AN ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS BEHIND THE GROWTH OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN TURKEY (2006-2021)

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INDONESIA

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DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL SCIENCES

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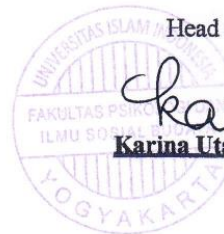Bachelor Degree of International Relations

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I hereby declare that this undergraduate thesis is the result of my own independent scientific work, and that all material from the work of others (in books, articles, essays, dissertations, and on the internet) has been stated, and quotations and paraphrases are clearly indicated.

No other materials are used other than those contained. I have read and understood the university's rules and procedures regarding plagiarism.

Making false statements is considered a violation of academic integrity.

17 August 2023,

Aldhila Putri Asha Saghira

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ABSTRACT

Sexual violence against women has become an increasingly disturbing issue in Turkey. The prevalence of sexual violence has increased under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, raising worries about the government's response and the socioeconomic causes, leading to this research. This thesis discussion here also dives into Turkish society's patriarchal values, which perpetuate gender inequity and produce an environment in which violence against women is tolerated. The government's role in investigating this issue is obvious, with Erdogan opposing gender equality and withdrawing Turkey from the Istanbul Convention, which has the intention of reduction violence against women. The failure of the government to respond comprehensively and effectively adds to the persistence of sexual assault. This thesis finishes by emphasizing the critical importance of coordinated efforts by all stakeholders to address sexual violence against women in Turkey. Prioritizing women's rights, agreeing to international accords, enacting strict legislation to protect victims and hold criminals accountable, and encouraging comprehensive education and awareness campaigns are among the recommendations. Turkey can begin to address the systemic conditions that contribute to sexual violence and create a safer society for all by confronting patriarchal conventions and increasing gender equality.

Keywords: Sexual violence, Women, Turkey, Patriarchal norms, Istanbul Convention, Gender equality, Sociocultural issues.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Sexual crimes are a real nightmare that continues to afflict this world. They are crimes that always befall innocent people wherever and whenever they are, regardless of age or gender. Sexual crimes have become an urgent issue in every country because there is never a "stopping point" for the perpetrators of these crimes. It is believed by every country that the sexual crimes that we continue to face today are a major social issue. Both men and women can become victims or even perpetrators of sexual crimes, which are usually acts that tend to be sensual, and cause discomfort, embarrassment, intimidation, or even direct contact between the victim and the perpetrator (Burn, 2018). Most of the existing reports indicate that women are very susceptible to sexual crimes, and this is not only true of adult women, but also teenagers and children (Planty et al., 2013). The highest percentage of sexual crimes being committed against females is in Turkey with 82.7% (Karanfil et al., 2013). Some states clearly state descriptions of sexual offenses other than rape, namely possession of extreme pornographic images, incitement of a minor to engage in sexual activity, aiding and abetting sexual abuse, attempted voyeurism, sodomy, and anything involving sexual activity without consent. (Public Prosecution Service, 2019)

In the worst case, the victim is also murdered. Survivors of sexual violence can also suffer from problems with physical or mental health,

including physical disabilities, chronic illnesses, mental disorders, drug and alcohol abuse, or even attempted suicide (WHO, 2021, p. 20). Victims of sexual violence usually experience trauma in terms of mental health and psychological disorders, and if sexual violence is experienced during childhood, the mental disorder will be carried on until they grow up and they are likely to become victims again (Hughes et al., 2019). The important issues regarding sexual crimes against women and children are discussed in the UNHCR Refugee Protection and Sexual Violence No.73 1993 act as follows, *'condemns harassment through sexual violence, which not only constitutes a grave violation of human rights, but also, when committed in the context of armed conflict...'* (UNHCR, 1993).

The World Health Organization's survey report states that most sexual crimes are committed by people closest to the victim, including intimate partners or even the victims' own families (WHO, 2014). According to the European Convention for the Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (ECHR), article 8 of 1950, *'Everybody has the proper regard for his private and family life, his domestic and his correspondence'* (European Court of Human Rights, 1950). However, what has been written in the law where the family is the protector and provides the main welfare for its members, including the women and children who are in it, can be the opposite of what happens in the family's private environment.

There are a huge number of cases of sexual harassment that have led to the murder of women. One of the countries with an increasing number of

sexual crimes is Turkey. Turkey is a country located at the crossroad of two continents and has a population of around 84 million (Worldometers, 2022). The unitary state and the secular national state which was the Islamic Ottoman Empire after fighting with Western powers after the first world war has several cases of sexual crimes against women that are things that need to be taken seriously by the Turkish government. Two famous cases are a 20-year-old woman named Ceren OzDemir and 23-year-old Sule Cat who was raped by her work colleagues and thrown from the top of a building. These cases have enraged women in Turkey because of unclear handling and punishment for the perpetrators (Ashdown, 2019).

The number of sexual crimes continues to increase. This can be seen from statistics released by Justice Ministry, daily Birgun, which showed that in 2006, the number of sexual assault cases including children was 2414, but this number increased to about 16,957 in 2016 (Anasayfa, 2016). This report cannot indicate where these crimes occurred which of course is increasingly unsettling for women and children around the world. In 2019, at least 430 women were killed in Turkey. The cases of sexual crimes against women and children in Turkey have been increasing with the prevalence of physical violence at 39.3%, sexual violence at 15.3%, emotional violence at 43.9%, and economic violence at 23.4%, as reported in 2014, and it has also been reported that 13% to 78 % of women are subjected to domestic violence in their lives (Guvenc et al., 2014).

The number of sexual abuse cases was 5,243 in 2006 and it increased to 13,347 in 2016. This means an increase occurred under Erdogan's leadership (Hurriyet Daily, 2017). When acts of crime and violation increase, especially those against women and children, it is a dangerous factor for a country. This is firstly because women and children are the most important and influential components to future generations. Secondly, if this continues, women and children will be afraid to socialize. Thirdly, if this does not receive special handling from the Turkish government, it could be an indication that Turkey is not carrying out its obligation to protect its citizens from crime and may have the outcome of Turkey becoming one of the unsafe countries of the world.

This research is necessary because it aims to analyze the factors that caused the growth of sexual violence against women in Turkey. This research is strengthened by data obtained by the Bianet group where at least 281 women were killed in 2014, and the data obtained shows this is a 31 percent increase from the previous year (Afanasieva & Hogg, 2015). This research also examines the presidential policy to analyze the actions of government in Turkey on this matter. In this context, this research is novel as it determines how this secular national state faced challenges and maintained its national security, especially the security of women in government.

1.2. Research Question

Based on the background outlined above, the research questions raised in this study is: How do sexual violence cases in Turkey continue to increase from 2006-2021?

1.3. Research Objective

1. To explain the urgency of sexual violence in Turkey.
2. To analyze the causes of the increase in cases of sexual violence in Turkey from 2006-2021.

1.4 Research Scope

The main focus of this research is to analyze how Turkey in 2006-2021 experienced an increase in the number of sexual violence. The reason this period was chosen is because it refers to the large number of sexual violence during the reign of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his previous leadership, namely which started from 2006 itself. More specifically, this research has a main focus on the fact that the Turkish government experienced an extreme spike in violence, from 5.243 cases in 2006 to 13.347 in 2016 (Hurriyet Daily, 2017). This also continues with a report from The Interior Ministry which stated that 38 out of 307 women were killed while under protection in 2021, this was stated to be the highest number for the previous five years (Human Rights Watch, 2022). There is definitely a failure to prevent sexual crimes threatens one component of human security, namely individuals, especially women.

1.5 Literature Review

Yenilmez and Demir asserted the reasons behind the actions of femicide and violence in Turkey and attempted to find out whether the system of legal change in Turkey could solve the problem of violence against women there. In the journal, it is stated that the violence against women that occurs in Turkey is a method used by men to dominate Turkish women. This cruelty has also been supported by many Turks who believe that men will continue to be like that in their culture. It is thought that violence in Turkey will forever be a critical social challenge and, indeed, until now it has not been handled properly (Yenilmez & Demir, 2016). On the other hand, the level of violence in Turkey cannot be identified with certainty because the unreliable statistics and tight data storage can only be accessed by the government, resulting in difficulties in this report. The real challenge, is that victims of violence against women and children in Turkey are less aware of reporting such cruel acts.

It was also explained in this journal that the reason victims of violence often do not report the incident is due to a culture of shame, lack of awareness that the incident violated human rights, being threatened or afraid of violence, or even fear of murder. Unequal status in society, poor economic conditions, and political instability are the main reasons this patriarchy continues and the power of men dominates women in Turkey. NGOs and other organizations want to help these women to be free from their cultural crimes, by providing socialization and greater understanding regarding their culture than the government has never done (Yenilmez & Demir, 2016).

Isabel Marcus explained that the existence of domestic violence and things related to physical or mental violations can be recognized as a new form of torture or terrorism at home. Actions of violence, especially those that occur in domestic society by their brothers, other male family members, or even their husbands usually occur because of poverty, education, or the culture that influenced their families in the past (Marcus, 2014). Relying on the analysis of feminist NGOs, Isabel Marcus wrote about several combinations of factors that greatly influence domestic violence, namely (i) the thickening of the traditional culture regarding the hegemony of men and women in a relationship, which can make it difficult for the authorities to oppose the violence; (ii) the personal nature of intimate violence; (iii) extreme violence that occurs simultaneously at separation; (iv) economic difficulties that bind women to submit, and (v) the consent of the victim's community to violence (Marcus, 2014)

Isabel Marcus also wrote that economic and cultural issues are the main factors regarding the continuation of sexual violence, to which Isabel Marcus offered a solution in the form of refraining from domestic violence as an act of torture or even terrorism at home. This is to open people's eyes and increase their awareness that sexual violence is not a trivial matter and must be fought against. In addition, Marcus urged the government components to apply the same logic or rationale regarding this sexual violence as they do with the traditional torture and terrorism acts (Marcus, 2014)

Kader Tekkas and Patricia Betrus emphasized that various risk factors for

sexual violence were stated, including cultural practices that violate woman's rights, especially marriage at a young age. Women have equal rights, have the right to life, freedom, privacy space, affordable health standards, and most importantly the security of themselves (Tekkas Kerman & Betrus, 2018). This study designed an effective violation prevention program against women by grouping each level into a "Social-ecological diagram". In total, this program has four levels, namely: the individual level, relationship level, community level, and society level.

The level of the individual itself presents the biological and personal history of the individual. The second level is the level of relationship which represents the context in which the abuse occurred, usually within the victim's family or among loved ones. Next is the community level, which involves social structures and figures. The last, or outermost circle, namely the level of society, is represented by social conditions, culture, and a political environment which can be included as cultural norms, laws, or even policies (Tekkas Kerman & Betrus, 2018). The difference between Kader Tekkas and Patricia Betrus' study and the study outlined in this thesis lies in the focus and subject of the study. The writings of Kader Tekkas and Patricia Betrus focus on strategies for preventing violations against women using socio-ecological methods, whereas in this thesis, the author focuses on the increase in the incidence of violence occurring under the leadership of a certain Turkish presidency and the efforts that have been made to address the increase in sexual violence against women in Turkey according to research data.

This research complements existing literature because this thesis discusses the factors that influence sexual violence against women in Turkey in accordance with the theory that will be used later. With a human security perspective, this research can provide another picture of why cases of sexual violence in Turkey continue to increase. This is a new perspective because there is little literature that discusses the issue of sexual violence under the leadership of this Turkish president based on research data.

1.6 Research Framework

In observing the case under study, the chosen framework aims to help research move forward and in a directed manner. To analyze the theme of sexual violence occurring in Turkey, it is important to explain the meaning of violence itself. Violence can take the form of any action, whether physical, verbal, psychological, or structural, which is sure to cause loss, damage, or even death to someone. The theory used in this research is the *"Triangle of Violence"* or *"Galtung Conflict Triangle"* by John Galtung. This violence triangle is mapped into three types of violence, namely: direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. Each of the categories is related to one another, which Galtung then mapped again into two categories, visible and invisible, which are presented in built-in vicious cycles.

According to Galtung, visible (direct violence) is caused by structural and cultural violence in society. Direct violence can be identified that refers to the physical, such as murder, torture, or rape, and includes verbal forms, such as intimidation and threats. The invisible effect (structural and cultural violence)

can have a more painful effect. In this type of violence there are parties such as groups, genders, ethnicities, institutions, or governments who have more rights and able to dominate others. This is in line with the structural violence identifications, for example: salary inequality and poverty. The other types of violence are cultural violence, identified as patriarchal system, and threats. This violence includes of racial, religious, gender, and exploitative discrimination (Galtung, 1990).

Galtung's Triangle of Violence

Direct Violence
physical attacks, torture, rape, murder

visible violence

invisible violence

Cultural Violence
- fear
- threat
- patriarchal system
- negative perceptions of the victim

Structural Violence
- salary inequality
- poverty
- hiding away by families
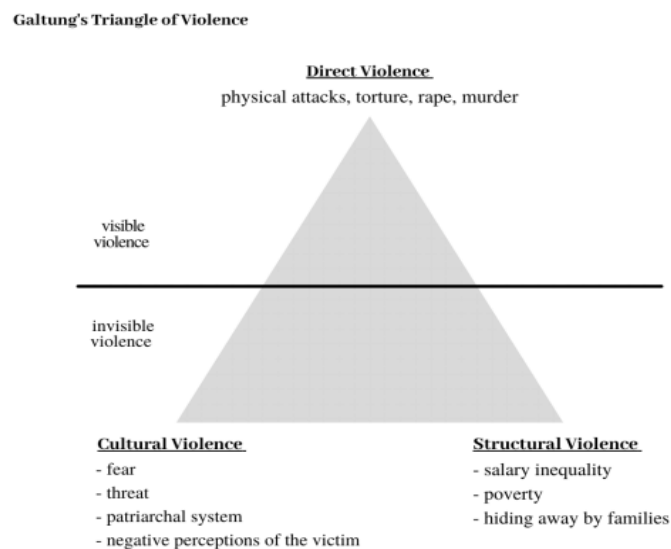
Picture 1. Galtung's Triangle of Violence (Galtung, 1990)

The researcher has applied the theory of *"Galtung Conflict Triangle"* to this study and will analyze the factors of the increase in incidence of sexual violence against women in Turkey from 2006-2021. In applying this theory, the researcher uses these three-violence approach. In discussing the political and security relations of women in the country, the researcher will examine how cases of sexual violence in Turkey during the previous presidency and Recep Tayyip Erdogan's presidency increased. For the discussion of these

violence, the researcher obtained data and information from credible journals or reports about the forms of sexual violence that occurred during this timeline. Through the application of the theory described above, this study will broaden the view of the relationship between human security and culture.

1.7 Provisional Argument

The temporary argument in this thesis is the suitability of the theoretical explanation of the 'triangle of violence' itself written by John Galtung in 1990 with the factors that influence all forms of sexual violence in Turkey. More specifically, it refers to what happened in Turkey regarding sexual violence against women, following what Galtung has described, where the sexual violence that occurred was based on three key features, namely direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. From these theories and discussions, it can be seen that the Tringle of Violence by Galtung can answer the root of the problem of sexual violence that occurs in Turkey.

1.8 Research Method

1.8.1   Type of the Research

The method that the author used in this research is the qualitative method. The qualitative method itself can be defined as the strategies used to investigate and comprehend the implications that a few people or gatherings of individuals think come from social or human issues (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this method, a descriptive analysis approach was needed to explain the case under study, wherein the qualitative research process plays an important role, such as by asking several questions and procedures, collecting

specific data from participants, analyzing data inductively, and interpreting the meaning of the data that has been obtained (Ishtiaq, 2019). The author aims to identify the factors lead into violence, views on the culture that exists in Turkish society.

1.8.2   Subject and Object of the Research

In this type of research, determination of the subject and object is very important to make it easier for readers to understand the research. The subject in this study is under the period of 2006-2021 and government's handling of the cases of sexual violence. The object of this study is the reason why cases of sexual violence increased in Turkey under this timeline.

1.8.3   Method of Data Collection

Research data collection is a tool chosen and used by researchers in data collection activities. The data collected in this study will be used to answer questions or problems that have been formulated, and which will ultimately be used as a basis for making conclusions and decisions (Afrizal, 2014). This research's data collection method is based on primary methods. In the primary method, the author conducts a literature review according to the research topic as the main source of getting information from books, journals, internet pages, and both print and electronic media selected based on the reputation and credibility of the media or publisher.

1.8.4   *Process of the Research*

The research process is a very important step in a study. This stage is a guideline for authors in conducting research and includes the planning or steps, from previous related research to interpretation of research or research reports. The selection of research sources is also an important step for the author as it determines the ease to which the research questions that have been compiled can be answered and makes it easier to understand the research in general.

1.9 Thesis Outline

In writing this thesis, the sequence that I applied was to start by examining the cases that provide the background to sexual violence in Turkey which reached an alarming position, from the period I took and the data obtained shows clearly that the cases continue to increase. Then the next chapter examines the general development of sexual violence that occurred there. The next chapter then discusses the important correlation of the theory described by John Galtung in the Triangle of Violence with the facts of the case factors that influenced the cases that occurred in Turkey. And at the end of the chapter is the answer to this research.

CHAPTER 2

ANALYSIS OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN TURKEY

2.1 Sexual Violence Against Women in Turkey

Patriarchal beliefs are considered a reason why Turkey has a high occurrence of domestic violence. Honor killings still happen in Turkey. About 40% of Turkish women have experienced domestic violence at some point in their lives, exceeding rates in the United States and Europe. Some people think that violence against women in Turkey is based on physical touch, physical abuse or violence, and sexual assault that involves penetration. They think it excludes the various kinds of sexual violence that occur outside of acts that involve physical contact, such as psychological sexual violence. These perceptions and opinions can influence how women in this world react to sexual violence when it happens to them. If there is a perception that sexual violence always has physical evidence, then it is not surprising that many cases of sexual violence go unreported, which is known as the iceberg phenomenon.

The data obtained on women in Turkey who experience violence from their partners during their lifetime indicates that this is at least 38 percent of women, which is considerably higher than the 25 percent observed in Europe (Ozer & Fidrmuc, 2017). Other data states that in 2014 there were at least 281 cases of murder of women in Turkey, and this was 31 percent higher than the previous year. 46 percent of the perpetrators were their own partners, and 109 other women were girls who were raped (Topalan, 2015), 9 percent of them

asked for protection from the state because of threats and the state did not do enough to protect these victims (Reuters, 2015). The increase does not stop there. Data in 2017 provided by the Turkish Higher Education Council pointed to the fact that 93 percent of women have experienced sexual harassment and 41 percent of women living in Turkey have experienced it at least once in their life (Kazan, 2017). The 2017 data is also strengthened by information of 409 cases of women being killed, 387 cases of sexually abused children, and 332 cases of women who were targets of sexual violence (Terekli & Çobanoğlu, 2018). In 2019 the organization 'We Will Stop Femicide' also provided information related to the recorded 430 cases of murder of women.

It can be inferred from this that in the thoughts of these victims, their rights have not been sufficiently violated. As a result of this disparaging perception, these women not only avoid reporting the violence to law enforcement but also refrain from seeking social support that may even be near them (Dobash & Dobash, 2004). The sexual violence that occurs in Turkey is becoming increasingly troubling year after year. Even though it has been an emergency political agenda for a long time because of the increase, in reality, the actions of the Turkish government need to be reviewed more deeply because they are not in line with the severity of the increase in cases of sexual violence. The lack of movement toward a solution from the government is also further strengthened by the fact that many conservative groups in the government are not in line with the principle of gender equality.

They consider that this belief, over time, is increasingly shifting in meaning toward promoting homosexuality. President Erdogan has also expressed his thoughts that women and men will never be equal (AFP, 2014). The policy of Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who supports the anti-gender equality movement and also the Turkish withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention had a big impact towards women in Turkey. Feminist demonstrators believe that this will continue to have a bad impact on women, especially those who are already married: the position of men will remain above them and be misinterpreted as acceptable to commit violence in the name of religion. Even though the Turkish government has issued this statement, many political experts viewed that Turkey's reason for leaving the Istanbul Convention as a political strategy of Erdogan to stay in power, as it would bring support from religious fundamentalists for Erdogan in the Turkish presidential election in the future.

The fact that sexual violence against women in Turkey is increasing should be convincing enough to make it become an urgency that must be dealt with by the government. However, in July 2021, the Supreme Court of Justice in Turkey rejected dozens of applications from women's organizations, lawyers' associations, and all kinds of supporters to cancel Turkey's withdrawal from the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, or what is known as the Istanbul Convention from the Convention Council Europe, which was the president's decision for 2021 (Callamard, 2021). This further clarifies how the Turkish government underestimated and

seemingly abandoned the problems that occur in cases of sexual violence, further threatening the position of women in Turkey.

The main argument that was developed in Turkish society against the Istanbul Convention was that the article on gender equality was considered a form of legalization of homosexuality which undermined the values and structure of the 'family' that existed in Turkey. This public sphere has not only been used as a place for discussion among Turkish people regarding the Istanbul Convention debate, but also as mediation between the Turkish people and the Turkish government to consider leaving the Istanbul Convention. In 2020, the representative of the AKP party, Numan Kurtulmus, stated that there was a request from the public that for them to consider leaving the Istanbul Convention. This statement proves that there was involvement of the Turkish people in the public space influencing Turkey's decision to withdraw from the Convention. On this basis, this study intends to determine the extent of the influence of the demands of the Turkish people on Turkey's decision to leave the Istanbul Convention (Brown & Brito, 2020)

Contrary to the perception stated above, that harassment perpetrated against women without prior physical contact, such as psychological or even economic assault, should also be included in the scope of the definition of sexual violence against women. Women who are victims of sexual violence often experience more than one type of attack, both physical and psychological, and psychological violence may be more detrimental to victims than physical (Buchanan et al., 2018). Perpetrators

generally try to control women by force by using psychological, emotional, and physical violence simultaneously (Brown & Brito, 2020). It is important to remember that women are faced with a wide variety of sexual violence that is most likely rooted in gender equality (Ekblad et al., 2007)

Looking at the facts above, we must realize that broadly defining sexual violence is very important for women's security. Based on Article 1 of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, Alice Edwards redefined this broad definition as *'including, but not limited to, any act, omission, or threat to life or harm or suffering through physical, sexual, or psychological acts towards women…'* (Rimmer, 2012). In addition, sexual violence includes acts that are verbal, harassment that leads to forced penetration, and also various types of acts that are coercive in the form of social pressure and intimidation, which may lead to the presence of physical force (WHO, 2012)

There are also three ways to identify sexual violence behavior. The first is gender harassment, which refers to abusive verbal and non-verbal sexual behavior. This is a way to convey contempt, hostility, or demean someone's identity or sexual gender orientation. This also includes sexual gestures, displaying sexual objects in public, and sending emails or sexual images whether as a joke or not (Sweeting et al., 2022) The second is unwanted sexual attention, such as comments that may be positive or negative about one's body, mocking and spreading lies that lead to sexual

matters, as well as unsolicited sexual advances (Gunby et al., 2020) The third is sexual coercion which usually occurs with sexual contact to get a reward or benefit in work or other benefits. This is also often followed by psychological abuse and blackmail (Parham et al., 2021)

The wide scope of sexual violence that has occurred should further strengthen the reason why this matter deserves urgent attention from the Turkish government. From the data obtained through the research above, it can be concluded that there is a wrong belief in society that victims of sexual violence must suffer serious physical or injuries, whereas, in reality, only a quarter of cases of violence and physical damage to victims were detected.

2.2 Women's Status in the Eyes of Turkey

It is important before we start discussing one of the obligations of a state in the eyes of international law, which is to keep women safe from all things based on violence including sexual violence, to provide brief information and an overview of how Turkey views women's status. Historically, Turkey used to be a monarchy which in the end turned into a republic of Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. One of the important policies in his leadership was to replace the legitimacy that was previously carried out based on Islamic Sharia law with the secularization of national sovereignty. The new policy taken by Kemal Ataturk was to bring attention to and equalize the rights and status of women in the eyes of Turkish society, which were previously the most

oppressed group (Starr, 1989). This policy included prohibiting polygamy and giving equal rights to women in terms of divorce, custody, and children (Zambrana, 2021). It was a great change, of course, given that women's rights had not been equal before. But in fact, these changes were not enough to change the domination of the traditional patriarchy which continues to oppress women's lives there.

Control, oppression, and violence against women are closely related to culture (UNHR, 2005), especially in Turkey. The culture that the author has summarized here is related to the 'honor' of a woman herself. Women are faced with the rule that they must be in a state of purity or virginity before marriage (Abboud et al., 2015) (Global Nonviolent Action Database, 2004) and are expected to be in a good environment after marriage. Therefore, the chastity of women becomes a burden, responsibility, and reputation for men who are in the family (Christianson et al., 2020) so they have to control the sexuality of women in their family, even if it involves violence. The second point based on culture here is that the status of women is considered high if there is a marriage and a role as a mother (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2011). Then, the last point is that all childcare is the responsibility of women. This policy tradition in the family also emphasizes the prevailing rule that men are the breadwinners and women must be housewives. This has also led to a lack of space for women in Turkey in employment (Susanli et al., 2016).

The impact of violence and oppression that is closely related to culture in Turkey has also been reinforced by a report entitled 'Global Gender Gap' in 2022 which was published by the world economic forum. This report stated that Turkey is currently ranked 124 out of 146 countries (Zahidi, 2022). This report shows that there are gender gaps in education, health, economy, and politics between women and men and importantly reminds us that the attention given to and the position of women needs to be improved government and Turkish society itself.

The strong cultural point of view in Turkey regarding how they perceive a woman in social life is key to the history of the beginnings of sexual violence in Turkey and there is yet to be justice for its victims who continue to fall. Social inequality between the positions of men and women in a relationship, especially in marriages that burden one side, namely women, is one of the reasons why this happens readily in Turkey's domestic life.

2.3 The Impacts of Sexual Violence in Turkey on Women

Sexual violence against women is a growing concern around the world, as is the impact on women themselves. The possible impact that occurs from one woman to another differs in time and response to the traumatic event, and this is natural for the victim. Although the factors that can influence the impact of sexual violence on each woman can be measured from the relationship with the perpetrator, the physical damage she experienced, and the length of time the sexual violence occurred

(Trickett et al., 2011), this does not rule out the possibility that every victim who experiences sexual violence can face emotional, physical, and mental health at the same time (Hawcroft et al., 2019)

There are direct impacts of sexual violence, such as injury and even death, but there are also long-term impacts. The long-term impacts after sexual violence can be in the form of unwanted pregnancy or maternal death (Fedina et al., 2020) and sexually transmitted infections that can affect birth defects in the baby (Grant et al., 2020). Another important impact is mental health problems such as depression, and drug use, or the worst-case scenario that usually occurs in younger victims is suicide (Bakken & Kruse, 2019). It can trigger emotional and physical stress for female victims, stress that triggers mental and physical illness as well, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Chan et al., 2008)

The World Health Organization has also provided an explanation of the consequences of sexual violence against women, and this is also reinforced by research from several experts. The impacts of sexual violence against women are as follows:

1. Psychological and emotional impacts: (i) depression, (ii) anxiety, which is the main response after someone experiences sexual violence and usually peaks around three weeks after the incident (Chaudhury, 2017) (iii) post-traumatic stress disorder, which usually occurs because of the overwhelming fear of experiencing future attacks and female victims tend to feel that their world is falling apart, especially

if the perpetrator of the violence is their own intimate partner (Crome & McCabe, 1995); and (iv) sleep difficulties, which is one of the impacts that may occur if a person's mental and psychological states are disturbed (Crivatu et al., 2021)

2. Physical impacts: (i) unwanted pregnancy; (ii) unsafe abortion - usually an unwanted pregnancy leads to an abortion decision (Wasco, 2003); (iii) damage to the urethra, vagina, and anus if sexual violence is in the form of penetration; and (iv) risk of infection, such as sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS (Smith et al., 2019)

3. Social and community impacts: (i) impacts on the way the victim interacts or socializes with her closest people and the surrounding community; (ii) affects the victim's relationships, such as difficulties in trust, communication, intimacy, and various sexual relationships with other people (Crome & McCabe, 1995); and (iii) negative reactions on the surrounding environment or even the sexual violence victim's family, which may be greatly affected by her mental state and recovery (Ahrens, 2006).

In addition to how worrying the effects of sexual violence are on its victims, in reality, what is happening in Turkey is even more complicated than imagined. Those suffering who want to ask for medical, forensic, or even psychological support to get treatment or collect evidence actually get poor treatment with inadequate systems and facilities (Aydın, 2019) and, as a result, many victims are reluctant to report their

cases. Furthermore, the cases of these victims are 'considered' not to be serious crimes by the police and are often underestimated. The lack of effective cooperation between the medical and police departments is one of the biggest reasons for many cases not being detected in the data on victims of sexual violence in Turkey.

2.4 Source of the Problem of Sexual Violence in Turkey

Sexual violence is one of the categories of gender-based violence, so in other words, there is a root of thought in society about low power, namely women themselves, and higher powers, namely men. In social life, we usually recognize the existence of behavioral norms, which are associated with the expectation that women and girls are under the control of men. Thus, it does not become taboo if violence and harassment can also occur in the family environment, something that is referred to as domestic violence. Violence and abuse can occur from childhood, into adulthood, and even into old age. Recorded research suggests that memories of violence and abuse experienced during childhood continues into later life, even affecting the lives of their children (Hightower, 2010)

It is this inequality of power between women and men in a society that is at the root of all forms of sexual violence, such as rape (Jewkes & Dartnall, 2008). Research shows that, in general, men who are involved in and commit sexual violence experience mental disorders or illnesses, are addicted to alcohol, or have a relationship with drug use (Dekeseredy &

Schwartz, 2011). Then, there is also another important reason why the cycle of sexual violence can continue to occur, namely because of the perpetrator's ambition to continue to maintain his power and control over female victims (Klopfstein & Hofner, 2013). This is in line with the meaning of the patriarchal system, where this system moves to maintain sexual violence in the family or in society.

There are four important factors that have become roots of sexual violence against women that we must pay attention to, namely:

1. Culture: The patriarchal and sexist system strongly encourages this sexual violence, which is certain to uphold the dominance and superiority of men (Mshweshwe, 2020). Norms, stereotypes, femininity, and masculinity seem to be people's expectations that do not want to be let go of. This system even has a religious and historical tradition where women's rights and ownership are under the control of men (Patra et al., 2018).

2. Economy: The correlation between violence, dependence, and lack of economic resources or poverty generally leaves women trapped in this dynamic (Wanjiru, 2021). The risks and threats of sexual violence against women in their work are also barriers for women to create financial independence in their own lives (Peters et al., 2016). Thus, some women also tend to depend on perpetrators of sexual violence, especially if they are their intimate partners, even though they are in an abusive

environment. One of the main examples is women trapped in areas of war or conflict, women refugees in conflict zones, and those who have difficulty finding protection.

3. Legal aspects: Law enforcement agencies often do not help or support proper punishment for perpetrators of sexual violence. Although various laws have been written in their own country and international laws have been made to maintain and stop the movement of sexual violence against women, these law enforcers tend to be lenient when responding to perpetrators. Not even a few still have the view that sexual violence comes from women themselves. Thus, the number of reports and investigations that occur is low, especially when it comes to domestic violence which is felt to be a private space.

4. Politics: There is a lack of representation of women in the political sphere and power, media, and legal systems. This results in a lack of discussion opportunities regarding how women feel and opportunities to use their position to influence a policy that will be made (Plotnieks et al., 2021). It is very important for us to understand the root of the real problem of sexual violence itself, but challenging the transformation of norms, social structure, culture, economy, and politics is not easy for the general public. So, the struggle against violence against women is often felt to be an impossible path.

Based on the results of the discussion above, it can be concluded that these four factors are related to one another when influencing why sexual violence against women can occur continuously in a country. These four factors make it is increasingly clear how the country of Turkey can have such a high number of sexual violations. It is because the government ignores women's problems that occur and does not make it an issue of urgency. This is also reinforced by the difficulty of obtaining exact data on the number of cases of sexual violations of women in Turkey because cases related to this are deliberately hidden by the country.

CHAPTER 3

REASONS FOR THE INCREASE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN TURKEY

UNDER RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN'S LEADERSHIP
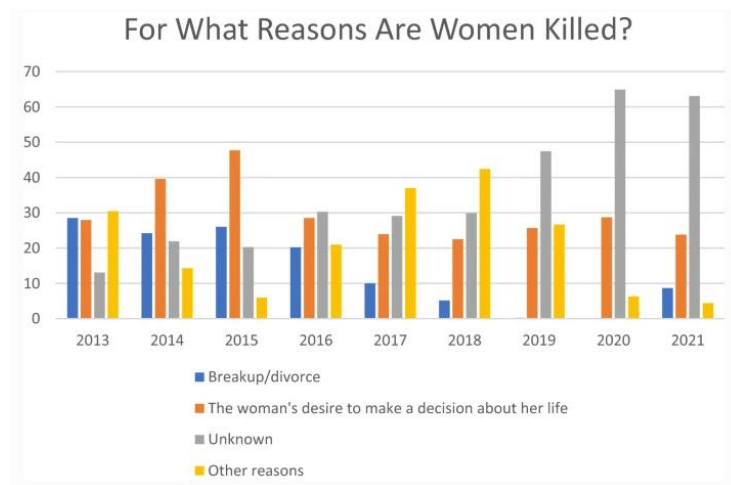
3.1 Direct Violence Approach of Sexual Violence Against Women in Turkey

Galtung has explained in his theory, 'triangle of violence' in 1990 clearly how violence can occur in a country, including sexual violence. Where direct violence is violence that is actually seen and felt by the victim. As in the table in the research framework, direct violence clearly states examples of violence such as physical assault, torture, rape, and even murder of the victim. Not only physical, it is explained in more detail that the attacks that occur can also take the form of psychological violence or anything that causes the victim to be traumatized or stressed. Apart from that, Galtung also explained that direct violence means there is a personal perpetrator, because violence without a perpetrator is structural or indirect violence (Galtung, 1990)

From the explanation of Galtung's theory regarding the direct violence approach, we can see clearly what actually happened in Turkey in cases of sexual violence against women there. Starting from the rape that occurred against a woman in Turkey, in 2021 it was reported that a 92-year-old woman was raped, assaulted and murdered in her house in the Aydin area, where she also lived in the house alone (Idil, 2021). It was also explained in the previous chapter that starting in 2006 there were

around 5,243 cases of sexual violence reported in Turkey and this increased very sharply in 2016 with reported cases reaching 13,347 cases.

This is also reinforced by the Ministry's report which states that at least 38 out of 307 women were murdered under state protection in 2021. Turkey is also one of the countries with the highest level of sexual violence against women, including murder, ever. The We Will Stop Femicide platform also states that between 2013 and 2021, at least 3,035 women have been murdered (Anavatan & Kayacan, 2023)

Picture 2. Reason Why Women Were Killed (Anavatan & Kayacan, 2023)
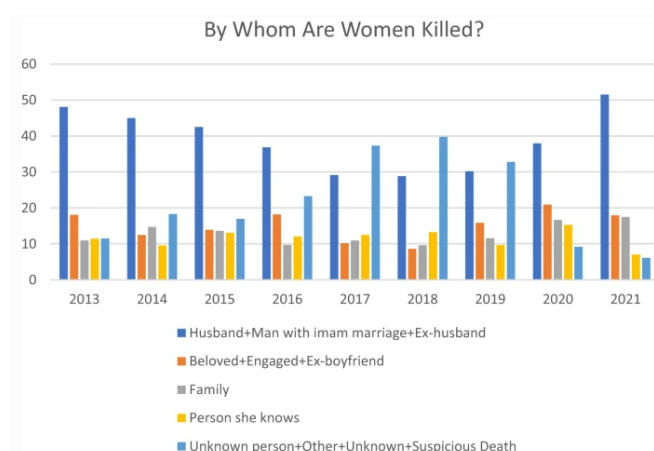
Picture 3. By Whom The Women Were Killed (Anavatan & Kayacan, 2023)

From this data it can be concluded that direct violence against women, especially sexual violence, is more common and the perpetrators are intimate partners, family members or people closest to the victim. This also begins with the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, especially marriage. This is also reinforced by the data that the author wrote in the previous chapter, that in 2017 data showed that 41% of women in Turkey experienced sexual violence at least once in their lives. This was followed by a report from 'We Will Stop Femicide' that there were 430 cases of murder of women in 2019, and in the following year, namely 2020, the organization also reported that at least 300 women were murdered, mostly by their partners, and 171 other women found dead under suspicious circumstances (Akman, 2022). Murder of women is the most extreme form of gender-based violence, generally perpetrated by men against women, largely due to the perpetrator's desire to dominate the victim (Prashad, 2020)

Table I. A Typology of Violence

	Survival Needs	Well-being Needs	Identity Needs	Freedom Needs
Direct Violence	Killing	Maiming Siege, Sanctions Misery	Desocialization Resocialization Secondary Citizen	Repression Detention Expulsion
Structural Violence	Exploitation A	Exploitation B	Penetration Segmentation	Marginalization Fragmentation

Picture 4. A Typology of Violence (Galtung, 1990)

The explanation of John Galtung's theory regarding the violence that occurred based on what happened in Turkey is further detailed based on the table above. Based on needs, direct sexual violence is not only focused on rape, torture or murder, but the layers of direct violence

are also broken down into several levels: according to survival needs (killing), well-being needs (maiming, siege, sanctions, and misery), identity needs (desocializations, resocialization, and secondary citizenship), and for the freedom needs (repression, detention, and expulsion). Further explanations regarding *'killing'* itself are also widespread, such as extermination, genocide, and the holocaust. Meanwhile, '*maiming*' for victims can take the form of siege, this also includes acts of intentional killing in the form of malnutrition, lack of medical attention, especially for victims who are considered weak, such as women, children, the poor and the elderly. *'Dissocialized'* is closely related to socialization among society, and this is aimed at minorities, even for children there is usually 'brainwashing' either from family or school where they do not have other choices. The final point is *'repression'* which refers to either the definition of 'freedom from' or 'freedom to'. This point also relates to prisons or locking people out, to expel them out of the country or to distant parts of their own country (Galtung, 1990).

3.2 Structural Violence Approach of Sexual Violence Against Women in Turkey

Galtung has explained in detail what structural violence is in 'triangle of violence's theory', where violence is violence that is not always intentional, has real victims but no real perpetrators. In detail, this refers to violence that is embedded in the social structure of society itself (Galtung, 1990). These systems collaborate with each other to

create complex forces. Where this usually results in certain groups being able to discriminate against other people or other groups regarding their rights, having greater power to regulate or harm other people, or what is usually called 'social injustice'. Also included in a country are institutions, market economy, social relations, even military institutions.

One of the biggest factors that can cause structural violence, referring to what John Galtung wrote in the 'triangle of violence' 1990 in society, is salary inequality. This is also in line with what happened in Turkey.

The Degree of Education	Males (%)	Females (%)
Without a diploma	21.14	78.86
Primary Sch.	49.34	50.66
Middle Sch.	56.82	43.18
High Sch.	54.85	45.15
Vocational high Sch.	60.65	39.35
Undergraduate Degrees	55.02	44.98
Postgraduate Degrees	57.26	42.74

Picture 5. Males and Females Distribution Based of Types of School Completed

(Köseoğullari & Ulucan, 2022)

This table is the distribution of men and women based on school graduation rates in 2017. From this data it can be concluded that if men generally have a higher level of education, then in a country's market economy, men clearly earn income. Labor market wages are also higher. The gender pay gap is largely caused by the educational gap between men and women. From the data that has been presented and also the implications of Galtung's theory in the Violence Triangle, salary

inequality, inequality in the education system, and poverty are obstacles for women to create financial dependence which at the next level becomes the root of structural problems violence that occurred in Turkey.

According to table picture number four regarding a type of violence explained by Galtung, the discussion about structural violence itself not only leaves wounds and marks on a person's body, but also on the mind of the victim. Hunger and disease are also examples. Several important points can also be seen from this table, where exploitation and coercion of victims are also included, such as penetration, (implanting inside so to speak), segmentation (giving only a very partial view of what goes on), marginalization (keeping it on the outside), and fragmentation (keeping it away from each other). Refers to gender-specific, namely women, this includes death, abortion and infanticide, where initially women were expected to have higher life expectations than men (Galtung, 1990). Apart from that, one of the most important points in structural refers to sustainable economic growth, which according to facts and data from Turkey has quite a large inequality between women and men there, this is the explanation as stated previously in picture number five.

Apart from that, there is power and authority from government institutions to dominate other groups, especially in policies made under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, where in accordance with the March 2021 Presidential Decree, Withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention is also a way to dominate other groups. factors described by Galtung. in a

description of how this structural violence began. Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, unexpectedly announced Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention via a decree on March 20, 2021. *"It has been decided to terminate the Council of Europe Agreement on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence based on Presidential Decree No. 9 verse 3 when the treaty was signed on November 5, 2011, and ratified on October 2, 2012, according to Presidential Decree 3718"*. Which was published in the Official Gazette on March 20, 2021 (Bas et al., 2022)

The withdrawal sparked widespread protests from women's groups and an outcry on social media where people criticized the decision as a major setback for women's rights in a country that still suffers from high levels of gender-based violence and femicide. The decision to withdraw raises questions about the reasons behind Turkey's decision. On March 22, 2021, The Turkish Directorate of Communications also released a statement explaining its decision to leave the Istanbul Convention, which included the following justifications (Bas et al., 2022)

"In order to legalize homosexuality, which is inconsistent with Turkey's social and family norms, some have violated the Istanbul Convention, which was originally designed to promote women's rights. Therefore, the withdrawal decision (has been made). The Istanbul Convention is a subject of great concern for more than just Turkey. The Istanbul Convention was not ratified by six countries of the European

Union (Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovakia).
Poland has also moved to leave the Convention, claiming the LGBT
community's efforts to impose their views on gender on the entire
population."

In a statement issued by the Turkish Communications Directorate, it was explained that the reason Turkey, which was the first country to sign and ratify the Istanbul Convention, announced its withdrawal was based on the grounds that the Istanbul Convention was being used to normalize homosexuality, which is incompatible with Turkey's social and family values. In August 2020, officials in the Justice and Development Party (AKP) signaled that Turkey was considering withdrawing from the Istanbul Convention after the religious conservative group began intense lobbying efforts regarding withdrawing from the Istanbul Convention. The Istanbul Convention also created differences of opinion between the AKP and several conservative women's rights NGOs, including KADEM (Bas et al., 2022)

Some experts consider Turkey's decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention by President Erdogan as a calculated political strategy to gain support from religious fundamentalists, as well as to increase Erdogan's popularity which had been sinking. The political strategy is certainly considered to be in favor of Erdogan seeking a fourth term in the next Presidential election currently scheduled for 2023. The withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention provides Erdogan with several political

advantages that will help him maintain his power. Firstly, the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention was a symbolic gesture for Erdogan and the AKP who aim to revive their conservative voter base that is dissatisfied with the economic downturn that has occurred due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Second, the potential defeat in the election made Erdogan look for new allies by submitting a bid to the Islamist Felicity Party (SP) in January 2021. The Islamist Felicity Party was chosen by Erdogan because it has the same Islamic roots as the AKP and is popular among ultraconservative voters, who enthusiastically support withdrawing Turkey from the Istanbul Convention, and the withdrawal was used by Erdogan as a bargaining chip for a possible future electoral alliance. Third, Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention could give Erdogan an advantage to strengthen his image as a leader (Cayli Messina, 2022)

3.3 Cultural Violence Approach of Sexual Violence Against Women in Turkey

Galtung focuses on cultural violence on how cultural aspects can ultimately be used by society to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence that occurs in a country. Galtung himself also stated in his cultural violence journal that explained about triangle of violence in 1990, that this cultural violence by equating it with stereotypes if cultural violence is in a gray position, doesn't really help, making the violence and structure look right, but not wrong either (Galtung, 1990). Which refers to how society views the morality of an act of violence itself. The theory

stated by Galtung regarding how this cultural violence occurred was also proven to be in line with what happened in Turkey itself.

If the three key points in the triangle of violence, namely direct and structural, have been explained, then the existence of cultural violence is what becomes the legitimizer for the two previous points. Because there a theory explained by Galtung, direct violence is an 'event', for example, an earthquake, structural violence is a 'process of rise and fall', tectonic movements, while cultural violence itself is invariant, or described as a fault line as a permanent condition. According to John Galtung, there are seven types of cultural violence, namely: Religion (refers to 'sacred' things and whom God chooses), Ideology (refers to successors to religion in the form of political ideology), Language (refers to women are made invisible than men when there is an explanation in anything), Art (refers to despotism), Empirical Science (refers to neoclassical economic doctrine), Formal Science (refers to black and white thinking and polarization in personal, social, and world spaces), and Cosmology (refers to the substratum of deeper assumptions about reality) (Galtung, 1990).

Anti-gender movement in Turkey has the support of various political figures, such as the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. On various occasions, Erdogan expressed his disapproval of the feminist movement and the concept of gender equality. Erdogan also implemented this view in his policies, one of which was his decision to leave the Istanbul Convention. The Istanbul Convention is a human rights treaty

(HAM) against violence against women and domestic violence that entered into force on 1 August 2011 (Resdifianti et al., 2022). This convention was drafted by the Council of Europe to uphold human rights and set legally binding standards, not only for punishing the perpetrators but also for preventing violence and protecting victims.

Violence against women in Europe is rife, with one in five women in the European Union having experienced some form of physical and sexual violence. The Istanbul Convention provides a comprehensive set of obligations for signatory states to address all forms of violence against women and children within the framework of international human rights law, including obligations for state governments to invest in education, collection of data related to gender-based crimes, and offering support services to victims. The Istanbul convention is certainly a breakthrough agreement that provides a clear explanation of how the state should work towards an area free from gender-based violence, Istanbul Convention identifies domestic violence as a gender-neutral phenomenon because both women and men commit domestic violence, this convention recognizes that domestic violence disproportionately affects women. Therefore, the Istanbul Convention became the first legally binding document establishing a structural relationship between gender equality and violence against women (Gülel, 2021)

Turkey's decision to leave the Istanbul Convention has generated reactions from both inside and outside Turkey. After Erdogan's decision to withdraw Turkey from the Istanbul Convention drew backlash, thousands of women took to the streets in Turkish cities to protest the decision by

chanting slogans such as 'Istanbul Convention saves lives', 'Murders of women are political', and 'We don't accept one man's decision'. Amnesty International Turkey Director Ece Unver said that the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention would be disastrous for the hundreds of thousands of ladies and youngsters dwelling in Turkey. A coalition of women's organizations referred to the withdrawal as a nightmare and claimed that it will embolden those who murder, torture, and rape women. Moreover, women's rights activists, constitutional lawyers, bar associations in Turkey, and opposition politicians insist that Erdogan cannot legally take Turkey out of international conventions ratified by parliament. This is due to the basic principle of the constitution that the executive cannot seize legislative power (Baytok, 2021)

Prior to the commemoration of World Women's Day in March 2019, The Turkish Family Assembly made an invitation on social media calling on the public to perform Friday prayers in several mosques in 8 major cities on Women's Day. Their motto was to 'stop the global war on the family' which is the same slogan used by anti-gender groups in Europe. They demanded the cancellation of the Istanbul Convention and the repeal of Law No. 6284 which focuses on protecting women from violence. This call also used the slogan 'gender equality and homosexuality terrorism are crimes against humanity'. They also had other demands on contentious topics, such as child custody and divorce payments (Sahin, 2022)

In May 2020, Turkiye Düşünce Platformu, or Turkey Thought Platform sent an evaluation report on the Istanbul Convention to the president and stated that in its efforts to prevent violence against women, this convention endangered Turkey's society and culture. The concept of gender equality in the Istanbul Convention tries to form a genderless society. In addition, the existence of the concept of violence in couples also changed the understanding of family and marriage. Furthermore, they also highlighted its application in education, where they feared that this concept would be taught from childhood and would change the social s tructure of society. They stated that the Istanbul Convention not only legalized LGBT by including them as subjects of violence but also recognized their preferences under international law through the concept of domestic violence (Szyszlak, 2022)

Even though there have been many discussions regarding the people's rejection of the Istanbul Convention, there are still many parts of Turkish society who support the Convention. Ataselim, Secretary General of 'We Will Stop Femicide Platform'. In his view, the Istanbul Convention aims to eradicate gender-based violence. Ataselim also asked people who view the Istanbul Convention as destroying the family structure to look again at the context contained in the Istanbul Convention. He questioned which traditions and families were meant in the community's criticism. Ataselim further criticized the existence of violence against women which has continued to occur because the Istanbul Convention could not work effectively. Besides Fidan Ataselim, journalist Sibel Eraslan has also

expressed his support that the Istanbul Convention is a 'living law; which means that laws are based on the needs of society. Sibel Eraslan further explained that what society needs is a law that can protect family values (Turgut, 2022)

In August 2020, KADEM also expressed its disapproval of the public criticism that the Istanbul Convention legitimizes homosexuality. Canan Güllü, President of the Federation of Women's Associations of Turkey, also stated the importance of the Istanbul Convention in preventing violence in the conservative world.

Selin Nakıpoğlu, who is a lawyer from the Mor Roof Women's Shelter Foundation, stated that although she often has different views from KADEM, the criticism that the public has against KADEM is unfair. Nakıpoğlu also expressed her disappointment at society's criticism of the Istanbul Convention, explaining that this convention is an important convention for women's struggles and that it was men who rejected this convention. Nakıpoğlu refutes critics who say that this convention can damage the family structure. For her, this argument is only an excuse for violence perpetrated by men.

Based on the explanation above, the difficulty of the Turkish government in listening to the voices of its own citizens, especially the threat to the position and security of women there, means that the Turkish government is considered less aware of the urgency of the problem of cases of violence against women there. It can be agreed that this is in

accordance with what Galtung also described in the Triangle of Violence itself.

From the description of the theory explained by John Galtung regarding cultural violence, we can conclude that there are several examples of cultural violence that occurred in Turkey following what has been described. As with point (i) religion, from the research that has been carried out we can see that there are policies regarding the anti-gender movement and Turkish withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, which are mostly decided by stakeholders and the Turkish president because they are believed to violate the rules according to what has been taught by religion, and also validation by the Turkish president that the position of women and men will never be equal (ii) ideology, this also continues with what a country believes in, namely anti-gender movement policy, Turkish withdrawal from Istanbul Convention, and the many rejections in the formation of gender organizations involve a disconnect between the state itself and the values carried within it. and the last is (iii) empirical science, which refers to the case of educational inequality between men and women in Turkey which then becomes the main reference for inequality in income between the two, where women are lower so that women find it difficult to be in a position of financial dependency.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

Until now, unfortunately, sexual violence is not a top priority for the current Turkish government. Sexual violence in Turkey has been a grave issue and one that needs immediate attention and all-encompassing solutions. The author has examined the prevalence of sexual violence, the societal elements fueling its increase, and the contribution of Turkey's leadership and government to the problem throughout the discussion here. The rise in cases of sexual assault against women is a complex issue that calls for coordinated action from a range of stakeholders. The alarming incidence of sexual violence in Turkey and its terrible effects on women's lives have been long-standing issues and the situation is getting worse as more women become victims of such horrible crimes. In addition to the physical trauma, sexual assault leaves its victims with lasting emotional and psychological scars that compromise their general well-being and quality of life. Victims are frequently discouraged from reporting these crimes out of fear of retaliation and social disgrace, which results in underreporting and a lack of precise data.

Furthermore, the deeply embedded patriarchal standards in Turkish society play a crucial role in the persistence of sexual assault against women. Women are frequently discriminated against across a variety of sectors of life due to gender inequality. Women are expected to fulfill

traditional gender norms that place them in inferior positions and promote a culture of violence and control over women's bodies. The problem is made worse by the absence of comprehensive education and awareness initiatives on consent, healthy relationships, and gender equality, which supports negative attitudes and behaviors. This complex problem then creates the big question: **How do sexual violence cases in Turkey continue to increase from 2006-2021?**

First, the sociocultural variables influencing the growth in sexual violence in Turkey and the unfavorable atmosphere where women's rights and safety are at risk are results of the unequal power dynamics between men and women as well as the pervasive idea of male supremacy. A culture that normalizes violence against women is further fueled by the objectification of women in the media and society. By challenging these detrimental practices and advancing gender equality and respect for women's autonomy, sexual assault can be effectively combated. If we look at direct violence, which can be seen from cases of sexual violence that have been recorded among victims of sexual violence in Turkey, there is evidence that the forms of sexual violence that have occurred have involved physical attacks, domestic violence, rape, and even murder. This visible violence, in theory, begins with the occurrence of cultural and structural violence that has been instilled in Turkish society which is not handled and cared about by the government, so it continues to worsen. What happened in Turkey is also in line to what Galtung explained in his

Triangle of Violence theory about how the three types of violence are related to each other.

Second, A strong patriarchal system and the beliefs of stakeholders in the government, especially President Erdogan himself, are also not in line with the gender equality because it is considered to be supportive of LGBTQ+ people. The stakeholders have also stated that women and men can never equal and this is the strongest factor allowing cultural and structural violence to occur readily in Turkey. Additionally, the absence of thorough sex education in both schools and society at large helps to promote false beliefs about sexual assault. The research results show that the growth of sexual violence under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey has increased to levels higher than in the previous administration due to several interrelated factors. This starts with the anti-gender movement in Turkey which has been gaining momentum and is supported by various political figures, including Erdogan himself. His rejection of feminist ideals and gender equality has perpetuated harmful patriarchal norms and created an environment in which violence against women is normalized. Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention was also a significant setback for women's rights in the country. The decision to withdraw reflected the government's disinterest in protecting women's rights and combating gender-based violence effectively. Slow and inadequate responses to reports of violence perpetuates this problem and makes women feel even more threatened and

vulnerable. This is an important and urgent issue and there are no strict laws or regulations to protect victims and punish perpetrators.

Third, the government's actions have been opposed by women's rights advocates, civil society organizations, and opposition lawmakers who emphasize the value of the Convention in protecting women's rights and preventing gender-based violence. The object that is highly disadvantaged and categorized as invisible is women in Turkey. Their government is harming and underestimating them by failing to enforce laws protecting women from sexual violence. They have also weakened punishments for perpetrators. Even though, international parties have also voiced their displeasure and pushed for Turkey to change its mind, especially the European Council and the European Union. Widespread protests over the state's decision to leave the Istanbul Convention have been organized by women's organizations and other groups, exposing stark differences among Turkish society on this matter. While some people strongly disagree with the government's decision and advocate for women's rights and gender equality, others strongly agree and express concern about family values and conventional norms. This is where the question that then needs to be asked is whether the Turkish government views are the voice of the people or not.

To effectively address this critical issue, Turkey's government must prioritize women's rights and commit to international agreements such as the Istanbul Convention. Implementing comprehensive policies and

programs aimed at preventing and addressing sexual violence is essential. The Turkish government must make ending sexual violence a top priority by enacting strict rules and regulations that safeguard victims and hold offenders accountable. A transformative strategy is necessary to challenge patriarchal norms and advance gender equality in order to address the systemic conditions that contribute to sexual assault. In order to alter attitudes and behaviors, comprehensive education and awareness campaigns on consent, healthy relationships, and gender equality are crucial. In order to support respectful representations of women and reject damaging stereotypes, the media and society must take responsibility for their actions.

To achieve tangible change, Turkey requires strong leadership and collective efforts from all stakeholders. Turkish society must also be encouraged to engage in dialogue and understand one another. In order to create a society that is just and equal, it is crucial to engage with different viewpoints and understand the significance of women's rights. Ultimately, the government, civil society, the commercial sector, and all other people must work together to eliminate sexual violence in Turkey. Turkey can only be expected to stop sexual assault and build a society where everyone can live without fear and violence through concerted and persistent efforts.

4.2 Recommendations

Given the explanations that have been outlined in this study, from the analysis to the results of the analysis, it is important to emphasize that there are still many drawbacks and limitations to this study. The author provides several suggestions for further research:

1. The author only conducted an analysis of sexual violence in Turkey in general. Meanwhile, there is also sexual violence based on domestic violence. Further researchers could combine or describe more forms of sexual violence that affect women.

2. Due to the fact that the scope of this research is only from 2006-2021 under the leadership of President Erdogan, it cannot be guaranteed that the impact and data of sexual violence on women in Turkey are as the authors provide above. Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention will certainly have a large impact on the security of women in Turkey.

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