The Gendered Effect of Conflict: Turkey

DPI Working Paper

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Democratic Progress Institute

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Foreword

The Democratic Progress Institute aims to create an atmosphere whereby different parties share knowledge, ideas, concerns, and suggestions facing the development of a democratic solution in Turkey. The work focuses on a combination of research and practical approaches to broaden bases for wider public involvement by providing platforms for discussion in the form of roundtable meetings, seminars, workshops and conferences. This is being carried out in order to support and contribute to existing work in Turkey but also extending to the wider region.

The Institute's work incorporates research and discussions on a wide range of strategic and relevant topics including constitutional reform; preparing for constitutional changes in conflicting societies; post conflict societies; freedom of expression and association; cultural and language rights, political participation and representation; women's role in resolving the conflict; access to justice and transitional justice including truth and reconciliation commissions.

The DPI aims to create an atmosphere whereby the different parties are able to meet with experts from Turkey and abroad, to draw on comparative studies, as well as analyse and compare various mechanisms used to achieve positive results in similar cases. The work supports the development of a pluralistic political arena capable of generating consensus and ownership over work on key issues surrounding a democratic solution at both the political and the local level.

This paper researches the importance of incorporating a gender perspective in decision making processes within Turkey and beyond, as a means of advancing democratic progress and broadening bases for peace. It aims to explore the obstacles preventing the inclusion of the gender perspective at state and international level, and possible ways forward, to move beyond these challenges.

With special thanks to Eleanor Johnson for her contribution to the research of this report.

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Chapter 1. The disproportionate effect of conflict on women: international commentary

The growing body of international law and legal commentary offering a gendered perspective on conflict includes international conventions,[1] United Nations Security Council Resolutions,[2] commentary by international legal bodies[3] as well as international conferences[4] on the issue. All have contributed to an established recognition of the disproportionate effect of conflict on women and of the importance of women's participation for the promotion of peace.

The purpose of this paper, which aims to act as a draft working paper, is to explore the extent of women's participation in public life, decision making, and peacemaking processes and the barriers that impede such participation, as well as the possible solutions to the underrepresentation of women, both in general and in the context of Turkey. It considers in detail the particular gendered effects conflict has on women, and emphasises the importance of women's inclusion at every level, in order for democratic advancement to occur and for peace to be secured, in Turkey and elsewhere.

1 The 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is the first international treaty to recognise sexual and gender-based violence as grave breaches of international law

2 UN SC Resolution 1325 and 1820

3 The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women have issued general comments and recommendations on gender based violence and other effects of conflict on women

4 Armed conflict formed a key topic in the Fourth World Conference on Women and Platform for Action, Beijing 1995

i) United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women and Conflict

a) United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325[5]

UNSCR 1325 (passed in 2000) is considered a landmark resolution in the area of women, peace and security.[6] Unanimously adopted, it acknowledges the importance of women's participation in the maintenance and achievement of peace, and also calls for the protection of women from gender based violence in situations of armed conflict. The resolution provides a framework within which a gendered perspective can be incorporated into all aspects of peace processes. It was preceded by numerous efforts to mainstream a gender perspective into decision making, peacekeeping, post-conflict processes and all reports and missions of the Security Council and the Secretary General, and to bring the protection of women's rights to the forefront of all UN activity.

Despite the initial enthusiasm with which Resolution 1325 was received by international non governmental organisations, governments and scholars, many of whom viewed it as a 'much awaited door of opportunity for women',[7] it has since been met with criticism, with doubt cast on the reality of its practical application. Main weaknesses of the resolution include its lack of

5 S/RES/1325 (2000)

6 Retrieved 14/06/11 at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/

7 CHOWDHURY, Ambassador Anwarul K (2010) *'Doable fast track indicators for turning the 1325 promise into reality'*, p.1 (launched at the working meeting on 1325 on 27 July 2010 at the United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC) retrieved 14/06/11 at: http://www.gc-council.org/en/download/Indicators_for_1325%20implementation.pdf

implementation mechanisms, such as monitoring bodies, as well as a lack of time limited targets, which would serve to pressurise actors[8] into implementing the resolution unequivocally. Other shortcomings which have impeded greater implementation of the resolution include the lack of knowledge of its existence among civil society, NGOs and other relevant bodies, which could be seen as reflective of an absence of effective information flow within the UN, as well as the lack of women in senior positions in peacekeeping missions and in visible roles such as Special Representatives of the Secretary General or Special Envoys.[9] Inadequate allocation of funds within the UN's gender equality architecture has also been a barrier to change in this area,[10] as have the understaffing of UN gender units,[11] the absence of mandate authority[12] and a paucity of Security Council interaction with grass roots women's organisations[13] during missions.

8 Actors include among others, the Security Council, Secretary General and Member States

9 United States Institute of Peace: *'Where are all the women peacekeepers?'*, retrieved on 14/06/11 at http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:7W0dRO7Hv0wJ:www.usip.org/events/where-are-the-women-peacekeepers+lack+of+women+peacekeeping+missions&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk&client=firefox-a&source=www.google.co.uk

10 Gender and Development Network: *'UN Women: A new opportunity to deliver for women'*, p.5, retrieved on 14/06/11 at http://www.thegodmothers.org.uk/Images/UN%20Women%20-%20A%20new%20opportunity%20to%20deliver%20for%20women_tcm104-29973.pdf

11 See footnote 10, above, at p.8

12 See footnote 10, above, at p.8

13 See footnote 10, above, at p.13

b) United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820[14]

UNSCR 1820 (passed in 2008) follows on from resolution 1325. Resolution 1820 directly confronts sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, recognising the direct link between systematic sexual violence as a tool of conflict and the maintenance and protection of international peace and security. It commits the Security Council to take measures to end violence, punish perpetrators and report on situations in which such systematic violence is being employed, as well as on strategies to eliminate it.

This resolution has a number of strong elements facilitating its implementation. These include clear, directive language, which sets out sexual violence against civilians during conflict and post-conflict periods as falling unequivocally within the Security Council's mandate. The language used in Resolution 1825 also brings clarity to the issues of sexual violence and international security; connecting the two and reducing ambiguity on conditions for international intervention in such cases.[15] Another strong point of the resolution is that it debunks the myth that sexual violence is an unavoidable consequence of conflict.

Crucially, this resolution also highlights the need for women's participation within decision making, in order to ensure that the subject of sexual violence be addressed. Despite these important

14 S/RES/1820 (2008)

15 International Women's Tribune Centre: *'United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820 – A preliminary assessment of the challenges and opportunities'* (2009), p. 21, retrieved on 14/06/11 at http://www.iwtc.org/1820blog/1820_paper.pdf

strengths, Resolution 1820 contains a number of weaknesses, which include a lack of acknowledgement of the breadth of gender based violence suffered during period of conflict (its main focus is on sexual violence, rather than *all* types of violence carried out *because* of someone's gender). It also limits its focus to periods of conflict, without giving in-depth consideration to periods preceding and following conflict. Although it acknowledges the importance of women's participation within decision making, it does not recognise the importance of women's participation in domestic police forces and other bodies, which is critical to long term stability. Finally, as with Resolution 1325, Resolution 1820 does not provide for monitoring or reporting mechanisms.

ii) The Women's Convention: General Comments and Recommendations on women and conflict

a) CEDAW General Recommendation 19 on Violence against Women[16]

The Committee of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against all Women (CEDAW), 1979 has been one of the international bodies most vocal on the subject of women in situations of armed conflict.[17] Although CEDAW does not contain any specific provision on violence, the Committee has been vocal in its recognition of the crucial importance of this area in relation to women's rights, by way of its General

16 11th session, 1992

17 The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) is perhaps the most comprehensive instrument in terms of addressing women's rights in this area, and unlike the Women's Convention, provides a definition of 'violence against women', which includes situations of armed conflict or war.

Recommendations. In 1992, General Recommendation 19 on violence against women applied a gendered perspective of violence for the first time in the history of CEDAW, defining gender-based violence as a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men, and as violence that is aimed at a woman *because* she is a woman. It also acknowledges gender based violence as *any* violence which disproportionately affects women. In this recommendation, the Committee elaborates on the ways in which wars, armed conflicts and the occupation of territories often impact women by way of increased prostitution, trafficking in women and sexual assault of women, which require specific protective and punitive measures. It also asserts the right of women to equal protection according to humanitarian norms in time of international or internal armed conflict.

b) CEDAW General Recommendation 24 on Women and Health[18]

Another pertinent general recommendation issued by the CEDAW Committee is General Recommendation 24 on women and health. This takes into account the fact that war and conflict have pervasive effects on all aspects of life, including the crucial aspect of health. The Committee recommends that States parties ensure that adequate protection and health services, including trauma treatment and counselling, are provided for women, for example trapped in situations of armed conflict and women refugees.

18 20th session, 1999

In addition to physical harm, this recommendation also addresses the psychological and mental health effects often engendered by conflict, stating that women are disproportionately susceptible to such effects as a result of armed conflict, and urges States parties to take appropriate measures to ensure that health services are sensitive to the needs of all women and are respectful of their human rights and dignity.

In its recent review of Turkey (May 2011), the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted the disparities in the enjoyment of such rights between men and women and between regions in Turkey. Maternal mortality rates remain higher in rural Kurdish areas, for example, which have been exposed to conflict, and where access to sexual and reproductive healthcare is inadequate.

iii) International Conferences: The Fourth World Conference on Women and Platform for Action, Beijing 1995

International conferences have proved an important means of addressing the issue of women and conflict on a global level. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) resulted from the Beijing conference, which at the time was the biggest UN conference ever held, and addressed gender equality, development and peace as global commitments, giving particular focus to the areas of sexual violence and women in situations of armed conflict. Beijing could be said to have brought the issue of

violence against women from margin to centre in the context of armed conflict, drawing the world's attention to the subject as a matter of urgency.

The conference and platform aimed to increase women's participation in decision making, conflict resolution mechanisms and peacebuilding and educational activities, the importance of which is reiterated in Security Council's resolutions and CEDAW's general comments, among others. Yet, it must be questioned whether women's presence alone is enough to achieve a considerable difference.[19]

Although the recognition of the gendered effects of conflict is growing within international law and legal commentary, the realisation of the aims of the above resolutions and recommendation proves to be an ongoing challenge; this is in even greater evidence in Turkey, where practical application of such tools is sorely lacking. The paucity of women in senior roles at national and international level; the lack of monitoring requirements for international treaties protecting women's rights such as CEDAW; and the lack of time limited targets to deal with issues such as women's representation and participation at all levels of public life are issues which should be addressed with

19 'Dianne Otto asserts that 'without admitting that the rules, regulating armed conflict and maintaining the militarised global order, must themselves change, it is hard to see how involving women in decision making is anything more than a token gesture'. (see footnote 16, 24) Should more attention therefore be given to changing the foundations of global militarisation and approaches to peace and conflict resolution as a whole, rather than on women's inclusion at surface level?

urgency, in order to meet women's needs as well as to enhance the possibility of sustainable peace and democracy.

Chapter 2. Women's participation in public and political life

i) Why include more women in public life?

Despite progress in recent years in terms of women's participation, it continues to be slow and uneven. By the end of 2010 women held 19.1% of all parliamentary seats worldwide, which, despite being the highest percentage to date, is still a long way off the UN's target of 30%,[20] and even further away from parity. The Turkish parliament currently has a new total of 78 women members (14%) since the June 2011 elections; an improvement on the previous 9%, but still significantly lower than the global average.

The reasons for including more women in public and political life are numerous. In its report of the expert group meeting on the equal participation of women and men in decision making processes,[21] the Division for the Advancement of Women put forward the following arguments: women account for around half the population and this needs to be reflected in terms of

20 Inter-Parliamentary Union report *'Women in Parliament in 2010: The Year in Perspective'* p.9 retrieved on 22/06/11 at http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?hl=en&q=cache:qaTu78GROlkJ:http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmnpersp10-e.pdf+global+average+%2B+Women+in+parliament+%25+2010&ct=clnk

21 UN DAW *'Equal Participation for Women and Men in Decision Making Processes, with particular emphasis on Political Participation and Leadership'* Expert Group Meeting, Addis Ababa, 24-27 October 2007: retrieved on 22/06/11at http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/eql-men/index.html

representation; women experience many things, including conflict, differently to men and this should be recognised during policy and decision making, which affects women; women's interests are often different to those of men and should therefore be represented by women at a political level; the inclusion of more women in political and public life attracts more women to participate; and finally, democratic governance is enhanced when men and women are represented equally. In regions where women experience conflict first hand, the representation of women's interests at a national level is even more imperative.

ii) The Women's Convention and women's participation

Article 7 of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979 (hereafter CEDAW), sets out the right of every woman to not be discriminated against in her participation in public and political life. The CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation 23 elaborates on this right, highlighting the importance of including a 'critical mass' of women in 'international negotiations, peacekeeping activities, all levels of preventive diplomacy, mediation, humanitarian assistance, social reconciliation, peace negotiations and the international criminal justice system'[22] in order to create real change. In particular, the general recommendation emphasises the necessity of applying a gender perspective and analysis in order to understand the differing effects of armed and all other conflict on women and men.

22 CEDAW General Recommendation 23 retrieved at: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom23

This general recommendation also looks in detail at the stereotyping of women, including that perpetrated by the media, and the effect this can have on women's participation in public and political life. Such stereotyping can restrict women's access to participation in areas such as finance and conflict resolution, instead confining their involvement to 'softer' issues such as the environment and health. In Turkey, women's portrayal in the media is often stereotyped; women are generally associated with family roles in the home.[23] The media there also continues to present an artificial, monolithic Turkish identity, ignoring the linguistic, ethnic and gender pluralism to the exclusion of 'othered' minority groups, or those not conforming to cultural expectations, such as politicised women or women in positions of authority. The state no longer holds the official monopoly over Turkey's media, and this presents an invaluable opportunity for expansion of women's portrayal at public level. The media is a valuable means of making women seen and heard. Women's inclusion is key to the democratic advancement of society within Turkey.

iii) Obstacles to women's inclusion in political and public arenas

Numerous impediments stand in the way of women's participation in the decision making processes and policy making encompassed in public and political life globally. These include the method or

23 IKIZLER, Ayse S (2007) *'Gender role representations in Turkish television programmes'*, St. Mary's College of Maryland, p.34, retrieved on 14/07/11 at http://www.smcm.edu/psyc/_assets/documents/SMP/Showcase/0607-AIkizler.pdf

type of electoral system employed by a state. In countries using proportional representation, for example, women's representation is higher.[24] The structure of political parties is also a determinate factor affecting the level of women's participation in political life.[25] The internal culture of a political party plays an important role in terms of its accessibility for women; if the culture is patriarchal and views women only as strategic tokens to secure women's votes, rather than as valued decision makers, they will be less involved in decision making and policy making. Political parties and their cultures have a strong impact on whether or not a woman will be a candidate in elected office.

Even when women are successful in becoming candidates, they may still be constrained by other factors. The 'double burden'[26] suffered by many women who take responsibility for both their unpaid work as family carer, housekeeper and farmer in addition to paid work can make campaigning, which is very time consuming, extremely challenging. Women can also lack the funds necessary to campaign successfully if they are not financially independent. They can also lack the political connections men have, due to patriarchal and male dominated networks. In the context of Turkey, families can often be 'patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal. Women move in with their husband's families,

24 See footnote 23, above, p. 15

25 See footnote 23, above, p. 15

26 describing the fact that women often take on double the workload of men; through the combination of their unpaid work in the home and their paid employment, see BITTMAN, Michael and WAJCMAN, Judy (2000) 'The Rush Hour: The Character of Leisure Time and Gender Equity', *Social Forces* 79(1) 184

bear their husband's name, and family leadership is mostly a male business...living arrangements and primary loyalties are male-centred, and daily family life is experienced in this context."[27]
In many countries, political institutions are not 'gender friendly' environments, for example they can lack childcare services, require late sitting times in parliament and implement meeting schedules that do not account for the fact that many women are the primary caregivers of their children. Violence is another major impediment to female candidates' successes; in many countries women suffer from 'discrimination, abuse and violence during elections', often giving up all 'political ambitions because of abuse'.[28]

Other obstacles to women's participation in political life can include lack of mobility: many rural women[29] do not have easy access to political and public organisations and institutions, which are often found in urban areas. Illiteracy can often be more prominent among rural women, which can prove another barrier to access. Boy children can be prioritised in terms of education, with girls often seen primarily as potential wives and mothers. The European Commission in its 2010 Progress Report on Turkey has highlighted the difficulties Turkish women often face in accessing secondary and further education, noting that the stereotyping of women contributes to these obstacles

27 GEERSE, Miriam (2010) *'The everyday violence of forced displacement: Community, memory and identity politics among Kurdish internal forced migrants in Turkey'*, Rozenberg Publishers, Amsterdam, p.68
28 See footnote 23, above, p.14
29 See CEDAW's Article 14 on the rights of rural women

(stereotyped views of women's roles and status also prevail within schools, with textbooks, for example, often presenting gender stereotypes), and urging Turkey to take action to decrease female drop-out rates, in particular in rural areas, as well as increase the quality of education in general.[30] It is vital that the persistent gender gap at all levels of education within Turkey be closed in order for all girls to access education, which in turn encourages the participation of women in public life.

Men are also more likely to learn the officially recognised language of a country, for example in Turkey, men from minority groups which use languages other than Turkish, often learn Turkish during compulsory army service, whereas women from such groups, in particular in rural regions, may only speak their native language. The use of minority languages (such as Kurdish) was prohibited in Turkey for many years and still faces severe restrictions and disapproval; and not recognised as an official language or taught in schools. The rate of illiteracy among women in Diyarbakir, the biggest Kurdish province, for example, is estimated by some as being as high as 50 to 60 per cent.[31] As such, women who only speak Kurdish are even less able to make their voices heard, facing greater inaccessibility to participation at national level.

30 See footnote 15, above, p.25

31 See Roj Women website, retrieved 04/07/11: http://rojwomen.com/2011/05/31/un-raises-concerns-about-disparities-in-the-enjoyment-of-economic-social-and-cultural-rights-between-men-and-women-and-between-region-in-turkey/

The stereotypical view many societies have of women as wife, mother and caregiver can mean that her involvement in public life can be met with hostility from family and society as a whole, thus inhibiting women's participation in often male dominated domains. Maintaining male dominance in areas such as the military, foreign affairs and macroeconomic policy perpetuates such stereotyped views of women. In the context of Turkey as a whole, women have long been victims of violence,[32] with virginity testing, honour killings, pre-meditated murders, and domestic violence believed to have risen in recent years,[33] along with other discriminatory practices such as early and forced marriages remaining prevalent. The case of *Opuz v Turkey* [34] demonstrates the *de facto* immunity often granted to men in the case of domestic violence in Turkey, as well as the inadequacy of state legislation on the issue and the lack of implementation of protective laws. The tacit endorsement or acquiescence of the state with regards to violence against women sends out the clear message that women are not equal to men.

Although the elimination of such engrained discrimination is likely to be a slow process within traditionally patriarchal states such as Turkey, change is essential if progress is to occur, and efforts must be strengthened to advance progress in this area.

32 Jihad Watch website, retrieved 04/07/11 at http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?hl=en&q=cache:uAUzfVfz2SkJ:http://www.jihadwatch.org/2011/05/turkey-violence-against-women-reaches-level-of-genercide-islamic-supremacist-government-resists-refo.html+number+of+women+killed+in+conflict+%2B+turkey+%2B+Kurdish&ct=clnk

33 See footnote 32, above

34 *Opuz v Turkey* [2009] ECHR 33401/02 (9 June 2009)

According to the European Commission, 'implementation of the national action plan on gender equality and violence against women lacks sufficient human and financial resources'[35] in Turkey. Adequate national resources are necessary in order to provide training for the judiciary and at all levels of public life, an addition to awareness raising programmes, as part of a comprehensive approach to women's rights.

iv) Solutions to women's underrepresentation

Resolving the problem of women's representation within public and political life and decision making processes worldwide is not straightforward. In the context of Turkey, such resolution is complicated by embedded attitudes and augmented by factors such as conservative traditional practices and religion. Consciousness and a change in outlook remain a crucial backdrop to any enduring change, and although actions can be taken to work towards such change, as discussed in sections a) and b) below, it should be borne in mind that without significant adjustments in underlying attitudes and a new approach to culture as a whole, such actions, alone, are likely to prove inadequate in improving women's overall situation.[36]

a) State action

In order for women's representation to be taken seriously as a route to democracy and peace, states need to be proactive in

35 See footnote 15, above, p.26

36 Iran is an example of a state which has adopted a quota system to increase women's representation in parliament. Whether this change will succeed in altering fundamental attitudes towards women remains to be seen.

mainstreaming gender awareness and women's participation at every level. This includes reviewing and amending national laws and constitutional frameworks to allow for the *substantive* access of women to public and political life. States should also ensure that international instruments requiring women's equal representation (such as CEDAW) are signed *and* ratified and that reservations to such instruments are withdrawn as quickly as possible.

Other action that can be encouraged at state level is the provision of public funding to assist in the aim of women's equal representation, as well as ensuring women's access to state media and developing gender-sensitive curriculum and training at every level of the state. Enforcing time limited targets for women's increased participation and implementing temporary special measures until targets are achieved are other important methods states can achieve to create de facto progress in this area.

b) Temporary special measures

In the CEDAW Committee's consideration of Turkey's sixth periodic report in July 2010,[37] it expressed its concern that women continue to be 'seriously underrepresented' in political and public life there, especially in leadership and decision-making positions. The Committee also highlighted its concern regarding the absence of the use of temporary special measures in Turkey

37 Retrieved on 22/06/11 at: http://sim.law.uu.nl/SIM/CaseLaw/uncom.nsf/fe005fcb50d8277cc12569d5003e4aaa/8bc1fba78a4e7ab6c1257785004c4eba?OpenDocument

(such as quotas)[38] aiming to increase women's representation in political and public life, as well as the absence of legal provisions for their application. Such concerns were recently reiterated in the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which reviewed Turkey in May 2011. The Committee also called for the adoption of a quota system to accelerate women's representation in political life.

Temporary special measures would increase women's representation, which would in turn increase women's equality in society as a whole. Quotas, for example, have proven to be an invaluable tool to increase women's access to decision making, with countries undergoing political transitions, such as South Africa and Latin American states, as well as post-conflict countries such as Rwanda and Iraq, demonstrating clear progress as a result of quota systems.[39] In the CEDAW Committee's observations to Turkey, it urged for an increase in 'the availability of training and capacity-building programmes for women wishing to enter or already in public office and to enhance its awareness-raising campaigns aimed at both women and men on the importance of women's participation in political and public life' and for a quota system to be put in place to ensure greater participation among women.

38 In accordance with Article 4, CEDAW

39 COLEMAN, Isobel (2004) *'Post-conflict reconstruction: the importance of women's participation'*, p.16, retrieved on 24/06/11 at: http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?hl=en&q=cache:jcXSTnEaH9QJ:http://www.cfr.org/society-and-culture/post-conflict-reconstruction-importance-womens-participation/p6909+the+importance+of+womens+participation&ct=clnk,

Quotas compensate for substantive obstacles to women's participation and ensure women's equal representation; allowing for women's experiences to form a part of political life. Quotas can also make the nomination process more transparent and formalised, thus contributing to a 'process of democratisation'.[40]

v) The representation of women in Turkey

Many women in the ethnically diverse state of Turkey are subject to double the discrimination experienced by women generally: not only do they suffer unfairly due to their gender, but also as a result of their ethnicity. The Race Committee (CERD) has commented on the subject of such intersectionality. In its General Recommendation 25[41] on the gender related dimensions of racial discrimination, the Committee recognises that 'some forms of racial discrimination have a unique and specific impact on women'. It describes the ways in which racial discrimination may have consequences which disproportionately affect women (although they also affect men), such as rape and ostracism, and the ways in which women 'may also be further hindered by a lack of access to remedies and complaint mechanisms for racial discrimination because of gender-related impediments, such as gender bias in the legal system and discrimination against women in private spheres of life'.

40 Quota Project website retrieved on 24/06/11 at http://www.quotaproject.org/aboutQuotas.cfm

41 CERD General Recommendation 25: 'Gender related dimensions of racial discrimination' (20/03/00) retrieved on 24/06/11 at http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/0/76a293e49a88bd23802568bd00538d83?Opendocument

The European Commission, in its 2010 Progress Report on Turkey[42] found that despite some improvement, access to justice in many rural areas of Turkey is still restricted, and the provision of legal aid within the country as a whole is limited, with the coverage and quality of services provided by legal aid lawyers being inadequate, without any form of monitoring system in place. In addition, access to public services is further hindered for women from minority groups due to the fact that services are often provided in Turkish language only. Despite restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language, for example, being formerly less than previously, they still exist, and are particularly apparent in political life, education and within public services. Although language interpretation is permitted by law in court hearings and in other similar circumstances, it is not consistently applied in practice. The general difficulties women often face in accessing justice because of their gender are therefore compounded as a result of their ethnicity and language.

The problems faced by women in Turkey can include their devaluation by patriarchal society. This can be perpetuated by orthodox religious lifestyles, which, as is the case in many other states where religious orthodoxy prevails, can result in domestic violence, honour killings and denial of education opportunities.[43] Women's subordination to men can often result in financial restrictions. Such constraints and discrimination

42 See footnote 15, above, p.79

43 *'Turkey: Kurdish women's struggle for rights and equality'* retrieved on 24/06/11 at http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?hl=en&q=cache:6EtpxPTYbuIJ:http://www.wluml.org/node/6116+KURDISH+women+%2B+rural&ct=clnk

often experienced by women is likely to increase their isolation and exclusion from participating in public life.[44]

The Kurdish population in Turkey is an example of a minority group within which women often face double discrimination, meaning that they can be more likely to face exclusion from public and political life. Many Kurdish women living in urban metropolises such as Istanbul are there as a result of forced displacement, which brings a unique set of problems likely to hinder integration into public life. As opposed to those displaced due to economic migration, for instance, Kurdish women in this particular context are likely to have suffered extreme trauma related to the forced nature of their displacement.[45] Unlike the economic migrants of the 1950s to 1970s, who left rural areas as a result of agricultural modernisation but maintained strong connections with their places of origin, family and support networks, forcibly displaced Kurdish women typically experience a complete severing of all ties with their place of origin and often lose all personal connections there,[46] further isolating them from society.

The representation of all women, including those from all ethnic groups, in Turkish society can be seen to reflect the degree of implementation of the principle of equality within the country

44 See footnote 43, above
45 ÇELIK, Ayşe Betül (2005) 'I Miss My Village!: Forced Kurdish Migrants in Istanbul and their Representation in Associations', *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 32, Spring 2005, p.141
46 See footnote 45, above, p.141

as a whole.[47] There are 13 Kurdish women members in Turkey's parliament today, yet the figure remains comparatively very low (16.7% of all women in parliament and 2.4% of all parliament members).

Not all female politicians are feminist in their approach, with many distinct women's voices existing, ranging from traditional, religious and conservative to secular and politicised as well as countless others. But, regardless of their ideological perspective and political views, it is likely that a greater involvement of women from all political and ideological standpoints in public and political life would assist the removal of obstacles to their socio-economic and civil and political human rights and increase the potential for focus on issues affecting women.[48] Greater, more diverse representation of women at political level would be likely to prove instrumental in the resolution of conflict in general, bringing the intersection of the much neglected voices of all women to negotiations and policy making.

47 Kurdish Human Rights Project *'Enforcing the Charter for the Rights and Freedoms of Women in the Kurdish Regions and Diaspora'* (2008) p.15
48 Such as land and inheritance rights.

Chapter 3. The effect of women's presence on conflict resolution and peacebuilding

The perception that women's participation in public life is an important means of resolving conflict and achieving peace is today an increasingly debated subject. Women are often viewed as being able to 'influence popular opinion for or against war, monitor the actions of the international community and of local conflict actors, provide support and protection to the vulnerable and contribute to the growth and strengthening of civil society'.[49] Other viewpoints contest the idea that women are instrumental to the achievement of peace, seeing this assumption as the continuation of traditional gendered stereotypes of women as passive and sensitive.[50] In the context of Turkey, women's involvement in conflict resolution and post conflict processes bears especially great significance, given the long history of violence (both by the state and by insurgent groups) within the country.

Women's experience of conflict can be very different to that of men's. A gendered perspective of conflict, its effects, and its resolution, which takes into account differences in experience, has been shown to widen the scope of discussion and the possibility

49 FARR, Vanessa (2003) 'The importance of a gender perspective to successful disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes', *Disarmament Forum*, Vol. 4 '*Women, Men, Peace and Security*', 32, p.9-10

50 OTTO, Dianne (1996) 'Holding up half the sky, but for whose benefit?: A critical analysis of the fourth world conference on women', *The Australian Feminist Law Journal*, 1996, Vol. 6, 25

for progress. Yet despite having much to bring to conflict resolution, peacebuilding and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) processes, women are often overlooked as possible contributors, and the potential benefits are lost.

i) The importance of women's inclusion

As acknowledged by UNSCR 1325, women's participation in every aspect of conflict resolution is imperative. In periods of post-conflict reconstruction, for example, research shows that women's involvement at this stage can help 'improve health, nutrition or education, reduce fertility or child mortality…build robust and self-sustaining community organizations, encourage grass-roots democracy, and ultimately, temper extremism'.[51] Women's participation at every level, including economic, political, social and by way of leadership roles has a direct effect on the development of post-conflict societies,[52] within which women often constitute the majority of the remaining population following war and conflict. Increasing the education of girl children, strengthening women's decision-making capacity in terms of resource distribution and encouraging the raising of women's political voice all have positive effects on development. Women's participation in decision making processes and in public life has implications for promoting gender equality at all levels. Eliminating gender discrimination has been shown to lead to substantial and comprehensive progress, ranging from an increased agricultural yield to a rise in the gross national

51 See footnote 40, above
52 See footnote 40, above

product (GNP) and national income of a country, to improved educational levels and health.[53] South Africa is a strong demonstration of how involving women in the constitutional drafting process, for example, can result in a constitution which ensures the prioritisation of women's rights within every aspect of life, both in public and private spheres.

In the context of war and conflict, women's participation in decision making processes has also been shown to impact peacebuilding positively.[54] Despite this, women are typically excluded from formal peace processes.[55] Even in conflicts where women take a front line position in terms of fighting, they often do not play a part in decision making. The focus of such processes is often men and arms, while women remain overlooked, or are considered solely as possible agents of peace rather than decision makers themselves.

Armed groups within Turkey are examples of organisations where women have typically played a more significant role in discussion and decision making,[56] and even have their own distinct parties. Since the 1980s, the discourse of numerous armed groups has been seen to have linked both Kurdish ethnic identity and Kurdish women's identity, with Abdullah Öcalan's leadership of the PKK, for example, increasing the emphasis

53 United Nations, Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (2002) *'Gender Mainstreaming: An overview'*, p.11
54 See footnote 53, above, p.11
55 See footnote 53, above, p. 24
56 Although the number of high ranking female officers is low.

on women's importance within Kurdish life and on *women's* freedom as a necessary factor in achieving *Kurdish* freedom. It is believed that women's membership in the PKK is today around 20 percent.[57] Other armed groups within Turkey such as Devrimci Sol (Revolutionary Left) and TIKKO (Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army of Turkey), on the other hand, are not as renowned for actively including women at decision making level.

Kurdish political parties have typically included relatively high percentages of women, with this year's election resulting in eight women elected among the BDP's (pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party) 36 elected members. The BDP also implements a co-chairmanship within the party, shared by a man and a woman. Despite such representation within pro-Kurdish parties and political groups, this is not replicated at state level within Turkey, with far fewer women represented within Turkey's leading party, the AKP (Justice and Development Party) and in other political parties, bureaucracy and within the private sector.[58]

57 JOSEPH, Suad and NAJMABADI, Afsaneh (2005), *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Law and Politics*, Brill Academic Publishers, p.580

58 Although women's representation in top managerial positions within private companies is low (12% in 2010), this is in fact comparatively higher than the 5% global average: see Today's Zaman, 23 October 2010, *'Turkey ranks second in number of female CEOs'*, retrieved on 12/07/11 at: http://www.todayszaman.com/news-225199-106-turkey-ranks-second-in-number-of-female-ceos.html

ii) Women and negotiation

Little concrete evidence or research exist measuring women's contribution to peace negotiations,[59] due to the low female representation at peace talks and the fact that measuring any decisive contribution by women in the context of a very long term conflict is difficult – research often focuses on the *presence* of women in discussions, rather than on their *contribution* to peace.[60]

It is, however, clear that women's presence in negotiations does create wider scope for discussion and assists in the envisaging of longer term goals and development within society.[61] In the context of Turkey, women need to assume a greater presence in negotiations, which have predominantly been male dominated, in order for their interests to be represented and for a wider variety of perspectives to be considered and integrated. Women themselves are more likely to envisage more suitable solutions to issues affecting them, such as gender based violence, and to take a gender sensitive approach to land, property, employment and education issues. Without women's involvement at every level, from every provenance and group of society, including Kurdish *and* Turkish women and all other identities that coexist there,

59 Centre for Human Dialogue (2008), POTTER, Antonia, 'Women and negotiations with armed groups', published in Dilemmas of Negotiation with Non-State Armed Groups, *The Canadian Consortium on Human Security*, February 2008, Vol. 6, Issue 2, 3

60 See footnote 59, above, p. 3

61 Negotiations involving women in Guatemala and El Salvador being strong examples of this.

women's exclusion will continue and the possibilities for peace will be narrowed.

It is therefore crucial that the participation of women in political life be encouraged in terms of peace discussions, negotiations and DDR programmes and other decision making processes. It is vital that women from every sphere of life be represented, and brought together for discussion at every stage of such processes. While women do assume greater visibility within some political parties and armed groups than others, it is necessary for *all* parties to any conflict to encourage their women members to engage in discussion and to bring their experiences to the fore. Such involvement offers an important, often missed opportunity for women from opposing ideologies and political viewpoints to engage in dialogue with one another and as such, broaden the possible bases for peace.

iii) Women and disarmament

It is vital that processes of disarmament take account of the different needs of men and women putting themselves forward for demobilisation and reintegration. Women's full inclusion in the DDR process must occur if such differences are to be appreciated and the particular needs of women made visible. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 explicitly recommends that actors in peace negotiations should not only recognise the needs of women in the process of disarmament, but should involve them directly in the process itself.

It is becoming increasingly understood that women's inclusion in disarmament processes is imperative if long term change is to be maintained, and that women's contribution to immediate action, for example the 'planning and execution of weapons collection and reintegration programmes',[62] is highly valuable and should not be undermined. Despite this, over ten years since the passing of UNSCR 1325, DDR processes still exclude women's participation and continue to focus on men, without taking gender into account when creating and executing DDR processes. DDR is still absent from the agendas of many grass-roots women's groups, with very little discussion on how they can achieve greater involvement in such processes; it should therefore be encouraged that such groups do more to embrace the issue as a priority.

DDR processes often envisage male combatants over the age of eighteen as their only subject of focus, when in fact children (both male and female) and women form a significant percentage of combatants in many situations. Women's direct involvement in the disarmament process must be prioritised; they play a vital role in situations of conflict, whether as members of armed groups, or as heads of households or caregivers. Women's roles within conflict are numerous, and should all be taken into account. Not only do women assume roles as combatants and victims, they also take on numerous support roles that contribute to war 'behind the scenes'. Although women combatants who are

62 See footnote 61, above, p.27

'active fighters and potential spoilers'[63] must be a prime focus in any DDR process, women who have rejoined their communities can also be valuable contributors, and should be consulted regarding reintegration processes, which aim to reintegrate former combatants, support reconciliation and assist in securing the safety of communities.[64]

To exclude the voice of any one group of women from the DDR process would ignore the opportunity for learning and for the expansion of knowledge and perspectives, and thus limit the possibility of broadening bases for peace. As such, it is important that a 'routine consideration of the different needs and capacities of the women and men involved in DDR processes' be adopted.

iv) Increasing women's participation

Increasing women's participation in public and political life, as mentioned above, is necessary for the increase of women's inclusion in peacebuilding and DDR processes. If women are to assume key, roles in decision making processes, it must first be possible for women to take on leadership positions and key roles in political arenas. Women should be appointed to key roles within both national and international organisations such as the United Nations, in order to deal specifically with issues of peacebuilding and disarmament. In Turkey, women's representation in politics, senior positions in public administration and in trade unions

63 United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre, *'Women, Gender and DDR'*, retrieved on 19/07/11 at: http://www.unddr.org/iddrs/05/
64 See footnote 63, above

remains very low;[65] it is urgent that this be addressed if women are to gain visibility at every level of society.

Disarmament and mobilisation processes generally continue to be run by men, and there are few women in leadership positions in the military;[66] all of which makes it extremely difficult for women to access peacebuilding processes and DDR programmes globally. In addition, in order for women to be included and considered as equals to men in disarmament and peace processes, it is necessary for them to be viewed independently from men (in post conflict situations, women are often seen as men's dependents, and treated as secondary beneficiaries, even if they have engaged in active combat).[67]

Chapter 4. Women's active involvement in armed conflict

i) Armed groups - an expansion of women's autonomy?

As well violence, displacement and general insecurity being among the many consequences prolonged conflict has had on women in Turkey, another effect has been the politicisation of many women there. This has meant recruitment into the armed groups for some, but also active involvement in political parties and their organisations and meetings, as well as activism, demonstrations and protests among many others.

65 European Commission, *Turkey 2010 Progress Report,* (Brussels, 9 November 2010), p.25, retrieved on 13/07/11 at: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2010/package/tr_rapport_2010_en.pdf

66 See footnote 65, above, p.30

67 See footnote 65, above, p.31

It has been suggested that the PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers Party)) has one of the highest proportions of women combatants among armed groups worldwide (today approximated to be 20 percent[68] but thought to be much higher during the peak of the conflict in the 1980s and 1990s); and the active presence of women within the PKK has made itself felt within the political arena. Kurdish women have always played an important role in bringing peace to communities, and this has been further emphasised since the rise of the Kurdish national movement in Turkey from the early 1980s, led by Abdullah Öcalan, with women's involvement seen by many as 'as a symbol of liberation and revolution'.[69]

Women's active role in combat in the context of Turkey could be seen to show a break away from the stereotypical role often granted to women: that of 'peacekeeper'. It proves that the role of women is not straightforward and cannot be categorised easily.[70] Kurdish and other armed groups in Turkey, and elsewhere demonstrate that the military is not only a male sector and that women are not solely linked to peace.

68 JOSEPH, Suad and NAJMABADI, Afsaneh (2005), *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Law and Politics*, Brill Academic Publishers, p.580

69 DRYAZ, Massoud Sharifi, *'Women and Nationalism: how women activists are changing the Kurdish conflict'*, p.2 retrieved on 17/06/11 at http://www.soas.ac.uk/lmei/events/ssemme/file67896.pdf

70 The placid 'peacekeeper' is a role which many feminist academics have critiqued. Dianne Otto, for example sees the implicit suggestion made by international law and by UN conferences promoting women's equality and participation, that women are more likely to promote peace than men, and are limited to more peacekeeping roles within conflict, as adopting an 'erroneous stereotype'.

Similar examples of women's active, physical involvement in conflict include Peru, where the traditional model of male led Latin American guerrilla movements was broken by the Shining Path movement (*Sendero Luminoso*); which included a high percentage of women combatants and whose central committee included 42% women at senior level.[71] One of the highest ranking members of the movement and second-in-command is a woman, Elena Iparraguire. Some argue that women's inclusion at every level of the Shining Path movement succeeded in bringing women into the public sphere in Peru as a whole, revealing their 'profound significance within Peruvian society and providing them with the tools and space necessary to act politically'.[72]

The participation of women in Turkey both in combat and in politics can be seen as an expansion of women's autonomy, and as an opportunity to increase women's greater participation in a wider context at national level. Whether the gender equality embraced by the political discourse of armed struggles is mirrored in other spheres, such as family life and within civil society and in the division of labour, is a different question. All of these processes of new patterns of infra-politic behaviours may represent the beginning of a repositioning of women in relationships within the organization, and the possibility of progress.

71 Harvard magazine *'Violence in Peru'* retrieved on 01/07/11 at http://harvardmagazine.com/1996/05/right.violence.html

72 FREED, Feather Crawford (2008) *'More than half the sky: The power of women in Peru'*, retrieved on 01/07/11 at http://hiddentranscripts.wordpress.com/2008/08/15/women-and-the-shining-path/

The political struggles of armed movements have been embraced by many women both as a vehicle for the recognition of their identity and as a means of liberating themselves. In the context of Turkey, many women seek liberation from the confines of their traditional role in society, the hegemonic cultural discourse of the Turkish state and male oppression within their own culture. Regardless of their political standpoint and ethnic or cultural identity, women in Turkey share many common goals. Although their ethnicity and cultural identity is what initially united Kurdish women, for example, their politicisation went on to deal specifically with 'gender and women's issues',[73] and a separate women's movement emerged out of the Kurdish movement.[74]

ii) The invisibility of women combatants

Women are therefore not excluded from combat itself during periods of conflict. Despite the reluctance of many societies to accept women as fighters, in a growing number of countries, increasing amounts of women are joining armed groups as combatants and supporters,[75] forming a significant role in fighting forces. As mentioned, Latin America is an example of a region within which women have played an important role in physical combat. Although official figures do not officially acknowledge the extent of women's military presence there, unofficial figures

73 DINER, Cagla and TOKTAŞ, Şule (2010) 'Waves of feminism in Turkey: Kemalist, Islamist and Kurdish women's movements in an era of globalization', *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, Volume 12, Number 1, March 2010, p.48

74 See footnote 74, above, p.48

75 MOSER, Caroline O.N. and CLARK, Fiona C. (2001) 'Gender, Conflict, and Building Sustainable Peace: Recent Lessons from Latin America', in *Gender and Development*, Vol.9, No.3, Humanitarian Work (Nov. 2001) 33

from El Salvador, for example, suggest that women 'made up 60 per cent of the FMLN's support base, and 30 per cent of demobilised soldiers'.[76]

Despite such involvement, women are often left largely invisible during peace negotiations and decision making; 'on returning to their communities they were stripped of the autonomy, political role, and leadership they had gained as combatants'.[77] Upon conflict ending, when women combatants are often rendered invisible, they are discriminated against in terms of demobilisation programmes offered to men, which include medical and psychological treatment and reintegration into civil society. Moser and Clark highlight the importance of offering equal access for women to demobilisation programmes following periods as combatants, and of designing such programmes with a gender perspective that acknowledges the varying needs of women and men upon returning to civilian life.[78] In the context of Turkey, all women should be protected from discrimination by way of including them at every level of discussion and by taking measures to make demobilisation processes as accessible to them as they are to men.

iii) Use of feminist discourse in the recruitment of women combatants

The inclusion of women in armed movements has been promoted by some as being representative of a move towards

76 See footnote 75, above, p.33
77 See footnote 75, above, p.33
78 See footnote 75, above, p.33 - 34

women's equality with men and an evolution in women's freedom from discrimination and oppression. Such discourses have been employed in some countries in order to recruit women into the military, for example in Mozambique, the leadership of the FRELIMO (Frente de Liberção de Mozambique) guerrilla (1964-1974) claimed it was within the interests of girls and women to contribute to the struggle, as their freedom from the shackles of "traditional" forms of age and gender hierarchy would be inextricably bound up with the FRELIMO campaign to liberate all Mozambicans from "oppression" and "exploitation".'[79] Similar discourse has been adopted in Kurdish regions of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. Indonesia also offers a similar example of the narrative of women's equality being used to attract women to the military. The inclusion and the visibility of women in the military 'are often utilized by the Indonesian state to exemplify its claims that Indonesian women have indeed achieved equality as citizens'.[80] Other countries which have adopted such narratives to encourage the active involvement of women in combat include South Africa, Palestine, Algeria and the Basque country.

Yet despite such inclusion of women through militarisation during times of crisis and revolt, upon returning to their communities following a return to normality, women are often

79 WEST, Harry G. (2000) 'Girls with Guns: Narrating the experience of war of FREMILO's "female detachment"', *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 73, No. 4, Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa, part 2 (Oct., 2000) 184

80 SUNINDYO, Saraswati (1998) 'When the Earth is Female and the Nation is Mother: Gender, the Armed Forces and Nationalism in Indonesia', *Feminist Review*, No. 58, International Voices (Spring, 1998), p.1

stripped of the autonomy, political role, and leadership they had gained as combatants, and both the rhetoric of equality and the representation of the nation used to mobilize women's participation in the popular armed struggle are once again adjusted to fit the heterosexual familial model.'[81] Such a return to inequality upon the resolution of conflict can be avoided by way of comprehensive DDR programmes which encompass women on an equal par with men.

iv) The effects of women's participation in armed conflict

The effects of participating in armed conflict can be vastly different for women and men. Many combatants are unpaid and many go for many years without seeing their families, or never see them again. For women who are mothers, this can mean sacrificing involvement in their children's lives. The physical effects of armed combat can also be different for women than for men, and the trauma of war and conflict can have different implications.

Important differences between the effects of conflict on male and female combatants often manifest during demobilisation periods, which follow conflict itself. Women can be less eager to identify themselves as ex combatants than men during the DDR phase, and can therefore become invisible within the process. Women need to be made to feel secure within such a process; if this does not happen they are likely to 'self-mobilise';[82]

81 See footnote 80, above, p.1

82 FARR, Vanessa (2003) '*The importance of a gender perspective to successful disarma-*

to hide themselves from view and thus lose opportunities such as job retraining and healthcare.[83] Following conflict, women are often more likely to be responsible for childcare than men, often having to deal with children's post conflict trauma as well as their own, in addition to facing economic crisis. In Kurdish regions of Turkey, the armed conflict can be seen to have strengthened the patriarchal community structure.

Chapter 5. The gendered dimensions of war and armed conflict

i) Displacement

Priscilla Hayner succinctly describes the differences suffered by men and women during conflict by saying: 'those killed and imprisoned are in greater proportion men, and those forced to move from their home and left in abject poverty … are in greater proportion women'.[84]

Despite the fact that more men than women fight and die in wars, women can be counted as the main victims of many wars.[85] Eighty per cent of refugees who have had to flee their homes because of war are women, children and young people.[86] The

ment, demobilization and reintegration processes', Disarmament Forum, Vol. 4 'Women, Men, Peace and Security', 32 retrieved on 22/06/11 at http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/UNIDIR_impofgenderperspective.pdf

83 See footnote 82, above

84 HAYNER, Priscilla B. (2001), *Unspeakable Truths*, Routledge, p.85

85 See footnote 84, above, p.85

86 Women's Refugee Commission: *'Refugee Girls – the invisible faces of war'* (2009), p.1, retrieved on 17/06/11 at http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/docs/refu-

effects of displacement on women differ for women and men, with women and girls for example facing greater risk of rape and trafficking. Rape in turn often leads to wider problems such as ostracism and rejection by a woman's family and her community as a whole. Gender based violence within regions of Turkey which have experienced armed conflict are relatively high.

In addition to being vulnerable to sexual violence, girls and young women are often thrust into new and unfamiliar roles during displacement. The loss of male breadwinners due to fighting or death during conflict can mean that women and girls are forced to provide financial support for their family for the first time.[87] In Turkey, most internally displaced persons (IDP) are Kurdish villagers, forcibly displaced due to the ongoing conflict between government forces and the PKK. The violence resulting from the conflict has forced many villagers to move to Turkey's cities. Although concrete statistics on such migration are difficult to obtain, it is estimated by government commissioned studies that between 954,000 and 1.2 million Kurdish villagers were displaced during the 1980s and 1990s alone (Kurdish organisations claim the figure to be much higher at around 4.5 million[88]), due to villages being burned down to prevent their usage as PKK bases and indiscriminate attacks on civilians by both the PKK and the

gee_girls_book.pdf

87 See footnote 86, above

88 ÜSTÜNDAG, Nazan (2004) 'The Stakes at Issue with Turkey`s Application for Membership of the European Union', Kurdish Institute of Paris Symposium, retrieved on 14/07/11 at http://www.institutkurde.org/en/conferences/the_stakes_at_issue_with_turkey_s_application_for_membership_of_the_european_union/Nazan+Ustundag.html

state military,[89] and although Kurdish regions are comparatively more secure today, ceasefires have been disregarded and violence still continues intermittently, with village guard militia in force. Most IDPs live on the edge of, or within the poorest areas of cities, with very limited access to healthcare, education and adequate housing, and face cultural and linguistic marginalisation. Discrimination against ethnic minorities within many cities, such as Istanbul, is prevalent, with many people being denied social, economic and cultural rights. Many Kurdish IDPs are directly refused rented accommodation by Turkish landlords due to their ethnicity, and the word 'Kurd' is often used as a pejorative.[90]

Forced displacement can also lead to other, indirect discrimination, for example the inability to vote or register children in school due to a requirement to do so in one's city of permanent residence or due to a need for official documentation, often left behind upon displacement.[91] Unemployment levels are also high within Turkish cities, with women worst affected; Kurdish women IDPs often experience discrimination in, or exclusion from the workforce, both as a result of their Kurdish identity as well as their gender.[92] Low levels of education also

89 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) website, retrieved 05/07/11 at http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004CE90B/%28httpCountries%29/C1E13DEC3D6630EB802570A7004CB2F8?OpenDocument

90 See footnote 65, above, p.142

91 See footnote 65, above, p.142

92 Kurdish Human Rights Project: *NGO Shadow report for the review of the Turkish government under the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* May 2010, retrieved 05/07/11 at http://supportkurds.org/reports/review-of-the-turkish-government-under-the-un-international-convention-on-the-elimination-of-all-forms-of-discrimination-against-

contribute to displaced Kurdish women's exclusion from the job market, placing them at a disadvantage to locals.[93]

Women are also more likely to face linguistic disadvantages than men, as a result of men being prioritised for education. Many women IDPs from ethnic minorities, living in Istanbul cannot speak Turkish,[94] and are therefore automatically excluded from much of the job market, as well as from many social interactions within daily life.

The situation and day to day living conditions and experiences of many IDPs in Turkey can be compared to those of refugees or political asylum seekers:[95] their migration was forced and violent and they form a distinct ethnic group with their own language and culture; they are excluded in many ways from the society in which they find themselves and they live in severe economic conditions.[96] And yet Nazan Üstündag describes that which distinguishes Kurdish IDPs, for example, from refugees or asylum seekers as being the fact that they are officially citizens in their country of residence,[97] and are therefore officially entitled to access their rights as are all other citizens. Despite this, Kurdish IDPs, in particular women, have yet to be granted full access to their rights and freedoms.

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93 See footnote 64, above, p.141
94 See footnote 64, above, p.146
95 See footnote 88, above
96 See footnote 88, above
97 See footnote 88, above

ii) The different phases of conflict

Conflict resolution scholars have identified five main periods in every conflict situation, these include: pre-conflict; escalation; peak (conflict); de-escalation and reconciliation.[98] Each period entails its own gendered dynamics, producing different physical, social and economic effects for women and men. The main waves of conflict are discussed below from a gendered perspective.

a) Pre-Conflict

In the period before conflict occurs, economic distress is usually present (it can often be a causal factor of the conflict). There are often disparities in the distribution of power and resources between groups, nations and individuals, both internally and externally. Johan Galtung has labelled such unequal distribution of resources and power as 'structural violence',[99] which often becomes intensified prior to periods of conflict. In the context of Turkey, structural violence has clearly affected the Kurdish population disproportionately and constitutes the backdrop to the conflict and internal displacement that have occurred. Miriam Geerse describes the way in which structural violence 'inheres in elitism, nationalism and sexism, to name just three phenomena relevant to the Turkish-Kurdish context',[100] noting that although large numbers of Turkish citizens are affected, Kurds tend to be more seriously so, with a lack of educational opportunities

98 DUDOUET, Veronique (2006) 'Transitions from Violence to Peace', *Berghof Report Number 15*, Berghof Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management
99 GALTUNG, J (1970) 'Feudal systems, structural violence and the structural theory of revolution', *Revista Latinoamerica de Ciencia Politica* 1:25-79
100 See footnote 37, above, p.41

and decent health care facilities leading to distress, poverty and numerous unnecessary deaths in the forced migrants' regions of origin, for example.[101] Structural violence, by way of institutions and social structures, limits the agency of particular individuals or groups, and excludes them from policies, laws and procedures. Many Kurdish women bear the brunt of such violence.

The effect of this pre-conflictive phase is often experienced by women in what has traditionally been labelled the 'private sphere';[102] that is to say in the home and in family life and relationships. Depressed wages and the unemployment of male breadwinners can have strong effects on the quality of women's lives and on relationships. Other material effects during the pre-conflict phase include the attraction of men to crime and militarization as well as the reduction or loss of subsistence farming, which affects women substantially, for example due to the lack of availability of micro-credit for women, which is necessary to increase production. What has become known as the feminization of poverty has now become widely acknowledged, for example during the 1995 Beijing conference.

b) Conflict

During periods of actual conflict, Cynthia Cockburn has identified three main gendered elements affecting women. These include mobilisation into armed forces, disruption of everyday life and brutalisation of the body.[103]

101 See footnote 37, above, p.41

102 CHARLESWORTH, Hilary C. and CHINKIN, C.M. (2000) *'The boundaries of international law: a feminist analysis'*, Manchester University Press, p.30

103 COCKBURN, Cynthia (1999) *'Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence'*, p.9,

Conflict often places pressure on men to participate, and can equally pressurise women into supporting them. Resistance to such pressure on both parts can have effects on relationships. A refusal to participate in conflict can lead to the punishment or imprisonment of men, leaving women without economic support in many instances.

The pervasive nature of war and conflict means that their effects seep into every aspect of life – both public and private spheres are continuously vulnerable to disruption. Today's wars result in many more civilian casualties than has been the case in previous eras.[104] Where men are generally more mobilised, women are generally less able to escape war zones. Their traditional responsibilities in many cultures, which include the daily reproduction of life and community, can be gender specific, and often tie women to their dependents and a specific location. Gender differentiation is often more evident in rural areas, which men are usually more equipped to flee than women. Because of this, women and children often comprise the majority of war affected 'civilians'.
The effects of militarisation and conflict include high national expenditure on arms and other warfare, often leading to decreased spending on important public services such as healthcare and education, with significant impact on the everyday lives of women. Where primary healthcare becomes limited or non existent, women are disproportionately affected, with an increase

retrieved on 24/06/11 at http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?hl=en&spell=1&q=cache:5UAuO_RwpEIJ:http://repository.forcedmigration.org/pdf/?pid=fmo:5013+cynthia+cockburn+%2B+conflict+%2B+brutilization&ct=clnk

104 See footnote 22, above

in maternal and child mortality. Where access to education and schooling becomes limited, in many countries, the boy child is given priority over the girl child, which has long lasting effects on women's lives and future opportunities.

Conflict is often accompanied by strongly nationalistic ideologies, represented in the media and pubic discourse. The ethic of ethnic belonging and 'purity' can prevail, as well as a desire to 'cleanse' the state of its enemies. The effect of such a discourse on women is generally greater than that experienced by men. It often goes hand in hand with patriarchal familial ideals, which place women in danger; women can be killed or punished for their lack of 'purity', for example by way of 'honour killings'. Patriarchy can even demand that men kill their wives and children as a sacrifice.[105] Although women in patriarchal societies can be at risk of such dangers in general, the risk can increase in times of conflict.

Physical brutality and sexual violence is the area which demonstrates the most marked distinction in terms of the effects of armed conflict on women and men. In war and armed conflict situations, men and women are tortured in distinct ways – in the case of women this is often sexualised. War and armed conflict are often intertwined with rape, now officially recognised as a method of torture.[106] Rape is used in numerous ways as a tactic of

105 It is important to note that while this is true, honour killings are widespread in Turkey as a whole both in the context of conflict and outside of conflict; they are not specific to the Kurdish culture or to times of conflict

106 As seen for example in the landmark case of *Raquel Martí de Mejía v. Perú, Case*

war, 'to humiliate, dominate, instil fear in, disperse and/or forcibly relocate civilian members of a community or ethnic group'.[107] It has been shown to be used strategically, for example to change an area's ethnic makeup or to contribute to 'ethnic cleansing'.[108] Today, it is recognised that rape can constitute a weapon of war, war crime, crime against humanity and a constitutive act regarding genocide.

In many contexts, rape can be seen to be 'fundamentally rooted in political conflict';[109] with the state employing violence against women from particular political groups, cultures or ethnicities, as a means of attacking those groups as a whole. Kurdish women activists in Turkey are seen to be particularly vulnerable to such violence, with sexual torture 'routinely used against women in custody', and frequently involving 'their children and other family members'.[110]

c) Peacebuilding and Reconstruction

Post conflict reconstruction is widely recognised as being crucial to the prevention of further conflict occurring in future, and also to long term social and economic development in conflict torn states. Security and human rights agendas need to

10.970, Report No. 5/96, Inter-Am.C.H.R., OEA/Ser.L/V/II.91 Doc. 7 at 157 (1996)
107 UNSC Resolution 1820: S/RES/1820 (2008)
108 For example in the cases of Bosnia and Rwanda, see Peace Women: *'World citizen pushing back against rape as a weapon of war'* (2010), retrieved on 17/06/11 at: http://www.peacewomen.org/news_article.php?id=2073&type=news
109 Roj women's association website, retrieved 04/07/11 at http://rojwomen.com/2010/12/29/kurdish-women-are-fighting-back-against-rape-in-turkey/
110 See footnote 109, above

address both short *and* long term action to achieving peace. The reconstruction phase marks the resumption of normality, and includes a number of elements, comprising an initial provision of humanitarian aid and deployment of peacekeepers; an ongoing period of economic, judicial and governance reconstruction as well as the rebuilding of social welfare (such as education and healthcare) and infrastructure; and a final phase of consolidation, whereby military presence is withdrawn and life begins to return to normal.[111] Healing trauma, overcoming prejudices within groups, restoring law and order and initiating reforms in the security sector are also important issues to address in this phase, if long terms resolution is to be accomplished.

A number of factors are believed to contribute to the occurrence or perpetuation of armed conflict, depending on the country in question, and must be addressed during the reconstruction period. These include corruption, exploitation, unequal development, investment, discrimination and political repression, as well as poverty and displacement,[112] all of which create vulnerabilities and tensions within society and can 'reawaken old hostilities'.[113] Dealing with such underlying and pervasive issues is therefore key to the maintenance of peace.

111 The Women Waging Peace Network: ANDERLINI, Sanam Naraghi and EL-BUSHRA, Judy (2004), 'Post conflict reconstruction' *in Inclusive security, sustainable peace: A toolkit for advocacy and action*, p. 51, retrieved on 15/06/11 at http://www.huntalternatives.org/download/39_post_conflict.pdf

112 See footnote 111, above, p. 7

113 See footnote 111, above, p. 7

Women's involvement in the peacebuilding and reconstruction phases following conflict is crucial if such issues are to be addressed, and long term resolution is to become feasible, as discussed previously.

Additionally, women's involvement in truth, justice and reconciliation processes, which can form integral parts of post-conflict reconstruction, is essential if such commissions are to meet the needs of women appropriately. It is important that the specific harms suffered by women are acknowledged and that fitting compensation is made. Women's participation in the formulation of truth, justice and reconciliation commissions at grassroots level must take place if solutions are to be gender sensitive and meet women's needs.

Such commissions can provide clarity and promote accountability for harms and rights violations committed and have proved successful in a number of post conflict societies including Peru; Chile and South Africa. They provide victims with a voice, by way of public hearings; trials; investigations and interviews, as well as addressing wrongs committed. For women, truth commissions can be invaluable in bringing attention and recompense to violations which have previously been undermined, and in recognising the disproportionate suffering borne by women during times of conflict. They can be instrumental in devising reparations programmes using fair and objective criteria, which takes into account the views of victims themselves. Truth

commissions can be flexible in their approach; which can range from community and collective based measures focusing on groups (for example Kurdish women in Turkey) to very specific attention to an individual's needs, for example providing medical or long term psychosocial support to victims of rape or torture. In some cases, both collective measures and individual reparations are necessary (for example taking into account the targeting of Kurdish women as a specific group based on their gender and ethnicity *and* individual victims of abuse).

Conclusion

Women's involvement in every aspect and at every level of society, from the creation of education curricula to the leadership of international negotiations, is today recognised as vital if women's equal representation is to be achieved. It is predicted that increasing women's participation is likely to assist the achievement of effective democratic transformations and enhance the likelihood of establishing long lasting peace.

Although women's participation in public and political life is increasing, such growth is occurring at a very slow rate. The adoption of mechanisms and state pro-activity are necessary to assist this growth, but such measures will only prove effective if accompanied by fundamental structural change within society and a re-orientation of deeply engrained views and cultural attitudes to women.

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