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# COMBATING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN TURKEY



An Analysis of the Discourses on Domestic Violence  
Among Organisations in Turkey



JENNY HENNECKE

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Handledare: Merete Hellum, Tiiu Soidre & Yakın Ertürk

# Abstract

<b>Title:</b> Combating domestic violence in Turkey – An analysis of the discourses on domestic violence among organisations in Turkey	
<b>Author:</b> Jenny Hennecke	
<b>Advisors:</b> Merete Hellum (Göteborg University, Sweden) Tiiu Soidre (Göteborg University, Sweden) Yakın Ertürk (Middle East Technical University, Turkey)	
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<b>Aim of the thesis (objectives and questions):</b> Domestic violence is an important issue in Turkey and there are many different organisations combating domestic violence. My interest is to analyse how these organisations perceive domestic violence. This will be done by analysing the socio-cultural context and the discourses on domestic violence that are prevalent in the organisations working with this issue. My research questions are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Which discourses can be found in the definitions of domestic violence of the organisations?</li><li>• What are the similarities and the differences in the approaches?</li><li>• Which cooperation problems can occur due to the different approaches to domestic violence?</li></ul>	
<b>Method:</b> To start with, a literature review on the field was done. Later, interviews were conducted with the organisations of interest. Critical Discourse Analysis combined with a feministic perspective was the main tool used for the analysis.	
<b>Main results:</b> The discourses on domestic violence prevalent in the organisations working on domestic violence in Turkey were largely derived from an ‘international discourse’ on domestic violence. This means that their discourse was in line with international standards and adapted to the Turkish context. However, the organisations were found to be rather elitist and progressive in their views and ways of working whereas the view of most of the population of Turkey, including the politicians, are rather traditional in their way of thinking and acting. The differences in approaches to domestic violence between the organisations seemed to be rather small. The only issue where a different approach could be found was that regarding the involvement of men in the organisations and in the activities of the organisations. Furthermore, there seemed to be a lack of communication and cooperation among the organisations thereby hindering their ability to network, form public opinion and collaborate on projects.	
<b>Key words:</b> Domestic violence, Turkey, women’s organisations, critical discourse analysis, feminism, women’s rights	

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Most of all, I want to thank all the organisations that were willing to welcome me and patiently answered my questions.

## List of tables

*Table 1:* List of organisations participating in the research

*Table 2:* Fairclough's and Chouliaraki's and framework for critical discourse analysis

## List of abbreviations

AKP	Justice an Development Party
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHP	Republican People's Party
CIVICUS	Worldwide Alliance for Citizens Participation
CoE	Council of Europe
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CSW	Commission on Status of Women
EU	European Union
KSGM	Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women, the national women's machinery in Turkey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
SHCEK	Social Service Agency in Turkey
TUSEV	Third Sector Foundation of Turkey
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
WWHR	Women for Women's Human Rights

## Sammanfattning

Våld i hemmet är ett allvarligt problem i Turkiet. Det är inte bara vanligt förekommande utan också långtgående accepterat och legitimerat genom traditioner i det turkiska samhället. Enligt en studie har 30 procent av alla gifta kvinnor i städer, 52 procent av alla gifta kvinnor på landet och 58 procent av alla gifta kvinnor i slumområden blivit utsatta för våld i hemmet. Samtidigt finns det en aktiv kvinnorörelse som jobbar mot våldet och som har nått många framgångar de senaste tio åren. De har inte bara påverkat samhällsdebatten kring våldsbrott mot kvinnor utan också bidragit till att lagar har ändrats så att kvinnor juridiskt är skyddade från att bli utsatt för all form av våld i hemmet idag.

Uppsatsens fokus är organisationer som jobbar med våld i hemmet. Jag har analyserat hur dessa organisationer definierar, förhåller sig till och jobbar med våld i hemmet. För studien har jag tillbringat sex månader i Ankara, Turkiet och genomfört intervjuer med kvinnoorganisationer, FN, statliga institutioner och andra organisationer som på olika sätt jobbar med våld i hemmet. Frågeställningar är:

- Vilka diskurser kan urskiljas i definitionerna av våld i hemmet hos organisationerna?
- Vilka likheter och skillnader i förhållningssätt kring våld i hemmet finns hos organisationerna?
- Vilka samarbetsproblem kan skillnaderna i förhållningssätt leda till?

Dessa frågeställningar undersöktes med hjälp av Fairclough's och Choulioraki's diskursanalytiska teori samtidigt som jag hade ett feministiskt förhållningssätt till material och forskning.

Uppsatsens resultat är att diskurserna om våld i hemmet som är dominerande hos organisationerna mestadels är hämtade från en 'internationell diskurs' om våld i hemmet som grundar sig på ett mänskligt rättighetsperspektiv. Dessa diskurser sammanfaller med internationella normer och lagar men har delvis anpassats till den turkiska kontexten. Jag anser att de organisationerna som sysslar med våld i hemmet är progressiva men också elitistiska och inte förankrade i samhället. Deras syn på våld i hemmet skiljer sig från den största delen av befolkningen som håller fast vid traditionella värden som legitimerar våld i hemmet. Skillnaderna i de dominerande diskurserna mellan organisationerna har befunnits vara väldigt små. Diskurserna liknade varandra. De största skillnaderna hittades i arbetssätten och i organisationernas syn på män och deras deltagande i arbetet mot våld i hemmet. Vissa organisationer tyckte att det var självklart att involvera män medan andra organisationer, mestadels uttalat feministiska organisationer, var emot det. Vidare kunde en brist och svårigheter i kommunikation mellan organisationer för att driva projekt tillsammans, nätverka och forma allmän opinion fastställas. Sammanfattningsvis kan sägas att jag var imponerad av

organisationernas effektivitet och professionella tillvägagångssätt men samtidigt tycker att organisationerna måste bli bättre på att kommunicera öppet med varandra, involvera fler personer i organisationerna och jobba för att få mer stöd i samhället.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction to research

Domestic violence is a topic that has been exceedingly discussed in Sweden. Although Sweden is a country with high ambitions regarding gender equality, over 35 per cent of Swedish women<sup>1</sup> have been subjected to violence by their partners. Hence, even after three decades of intensive efforts of the women's movement and the empowerment of women in the public-sphere, intimate-partner violence is still a serious problem in Sweden (Ertürk 2007b).

In Turkey, domestic violence is by many people still perceived as a normal aspect of daily life that is legitimised by traditional customs. Figures show that 30 per cent of the married women in the urban areas, 52 per cent of the married women in the rural areas and 58 per cent of the married women in shantytowns report being beaten by their husbands. Since the 1980's, the local women's movement has been active in combating domestic violence, forming public opinion and lobbying politicians. The struggle has been challenging but it has led to important changes. Nowadays, women in Turkey are protected against domestic violence by law and they enjoy the same rights as their male counterparts. Furthermore, domestic violence has become a hotly debated topic in media and in society in general.

What can this thesis contribute to already existing literature and texts? My hope is that, with this thesis, I can contribute to a better understanding in Sweden of the Turkish context of domestic violence. The reality in Turkey is often erroneously reflected in the Western media, which results in prejudices and stereotypes against Turkish people. Furthermore, I also hope that I can contribute to the field of knowledge in Turkey by analysing domestic violence from a different angle.

## 1.2 Aim and purpose of the research

Domestic violence has become an important issue in Turkey and there are many different organisations combating domestic violence. My interest is to analyse how these organisations perceive domestic violence. This will be done by analysing both the socio-cultural context and the discourses on domestic violence that are prevalent in the organisations working with this issue.

My hypothesis is that even though different organisations such as state institutions, United Nations (UN), women's organisations and other organisations have similar approaches to domestic violence, there might be

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<sup>1</sup> of the women who were married to or had cohabited with a man at least once in their life

small differences that can lead to misunderstandings during the cooperation process.

My objects of research are organisations working with domestic violence, such as women's organisations, state organisations, the UN and other organisations.

### ***1.3 Research questions***

My research questions are:

- Which discourses can be found in the definitions of domestic violence of the organisations?
- What are the similarities and the differences in the approaches?
- Which cooperation problems can occur due to the different approaches to domestic violence?

### ***1.4 Disposition***

The thesis is divided into six different parts: (1) the introduction, including the aims and objectives and the presentation of the author of this text; (2) the background to the research, including a definition on domestic violence, a review of the women's rights situation in Turkey and the legal aspects of domestic violence; (3) the theoretical approaches; (4) the methods used; (5) the analysis; and (6) the conclusions.

### ***1.5 About the researcher***

The aim of this chapter is to explain what has influenced my research. How do I see my role as a researcher? Which values have shaped this research? Who am I as a person?

During the last decades, the role of the researcher and the influence that the researcher might have on the research, such as on the choice of the topic, the questions asked, the answers given, have been highlighted more and more. It has been acknowledged that it is impossible to be objective as a researcher and that the researcher is accountable for the knowledge that is produced in his or her work. This is called reflexivity. Hence, there has to be an open acknowledgement by the researcher of his or her assumptions, beliefs, sympathies and biases. Furthermore, the effects of power relations on the research process and the ethical judgements made have to be made clear (Ramazanoglu in Skinner et al. 2005:15). Letherby (2003) emphasises the importance of taking responsibility for the text produced. One way to do that is by positioning yourself as researcher in relation to the text. Another way is to

produce “our ‘intellectual biography’ by providing ‘accountable knowledge’ in which the reader has access to details of the contextuality located reasoning context which gives rise to the ‘findings’, the ‘outcomes’ ” (Letherby 2003: 9). To be reflexive and accountable for my text is something I consider highly important. Only in the context of my own beliefs, biases and judgements, can this thesis be understood in the right way.

The Finish sociologist Eeva Jokinen (cited by Järviluoma, Moisala & Vilkkö 2003: 110) has suggested three different forms of authorial presence in the research text. Autobiographical presence is the first form and represents the author’s lived experience in the context of the research. Being personal in research reporting by striving to intensify the relationship between the researcher and the implied reader is the second form. The third form of authorial presence in the research is the author’s disclosure of his or her theoretical position in relation to his or her imagined audience. This can be called “positional”. In the course of the thesis, I will hence try to give an account on all three forms of authorial presence. But firstly I want to introduce myself so that the reader is able to understand my personal background.

I am in my late twenties and I grew up in Germany with a Swedish mother and a German father. This provided me with an intercultural environment that has shaped me as a person and my way of understanding different cultures. I have always been very interested in exploring different cultures and getting to know other ways of thinking and understanding. I have lived abroad for several years in different countries such as Uruguay and Singapore. In 2002, I moved to Gothenburg, Sweden to study. My majors are Development Studies and Sociology. For the field research for this thesis, I spent six months in Turkey in the spring of 2007. I was based in Ankara where I also did most of the interviews. At the same time, I also did an internship with the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences, Dr. Yakin Ertürk.

## 2. Background

### 2.1 Earlier research

I have not been able to find earlier research on how organisations work with domestic violence. However, worth mentioning is a thesis called “Contemporary women’s activism in engendering the political agenda: a case of the legal reform in Turkey” by Ayşe Gönüllü (2005) submitted to the Middle East Technical University. The main aim of this study was to investigate the tools of the women’s activism, which are used in transforming the gender equality agenda in Turkey through legislative reform. Ayşe also looks at the women’s organisations and how they have influenced the public agenda.

A report that caught my attention is the TUSEV (Third Sector Foundation of Turkey) report on civil society in Turkey, providing a Civil Society Index for Turkey (2006). In this report, interesting statistics on the participation of Turkish citizens in civil society are presented. There is a focus on gender in some parts of the report, which was helpful for this thesis.

Another area of research that has been relevant for this thesis is the research done in the area of domestic violence in Turkey. A literature review shows that there is a fair amount of publications available on the topic of domestic violence in Turkey, which have mostly been produced by NGOs (Non-governmental organisations) and feminist researchers affiliated to the women’s movement. However, until now, no comprehensive statistics have been produced on domestic violence and its frequency in different areas of the country. At the moment, there are ongoing efforts to improve the situation and create statistical data.

The earliest study on domestic violence in Turkey was conducted by a market-research company, PIAR, which was contracted by the national women’s machinery, the Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women (KSGM) in 1988. In this study it was pinpointed that 75 per cent of the women who were interviewed had been abused by their husbands physically (PIAR-Gallup cited by Gülçür 1999). In a national survey conducted by PIAR in 1992, 22 per cent of married respondents reported having been physically abused by their husbands (Gülçür 1999).

Yüksel (1990, cited by Gülçür 1999) interviewed 140 married women who had applied for counselling at Istanbul University Medical Centre and found that 57 per cent reported to have been abused by their husbands.

One of the most comprehensive studies about domestic violence in Turkey was carried out by Gülçür for the organisation Women for Women’s Human Rights in 1993-1994. The findings of the study indicated that there are different forms of domestic violence that act as pervasive violation of women’s human rights (Gülçür 1999:4). Few of the women subjected to domestic

violence in Turkey actually tend to take measures to improve their situation (1999: 13). According to the study, the most common strategies against domestic violence are: not talking to the husbands for some period of time (22.7 per cent), temporarily leaving the home (23 per cent), asking for help from friends, family or neighbours (10.7 per cent) and leaving home permanently (7.3 per cent). The option of asking for help from social services and government agencies was only used in a few cases. Only 2.4 per cent went to a doctor or hospital, 1.2 per cent called the police, 1.2 per cent applied to a social service agency, 1.2 per cent went to a women's shelter and 0 per cent filed a legal complaint.<sup>2</sup> Gülçür (1999:14) writes about three factors that may play a role in limiting the range of women's responses to domestic violence: a) a lack of awareness of the women, that they have the right to apply to judicial, law enforcement and other social service institutions to stop the violence; b) a perception that applying to these institutions would not be of any help; and c) internalised social norms that sanction domestic violence and lead the women to believe "she somehow deserves it".

According to a study conducted by the Istanbul Bilgi University, 30 per cent of the married women in the urban areas, 52 per cent of the married women in the rural areas and 58 per cent of the married women in the shantytowns reported being beaten by their husbands (Kardam 2005: 113). Furthermore 52 per cent of the respondents indicated that they encountered violence in the families before they got married (Kardam 2005: 113). Studies reveal that domestic violence is still perceived as a normal aspect of family life, including by the women themselves. The 2003 Turkish Demographic and Health Survey asked a sample of women whether a husband would be justified in beating his wife if she burned the food, if she argued with him, if she spent too much money, if she neglected the children or if she refused to have sex with him. Overall, 39.2 per cent of women accepted at least one of these reasons as a justification for wife beating (Ertürk 2007a).

In 2005, UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) published a report on honour killings. The report's main findings were that "youths are surprisingly more accepting and supportive of killing in the name of honour than their elders. This view is reinforced by recent findings that the majority of young women expect to be beaten as part of their married life."

## ***2.2 Background information on Turkey***

Turkey has a population of 70 million people with more than 73 per cent of the population living in the cities. The country is the 17<sup>th</sup> most industrialised country in the world. Geographically, Turkey stretches across the Anatolian peninsula, located between Europe and Asia and bordering the Mediterranean, Aegean and Black Sea.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that this study was conducted before the law against domestic violence was introduced. Today, these figures might have changed.

The Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923 as the successor state of the fallen Ottoman Empire. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who came to govern the country for the next 25 years, tried to break the ties with the Ottoman Empire, which had been founded on Islamic principles, by implementing radical changes. His vision of Turkey was to create a Western oriented modern nation. He introduced secularism, separated religion from the state in order to limit the influence of the Islamic leaders on politics and forbade the citizens to wear traditional clothes. Furthermore he conducted a language reform replacing all Arabic and Persian words with Turkish words and gave equal voting rights to women and men. The secularisation of the family code and the enfranchisement of the women were part of a broader struggle to liquidate the theoretical institutions of the Ottoman state and create a new legitimising state ideology (Kandiyoti, Introduction 1991:4). Atatürk's political visions are today carried on by the Kemalists, named after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Kemalism is represented by the CHP Party (Republican People's Party) in politics.

Since its foundation, Turkey has had a rocky history with three military coups in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, separatist and political extremist movements with an ethical touch and economic recessions. In the 1970s, conflicts between socialist rebels and nationalists emerged and ended with the military coup in 1980. In the 1980s, internal conflicts with the PKK, the Kurdistan Workers Party again weakened the nation and improved only after the arrest of PKK leader Abudullah Öcalan in 1999.

Economic reforms in the late 1980s speeded up the economic development. In the past few years, the country has been relatively stable, both politically and economically. The current Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was first elected in 2002 and re-elected in 2007. He belongs to the Justice and Development Party, AKP, a conservative party with Islamic roots. His party receives a considerable amount of support in the population despite its Islamic orientation that many of the voters do not share. However, it is commonly believed that the military, as the guardian of the secular principles, will make sure that Turkey's secular principles are not challenged.

Turkey has been a candidate country for the European Union since the 1980s. The first negotiations for Turkey's EU membership were started in 1999 but the negotiations were only intensified in 2005. Turkey, as all EU candidate countries, has to satisfy three criteria for accession<sup>3</sup>: 1) Stable institutions that ensure democracy, rule of law, human rights and respect for minorities; 2) a well-functioning market economy; 3) the adoption of the EU body of legislation. For the case of Turkey, the EU has especially highlighted the importance for Turkey to comply with first, the 'human rights criteria' (Dunér 2006: 6). The pressure of the EU to improve the situation of human rights and especially the situation of women in Turkey has been an issue that has frequently been discussed in the media. The religion, the size of the

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<sup>3</sup> called the "Copenhagen Criteria"

population<sup>4</sup>, the growing economy and the closeness to the East<sup>5</sup> have been the reasons for the EU's hesitant attitude. Dunér (2006: 9) states that Turkey has been seen more as a problem than an asset by the European Union and that Turkey's positive aspects have seldom been taken into account.

## **2.3 Domestic violence**

In this chapter, a definition of domestic violence is provided, domestic violence and human rights are put in relation to each other, the cultural context of domestic violence is discussed and an overview over the situation of domestic violence in Turkey is given.

### **2.3.1 Definition of domestic violence and violence against women**

Domestic violence is a term that is widely disputed today. In many circles (especially among feminists), people prefer to label it 'domestic violence against women' or 'male violence against women' in order to highlight the victim and/or the perpetrator of domestic violence. However, I prefer to use the term 'domestic violence' as I think that the term encompasses both the perpetrator and the victim as well as potentially including non-male perpetrators (e.g. mothers-in-law) and children as victims of domestic violence. Other terms that are used instead of domestic violence are: intimate partner violence, family violence, wife abuse, intimate partner aggression, spouse abuse, violence in close relationships, women in violent relationships, wife assault and women battering. Another term that often shows up in the context of domestic violence is 'violence against women'. There is a difference between violence against women and domestic violence. Violence against women refers to all kinds of violent acts that women can be subjected to. This can include women trafficking, domestic violence, rape (outside the family) and female genital mutilation. Moreover, the term violence against women highlights the structural aspects of violence performed by the state or society (gender discrimination at work, discriminatory laws etc.). Hence, not all forms of violence against women are cases of domestic violence. In this text the term 'violence against women' will be used frequently as many texts use it together with the term 'domestic violence', especially in UN documents.

Until today, no universally accepted definitions on 'violence against women' and 'domestic violence' have been developed. There is a disagreement on whether the definition of 'violence against women' should be broad or narrow. The broad definition would include structural violence such as poverty and unequal access to health and education, which the narrow definition would exclude in order to not lose the descriptive power of the term (UNICEF 2000).

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<sup>4</sup> Turkey would be the second biggest country in the EU population-wise

<sup>5</sup> Turkey is bordering Iran, Iraq, Armenia, Georgia and Syria



The ‘Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women’ (1993) provides a definition of gender-based abuse, calling it “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. The Declaration defines violence against women as encompassing, but not limited to three areas: violence occurring in the family, within the general community, and violence perpetrated or condoned by the state (see the Appendices for more information).

In the UNICEF Digest “Domestic Violence against Women and Girls” (2000), the term ‘domestic violence’ is used to describe violence perpetrated by intimate partners and other family members manifested through physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse and economical abuse.

*Physical abuse includes:* slapping, beating, arm-twisting, stabbing, burning, choking, strangling, kicking, threats with an object or weapon, and murder. Traditional practices harmful to women are also included, such as female genital mutilation and wife inheritance.

*Sexual abuse includes:* coerced sex through threats, intimidation or physical force, forcing unwanted acts or forcing sex with others.

*Psychological abuse includes:* behaviour that is intended to intimidate and persecute, and takes the form of threats of abandonment or abuse, confinement to the home, surveillance, threats to take away custody of the children, destruction of objects, isolation, verbal aggression and constant humiliation.

*Economical abuse includes:* denial of funds, refusal to contribute financially, denial of food and basic needs, and controlling access to health care, employment, etc.

In my thesis, I use the term ‘domestic violence’ as defined above (UNICEF) including physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence perpetrated by intimate partners and other family members. The violence can thus also be inflicted upon a girl (e.g. daughter or sister) and can include violence inflicted by a mother-in-law on her daughter-in-law, which I consider as important in the Turkish context.

### **2.3.2 Violence against women and human rights**

For a long time, domestic violence was neither seen nor recognised as a societal problem as it was seen as a strictly private matter and neither the state nor the UN had the right to interfere. This view was challenged by women’s rights organisations in the 1970’s that claimed that domestic violence had its origins in complex social institutions that define women’s place as in the home and as subordinates to men (Andersen 2006: 7). The women’s organisations organised collective action and demonstrations in order to call attention to the plight of battered women. In the 1980’s, after



many years of struggle, the issue of domestic violence finally started to be recognised as a societal problem. At that time, the United Nations started working on the issue and states adapted their legislations to protect women from domestic violence.

Today, the right to life and to bodily integrity are core fundamental rights that are protected under international law (Stop violence against women website 3). In 1992, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted a comprehensive general recommendation (No. 19) in which it is formally recognised that violence against women constitutes a form of gender discrimination that impairs or nullifies women's enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms under international law (Ertürk 2006b). Radika Coomaraswamy, the former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, explains that there are three ways in which domestic violence can be understood as a human rights violation: due diligence<sup>6</sup>, equal protection, and torture (Stop violence against women website 3). In a statement to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995, the United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said that violence against women is a universal problem that must be universally condemned. In the Platform for Action, the core document of the Beijing Conference, governments declared: "violence against women constitutes a violation of basic human rights and is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace" (UN website for Women and Violence).

### **2.3.3 The cultural context of domestic violence**

Studies have shown that domestic violence is a phenomenon that is prevalent in all societies. 20-50 per cent of women in the different regions of the world have experienced domestic violence according to a report produced by UNICEF (UNICEF 2000). Some reports claim the numbers to be even higher. For instance, Gülçür refers to a study conducted in 90 societies worldwide where Levinson (1990 cited by Gülçür 1999: 4) found domestic violence against women in 86 per cent of them. The only variations between the countries are the patterns and trends that exist in each country and region.

Gender is in almost all societies a major category for the organisation of cultural and social relations. Gender expectations in a culture are sometimes expressed subtly in social interaction<sup>7</sup> (Andersen 2006: 27ff). Culture thus shapes the different gender roles and defines the different expectations that are present in a society. Hence, domestic violence is expressed differently and takes distinct forms in different cultures, changing its patterns and trends. In many cultures, violations against women's rights are sanctioned under the cover of local cultural practices and norms. Recognising this problem, the

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<sup>6</sup> Due diligence obliges the state to act with a certain standard of care.

<sup>7</sup> In the US culture, for instance, it is common that men interrupt women (Andersen 2006: 27ff).

Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination of Women stated that “traditional religious or cultural practice could not justify violations of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women”. Consequently, if states fail to condemn any specific form of violence against women or fail to pursue such violence, they violate their obligations (Ertürk 2006b). However, the validity and the universality of the human rights of women have been contested by relativist discourses. Cultural relativists see human rights as Western inventions and impositions that are incompatible with local cultures. Acts of discrimination and violence against women are hence justified and excused in the name of ‘culture’, ‘custom’, ‘tradition’ or ‘religion’, thus undermining the compliance of states with their international human rights obligations (Ertürk 2006b). In her thematic report on the “Intersections between culture and violence against women” (2006b), the current UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its causes and consequences Dr. Yakın Ertürk asks the states to condemn violence taking place in the name of culture in stead of trivialising or otherwise playing down the harm caused by such violence.

#### **2.3.4 Domestic violence in Turkey**

In Turkey, domestic violence was regarded to be a taboo subject for a long time and, it was only in the 1980s that domestic violence and violence against women was put on the public agenda by the women’s organisations. Domestic violence in Turkey is not only sanctioned through social norms and behaviour (Gülçür 1999: 5) but until recently also through legislative means. Until the change of the Civil Code in 2002, the man was defined as the head of the household and he was thereby in charge of the family’s private matters. Domestic violence was regarded as a private matter and was therefore of no concern to the state. Today, the “Protection of the Family Law”, the Civil and the Penal Code protect women from domestic violence and gives them the right to demand protection orders and to prosecute the husband legally. However, few incidents of domestic violence are reported in Turkey, “as the reporting of such matters is regarded as a dishonourable act in itself that may lead to honour retribution against the woman reporting” (Ertürk 2007a).

Two governmental institutions, the Directorate General of the Status and Problems of Women KSGM (the national women’s machinery) and the Directorate General of Social Services and Child Protection Institute SHCEK (the social services agency), are in charge of dealing with domestic violence in Turkey. SHCEK provides services for battered women or those who are at risk of encountering violence through guesthouses for women. From 1995 to 2002, a total of 1,139 women and 2,609 dependant children were housed in these shelters. The KSGM and SHCEK have the mandate to develop national policies and plans for governmental services and programmes to eradicate violence against women and children.

‘Cultural specific’ expressions of violence against women and domestic

violence in Turkey are honour-related violence and bride exchange. Honour, 'namus' in Turkish, is an important value in Turkish society and requires girls and women to behave in certain ways such as accepting arranged marriages, dressing with modesty and observing chastity before marriage (Ertürk 2007a). Another form of violence against women in Turkey is 'berdel', a bride exchange between two families. Also highlighted by the media are high suicide rates among young girls in the Southeastern parts of Turkey. Discussions started by NGOs and the media suggested that the suicides could be disguised honour crimes where the family either forces the girl to commit suicide or disguises a murder as a suicide. In the Eastern and Southeastern regions of Turkey, 'töre', a traditional custom or law, plays an important role<sup>8</sup>. Töre makes sure that the family safeguards the code of honour in order to prevent transgressions thereof (Ertürk 2007a). Töre crimes can be committed against both women and men. A survey between 2000 and 2006 in urban districts under police jurisdiction revealed that of 1,091 töre murders, 480 were committed against women and 710 against men. Nearly one third of the murders were categorised as honour-related crimes, another third concerned intra-family conflict, 10 per cent were blood feuds and the remaining cases involved rape, disputes over marriage arrangements, etc. (Ertürk 2007a).

## **2.4 Women's rights in Turkey**

### **2.4.1 The beginning of the struggle for women's rights**

The history of women's rights and the women's movement in Turkey can be separated into several different phases. It started in the second half of the nineteenth century, during the Ottoman Empire, when the role and the status of the Turkish women attracted the attention of westernisation movements. The westernisation movements claimed that the only way to achieve Western Universality was through the liberalisation of the woman and the liberalisation of the Islamic traditions (Ilkcaracan 1997: 3). However, the Ottoman elites were opposed to this view. At that time, the Qur'an formed the basis of the family law, which in turn determined the status of women.

### **2.4.2 The women's rights during the Kemalist period**

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the 'women question' became one of the most important issues both challenging and framing Turkish modernisation (Ertürk 2007a). In 1924, Atatürk's government carried out one of the most radical 'women's revolutions' ever attempted in Muslim-Mediterranean societies (Gülendam

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<sup>8</sup> According to töre, "the family must ensure that the code of honour is observed by its members as transgressions (or mere rumours of such transgressions) are seen as "stains" on the entire family. These stains may have to be cleansed at any cost, if necessary through murder" (Ertürk 2007).

2000). The granting of women's rights by the Kemalist can be seen as an attempt to destroy links back to the Ottoman Empire and a way to achieve secularism. Women were granted equal rights in matters of divorce and child custody and they were given the rights to vote and to work outside the home, although only with their husband's permission. A couple of women's organisations were founded during that period but after a few years they were closed again because, according to themselves, all their rights had been granted so there was no need to continue to struggle for women's rights. At that time, women in Turkey had more rights than most women in other Western countries. However, women's lives in Turkey continued to be shaped by several customary and religious practices that contradicted existing laws, such as early and forced marriages, honour crimes, polygamous marriages, and restrictions on women's mobility for many. Güldam (2000) tries to explain this contradiction with the fact that the women in Turkey "had neither asked for them [their rights], demanded them, nor had they fought for them". The equality between women and men and the empowerment of women was a role and an identity that Kemalism had superimposed on women. According to Ilkcaracan (1997: 5), women were instrumentalised for the sake of upholding the new Republican ideology of secularism. This might have been a contributing factor in the women's slowness taking up these rights again. The only women that were actually able to take full advantage of the new laws were a very small and privileged group of elite-women from the urban upper class. They became the exemplary "New Daughters" of the Turkish Republic, respected and honoured because they were educated, had professions, and practiced them without ignoring their traditional duties both as supporting and obedient wives and good mothers. This new identity, which obviously carried the dualism of republican-western ideology and Islamic tradition, is called 'State-Feminism' or 'Kemalist female identity'.

### **2.4.3 The growth of the women's movement**

It was not until the 1980s that the women's movement grew strong in Turkey. This is ten years later than their counterparts in the Western world. Until the 1970s, Turkish women had mostly been affiliated to political movements both from right- and left-wing ideologies. However, the women seldom held leading positions. Women's issues were consequently subsumed by ideological discourses in this environment (Ilkcaracan 1997: 7). In 1980, most of the left and right wing parties were closed following a military coup. After the coup, a process of economic transformation and democratisation began (Kardam and Ertürk 1999:186) and new types of organisations emerged. Instead of being organised in political groups, the people now began to organise themselves according to their identity. The 80s were hence the time of 'identity politics'. Actors such as the Kurdish nationalist, the radical religious groups and other marginal groups (of which the feminist occupy the primary place) arose. All of these groups challenged principles of the state. The Kurds challenged the Unitarian character of the state; the radical religious groups challenged the secularity; and the feminist challenged the latent patriarchal order of the state

(Kardam & Ertürk 1999:187). However, the women's movement was not seen as dangerous as the other organisations and was therefore allowed to freely develop. Women's organisations were founded and several feminist magazines began to be published, producing a lively debate on women's rights and the role of the state in supporting the patriarchal system (Ilkcaracan 1997: 8).

Domestic violence was one of the first issues that were brought up by the women's movement. In May 1987, 3000 women marched in Istanbul to protest against the physical abuse of women and in particular the battering of women. One of the trigger effects, which brought violence against women to the public's attention, was a court case in 1987 in which the judge was quoted as saying "no women should be without a child in her womb and a stick on her back" (a Turkish saying). This saying caused widespread fury and demonstrations that were the beginning of a national campaign about violence against women in the family (Gülçür 1999: 5). The campaign served as a focus point at that time, around which different small women's groups rallied and cooperated. According to Gülçür (1999: 6), the campaign initiated a process that led to a number of positive results. First, the public was forced to acknowledge the social dimensions of the issue. Second, local and national government agencies began to accept that violence against women in the family was a serious problem that needed to be addressed. Shelters for women were created. Third, preliminary steps were taken to create community-based interventions and to implement new legislation to prevent domestic violence.

#### **2.4.4 The institutionalisation of gender issues**

Since the 1980s there has been an alteration in the relationship between state and society in Turkey toward more gender accountability (Ertürk & Kardam 1999:168). Ertürk and Kardam (1999:170) state that organisational changes within the government bodies have occurred towards a greater responsiveness to women's interest as a consequence of the developments on the women's issue. This has opened a dialogue and channels of collaboration between women in civil society and the Turkish state.

In 1990, a government unit of women's affairs was established, called the Directorate General of the Status and Problems of Women (KSGM). The establishment of the Directorate General can be interpreted as an acknowledgement of the Turkish state for the importance of gender issues (Kardam and Ertürk 1999). However, the state was not willing to finance the Directorate General sufficiently and it is therefore highly dependent on outside donor agencies. According to Kardam and Ertürk (1999: 178), the KSGM has been quite successful in putting gender issues on the public agenda despite their restricted budget. They are now acting as a coordinating body among government institutions on gender issues, and promoting dialogue between women's organisations and the state in a more democratic fashion. More than

200 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) participate regularly in meetings and consultations held by the Directorate General.

#### **2.4.5 The rise of fundamentalist women's groups**

Parallel to the rise of the women's movement in Turkey, a rise of fundamentalism and Islamism<sup>9</sup> took place. Women have often been successfully included in Islamic groups. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) and other Islamic organisations managed to attract many women that migrated from the countryside to the cities. The AKP offers women living in poor areas practical help such as financial support and health services as well as spiritual solidarity, political activity and a sense of identity (Ilkkaracan 1997: 10). Islamist women have received a considerable amount of media attention and triggered many debates in society by demanding their rights to cover their heads in university and government offices, which is forbidden in the name of secularism. Currently (spring 2008), the party in power, AKP, is trying to change the law that restrain women from wearing headscarves at universities.

#### **2.4.6 Contradictions**

The question of women's rights in Turkey has been characterised by a huge contradiction between the progressive laws, which were adopted in the 1920s, and the discrimination against women in society. This contradiction continues until today and is further marked by the difference in living standards in the cities and the countryside. While women in the cities live modern lives and are often fully aware of their rights, many women in the countryside and in the shantytowns continue to live according to the traditional practices.

### ***2.5 Legal framework***

The aim of this chapter is to review the legal framework that has been formulated to inhibit domestic violence in Turkey and internationally. I have summarised the points relevant to this thesis so that it will be easier for the reader to get an impression of the legal developments on this issue.

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<sup>9</sup> The term Islamism is used to underscore the act of using Islam as a source of political activism rather than practicing it as a non-political daily ritual (Aldikatçi Marshall 2005: 104). Even if close to 90 per cent of the Turkish population calls itself Muslim, for most of the people, religion is not a catalyst for becoming politically involved. For Islamist women, progress for women can only be realised when women fulfil the obligations which Islam has foreseen for them (Aldikatçi Marshall 2005: 105).



### **2.5.1 Turkey's Law on the Protection of the Family**

Law No. 4320 on the Protection of the Family, which was adopted to curtail domestic violence, became effective on 17 January 1998. According to the law, the offender is subject to various punitive measures when committing domestic violence such as forcing the offender to abandon the house, the confiscation of arms owned by the offender, the payment of temporary alimony, a ban on disturbing the family through means of communication devices, and prohibiting the destruction of the possessions of other family members (Forth and Fifth Periodic Report 2003: 10). The most important element of the law is the establishment of protection orders for women subjected to domestic violence. A protection order requires the perpetrator of domestic violence to abstain from approaching the domicile or the work place of the victim. As the perpetrator will in most cases not be sent to jail but will only be forbidden to come close to the residence and workplace of the victim, the social stigma attached to the person applying to the court is lessened.

Before the adoption of the Protection of the Family Law, cases involving domestic violence were considered under general provisions of the Criminal Code. In the Forth and Fifth Periodic Report of Turkey to the CEDAW (see below for an elaboration on CEDAW) it is described that this entailed difficulties in the determination and punishment of such crimes due to the fact that the private sphere of the family life remained largely outside of the regulatory mechanisms of the existing legal framework. The law concerning domestic violence has hence opened up matters once perceived as private to public concern. It provides women with an easy-to-implement legal recourse to fight domestic violence (Gülçür 1999: 2).

### **2.5.2 Civil Code Reform in Turkey**

Turkey adopted its Civil Code in 1926, shortly after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. The Civil Code was translated and adapted from the Swiss Civil Code and gave women 'almost' complete legal equality to men. Nevertheless, even if the Civil Code was progressive for its time, it still contained many articles that disfavoured women. Thus, the Civil Code had a patriarchal outlook despite the constitutional gender equality principal which is evident in several clauses (WWHR 2005:3). For instance, according to the Civil Code the husband was the head of the family. He had the final say in choices of domicile and children. Furthermore, the wife needed her husband's consent to work outside the family-home.

A review process of the Civil Code took place between 1993 and 2001 and the new Civil Code became effective in 2002. The reform brought the Civil Code in line with the EU, the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the CEDAW. The review process had a clear emphasis on gender equality and led to significant changes in this regard. These changes were mostly a result of vigorous campaigns of the women's movements in Turkey, according to

Women for Women Human Rights (WWHR), one of the organisations lobbying most actively for a change in the Civil Code. Several reforms met strong resistance from religious conservatives and nationalists in Parliament. They argued that equality between women and men would ‘create anarchy and chaos in the family’ and thus ‘threaten the foundations of the Turkish nation’ (WWHR 2005: 7).

Most important changes in the Civil Code in regard to domestic violence:

- The old Civil Code defined the man of the head of the family and deprived thereby the social, civil and economic rights of the women. The new Civil Code abolishes the supremacy of men in marriage and grants equal rights to men and women. The family is defined as an entity “that is based on the equality between spouses”.
- Legal age of marriage is changed to 18 for both sexes and 17 with the consent of the parents instead of 17 for men and 15 for women.
- Spouses have equal representative power

### **2.5.3 Penal Code Reform in Turkey**

After the Civil Code reform was finalised, the women’s movements started to campaign for a reform of the Penal Code from a gender perspective “as the Penal Code is of crucial significance to the realisation of women’s human rights and gender equality” according to Women for Women’s Human Rights (WWHR 2005: 9). The new Turkish Penal Code was adopted in 2004 and contains more than thirty amendments that constitute a major step towards gender equality and protection of women’s rights in Turkey (WWHR 2005: 14).

The most important changes in the Penal Code with regards to domestic violence are:

- Women’s right to have autonomy over their bodies and sexuality is acknowledged. Sexual crimes are regulated as crimes against individuals instead of crimes against society, family or public morality.
- Higher sentences for sexual crimes, criminalisation of marital rape and prevention of sentence reduction for honour related crimes.
- Provisions legitimising rape and abduction in cases which the perpetrator marries the victim have been abolished.

### **2.5.4 CEDAW and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women**

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was the first of its kind to oblige states to take steps towards gender equality and against the discrimination of women. It defines the right of women to be free from discrimination and sets the core principles to protect this right. The Convention establishes an agenda for national action to end discrimination, and provides the basis for achieving equality between



men and women through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in political and public life as well as education, health and employment (UNFPA 6). Turkey ratified the CEDAW in 1986 with certain reservations.

Every four years, the countries that have ratified CEDAW have to submit a periodic report on the advancements that have been made in relation to the discrimination of women. In the Fourth and Fifth Periodic Report of Turkey submitted in 2005 it is stated that the state is committed to the principle of CEDAW. The Report admits that there are still shortcomings such as the under-representation of women in Parliament, violence against women as a under prioritised area and the gender bias of the national budget.

After recommendations from the CEDAW Committee, the Commission of the Status of Women developed the 'Declaration of the Elimination of Violence against Women' in order to compensate for shortcomings of the CEDAW that does not mention violence against women directly. The UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration unanimously in 1993. The Declaration defines violence against women broadly as physical, sexual, psychological harm or threats of harm in public or private life. Gender-based violence is described as a violation of Human Rights and as instance of sex discrimination and inequality (Merry 2006: 23). The Declaration prohibits invoking custom, tradition or religious considerations to avoid its obligations and urges states to exercise due diligence<sup>10</sup>, to prevent, investigate and punish acts of violence against women whether perpetrated by the state or private persons (Merry 2006: 23).

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<sup>10</sup> Due diligence obliges the state to act with a certain standard of care.

## **3. Theoretical approaches**

### ***3.1 Introduction to theoretical framework***

Theories are important tools to approach the research topic. They do not only provide a certain kind of perspective but they also give the researcher the chance to systematically analyse the research question. My choice of theory is Discourse Analysis. As with all theories, this theory looks at society from a certain angle, which makes it possible to go deep into the research topic from that angle. Nevertheless, this also means that other important angles and perspectives are left out and even ignored. One way to open up the angle of a theory is to include other theories in the research. I have used a feminist perspective to achieve this. I do not want to call it “feminist theory” because there is no main theory that I have used. However, I have tried to look at my research from a gender perspective by including feminist research tools in my thesis.

Below I will first discuss my theoretical points of departures and then I will give a theoretical approach to domestic violence. This is essential to the analysis part of this thesis where I want to reconnect to the theories on domestic violence when analysing the discourses used by the organisations I interviewed.

### ***3.2 Discourse analysis***

Contrary to most other theories that try to explain certain social conditions, discourse analysis is more of a ‘way to look at the world’. There are different schools of discourse analysis including ‘Critical Discourse Analyses’, ‘Discourse Theory’ and ‘Discourse Psychology’. Discourse analysis is furthermore not only a theory but also a method. Hence, I will briefly mention discourse analysis in the methodology chapter.

The term ‘discourse’ is used in various ways within the broad field of discourse analysis. In the broadest sense it is described as “a determined way to talk about and understand the world” (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 7). In a more abstract sense, a discourse can be seen as a category which designates the broadly semiotic elements<sup>11</sup> of social life<sup>12</sup> (Fairclough 2005b). Most of the schools of discourse analysis have certain ontological and epistemological premises regarding the role of language in the social construction of the world in common. These are: (1) discourse analysis is rooted in social constructionism and (2) the different schools of discourse analyses have also the structuralist and post-structuralist language philosophy

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<sup>11</sup> ‘Semiotic elements’ means elements of language not only including words but also including signs and symbols.

<sup>12</sup> Language, but also visual semiosis, ‘body language’ etc.

in common. The structuralist approach claims that we can only gain access to reality through language (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 15) by creating representations of the reality with the help of language. However, these representations are not merely mirrors of the reality but also include our interpretations of reality. Thus, the physical world becomes meaningful through discourses.

In discourse analysis, texts are analysed. Texts in this context can be written or printed texts, newspaper articles, transcripts of interviews, television programmes and interviews among others (Fairclough 2003: 3).

### ***3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis***

For this thesis I have chosen to use Critical Discourse Analysis. One strong argument for using Critical Discourse Analysis is that it is less theoretical than its 'cousin' Discourse Theory and that it provides practical tools for analysis. Another argument in favour is that Critical Discourse Analysis claims that there are discursive and non-discursive social practices, which constitute the social world. So, in Critical Discourse Analysis, not everything is discourse: there are also events happening outside of language and discourse. This coincides with my views on discourses and the nature of the social world.

Critical discourse analysts generally believe that discursive practices<sup>13</sup> contribute to the creation and reproduction of unequal relationships. These unequal relationships can for instance be observed between women and men or between different social classes. The discursive practices can hence have ideological effects that help to maintain unequal relationships. This means that the relations between people are controlled by ideologies. The social groups have different possibilities to influence the existing discourses and make their standpoint heard depending on their hierarchical position. The central aim for critical discourse analysts is to examine the role of the discursive practices in the upkeep of the social order and in social change (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 76). As opposed to other forms of discourse analyses, the central concern of Critical Discourse Analysis is with social conditions, rather than with discursive action. Furthermore, Critical Discourse Analysis does not see the individual as determined but more as the 'language's masters and slaves'. That means that individuals use discourses as resources where they create new compositions of words – sentences that have never been pronounced – instead of just being 'victims' of discourses (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 24).

The critical discourse analysis used in this thesis is largely based on Fairclough's and Fairclough and Chouliaraki's approach. Contrary to most other discourse analysts, Fairclough has a realist approach, based on a realist

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<sup>13</sup> The discursive practice is the production, distribution and consumption of a text (Fairclough 1995: 135)

ontology. That means that social practices<sup>14</sup> and social events are treated as parts of reality (Fairclough 2003: 14). Fairclough's approach to discourse analysis is based upon the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life (Fairclough 2003: 2). Language (as well as other semiotic systems) is seen as a particular type of social structure that is socially created or constituted but at the same time also constituted *by* social structures. Fairclough claims, similar to other Critical Discourse Analysis followers, that there are discursive and non-discursive social practices constituting the social world. A discourse is hence seen as a social practice that constitutes the social world, however there are also other non-discursive social practices (Fairclough 2003: 26).

Fairclough believes that social structures can influence discursive practices. This can happen when discursive practices become non-discursive institutions under certain circumstances. In a family, for instance, the relation between the children and parents is constituted by discourses. But at the same time, the family is also an institution with concrete practices, existing relations and identities. These practices, relations and identities have been constituted by discourses but over time they have become institutions and non-discursive practices (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 68).

### **3.4 Feminist perspective**

As I mentioned before, I will not introduce a specific feminist theory. Rather, there will be a feminist perspective on the whole thesis. Feminist research distinguishes itself by the questions feminists ask, the location of the researcher within the process of research and within theorising, and the intended purpose of the work produced (Letherby 2003: 5). For me, using a feminist perspective means allowing the point of view of women to play a role and using feminist research methods. It also entails raising questions that are of concern to women and which might have been under-researched and having a reflexive approach to my material. Furthermore, doing research with a feminist perspective means being sensitive of the role of gender in society and the differential experiences of males and females.

Feminism and gender research was a rather new area for me when I began to write this thesis. Before, I generally avoided focusing on gender and on women in particular as I felt that this would allocate me in a niche. I also felt sceptic to the approach of looking at women as an oppressed minority, which I think that many gender researchers and feminists seem to have. I don't think that half of the population of the world cannot be approached from a minority-perspective. Andersen (2006: 3), for example, asks herself "why focus on women?" and answers: "[...] it is through focusing on women that we can see

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<sup>14</sup> Social practice are described as actions of individuals that are concrete, individual and bound to a context as well as institutionalised and socially rooted which gives them certain regularity (Jørgensen & Phillips 2000:25)

the influence of gender in society”. I am sceptical to this approach. However, I am not denying that there are oppressive structures in society which disfavour women. Therefore, instead of just focusing on women and taking the point of departure solely from women and women’s experiences, I would prefer to see an integrated approach to gender issues, based on women’s *and* men’s experiences. After all, the structures in society are not only a problem for women but also for men.

It has been both a challenging and interesting experience for me to explore feminism, gender and feministic theories deeper and to look at society from this point of view. During the course of the research, I have gained a bigger understanding for feminist writings but I have also realised that I still believe that research topics focusing on gender issues still focus too much on women instead of women and men (and everything which might lie in between such as trans and queer). What I have brought with me from this experience is that studying women and men as gendered subjects requires challenging some of the basic assumptions in existing knowledge – both in popular knowledge and academic studies (Andersen 2006: 5).

### **3.5 Theories on domestic violence**

There are a considerable number of theories on domestic violence. They include biological, psychological, socio-psychological, political and economic explanations and they have changed significantly over time. Furthermore, the theories can be feminist, non-feminist or anti-feminist.

In the beginning of the domestic violence research, the researchers concentrated on individual explanations such as the use of alcohol and drugs, victims actions, mental illness, stress, frustration, underdevelopment and violent family of origin to explain violence against women (UN Resource Manual 1993: 10). However, when the scope of domestic violence became clear, researchers tried to find other explanations including ‘learned helplessness’ and the ‘cycle of violence’<sup>15</sup>. From then onwards, theories aimed at including the societal dimensions of domestic violence. One theory claims that domestic violence is a “learned behaviour that a batterer engages in to establish and maintain power and control over another. Batterers learn this behaviour through observation” (Stop Violence Against Women website 1). Hence boys who witness their fathers beating their mothers are seven times more likely to batter their own spouses. According to this understanding, violence is learned through exposure to social values and beliefs regarding the appropriate roles of men and women (Stop Violence Against Women website 1). Another theory claims that “violence is a logical outcome of relationships of dominance and inequality—relationships shaped not simply by the personal

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<sup>15</sup> visit the website Stop Violence against women for more information, [http://www.stopvaw.org/Theories\\_of\\_Violence.html](http://www.stopvaw.org/Theories_of_Violence.html)

choices or desires of some men to [dominate] their wives but by how we, as a society, construct social and economic relationships between men and women and within marriage (or intimate domestic relationships) and families.” (Stop Violence Against Women website 1 quoting Ellen L. Pence, Some Thoughts on Philosophy)

Two theories that are commonly used to explain domestic violence are resource theory and relative resource theory. These structural perspectives suggest that the level of resources is the primary predictor of wife abuse. Specifically, they argue that married men who have few resources to offer (resource theory), alternatively fewer resources than their wives (relative resource theory), are more likely than their resource-rich counterparts to use violence. Violence serves as a compensation for the lack of resources (Atkinson, Greenstein & Lang 2005).

### ***3.6 Domestic violence from a feminist perspective***

Feminists believe that gender is constructed through social, political, economical and cultural experiences in a given society (Andersen 2006: 29). Social institutions and attitudes are generally seen as the basis for women’s position in society. Hence, there is a belief that there is a need to change these institutions and attitudes in order to reach gender equality (Andersen 2006: 10). The main ambition for feminists is to understand why inequality between women and men exists and to find reasons for the subordination of women (Letherby 2003: 4).

I have mentioned above that, for a long time, domestic violence was not considered as a matter for the state but was seen as a ‘private’ matter. One of the reasons why domestic violence was not considered to be a problem for the state was the traditional approach to knowledge (also called epistemology) where women’s experiences and concerns were not seen as authentic but as subjective. Men’s experiences on the other hand, were seen as the basis for the production of true knowledge (Letherby 2003: 24). Hence, women’s experience of domestic violence were not seen as authentic and therefore not worth researching and recognising as a problem. This approach characterises the way many people still look at domestic violence.

Feminists generally try to emphasise the importance of men’s social and structural power over women and children. The concept of patriarchy becomes especially important in this explanatory framework. Patriarchy is defined in a number of different ways in the different schools of feminism. The radical feminists claim that the men as a group dominate women as a group. The men are the ones who benefit most from the women’s subordination. Men’s violence against women is hereby seen as a part of the system that controls women (Walby 2003: 16f). The Marxist feminists on the other hand claim that the difference between men and women originates in the capitalistic system. The liberal feminists do not relate the phenomenon of patriarchy to

social structures but the subordination of women is seen as accumulated effect of a big number of individual deprivations (Walby 2003: 17f). Walby herself defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices where men dominate, oppress and exploit women (Walby 2003: 39). On a structural level, patriarchy can be observed as a system of social relations. On a more concrete level, patriarchy can be found (among others) in the patriarchal mode of production, the patriarchal relations in the state, men's violence against women and patriarchal relations in the sexual area (Walby 2003: 39). Violence of men is here a behaviour that women expect from men. The state oversees and legitimates men's violence against women systematically by their objection to take action against the violence (Walby 2003: 41).

Andersen is a feminist researcher who has developed theories on domestic violence. According to her, domestic violence from a gender perspective can be seen as social control emerging directly from patriarchal structures and the ideology of the family (Andersen 2006: 182). She claims that there are some risk factors that make domestic violence more likely: 1) when a women's education level is higher than the men's, 2) prior history of violence (Andersson 2006: 182).

Mathur (2004) goes back to Kelkar who says that while "violence against women is part of the general violence inherent in all social structures of class, caste, religion, ethnicity and so on, and in the way the state controls people, it also encompasses aspects of structural violence and forms of control and coercion through hierarchical and patriarchal gender relationship in the family and society."

Gülçür (1999: 4) argues that the fact that over 90 per cent of reported domestic abuse cases are against women shows that gender is a major factor determining who will be at most risk of violence in the family. Furthermore she claims that spouse abuse occurs within the context of a societal framework where public, family and individual relations are based on male authority and power. Skinner et al. (2005:10f) argue that "gender violence is a reflection of as well as something that constructs gender inequality". This implies that violence against women is in deed something special which should be treated differently from other forms of violence.

### ***3.7 Other approaches to domestic violence***

Felson (2002) states that it is wrong to try to disconnect violence against women from the larger context of violence. He is claiming that, in feminist studies, it is commonly assumed that sexism motivates men to attack women. However, when analysing the question of violence against women in a broader context of violence, it might be revealed that violence against women is like any violence and not an expression of sexism (Felson 2002: 3ff). In the US for example, the high rates of violence against women are consistent with



overall high violent crime rates. Felson states: “Social relationships produce conflict regardless of gender” (2002: 4). Felson wants to change the notion that violence against women is ‘special’ and has to be treated differently to other forms of violence.

One detail that might contradict Felson’s conclusion is the fact that over 90 per cent of the victims of spouse abuse that are reported to the authorities are women as Gülçür (1999: 4) highlights. On the one hand, this seems to be a clear indicator supporting the feminist standpoint. On the other hand, critics<sup>16</sup> argue that men generally do not report women’s violence and that this is the explanation for the low percentage of men reporting domestic abuse. Studies<sup>17</sup> have shown that women can be as violent as men in the home. However, generally the physical violence of women against men is not as severe as men’s violence against women.

Personally, I do not wish to take sides in this discussion. My aim is not to say that one or another perspective is wrong or right. Rather, I believe that both the feminist and the anti-feminists have their biases that influence their research and findings. An example of this is Steen’s finding (2003: 58) that she mentions in her report on men’s violence against women where she analysed the texts of different researchers. She states that she was surprised to read in several studies that women who are abused have aggressive impulses and feelings of hatred and wrath that they are trying to suppress. However, these findings were not researched further and they did not appear in the analysis and conclusion parts of the studies. Steen states that this might be the case because it does not fit in the description of the women as victims.

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<sup>16</sup> See for instance Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz 1981 and Farrell 1994

<sup>17</sup> See for instance Karen Peterson’s article in USA Today 2003-06-22



## **4. Methodology**

### ***4.1 Introduction to methodology***

The aim of this chapter is to explain which methodology has served as a basis for this research and which concrete methods were used. In order for the reader to be able to know how the researcher came to her or his conclusions, it is essential to understand the research methodology. Explaining the research methods and methodology is also a question of reliability and validity. Reliability and validity oblige the researcher to accurately describe how the research was carried out, which research tools were used and how the researcher reached her or his conclusions.

The methods I used for this thesis were Critical Discourse Analysis methods, which will be discussed in the chapters “Data” and “Data Collection” combined with feminist methods explained below.

Even though there is no such thing called ‘feminist methodology’, there are some characteristics that most of the feminist research methods have in common according to Skinner et al. (2005:10ff). These are: 1) Feminist research focuses on gender and gender inequality and is grounded in women’s experience; 2) Most feminist researchers reject the standard distinction between the researcher and the ‘researched’; 3) The research should enable the voices of women and other marginalised groups to be heard and their experiences to be valued by having a democratic research process. 4) The experiences of the marginalised should be valued; and 5) there should be a reflexive meaning, a discussion of how the researcher impacts on the research process.

### ***4.2 Data***

According to Wood and Kroger (2000: 56), it is of utmost importance to have access to original interview recordings for the data collection. It is not enough to rely on re-narrations of interviews. This can, in fact, pose a problem in my case, because most of the interviews were translated. Hence, the original meaning of the sentences can be distorted and special emphasis and a special choice of words can have gotten lost. Therefore, I am not focusing on the semantic parts of discourse analysis and the way language is used will not play a role in my analysis. However, the strength of my interviews is that most of the respondents were able to comprehend enough English to understand the translations. In cases where they believed that what they said was not translated sufficiently, they would get back to the interpreter and explain again.

Fairclough (1992: 230) suggests having a small number of discourse samples for the analysis, which allows the researcher to do in-depth and detailed analyses. I would describe my sample as being of medium size (10 interviews of approximately 1-2 hours), meaning a little too big for Fairclough's liking. Sometimes, this has posed problems for me during my analysis, as it is impossible to analyse every little detail that seems important. However, contrary to what Fairclough suggests, I have not used linguistic and semantic analysis. This reduced the workload and made it possible for me to concentrate on the pure content of the interviews. However, this also means that the linguistic dimension, which is closely related to the way the respondent and the interviewer interact, is not taken into consideration.

### **4.3 Data Collection: Interviews**

My choice for the data collection was to conduct interviews. The reason for that is that I believe that the researcher has the chance to come much closer to the topic when interviewing people. This is especially true when the researcher, as in my case, is not familiar with the research area in beforehand. Furthermore, interviews will continuously challenge the researcher as new and unexpected thoughts and ideas will be brought up by the respondents. To conduct interviews also gives the interviewer the chance to discuss his or her ideas with the respondents and, in that way, a reflexive researching process is granted. This is in line with feminist practice and, if practiced in the right way, it is a participatory method. A truly 'feminist' interview Letherby (2003: 83f) should be based on reciprocity and non-hierarchical relationships between the interviewer and the respondent. The respondent should have an active role in the research process, meaning that the interviewer should be responsive to the language and concepts used by the respondents and should give of her-/himself as well as obtaining information.

It can be problematic to conduct interviews in countries and cultures different from your own. First of all, there can be communicative difficulties. If two people do not speak the same language, an interpreter must facilitate the communication between the two. This will necessarily distort the authenticity of the respondents answer. Furthermore, the different cultural norms and values might lead to misunderstandings. To me it happened several times that I asked a question but received an answer that did not fit the question. A possible explanation for that is that the interpreter did not translate the question and/or the answer correctly. Another possible explanation is that the ways to ask questions and to formulate certain issues differ from culture to culture. There is no need to move far away to realise this. Briggs (1989), a social anthropologist from the US, describes that he had difficulties to communicate with people from a Hispano village in the US, even if he was acquainted with their norms and social customs. He says that these 'communicative blunders' reflect a deep and pervasive pattern that is inherent in received interview techniques (1989: xiii f). These blunders, he continues,

follow from the imposition of one set of norms, embedded in the interview situation, on a speech that organised talk along opposing lines. My experience largely coincides with Briggs observations.

Another factor that is likely to influence the interviews is the gender, race, education, political belief etc. of the researcher. Sometimes a woman feels only comfortable with a woman and a man with a man. A Western researcher can also be perceived as an intruder or as a person with a much higher hierarchical rank than the respondent's rank. In my case, I did not feel that any of the mentioned aspects influenced the respondents or our interactions noteworthy. However, sometimes I felt that some of the women that I interviewed felt a little superior to me. They advised me for instance: "Maybe you should look that up", or they said: "This probably you heard about...?". The way it was said clearly indicated to me that they thought that I did not know much about their work. Other respondents had a totally different attitude however. They treated me like a guest or friend that they warmly welcomed.

My interviews were semi-structured conversations in which I used open-ended questions. Each interview lasted one to two hours. The open structure of the interviews should encourage the interviewees to relate, in their own words, their experiences, interpretations and attitudes (Skinner 2005:49). Advantages of semi-structured interviews include: the instant ability to redefine questions or follow up unclear answers, the researchers ability during the interview to accommodate hitherto unacknowledged themes, and the ability within the interview to establish reasons behind, or existence of, a phenomenon where the complexity of the issues researched requires intensive, sensitive, or simply face-to-face discussions with individuals who can be given anonymity (Skinner 2005:49).

In the beginning of my research, I had to decide whom to interview for my research. On my wish list were women's organisations, academicians and state institutions working with domestic violence. However, I did not start to contact the organisations until some months before I left Turkey because I felt that I was unprepared. First I went to visit one women's organisation working professionally with domestic violence to discuss my research with them and to get some ideas. They were friendly enough to welcome me and discuss my research topic with me. After that conversation I felt that I had a lot more to learn and investigate on the issue. Two months later I started contacting the persons and organisations I wanted to interview. Sometimes I just called and told them about my research and asked if I could do an interview, sometimes my contacts in Turkey, especially my local advisor Dr. Yakın Ertürk, helped me to arrange an interview. At the end I interviewed all the persons I wanted to interview apart from academicians. The organisations that I interviewed can be found in the table below.

<b>Type of organisation</b>	<b>Name of organisation</b>
<i>State organisations</i>	SHCEK (Social Services Agency) KSGM (Directorate General on the Problems and Status of Women) Altındağ Municipality
<i>Women's organisations</i>	Foundation for Women's Solidarity (Başkent Kadın Platformu) (Kırk Örük) Purple Roof Foundation Van Women's Association
<i>International Organisation</i>	UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund)
<i>Others</i>	Ankara Bar Association - Women Rights Center Amnesty International

*Table 1*

The people I interviewed had different positions in their organisations and their knowledge on domestic violence and the daily operations of their organisations on domestic violence hence varied. Some of the respondents worked with women subjected to violence on daily basis, some others were coordinating activities of the organisations, and some were on decision making levels of the organisation. This makes it sometimes somewhat difficult to compare the interviews because of the different approaches to the topic the respondents had.

Below, a short introduction to all the organisations that I interviewed:

### **State organisations:**

#### **SHCEK (Social Services Agency)**

SHCEK is a state agency responsible for social services and child protection. The institution is largely underfinanced and is mainly providing assistance to elderly and children. SHCEK has a family department that deals with domestic violence. I was able to talk to two employees of SHCEK, however, as the interviews were not official I am not able to refer to them directly. When I refer directly to SHCEK, I have taken the information from their website or other sources.

#### **KSGM (Directorate General on Status and Problems of Women)**

The national women machinery KSGM was founded in 1990 and is a coordinating institution responsible for women's and gender issues. For a long time, KSGM had very little financial resources and was largely financed by outside donors. However, in the last years, KSGM has received more financial support from the state. KSGM is the institution in Turkey that is working most closely with NGOs. I interviewed one person at the coordination/decision making level of KSGM.

### **Altındağ Municipality**

Altındağ Municipality is located close to the centre of Ankara. It is known to be one of the poorest municipalities in Ankara and it has high rates of crime and unemployment. Altındağ Municipality works closely together with NGOs to combat violence against women. I interviewed an employee of the municipality working on violence against women for the municipality. She works at the coordinating level.

### **Women's organisations:**

#### **Foundation for Women's Solidarity (Kadın Dayanışma Vakfı)**

The Foundation for Women's Solidarity, located in Ankara, was established in 1991 to combat domestic violence and violence against women. This is done by creating a kind of lobby and a pressure on the policy makers and politicians to prevent domestic violence and violence against women. The foundation provides counselling to women subjected to violence and they run a shelter for trafficking victims. I conducted two interviews with the organisation. The first interview was a pilot interview and the other interview was the 'real' interview. Both interviews were with staff who are directly involved with the subjected women and who also work at the coordination level.

#### **Başkent Kadın Platformu (Association of Women's Platform at the Capital)**

Başkent Kadın Platformu is a feminist Islamist organisation located in Ankara. They do not work with domestic violence issues and, therefore, I will not analyse their interview. Nevertheless, it was very interesting to conduct the interview in order to get to know the 'field' better. Başkent Kadın Platformu works for the rights of the women to wear headscarf in the public domain and considers this as a women's rights issue. I conducted a joint interview with four active members of the organisation.

#### **Kırk Örük**

Kırk Örük is a cooperative located in Ankara working actively to combat violence against women. They have a café where women can meet and they have projects to create awareness around the problem of violence. I interviewed two active members of the organisation. Unfortunately, parts of the interview got lost as my hard disk broke down and, therefore, I am not able to use the interview in the analysis part extensively.

#### **Purple Roof Foundation (Mor Çatı)**

The Purple Roof Foundation, located in Istanbul, was the first organisation established to combat domestic violence in Turkey. They opened the country's first women's shelter in 1995 and have contributed a lot to putting domestic violence on the political agenda. Today they run a shelter and a consultancy centre for women subjected to domestic violence. I interviewed one of their staff working both on the coordination level and practically with the women.

### **Van Kadın Derniği (Van Women’s Association)**

Van Kadın Derniği was established in 2004 and is located in Van, in the East of Turkey. The organisation works with honour crimes and victims of violence. I did not meet the members of the organisation personally but they were so friendly to answer a questionnaire that I sent to them via email. The questionnaire is attached.

### **International organisation**

#### **UNFPA Turkey (United Nations Population Fund)**

The United Nations Population Fund is one of the UN agencies working most actively to combat violence against women. In Turkey, UNFPA has been involved in several campaigns against violence. They generally act as a coordinating body for the campaigns. I interviewed one of their staff members working on the recently started campaign “Combating Domestic Violence against Women”.

### **Other organisations**

#### **Ankara Bar Association – Women’s Right Center**

The Ankara Bar Association – Women’s Rights Center is located in the Court Hall of Ankara and provides legal counselling to women subjected to violence. The Centre has one paid staff member and many voluntary lawyers who help women free of charge. I interviewed two persons from the Women’s Rights Center: one of the lawyers associated to the Center who is the most well known lawyer in Ankara dealing with domestic violence and their paid staff member.

#### **Amnesty International**

Amnesty International Turkey is located in Istanbul but they also have local groups. Violence against women is one of the prioritised areas of Amnesty International worldwide. In Turkey, Amnesty International has conducted several studies and campaigns on violence against women. Right now they are working on lobbying for shelters in Turkey. I interviewed the staff member responsible for the “Stop violence against women” campaign.

## ***4.4 Preparation for data analysis***

After collecting the data in the form of interviews, I transcribed all the interviews carefully, already at this stage trying to see patterns. At the same time I tried to relate the interviews to the literature I had read and to the social processes I observed in the Turkish society. This is in accordance with the procedures of Critical Discourse Analysis that entail some form of detailed textual analysis. This procedure specifically includes a combination of interdiscursive analysis of texts (i.e. of how different genres, discourses and styles are articulated together) and linguistic and other forms of semiotic analysis (Fairclough 2005b).

After getting a first overview on my data, I tried to systematically identify topics that the respondents had either a similar point of view on or where the respondents had very different opinions on. The topics that the respondents had similar opinions on were: (1) patriarchy as an underlying reason for domestic violence; (2) the definition of domestic violence including psychological, physical and economical violence; (3) the way the affiliation to a certain class influences the occurrence of domestic violence; (4) the need to change attitudes in the society and to increase gender equality among other things. The topics on which the respondents had different opinions were: (1) the need to include men in the work against domestic violence; (2) the effectiveness of the cooperation between the different organisations and (3) the way that domestic violence should be combated. Hence, the similarities between the different interviews were bigger than the differences.

For the analysis, I chose to look at two areas where the organisations seem to have similar approaches and two areas where they had different approaches. I chose (1) patriarchy as an underlying reason for domestic violence and (2) the definition of domestic violence including psychological, physical and economical violence for the two areas where the organisations had similar approaches. The reason for choosing these two areas were that they would help me to answer my research question on the definition of domestic violence. For the different approaches I chose (1) the need to include men in the work against domestic violence and (2) the effectiveness of the cooperation between the different organisations. These two areas were chosen because I felt that they were the most controversial, not only in Turkey but also among organisations working on domestic violence in the world. Hence, it would be interesting compare the attitudes of the organisations in these topics.

These approaches were analysed with the help of Critical Discourse Analysis.

#### ***4.5 Ethical concerns***

Working with the topic of domestic violence can raise ethical concerns. As I did not conduct any interviews with women who are victims of violence, there was no concern on how I would have dealt with these women. Nevertheless, conducting interviews always raises ethical concerns. Therefore, it is important to constantly keep in mind that participation in an interview should be voluntary, that the respondents should be informed and should agree on the purpose of the research, that no harm should be done to the respondents as a consequence of the interview, and that confidentiality, anonymity and privacy should be offered to the respondents (De Vaus 2002). During my interviews, I always explained the purpose and aim of the interviews beforehand and I gave the respondents the chance to ask me questions. Furthermore, I asked them if it was okay to tape the interview and if they wanted to be anonymous or not. If the respondent felt uncomfortable to be



cited or to be named, I promised her/him to not refer to the interview directly in my thesis.

#### ***4.6 Material and sources criticism***

I have mainly used three different kinds of sources. The first type has been theoretical literature focusing on human rights and women's rights, discourse analysis, violence against women and feminism. These texts were mainly written by international authors. The second type of material has been of a more empirical nature. They were about the situation of women in Turkey, women's rights and the women's movement in Turkey. The authors of these texts were mainly Turkish. The third type of literature includes reports from different international organisations such as the UN and Amnesty International.

Source criticism is essential for the material used in any kind of academic research. Hence, I have tried to read all texts that form the basis of this thesis with scrutiny. My aim has been to identify the author's position in the subject, to find out if the author has a close or distant relationship to the topic and if and in which way the author tries to influence the reader. My observation has been that in fact, most of the authors try to influence their readers. This is especially obvious in the texts published by women's organisations and in feminist readings. While feminist authors generally see it as their mission to influence their readers and give rise to change, this aim is generally not so clearly stated in the texts published by the women's organisations. As a reader, you generally get the impression that what you read is an objective account of happenings or realities when it is actually just one way to see things. This is not a criticism of these publications but more an observation that applies to many texts.

#### ***4.7 Limitations of the study***

This study purely focuses on domestic violence from the point of view of the organisations working with it. Hence, this study neither gives a complete picture of discourses on domestic violence in Turkey nor an analysis on how victims of domestic violence talk about or perceive domestic violence.

Due to my shortcomings in the Turkish language, the material I could use was limited to the publications written in English. Therefore, there might be some important publications and documents that I have missed simply due to the fact that I am not able to find and read them. I have translated some of the material that I found to be important from the organisations but, otherwise, I have relied on getting enough information from the material available in English. As there are many Turkish academicians and organisations publishing in English, I hope that I was successful.



## 5. Analysis

### 5.1 *Critical Discourse Analysis in practice*

In my analysis, I mainly use Fairclough's and Chouliaraki's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis at the same time as I apply a feminist perspective. My aim is to compare the different approaches towards domestic violence with the help of Critical Discourse Analysis and a feminist perspective in order to identify the discourses prevalent in the organisations. Below, I will provide a short description of some important concepts that Fairclough uses for his version of Critical Discourse Analysis. After each description, I will apply the concepts to my research topic. This will form the basis for the next chapter where I will employ a more systematic approach to the research topic by applying a framework of critical discourse analysis on my material.

For Fairclough, discourse analysis is the analysis of how texts work within socio-cultural practice (Fairclough 1995: 7). He thinks that discourses contribute to the constitution of social identities, social relations, and knowledge and meaning systems. This means that discourses have a considerable influence on our daily lives as they not only define which position each individual has in society but also which knowledge is valued in society, which knowledge is not valued and what meaning is given to said knowledge. Fairclough (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 74, forthcoming) suggest that a critical discourse analyst should focus on two different dimensions when analysing a discourse: the 'communicative event' and the 'order of the discourse'. These are important to know in order to locate the discourse in the right socio-cultural context. A communicative event is every occasion in which language is used. Every communicative event is based on another communicative event that happened earlier as each word that is used has been used before. This is called 'intertextuality'. The communicative event has three dimensions: (1) it is a text (spoken, written, painted etc.); (2) it is a discursive practice; (3) and it is a social practice. The 'order of discourses' is referred to as "the ordered set of discursive practices associated with a particular social domain or institution and boundaries and relationships between them" (Fairclough 1995: 12). Fairclough generally uses formal institutions as examples for 'order of discourses' but other kinds of institutions, such as nationalism, can also be seen as orders of discourse. Everything that is included in a discourse can thus be found in the order of discourse. There are 'local' orders of discourse of particular societal domains as described above and there is a societal order of discourse to chart relationships and boundaries between 'local' orders of discourse (e.g. boundaries between orders of discourse of the classroom, peer group, and family). Changes in orders of discourse are part of socio-cultural changes as boundaries between and within order of discourse are constantly shifting (Fairclough 1995: 12).

In my case, the communicative event occurred when I interviewed the representatives of the organisations and can, according to the three points

mentioned above, be explained like this: (1) The text is a spoken text. (2) The discursive practice, meaning the production and interpretation of a text (Fairclough 1995: 133), is the interview produced by the respondent, in some cases the interpreter, and the interviewer. The interpretation of the discourses will be undertaken later in this thesis. (3) The communicative event as social practice is concerned with the institutional and organisational circumstances of the discursive event (Fairclough 1992: 4) relating the discourse to the concepts of hegemony and ideology. This third dimension is the one that I will touch on the least.

Intertextuality does not happen that frequently in interviews. It is generally found in articles and books where other texts are referred to and where other authors are cited. In my interviews, intertextuality occurred when the respondents were referring to UN documents, declarations and conventions and when using certain expressions such as “violence against women” and “domestic violence” and thereby referring to an existing concept. Intertextuality also occurred when a respondent directly referred to something that another person had said. For instance, the respondent from KSGM mentioned that some of the women’s organisations were not happy with the report to the CEDAW and explained why. This is an example of intertextuality.

In order to do a proper classification of the order of discourse to which domestic violence belongs, it would be necessary to systematically analyse a large number of texts in the field. Many discourse analysts use a computer programme where they can see how often words that are related to the topic of their research can be found in the same paragraph or sentence. In my case it would be interesting to see how often domestic violence and violence against women, women’s rights, human rights or feminism are mentioned together. However, for this thesis, it would have taken too much time and effort to carry out such detailed analyses. Instead, I will make a short and less detailed analysis based on the considerable amount and articles, reports and texts on the topic that I have read over the last year. Thus, although my analysis might be incomplete, I believe nevertheless that it will give the reader an idea on which discourses surround domestic violence and to which order of discourse domestic violence belongs.

According to my interpretation, the order of discourse in which domestic violence is included is ‘human rights’. While reading about domestic violence, I noticed that most of the texts were either discussing domestic violence as a human rights or feminist concern. Atkinson (2005) Skinner, Hester and Malos (2005), for example, have a clear feminist point of departure while Merry (2006), Ertürk and Kardam have a human rights focus. Then there are authors, such as Gülçür for example, that take both aspects into account. However, I am arguing that domestic violence belongs to the human rights order of discourse because most of the feminist authors use the human rights discourse as a point of reference and a way to legitimise the unethical nature of domestic violence. Hence, even if feminists originally brought up domestic violence, today, both discourses have merged and, in my opinion, the feminist

discourse has changed its focus towards the human rights and women's rights discourse.

Another key concept in Critical Discourse Analysis is 'interdiscursivity'. The articulation of different discourses within and in between different 'orders of discourses' is seen as a form of interdiscursivity. New creative discursive practices are thus created and mixed in a new and complex way, a new interdiscursive mix. This contributes to socio-cultural change (Winther Jørgensen & Phillips 2000: 77). If many discourses can be found in the same text (high interdiscursivity), this is a sign for social change. Interdiscursivity is a form of intertextuality.

Interdiscursivity was very common in my interviews. As I mentioned before, violence against women and domestic violence were concepts that were frequently borrowed from existing "Western" discourses. Furthermore, discourses on patriarchal structures causing gender inequality were in the same line of discourses. Other local Turkish discourses that the respondents referred to were discourses on honour crimes, the honour of the girl that has to be protected (namus), the 'backwardness of the people living in the East' and the low education of the women and men on the issue of domestic violence.

One final question, which I want to ask myself before continuing to the next chapter is: when does something become a discourse? This question sometimes posed difficulties for me. For instance, when a respondent refers to a theory, is it a matter of intertextuality or interdiscursivity? After some reflection I came to the conclusion that a discourse and a theory can more or less be the same thing. The condition for a theory or a concept to become a discourse is that it is present and discussed in society. For instance, there is a theory that violence is a learnt behaviour that children learn at home or in their social environment and then copy. So far, this is only a theory. However, when newspapers start writing about it and the general society starts referring to it then I would start calling it a discourse. Imagine a dialogue like this.

Ben: Did you know that Clara's boyfriend hits Clara?

Tina: Maybe his parents hit him when he was small.

This is a reference to the theory on domestic violence as a learnt behaviour. However, Tina uses it without knowing much about the theory. Hence, what she know is rather 'things that are known in society', a discourse. The difference between theories and discourses is hence that theories explain something thoroughly and in-depth, while discourses are more simplified truths, thoughts and beliefs that have gained a hegemonic position in the discourses of society.

## **5.2 A framework for Critical Discourse Analysis**

Fairclough has developed different models for his version of Critical Discourse Analysis over the years. I will use a framework for Critical Discourse Analysis that he and his co-author Chouliaraki suggest in “Discourse in late modernity” (1999). The framework will be adapted to my needs. While some parts will be more emphasised, other parts will only be touched upon briefly.

Framework for Critical Discourse Analysis  
(modelled on Bhaskars (1986) ‘explanatory critique’)

1. A problem (activity, reflexivity)
2. Obstacles to its being tackled:
  - a. Analysis of the conjuncture
  - b. Analysis of the practice re its discourse moment
    - i. Relevant practice(s)
    - ii. Relation of discourse to other moments
      - Discourse as a part of the activity
      - Discourse and reflexivity
  - c. Analysis of the discourse
    - i. Structural analyses
    - ii. Interactional analysis
      - Interdiscursive analysis
      - Linguistic and semiotic analysis
3. Function of the problem in the practice
4. Possible ways past the obstacles
5. Reflection on the analysis

*Table 2*

### **5.2.1 A problem**

According to the mentioned framework for Critical Discourse Analysis, one has to begin with identifying a problem in some part of social life, which has a linguistic aspect. As described in my “Aims and objectives”, my problem is the struggle to combat domestic violence in Turkey, more specifically the way the concerned organisations approach the topic of domestic violence, work with it, and cooperate with other organisations around it.

## **5.2.2 Obstacles being tackled**

### **a. Analysis of conjuncture**

Conjunctures are described as “the configuration of practices associated with specific occasioned social goings-on” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 61) or, in other words: social practices that are linked together. The aim is to have a broad sense of the overall frame of social practice that the discourse in focus is located within (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 61). For this thesis, the necessary information for the conjuncture of this problem has been described in the chapter “Background”. The aim is to give a picture of the net of social practices in time and space that are related to the problem. The social practices that are important to analyse in order to understand the problem are in my opinion: the women’s human rights, the concept of domestic violence, the legal processes around domestic violence, the women’s movements in Turkey and the situation of domestic violence in Turkey.

### **b. Analysis of the practice re its discourse moment**

- i. Relevant practice(s)
- ii. Relation of discourse to other moments
  - Discourse as a part of the activity
  - Discourse and reflexivity

In order to analyse the particular practice or practices, which the discourse is focus is a moment of, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 61) suggest looking at the four main moments of social practice:

- (1) material activity (non-semiotic);
- (2) social relations and processes (social relations and power institutions);
- (3) mental phenomena (beliefs, values, desires);
- (4) discourse.

Furthermore, the aim of moment is to specify the relationship between discourse and these other moments. In order to do this, Fairclough and Chouliaraki suggest a combination of ethnographic research and discourse analysis. They claim that the ethnographic research method, where the researcher is present in the context of the practice during the study, can give the researcher knowledge about the different moments of social practice, which a critical discourse analyst might fail to notice (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 62). For instance, during ethnographic research, the researcher will become aware of the material aspects of the social practice (in this case the localisation of the office, the environment the organisations is working in), the social relationships and processes (i.e. the way the women’s organisations are seen by society and media, the role they play in society, the relationship between the organisations and governmental institutions etc.), and the beliefs, values and desires of the respondents. Critical Discourse Analysis can contribute to the ethnographical research by adding the dimension of

discourse and reflexivity. This means that data material should not be regarded as faithful descriptions of the external world but as discursive formations that are assembled together to construct a particular perspective on the social world (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 62).

Fairclough uses 'discourses' for particular and diverse ways of representing aspects of the world (e.g. different economic discourses, or different political discourses), 'genres' for different ways of acting and interacting communicatively and their associated social relations (e.g. 'interview' and 'meeting' are each a cluster of genres), and 'styles' for different ways of being or identities in their communicative (linguistic/semiotic) aspects (e.g. different leadership styles in business and politics).

During my research, I could get a glimpse of all the aspects mentioned. Although I did not conduct an ethnographic research per se, I lived in Turkey for six months and was able to gain an impression of the social relation, the material aspects, the beliefs and values and the discourses. However, it was difficult to get a complete picture as I did not speak the language and I only lived in Turkey for six months, which is not enough time to really understand social processes. Below is a review of the four main moments mentioned by Fairclough:

**Material activity/aspect:**

All of the organisations I visited had an office. The governmental agencies were located in government buildings. In my experience, it is generally not possible to get access to government buildings if you do not have a pre-arranged appointment. The women's organisations had offices in normal houses. For instance, the Purple Roof Foundation rents a flat close to the main street of Istanbul. However, the neighbourhood is poor and there is no sign at the entrance announcing the presence of the organisation. When I asked why they did not have a sign, they told me that they do not want the husbands of the victims to find the organisation. However, the other organisations that I visited had signs on the doors announcing their presence. For most of the women organisations, it is important to be easily accessible to the women in need.

**Social relations and processes:**

As a foreigner, it is difficult for me to give a description of the social relations and processes that surround domestic violence and the organisations working with it as I do not have enough insight into the Turkish society. However, I will try to give a brief description here, which is based on my experiences and assumptions.

It was only two decades ago that domestic violence came to the attention of the public in Turkey as a 'problem' for the affected women and children and the society in general. However, in this short time, important changes have been achieved. The legal framework has been adapted to international standards, prohibiting domestic violence and protecting women and children



from the perpetrators of domestic violence. Governmental and civil society organisations are nowadays working on the issue. Nonetheless, many of the politicians seem to have a very conservative attitude (see chapter 2.3.4 *Domestic Violence in Turkey*). Hence, the commitment of the government to work on this issue is low. In society, domestic violence is still regarded as something normal, as proved by recent surveys (see chapter 2.1 *Earlier research*). The society's attitude towards domestic violence has thus not changed at the same quick pace as the legal changes. Furthermore, it is mostly the elites of the Turkish society that reap the benefit of the laws and of the more open attitudes while the rest of the Turkish population continues to live according to traditional customs.

Despite the setbacks, gender and 'women's questions' have found a firm place in the Turkish society. Since the 1980's, women's organisations have been influencing the gender discourse by expanding their spheres of influence and formulating strategies that work towards the empowerment of women, gender sensitive public opinion and gender sensitive policy making. This is evident by looking at the development of women's organisations, which has changed from an orientation towards service, charity and volunteer-based, elite organisations to service and advocacy orientation, global networking, external fundraising and increased professionalism (Ertürk and Kardam 1999: 175). According to Ertürk and Kardam, women's organisations today are heard in the Turkish society. The media regularly covers issues such as honour crimes, domestic violence, violence against women and girls being deprived of schooling etc.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, imams are instructed by the Religious Affairs Directorate to discuss honour crimes as being contrary to the Prophet's teaching in the Friday prayers (Kardam 2005: 131). The police is being trained on how to deal with domestic violence victims. Yet, this does not mean, that the majority of the Turkish society agrees with or is aware of these developments. It is also difficult for women to get elected to politics. Even though women's organisations have driven rigorous campaigns, the percentage of women in Parliament is only 9,1 per cent at the moment. Also the percentage of women working in 2004 was only 17,1 per cent and the enrolment ratios for school education was only 87,0 per cent for girls compared to 92,4 per cent for boys (KSGM 2004). The percentage of women making use of the new laws and denouncing their husbands for domestic violence is also low (see chapter 2.3.4 *Domestic violence in Turkey*).

However, when talking to KSGM, the national women's machinery, a slightly different picture appears. As a coordinating agency, they discuss with other ministries and government agencies how to implement the gender dimension in their work. According to KSGM, they get very positive responses from the government agencies:

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<sup>18</sup> In the Bibliography you will find a list of articles published in English language newspapers in Turkey from June 2005 to June 2007 (the time of my research and earlier).



“Since we got our legislative base, our relations [with other governmental institutions] are getting stronger. Usually while we are working together with other institutions we have no problems. We prepare some proposals before we go to a meeting. And when we go there they usually accept it.”

Respondent KSGM

Finally, it can be said that gender issues have definitely received a considerable amount of attention during the last two decades and that the women’s organisations and other actors such as KSGM and the UN do a lot of work to keep up the level of attention. However, it seems that the topic and the values have not yet become deeply rooted in politics and in society at large.

### **Beliefs, values and desires:**

To map out the beliefs, values and desires of the respondents is one of the hardest tasks during the research. They are seldom pronounced openly and have to be found through detailed reviews of the interview material. According to my own estimations, most of my respondents belong to the Turkish middle class. All of them have studied at university and they seem very modern and emancipated. This leads me to the conclusion that the women that I interviewed belong to the urban middle class elite that leads a Western lifestyle.

From the interviews, there are three core values and beliefs that I could identify and that were shared by all the respondents:

- *Gender equality:* All the persons I interviewed shared a strong belief in gender equality.
- *Feminism:* My respondents believed in feminism and thought that women in the Turkish society (and in general) are oppressed. This is something that they wanted to change. The women’s organisations in particular had a clear feminist profile.
- *Human rights and women’s rights:* All of my respondents believed in human rights and women’s rights in the sense that all humans are equal and deserve to live a life in dignity and without oppression or violence.

Desires are even more difficult to identify but from what I could understand, all of the respondents would like to see:

- A higher level of awareness of gender inequality and domestic violence in the society.
- A society where men and women are equal and where women and men have the same opportunities and rights.

- A better framework for women that need help in form of shelters, educated polices and judges and consultation centres.

### **Discourse:**

Here I will give a short description on the discourses on gender among the women's organisations in Turkey.

Among the women's organisations in Turkey, there are different discourses on gender equality according to Ertürk and Kardam (1999: 173f). They range from the socialist feminists, radical feminists and Kemalist feminists to "turbaned feminists". Apart from the "turbaned feminists", most of them are influenced by the Western feminist movement (Kardam 2005: 44). Socialist feminists state that gender equality would come with a socialist order accompanied by the dismantling of patriarchal practices. Radical feminists on the other hand want to draw attention to how tradition and culture have perpetuated patriarchy and relegated all women to the status of second-class citizens. There are also Kemalist feminists who emphasize the maintenance of secularism in the upholding of the rights that Atatürk granted women (Ertürk and Kardam 1999: 173f). Lastly, the women in the Islamist sphere declare that women do not need to claim equality because they are already equal to men, though in their separate sphere. Only the radical feminists seem hence to be willing to criticise the present status of women in Turkey while the secular feminists and the Islamist feminists are more concerned with fighting each other. The women's organisations I interviewed seemed to have a radical feminist background. Personally, I did not see any antagonism between socialist, Kemalist and radical feminists, which could have been a result of my ignorance. However, I clearly noted an increasing gap between the Islamist feminist organisations and the other women's organisations.

### **c. Analysis of discourse**

- i. Structural analyses
- ii. Interactional analysis
  - Interdiscursive analysis
  - Linguistic and semiotic analysis

The first concern from a structural perspective is 1) to locate the discourse in its relation to the network of orders of discourse, and 2) to specify how the discourse draws selectively from that network (e.g. which genres, discourses and voices, from which orders of discourse) (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 63). From the perspective of interaction, the concern is with how the discourse works as a resource – how genres and discourses which are drawn upon are worked together in the textual process of the discourse and what articulatory work is done in the text (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 63). This will be done by identifying and discussing the discourses on domestic violence used by the organisations that I have interviewed. I will not do a linguistic and semiotic analysis, as requested under 2.c.ii, as I do not think that this is appropriate

considering that most of the interviews were translated. The translation makes it impossible to analyse the way the respondents emphasise certain words, choose one word before the other, make pauses etc.

Genres are the specifically discursive aspect of ways of acting and interacting in the course of social events (2003: 65). How do people interact discursively? How do they communicate with each other? Genres are furthermore defined in terms of the purpose of the activity (one purpose can be to attract investment). The genre I used to communicate with the organisations was through interviews. The purpose of interviewing the members of the organisations was to get as much information as possible for my thesis and to gain trust so that the respondents would answer honestly and tell me 'non-official' things. My respondents' purposes for participating in the interviews surely differ from mine. They might have been interested in promoting their own organisations by showing that they are helpful and welcoming, they might have hoped that my research would be useful for them, or they might have been eager to present their point of views. Another goal of the respondents might have been to convince me of their expertise on the topic.

In order to analyse the discourses more systematically, I have chosen to look at two areas where the organisations seem to have similar approaches and two areas where they had different approaches.

Similar approaches:

- (1) patriarchy as an underlying reason for domestic violence;
- (2) the definition of domestic violence including psychological, physical and economical violence

Different approaches:

- (1) the need to include men in the work against domestic violence;
- (2) the effectiveness of the cooperation between the different organisations.

### **5.2.3 Patriarchy as the underlying reason for domestic violence**

Today, most of the theories and approaches to domestic violence are based on the assumption that patriarchal structures in society provide the framework for a gender power structure that favours men and oppresses women. These structures legitimise male violence towards women. Even if there are academicians claiming otherwise<sup>19</sup>, most of the international legislations as well as the new Turkish national laws are based on that assumption. Hence, for me it is interesting to analyse which underlying assumptions the organisations working on domestic violence have as this influences their way of seeing domestic violence and societal structures. Below is a sample of quotes that represent most of the respondents reasonably well:

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<sup>19</sup> See e.g. Felson 2002 and Felson and Cares 2005

The respondent of the Foundation for Women's Solidarity explains:

“ [...] physical violence, including preventing women to access from rights, to get education, to work and just violating their human rights. [...] is *social gender based*. The terminology for that is “gender-based violence”. It doesn't mean that it is only women but it can mean that it is a kind of a gender issue, that gender plays a role to define and reasoning the violence. [...] The attitudes in society that contribute to that domestic violence still exists is that [...] the role of the woman and man just defines it in a way, and the values which is just like coming from the roles that the society put on the men and the women. [...] also the women, the mothers, who are not really stopping her husband and son to doing violence against women [legitimise domestic violence]. [...] that is why the social gender is accepted and is even supported by the women as well. So it is the tradition of the society in a way. “

Respondent Foundation for Women's Solidarity

Here, the idea of the social construction of gender and that the society defines gender roles can be found. Furthermore, the respondent refers to the concept of gender-based violence. All these discourses can also be found in most international discourses that are dominant in the West. These discourses identify patriarchal structures as the premise for the social gender roles that are the precondition for domestic violence.

The respondent of the Purple Roof Foundation says that she sees male violence as a

“societal problem because of patriarchal structures. This system is not just a biological thing, it's also economic. For men it's, the fact that these women are been oppressed also gives them economic advantages.”

Respondent Purple Roof Foundation

The respondent from the Purple Roof Foundations mentions patriarchal structures directly. She refers hereby to feminist views on gender power structures that are based on the assumption that gender is a concept that is socially constructed.

Van Women's Association mentions 'control and power' as reasons for domestic violence:

“A show of control and power [are the reasons for domestic violence]. A lack of development in the culture of non-violent dialog with respect to solving problems.”

Respondent Van Women's Association

The terms control and power are used in order to refer to the gender power structures that exist in society and that allow men to control women and to exercise power over them. Again, we are referring to patriarchal structures that organise the hierarchical structures in society.

Therefore, my conclusion is that the organisations that I interviewed share the common assumption that domestic violence is based on gender power structures that give men and women different rights and that are based on patriarchal values in the society. This coincides with the dominant discourse

on the underlying reasons for domestic violence and is therefore not unexpected.

#### 5.2.4 Defining domestic violence

The aim of this chapter is to continue the discussion on the discourses on domestic violence prevalent in the organisations by looking closer at the ways in which the organisations define domestic violence. Below, there are five different ways that the respondents used to define domestic violence:

“In general if you talk about violence, you understand physical violence. But of course, it’s not alone. We can also see the economic violence and honour violence. And we also take all the types of violence into account. But we work mostly on physical violence and young girls having the opportunity and the right to go to school.”

Respondent KSGM

“[...] male violence including physical, verbal, psychological and emotional violence”.

Respondent Purple Roof Foundation

“From [...] inter-family rape to economical violence. I include everything. [...] I mean psychological violence, economical violence and physical violence, physical violence from actually one slap to murder, to honour killings. So my definition of domestic violence it’s wide.”

Respondent UNFPA

“Any kind of physical, economical and psychological attack from the men to children or women is domestic violence for me but physical violence is the extreme version. We also include violence coming from grandparents and mothers. They can be also be attackers.”

Respondent Altındağ Municipality

“[...] psychological and economical, emotional and physical violence [that] exists in the family”.

Respondent Women’s Rights Centre (Lawyer)

These five definitions of domestic violence are, according to my experience, representative definitions on domestic violence among the different organisations. The different dimensions of domestic violence, such as economic, sexual, psychological and physical violence are included and in some cases, there is a reference to more local expressions of domestic violence such as honour crimes and structural problems such as girls being deprived from primary education. The perpetrator is either the husband or another family member.

These definitions are clearly derived from internationally established discourses that can be found in UN definitions including different forms of violence and also taking the structural aspects of violence into account. These “international discourses”, as defined in chapter 2.3.1 *Definition of domestic violence and violence against women*, are take several different aspects of

domestic violence into account: economic, psychological, sexual and physical violence perpetrated by an intimate partner.

The respondent from Amnesty International differed slightly in his choice of words from the other respondents. He used the terms 'social' and physical violence to define domestic violence. However, when I asked him to specify the term social violence, it turned out that he meant economical, psychological and other forms of violence that have a social dimension. Hence my conclusion is that even his definition is derived from international discourses. After having a look in Amnesty International Turkey's information material on honour crimes and domestic violence (2004 and undated), my assumption is confirmed as the UN definition from the Declaration of Elimination of All Forms of Violence is used there.

The respondent from the Purple Roof Foundation uses the term 'male violence' instead of domestic violence as shown in the quotation above. The reason for that is that she thinks that 'domestic violence' is very widely phrased and it is not obvious who is hitting whom. I have seen the same tendencies to use the term 'male violence' or 'male violence against women' in feminist Swedish discourses of domestic violence. What is interesting to note is that, in Turkey, the perpetrator of domestic violence is not necessarily always the woman's partner but can also be the family-in-law. By saying 'male violence' the respondent indicates the he or she has a feminist background, which she also mentioned during the interview. She believes that "women's solidarity is needed to solve the problem [of male violence]". The respondent also mentions that the organisation is using feminist techniques to combat domestic violence. I can thereby suppose that the organisation uses feminist theory and methods to work with domestic violence.

My conclusion is that all the organisations take the same definition, derived from an international discourse on domestic violence, as their point of departure. However, they choose to emphasise certain things that are in their interest, for instance the education of girls and honour crimes. When I conducted the interviews, I was surprised to hear the same definitions again and again. I would have suspected that persons working in state organisations or municipalities would have a different approach to domestic violence than persons in women's organisations. However, that was not the case. One explanation for this is that most of my respondents had a feminist background, including the people working in the state organisations. Either they had been active in women's organisations themselves or they had done research on feministic topics previously. Furthermore, all of the respondents came from the same social background, the upper middle class. This might be a result of the historical development of the Turkish Republic where it was mainly the urban upper and middle classes who were the beneficiaries of the reforms initiated by Atatürk. Furthermore, the women's movement historically has attracted women from the urban elites. In the women's organisations, I noted a lack of volunteers in the women's organisations that asserted my

impression that many of the women's organisations have a somewhat elitist character.

### 5.2.5 Male involvement

The attitudes of the organisations that I interviewed towards men and the inclusion of men in the work of combating domestic violence is a matter that is important to highlight. According to the Council of Europe Factsheet, since men represent the majority of perpetrators of violence against women, they also have an important role to play in preventing and combating violence against women. However, the organisations have very different attitudes towards the inclusion of men in their work.

The Purple Roof Foundation says that their "involvement is only with women". Women are "in the second position" as she expresses it and therefore, it would be more important to empower women than to work with men. The Purple Roof Foundation also emphasises the need to call men's violence against women as "male violence". The reason is that they think that the problem of violence against women is not the women's problem but the men's. Hence they want to change the focus of attention from the women to the men.

The Foundation for Women's Solidarity is, similarly to the Purple Roof Foundation, only working for women and with women. They share the opinion of the Purple Roof Foundation claiming that men are the root of the problem.

At Altındağ Municipality I noticed a different attitude. My respondent is convinced that nothing in the society will change in regards to domestic violence "as long men remain the same". She claims that, today, "women know their rights but men have to learn and change their mentality". Hence, men "have to open themselves to education and they have to raise their consciousness about that [the problem of domestic violence]. Otherwise we cannot have a change." Until now, Altındağ Municipality has not been working with men, however, the respondent reveals that she has plans of organising training for all male public workers in the Altındağ area.

At the Ankara Bar Association – Women's Rights Center, there are only female lawyers working. According to my respondent, the coordinator of the centre, this is because "it's not so easy for women to speak with a man about that issue".

However, they are open to men visiting their centre to get advice:

"Men [are also welcome]... Especially during the last few years' men are also coming. Maybe because women learnt their rights and they know how to defend themselves. That's why men are also coming, especially about divorce issues, men come to take some advice."

Respondent Women's Rights Center (Coordinator)



However, the priority of the centre is women

“...because this centre was established because of a need. It is the same in the rest of the world, there is no men’s centre. [...] That’s why our priority is women and as lawyers we help men because we have a responsibility as lawyer. I know something so I have to help a person and a human being who needs me. So that is why I help them. And sometimes men also ask why there is no men’s centre like this and we answer ‘you have to come together and establish a men’s centre, just like us’.”

Respondent Women’s Rights Center (Coordinator)

At Amnesty International, men are one of the target groups of their “Stop Violence Against Women Campaign”. Amnesty does not have training for men but my respondent mentioned they have meetings and actions with men:

“[...] we have some actions related to change men behaviour. In some part of the Eastern regions, in the coffeehouses where retired men and older men go, we have given hand-outs and brochures.”

Respondent Amnesty International

Men have also participated in actions against violence where they leave the “print” of their hand on a textile as a sign that they are against violence and honour crimes. This textile was later handed over to the government.

Until recently, UNFPA worked exclusively with women, as my respondent tells me. However, she sees a need to start working with men as well:

“[...] men involvement is something very important while combating domestic violence because [...] there are always two people, men and women, and we’re always working for women, for many years. And all the NGOs but we are supporting the women, we are empowering the women and now most of them are empowered but the problem is, if you are empowering women and don’t touch men, I mean, a big big problem emerged. That’s an unbalanced relationship. So, the most important thing that I learnt is, we have to work with men as well. Not just on domestic violence issues or violence issues but about the gender equality issues. Because it starts from there.”

Respondent UNFPA

After reading the quotes, it becomes clear that there are two different groups of organisations. The women’s organisation, having a strong focus on women and being based on feminist ideas, are much less willing to work with men. Their priority is to empower women and to change the status of women. The other organisations however, like the state organisations, the UN and Amnesty International, have a more inclusive approach and try to address both men and women, even if women are still their priority.

## 5.2.6 Cooperation

In Turkey, advocacy for achieving changes in regards to women’s rights has been a successful tool for women’s organisations and other organisations active in the field. According to UNFPA (UNFPA 4) this is an important time

“for those in Turkey who make policies, enforce legislation and for those who would like to see existing laws or policies modified or changed, or new mechanisms introduced [...]. As the country continues to prepare for accession to the European Union, many key laws and instruments (e.g. the civil code and the penal code) have been modified to bring them closer to EU norms and to fulfil the criteria for accession.” According to Ertürk (Ertürk 2006: 100), “advocacy and lobby work in Turkey, using universal norms and Turkey’s international commitments as negotiating tools for leverage has led to an increased opportunity for dialogue among women of different orientations”.

Cooperation among the different organisations working on domestic violence is hence of utmost importance in order to do advocacy work, form public opinion, lobby politicians and to coordinate their interventions. Women’s organisations in Turkey have reasonable experience in cooperating, lobbying and doing advocacy work together. It started with the campaign against Battering of Women in the 1980’s and continued with the successful campaigns for the new Civil Code and Penal Code at the beginning of the Millennium. In 2004, UNFPA together with the Directorate General on the Status and Problem of Women (KSGM) started a campaign that was called “Stop Violence against Women”. The second campaign for “Combating Domestic Violence Against Women”, a cooperation between UNFPA, European Commission, Directorate General KSGM and civil society organisations, was launched in the beginning of 2007. This project has proclaimed its goal to produce relevant data on violence against women and domestic violence. Furthermore, the objective of this project is to promote gender equality and protect women’s human rights in Turkey.

However, the opinions and experiences of the organisations on the cooperation differ widely.

### **Experiences and attitude to cooperation**

The respondent from Altındağ Municipality narrates about the cooperation between the municipality and some NGOs:

“[...] there is such a problem here that we cannot work, we cannot make NGOs work together, we cannot create projects altogether. One by one you can work with them. But when you become three it’s impossible.”  
Respondent Altındağ Municipality

What the respondent refers to is that they are working together with several organisations in the Municipality of Altındağ on projects related to combating domestic violence. However, it is only possible to establish cooperation between the municipality and the organisation. The alternative scenario, to have the municipality and different organisations working together on the same project, is not possible according to this respondent. The respondent’s conclusion is that that the Turkish civil society is not yet mature enough to work together successfully.

Ankara Bar Association Women's Rights Center is an organisation that chooses to limit their cooperation with other women's organisations. Below, the respondent explains the reasons:

"We don't send [representatives to women's organisations platforms] although the platform asked for a lawyer. But as we are working as a sub unit of Ankara Bar Association, we have to be very selective and careful which organisations and platform we join. We cannot send anyone to everywhere because in some platforms we see some organisations that we don't want to work with and that we don't approve of. We don't accept some of them because they use [the women's] rights as a cover. Baskent Kadın Platformu for instance, they say that they have [the right to wear] a headscarf so they don't want to send any lawyer to them."

Respondent Ankara Bar Association – Women's Rights Center (Coordinator)

The Purple Roof Foundation cooperates with other women's organisations working on domestic violence:

"We usually work with organisations that work on domestic violence. This is not what we would like but it's kind of what comes with working in the environment that we are. All forms of violence are very closely linked to each other because of the patriarchal structures. And because we think like that we would like to work with women's organisations in other areas outside domestic violence. [...] But because there is so much work to be done in this area we don't have any time left look at other areas that we would like to work with."

Respondent Purple Roof Foundation

### **Problems of cooperation**

The Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women, KSGM, is the governmental agency that has the most contact and cooperation with NGOs in Turkey. In the interview, the respondent said that she feels that the cooperation is going very well, apart from a few problems:

"We think that we have good relations with them [the women's organisations] but we have some problems. The main problem is that how state is working is very different from how NGOs work. We have some restrictions but if the NGOs think about something, they just act. But we can't."

"But we can say that in Turkey we are the best institution that is working with NGOs. We might be criticized from the NGOs. Sometimes the NGOs also have problems amongst each other. But we also know that women's issues cannot be solved without NGO cooperation. We want them to participate all in our work. But it's related to our possibilities. We know that NGOs have limited opportunities but we also have limited budgets for ourselves."

"We do not have really important problems. We are preparing the sixth periodical country report to CEDAW committee right now. So in this preparation meeting we are criticized because some of the NGOs think that they are not called or they have problems with the representation at the meeting. Also they may have, they insist very much on their idea to be in this report but maybe another NGO may not want this to have a part in this report. We like to make a report that includes all the proposals. They insist a lot to have a part in the report. But it's a state report. So they have a shadow report. If we include all the information or the proposals, the report became a huge report. Since we have limits to prepare a report, we are trying to get all their proposals in a summarised form to make all of them, to write all of them inside. So one of their criticism is that point."

However, this view is not shared by all the women's organisations. They complain about a lack of communication with the Directorate General and the head of the Directorate General Nimet Çubukçu in particular. Furthermore, they also feel that the collaboration on the "Combat Domestic Violence against Women Project"<sup>20</sup> is not going well. The reasons are that the women's organisations were not involved in the planning of the project and that they receive very little information and have little possibilities to influence the project that is supposed to bind organisations together.

The Purple Roof Foundation is especially not happy about their relationship with the Directorate General of the Status and Problems of Women KSGM and the minister of women's and family affairs Nimet Çubukçu, the head of KSGM:

"There is no relationship apart from being invited to meetings there is no relationship. For this reason their relationship is for show, it's not real."  
Respondent Purple Roof Foundation

She says that there is no exchange of information, no cooperation and no transparency and that the women's organisations have no chance to meet the Minister. This is contradictory to what the respondent at the Directorate General KSGM says.

Furthermore, the respondent of the Purple Roof Foundation talks about "Combating Domestic Violence against Women Project":

"We were invited to a meeting. And we have been invited to another meeting in Abant. We don't see this as a real cooperation. I mean, we have just been invited to two meetings and they don't see that this is a cooperation."  
Respondent Purple Roof Foundation

The respondent from the Foundation for Women's Solidarity states that she cannot really say much about the "Combating Domestic Violence against Women Project" because "they do not get so much feedback about it. [...] They are invited for an information meeting but nothings else."

The respondent from UNFPA about the relation between KSGM and the women's organisations:

"When I think about the history of the General Directorate on the women's status, they have been having a strong relationship with NGOs just from the beginning. But for the last five years, for five years, that strong relationship is broken. With some certain NGOs who are actually the ones who are working strongly for women's movements. [...] Whenever they have meetings they always inviting NGOs, they have an NGO unit actually, within the General Directorate. They meet each month or two or

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<sup>20</sup> The Combating Domestic Violence against Women Project was initiated in the beginning of 2007 and is a cooperation between KSGM, UNFPA, the EU and different women's organisations to promote gender equality and the protection of women's human rights in Turkey.

three months time. So, they don't have the, as strong relationship as in the beginning but they still have a relationship and they are trying to do their activities with them as well.”

“[...] it is the staff of, I mean the changing staff of the General Directorate. It's so personal actually. “

Respondent UNFPA

From the interview excerpts it becomes clear that there are numerous problems in the collaboration of the organisations. First, there are problems of differing interests and the expectation that they have to agree on one solution (the CEDAW report). Second, there are problems of identifications. Some of the organisations do not want to work together in the same network with certain other organisations (such as Islamic women's organisations), fearing that this might risk the reputation of their own organisation. Third, there are time constraints that make it difficult for organisations to spend their time networking and collaborating instead of working directly with the affected women. Fourth, there are problems of communication between the different organisations as shown by the example of the minister who is not willing to communicate with the other organisations. The same problem also became clear in relation to the “Combating Domestic Violence against Women Project”. Many organisations complained that they were not being informed about what was going on and that they were not being invited to get involved. The fifth and last problem of cooperation is the lack of personal contacts and good relations. That shows how dependent collaboration is on an understanding at the personal level between the members of the organisations.

My observation is that most of the organisations were willing and interested to collaborate with other organisations in order to achieve a common goal. The only exceptions were Amnesty International and the Ankara Bar Association – Women's Rights Center. These were also the organisations that are different from the other organisations. Amnesty International has a strong international network where they get their support and ideologies. Furthermore, their way of working, mainly by sending petition letters and direct actions, differs considerably from the other organisations way of working. According to them, they do not have a big interest in collaborating with other organisations because it would be difficult to work together since they are using different methods to reach their goal. The Women's Rights Center is both supported and restrained by the Ankara Bar Association. On the one hand, the Ankara Bar Association helps them financially and gives them a legal status and, on the other hand, they have to be more careful about their reputation in order not to lose the recognition of the Ankara Bar Association. That makes them less willing to risk their reputation and to collaborate on questionable projects. Both Ankara Bar Association and Amnesty International have hence a different socio-cultural context than the other organisations, which makes them less willing to cooperate.

### **5.2.7 Final points from the Framework**

After discussing the discourses, it is time to reflect upon the remaining three points from the framework.

3. Function of the problem in the practice
4. Possible ways past the obstacles
5. Reflection on the analysis

First, there is the question of the function of the problem in practice. This aspect was already considered in my previous discussion. The next points are the ones of possible ways past obstacles and the reflection on the analysis. These points will be taken up in the next chapter “Conclusions”.

## 6. Conclusions

### 6.1 *Research findings*

In this chapter, my aim is to go back to my original research questions and discuss my findings in relation to the questions, in order to sum up my research.

My research started off with the assumption that the organisations working with domestic violence have similar but different ways of defining domestic violence and hence different approaches towards domestic violence and how to work with the issue. After my analysis of the discourses on domestic violence prevalent in the different organisations, my conclusion is that my initial assumption was incorrect. Most of the organisations had similar ways of defining domestic violence, including economical, psychological, physical (and sexual) violence. The only exception was Amnesty International that used the term social and physical violence. However, the term social violence includes all forms of non-physical abuse and, therefore, this is more a matter of wording than of including different things in the term domestic violence.

This way of looking at domestic violence is clearly derived from international discourses dominant in the West and in the UN, based on the human rights. This is not surprising, considering that Turkey has had an orientation towards the Western world since the foundation of the Republic. Furthermore, donor agencies from the West and the EU have had a significant impact on the gender discourses in Turkey, putting constant pressure on the government to improve the situation of women in Turkey. In addition, since the beginning of the women's movement, the Turkish women's organisations have been in close cooperation with women's organisations in the West and they have actively participated in international platforms where they have been influenced by the prevalent discourses.

The involvement of males in the organisations was the issue where the biggest difference in approaches towards working with domestic violence could be noticed. The women's organisations, being based on feminist ideals, were the ones least in favour of involving men. For them, the most important thing is to empower women. The question can be raised if solely working with women will change anything in society. In contrast, the other organisations were in favour of involving men in their programmes even if that was also a new idea to them.

The cooperation of the organisations in order to carry out successful lobbying on politicians, influence public opinion and organise projects and events together was afflicted by some problems. The organisations are very aware of that fact that it is important to cooperate but there are many obstacles that have a negative influence on the collaboration between the organisations. These obstacles include weak communication between the organisations



regarding ongoing projects, different and contradicting expectations and the lack of personal contact. Hence, continuing and extending the collaboration between the organisations will be very important for the achievement of a society that accepts new gender norms.

Furthermore, I noted that many of the organisations working with domestic violence, especially the women's organisations, gave a rather elitist impression. This was not only due to the background of the respondents but also due to the lack of volunteers. Moreover, even if the organisations had very progressive views and ways of working on domestic violence, this view is not yet shared by most of the population in Turkey, including the politicians who are still rather traditional in their way of thinking and acting.

Finally, I have to say that I was very impressed by the organisations I met, namely the state and the municipal organisations as well as the UN, women's organisations and other organisations. The work that the women's movement has done during the last two decades is remarkable: they have brought the issue of domestic violence to the public agenda, they have changed the legislation and they have abolished the patriarchal outlook in the civil and penal code. However, in order to accelerate the changes in the society, I think it will be necessary to try new ways of working, such as including the civil society more and collaborating more.

## **6.2 Summary of findings**

The discourses on domestic violence prevalent in the organisations working on domestic violence in Turkey were largely derived from an 'international discourse' on domestic violence. This means that their discourse was in line with international standards and adapted to the Turkish context. However, the organisations were found to be rather elitist and progressive in their views and their ways of working while the view of most of the population of Turkey, including that of the politicians, are rather traditional in their way of thinking and acting. The differences in approaches to domestic violence in between the organisations seemed to be rather small. The only issue regarding which a different approach could be found was the involvement of men in the organisations and the activities of the organisations. Furthermore, there existed a lack of communication and cooperation between the organisations hindering their ability to network, form public opinion and collaborate on project.

### **6.3 Recommendations for further research**

For further research on this topic, I recommend undertaking a discourse analysis on the way media displays domestic violence in Turkey. This could furnish important information on which discourse influences large parts of the society. Furthermore, it would be interesting to perform a study on the general perception of domestic violence in society. This could either be a quantitative or a qualitative study.

A phenomenon that awoke my interest is the existence of numerous platforms for women's organisations. How effectively are the organisations working together in these platforms, how are issues decided and who puts which issues on the agenda? A study on this would surely broaden the knowledge on the way women's organisations work in Turkey.

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## Appendices

### ***The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women***

The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women provides a definition of gender-based abuse, calling it ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life’.

Article 2 in the Declarations states:

Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:

(a) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;

(b) Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;

(c) Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

## ***Organisations working on violence against women in Turkey***

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Amargi Women's Cooperative	+90-212 2432393
Amnesty International Turkey	<a href="http://www.amnesty-turkiye.org/">http://www.amnesty-turkiye.org/</a>
Combating Domestic Violence against Women Project	<a href="http://www.unfpa.org.tr">www.unfpa.org.tr</a>
Flying Broom (Uçan Süpürge)	<a href="http://www.ucansupurge.org/">http://www.ucansupurge.org/</a>
Foundation for Women's Solidarity (Kadın Dayanışma Vakfı)	<a href="http://www.kadindayanismavakfi.org">www.kadindayanismavakfi.org</a>
General Directorate on the Status and Problems of Women (Kadının Statüsü Genel Müdürlüğü)	<a href="http://www.kssgm.gov.tr/">http://www.kssgm.gov.tr/</a>
Kirk Örük (Cooperative for struggle against violence against women)	+90-312 229 22 91
Foundation of Purple Roof Women's Shelter (Mor Çatı)	<a href="http://www.morcati.org.tr">www.morcati.org.tr</a>
Şahmaran Women, Research and Solidarity Association	+90-216 5737433
Women for Women's Human Rights (Kadının İnsan Hakları – Yeni Çözümler Derneği)	<a href="http://www.wwhr.org/">http://www.wwhr.org/</a>
Women's Rights Council of the Ankara Bar Association (Ankara Barosu Kadın Danışma Merkezi)	<a href="http://www.ankarabarusu.org.tr/">http://www.ankarabarusu.org.tr/</a>

More contact details of women's organisations in Turkey can be found in the "Directory of Women's organisations in Turkey":  
[http://supurge.dincsa.com/index.php?sayfa=3&city=06&type=99&time=&time\\_opt=1&name=&lang=eng&alt\\_sayfa=arama](http://supurge.dincsa.com/index.php?sayfa=3&city=06&type=99&time=&time_opt=1&name=&lang=eng&alt_sayfa=arama)

## **Questionnaire to Van Women's Association**

### **Data of organisation and respondent:**

#### **Organisation:**

a) Name and web address of your organisation (*if applicable*):

#### **Respondent:**

c) Your name:

d) Your age (*optional*):

e) What is your position in the organisation (*if applicable*)?

f) Since when are you working for the organisations (*if applicable*)?

g) Since when are you active in the women's movement?

### **Questions on domestic violence:**

- 1) How do you define domestic violence? (Which forms of violence do you count as domestic violence?)
- 2) What are the reasons for domestic violence against women according to you?
- 3) Do you think that domestic violence has a class dimension?
- 4) How do you work on combating domestic violence (and related phenomena such as honour crimes)?
- 5) Do you also involve men when working on domestic violence? Why? Why not?

### **Questions on public awareness:**

- 6) Is your organisation trying to create public awareness and influence political and governmental actors on the issue domestic violence?
- 7) If yes, how? Describe!

- 8) Are you involved in the 2007 campaign “Combating Domestic Violence Against Women project” organised by KSGM and UNFPA?

**Only answer these questions if you are involved in the campaign:**

- 9) How are you involved?
- 10) How is the cooperation around the campaign going?
- 11) Are there any problems in communication?
- 12) Do you feel informed and involved in what is happening in the campaign?

**Only answer these questions if you are NOT involved in the campaign:**

- 13) Why are you not involved?
- 14) Would you like to be involved?

**Questions on cooperation with other partners:**

- 15) Are you cooperating with other partners (organisations, institutions etc.) on the issue of domestic violence? With which partners?
- 16) How is the cooperation organised?
- 17) What are your experiences with the cooperation? Please name both negative and positive experiences.
- 18) With which politicians and governmental institutions are you working together with?
- 19) How is the cooperation going?

**Additional questions:**

- 20) Do you have any other comment (on this questionnaire etc)?
- 21) Can I come back to you if I have any further questions?
- 22) Do you want to be anonymous or can I mention your name in my thesis?



