

The Panoptic State, Privacy, and Politicized Women

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Violations of privacy in political and social relations, such as interfering in private life, the sharing of private information, and unauthorized access to private space, are widespread in Azerbaijan. In political relations, some of these tactics were employed by the government in March 2021 against five female citizens. In the article, I will criticize the patriarchal and panoptic^[1] state from three aspects, referring to these privacy violation cases as the *4+1 March Incidents*.

The first aspect is that the state, like a patriarchal society, does not view women as autonomous subjects, i.e. it views each woman as subjugated to a man. Therefore, women are instrumentalized by the patriarchal state in political conflicts. I will compare this aspect with the *oikos* system of ancient Greece, based on the notion of privacy that feminist political theory has been debating since the 1970s.

The second aspect is that in the *4+1 March Incidents*, the state violated *the norms of privacy*, including the principles of the inviolability of private life and of private residences contained in Articles 32 and 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Here I will evaluate the *4+1 March Incidents* not from the perspective of the law, but from the perspective of *privacy* in political philosophy. In the *4+1 March Incidents*, the state violated *the individual and political autonomy of the citizen* by interfering in their privacy; since the state does not respect the citizen as an autonomous subject, the citizen is seen as an object.

The third aspect is that the state is intolerant of the politicization of women and public activism by women that is

independent of the state. What is unacceptable here is the “political side of [a woman’s] individual autonomy” (Rössler 2017, 22). The *4+1 March Incidents* are a direct restriction on women’s political participation. In particular, *politicized women* are perceived as a threat to the entrenched anti-democratic political, social, and cultural order. In Azerbaijan, politicized women are also demonized because of their critical view of and opposition to the patriarchal society, including the state.^[2]

To substantiate these three aspects, I will first summarize the *4+1 March Incidents* and the motivation behind them. Then I will explain the historical development of the concept of privacy in the feminist and liberal paradigm. Then I will explain in detail the norms of privacy that Beate Rössler has contributed to political philosophy, and their dimensions such as *decisional*, *informational*, and *local privacy*. Finally, I will substantiate in this context the three aspects I mentioned above.

Throughout the article, my portrayal of the government^[3] as the offending party is based on the aggrieved parties’ claims as reported by the media. In addition, the authorities have not officially denied the allegations against them regarding the *4+1 March Incidents*, and in one such case (the case of Khadija Ismayilova) the European Court of Human Rights found the Azerbaijani government guilty and fined it.^[4] I will criticize the Azerbaijani government, therefore, based on these grounds.

***4+1 March Incidents* and the motivation behind them**

In March 2021, a series of incidents occurred in Azerbaijan involving intrusions into the private lives of women, unauthorized access to their private residences, unauthorized access to and disclosure of private information about women, and violations of the individual and political autonomy of women. Intimate videos of politician Jamil Hasanli’s daughter,

Gunel Hasanli, and video blogger Mahammad Mirzali's sister, Zumrud Mirzaliyeva, were obtained using hidden cameras installed in their bedrooms and published. Feminist activist Narmin Shahmarzadeh's intimate correspondence and photos were published, as was a private audio recording regarding feminist activist Gulnara Mehdiyeva's mental health. These four cybercrimes all occurred one after the other in March.^[5] In addition to these four incidents, the journalist Sevinj Sadigova stated that she had been threatened with hidden camera footage from the bathroom in their apartment and the publication of other private materials in order to stop her husband's hunger strike in prison.^[6] These are not the first cases in Azerbaijan's history of state violations of the principle of privacy,^[7] but this time, in March 2021, they intensified and women were targeted.

These are acts of political revenge for the political and social activities of women's male family members (Jamil Hasanli, Mahammad Mirzali, Afgan Sadigov) and women themselves (Gulnara Mehdiyeva, Narmin Shahmarzadeh), with the intention of discrediting public individuals and, as a result, discouraging them from participating in politics. The reason for the above acts, organized against citizens by the government, is to suppress *conventional and non-conventional forms of political participation*, as well as *protest*.

Political participation is citizens voluntarily acting individually or in groups, influencing decisions at different levels of the political system (community, country, alliance, supranational association) or making their own decisions (Kaase 1994, 442; Fuchs 2010, 547). Political participation includes *conventional* (participation in elections and party representation) and *non-conventional* (civic initiatives and demonstrations) forms, as well as *protest*, commonly considered illegal (aggression and demonstration [e.g. hunger strikes, arson, destruction, occupation]) (Fuchs 2010, 547). Each of the *4+1 March Incidents* summarized above involved activities

that reflect these forms of political participation, therefore at the root of these events is an attempt to suppress all forms of citizens' political participation. In addition, the *individual and political autonomy* of the citizen are violated at the same time.

I consider it necessary to look at such events from three aspects, which I will describe below, and I believe it is important to popularize this view among the public. In Azerbaijani society, these incidents were criticized in an ineffective way, either in a culturally and morally conservative framework, or in an ineffective^[8] legal framework recognized by international organizations, which did not serve the general emancipation of the citizen. However, the most appropriate reaction in the case of Gunel Hasanli was that of her father, the politician Jamil Hasanli. His response^[9] was *emancipative* for Azerbaijani society, where women's individual autonomy has not been recognized and where crimes against women are on the rise, and *revolutionary* for patriarchal Azerbaijani men. It was also a reaction that the patriarchal state had not counted on. Other criticisms were voiced on social media platforms, but there was no substantive defense or progressive criticism of the incidents from relevant government agencies, political parties, the international community (organizations and the media), or local women's rights organizations. It is a dangerous trend that the lack of progressive and emancipative approaches to – or to be more precise, criticisms of – these issues facilitates the regular occurrence of such events in Azerbaijan, in both political and social relations.^[10] This further lowers the level of both the political and social consciousness of society.

Diversification of the private sphere: a history

What is private and what is not private? This question has been the subject of various debates. At present, there is a feminist concept of privacy and a liberal concept of privacy.

They are different from each other and have different meanings. According to the feminist conception of privacy, nothing that is patriarchal or gender-based is private. From the liberal point of view, the concept of privacy is understood in the context of freedom and autonomy (Rössler 2001; 2017).

There is no other topic in political theory that became the focus of attention as quickly as private sphere (Rössler 2010, 41). Earlier, this topic was never debated or written about in the fields of law, political theory, social philosophy, or sociology (Rössler 2010). "The social sciences were the first to take on the subject of the private sphere in the literal sense, i.e. the private family sphere, [...] where the private sphere [was understood] in its classical sense as domestic life, family, intimacy; i.e. from antiquity to the present, despite modification, functional change, and renewal, it was taken in its basic definition" (Rössler 2001, 12). In this sense, the private sphere "has always been understood as a space designated as both intimate and a traditional sphere of life" (Rössler 2001, 11).

In my opinion, such an understanding is based on the distinction between the *private* and *public* spheres, which is based on Plato's division of *oikos* and *polis* in ancient Greece. *Oikos* means "home and everyone living in the home," which was understood as a space where *women, children* and *slaves* lived under male rule. It was considered inadmissible for the city government to interfere in this space, which belonged to the male citizens. *Oikos* was a *private* space, a man's private sphere. *Polis* means *state*. This space was intended for male citizens' socio-political activism for the common good. The *polis* was the public sphere for men.

"As a result of the separation of public and private space, a private sphere emerged where (male) individuals were protected from state interference and where [men] could create their own autonomy" (Jurczyk and Oechsle 2008, 9). This led to the

emergence of a *public sphere* in which the citizen acts for the common good of the community (Jurczyk and Oechsle 2008, 9). Thus, the public was codified as political and the private as nonpolitical. Since the private and public spheres here were intended for male individuals only, women were not given a place of their own in either. It was impossible to speak about a woman's social activism because that was just an element of a man's private life. Moreover, "the main reason for the complete separation of the elite of the ideal city-state from the private sphere was so that the state could have more influence over the family" (Rosenzweig 2010, 31). In this way, the family would become an apparatus that is directly exploited, managed, controlled, and influenced by the interests of the state. Most importantly, hierarchical control and governance in society is structured: the state exercises power over men, men over women, and women over children.

Although this ancient division and tradition underwent some changes over the years, the first radical debates about it – i.e. the scandalization of the 'private and public' spheres – began in the 1970s with protests by women's movements (Jurczyk and Oechsle 2008). In her 1969 article, "The Personal is Political," Carol Hanisch^[11] outlined the basic demand of the second-wave feminist movement. Later, there was demand for a socio-political analysis of the space accepted as *private*, and the family was exposed as a hotbed of patriarchal violence (Ehrmann 2011). Thus, from this period, the subject of *private space* became more dynamic in the fields of political philosophy especially, but also law, political science, the social sciences, etc., and the topic began to be debated. In particular, domestic violence, crimes against women, and domestic exploitation began to be taken into account as the political thesis that *the personal is political* began to be adopted. As a result, today, states and international organizations are committed to preventing domestic and family violence, as well as to eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.^[12] In this sense, family

relationships, which were once considered private, have already lost their status as a “private matter.” In particular, women were taken out of the private sphere (under male authority) and legal barriers were removed against women moving into the public sphere, i.e. women’s voting, education, employment, public activity, representation in government, etc. The ideas that domestic life was a woman’s natural sphere, and that women should remain under male authority, rotted away, and women were freed from being bound to a man’s private sphere. In women’s studies and gender studies, the issue of modernizing women’s lives through employment and social representation has focused on employment integration and political participation (Jurczyk and Oechsle 2008, 12).

Concepts of privacy and autonomy: Rössler’s explanation

According to Rössler, “when looking at the semantics of the word private, it is important to distinguish it from words such as *intimate* or *secret*, because what is intimate is always private, but what is private is not always intimate. The word intimate has a more erotic or sexual meaning (...) and therefore people want to keep it private” (2001, 17). The words *secret* and *private* are also different; what is private may or may not be secret, while what is secret may or may not be private; what a person wears is a private matter, but not a secret, while a state secret is secret, but not private (2001, 17).

There are three aspects of *the private*: 1) privacy of action and behavior, 2) privacy of certain information, and 3) privacy of space.

1. *Privacy of action and behavior* refers to the decisions an individual makes regarding their own life, the choices they make, their way of life, their preferences;

2. *Privacy of certain information* refers to all information regarding an individual. For example, a person’s health and illness, who they live with, what they think of someone else, etc. (2001, 19);

3. *Privacy of space* refers to the apartment or room in which the person lives (2001, 19).

The conclusion to be drawn from this is that my actions and behavior (choices, decisions, and preferences), all the information that belongs to me (open or confidential information), and the place where I live and control access, exploitation, and management, are my private business. These are an individual's *private affairs, private issues, and private space*, and all three taken together are an individual's *privacy*. According to Rössler, "*what is private is considered to belong only to you, whatever it is, the access to control it is yours*" (Rössler 2001, 23). The term *access* here refers to " 'the probability of protest' against decisions, literally access to information or access to a residence" (Rössler 2010, 42). Protesting and interfering with an individual's decisions, choices, and way of life, disseminating their information, speaking or transmitting it to others, watching, listening, taking photos or videos, recording their voice, or interfering with their space are all violations of an individual's privacy. The inviolability of privacy is necessary so that the state and other persons (family members, circle, colleagues, friends, spouse, etc.) do not have access to you or to things that belong to you (for example: decisions, information, space) *without your knowledge or against your will*, and to prevent the probability of protest against decisions or interference in them.

However, privacy is a key factor determining an individual's autonomy. An autonomous person is one who *is able to want (wollen können)* to live their life a certain way and decides for themselves how they lived their life (Rössler 2001). In other words, "a person is autonomous when their desires and values are formed in such a way that they can think about them, judge them, and resist them" (Hüseynli 2019). For an individual to be free, they must be autonomous. The autonomy of an individual is conditioned by the norm of privacy, as "the realization of freedom and the ability to lead an

autonomous life is possible only on the condition of the protection of privacy” (Rössler 2001, 137). According to Rössler, *autonomy* is the ability to make autonomous decisions and to have the right to live one’s life as one determines; “Being forced to live and act against one’s will and one’s decisions can never be considered a successful or good life” (Rössler 2017, 13).

Privacy, which determines an individual’s autonomy, is defined on the basis of the following three dimensions: decisional privacy, informational privacy, and local privacy (Rössler 2001; 2017).

1. **Decisional Privacy** – Decisions, choices, and actions regarding how a person wants to live their life are considered to be their decisional privacy. For example, a person’s choice of profession, with whom, how, or where they want to live, in which gender they find fulfillment, the choice to have an abortion, etc. is decisional privacy. All the decisions, preferences, and choices that a person makes for their life are decisional privacy. According to Rössler, decisions and choices in decisional privacy may be affected by manipulation and influence, but what is important is that the person makes the decisions and choices of their own free will.^[13] “Violation of decisional privacy means limiting one’s life to the way one wants it to be. Its protection is important because (...) so that it is possible to realize patterns of behavior, lifestyles, and plans without the intervention of others” (Rössler 2001, 153).

2. **Informational privacy** – The essence of informational privacy is that a person is able to control information that concerns them as well as who has access to what information about them: for example, what is written on my ID; information about my health; the activity in my bank account; information about what I do in my free time; and information about what I do, where, how, and with whom (expand this list examples from your own life) is all informational privacy. When government

agencies, companies, banks, hospitals/doctors (insurance companies), or any other governmental or non-governmental organizations know, transmit, disseminate, or speak about a person without their knowledge or consent, that is a violation of that individual's informational privacy. In addition, in social relationships, when individuals (e.g. family members, friends, relatives, co-workers, spouses, etc.) do these things, those are also violation of an individual's informational privacy. Violation of informational privacy is interference in a person's freedom and autonomy. As an autonomous person, the ability to control information about oneself and the protection of informational privacy are necessary in order for a person to have freedom of behavior, to maintain their authenticity, and to live an autonomous life. According to Rössler, democratic self-expression is impossible without informational privacy (2010, 51). From this point of view, violations of informational privacy in the political sphere are contrary to democracy and democratic governance.

3. Local Privacy – The place where a person lives: a house, an apartment, a room, the person's belongings, the design of the living space, and its use are all related to local privacy. Private space is a place in a panoptic society where a person is not monitored, listened to, supervised, controlled, or disturbed. To avoid all this and to have physical and mental comfort, an individual must have the opportunity to have local privacy. Fundamental freedom and autonomy determine local privacy, i.e. "being able to avoid the gaze of others is an essential requirement for complete autonomy" (Rössler 2001, 274).

Above we have seen what the word *private* means, what is meant by *privacy*, and what are its dimensions, as well as what is autonomy. Based on these concepts, let's examine the three aspects I mentioned in the introduction.

Aspect 1: Woman as object

In Azerbaijani society, a person's decisional, informational, and local privacy is violated. Privacy first begins to be violated in society's "black box," the institution of the family. In fact, this corresponds perfectly to the demands and expectations of the patriarchal and panoptic state. Based on the family's patriarchal values and repressive management, decisions about how individuals, regardless of gender or age, live their lives are made either collectively, or by parents, or on the basis of manipulation (cultural factors). Usually, life is shaped within the framework of the values, customs and rules directly imposed by society on the patriarchal family system. This system is doubly complicated for women in particular: responsibilities, roles, and norms considered appropriate for women in society are constructed in accordance with the wishes and requirements of a male-centered society, in which women are placed in a more limited and controlled position than men (Jalil 2021). Therefore, the institution of the family in Azerbaijani society differs little in content from the *oikos* of antiquity.

In the case of Gunel Hasanli, in particular, I would like to refer to the *oikos* system of antiquity in order to demonstrate the idea that a woman is seen as an object and has been instrumentalized in order to damage the reputation of her politician father. "According to Aristotle, the *oikos* consisted of men, women, children, and slaves; it was the place where three generations of families lived together under the authority of the male individual considered the head of the household; and it encompassed the house, the surrounding land, the people, the animals, and everything related to the house" (Yilmazcan 2020). Women in the *oikos* were under the authority and control of men, because it was considered the man's private sphere. Control and management over a woman belonged to her father, the man she married, and her brother if her father died (Yilmazcan 2020). A woman had to live according to the rules, lifestyle, and customs of the *oikos* (Seubert 2010). A woman had to have a child, as it was

considered important for the child to look after them as they got older and to prevent the family property from being passed on to other relatives.

Overall, this picture is very similar to the family institution in Azerbaijan. In society, the expectation, demand, and resulting way of thinking are that a woman is subordinate to and represents the men in the family. Based on this approach and way of thinking, Gunel Hasanli was the target of an attack on her father, because she shaped her life as an autonomous individual. In addition, this was an invasion into the security of the information regarding how she wanted to live and how she lived, as well as into her residence. This is the conclusion that emerges from the instrumentalization of Gunel Hasanli;

1. Gunel Hasanli is considered by the state to belong to her father's personal sphere and to represent him. This means that *the state does not recognize women as autonomous subjects.*
2. The state unofficially considers it wrong to live contrary to the *traditional patriarchal way of life* and stigmatizes it. This means that the state is interfering in the autonomous decisions of citizens about their private lives and *judging autonomous lives.*
3. As a result, *the state violates the decisional, informational, and local privacy of women.*

In the cases of Zumrud Mirzaliyeva and Sevinj Sadigova, they were instrumentalized by the opposing side in a political conflict, which believed that they represented the men in their family. Zumrud Mirzaliyeva was targeted to punish her brother, a political émigré in conflict with the government over his wild online content. Meanwhile, Sevinj Sadigova was threatened with her own private life in order to force her husband to stop his hunger strike in prison. Thus, these three women were instrumentalized in political conflicts. Although all three dimensions of the privacy of the women targeted in the *4+1 March Incidents*, especially Gunel Hasanli, were

violated, a criminal case was opened regarding her incident under the article of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding *the illegal distribution of pornographic materials or items*.^[14] This is absurd from the point of view of privacy norms, because it does not reflect the violation of citizens' constitutional rights (privacy and inviolability of the home), and it does not include any aspect of the privacy norms. This reinforces the claim that the state sees women as objects.

Aspect 2: Citizen as object: the violation of decisional, informational, and local privacy in the 4+1 March incidents

The principle of a citizen's decisional, informational, and local privacy is partially reflected in the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan. According to paragraph 3 of Article 32 of the Constitution, entitled *Inviolability of Private Life*: "the collection, storage, use, and dissemination of information about a person's private life without their consent is not allowed. Except as provided by law, no one may be monitored, videotaped, photographed, audiotaped, or otherwise acted upon without their knowledge or despite their protest." In addition, according to Article 33 of the Constitution, entitled *Inviolability of Residence*: "everyone has the right to inviolability of residence, and no one may enter a residence against the will of the occupants, except in cases provided by law or a court decision." However, in the *4+1 March Incidents*, we are witnessing a violation of the constitutional rights of citizens, as well as a violation of their decisional, informational, and local privacy, through the state's intervention into their private lives. It is a deficit of the rule of law for government agencies and security services to illegally access, use, and pass on a citizen's private information without that citizen's knowledge and against their will (Braun 2017). At the same time, the fundamental collapse of the rule of law has led to the formation of a panoptic society in Azerbaijan. A panoptic

society is one that has normalized “collecting, storing, using, transmitting, or selling private information, tapping phones, hidden or public cameras,^[15] transmitting data between various firms and insurance companies, bugging and surveilling homes and apartments,” while legal protection as well as punishment is impossible. (Rössler 2001, 216). In this case, such a state (including, based on the *4+1 March Incidents* and other cases, the Azerbaijani state) is considered a *surveillance state* (Überwachungsstaat). Violation of a citizen’s privacy is the denial of their autonomy by the state. In this case, the state sees the citizen as an object. At the same time, the fact that the state unhesitatingly treats its citizens this way is a confirmation that the rule of law and democratic institutions do not work. As a result, the deficit of the rule of law forms the basis of a panoptic state in which the citizen is seen as an object. The state itself violates the constitutional rights and privacy of the citizen, because in a panoptic state like Azerbaijan, the citizen is considered an object.

Aspect 3: The political side of individual autonomy: suppression of political participation and reactions to a politicized woman

Women’s political participation – globally marginal but sufficient in Europe – is a central problem in both the theory and practice of democracy (Fuchs 2010, 547). Azerbaijan, in particular, is one of the countries with the lowest political participation of women.^[16] According to an annual survey of 193 countries, Azerbaijan is declining in terms of women’s political participation each year; it was ranked 174th in 2017, 178th in 2019, 181st in 2020, and 183rd this year (Women in Politics Map: 2021). One of the main reasons for this is that “although Eurasian countries such as Azerbaijan [...] have liberal democratic bodies and institutions, authoritarian and neopatrimonial regimes prevail there.” (Birsl and Derichs 2013, 194). The lack of democratic and transparent elections

and the discrimination and political pressure against women further weaken their interest in political participation, severing them from it.

Although the non-conventional political participation of women in Azerbaijan has become more dynamic in recent years, especially with the popularity of social networks, it can put both their freedom and their lives in danger. Citizens' initiatives that are not dependent on or approved by the government are unequivocally restricted. We can see it just by looking at the March 8 demonstrations.^[17] Female citizens who are involved in civic initiatives and engage in political activity are particularly hated by both the government and the public because, "with the separation of the private and public spheres, men are constructed [coded] as political and women as apolitical" (Fuchs 2010, 547). This is due to the fact that today in Azerbaijan, there is obviously an attempt to silence women who participate in conventional or non-conventional forms of opposition or protest, or to stop their activism, through invasions of their privacy. If this trend – the political participation of women in Azerbaijani society – becomes more widespread, then society will be in conflict with the authoritarian political will, which will make it more difficult for the government to control. However, we know that women's political participation and representation in Azerbaijan is not only a socio-economic, cultural, and institutional problem, but also results from the lack of a participatory consciousness (a need to participate, thoughts about it, a demand for it, etc.). The depoliticization of women is carried out structurally and invisibly through the complementary efforts of the trinity of *the state, society, and the family institution*. However, just as women who break this spell and become politicized face pressure, women who voluntarily or forcibly stay away from political participation think that they live more comfortably and freely. However, "people living under authoritarian rule cannot increase their freedoms by decreasing their desires – by not exercising and

securing their constitutional rights as citizens” (Hüseynli 2019). Therefore, the formation of a participatory consciousness among Azerbaijani women and the establishment of their political and individual autonomy – a condition for freedom – as well as their self-determination have always been fundamental socio-political necessities in the struggle against anti-democratic rule.

Conclusion

An ancient concept of privacy still prevails in Azerbaijani society, and modern privacy norms are not protected in the political or social spheres. Patriarchal and panoptic restraints arise from the cooperation of the state and society in restricting political participation and depoliticizing citizens. The *4+1 March Incidents* are also consequences of the gender-based instrumentalization of women intended to stifle political participation and a violation of their security to live autonomous lives individually and politically through invasions of their privacy. As a result, the self-determination of women is not recognized at the state level, as an individual, her autonomy is not taken into account, and as a citizen, through invasions of her privacy, she becomes an object. This is a fundamental problem of Azerbaijani society and it makes it impossible for the citizen to live a safe and autonomous life in the state and the society. In this evaluation, one must conclude that the Azerbaijani state is patriarchal and panoptic. In conclusion, the state is obliged to protect the privacy of the citizen, to accept their individual and political autonomy, and thus to ensure the security of the citizen’s autonomous life. Female citizens become even more enslaved if they do not demand the protection of this fundamental principle of freedom, when the state does not ensure this.

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(Batterien, N.F., No. 014).

Notes

^[1] The word *panopticon* comes from the Greek words *pān* “all” and *optikó* “visible.” It was first used by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham. He envisioned the architecture of a prison building where everything could be seen, tracked, and controlled. A person would be tracked without seeing anything themselves, being an object of information and never a subject in communication (Foucault 1977, 257). This architectural style was intended not only for prisons, but also for factories, mills, hospitals, and schools (Welzbacher 2013). In 1975, Michel Foucault re-introduced the concept of panopticism in discussing the individual as an object of control in society. Panoptic governance is seen as a power of the authorities and aims to keep *subalterns* under control. Alongside political philosophy, political literature also includes descriptions of panoptics and panoptic governance. George Orwell’s novel about pantoptic governance, *1984*, is a work that describes the nature of the panoptic state. Orwell shows that the fundamental characteristic of a totalitarian state is the impossibility of any sphere, any space, or any extent of privacy: no action, no thought, not even a corner of the room can remain unmonitored (Rössler 2001, 263).

^[2] By *politicized woman*, I mean a *politically autonomous woman* who owes no loyalty in the political, social, and cultural spheres to the (anti-democratic) state, the (patriarchal) society, and the political system, as well as a woman with a concept of citizenship and an ideological viewpoint who expresses herself in some form of political participation.

^[3] In this article, the terms *government* and *state* are used as synonyms, because I believe that in Azerbaijan the concepts of government and state are interchangeable in this context, as the political governance is undemocratic.

[4] Lomsadze, Giorgi, "Azerbaijani reporter wins sex tape case" Eurasianet, 11.01.2019
<https://eurasianet.org/azerbaijan-reporter-wins-sex-tape-case>.

[5] Hamida Giyasbayli, New sex-tape emerges targetting daughter of Azerbaijani critic. OC Media, 30 March 2021.
<https://oc-media.org/new-sex-tape-emerges-targetting-daughter-of-azerbaijani-critic/>

[6] Toplum TV, Jurnalistin həyat yoldaşı: "Məni intim görüntülərimi yaymaqla şantaj edirlər." Toplum TV, 30 Mart 2021.
<https://toplum.tv/siyaset/jurnalistin-heyat-yoldasi-meni-intim-goruntulerimi-yaymaqla-santaj-edirler>

[7] In Azerbaijan, over the past 30 years (especially in the last 15), about 20 intimate videos, including the 5 mentioned above, have been taken with hidden cameras in private apartments or hotels and published. It cannot be ruled out that there are many cases of blackmail involving private lives that have not been publicized.

[8] International organizations do not have a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the obligations of states that have acceded to resolutions, conventions or documents. Governments are not subject to sanctions or bans if they fail to meet these obligations.

[9] "I have just been informed that Ilham Aliyev and his security service have released videos related to the private life of my daughter Gunel Hasanli. It is their old specialty to interfere in the private lives of others, to spy on people, to stick their filthy, disgusting noses in people's bedrooms. My daughter Gunel Hasanli is 38 years old and has been divorced for more than 10 years. She can have her own private life and remarry. No one, including me, can forbid her to do that. There is nothing strange in that. It is immoral to

intrude on the privacy of others, to mobilize the security services of the state, and to use them as a means of political blackmail. Of course, this video with my daughter, like similar events that took place earlier, is the handiwork of Ilham Aliyev himself. Engaging in such dishonorable acts and using them as methods of blackmail are his old specialty and the result of his incomplete upbringing. A criminal case was filed against his father for such immoral acts while he was still working for the KGB. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree. And finally, Ilham Aliyev has a false hope that he will deter us from politics using such immoral methods. How my daughter conducts and lives her private life is her own business, it has nothing to do with the state. He exposes his immoral nature by involving the state security services – which he has turned into a family servant when the country faces 1,001 troubles – in illegal activities such as intrusions into private life. It would be wrong to expect anything else from him.” Jamil Hasanli, 03.29.2021.

[\[10\]](#) Sex videos, photos, or texts are often shared among citizens on social media to intimidate, blackmail, get even with, or ridicule someone they know. This dangerous trend shakes trust and confidence in social relations within Azerbaijani society and undermines interpersonal security. The occurrence of these cases at both at political and social levels demonstrates the cooperation of society and the state in the violation of privacy.

[\[11\]](#) Commenting on the sensational title of the article, Carol Hanisch writes: “The paper, ‘The Personal Is Political,’ was originally published in *Notes from the Second Year: Women’s Liberation* in 1970 and was widely reprinted and passed around the Movement and beyond in the next several years. I didn’t know just how much it had gotten around until I did a Goggle [sic] search and found it being discussed in many different languages. I’d like to clarify for the record that I did not give the paper its title, ‘The Personal Is Political.’ As far

as I know, that was done by *Notes from the Second Year* editors Shulie Firestone and Anne Koedt after Kathie Sarachild brought it to their attention as a possible paper to be printed in that early collection. Also, 'political' was used here in the board [sic] sense of the word as having to do with power relationships, not the narrow sense of electoral [sic] politics." (Hanisch 2006).

[12] See: CEDAW Convention 1979, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx>

[13] I do not agree with Rössler's approach. A person's behavior, actions, and way of life are influenced by socialization, and socialization usually involves gender-based subordination, gender assignment, and the resulting symbolism. Freedom in decisional privacy involves structural manipulation, violence, and subordination in gender-specific situations. For example, the mandatory dress code (headscarf, niqab, veil, etc.) prescribed by religion, or the false beauty standard for women (Hanisch 2006), as well as a subordinate lifestyle or a woman's "voluntary" lifestyle, do not indicate that she is free. This point, where feminist criticism was never in agreement with liberalism, is a subject of debate between them.

[14] Aygül Mehman, *Cəmil Həsənlinin qızının olduğu deyilən görüntülərin yayılması ilə bağlı cinayət işi açılıb*. 29 Mart 2021, BBC News Azərbaycanca, <https://www.bbc.com/azeri/azerbaijan-56571562>

[15] In a panoptic society, the issue of camera surveillance is divided into two parts: a) cognitive asymmetry and b) cognitive symmetry. In *cognitive asymmetry*, "individuals do not know that they are being monitored by cameras and have no control over what is done with the data collected" (Rössler 2003, 29). *Cognitive symmetry* is when a person knows that they are being monitored by cameras in shops, public institutions,

etc. (Rössler 2003). Therefore, signs must be displayed in public spaces and inform people that they are being filmed.

^[16] See: Women in Politics Map: 2021,

<https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2021/women-in-politics-2021-en.pdf>

^[17] Human Rights House Foundation. *Statement on Events Surrounding the 8 March 2021 March in Central Baku*. 15 March 2021,

<https://humanrightshouse.org/statements/statement-on-events-surrounding-the-8-march-2021-march-in-central-baku/>