is almost being made to think that “this victim who had crossed all boundaries has deserved death”.

3. With detail –such as in the quotation we gave above- the origin of which is unclear regarding Hatun Sürücü’s life, the

effect produced by the photograph is strengthened and the impression that the murderer committed the crime “under heavy provocation” is given.

4. As the source of the information in the news item is not given, it is highly improbable for the reader to accept what they have told as true in a literal reading. If it were a piece of news with a Turkish location it would not have been too difficult to state “according to a police source”. Is that how this kind of news is leaked in Germany?

So how should this news item, which while featuring a woman who was murdered “in the name of tradition” continues to commit rights violations and on the other hand re-produces the patriarchal conception in a manner which will legitimise similar murders and encourage new ones, which is irresponsible ethically and politically and far removed from woman focus, be correctly given? During the discussions at training workshops we asked participant journalists to rewrite this news story based on information at hand as well as “imaginary contributions”. The “imaginary contribution” of one of the participant journalists who appealed to the opinion of Women’s Counselling Centre attendant Evin Sarı was found significant and necessary:

“We condemn the murder. We see the destruction of right to life as a violation of human rights. Men see women as their property. As can be seen from this example when the woman does not behave in the way the man wants her too ‘honour’ is stained and the man sees in himself the right to kill the woman. Despite the fact that the law takes crimes of this sort as crimes committed against life and foresees severe prison sentence for the offenders.

“At our Counselling Centre we tell people that these murders are crimes committed against the female body. We encourage women who under such threats to apply to us.”

The headline “neither tradition nor honour but family pressure” was the preferred headline.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile reporters at the training meeting held in Batman said that they were behaved especially sensitively and tried not be provocative while reporting “woman murders” so as not to legitimise the murders and encourage new ones. For as the

participants stated, based on their own experiences, the exact use of information in this type of news, with no identified source or usually from police sources and therefore on sided, lacking and questionable information can lead the news item away from the “truth” and can open the door to new murders. What is being discussed here is the news the reporter makes based on a few sentences collected during the first few moments and then written as though the reporter was there themselves. The source of these news is usually the fragmented information gathered by the police during the initial phase, and once these questionable bits of “information” are served with the “sauce” of journalistic language a long story may appear. At the Batman workshop, the number among those present who thought that news regarding the gathering of the “family council” or the discussions in the “family council” or the moment of decision which sometimes appear in the mainstream media may be encouraging was not at all low.

*When the woman is the perpetrator...*

Another example problematic in terms of rights journalism which we used in our workshops was the news regarding four women wounding construction worker Kadim Duran with a gun in Balıkesir. We discussed the news which was published in

17. Let us make a special note and say that the discussions carried out on the first day of *Gender-based Journalism* showed their benefits immediately in some special examples and mention that the mistakes made by a journalist, who had not attended on the first day when the requirements of women’s rights and gender-based journalism were discussed but who came on the second day when the news items were being rewritten, were very accurately identified by the other participants themselves. The said journalist was at first furious with the criticism, but then gave the others their due and said “well of course, I wasn’t here yesterday”.

*Hürriyet*, *Milliyet* and *Cumhuriyet*<sup>18</sup> of 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2005 from the perspective of gender-based journalism.

In the spot line of *Milliyet*'s article titled "The second wife revenge of four women" it is said, "the man who took her sister in law's daughter as a second wife to the woman he was living with is alleged to have been showered with bullets by his lover, her niece who was taken as a second wife and the lover's two sisters".

The article is exactly as follows:

Construction worker Kadim Duran, 37, who lives together with Y.B., 33, in the Edremit district of Balıkesir took B's niece B.A. (20) as a second wife three weeks ago. Her mother G.T. and aunt Z.T. who were looking for B.A. who disappeared while in the middle of her divorce process came to their sister Y.B. who lives in the town of Akçay.

## THEY PASSED A DEATH SENTENCE

According to preliminary statements the suspects have made to the police, the sisters who learned that B.A. was in Akçay evaluated the situation and decided on a death sentence on Kadim Duran.

The first bullet was to be fired by Y.B.. Then the other sisters G.T. and Z.T. would take the gun and finally the niece B.A. would fire. The women who met Duran on the avenue realised their plan and after the gun was fired by Y.B. it passed from hand to hand. Duran who collapsed was taken to the State Hospital by 112 Emergency Services alerted by the police.

It has been stated that Duran who took four bullet wounds to the chest is in critical condition.

## 'HE SOILED OUR HONOUR'

The women who turned themselves into the police said they had fired on Duran with the intent to kill. In her statement to the police Y.B. said that her niece B. had been brought as a second wife and was being held in the house against her will and said:

18. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/3550063.asp>;  
[www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/11/22/yasam/axyas02.html+Kadim+Duran&hl=tr&q=tr&ct=clnk&cd=2](http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/11/22/yasam/axyas02.html+Kadim+Duran&hl=tr&q=tr&ct=clnk&cd=2);  
<http://arama.yore.com.tr:8081/sayfa.cgi?w+30+/cumhuriyet/cumhuriyet2005/0511/22/t/c00.html>

“He would not listen to our pleas. He soiled our honour. He deserved to die. We took the decision all together and we all fired once. We will live comfortably now. We will be able to walk the street with our heads held high.” While it was determined that the unregistered weapon used in the incident belonged to G.T. the suspects withdrew the statement they had made to the police at the office of the prosecutor. They said that G.T. had shot Duran. While Topçu who plead guilty at court was arrested and sent to Prison, the other suspects were released to be tried without imprisonment.

Three working groups, two formed of women and one of men observed the following problems regarding the news:

- Words such as “execution”, “blood”, “revenge”, “a shower of bullets” legitimise violence. The present news also encourages individual possession of weapons.
- The news normalises and legitimises the “family council” through the example of “women do it as well” and therefore the murder of women by men, although this incident did not end in death.
- When one reads the article one gets the impression that the reporter was there throughout the process. Since this is not possible, the source of the news is problematic. With information most probably given by or taken from the police the reader is made to think that everything happened as it is told.
- Although there exist the serious possibility that the women presented as “perpetrators” have been victims of rape and been subjected to violence, were forced to polygamy and were held against their will, this is not mentioned within the news structure. Yet even the expression attributed to the women –if it is true – “we cleansed our honour”, brings to mind the possibility that this is a case of “self defence” or “bodily protection”.
- Although there arises the necessity of consulting a lawyer at this point within the news structure, this has not been carried out.

### **The status of women at the local level and in local media**

Among the discussion topics for our workshops typical problems regarding women's rights in each region and the developments in the status of woman employees were also included.

The problem areas were determined as follows:

- The most widespread women's rights violations in applications to Provincial Boards of Human Rights at the local level were physical violence, the poverty of women and polygamous marriage of men.
- Although domestic violence continues to be the foremost problem, due to different dynamics of the relationship between the journalist and the reader/viewer at the local level reporting on the subject is found to be inadequate.
- Local reporters generally only perceive physical violence as violence, rather than its emotional, verbal, sexual and economic aspects.
- Women are hesitant to voice violence and do not openly explain the violence they have been exposed to even when the matter is directed at security units.
- There are no institutions for women exposed to violence to apply to.
- It is not easy to make positive or negative news about women. A news item in which the name or a photograph of a woman is featured can lead to her relatives such as spouse, brother or father to confront the journalist. Therefore women are hesitant to be featured in the media.
- Even when the reporters choose to get information from NGOs working in the field and to render the news item gender-based they try to bring out the "sensational" side to the story. This is self-criticism from the local media.
- The local media most easily reports on the subject of education of girls and the reporters think they are successful at influencing families on this point.

- Women can become journalists, editors in chief and even owners in the local media through family/inheritance. In truth the number of female of journalists in the local media is low again due to the family and its view that journalism is “men’s business”.
- Low numbers of woman journalists do get the chance to find employment in radios due to “voice” and in television channels due to “image”, however journalism is still not widely accepted as a “woman’s job”. Even those who have studied communication may be assigned to advertising units because they are considered to be “attractive”.
- Women who overcome all obstacles and manage to enter the field as reporter are then exposed to discrimination in occupational life.

It will be beneficial to emphasise something about discrimination at this point. In all training programmes we have carried out over seven years we supported the participation of female journalists. Despite this, when we ask why women do not attend the meetings we get the response “they will not come alone, they will come should you invite two people from each organisation”. Yet in training seminars on gender-based journalism in which female attendance was higher than that for men, women did manage to come on their own. How did this happen? Because male journalists who saw the word “woman” in the invitations we sent out had passed it on to the female journalist they were working with, where applicable, saying “this is for you”.

### **To reverse the situation in the media to the benefit of women!**

What should we do to change the positions which surface in news texts, subjects, sources used, photos, sound and image recording in news items regarding women, which violate women’s rights and which reproduce the patriarchal mind set to the detriment of women?

First, beginning with our own person, *we should develop an awareness based on gender*. For only from such a perspective can we identify the inequality and discrimination which exists between women and men and come to realise the differences at the root of discrimination against women which are not necessarily essential but are formed during the construction process of gender. When we come to problematise the differences we can grow sensible to women's rights and search the ways for rendering our news item gender-based. By questioning the mistakes in news value, news gathering techniques and formation of the news language of the traditional understanding of journalism we can reverse them in order to render women visible, strengthen them and to alleviate the imbalance/inequality in which women find themselves.

Secondly although the existence of women in the media sector does not always yield the expected changes in news regarding women without a gender perspective accompanying it, we should strive for an increase in numbers of woman journalists, especially in decision making mechanisms. For studies show that in cases where there are more woman managers, the media undergoes changes which makes it behave more sensitively when reporting especially on issues such as violence against women, harassment and rape. However, for a transformation of the masculine quality of the news item *the threshold of 33 percent must be attained* with women with a female point of view, as feminists have emphasised for every field.

Still there is no need to find excuses to do nothing; when we begin asking ourselves the following questions as individual female or male reporters/editors we can actualise the said reversal and cover significant distance in the field of gender-based journalism.

- What am I reporting on?
- Through which approach or perspective am I reporting?
- Through which eyes do I see the news item?



- Which problematic clichés have I reproduced in the news item?
- Have I acted in a just and balanced enough manner in the representation of women and men and female and male children in the news item? (For example, are a third of those whom I have consulted women?)
- Have I promoted female-male equality in society or have I reproduced traditional judgments with the manner in which I used language and wrote the news item?

There are also the following questions:

- Who is the principle source of the news?
- Who are we writing about?
- Who do we make the most positive news about?
- Who do we make the most negative news about?
- Whose voice do we hear less as a news source?

### **What can we feature as news for gender-based journalism?**

- Legal regulation, rights and practices regarding women,
- The women's struggles,
- The statements, press conferences, actions, successes and activities of organisations/platforms working in the field of women,
- Views, problems and successes of women from different segments (lawyers, medical practitioners, teachers, civil servants, healthcare professionals, domestic workers, workers, the unemployed etc),
- The views, problems, struggles and successes of women working in non-governmental organisations, political parties, the media and the private sector,
- Portraits of women from different sectors.

### **How can we render women visible, what should we understand from rendering women visible?**

- Women's voices should be on the front page,
- Let us not forget that women have names, let us give up defining her through a man (as spouse, lover, sister),
- In situations when her name should not be disclosed, let us do just that and hide her identity. Let us not write the name or publish the photo of the woman who has been raped or who has committed suicide...
- Let us reverse our habits in using women's photos. Let us look at how we are using them now, and whatever is wrong, let us abstain from it.

### **A quiz**

And finally, at the end of the day/week let us take this quiz:

- With what percentage did women feature in the news?
- Was there a special women's news item?
- Have any women been consulted?
- Have we used women's photos? If yes, did it feature on the page as a "victim" or as in a "shop window"?
- Have we violated rights in reporting the news?

### **Our responsibilities do not end here...**

There are things we have to do to ensure an increase in the number of women working in our organisation and to ensure that they are not discriminated against:

- Let us encourage women to work in active aspects of journalism such as reporting. Let us encourage women we know who are good at observing and writing to become reporters,
- Let us increase the number of women reporters working in our organisation and think critically on which units women work in,
- Let us definitively say no to the newspaper, radio or television the employees of which are entirely male,
- Let us relax working conditions in a way which will not cause discrimination against women.

All of this is possible; we at *bianet* form the working environment and make the news by asking precisely these questions. It is appropriate to remind you at this point that both [www.bianet.org](http://www.bianet.org) and the Woman's Window ([kadin.bianet.org](http://kadin.bianet.org)) are both valuable sources for you both in terms of current and past reporting. As you can make use of current use, it will be of help to you as an archive.

Paraphrasing the words of a female journalist from the Batman meeting we say, it is time for those who work as “bayan”\* and by saying “bayan” to work as “woman” and by saying “woman”. A good working day to us all!

See footnote in Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver's article “Forms of Representation of Women in the Media and Women's Rights Violations” regarding the word “bayan”. (translator's note)



## ***bianet* AND GENDER-BASED JOURNALISM**

Burçin Belge

*“There is nothing in life that does not affect women!”* or, to put it in the other way round, *“There is nothing in life that is not affected by women!”*

Then, where are women in popular newspapers and television programmes? All those news and comments, serials, movies and adverts, how much and in what patterns do they show us women, and what do they tell about women?

Or, to put our questions again, in different forms:

Women who breathe, who rejoice, who are upset, who are angry, who participate in life, who struggle with problems, what do they do where, what do they fight for, how are they affected by the events on the agenda of big newspapers and television channels, how do they transform themselves and their lives?

According to *Cynthia Enloe*, a feminist from the USA, who is closely known also to Turkish readers through her articles and books published in Turkey, these questions are not only necessary from the point of journalism but also capable of shedding light on many mysteries concerning politics, the economy and the way in which the world functions.<sup>1</sup>

To explain the “gender-based journalism” of *bianet*, it is probably necessary to start with these questions... I think that, well before the BIA project started, we also set out by criticizing the notions of womanhood hidden behind these questions...

I say “well before the BIA project started” because, when *bianet* started publication in December 2000, it already aimed at “ethically and politically responsible journalism” and “hearing the voices of those who are not heard” and its news gave as much coverage as possible to women together with all disadvantaged groups.

In that period, we did not fail to cover in our pages the criticisms and demands of women concerning the draft Civil Code; the initiatives towards cancelling the membership status of the turban-wearing founding members of the Justice and Development Party (AKP); and the reactions against those initiatives.

While reporting the initiative taken by the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals, Sabih Kanadoğlu, against the turban-wearing women among the founding members of the AKP with the headline “What is the difference of the turban-wearing members from the men?”, we again consulted women for their opinions about the event...

1. See Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Military Bases: International Politics from the Feminist Perspective*, translated by Berna Kurt and Ece Aydın, İstanbul: Çitlembik, 2003, p. 167.

In the same year, a news report in which we provided information on the Women's Rights Application Centre of the Istanbul Bar Association, the Istanbul encounter of the Group of Women in Solidarity for Peace, and criticisms against the regulations that opened the way for the virginity examination of students at Health Vocational High Schools, were among the news reports appearing on our pages. Moreover, a women's page, "*Women's Window*", updated every week, was also in publication under the *BIA Project*.

The publication objectives of *Women's Window* included "providing a ground for the expression of women's intellectual accumulation, taking as a basis that women and men are different and not equal, exposing such inequality and oppressed status from time to time, but mainly conveying the actions taken by those who, individually or in groups, strive to eliminate such inequality." Nevertheless, *Women's Window* used to be prepared through the intensive effort of a single person, Filiz Koçali, and was closer to a magazine's line.

This is how the journey of *bianet* in the area of "woman-focused journalism" started, a little with our intuitions, a little with our experiences, and a little with our curiosity, anger and excitement. But we should perhaps remember under what conditions we started this journey, before discussing the journey itself...

## **Women in Turkey and in the mainstream media**

Although equality between women and men as a minimum liberal presupposition is included as a basic principle in almost all human rights instruments in the world and in Turkey, it does not seem possible to say that we have achieved such equality. According to the records of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), there were 526 men and 24 women among the total of 550 members of the TGNA in 2002. Men were represented in the Assembly at the rate of 95.6 percent and women at the rate of 4.4 percent, and unfortunately this was the second highest rate after 1935, the year in which women were represented in the Assembly for the first time in the history of Turkey. According to the data of the State Institute of Statistics (SIS), in 2000, there were 98

women against every one hundred men whereas there were 309 illiterate women against every one hundred illiterate men, with 84 literate women against every one hundred literate men.

Another area where women remain in a disadvantaged position is participation in employment and in the labour force. Again according to SIS data, in 2000, the rate of participation in the labour force for the total population was 55.2 percent and the unemployment rate 8.9 percent. In contrast, women's rate of participation in the labour force was 39.6 percent and women's unemployment rate 7.2 percent while these rates were, respectively, 70.6 percent and 9.9 percent for men.

While for every 100 paid male employees, there were only 25 female employees in 2000, there were 14 women for every 100 male employers and 12 self employed women for every hundred men. Figures for the same year show that there were 284 unpaid female domestic workers for every 100 men.

All these figures go to show that women are among the disadvantaged groups in Turkey, despite all the effort made towards equality.

When we look at the news in the mainstream media, we know that women are the most "visible" among the disadvantaged groups. According to the research "Media and Social Participation" carried out by Associate Professor Mine Gencil Bek of Ankara University between January and October 2005 based on news items published in four national newspapers, the featuring rate of "women" is greatest among disadvantaged groups, followed in order by "those with different sexual preferences", "children", "the disabled" and "cultural groups/minorities".<sup>2</sup> However, when interpreting the

2. For the results of the research see Mine Gencil Bek, *Medya ve Toplumsal Katılım Araştırması İçerik Analizi Sonuçları (Media and Social Participation Research Content Analysis Results)*, March 2006 ([www.britishcouncil.org.tr](http://www.britishcouncil.org.tr)).



results Mine Gencel Bek underlines that the relative greatness of women's visibility should not be taken as sensitive publishing regarding women on the part of the media. According to Bek, when interpreting the results we should examine the identity and form of representation of women who are the subject of the news.

Indeed, the relative greatness in quantity of news regarding women does not point to a social mobilisation which will transform the secondary status of women. Furthermore, these news items generally do not contain the voices, words, criticisms, demands or advice of women. Viewing them carefully, we see that women are presented in the news in the traditional roles of mothers and wives and therefore asexualised, as the target of the act of violence in their role of the victim of disloyalty, rape, murder in the name of honour and suicide, or as transformed into objects of desire with their bodies and sexuality. Accordingly, in the media, women are not evaluated seriously in any aspect other than their sexuality and they cannot exist there bearing their sexuality as a regular aspect of their identity.<sup>3</sup>

Women who are "depersonalised" by being forced to fit in one of the given types of the media are "ignored" in fields which are considered to "belong to men" such as politics, economics and sports. Women's news is seen as a "side field" and women cannot find themselves a place among "serious issues" and "serious men".

3. Ayşe Saktanber too points out that the woman is turned into an "object of desire for viewing" by her sexuality in the media defined by dominant male discourses in her article "The Woman in the Media in Turkey: the Free, Available Woman or the Good Wife the Sacrificing Mother" in the book *Women in the Turkey of the 1980s from a Feminine Perspective*: "While women watch themselves being watched in the various fields of the media, they are at the same time shown what the 'ideal' woman expected of them is and this discourse which in its construction is aided by women working in the media is accepted, augmented and spread by women who do not want to fall out of demand." Şirin Tekeli (ed.), İstanbul: İletişim, 1995.

In the traditional understanding of journalism, women can not occupy the focus of the news, because according to this approach the subject of the news are wars in which women do not participate, parliaments of which they are not members and businesses which they do not own.

However the invisibility of women in these fields does not stem from their “non-presence” or indifference but from the fact that woman opinion leaders, employers and employees, politicians and voters are not “seen” by journalists with a “male viewpoint”. Indeed the relative “ignorance” of women by the media or within the traditional understanding of journalism leads to a false/inadequate evaluation of life and developments and to the media not fulfilling its function of informing.

Yet since we have started to view the journalistic practices in which we are engaged through an awareness of aspects which we as women cannot but question, we have come to see women and the transformative power of women more clearly. To have “eyes which see women” it was of course necessary to first bring in a new perspective which saw women as the subjects of social transformation and at this point the contribution of feminist thought and movements was very significant.

Nowadays we often say “the male dominated discourse and violence against women is reproduced through the media”. We know that the media commits grave rights violations against women with the sexist language and images it uses, by exhibiting private life (Gencel Bek, 2006), by judging women who have been subjected to sexual crimes and violence with sexist preconceptions and by making magazine erotic images of crimes of which women are the victims.<sup>4</sup>

### **The gender-based journalism of *bianet***

For precisely the reasons I have outlined above, we have aimed not only to report on rights violations while practicing

“gender-based journalism” at *bianet*, but tried to report on all issues from a woman’s perspective while seeing to it that we did not commit violations of human, women’s, children’s etc rights.

We examined and re-examined the language we use, the form of the news item and our approach to the news. When we set out to practice “gender-based journalism” we first tried to raise awareness regarding the “discourse of the media which is discriminative of woman and which holds her in secondary status and as dependent on men”.<sup>5</sup>

Thus a very new understanding of journalism which has developed itself and searched for its language and narrative since the founding of *bianet* appeared on our pages. A process in which we took care to place women in the centre of all news whether related to women’s rights violations or not, to form a language which displaced the patriarchal narrative and to refer to female sources began. For my part, I think of this period as a truly educational one.<sup>6</sup>

Let alone the subject of our news, sources and references, the content of our agenda meetings and the language used in these meetings itself was changing from day to day. It is necessary to recall the contributions made by our male friends at the desk to the process while talking about transforming ourselves and life... They sometimes made very precise interventions and sometimes provoked arguments which made us say “this is exactly the problem”...

4. See Sevda Alankuş, “Haberin Kendisi Kadın Hakları İhlalcisi” (“The News Item Itself is a Violator of Women’s Rights”), *bianet*, 16.9.2005.

5. The Media Monitoring Group (MEDİZ)

6. E must not overlook our past while talking about the process. There was of course a “Bia language” and a “Bia culture”, and of course news related to women had appeared on our pages many times up until November 2003 when the BIA2 Project began.

Sometimes we caught ourselves using the expression “as befits a man” and sometimes corrected a male friend who had said “working mothers” with “mothers working out of the house”... The expressions “statesman”, “boy child”, “gentlemen’s contract” I remember now alongside the discussions we had... It was a true learning process and the “*bianet* men” were also learning and changing with us. I think this interaction prevented us women with a claim to “gender-based journalism” to become lost in the subjective fallacy of the women’s perspective...

During the year 2002 women’s demands for “quotas” and “positive discrimination” were the issues which found their way most often to our pages. We took up the status/problems of women in politics, discriminative practices regarding women and the regulation regarding women in party programmes. We were careful to place ourselves at equal distance from all women with different views while making room for the voices and words of female candidates. For example during the veil debate, while we underlined the discrimination against women we also featured *debate regarding different forms of femininity experienced by different women*.

It must be emphasised that we had taken it up as a principle to not to look for female politicians only in news on “women and politics” but to “remember the existence” of women in every news item we put on the agenda. However, at this point things were beginning to change as opposed to all the news we had prepared earlier and our “agenda”, “aims” and “priorities” began to be defined as on the side of women.

In terms of my personal learning process, each news item we prepared came to mean new acquaintances and new issues to “worry about”... From almost all the women I met during this period I learned to look “towards women” and “regarding women” as well as valuable knowledge. I tried to read every document on the subject and to become aware of regulation

regarding women in national and international legislation. I also followed closely legal regulation, court decisions, ongoing trials, demands, criticism, advice and expectations of women.

Following the above I wish to once more remind you of the sentence “there is nothing in life which does not affect women”: news regarding the International Monetary Fund, the World Economic Forum and the USA’s intervention in Iraq affected and interested women like all other developments.

### **Four main axes**

Generally speaking, it would not be wrong to say that we develop our news in the framework of four main axes:

1. The follow-up and reporting on rights violations against women.
2. Reporting on the national/international regulation relevant to women and the demands, criticism and advice of women to be kept current on the agenda.
3. The evaluation of agenda setting developments through “women’s perspective”, with answers to the questions “where are women” and “what do women say”.
4. Reporting on the activities of women’s organisations.

Since the onset of the *BİA<sup>2</sup> Project* the subject of the news we reported on point to these four axes. The news we prepared in 2004 show parallels with the agenda of the Turkish and the world wide women’s movement:

The acceptance of the European Court of Human Rights of the claim by the İzmir lawyer Aytan Tekeli that the ban on using her pre-marital surname only is “against private life” and “discriminative”, the decisions of the United Nations General Council which draw attention to the responsibility of the state regarding “honour” crimes and the acceptance of women’s organisations in Turkey to the European Women’s Lobby are those which first come to mind. Other developments which became the subject of our reporting were the struggle of

women against discrimination in working life, the amendments to the Turkish Penal Code to the benefit of women, and the obligation to set up safe houses in local administrative units with a population of over 50 thousand with the Municipalities Law.

While talking about “gender-based journalism” we did not forget about “woman journalists” of course. In our news item under the title “the Animosity towards Women of Male Hürriyet” (*bianet*, 12.12.2003) we took the photo of a woman journalist taken while reporting and showing her underwear as a basis to ask women the status of women working in the media. In “Woman Journalists are ‘Breaking the Ceiling’” (*bianet*, 04.08.2004) we touched on the difficulties facing women journalists in taking a position in the decision making mechanisms of the media.

The issues we frequently took up in 2005 were not removed from the agenda of the women’s movement. Issues such as “positive discrimination”, “sexual relationships out of marriage”, “virginity tests” and the “equal participation of women in politics” were constantly on our agenda. We reported on the women who opposed the condition of “being male” in order to apply for a job with the State Waterworks, State Airports Authority and the General Directorate of Land Produce Office. We then reported on how this condition had been lifted through the struggle of women.

We never refrained from listening to what was being said by the local women’s organisations while reporting on legal regulations and practices of course. We opened our pages to women who opposed the action taken by Samsun Municipality trade police units against young people “whose conduct while sitting down” they had not found appropriate as well as the march through the streets of Ankara by women coming from Van, Diyarbakır, Denizli, Çanakkale, Adana, Mersin, Bursa, İzmir and Samsun...

Both the Penal Trials Procedure Law and the Organisation Law for the General Directorate for the Status of Women were

important news items. We took care to build our stories in a “hopeful” language; we refrained from portraying women as weak/desperate; we never gave up “idea follow-up” and we drew attention to the possibilities and risks drawn attention to by women.

### **To make the agenda in *Hürriyet***

A very important aspect of what we did at *Bianet* was to evaluate the events forming the agenda from a “women’s perspective” and by looking for the answers to the questions “where are women” and “what do women say”. These questions were the product of an understanding of journalism which we had not often encountered before. A new way of thinking meant new questions and new answers... Both for us and our readers...

During the first year of the *BIA<sup>2</sup> Project* the two issues being observed with curiosity both in Turkey and the world at large were the Cyprus talks and the NATO summit. Although they were not mentioned at all, both these subjects interested and affected women. In addition although they were not adequately visible, women were there. *Bianet* took up these women and the condition of their womanhood.

On the agenda in April 2004 were the Cyprus talks, the Annan plan and the referendum. While “male” politicians directed the talks and signed decisions, women from the two communities were not idle. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of April the “*This Country is Ours*” platform organised a “Yes in the Referendum” rally in Nicosia. The rally made the news in Turkey and in the world. However, in the reporting men featured mainly with their words while women featured with their faces. That is the text of the news was from men while images were those of women. However women were on the streets to “form the common language of the two communities” and “to live in peace altogether”. So we opened up our pages to them. Women answering our random calls from Istanbul had almost all attended the rally and were willing to answer our questions. What they had experienced,

thought, did and had to tell were many. This resulted in our news "Peace is Close to Us, Enmity to Leaders" (*bianet*, 14.4.2004).

The month of June saw the NATO summit and debate regarding the Istanbul visit of US President Bush. *Bianet* followed the summit and all developments regarding it. However, it also did something else, "it asked questions regarding women". Therefore, alongside other coverage of the summit "The Administrators of NATO and its Opponents are Males" (29.06.2004) and the "Women of NATO are Queens" (29.06.2004) items were prepared.

The first item said "There was only one woman at the summit and only men spoke at the anti-NATO rally. Women attending the summit became subjects only through their spouses while women who took to the streets to protest could not find a place at the podium" and directed questions at feminists.

The second news item introduced the woman heads of state of NATO member countries and drew attention to the fact that there were no women among heads of government, civilian administrators or the command structure.

All these news items we prepared with great delight and were always happy of their results. No, actually not always... There is one news item among all the nice, enjoyable and elevating undertakings we have completed which makes me blush and smile at the same time whenever I remember it, even now after many years. Indeed, I actually almost filled an entire page in Turkey's "largest" newspaper with this item.

One of the most important items on the agenda when the *BİA<sup>2</sup> Project* officially began was the local elections of 28<sup>th</sup> of March. We followed the electoral process by evaluating it through the activities and rights of women. Our first news item of the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2004 was "Only 24 out of 3.234 Mayors are Woemn" (*bianet*, 30.04.2004). I had prepared the article by going through all the candidate and results lists one by one, through



many hours of work. I had reached the number of female lawyers and the proportion of representation of women in Turkey through the names of the newly elected mayors.

We were very satisfied with ourselves the next day. "*Hürriyet*, the largest newspaper in Turkey", had picked up on our news and had indicated the source. We were happy and a little proud... However both my happiness and pride lasted a short while: only 24 hours... What emerged from news in the *Hürriyet* of the 1<sup>st</sup> of April was that 10 of my "woman" mayors were actually men with unisex names like "Tansu" or "Canan" which are more common among women. As can be expected, our agenda meeting that day lasted significantly longer. That I had tried to determine the sex and identity of mayors through their names alone and had not subjected the information to a second process of verification had yielded bitter results.

My job that day was very difficult... I was calling the mayors one by one to apologise and was asking them what it was like to have been "supposed female". The calls I had began to make in shame I concluded with a smile and prepared the news "Mayors Complain of the Lack of Women" (*bianet*, 01.04.2004).

What emerged was that my hurry had caused a serious mistake but it threw light on how important the work we are doing at *bianet* is once again: for the *Hürriyet* newspaper, it was not "the exclusion of women from politics" that was news worthy "but the anger of men at being mistaken for women". Whereas we were on the right path, which was a long one...

Today *bianet* is within its seventh year of publication. It has been practicing "gender-based journalism" for over three years. I have been following *bianet* from a "distance" for a while now, but I think that *bianet* and all those who contribute to it all form a unique and new understanding of journalism; an understanding of journalism which defies the patriarchal nature of the media, which is gender-based with a female language and sources...



## **AN EXAMPLE OF ALTERNATIVE WOMAN MEDIA: THE *PAZARTESI* MAGAZINE**

Beyhan Demir

### **Brief notes from the history of women**

To be able to talk about the *Pazartesi* (*Monday*) magazine, I want to give a few examples to women's magazine publishing since Ottoman times and how women fought for their slightest rights on these lands. For women starting to write their own history from their own perspective dates back a long time to the 1880s. In the 1880s women's corners were first started in newspapers and almost thirty women's magazines had started to be published. The *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Newspaper for Ladies Only) which came out between 1895 and 1908 had aimed at forming an information network for women and *Kadınlar Dünyası* (Women's World) had thoroughly expressed thoughts close to feminism.

Nine of the fifty workers' strikes that took place in the Ottoman era took place in industries in which women worked and 50 women had taken place as organisers and overseers in the Feshane (fez workshop) strike which is an important example of unionised struggle from the period. In the constitutional period which began in 1908 women's movements also gathered pace and momentum, however the movement did

not take on a political aspect and its arguments remained based on the participation of women in social life and their demands for the regulation of familial life. Women began to organise for their political rights in the 1920s. With the Republic women gained the right to be citizens, however attempts at setting up a *Women's People's Party* were obstructed. In fact, in 1935 the organisation *Turkish Women's Union* was closed down due to the reason "there is no need for such an organisation now that Turkish women have equal rights as Turkish men" (Çakır, 1998).

In the 1980s, women had begun to put on the public agenda which had previously been considered taboos, sexuality had come to be spoken of and the sphere called "personal life" had been defined for the first time as a public issue. Educated women who had access to feminism through publications from the west had begun to raise their voice in this period. In 1984 the *Women's Circle* was set up and in 1987 the first rally following the 1980 coup, against beatings, was organised by women.

These attempts secured the development of feminist politics in Turkey and the acceptance of personal life which had been thought to be non-political as political and the determination of an oppressor-oppressed relationship between men and women have caused political tumult. Magazines such as *Kadınca* and *Kim* were published and women's issues were opened up to debate. Thus, following 1980 women have forwarded the struggle for equal rights and have started formulating their experiences of examining themselves and male dominance and fighting against it.

By the 1990s feminism had become a widely discussed ideology which everyone took notice of, even if some looked down on it (Düzkan, 2005). The *Pazartesi* magazine began to be published in March 1995 following a discussion process of almost two years by women who had taken place in the women's movement. The *Pazartesi* magazine was published

on the basis of discussion regarding the means of struggle for the final solution to the women's problem which had now been defined following attempts at rendering it visible throughout the history of women's struggle. Therefore the *Pazartesi* has always carried a message and saw nothing wrong in calling on women to organize against the patriarchy.

However, the magazine which started out with an introductory issue in March 1995 had to temporarily halt its operations in March 2002 due to financial constraints. Having started being published again in November 2003, in March 2005 the magazine celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> issue and with 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### **What sort of *Pazartesi* (Monday)?**

The target of a *Pazartesi* which followed the agenda, which analysed and interpreted it from a feminist perspective and which strove to point out male dominance which is reproduced covertly in popular culture was very important. The *Pazartesi* showed that popular culture is not only consumable but that it can also be criticised. It realised examples of this. This became something which is often done in the large press (Düzkan, 2005).

The *Pazartesi* tries to present an example in itself to how traditional roles can be questioned while practicing women's reporting. It included in all of its news items how women are "naturally" better at housework and childcare than men and how men make better doctors and engineers as myths. The most important political stance of the *Pazartesi* became its rejection of the traditional and those which are taken to be "natural" and "normal".

Louis Althusser (2002) says that the most widespread and invisible form of ideology works through "calling". When we see ourselves as the one being called and when we respond to this communication (voice), we join in to our own

ideological, social construction. While it called to women the *Pazartesi* never ignored to emphasise that this ideological construction can be turned upside down. One of the most important functions of the *Pazartesi* became to accept this as an ideological war and to say that the feminine roles we are lade with are changeable and are not from birth.

Another important emphasis was that the *Pazartesi* reported through the understanding that the women's problem was not anyone's problem but that every problem was the problem of women (Düzkan, 2005). Thus the *Pazartesi* showed that women have something to say regarding everything, every political development. From the European Union to the "test tube baby" practice, to type F prisons and health issues, the magazine pointed its tape recorder in the direction of women, thus questioning the male dominated media which in all fields of expertise only asks for the opinion of men and tried to reverse the situation.

Another important point was that while many women magazines at the time –and now- showed women the ways to lose their cellulites, to show their breasts as bigger/smaller, and how to seduce men, the *Pazartesi* tried to make women question why they had so many issues regarding their breasts and why they had to cover their thighs. This is a very significant difference and the *Pazartesi* tries to show women that the roles laden on women arise from the patriarchy and that it is necessary to reverse the situation in terms of femininity and masculinity.

### **What is in the *Pazartesi*?**

The *Pazartesi* has not refrained from giving advice to women and sharing experiences. Sometimes in its headlines it emphasised its demands and wanted safe houses. Sometimes it showed women the way. It found examples of things of which it was said that women would not or could not do and

brought them out into the open. It featured women successful in professions which are held to be men's jobs. By introducing women who were successful in their fields it encouraged and motivated women.

By venturing into the field of humour in which women are constantly denigrated under the monopoly of men it showed that women could do humour without belittling anyone and that they could be funny.

All the "others" of society (homosexuals, Kurds, Armenians, the disabled, women in veils) featured in the *Pazartesi* with their problems, worries and successes without being *made the other*. The *Pazartesi* tried to constantly reflect the double oppression of Kurdish women and did not hesitate to take sides on this issue. It opposed the war taking place right next to us and openly displayed its stance. It formed solidarity with the women of oppressed nations. For this reason in every issue for the last three years it symbolically published an article in Kurdish.

The *Pazartesi* began its publishing life with the news of the rape of Güneş K. by Alp Buğdaycı and Metin Kaçan on the cover and being the only magazine that Güneş K. gave an interview to (April 1995, issue: 1). This reporting formed an important example in terms of women's journalism and with its reporting style the *Pazartesi* became an example for the "large media". For with its coverage the magazine realised in practice the necessity that it is not the women but the perpetrators in news of violence against who should be identified by not publishing Güneş K.'s photograph. In the *Pazartesi*'s reporting style, women never featured solely as in their identity as victims. The *Pazartesi* never wavered in its quality of being on the hand a place for women to see that they are not alone over any issue (motherhood, love, dishonesty, violence, harassment, rape, vaginismus etc) and met other women models from whom they could take comfort and on the other a journal through which they could follow cinema, music, theatre and literature news.

The *Pazartesi* took up everything experienced by women in every field ideologically. In its case file which it continued for three consecutive issues entitled "What does the Left Offer Women?" it discussed the salvation of women with women from socialist organisations (May, June, July 2004, issues: 90, 91, 92).

It ventured into the field of sexuality, the most forbidden to women, without a second thought. It came under the gaze of the state by writing about the right of women to pleasure, women's sexual problems, women's demands regarding their sexuality, homosexual women and our fantasies. By taking up the issue of clitoris it stated once again that it was against the issue being a taboo. Due to issue with the clitoris cover many newspapers and internet sites discussed women's sexuality by making reference to the *Pazartesi* (July, August 2005, issue: 104). It was collected twice as punishment due to publishing fantasies from readers in the "Naughty Column". The *Pazartesi* which was tried due to the "Naughty Corner" was also put on trial at the State Security Court for its coverage of the operation at the Burdur Prison. With the magazine team which sometimes covered the 19<sup>th</sup> of December operation and sometimes raided the offices of *Elit Model Look* it carried "itself" to its cover. Sometimes it vented its anger from the cover. In response to the 15 year old R.G.'s nose being broken by her elder brothers because she 'went about a lot' it raised the cry "We will have our revenge" from its cover (May 2005, issue: 105).

### **The magazine in which many women wrote for the first time...**

The *Pazartesi* had its share of the famous. Women cartoonists such as Ramize Erer, Feyhan Güver, Semra Can, Ayşen Baloğlu, Gülay Batur featured in the *Pazartesi* with their drawings. Perihan Mağden, Berrin Karakaş, Ayşe Düzkan wrote for it. The *Pazartesi* was also a school of journalism in which many women for the first time touched a keyboard, wrote for the first time, reported for the first time and learned



journalism. Nevin Cerav, who began her life as a journalist at the *Pazartesi* won the Metin Göktepe Jury Special Prize with her news item titled *Why Did Fatma Ülkü Hang Herself* (Eylül 1998, issue: 42).

With its news and articles it was always a magazine which the “large media” could not pass over. In any issue regarding women it was always the *Pazartesi*’s office that was called, consulted and it was a magazine which was referenced and quoted. It became the address to look for the answer to the question “What do the feminists say about this?”.

In its eleven year history, the magazine and the magazine office was always a place where women wrote, distributed, made tea, contacted women’s movements and benefited from as a means of organisation. By not forming an hierarchy between its writers and readers it showed that every reader of the magazine could also be a writer for it and devoted its pages to everything that women wanted to put down on paper in their field.

From time to time it prepared law and health columns. It created a solidarity network in which the questions/problems of women were tried to be answered/solved and which through its notice board tried to find homes for those looking for them and jobs for the unemployed. It was a place where many women who are today in their thirties received their first lessons in feminism. Some of its pages were set aside for “lessons” in feminism.

In terms of women’s journalism it developed principles such as *following up the news, preventing the objectification in the news item, paying attention to women not being exhibited and not allowing discrimination or violence within the news* and thereby laboured to *develop a new language against the masculine language of the news*. It allowed women to rewrite the meaning of many words in the language with its *Feminist Encyclopaedia* section.

In effect the *Pazartesi* by never severing its link with the Women's Salvation Movement tried both to be the movement's magazine and formed a link between women in the movement and those who were not. It owes its continued existence in the world of publishing to this. All its publication qualities aside, the *Pazartesi* is a noteworthy example of a collective undertaking in which women learned from each other and produced together...

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**'THE STORY OF THE FLYING  
BROOM LOCAL WOMAN  
REPORTERS NETWORK'  
OR 'LIFE IS NEWS'**

Selen Doğan

This seminar by BİA is an undertaking in which local media employees will be informed about possessing a women's perspective in the processes of gathering, writing and publishing news and about gender equality sensitivity and in which ideas and experiences relevant to the field will be shared. As the Flying Broom we believe that this training is extremely necessary and beneficent.

In this seminar I want to share with you experiences regarding the "alternative women's news network organisation" set up along the main axis of the Flying Broom (which is a "*communication centre*" and the Local Woman Reporters Network set up to this end and to relate to you the work we did. In addition I want to share a few pieces of advice for a greater coverage of women's news in the local media as well as the increase in the proportion of women in local media organisations as well as in news texts.

**“The Local Woman Reporters Network” project or an “alternative women news organisation”**

The Flying Broom’s “Local Woman Reporters Network” essentially arose out of an *objection* to the *false and inadequate* representation of women in the mainstream media. Because we did not believe that the “third page” news which strengthens the secondary status of women and which we criticise for its view and approach to harassment, rape and all sorts of violence and the “back cover girls” in which women are presented as an object of desire did not represent us we set out by saying “let us make our own news ourselves”. This project came into being with the slogan “Life is news”.

Another starting point was seeing that the national media’s news pool feeds from Istanbul and certain other large cities and does not accept as news the work of women and women’s organisations at the local level, their exemplary activities and similar hope raising joyful developments and the concern we felt at this as a women’s organisation.

As the employees of a women’s organisation which aims to provide communication and consequently interaction between women and women’s organisation we all together formed and developed the “Local Woman Reporters Network” project. The project started in March 2003 in 8 pilot cities (*Antalya, Çanakkale, Diyarbakır, Eskişehir, Mersin, Samsun, İzmir and Gaziantep*). In 2004 four more cities were added to the project (*Adıyaman, Van, Mardin, Şanlıurfa*).

Overtime we received many messages from women who we had reached through our connections in the provinces and the increase in our participatory work or those who had heard of our work and contacted us, saying that they wanted to be “volunteer reporters”. Thus with the participation of women from within and outside the country we expanded our news network. We still have volunteer reporters who send us news

from within and outside Turkey. This news network continues to expand with new people joining.

We organise training programmes for our local woman reporters at regular intervals as part of the project. Our first training work took place in Ankara in March 2003. It was followed in order by training in Ankara, Küçükuyu in Çanakkale and Kızıltepe in Mardin. Then came May 2004 and April 2005 Ankara training meetings. During the training work our reporters were informed by academics, journalists and experts active in the women's movement on many subjects such as *fundamental knowledge they can use to make news like news collecting and writing techniques, following and reporting on the local agenda, women's journalism, news sources as well as feminist theory, entrepreneurship, local politics, alternative media, empathy, women's organisations in Turkey*. The researcher Yaprak Zihnioğlu, journalist Nadire Mater and sociologist Yıldız Ecevit are just few of the names that can be counted. During the trainings our reporters also got the opportunity to share their observations and experiences regarding their own regions with each other. Aside from the training work, we also came together with our reporters during the course of other organisations. We were supported by our reporters in activities such as campaigns, seminars, exhibitions etc carried out by the Flying Broom in Ankara and other provinces. In short we took care to inform them of every piece of work carried out by the Flying Broom.

The Local Woman Reporters Network came into being as an alternative women's news network organisation. This means being the voice of women who could not get their voices/words heard through the coverage of our woman reporters who believe in the equality of women and men and who are sensitive to gender from the provinces and regions in which they live... To become the means through which those women could voice their problems, demands and expectations... Our aim was to ensure that women made the "news" not only when

they are murdered or become victims of rape but also when they transformed their lives, when they produced successful results and when they did something good for themselves and the women around them.

From the start our reporters have been sending us news ranging from “honour” killings to success stories and from the women entrepreneurs to the work of women’s organisations by following the women’s agenda in their home province. These news items are published on our website, [www.ucansupurge.org](http://www.ucansupurge.org), which is updated every Friday.

The target of the Local Woman Reporters Network is the 81 provinces. That is to have at least one woman reporter from every province in Turkey. We believe that if women make their own news they will find the opportunity to loudly voice their demands and will have taken a step in transforming their weaknesses into strengths. *Thus the local women’s news which are generally followed by male journalists who generally overlook them will become known.* This in turn will allow new projects for women. In line with the demands and requirements of women who can make their voices heard, new safe houses, the creation of new employment possibilities, increase in educational and income providing activities for women and new social centres may become possible.

### **How can the local media reach women’s news?**

For women’s news in the local media to be visible, the reporters, editors and editors in chief who work at local media organisations need to be sensitive, interested/knowledgeable in the subject. This requires that they follow closely and regularly the women’s agenda in the city where they are located. Then how should you follow the agenda and from which sources should you get women’s news from? The following list might provide an answer:

- Women's organisations (associations, foundations, platforms, initiatives etc)
- Non-governmental organisations who work in the field of women (organisations who work on human rights, education, health etc)
- Women's branches of political parties
- Unions and other professional bodies
- Yerel Gündem 21 (Local Agenda 21) City Councils and Women's Parliaments
- Local government (the municipality, office of the governor, office of the district governor, fore people...)
- Women's commissions of legal bars
- The local media, national/mainstream media
- Universities
- Community centres, public education centres
- Enterprises owned by women
- Individual women

You may lengthen this list and add the existing institutions/organisations/individuals' communication details to your lists. By visiting or calling these institutions/organisations regularly you can learn about activities regarding women and report on them.

To be in touch with news sources will allow you to reach the news first hand by furnishing you with constant news flow and it will also ensure that you do your share in spreading women's news. Let us give a few examples;

*Example 1:* How many women run for mayor, the municipal parliament or for fore person during local election time, how many are elected, whether the election results are satisfactory in terms of the political representation of women are important in terms of women's journalism. You can get information on the subject from political parties and through reporting you can draw the public's attention for more women to play roles.

*Example 2:* Poverty “hits” women the hardest in society. Many women contribute to the domestic economy by working without social security in low-paid jobs, as domestic workers or by selling what they produce at home as domestic workers. You can report on the lives and working conditions of women who sell at the market or go to houses as cleaners etc by interviewing them. Similarly, the success stories of women who set up their own businesses is also news.

### **“Where is the woman in this news item?”**

When producing news we must always ask ourselves this question: “Where is the woman in this news item?”.

Because at the local level as well, every policy/decision/practice in every field of social life has a positive or negative impact on women. Let us take a look at some more examples.

*Example 1:* In a given neighbourhood unlit street lights, especially during the winter months when darkness falls early, may be contributing to an increase in incidents of harassment, rape and purse snatching targeting women on that street. In reporting on this issue you should also think of women when reminding the municipality of its responsibility and count the possible rise in crimes targeting women among the negative impacts of this inadequate service.

*Example 2:* In meeting we held with women throughout Turkey as the Flying Broom we saw women have problems arising from urban life. One of these was the lack of women’s restrooms in the marketplace in some provinces. This is just an example. Bearing in mind that spaces of social life are almost all considered to be “for men” we should know that women also need social centres, parks etc. and feature them in our news.



*Example 3: As you know, the new Local Administrations Law requires a “women’s safe house” to be present in every settlement with a population of over 50 thousand. However, the number of municipalities who are sensitive on this issue, beyond keeping with the requirements of the law are very few. Violence against women exists in every region in Turkey and therefore a great part falls on local administrations in practices against violence. As representatives of the local media you must follow up on relevant decisions and practices, even promises, and you must follow the entire process as a journalist and report on it, thus forming a pressure base. While doing this, you should seek the opinion of women’s organisations in the city.*

Of course more such examples can be given. What is important is how you follow life in the city as a local journalist, how many news items regarding women you allow entry into your news pool and how you take up women while publishing these news items.

### **The presence of woman journalists in the local media**

Another issue which must be given importance is the quantitative presence of women reporters and decision makers in the local media. It is quite important for us how many women work as reporters, editors and editors in chief in local newspapers/radios/televisions. In the mainstream media there are many women who work as journalists but the situation is different at the local level. Meanwhile of women employees at the local level, who are already few in number, very few are in the decision making mechanism. This augments the “male” identity of the local media and naturally results in women’s news being given very little space or even women not featuring in the news at all. For this reason more women need to apply for these positions and newspaper/television owners need to employ more women.

In conclusion, I have shared with you the experiences we have gained through the Flying Broom's Local Woman Reporters Network so that they may have an effect on the publishing/broadcasting policy of the local media. The Flying Broom with its news network and website continues to be a communication platform which displays violence and discrimination against women, which allows women and women's organisations to be in touch with each other, to follow and relate the women's agenda in Turkey and in the world at large and which conveys the demands and expectations of women. We share with our readers news in many fields from violence to the law, health to education, culture and arts on our website [www.ucansupurge.org](http://www.ucansupurge.org), updated weekly. The role played by all these news items in rendering "visible" things done by women is great. As women we make news of our lives and experiences. For "life is news"!

*The Flying Broom*

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### **17-18 September 2005, Batman, Hotel Asko**

*Participants:* Nil Aydiş (Batman Bakış newspaper/ Batman), Hüseyin Ay (Batman Bakış newspaper/ Batman), Fatma Kavşut (Batman Bakış newspaper/ Batman), Ubeydullah Baş (Batman Bakış newspaper/ Batman), Nizamettin İzgi (Batman newspaper/ Batman), Şükrü Yıldırım (Batman newspaper/ Batman), Osman Seyrek (Batman Umut newspaper/ Batman), Ercan Aslan (Batman Medya newspaper/ Batman), Ahmet Aksoy (Y. Oluşum newspaper/ Gaziantep), Müslüm Çelik (Halkın Sesi newspaper/ Gaziantep), Mert Ali Bacaksız (İlke newspaper/ Gaziantep), Senar Yıldız (Yüksekova Haber newspaper/ Hakkari), Semira Aktaş (İlk Haber newspaper/ Malatya), Mhemet Halis İş (Midyat Habur newspaper/ Mardin), Süleyman İş (Midyat newspaper/ Mardin), Mustafa Söylemez (Muşun Sesi newspaper/Muş), Sabri Yıldırım (Muş Postası newspaper/ Muş), Necdet Armağan (Şark Telgraf newspaper/ Muş), Emrullah Özbey (Haber 49 newspaper/ Muş), Sahra Turhan (Siirt Yaşam newspaper/ Siirt), Evin Saklam (Siirt Yaşam newspaper/ Siirt), Yahya Maracı (Bizim Gazete/ Şanlıurfa), Salih Ünlü (Radio Medya/ Şanlıurfa), Cumali Aksaç (Çağlar FM/ Malatya), İskender Korkut (Mercan TV/ Adıyaman), M. Ali Ayhan (ART-TV/ Diyarbakır), M. Duran Özkan (Güneş TV/ Malatya), Metin Kavak (Sipas TV/ Sivas), Reşat Akıncı (Human Rights Association/ Batman), Evin Sarı (Human Rights Association/ Batman)

*BİA Coordination:* Nadire Mater, Fügen Uğur, Ayşe Durukan, Baran Gündoğdu

*Presentations:* Hülya Gülbahar, Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver, Aksu Bora, İpek Çalışlar, Beyhan Demir, Halime Güner

## 24-25 September 2005, Ordu, Balıktaşı Hotel

*Participants:* Sümeýra Çağdaş (Hakimiyet newspaper/ Çorum), Seveda İnce (Kent Haber/ Çorum), Hülya Gökmen (Osmancık Haber newspaper/ Çorum), Revasiye Karaaslan (Tek Yıldız newspaper/ Çorum), Dursun Karahansan, (Gazete 28/ Giresun), Safiye Şule Karahaslan (Özbulancak newspaper/ Giresun), Saliha Yayla (Ekpres newspaper/ Giresun), Hıdır Keleş (Kars Halk newspaper/ Kars), Sedat Topaloğlu (İlgaz 37/ Kastamonu), Mustafa Kemal Bektaş (Önder newspaper/ Ereğli-Zonguldak), Sibel Özmen (Hürses newspaper/ Ordu), Hacer Çoşkun (Hizmet newspaper/ Ordu), Esmâ Gürel (Ünye Haber newspaper/ Ordu), Elif Çavuş (Hüryol newspaper/ Ordu), Zuriye İskenderoğlu (İnanış newspaper/ Zonguldak), engin Özkurt (Zirve newspaper/ Ordu), Dilşat Naz (Ordu Kent newspaper/ Ordu), Mutlu Güven (ORT newspaper/ Ordu), Erdal Demiralp (Hisar Fm/ Giresun), Mehmet Şahinbaş (Radio 37/ Kastamonu), Neslihan Yağcı (C.S.R.T/ Kastamonu), Tuğba Güdek (Oney Flash FM/ Ünye-Ordu), Nagihan Kırbay (Melodi FM/ Ünye-Ordu), Elif Torun (Hizmet Radio/ Ünye-Ordu), Emine Bülbül (Radio Kulüp/ Samsun), Serkan Türk (Radio Aktif/ Trabzon), İbrahim Eksilmez (Kaçkar TV-Radio/ Artvin), İsmail Şenol (Hisar TV/ Giresun), Deniz Öztürk (ORT Televizyonu/ Ordu), Şefat Yılmaz (Kanal 52/ Ordu), Hamide Şekerci (Hizmet TV/ Ünye-Ordu), Okan Dilek (STV/ Samsun), Ömür Çalış (ORT/ Ordu), Zeynep Türkmen (Flying Broom/ Ordu)

*BIA Coordination:* Nadire Mater, Erol Önderoğlu, Leyla İşbilir, Fügen Uğur

*Presentations:* Hülya Gülbahar, Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver, Nadire Mater, Fügen Uğur, Beyhan Demir, Selen doğan, Meriç Eyüboğlu

## 1-2 October 2005, Eskişehir Anadolu University

*Participants:* Salih Baran (Aşıkpaşa newspaper/ Kırşehir), Mustafa Çavuş (Memleket/ Kırşehir), Serap Elmas (Milli İrade newspaper/ Eskişehir), Berrin Kılmaz (Anadolu newspaper/ Eskişehir), Ergun Özmen (Yarın newspaper/ Bilecik), Abdullah Ünsal (Yeni Pazar newspaper/ Bilecik), A. Kaya Kaya (Yeni Şafak newspaper/ Eskişehir), Yeşil Kaya (Yeni Şafak newspaper/ Eskişehir), Aybala Şeker (ES Tempo/ Eskişehir), Lara Kurt (Net Radio/ Eskişehir), Mehmet Ali Turpçu (Ay TV/ Kırşehir), Mustafa Turpçu (Ay TV/ Kırşehir), Hikmet Manaz (Bolu Kadın İnisyatifi/ Bolu), Sevim Şahin (Association to Support Woman Candidates/ Eskişehir), Hüyeser Kılıç (Association to Support Woman Candidates/ Eskişehir)

*BlA Coordination:* Nadire Mater, Baran Gündoğdu, Neval Gündoğan

*Presentations:* Filiz Kerestecioğlu, Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver, Nadire Mater, İpek Çalışlar, Beyhan Demir, Selen Doğan

## **12-13 November, Çanakkale, Kolin Hotel**

*Participants:* Derya Aytaç (Bursa Haber/ Bursa), Barış Keskin (Olay FM/ Bursa), Rüstem Avcı (Demokrat Bakış/ Bursa), Nafî Karanfil (Güncel newspaper/ Bursa-Orhangazi), Ali Osman Ata (Genç Bayrak newspaper/ Bandırma-Balıkesir), Basri Atılganer (Gürses newspaper/ Bandırma-Balıkesir), Şinasi Oruç (Marmara Yaşam newspaper/ Bandırma-Balıkesir), Ergun Özmen (Yenipazar newspaper/ Bilecik), Abdullah Ünsal (Yarın newspaper/ Bilecik), Hilal Yüzüak (Boğaz newspaper/ Çanakkale), Duygu Kral (Boğaz Vitamin newspaper/ Çanakkale), Pınar Dublen (Burası Çanakkale newspaper/ Çanakkale), Ayhan Karaduman (Ayvacık newspaper/ Çanakkale), Filiz uysal (Lapseki newspaper/ Çanakkale), Kamil Yeşilfiliz (Biga Doğu newspaper/ Çanakkale), Mukadder Yeşilfiliz (Biga Doğu newspaper/ Çanakkale), Sedat Yeşilfiliz (Biga Doğu newspaper/ Çanakkale), Burcu Yeşilfiliz (Biga Doğu newspaper/ Çanakkale), Cahit Yılmaz (Ekspres newspaper/ Çanakkale), Cemal Akdağ (Ayyıldız newspaper/ Çanakkale), Remziye Güven (Medya Keşan newspaper/ Edirne), Gökhan Yumuşak (Keşan Önder newspaper/ Edirne), Mehmet Şen (Yeni Doğu newspaper/ Tekirdağ), Derya İpek (Manşet newspaper/ Yalova), Pınar Soylu (Yalova newspaper/ Yalova), Duygu Biçer (Bölge newspaper/ Yalova), Mustafa Beyler (Gündem newspaper/ Çanakkale), Recep Yüzüak (B. Zafer newspaper/ Çanakkale), Muzaffer Altunay (Zaman newspaper/ Çanakkale), Gökhan Özbirtun (Manşet newspaper/ Çanakkale), Volkan Özbirtun (Manşet newspaper/ Çanakkale), Seçkin Toplam (Olay newspaper/ Çanakkale), Gazi Güneş (Olay newspaper/ Çanakkale), Mahmut Uçak (Can Dost FM/ Bursa), Mehmet Şahin (1001 FM/ Bursa), Hasan Anıl (Radio As/ Bursa), Zafer Beyaz (Medya Dost/ Bursa), Sinan Unuak (Güneş FM/ Bursa), Ercüment Esen (Körfez FM/ Gemlik-Bursa), Erdinç Saraç (Radio BRT/ Balıkesir), Mustafa Yamaner (Radio Bester/Bandırma-Balıkesir), Sadettin Aslan (Çan FM/ Çanakkale), Devrim Turan (Anadolunun Sesi Radiosu/ İstanbul), Zübeyde Senem (Özgür Radio/ İstanbul), Adnan Şahin (Biga FM/ Çanakkale), Özlem Sağduç (Gelibolu FM/ Çanakkale), Ümit Babacan (Marmara TV/ Bandırma-Balıkesir), Aylin Akıncı (Ton TV/ Çanakkale), İsmet Akıncı (Journalists' Association/ Çanakkale), Gülay Sarışen (Association to Support Woman Candidates/ Çanakkale), Muteber Yügnük (Flying Broom/ Çanakkale), Yıldız Han Ordulu (Turkish Women's Union/ Çanakkale), Seçil Özyayla (Local Agenda 21/ Çanakkale), Gülay Kanber (Local Agenda 21/ Çanakkale), Saadet Çicekli (Local Agenda 21/ Çanakkale), Nursen Kırmacı (Association to Support Modern Life/ Çanakkale), Ayşegül Kartal (Turkish Women's Union/ Çanakkale), Ayşe Derman (Çanakkale Women's Union/ Çanakkale), Saniye Seçkin

(Çanakkale Women's Union/ Çanakkale), Serpil Mete (Haberci newspaper/ Yalova), Ganime Güneş (Association for Utilising Handicrafts Labour/ Çanakkale), Besime Ünal (Association for Utilising Handicrafts Labour/ Çanakkale), Sevgi Uysal (Municipal Council Member/ Çanakkale), Yüksel Özcan (Association for Utilising Handicrafts Labour/ Çanakkale), Nevin Pazarbaşı (Association for Utilising Handicrafts Labour/ Çanakkale), Serap Yaşar (Association for Utilising Handicrafts Labour/ Çanakkale), Filiz Mutay (Local Agenda 21/Çanakkale), Nilgün Ordulu (Turkish Women's Union/ Çanakkale), Şenay Danişan (Barbaros Community Centre/ Çanakkale)

*BlA Coordination:* Ertuğrul Kürkçü, Baran Gündoğdu, Erol Önderoğlu

*Presentations:* Filiz Kerestecioğlu, Eser Köker, Aksu Bora, Nermin Yıldırım, Selen Doğan, Meriç Eyüboğlu

### **19-20 November 2005, İzmir, Hotel Kaya Prestige**

*Participants:* Ayfer Eker (Didim Manşet newspaper/ Didim-Aydın), Hasan Eker (Didim Gündem newspaper/ Didim-Aydın), Özlem Girgin Aydın (Özgür Ses newspaper/ Didim-Aydın), Savgu Aydın (TİEDİDYMA newspaper/ Didim-Aydın), Sevgiser Erdoğan (Hüraydın newspaper/ Aydın), Fatma Cansu (Ses 15 newspaper/ Burdur), Hasan Türker (Burdur Journalists' Association/ Burdur), Hakan Altınsır (Kulvar newspaper/ Denizli), Hüseyin Özdemir (Hakimiyet newspaper/ Isparta), Duygu Özsüpanda (İzmir Life magazine/ İzmir), Çiğdem Askeri (Ege Telgraf newspaper/ İzmir), Şahap Avcı (Aliağa Ekspres newspaper/ İzmir), Dilek Altıntaş (Çağdaş Marmaris newspaper/ Marmaris), M. Özgür Bulut (Gazete 45/ Manisa), Mehmet Bozkır (Güney Ege newspaper/ Muğla), Seval Kandemir (Olay newspaper/ Uşak), Özlem Bardakçı (Bir Eylül newspaper/ Uşak), Ali Girişim (Çağdaş Burdur newspaper/ Burdur), Emir Ayşe Güldal (Kulvar gazetesini/ Isparta), Muhabir (Ekspres/ Isparta), Tuğba Tercan Kadılar (Demokrat Radio/ İzmir), Nadiye Gürbüz (Demokrat Radio/ İzmir), Filiz Bulut (Soma FM/ Manisa), Fatoş Ünal (Radio 45/ Manisa), Duygu Yavuz (Demokrat Radio/ İzmir), Gamze Kalaycı (Burdur Bucak Radio-TV/ Burdur), Kameraman (SKY/ İzmir), Neriman Sarıtaş (Women's Solidarity Association/ İzmir), Ayşegül Önen (Ahean Women's Solidarity Foundation/ İzmir), Yasemin Alpboğa (MAZLUMDER/ İzmir), Engin Demir (Association for the Protection of Women's Rights/ İzmir), Ayla Eği (Association for the Protection of Women's Rights/ İzmir), Şermin Akman (İzmir Women's Union/ İzmir), Ayhan Ünver (İzmir Women's Union/ İzmir), Safiye Fenercioğlu (Association to Support Woman Candidates/ İzmir), Yeldan Başkan Bilba (Association to Support Woman Candidates/ İzmir), Fulya Ürek (Association to Support Woman Candidates/ İzmir), Berrin Dayus (Institute of Management Economics/ İzmir), Latife Şencan (Turkish Women's Union/ İzmir), Birol Keskin (Lawyer/ İzmir)

*BlA Coordination:* Nadire Mater, Kemal Özmen, Leyla İşbilir

*Presentations:* Hülya Gülbahar, Eser Köker, Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver, Nadire Mater, İpek Çalışlar, Beyhan Demir, Selen Doğan, Meriç Eyüboğlu

## **26-27 Kasım 2005, Adana, Otel İnci**

*Participants:* Candan Yaygın (Kent Konseyi newspaper/ Adana), Ersin İlhan (Yerel Haber newspaper/ Adana), Fatma Arslan (Yerel Haber newspaper/ Adana), Mehmet Yılmaz (Manavgatın Sesi newspaper/ Antalya), Avni Gelendost (Akdenizin Sesi newspaper/ Antalya), Gülşen Çınar (Sahil newspaper/ Antalya), Işık Tuncel (Ekspres newspaper/ Antalya), Aydın Saatçi (Kaynarca newspaper/ Elbistan), Ersen Korkmaz (Demokrat newspaper/ Iskenderun), Arif kerem Yavuzaslan (Karamanın Sesi newspaper/ Karaman), Berkan Vanlı (İstiklal newspaper/ Kahramanmaraş), Saniye Akyol (Akdeniz newspaper/ Kahramanmaraş), H.A. Kürşat Açıkgöz (Meydan newspaper/ Kayseri), Ruhsar Hatip (Haber newspaper/ Kayseri), Eflatun Aksoy (Yeni Kayseri newspaper/ Kayseri), Ahmet Öncü (Önder newspaper/ Niğde), Ayşe Paslanlı (Göreme newspaper/ Nevşehir), Mihriban Amanoğlu (Bugün Mersin newspaper/ Mersin), Özay Doğan (Bahçenin Sesi newspaper/ Osmaniye), Aysun Ayla (Haber newspaper/ Osmaniye), Fatih Demir (Dünya Radio/ Adana), Şükran Akın (Dünya Radio/ Adana), Lokman Gümüşsoy (Radio Kent/ Aksaray), Doğan Sönmez (Venüs Radio/ Antalya), Sinan Erdoğan (Kay Radio/ Kayseri), Famiha Aslan (Radio Ses/ Mersin), Sema Erdoğan (Radio Başkent/ Adana), Leyla Ozan (Kay TV/ Kayseri), Leyla Uyar (AMARGİ/ Adana), Fatoş Hacı Velioğlu (Lawyer/ Adana), Çiğdem Akça (Adana Women's Solidarity Centre and Safe House Protection Association/ Adana), Sema Yapıcı (Domestic Women Solidarity and Support Association President/ Adana), Melek Kurt (Association to Support Woman Candidates/ Adana), Ali Ünlüler (Anadolu Publishing Manager and KGRT/ Karaman), Bahar Teğin (Independent Women's Association/ Mersin), Fatma Kenger Kaya (City Council Women's Parliament/ Adana), Ayşegül Kanat (Feminist Group/ Ankara)

*BlA Coordination:* Nadire Mater, Baran Gündoğdu, Tolga Korkut

*Presentations:* Hülya Gülbahar, Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver, Nadire Mater, İpek Çalışlar, Beyhan Demir, Selen Doğa





## Authors

### Beyhan Demir

She was born in Antakya in 1972. She graduated from Istanbul University Faculty of Political Science Department of Public Administration. In 1998 she began to work for the *Pazartesi* magazine. Since 2003 she has acted as the editor in chief of the magazine. Her articles are regularly published in the Zip Istanbul Magazine.

### Eser Köker

She was born in Samsun in 1958. She completed her lycee education at the 19 Mayıs Lycee. She graduated from the University of Marmara Faculty of Political Science, then known as Şişli Political Science in 1980 and completed masters and doctoral studies at Ankara University Faculty of Political Science. In her doctoral thesis presented in 1988 she studied the position of women in scientific organisation. Since 1986 she has worked as a member of staff at the communication faculty of Ankara University. She has two published books; *The Communication of Politics and the Politics of Communication* and *Flowers Dried in Books*. She is one of the co-authors of the book *Mirrors which have Outlasted Grandmothers' Secrets* in which the stories of students of the AU Women's Studies Programme collected their stories regarding their grandmothers. She currently lectures on political communication, spoken culture, political science, rhetoric, women's communication and politics at the Faculty of Communication and the Institute of Social Sciences. She also regularly gives conferences and seminars under the same titles at the Northern Cyprus Near East University. She is married and has a daughter.

## Filiz Kerestecioğlu

She was born in Gülcük in 1961. She graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Law in 1984. She has been practicing as a freelance lawyer since 1987. She was an activist within the women's movement and took positions in various magazines. Between 1991-92 she was the Switzerland representative of *Nokta* magazine. She was in the board of editors of the *Feminist* in 1987 and of the *Pazartesi* magazine in 1995. Between 2000-2004 she acted as the managing editor of the *Günce Hukuk* magazine. She was among the founders of the Istanbul Bar Women's Rights Implementation Centre in 1989 and of the Mor Çatı Women's Shelters Foundation in 1990. In 1995 she was the producer of the documentary "Kadınlar Vardır" (There are Women) which recounted the struggle of women from Ottoman times to the present day. The "Legal Literacy Handbook" of Women's Human Rights New Solutions Foundation which she edited was published in 1995.

## Fügen Uğur

She graduated from Istanbul German Lycee and Aachen Technical University Department of Management and gained certificates of European Law and European Politics from the European Research Programme of the same university. She worked as an administrator and a representative in various national and international non-governmental organisations. She provides consultancy services on project development, international events organisation and project assessment to various national and international organisations and is a trainer and consultant on work ethics.

## Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver

She was born in Istanbul in 1955. After graduating from Galatasaray Lycee she completed her undergraduate studies in Political Science and masters studies in Political Sociology at the Paris I-Panthéon-Sorbonne University. She completed her doctoral studies in Communication Sociology at the Montpellier III – Paul Valéry University. Having worked in the private sector in the fields of social research, communication consultancy, press and publication she became a member of the staff at Galatasaray University in 1996, a post which she has held since. Aside from four published books she has many articles in the fields of gender, popular culture, the media, sociology of the cinema and political communication as well as translations in social sciences. Other than her academic work she carries out consultancy and film interpreting workshops for the Filmor Woman's Films Festival and other work on the

media and women's rights. She is among the founders and a working group member of the Women Media Monitoring Group.

## Hülya Gülbahar

She was born in İzmir and after having studied for a year at the Aegean University College of Journalism and Public Relations she graduated from Dokuz Eylül University Faculty of Law. Between 1984-1988 she worked in the fields of encyclopaedia publishing and trade unions publishing. She was one of the founders and writers of the *Kadın Bülteni* and the *Kadın Postası* magazines. Since 1988 she has been working as a freelance lawyer in İstanbul. She has been an activist in the women's movement since 1978. She is a founding member of the Mart Women's Platform and İstanbul Independent Women's Initiative. Between 1994 and 2004 she was the volunteer lawyer for the Mor Çatı Women's Shelters Foundation. She is the founding member of the Kadın Kurultayı e-mail group, Women Media Monitoring Group and Women's Labour and Employment Group; she is a member of the general board of Women's Works Library and Information Centre Foundation and a member of Solidarity with Women Foundation, Turkish Parliamentarians' Union Female-Male Equality Commission and the İstanbul Bar Women's Rights Implementation Centre. As a founding member of the Civil Code Women's Platform and the Turkish Penal Code Women's Platform she continues her work in these areas. She gives training and attends conferences at the İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir bars and other institutions and organisations on the subjects of the Civil Code, the Penal Code and women's rights. Her articles are currently being published in the press, various magazines, in *Kazete*, a women's magazine and in the *Feminist Research Magazine*. She acted as consultant for the "Women's Club" programme aired on Kanaltürk in 2005 and 2006. Since 2005 she has been contributing to the preparation and presentation of the programme "The Woman Form of the Story" which has a section called "Living Law" and is aired on Açık Radio. Since 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2007 she is the president of the Association to Support Woman Candidates.

## İpek Çalışlar

She was born in İstanbul. She graduated from Üsküdar Girls' American Lycee and Ankara University Faculty of Political Science. She began journalism at the Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) news centre. After the 1980 coup she quit TRT; was a news editor in the *Nokta* magazine which was the voice of the opposition in the 1980s and was one of the founders of the short lived *Söz* newspaper and *Sokak* which was known as the magazine without a boss. Between 1990 and 1992 she lived in Hamburg and researched homosexuality, women and Islam. After

returning to Turkey she undertook the news editing of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper and then for 10 years published *Cumhuriyet Dergi* supplement. In 2006 her biographical work on Latife Hanım was published as a book.

### **Nadire Mater**

She was born in Söke in 1949. She is the president of the IPS Communication Foundation and project consultant for Media Freedom and Independent Journalism Monitoring and News Network (BIA<sup>2</sup>). She studied at the Social Services Academy and following 10 years of work as a social services expert began journalism. She has been a journalist for 27 year and having worked at local, national and international media she is now trying to bring them together. Her foremost fields of interest are human rights, children, women and the freedom of expression. For a while she was the Turkey representative of Journalists without Borders. Her book *Mehmedin Kitabı* (*Voices from the Front*) which is composed of interviews carried out with 42 young men who had been at the conflict zone in the Southeast for military service during 1984-1998 was published, banned and cleared in 1999. The book has been translated into English, German, Italian, Finnish and Greek.

### **Selen Doğan**

She was born in Ankara in 1975. She graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Communication Department of Journalism in 1998. The same year she became an editor in the publications unit of the Ankara University Turkish and Foreign Languages Education Centre. In 2004 she resigned from her post at the university and started working at the Flying Broom. She is the editor of the news website of the Flying Broom, the women's magazine Flying News and of the books published by the association. She is the editor of the Local Woman Reporters Network which has been active since 2003 and she trains women's groups and woman reporters on media and gender. At the same time she undertakes duties in other women's projects carried out by the Flying Broom. Selen Doğan has many articles and interviews published in various magazines and websites.

### **Sevda Alankuş**

She graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Political Science in 1981. She gained her doctoral degree from Political Science and Public Administration with her thesis on the Political Culture of Turkish Cypriot Elites. Alankuş continued her studies at Leeds University on

Cultural/Ethnic Identities. Between 1982 and 1999 she worked at the Faculties on Communication of the Aegean and Ankara Universities as a member of staff. She worked as a consultant, researcher and coordinator for projects such as Media Monitoring BIA's Local Media Training Human Rights in Primary and Secondary Education Textbooks. In 1995 she received her title of associate professor in the field of Communication Theories. Since 1999 she has been a member of staff at the Eastern Mediterranean University Faculty of Communication and Media Studies and she is currently the dean of the faculty.

## **GENDER-BASED JOURNALISM**

We think that the news item is a genre which reproduces rights violations against women, as it does with all “others”. For the language of daily life is a phallic language and the patriarchal discourse produced through this language has penetrated the news item, as it has similarly penetrated the narratives of science, love, eroticism, religion, literature, the law and politics...

In this news we move from the claim that for a rights based journalism the language and structure of both daily life and the news needs to change and open up to discussion the rights violations committed in traditional journalism; we display how women are not represented in the news –and if they are how they are represented due to violence, harassment and rape committed against them – and how the language and structure of the news violates their rights. Our aim is to show the way to transform the present understanding of journalism to an understanding formed around the framework of woman based journalism. When we say woman based journalism, we mean a form of journalism which does not commit rights violations, which follows those violations committed, which forms every news item in a language and structure which can lead the way to policy and transformations to the benefit of women –as with children- and a form of journalism which is based on solutions. Therefore our book makes an effort to contribute in two ways, theoretical and practical. Primarily it tries to introduce the concept and understanding of woman based journalism to the literature in Turkey concerning reporting/journalism. Secondly It draws attention to the news item being a masculine genre by carrying forward the arguments regarding the status of the news item held by critical work which problematises the structure of the news which is formed through power relationships and its claim to truth. It does not rest with displaying a theoretical framework regarding the structure of the news item, but shows us how a transformation may be realised.

ISBN-13:978-975-01484-1-5

