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**INFOSHEET**

# 2018 PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER EQUALITY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

TURKEY

The data in this factsheet was collected in 2018 as part of a baseline survey exercise conducted by the Flying Broom Women's Communication and Research Association (Flying Broom) under the EU-UN Women regional programme 'Implementing Norms, Changing Minds.' Data includes responses from 403 women, girls, men and boys of ages 15-64, in Mersin and its four municipalities, in both urban and rural areas. Detailed information about Flying Broom can be found at: <https://www.bilimveteknolojidekizcocuklar.com/>

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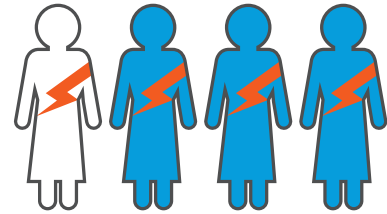
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## COUNTRY CONTEXT

- The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) was signed in 2011 and ratified in 2012 – an important step in terms of legal regulations in Turkey.
- Despite its early ratification of the Istanbul Convention, Turkey has yet to specifically criminalize certain forms of violence against women as outlined in the Convention, such as stalking, forced marriage, domestic violence, psychological violence, and economic violence.<sup>1</sup>
- The prevalence of violence in intimate relationships is high – 38% of Turkish women have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual violence at any point in their lives.<sup>2</sup>

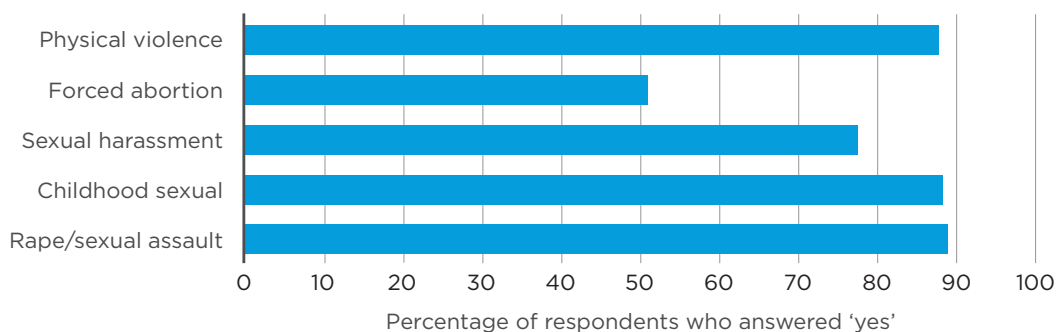
### Knowledge of the Law

**Key finding #1: Respondents were less aware that some specific forms of violence against women are prohibited by law.** Only half knew that forced abortion was criminalized, and only three-fourths knew that sexual harassment was criminalized. On the other hand, the vast majority of respondents were aware that more general forms of violence were illegal. See Figure 1 below.



Only **3 in 4 respondents** knew that sexual harassment was criminalized

**Figure 1: Are the following forms of violence punishable by law?**

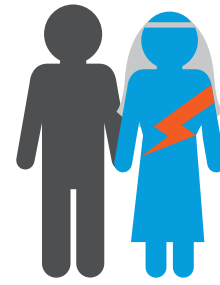


1. "Baseline Evaluation Report: Turkey," GREVIO, Council of Europe, 2018. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/eng-grevio-report-turquie/16808e5283>  
2. Hacettepe University, December 2014: "Domestic Violence against women in Turkey"

**Key finding #2: Respondents have limited confidence that perpetrators of a crime will be punished for breaking the law.** Compelling contradictions were found between which forms of violence respondents knew to be illegal and which forms of violence they believed a person would be punished for committing (see Figure 2 in comparison to Figure 1). For example:

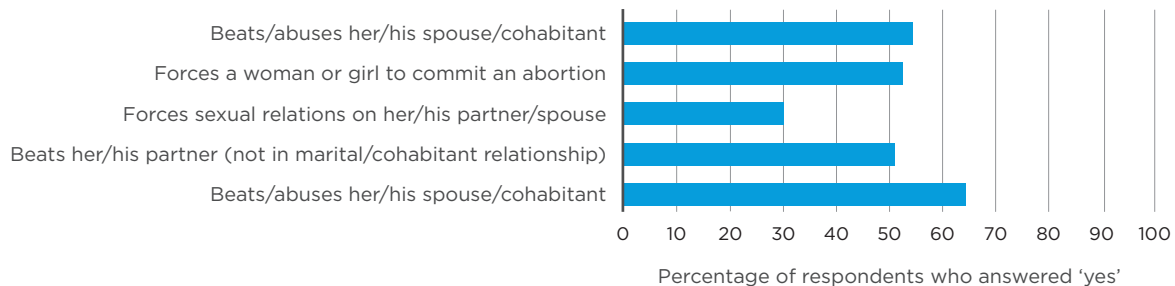
- **89%** knew that rape/sexual assault was a crime, but only **30%** believed a person would be punished for forcing sex on their spouse/partner.
- **88%** of respondents knew that physical violence was a crime, but only **64%** believed a person would be punished for beating their spouse, only **54%** believed they would be punished for beating other family members, and only **51%** believed they would be punished for beating their non-married partner.

These contradictions may reflect a number of things – the belief that the victim will not report violence, the belief that the perpetrator will not be punished, and/or the belief that violence committed in a relationship isn't as serious or deserving of punishment as other types of violence.



**89% of respondents knew that rape/sexual assault was a crime, but only 30% of respondents believed a person would be punished for forcing sex on their spouse/partner**

**Figure 2: Would a person be punished if he/she...**

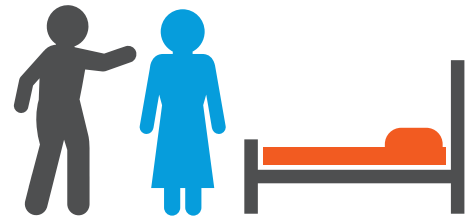


## Perception of gender roles

**Key finding #1: Women are expected to behave within traditional gender roles.** A notable percentage of respondents (men in particular) showed support for statements that limit women to the domestic sphere (see Figure 3 below).

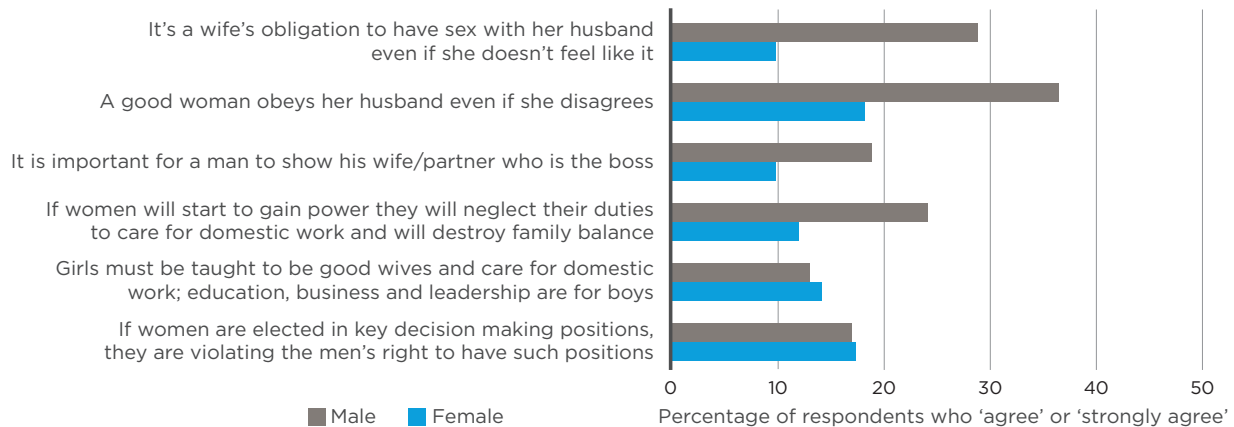
**Key finding #2: Women are seen as subservient to men.** A high proportion of respondents, particularly male respondents, agreed that women should obey their male partners. Women's subservience to men even extended to their own bodies – a notable 29% of men believed that women should have sex with their husbands regardless of their own desire.

**Key finding #3: Men are the primary supporters of beliefs that place them in positions of power over women.** Men showed greater support for traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms regarding discrimination and violence against women. Perhaps unsurprisingly, women demonstrated more equitable attitudes than men in most categories.



**29% of men**  
believed that women should  
have sex with their husbands  
regardless of their own desire

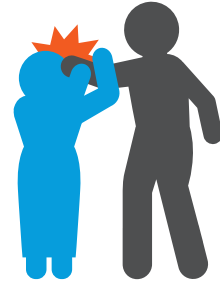
**Figure 3: What do you think about the following statements?**



## Attitudes toward violence against women

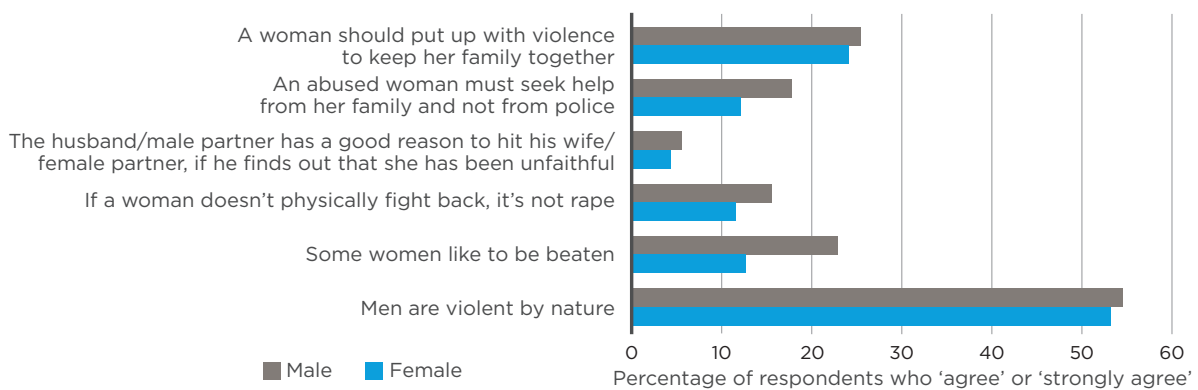
**Key finding #1:** Despite showing support for attitudes that place women as subservient to men, the vast majority of respondents rejected justifications for physical violence in relationships. Compared to other countries in the baseline study, a much lower proportion of respondents from Turkey supported statements that justify violence against women.

**Key finding #2:** More than half of respondents perceive men as 'naturally' violent. This belief perpetuates violence against women by 1) portraying VAW as an inevitable byproduct of biology (rather than the result of social structures that systematically exclude and discriminate against women) and 2) providing an excuse/justification for men who commit violence.



**More than half**  
of respondents perceive men  
as 'naturally' violent

**Figure 4: What do you think about the following statements?**



## Willingness to prevent or report violence

**Key finding #1: Respondents showed a willingness to help individuals from vulnerable groups.** Compared to other countries, respondents from Turkey were more willing to help prevent violence against ethnic minorities, refugees, immigrants, and LGBTI individuals. See Figure 5 below.

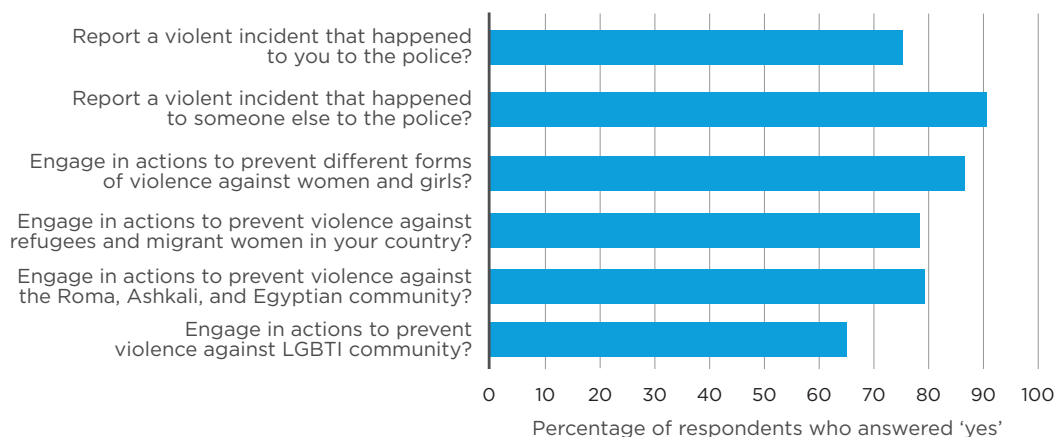
**Key finding #2: Respondents were hesitant to leave their own violent relationships or prosecute the perpetrators, despite their willingness to help others escape violence.** This finding may be related to low trust in institutions meant to prosecute perpetrators and protect victims and/or societal attitudes that create shame among victims, as reflected in Figure 4, in which 1 in 4 respondents believe women should tolerate violence for the sake of the ‘family.’

**Key finding #3: In almost every category, women were more willing than men to act positively and proactively to escape or prevent violent situations and abuse.** In the majority of questions, women showed to be more willing than men to act in situations of violence, especially towards vulnerable groups and in their own abusive relationships.



**1 in 4 respondents believe women should tolerate violence for the sake of the ‘family.’**

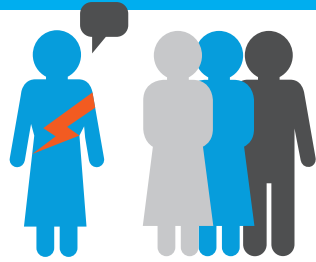
**Figure 5: In the future, would you be willing to...**



# Commonality of discussions on VAW/G and gender equality

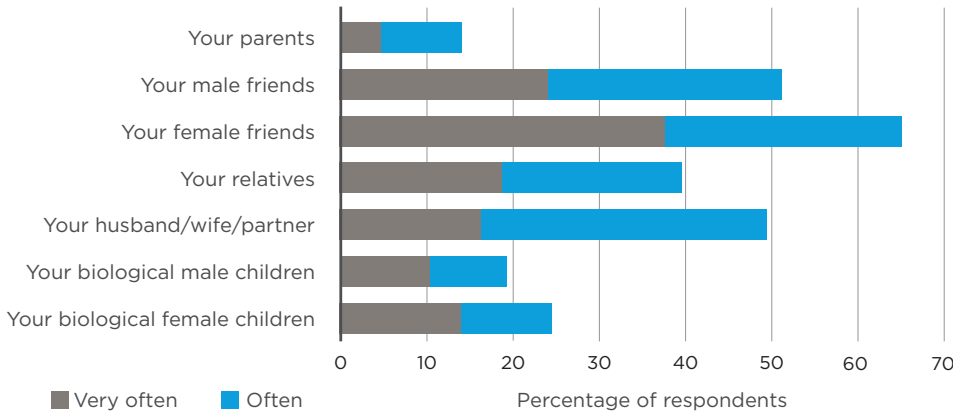
**Key finding #1: Discussions on issues related to violence against women and girls are not limited to friends and family.** Compared to other countries, respondents in Turkey were more willing to discuss the issue of EAW with teachers and colleagues.

**Key finding #2: Respondents discuss issues related to VAW/G more frequently with their children than respondents from other countries.** Nevertheless, the proportion of respondents who discuss these issues with their children remains low.



Compared to other countries, respondents in Turkey **were more willing to discuss the issue** of EAW with teachers and colleagues.

**Figure 6: In the past 12 months, have you discussed issues related to the prevention of VAWG with...**





## Common channels for messaging on VAW/G and gender equality

**Key finding #1: Commonly used methods of communication are most likely to reach target audiences.**

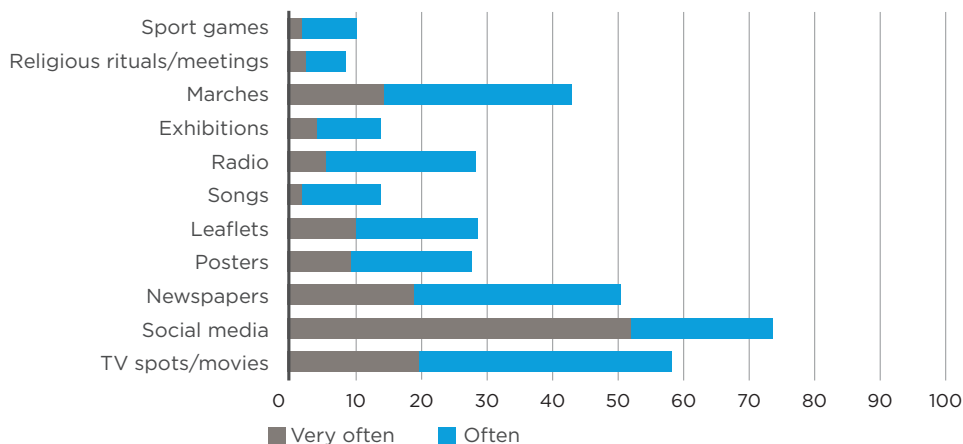
TV spots, TV emissions/debates, social media and newspapers are the most effective channels of information related to the prevention of violence against women.

**Key finding #2: Compared to other countries, respondents from Turkey were more frequently exposed to messages related to the prevention of violence against women and girls and/or gender inequality.** This may be related to the strength of the women’s movement and grassroots activism in Turkey.



**Commonly used methods of communication (TV, social media, newspapers) are most likely to reach target audiences**

**Figure 7: In the past 12 months, have you heard about issues related to gender equality or the prevention of VAW/G through...**



## PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROGRAMMING

- **Work with women towards recognizing intimate partner violence, particularly non-physical violence**, and specifically raise awareness within society about the existence of traditional gender stereotypes and how those stereotypes promote violence against women.
- **Establish and build the capacity of women's associations, counseling centers and shelters** to increase the knowledge regarding women's rights and gender equality.
- **Use common channels of communication to raise awareness through strategic campaigns**, such as TV, social media and newspapers. Less common channels of communication, while beneficial when used to complement other methods, are unlikely to reach large audiences.
- **Utilize strategic messages to challenge attitudes that perpetuate and justify violence against women.** Important areas of focus may include: 1) messages that portray violence as a choice rather than something 'natural' and 2) messages that challenges victim-blaming attitudes and place the responsibility for 'destroying the family' on the perpetrator of violence.
- **Work with men and boys to challenge traditional gender norms and address** the concerns, fears and pressures that men face as a result of harmful gender roles and patriarchal norms. Violence against women cannot be prevented without the active participation of men and boys.
- **Ensure that programming is intergenerational and includes adolescents.** It is important to work with young generations to prevent continuous and persistent gender stereotypes and discrimination based on gender.