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Barometer of Gender-Based Violence 2022

Violence Against Women in Romania: Representations, Perceptions



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Ionela Băluță & Claudiu Tufiș

BAROMETER OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE 2022

*Violence Against Women in Romania:
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**Foreword by His Excellency
Dr. Peer Gebauer**



Gender-based violence (GBV) continues to be one of the most prevalent human rights violations in the world. While humans of all genders can be exposed to gender-based violence, the majority of victims are women and girls. In Europe, 12% to 15% of women are daily victims of domestic violence. Worldwide, more than an estimated 1 in 3 women has experienced gender-based violence, a figure that has unfortunately remained largely unchanged over the last decade.

Gender-based violence is typically the result of persisting inequalities, the abuse of power and harmful norms. It continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies, independent of social, economic or national boundaries. And it often remains shrouded in a culture of silence.

To break this silence and to enable an objective and open discussion about the topic, facts are of vital importance. The “Gender Based Violence Barometer. Violence against women in Romania: representations, perceptions” contributes to this very issue and supplies important data on how violence against women is perceived by the Romanian public.

I would like to thank all the parties involved for their tireless commitment. The German Embassy wholeheartedly supports the efforts to advance the fight against gender-based violence and has therefore have gladly contributed funds for this important work.

Because the most important fact about gender-based violence is that it is preventable.

About the Barometer of Gender Based Violence

For impactful public policies in the field of preventing and combating violence against women, it is essential that they build on the knowledge of the issue they address. *Barometer of Gender-Based Violence 2022 Violence against women in Romania: representations, perceptions* responds to this first step and provides valuable information for policy development in the field of gender-based violence. The study captures people's attitudes and perceptions regarding violence against women, the degree of tolerance of violence in society, the level of trust in the responsible authorities, as well as the existing obstacles for victims of gender-based violence, depending on ethnicity, education, social status.

The *Barometer of Gender-Based Violence* comes almost 20 years after the last nationally representative research on the subject was published. It should be noted that both studies were published by non-governmental organisations. Insufficient or non-existent public funding for the development of feminist knowledge, in the field of gender studies, of the problems faced mainly by women and girls limits the in-depth understanding of topics that should be essential and priority for the political agenda: gender violence, sexual violence, education for gender equality.

Feminist researchers and activists, allies and colleagues have given us their contributions for defining research objectives and instruments and we thank them for their work: Oana Băluță, Anca Dohotariu, Laura Grünberg, Emanuela Ignățoiu-Sora, Roxana Marinescu, Dumitru Sandu, Ionela Vlase, Bogdan Voicu. This barometer would not have been possible without the financial support of the German Embassy in Bucharest, to which we thank for its active contribution in promoting the rights of women and girls.

Andreea Bragă

Introduction

Violence against women is a widespread phenomenon in all societies, which seriously affects the health and safety of women, represents a violation of democratic principles and rights, and the most frequent and widespread violation of human rights.

The World Health Organisation estimates that around a third of women worldwide are victims of violence¹. In the European Union, in 2020, Eurostat recorded 788 cases of the femicide², reported by 17 Member States (the others did not transmit data)³.

In the first six months of 2022, the data related to domestic violence recorded by the Romanian Police⁴ show that 18,507 women were victims of violence, of which: 18 homicides, 13 attempted murders and 12,801 acts of bodily harm⁵. In the Romanian Constitution, it is written that "the right to life, as well as the right to physical and mental integrity of the person are guaranteed" (Art. 22, para. 1). The Romanian state therefore fails to guarantee the fundamental rights of its own Constitution. Or are women not citizens of the Romanian state?

In Romania, under the pressure of international organizations and feminist associations, steps have been taken after the 2000s in terms of creating a (fragile) legislative and institutional framework to combat domestic violence⁶. An important moment is the ratification of the Istanbul⁷ Convention in 2016. The first country report of the GREVIO Group⁸ on the implementation of the provisions of this Convention was published this year (June 16, 2022) and it is extremely useful to understand the

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>, consulted on 3.11.2022.

² Femicide is a term more recently introduced in the political vocabulary of violence against women. The United Nations Statistical Commission approved on March 4, 2022 the introduction of this term to measure "gender-based crimes against women and girls", emphasizing the need to produce data on this extreme form of violence, which is spread throughout the world, but is insufficiently known and measured. At European level, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) proposed in 2017 the following definition: "(t)he killing of a woman by an intimate partner and the death of a woman as a result of a practice that is harmful to women. Intimate partner is understood as a former or current spouse or partner, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim" (EIGE, 2017, p. 44). In 2021, EIGE also published a report nuancing the definition and arguing for the introduction of the statistical definition and a legal definition of femicide in the EU states. The glossary drafted by EIGE precisely to create a common vocabulary regarding gender equality (with all the themes it covers) in the EU states includes in the English version an entry "femicide" in which, besides the definition already quoted, are given several examples of cases that can be framed as femicide – honor killings, killing girls and women in armed conflicts, etc. (<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1128?lang=en>) Unfortunately, in the Romanian version of the glossary, the term is missing (not the only one, for that matter).

³ *Gender Equality Index*, 2002, <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2022/domain/violence>, consulted on 3.11.2022.

⁴ In accordance with Law 217/2003; we emphasize, however, that this is a restrictive definition of acts of violence, which we will return to.

⁵ According to the database recorded by the Romanian Police, taken over by the network of NGOs Violence Against Women (VIF), which do the work of processing and communicating this information, given that no institution of the statute does so.

⁶ We'll go back to the concepts and the terminology in the next section.

⁷ *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence*, signed in Istanbul in 2011 (hence the name abbreviated by the Istanbul Convention).

⁸ *Baseline Evaluation Report Romania*, GREVIO - Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, June 16, 2022, <https://rm.coe.int/final-report-on-romania/1680a6e439>

situation of the way in which the Romanian State (does not) treat violence against women. Overall, while acknowledging the efforts made in a number of areas, the report also highlights a great many issues that have either not been addressed at all or have been started but are rather at the legislative level or at the level of plans and strategies, with little or no implementation. Data collection is one of the areas in which we are lagging: ‘Romania does not have an integrated system of data collection on domestic violence and other forms of violence against women’. (Baseline Evaluation Report Romania, p. 23). Also, the reason why the Gender Equality Index does not calculate the score for the field of violence against women is that there is not enough comparable data for all EU countries, in the case of Romania mentioning: ‘Insufficient data to assess violence against women. Romania does not have a score in the field of violence, due to the lack of evidence to assess violence against women. No score is given to Romania in the domain of violence, due to a lack of comparable EU-wide data.’ (Gender Equality Index 2022). This in itself is an indicator that public policies in the field of gender equality and violence against women are insufficiently developed and implemented: any public policy manual says that the diagnostic phase is essential for the development of meaningful and consistent strategies and plans. To quote everything from the GREVIO report: *“Another area of concern is the lack of an integrated system of data collection on domestic violence and other forms of violence against women. The limitations of the Romanian administrative data collection system prevent a comprehensive view of gender-based violence against women and domestic violence from emerging in Romania and hinder the evaluation of public policies and laws. The report, therefore, points to the need to improve data collection and to introduce a system for the collection of data by law enforcement and judicial authorities based on harmonised categories which make it possible to trace the progress of cases throughout the criminal process, covering all forms of violence against women within the scope of the Istanbul Convention and broken down by sex, age, type of offence and type of relationship of the perpetrator with the victim.”*

How can you set priorities and objectives, how can you identify actions and set indicators and deadlines if you don't even know what the dimensions of the phenomenon are?

The Romanian police only collects data on domestic violence⁹, which does not cover all forms of violence against women as provided for in the Istanbul Convention or even those provided for in national legislation. Moreover, the Criminal Code (art. 177 and art. 199) maintains a restrictive definition of ‘family members’, which excludes the partners who perpetrate acts of violence who do not live in the same house as the victim.

⁹ It should be noted that although in the tables provided reference is made to the definitions of violence in Law 217/2003 for the prevention and combating of domestic violence, in the title is still preserved the expression ‘domestic violence’, which reflects the stereotypes that the police have in relation to this phenomenon.

Even in the polls, things aren't too good. The GREVIO report highlights NGOs' efforts in collecting data. State institutions have conducted very few national surveys related to perceptions, attitudes, experiences of violence: the only study that can be accessed was conducted within a project¹⁰, and has many methodological problems, which we will present in the section "Some data about the current context", the second study is not publicly available¹¹. The National Institute of Statistics has started to develop a series of statistics available online: at point H - Sustainable development there is the objective H5 'Gender Equality' there is also a sub-objective " Elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, in public and private spheres, including trafficking, sexual exploitation and other types of exploitation"¹². Of the 9 defined targets, one is actually related to violence against women, all the others are on domestic violence (we will present in detail the important issues that such an approach has, actually causing the impossibility of measuring violence against women. But this target also actually measures the data related to domestic violence against women ; in fact, the NIS is content to take over the data provided by the DGSAPCs, so it refers only to the persons registered in these institutions and who received assistance : thus, for 2021 only 2953 women were victims of violence. From the data collected by the Romanian Police, in 2021 there were 33970 women victims of violence based on the acts of referral. Needless to say that as it currently shows, the NIS database is not only completely useless, but can also be dangerous: if a person does not read carefully the information related to the collected/presented data and does not have enough information about (non-) data collection on violence against women, one can draw the conclusion that this phenomenon is marginal in the Romanian society. Thus, the **only relevant data**, in terms of legislation and definitions agreed at EU level, are provided by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2014.

We insisted on the lack of data and their role in the development of public policies in order to show the urgent need for quantitative and qualitative research that can provide the necessary information to understand the extent, but also the causes and forms of violence against women. **Through this Barometer of Gender-Based Violence, we aim to respond to this need. Our research is the first national investigation that analyses stereotypes, perceptions and attitudes related to violence against women (and not domestic violence) within the meaning of the Istanbul Convention. Moreover, it is the first research that analyses violence against women from the perspective of gender structural inequalities, which emphasizes the systemic character**

¹⁰ ANES study by CCSAS - <https://anes.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Studiu-privind-prevalenta-formelor-de-violenta-imptivi-femeilor.pdf>

¹¹ A quantitative study on domestic violence carried out within the project 'Start – A safe quality life', which is not available on the ANES WEBSITE

¹² <http://statistici.insse.ro:8077/tempo-online/#/pages/tables/insse-table>

of the phenomenon and the need to act on all the factors that (re)cause this violence. Violence against women must be analysed and treated as gender-based discrimination and rooted in gender inequalities, in an intersectional perspective.

This study is structured in two parts. In the first part we propose a brief discussion on how we study violence against women and what terms we use, then we present some contextual data (available data, collected data, legislation, previous research) and the methodology of the research. The second part presents the results of the national questionnaire survey. We have interpreted some of the data, trying to highlight the most important issues related to people's perceptions and attitudes towards violence against women. Our analysis is divided into ten sections: recognition of forms of violence, sources of information, civic involvement, perceptions of violence, causes of violence against women, frequency of violence against women, patriarchal values, knowledge of the legal framework, reasons why women do not report violence, violence against women from an intersectional perspective. We have focused on the relationships that allow us to understand the link between violence against women and structural gender inequalities. However, the database is much richer, and many more analyses and correlations can be made in future studies.

The Gender-Based Violence Barometer aims to provide a useful tool for: public institutions that are tasked with developing policies and tools for preventing and combating violence against women; political actors that want to understand the phenomenon and contribute to the promotion of an appropriate political agenda; international political organizations and actors that are interested in the Romanian context; NGOs that work in the field of violence against women, gender violence and related fields; academic space (both for the teaching process and for the research part, especially through the database that we will be available in open access on FILIA website).

How do we define and analyse violence against women?

The analysis of the phenomenon of violence against women and of specific international and national policies has already produced numerous researches, focusing either on conceptual elaboration (defining the phenomenon and types of violence) and on theoretical frameworks, or on the study of various national contexts or international mobilizations and policies. On the other hand, international and national legislation and public policies, as well as the various manuals and instruments developed by institutions dealing with violence against women (e.g. UN Women or EIGE, European Council, FRA), also propose definitions of the various forms of violence against women, often accompanied by concrete examples, methodological recommendations for measurement or analysis, examples of good practice. Given that our study addresses a wider audience, we will present only a few theoretical aspects, which we consider relevant to understand why it is important to reflect carefully on how we define violence against women but also on the analytical grid we apply. Regarding the various types of violence and their definition, we will use the terminology of the Romanian legislation, supplemented by the European one.

Gender perspective and analysis of violence against women

Violence against women was one of the main points on the global feminist agenda of the 1970s, which sought to redefine human rights to include the private sphere as well as a gender-sensitive perspective. (Kelly, 2005). This implies, inter alia, the need to go beyond definitions and public policies that focus on situations of violence, it addresses them punctually, without taking into account the structural factors that (re)produce the gender hierarchies at societal level, or the gender roles and stereotypes that create a favourable ground for violence against women. As Oana Băluță points out: *"Violence against women is also a manifestation of gender inequality, namely of social practices that disadvantage women. The rules that establish the dominance of men over women legitimize various forms of violence"* (Băluță O. 2020, p. 27). Often, however, violence against women is approached from a slightly conservative perspective, which remains blind to the problem of discrimination and gender structural inequalities, but also to the intersectional dimension. Andreea Krizsan and Raluca Popa propose an extremely useful 'critical frame'¹³ analysis of the violence against women in public policies: *"We conceptualize differences in the meanings of gender equality in policy contestations around domestic violence along a continuum from gendered to degendered policy frames. (...) The continuum of frames ranges from structural gender equality to rights of*

¹³ It is related to a theoretical-methodological approach introduced by Mike Verloo – critical frame analysis. We chose to translate by approach, because it seems to us closer to the meaning of the English term than 'framework' (literal translation of it)

individuals subjected to domestic violence, with two sub-frames between them: women-centered frame and implicit gender equality frame.” (Krizsan & Popa 2014, p. 762) Addressing the phenomenon through the gender equality structural frame means analysing violence against women as gender-based discrimination, rooted in gender inequalities. CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women) used this type¹⁴ of approach for the first time. At the other end of the spectrum is the approach focused on the rights of people affected by domestic violence, where the gender dimension is reduced or non-existent/neutralised. In this approach, the individual is in the centre, and the attention is focused on the symptoms of the problem and not on the structural causes that (re)produce the occurrence of the phenomenon. This approach was dominant in the EU Member States in 2014. (Krizsan & Popa, 2014, 762-763). In the case of Romania, the authors show that the placement of violence against women in the domestic sphere and family protection practically eliminated the introduction of a gender equality and women's rights perspective (Krizsan & Popa, 776). At the international level, the Istanbul Convention is the first international treaty that adopts a gender structural equality frame for the violence against women (and which defines the term ‘gender’).

The approach that emphasizes that violence against women must be defined, analysed and then transposed into legislation and public policies in the light of gender structural inequalities (as well as the concept of gender violence, or gender violence against women) should not be interpreted as a kind of "neutralization" of a feminist perspective. This approach in no way disguises the fact that women are in an overwhelming and worrying proportion the victims of various forms of violence. But instead of putting it in rather descriptive terms (for example, ‘what are the forms of violence?’ ‘who are the victims/aggressors?’) and in general /non-specific terms (in our legislation the dominant concept is ‘domestic violence’ and refers to all members of the family) the analysis of violence against women based on the concept of ‘gender contract’¹⁵ and gender equality policies allows the interrogation of structural factors (cultural, economic, political) that create the premises for women to be the target of various forms of violence. The Istanbul Convention uses this approach, as stated very clearly in the preamble: *‘Recognising that the realisation of de jure and de facto equality*

¹⁴ The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as it was translated into Romanian, was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1981 and is the first international treaty that lays the foundation of equality between women and men, the Convention was ratified by Romania on January 7, 1982

¹⁵ The concept was used and (re)defined by several authors (Yvonne Hirdmann, Nancy Fraser, Birgit Pfau-Effinger). A more simplified but very useful definition, because it proposes somewhat of an analytical grid based on existing theories, is offered by the EIGE Glossary: “set of implicit and explicit rules that define gender relations, assign to women and men different jobs, values, responsibilities and obligations and are maintained at three levels: the cultural superstructure (the norms and values of society); the institutions (family welfare, education and employment systems, etc.) and the processes of socialization, especially in the family.” <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1159?lang=ro>, consulted on 5.11.2022.

between women and men is a key element in the prevention of violence against women; Recognising that violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which have led to domination over, and discrimination against, women by men and to the prevention of the full advancement of women’.

Gender stereotypes and gender roles are one of the structural cultural factors that create a favourable context for violence against women. On the one hand, at the societal level, the stereotypes related to the man who is the head of the family/couple and the woman who must listen to him (which includes the fact that a woman should not contradict her partner, especially in public), or those about the man's sexuality and "biological" needs, to give just a few examples, influence the behaviours of men and women. Because of these representations and social norms, to which are added the economic inequalities (economic dependence of women), family and community pressure, etc., many women do not identify all the forms of violence they face (for example psychological violence) and especially they are ashamed and afraid to talk about and to report the acts of violence (Cardi & Pruvost (2012 ; Flood & Pease 2009 ; Marin & Ruso 2003). Moreover, gender stereotypes and roles also influence the way in which violence against women is perceived, treated and judged by society (family, community, professional group), by the media (which often uses a speech to normalize the acts of violence or to blame the victim), but also by the representatives of the institutions that are tasked with managing the cases of violence : police, medical staff, judges, prosecutors (Nemeş & Crişan 2020, Scarduzio, Carlyle, Harris, & Savage, 2017, Băluţă O, 2015). These prejudices become obstacles to women and limit their rights in the context of violence. For example, deterring victims to file a formal complaint (Nemeş 2022), failure to apply interim protection orders to intervene, the very number of cases of rape, sexual assault or sexual act with a minor for which the prosecution is not continuing/ending (in 2021, for 75% of the cases registered by the prosecutor's office were closed during the investigation). (VAW Universal Periodic Report).

The Istanbul Convention links the legislative framework on violence against women with this structural analysis of the causes of violence against women: *”The Parties shall take the necessary measures to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men, with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and other practices, which are based on the idea of inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men.”* (Art 12, 1) Article 15 (Training of Professionals) also stresses the need for appropriate training for all professionals *”dealing with victims or perpetrators of all acts of violence covered by the scope of this Convention, on the prevention and detection of such violence, equality between women and men, the needs and rights of victims, as well as on how to prevent secondary victimisation”*. The Council of Europe argues that *”gender-based violence, and in particular violence against women, is one of the most*

pronounced expressions of the unequal power relations between women and men” (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/what-causes-gender-based-violence>). Thus, four categories of factors that cause violence against women are identified: cultural, legal, economic and political. Very briefly, **cultural factors** include ‘patriarchal and sexist views’ that legitimise violence to (re)produce male dominance, stereotypes of femininity and masculinity, gendered socialisation, male authority (pater familias), cultural and historical traditions, ethnic stereotypes, stereotypes and norms related to sexuality, etc. Legal factors relate to the maintenance of differences between the public and private spheres (e.g. in the definition of domestic violence and/or family violence) which do not allow all forms of violence against women to be rigorously framed and punished. Unevenly distributed economic resources and reduced autonomy of women are an example of **economic factors** that contribute to perpetuating acts of violence. Among the **political factors**, we mention the under-representation of women and women's interests in politics, the marginalization of violence against women on the political agenda or its approach in the wider sphere of domestic/family violence, which leads to the invisibility of the phenomenon and allows for conservative approaches.

The intersectional perspective in analysing and addressing violence against women was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), who drew attention to the need to take account of racism, which in the case of women of colour plays as important a structural role as sexism and patriarchy. Thus, says Crenshaw, understanding violence against black women needs a specific conceptualization, and at the level of legislation and public policies, an approach that takes into account both gender and race structural inequalities. In recent years, gender-based violence against people of the LGBTQI+ community has become an object of study that enriches the intersectional approach (Wirtz, A. L., Poteat, T. C., Malik, M., & Glass, N. (2020). In Romania, more research, coming mainly from the sphere of NGOs, showed that understanding and addressing violence against Roma women must take into account structural factors that concern both gender and ethnicity, insisting on ethnic stereotypes that affect the way in which these acts of violence are handled by authorities, media and society (Braga 2020, Braga, Neaga, Nica, 2017). Refugee status or religion are other factors that should be introduced to an intersectional approach to violence against women (Marin 2020, Yilmaz 2020)

Therefore, the study of gender stereotypes and gender roles, of the cultural factors underlying violence against women is both an essential axis to understand the mechanisms and structural causes of the phenomenon, and for the elaboration of public policies that are closer to addressing violence against women through the prism of gender structural equality. Using an intersectional perspective that takes into account social processes that intersect with gender and adds additional factors of discrimination and inequality is mandatory: racism and ethnic

discrimination, classism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia are systems of domination and discrimination that structurally influence violence against women, in addition to sexism and patriarchy. In Romania, violence against women must be analysed based on these theoretical perspectives, in order to allow then legislative adaptation and the elaboration of public policies that respond to European priorities and obligations assumed by signing the Istanbul Convention.

Forms of violence against women: legal terminology

As a result of research, projects and debates in the academic and associative space, the terms used have been diversified and nuanced: domestic violence, domestic violence, violence against women, violence against girls and women, gender violence. Various forms of violence have also been defined and introduced, ranging from physical to psychological or sexual violence. Each transformation and/or diversification of terms is the result of interactions between the various actors involved (feminist associations, international organizations, academia, politicians/politicians, experts from public institutions) and has meanings in terms of the type of approach and proposed solutions¹⁶.

For the questionnaire survey we started from the terminology proposed by the Eurostat manual for surveys on gender-based violence against women (2021), the Istanbul Convention (ratified by Law 30/2016) and national legislation (Law 202/2002 republished, Law 217/2003 republished).

Thus, the Istanbul Convention proposes the following definitions:

- *“**violence against women**” is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life; (Art. 3, a)*
- *“**domestic violence**” shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or*

¹⁶ In order to become familiar with the terminology, the NGOs in the VIF network produced a series of very useful guides, methodologies and materials, which contain both definitions translated into a language accessible to the general public, with examples and the deconstruction of stereotypes and myths related to violence, as well as information on the institutions and actors responsible for taking over and solving cases of violence against women: Bragă, Andreea, (2022), *Methodology regarding the coordinated intervention of professionals in cases of domestic violence*, FILIA Center; Săsărman Mihaela, Mnagu Mihaela, Mihai Popescu & Carmen Nemeş (2021), *Monitoring report of the existing services for the victims of domestic violence and aggressors in order to achieve a national map*; ELECT, (2021) *The journalists who make the difference. How we talk about domestic violence*.

current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim; ; (Art. 3, b)

- *“gender-based violence against women” shall mean violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately; (Art. 3 d)*

In the national legislation, the specific law (217/2003) kept the terminology from 2003 – ‘domestic violence’ but the definition was modified: *‘For the purposes of this Law, domestic violence means any intentional inaction or action of physical, sexual, psychological, economic, social or spiritual violence occurring in the family or domestic environment or between spouses or former spouses, as well as between current or former partners, whether the perpetrator lives or has lived together with the victim.’ (Art. 3)*

The revised Law 202/2002 introduces the term gender violence and the following definition:

‘gender-based violence means the act of violence directed against a woman or, as the case may be, a man, motivated by his gender. Gender-based violence against women is violence that affects women disproportionately. Gender-based violence includes, without limitation, the following facts: domestic violence, sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation, sexual harassment, trafficking in human beings and forced prostitution.’ (Art. 4, l) In addition, the law also introduces the definitions of harassment, psychological harassment and sexual harassment (art. 4, c, d, d¹)

The revised Law 217/2003 identifies and defines the following forms of domestic violence: psychological violence, physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence, social violence, spiritual violence, cyber violence (art. 4, 1, a-h).

The Eurostat Handbook takes, for violence against women, the definition in the Istanbul Convention, and provides definitions for the types of violence measured by the EU-GBV: sexual harassment, psychological violence, physical violence, sexual violence, including rape, stalking (*Methodological manual for the EU survey on gender-based violence against women and other forms of inter-personal violence (EU-GBV)*, p. 13-15)

Taking into account the theoretical considerations mentioned above, as well as the European and national legal framework, we have chosen the generic title Gender-Based Violence Barometer for this research, to underline the importance of the gender perspective, and subtitled it violence against women, which remains the most prevalent form of violence, and which we explored through the questionnaire survey.

Several contextual elements

Violence Against Women in Data

As we have already pointed out, one of the main problems is the lack of systematic and integrated collection of data on violence against women. Based on the data collected by the Romanian Police, we can reconstruct at least part of the phenomenon.

Thus, in 2021, based on the act of reporting the acts of violence, a total of 51.222 victims were identified, of which 42.677 adults and 8.545 minors. In the case of adults, the victims are in an absolute majority women (33.970), while in the case of minors, girls and boys are both victims (4.163 boys and 4.382 girls). In the first months of 2021, starting from the act of referral, there were 27.337 victims, and of the adult ones 18.507 are women and 4.453 men.

If we look at the types of assaults with the most adult victims, the figures show that women are victims of violence – we emphasize that these are only acts of violence recorded by the police, and only based on the provisions of the Criminal Code.

In 2021, 23.498 women suffered beatings or other acts of violence, 4.431 were threatened (as per Art. 206 NCP) and 100 women were raped. In the first six months of 2022, 12.801 women were beaten or otherwise assaulted, 2.579 women were threatened (as per Art. 206 NCP) and 89 were raped. Unfortunately, from the data collected by the police, we cannot make a clear correlation between the acts of violence against women and the aggressor (because they are not gender disaggregated), but overall, we find that in 2021, 19.094 of the aggressors are or were married to the victim, and 11.287 are current or former partners. In 2022, 9.649 of the perpetrators are or were married to the victim, 6.710 are current or former partners. The good part is that the definition of family members is that of law 217/2003 (art 5), which is more comprehensive than that of the Criminal Code.

As far as previous quantitative research is concerned, as the GREVIO Report points out, the data are very scarce. The latest survey on violence against women is that carried out in 2014 by the FRA (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights). The only national survey dating back to 2003 was conducted by the Center Partnership for Equality and funded by the Open Institute Society¹⁷. Also in 2003, the Gallup Organisation conducted research on violence against women in Bucharest. Both of these researches are very well conducted and we used them to design the questionnaire, trying to keep some common questions, in order to make a comparison and to highlight the changes. The National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men also funded a research (National Survey

¹⁷ Even if the research is on domestic violence (for example, the perceptions and attitudes towards violence against men have been studied), the super-sample of women but also the choice of terminology and the formulation of questions allowed the production of relevant data for violence against women.

on the Prevalence of Different Forms of Violence Against Women), with a quantitative and qualitative part. Neither the period in which the research was carried out nor the year of publication of the study is specified¹⁸. Moreover, although the title of the study talks about violence against women, and the financed project aims at implementing the Istanbul Convention, quantitative research is about 'domestic violence', there is no presentation of the terminology used and no presentation of the methodology. The questions refer to domestic violence and various forms of violence, but it does not specify whether it is violence against women, against men, against children, etc. The data cannot therefore be used in any way to speak about violence against women. The preamble also mentions a quantitative study on domestic violence carried out in the framework of the project 'Start - A Safe Quality Life', which is not available. Questions about perceptions and attitudes towards violence were also introduced in other surveys, such as various Barometers of Public Opinion. For example, the survey 'Barometer of Public Opinion - The Truth about Romania' conducted by INSCOP Research, commissioned by Adevărul in 2013 had a section on domestic violence (<https://www.inscop.ro/august-2013violenta-in-familie-i/>). However, these data are not systematic and are not easy to identify (there is no centralized record of them), so it is very difficult to use them for a systematic statistical analysis. Moreover, as there are no specific surveys/surveys, the conceptual, terminological and methodological choices are not adapted to the measurement of violence against women.

Violence Against Girls: A Great Absence and a Great Problem

Sexual assaults and rapes with minor victims (mostly girls) are an extremely worrying topic, which must be mentioned separately in this brief picture of the current situation. Several ECHR decisions have condemned Romania for improper handling of such cases: for example, in 2016, Romania was sentenced to the ECHR in the cases of the Ministry of Justice and the Court of Justice of the European Union (MGC) and the Court of Justice (I.C.) (two cases with victims aged 11 and 14) in which the courts in Romania decided to convict the aggressors for sexual intercourse with a minor, not for rape, considering that the victims had consented to have sexual relations with their aggressors (Stoicescu, Oncioiu 2021; VIF 2021).

The Report of the Judicial Inspection published in July 2021 on the prejudices among prosecutors and judges about minors aged 10-14 years, victims of sexual violence shows serious

¹⁸ The only indication that appears is as follows: 'Purchase of services for conducting a National Survey on the Prevalence of Different Forms of Violence Against Women in the Project: 'Support for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Romania', Financing Agreement: 16/61710/2018/29.01.2019 - NORWEGIAN FINANCIAL MECANISM - Justice Program 2014-2020"

problems related to the way in which sexual offenses with minor victims are (not) treated and solved. These crimes represent, in 2020, 60% of the cases of sexual offenses, and the reading of the report allowed Diana Oncioiu and Vlad Stoicescu (2021) to identify a number of structural problems, of which we mention: less than 20% of the complaints were finalized with the prosecution; "at the level of the courts and prosecutors' offices there is no established and uniform practice in relation to the notion of consent, in the cases of sexual offences with minor victims. Depending on the prosecutor's office or court that a case of a victim under 12 years of age reaches, it can be prosecuted either as a sexual act with a minor or as rape"; "the lack of special facilities for hearing minor victims and their rehearing even 4-5 times in the course of judicial proceedings are major problems of the justice system. "The open letter of the VIF network summarizes very well the urgent problems that should be solved in the case of sexual offenses with minors (VIF 2022).

The fact that violence against girls, although clearly mentioned in the Istanbul Convention and in all international research and reports, is not the subject of specific legislation and policies in Romania is a serious obstacle to assessing the phenomenon and preventing and combating it. If we add that Romania occupies a leading position in the European Union (usually the first) with underage mothers (in 2021, according to INS 687 girls under 15 and 15,811 girls between 15 and 19 years old became mothers)¹⁹, it is obvious that at present violence against girls, especially rape, sexual assaults and forced marriages should be a priority for the legislators and politicians in Romania.

Virginity tests: a litmus test of the normalisation of violence against women

Although there is much to be said in terms of the current context, we will raise one last point, which reflects very well the degree of normalised violence against women: the legal existence of virginity tests. Although the World Health Organization considers virginity tests as a violation of human rights, and in the reports and analyses about violence against women this practice is severely denounced, in our country the virginity tests are still on the list of documents issued by the Institutes of Forensic Medicine (VIF Network, 2022). The bodies of girls and women continue to be objectified, treated as property: there are still fathers who take their girls to the IMLs to submit them to this violent and degrading test. And these practices do not appear in any report or document of public institutions

¹⁹ FILIA's monitoring of girls who gave birth in 2021, however, highlights several methodological problems in collecting and centralising this data, which proves, once again, that the institutions of the Romanian State have not developed tools and procedures to accurately identify issues related to gender equality and violence against girls and women: all public data are partial and undersized. For example, in the case of underage mothers, the NIS collects the data from the civil status services, and according to the calculations of FILIA in 2021 only 68% of them provided data. The report is available at <https://centrulfilia.ro/new/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Raport-mame-minore.pdf>

tasked with developing and implementing policies on gender equality and combating violence against women.

Legislative framework and public policies

Since the 1970s, feminist movements have raised the attention to the fact that violence against women should not be regarded as a phenomenon related to personal life or private space, but as a phenomenon that has structural social, economic and political causes. In 1979, the U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women introduces a definition that takes account of these claims and an approach to this phenomenon in relation to equality between women and men.

In Romania, the 1995 Beijing conference was an important moment for increasing awareness and visibility of the topic of violence against women and gender equality. It was only in 2003 that the first law to combat violence was adopted, defined as "domestic violence" and framed rather in the sphere of family protection (Krizsan & Popa 2014, p. 774). Feminist associations have played an important role in imposing legislative changes. In 2003 the National Coalition of NGOs involved in Violence against Women programmes was established. The Coalition was formed on the occasion of the Conference on Preventing and Combating Domestic Violence organised by the Centre for Partnership for Equality (CPE) and brings together 33 NGOs. In the period 2011-2014, the crystallization of the Network for the Prevention and Fight against Violence against Women ([VIF](https://violentaimpotrivaefemeilor.ro/) – <https://violentaimpotrivaefemeilor.ro/>) represented an important moment in the outlining of clear objectives: "*increasing the protection of women victims of violence by improving legislation, services and ensuring access to education and information and preventing victimization and re-victimization through education, information, lobbying and advocacy*". The VIF network had a decisive contribution to the introduction of the Restraining Order in 2012 (by amending Law 217/2003) and subsequently to the introduction of the interim Restraining Order and the electronic wristband monitoring system. Also, the VIF Network contributed to the introduction of new forms of violence in Romanian legislation, organized, starting with 2015, the March "Together for Women's Safety!" and developed many extremely useful resources for studying and understanding forms of violence against women in an intersectional perspective, tools for awareness and information, guides and recommendations for training professionals who have to manage cases of violence. (<https://violentaimpotrivaefemeilor.ro/category/studii-cercetari/>) The regular collection and publication of data on violence against women is extremely important, as no other institution does

this.²⁰ Moreover, the GREVIO report repeatedly highlights the important role of NGOs : "Although NGOs' services complement state activities in the field such as the provision of support services, the information available indicates that they are seriously underfunded and understaffed." (p. 21).

Currently, the main law governing violence against women is Law no. 217/2003, revised and adapted to transpose some of the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, which, since its ratification, is also part of domestic law (as per Article 11 of the Romanian Constitution). Definitions of violence are also present in Law 202/2002, and in case of facts that can be prosecuted, the provisions of the Criminal Code are the starting point. There are also a number of regulations, methodologies, strategies, many of them adopted or revised after the ratification of the Istanbul Convention²¹.

To understand the current context, we believe that the GREVIO Report reflects very well the main positive and negative points. We will summarise some of these.

At the legislative level, the definitions have been changed and new forms of violence have been introduced (the last one is cyber violence, introduced in 2020). Also, the definition of family members has been extended in Law no. 217/2003, but still remains restrictive in the Criminal Code. As we have already mentioned, provisional protection orders and the system for monitoring aggressors through electronic bracelets are very important legislative provisions. However, problems remain in terms of application and implementation, which have been pointed out mainly by NGOs. There are still forms of violence against women that have not been introduced or are insufficiently addressed in national legislation and policies, there are no support services and there are no legal provisions to sanction them: sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion, forced sterilisation. (Baseline Evaluation Report Romania p.7) Sexual harassment was introduced in the new version of the Criminal Code, but only for labour relations: "Repeatedly claiming favours of a sexual nature in an employment relationship or a similar relationship, if by this the victim was intimidated or put in a humiliating situation, is punished by imprisonment from 3 months to one year or by a fine." (Art 223, 1) Domestic violence or gender-based violence is not incriminated as a distinct crime in the Criminal Code, and Article 199 in fact establishes that when acts of murder (Article 188), qualified murder (Article 189), assault or other violence (Article 193), bodily injury (194) or injuries causing death (195) on a family member the special maximum of the

²⁰ Although the National Agency for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men would have the duty to collect, correlate and publish these data (see also the insistent recommendation in the GREVIO Report in this regard), on the institution's website are published only two reports, for 2018 and 2019, which, although they have the title 'National Study for Domestic Violence', present only the data 'regarding the victims of domestic violence who have benefited on request from social services', reported by DGASPCs: anes.gov.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/SEM-I-2019-STUDIUL-NATIONAL-VD.pdf, consulted on 9.11.2022.

²¹ For the presentation of the national legislative framework, see ANES website: <https://anes.gov.ro/legislatie-nationala-violenta-domestica/>, consulted on 9.11.2020

punishment increases by one quarter. Keeping 'domestic violence' as the main approach continues to make violence against women invisible: for example, in Law 217/2003 intergenerational domestic violence is treated together with partner violence. The Romanian police, who record acts of violence according to this law, therefore do not collect data related to cases of violence against women that do not take place within the family. In June 2022 the VIF Network sent a petition requesting the collection of disaggregated data by gender, showing that in 2021, 94% of the cases of rape, sexual assault or sexual intercourse with a minor occurred outside the family²². The same applies to the other authorities involved in managing cases of violence against women, which either do not collect, centralise or publish data or do not collect gender-disaggregated data.²³ The implementation of existing measures is deficient, the main causes being the poor inter-institutional coordination and cooperation, the insufficient participation of local authorities, the reduced involvement of NGOs and other non-state actors, but also the reduced budgetary resources (Baseline Evaluation Report Romania p.7).

Services for victims of violence are also insufficiently implemented. According to the law, local public authorities have the obligation to provide in their budgets the financing of social services for adult victims of violence; local and county councils should establish mobile teams for emergency intervention in cases of domestic violence. A monitoring report of the services for the victims of domestic violence carried out in 2021 highlights many deficient aspects, of which we note: the difficulty of collecting data, their unavailability on the institutions' websites, the use of different names and terminologies (which makes the evaluation process difficult), the insufficiency of residential centres (most of them being residential housing, but often assimilated to the centres for mother and child or children victims of domestic violence); the small number of day care centres; the different formation of mobile intervention teams, the lack of training of personnel, their reduced request by the police (Săsărman, Mangu, Popescu, Nemeş, 2021).

Among the recommendations (of an urgent nature) made in the Grevio country report, we quote:

- "integrate the perspective of women and girls from Roma communities and that of other groups of vulnerable women and girls into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies for preventing and combating violence against women, by supporting, funding and closely co-operating with women's NGOs representing them;

²² The petition can be accessed here: <https://centrulfilia.ro/new/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Petitie-pentru-colectarea-dezagregata-a-tuturor-datelor-referitoare-la-violenta-sexuala-si-violenta-de-gen.pdf>

²³ Report of the Network for the Prevention and Fight Against Violence Against Women (VIF Network), submitted on October 11, 2022 to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Examination of Romania.

- - enhance the application of a gendered perspective in legislation and policies dealing with violence against women;
- - improve data collection in line with the requirements of Article 11 of the convention by all relevant professionals; expand the number and/or capacity of specialist shelter facilities dedicated to women and their children, the whole country and pursue the efforts in upset sexual violence referral centres and/or rape crisis centres.” (Baseline Evaluation Report Romania, p 7).

Research Methodology

The design of quantitative research (from setting objectives, to sampling, to formulating the questionnaire) started with a phase of documentation and consultation of specialists²⁴. We have summarized in the pages above the main theoretical and terminological perspectives we opted for. Given the material limitations, we decided that it is important to maintain the representative national sample, but we had to opt for the application of the questionnaire by CATI method. This method of application of the questionnaire also required smaller sizes in order to avoid an excessive dropout rate and a research failure

Therefore, the redefinition of the objectives was done based on these considerations: questionnaire of maximum 30 minutes, applied by phone, national representative sample. In these circumstances, in order to obtain relevant results defined as a major objective of the survey by questionnaire, the identification of stereotypes and perceptions about gender violence. We are responding to the need to produce national opinion polls on violence against women. In designing the questionnaire, we started from the theoretical principles synthesized above and we aimed to explore the cultural factors that influence the phenomenon of violence against women, using an approach in terms of gender structural inequalities.

More specifically, the proposed objectives are: to see to what extent the various forms of violence against women are known and identified; to see what are the perceptions and attitudes towards the various forms of violence against women; to see what are the perceptions and attitudes towards the reasons and underlying the violence against women; to identify the representations about gender roles/gender equality and to use them as a cross-cutting factor in analysing the other questions; to see to what extent the legislative framework and the institutions involved in managing forms of violence against women are known.

²⁴ We especially thank Professor Dumitru Sandu for his advice and support in establishing the parameters of the investigation (type of sample, structure, method of application, verification, methodological report).

The questionnaire was divided into 6 modules: (1) Socio-demographic data; (2) Social networks (3) Knowledge/identification of forms of violence against women; (4) Perceptions and attitudes towards violence against women; (5) Gender roles and stereotypes; and (6) Knowledge of the legislative framework. The questionnaire was drafted in collaboration with the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy (IRES), was pre-tested on 101 people and adjusted after pretesting.

The IRES has drawn up a methodological report containing all the information needed to understand how the survey was carried out and to ensure that the database, which will be in open access, can be used appropriately for subsequent reports, analyses and studies. Please find below some of this report

Methodological report – IRES

The research universe was represented by the general population aged between 18 and 65, living in private households, with the usual residence on the territory of Romania, both in urban and rural areas. The final sample is representative at national level, depending on gender, age, education level, residential environment and development region. The data were collected through the questionnaire, using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). The sample size is 1363 respondents.

Sampling

The sample developed for the survey is a probabilistic one, by randomly generating telephone numbers with a valid format on the territory of Romania. The validation of the sample was carried out by stratification depending on the development region and the type / degree of urbanization of the locality, during and after the end of the data collection activity. Deviations of the sample structure from the distribution of the reference population by key socio-demographic variables (gender, age category, residence environment, region) caused by unequal non-response rates in certain population categories were corrected by post-sampling weighting techniques so that the structure of the sample under analysis closely reproduced the structure of the reference population. The sample is representative at national level for the population aged 18-65, who has the usual residence on the territory of Romania, both in urban and rural areas, and who has access to telephone services (fixed and/or mobile).

For each respondent, the socio-demographic data were recorded, according to which the structure of the sample was validated: gender, age, education level, type of locality (residence area) and development region.

The final sample was checked in terms of compliance with the weights of the categories mentioned in the general population, according to the last available NIS data, by marginal

distributions. IRES performed sample recovery through raked weighting technique. Post-stratification weights were calculated using the most recent official statistical data at population level, i.e. estimates of the distribution of the resident population in Romania on 1 January 2022 for: age (categories 18-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-65 years), gender (hetero-identified by the interviewer, by voice), residence environment (urban, rural), development region (NUTS II level, presented above). For the level of schooling (measured by the last school graduated), the data available from the Population and Housing Census of 2011 were used, estimated for the age category 18-65 years. Three categories were used for weighting: elementary studies (up to 8 grades), secondary education (at most post-secondary), higher education (short or long term university and postgraduate). The final sample weighting variable is present in the SPSS file with the completed and validated interviews.

Collection of Data

Collection of Data The data were collected between 15.09.2022 and 28.09.2022. The respondents were selected by generating random telephone numbers, by the RDD method (random digit dialing). Thus, 49.015 numbers were generated, the call schedule being presented in the table below. Following the generation of these numbers, a number of 1393 complete and valid questionnaires were applied. The success rate, relative to the number of calls answered, was 11.7%. The dropout rate in the case of this questionnaire was 30.91%.

The rate of refusal was 61.55%. The average duration of application of a complete questionnaire was 22 minutes ; the minimum duration: 9 minutes, maximum duration: 46 minutes.

Checking data collection

32 interviewers collected data for this research from the network of IRES operators and the control of the proper conduct of the research was realised in real time. Four supervisors of the team of call center operators checked for 20% of the applied interviews.

The specificity of the use of the CATI method for data collection involves the introduction of answers in the electronic system by the operator, in real time, directly. The correct selection of the response options was verified both in real time and subsequently, by listening to calls and comparing the responses provided by the respondents with those recorded in the database, by the supervisors dedicated to IRES. No major deficiencies were discovered. Any deviations from the proposed methodology were corrected during the application, by giving immediate feedback to the operators, so that all the applied questionnaires were correctly and completely carried out according to the methodology. In the final phase of data verification and validation, 46 questionnaires were eliminated, the main reason being the lack of socio-demographic data used for the validation and weighting of the sample.

Data analysis and reporting of results

Following the analysis of the non-response rates to the questionnaire questions, we observed that a package of 6 items had non-response rates between 3.8% and 8.2% of the sample. We decided not to use these items in the analysis, but the frequencies are reported in the appendix. Of all the other variables in the survey, only four variables had non-response rates between 2% and 3.6%, with the remaining variables having less than 2% non-response. Based on these observations, we decided to report all data in the report as a proportion of total valid responses, eliminating non-response from the variable-by-variable analysis. The results are not significantly influenced by non-response rates as low as those recorded in our survey.

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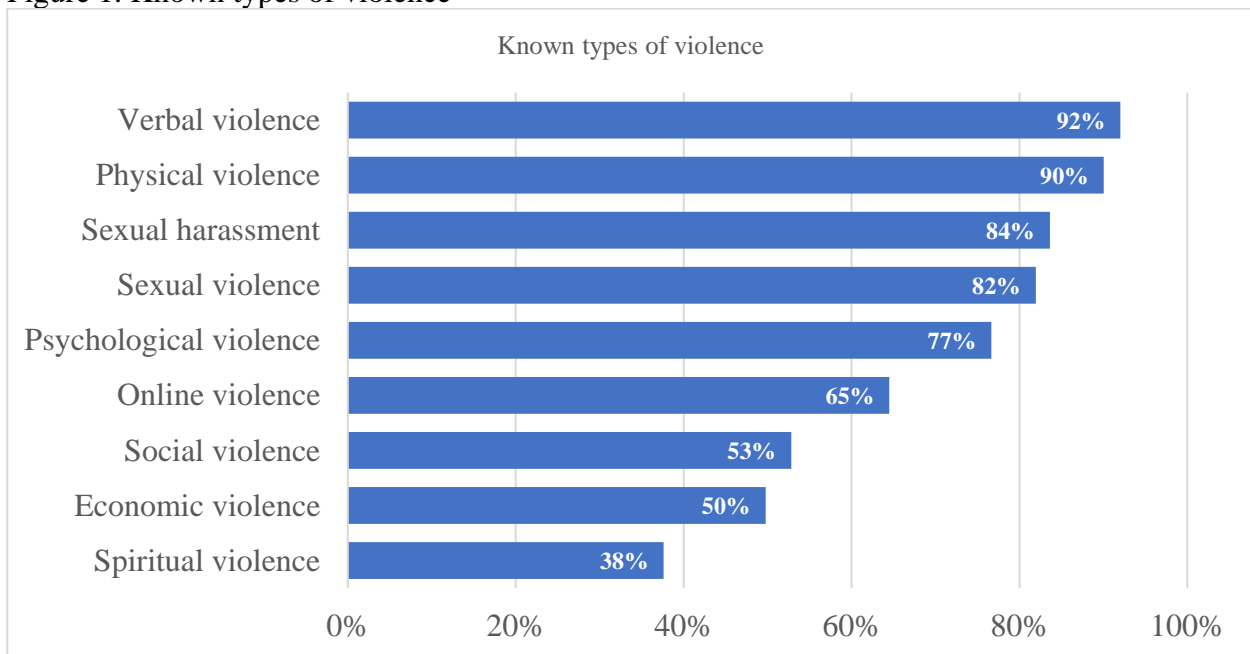
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Data analysis

Who and which forms of violence do they know/recognise?

We started out with a question asking what types of violence are known.

Figure 1. Known types of violence



For the answer options we have used the terms from the legislation. The answers received (*Figure 1*) indicate that best known forms of violence are the verbal one (92%) and the physical one (90%), and the least common is spiritual violence (38%). Only one in two persons have heard of economic violence and social violence.

The largest gaps between the respondents' perceptions and knowledge are determined by their level of education (*Figure 2*). Therefore, between those with higher education and those with elementary education there is a very large gap in knowing/recognising psychological violence (23%), sexual violence (21%) and online violence (18%) and a rather large gap in physical violence (15%), verbal violence (14%), sexual harassment (13%). People with a higher education identify all forms of violence in higher percentages.

The following indicator that leads to differences is the residential environment (*Figure 3*). Thus, people in rural areas are on average much less aware and informed about violence against women than those living in urban areas: the biggest difference (12%) is for psychological violence, followed by online violence (10%) and then physical and sexual violence (7%).

Figure 2. Known types of violence by level of education

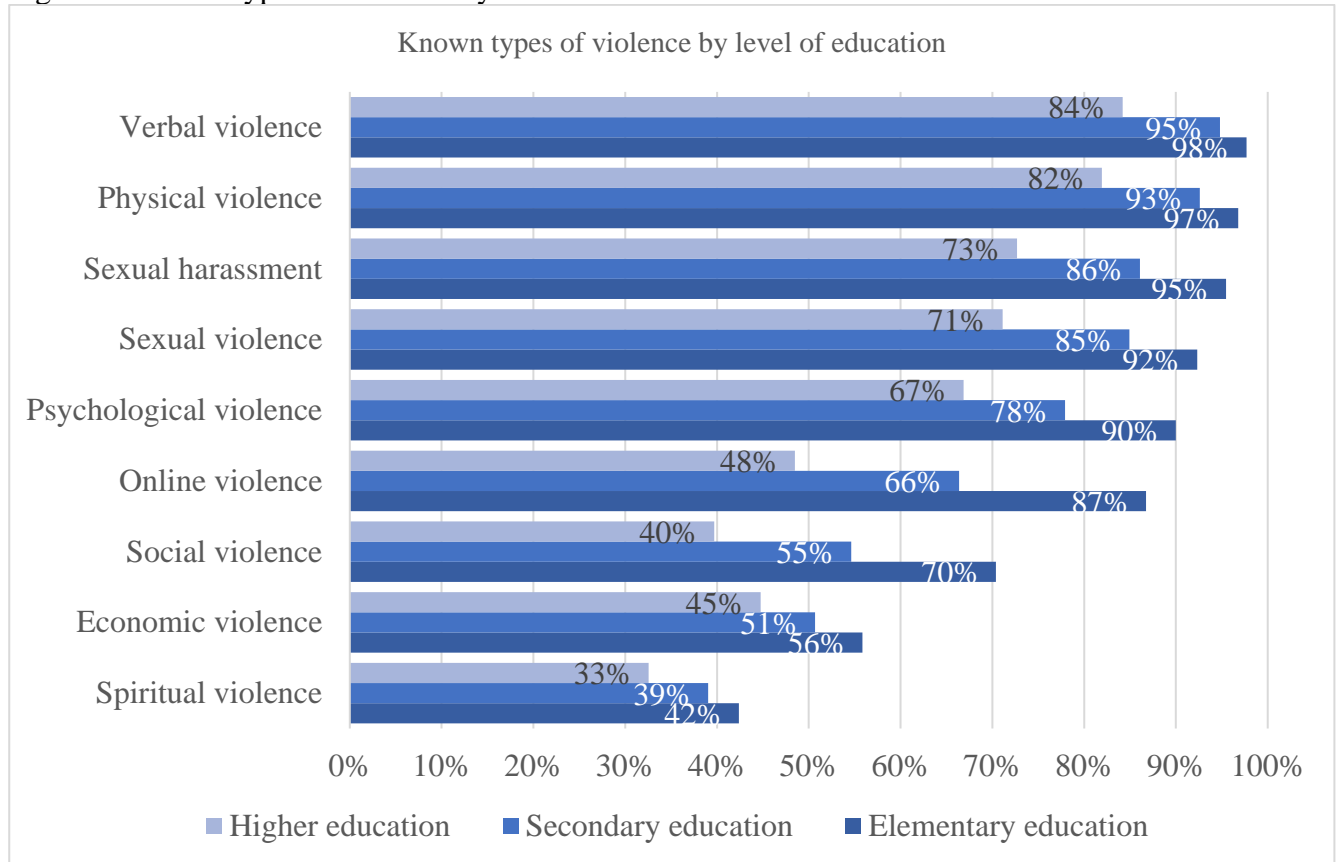
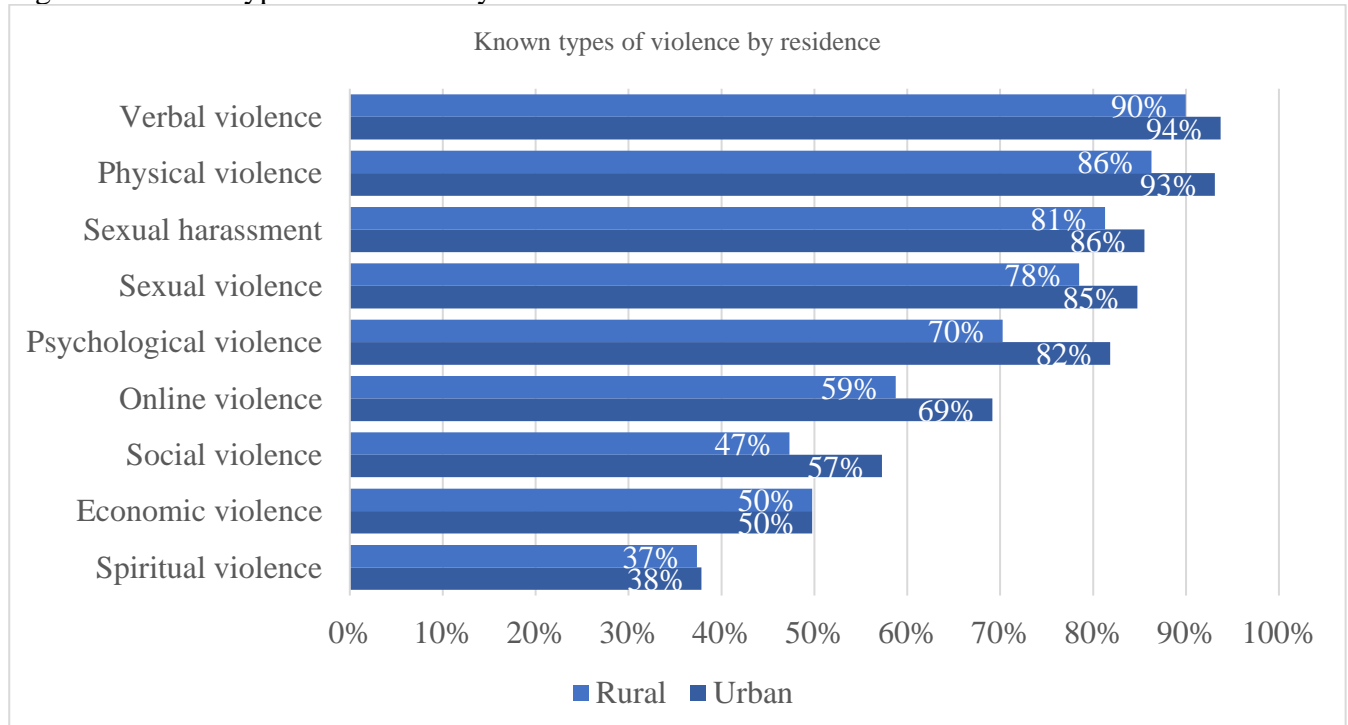


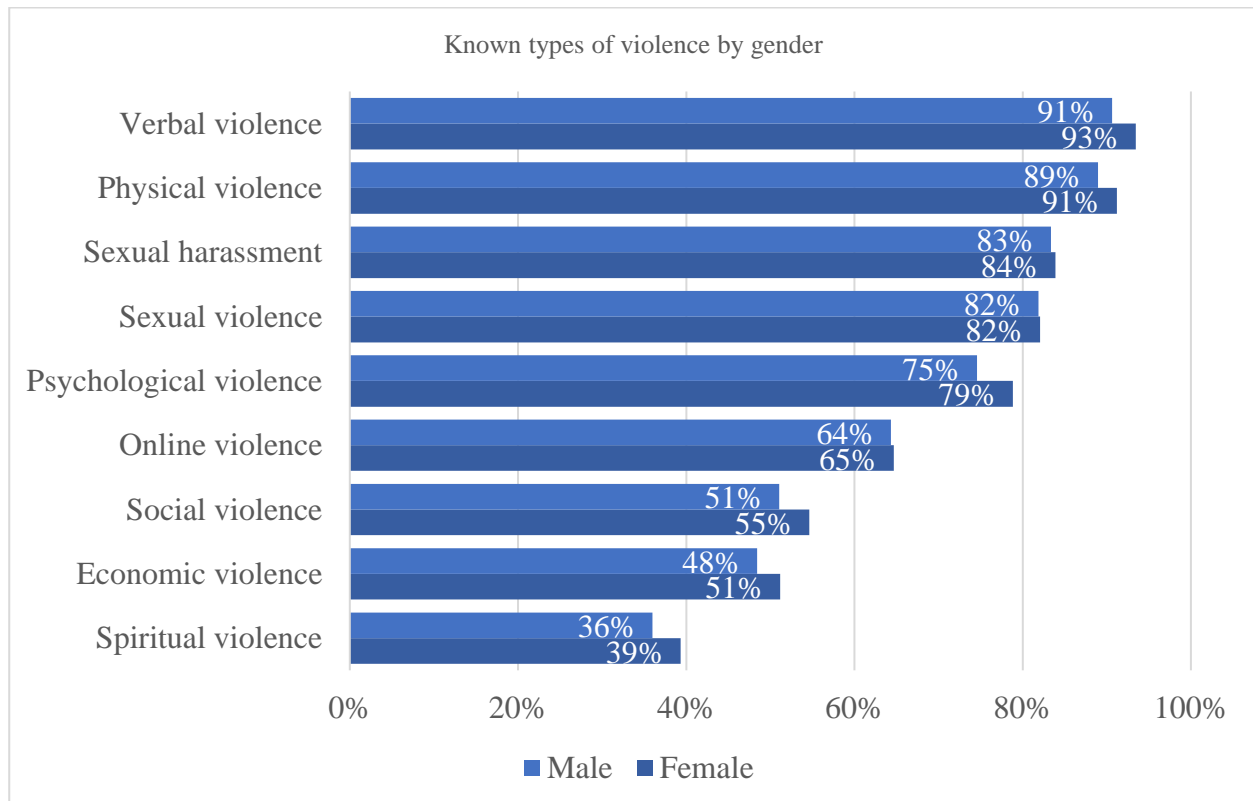
Figure 3. Known types of violence by residence



Third, when looking at the variation by gender, we find that women are more familiar with all forms of violence than men, the largest difference (4%) being for psychological and social violence. And more importantly, if we cross-check the answers with those of question 16 regarding

gender roles and stereotypes (Q16), we find that respondents who share patriarchal values (the man is the head of the family, women need the protection of a man, women must listen to their husband/partner, it is better to be in a bad marriage than not to get married, for the sake of children it is better to stay even in a violent relationship) are far less aware, informed and/or sensitive to violence against women.

Figure 4. Known types of violence by gender



Lastly, we find that for the first four forms of violence, two other categories have lower knowledge (on average by 10%): people living in households with more than 5 members and people with 3 or more children. Certainly, in most cases the two categories are actually the same situation: couples with three or more children. Although the percentage differences between respondents who either have no children or have two or fewer children are small (on average 5%), those having 3 or more children have heard less about the types of violence mentioned. For instance, for psychological violence the gap is 22%, for sexual violence 15% and the biggest gap is recorded for online violence (37%).

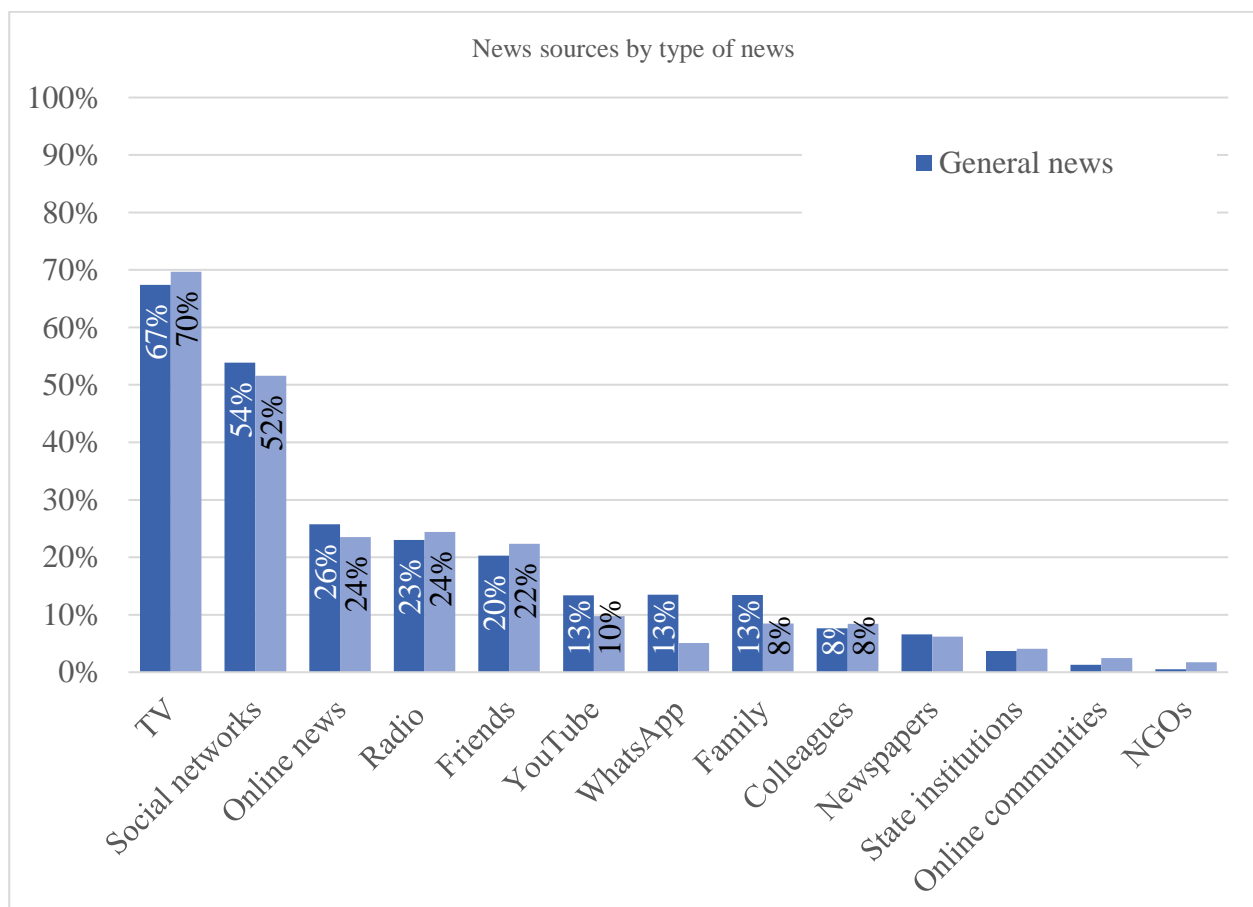
Each of the situations identified deserves an analysis by itself, but several general explanations can be formulated on the basis of these data: for information and awareness, education and residence environment (to which we can add the standard of living) make the most differences for any initiative that would aim at informing and raising public awareness about the different types of violence. The

differences between women and men can be related to the fact that women are more often victims of violence and are more likely to recognize and learn about it. Also, in the case of men, the internalisation of gender rules leads to a minimisation, rejection and/or standardisation of violent behaviour. The correlation between patriarchal stereotypes and gender roles and lower awareness of forms of violence could mean ignoring and normalising violence, as long as the man is the head of the family and the woman has to listen to him.

Sources of information

Considering that in the previous section we discussed about the types of violence known/recognised by the respondents, we continue the discussion with the analysis of Romanians' main sources of information. The participants in our survey were requested to indicate the top three sources from which they get information in general and the top three sources from which they get information about violence against women. We provided respondents with a list of 13 sources of information, covering everything from traditional sources (printed newspapers, radio, TV) to modern sources (social networks), including various reference groups (family, friends, colleagues) or institutions.

Figure 5 Information sources by type of news



The answers to these two questions are listed in *Figure 5*. Our first observation is that the same sources are largely used for general news and news about violence against women. **Three of the information sources seem to provide a slightly higher proportion of news about violence against women: TV, social media and radio. In fourth place are friends, with a percentage very close to radio.** The conventional media is known for its preference for such news (it is not for nothing that the "5 o'clock news" has a certain image among the public), while friends are the mechanism through which people find out about violence against women in their extended circle of friends.

A second observation regards the most frequently used sources of information. **TV channels are still the main source of information for two thirds of Romanians, but their position is threatened by social networks, which are used by more than half of respondents.** Coming in third place, more or less equally, is a traditional source - the radio, a modern source - online news, and one of the oldest sources of information - friends.

Table1 Ranking of information sources by socio-demographic characteristics

Overall ranking: 67% - TV 54% - Social networks 26% - Online news 23% - Radio 20% - Friends		
Ranking in case of men: 66% - TV 48% - Social networks 28% - Radio 27% - Online news 21% - Friends	Ranking in case of women: 68% - TV 60% - Social networks 25% - Online news 20% - Friends 18% - Radio	
Ranking in rural areas: 71% - TV 49% - Social networks 26% - Radio 19% - Online news 18% - Friends	Ranking in urban areas: 64% - TV 58% - Social networks 31% - Online news 22% - Friends 21% - Radio	
Ranking for the age group 18-29: 75% - Social networks 40% - TV 29% - Online news 25% - Friends 20% - YouTube	Ranking for the age group 30-44: 63% - Social networks 60% - TV 30% - Online news 20% - Radio 20% - Friends	Ranking for the age group 45-65: 84% - TV 39% - Social networks 31% - Radio 22% - Online news 19% - Friends
Ranking by elementary education: 72% - TV	Ranking by secondary education: 71% - TV	Ranking by higher education: 52% - Social networks 50% - TV

60% - Social networks 19% - Friends 17% - YouTube 15% - Online news	51% - Social networks 28% - Radio 24% - Online news 20% - Friends	48% - Online news 24% - Radio 23% - Friends
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In *Table1* we show the five main sources of information for various sub-groups of the population. On the basis of these rankings, some significant differences can be observed between these groups as regards the news consumption. Thus, women use social networks more for their information (60%) as compared to men (48%), yet use radio less (only 18% as compared to 28% for men). The residential environment is also associated with differences in the information consumption behaviour: in rural areas TV and radio stations are used more than in urban areas, while people in urban areas get more information from social networks (58% as compared to 49% in rural areas) and online news sites (31% as compared to 19% in rural areas).

The most significant differences are associated with age and level of education. Therefore, young people under 30 behave differently: three quarters of them get their information from social media and only 40% of them get their information from TV. Meanwhile, people over 45 mainly take information from TV (84%) and only 40% get information from social media. This is significant because the type of information obtained depends largely on the particular channel used. There are similar differences according to education level: those with elementary education mainly use TV (72%) and social networks (60%) as sources of information, whereas people with higher education have a more balanced media consumption: 52% from social media, 50% from TV and 48% from online news.

Civic involvement

Information is not only obtained passively, by watching news channels, but it can also be obtained actively, by interacting with other people through volunteering, participation in civic and/or political associations/organisations. We measured civic engagement by participation in the activities of six types of organizations: (1) religious or church organisations, attended by 32% of respondents, (2) support groups, helping people with similar problems - 18%, (3) non-profit, charitable, humanitarian organisations - 15%, (4) trade unions - 10%, (5) political groups or parties - 5% and (6) other types of groups - 9%. **It is clear from this data that religious or church organisations are the most successful in attracting members.** This situation is also confirmed by the statistics on the use of money redirected from income tax, churches being the main beneficiaries of these fundings.

Also worth noting is that for two of the six types of associations analysed, the participation rate is significantly higher in rural areas than in urban areas: participation in the activities of religious

or church organisations is 40% among those in rural areas, as compared to only 25% in urban areas. In a similar way, 22% of rural residents are involved in support group activities, in helping people with similar problems, as compared to only 14% of urban residents.

On the basis of these responses, we developed a new variable that measures the degree of civic involvement, given that part of the respondents are involved in more than one association. (*Figure 6*). We can see that almost half of Romanians are not involved in any kind of civic involvement, while 30% are involved in only one association, 12% are involved in two associations and 10% are involved in three or more associations.

In *Figure 7* we have a closer look at the types of organizations to which citizens who are civically involved devote their time. We can see here that half of those involved in a single association join religious or church organisations (52%), while participation in other types of organisations varies between 6% and 15%.

Figure 6 Degree of civic engagement

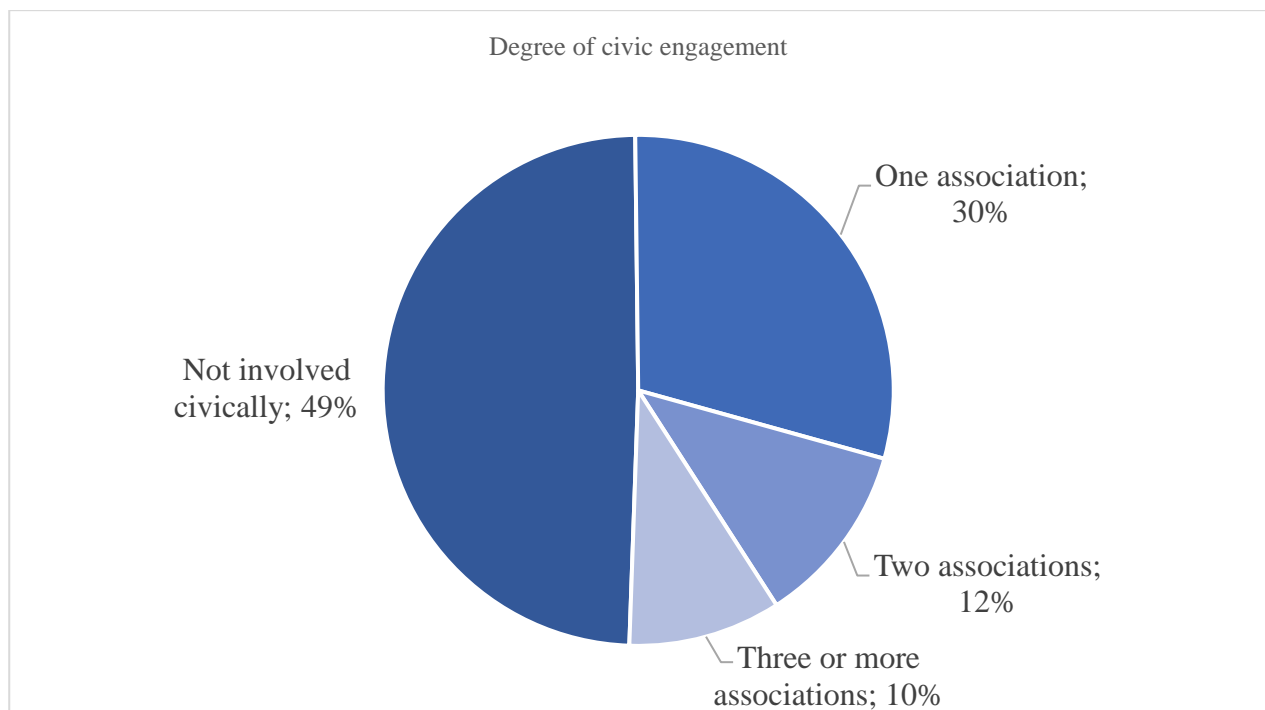
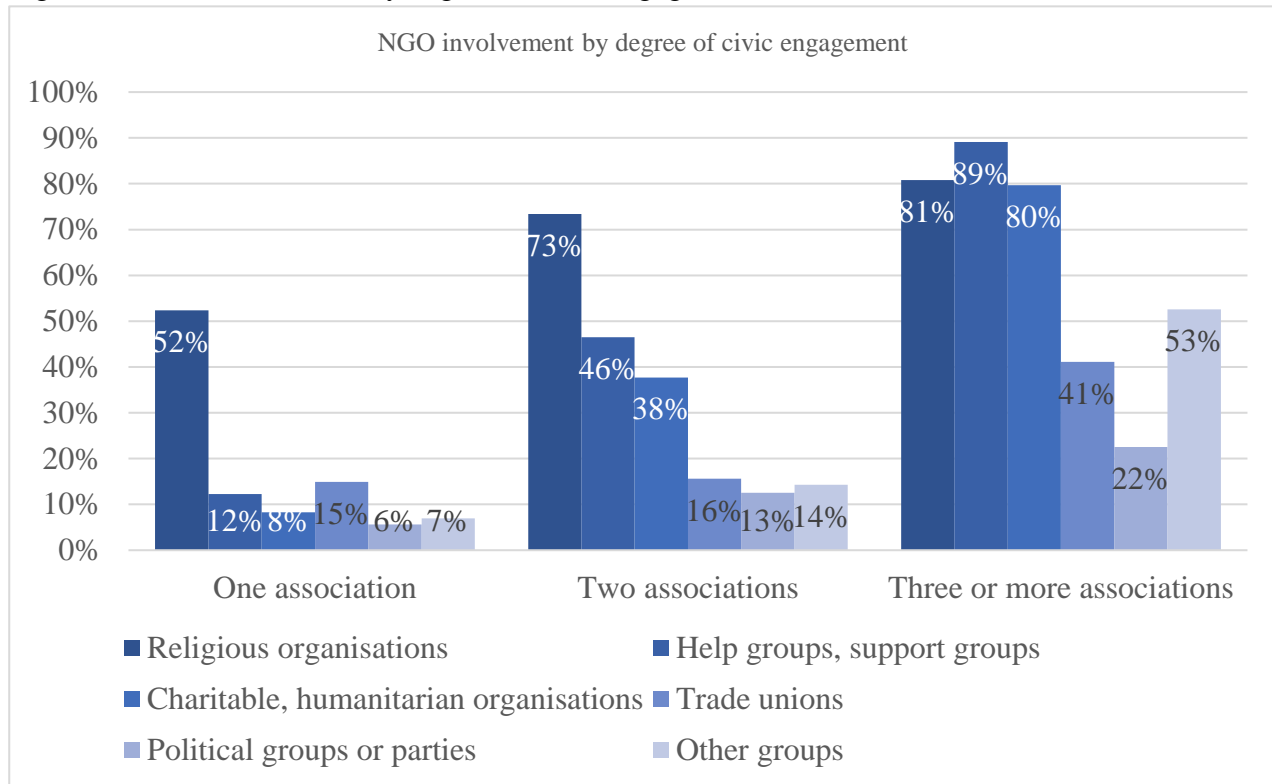


Figure 7 NGO involvement by degree of civic engagement



Looking at those who are involved in two or three or more associations, we see a cluster around religious or church organisations. These ones, along with support groups, helping people with similar problems and non-profit, charitable, humanitarian organisations, seem to form the main attraction for people involved in the community. This data is also confirmed by the distribution by residential environment, which we mentioned earlier - in rural areas the participation in such organisations is significantly higher than in urban areas.

This concentration of civic involvement in Romania around religious or church organisations and other types of similar or related organisations should be analysed in future studies. As an assumption, we can presume that the interests of religious or church organisations are not always congruent with the interests of more socially liberal groups in the society, which makes such interests less represented, as a large proportion of those who are civically involved are oriented towards organisations having a religious component. Surely, the relevant question is how to increase the participation rate in other types of organisations, which may not have the resources that religiously involved organisations have.

Perceptions of various forms of violence

The questionnaire we developed also included a series of four questions that we used to measure respondents' perceptions and attitudes towards various types of violence: how much tolerance there is for verbal, physical, economic, sexual, psychological violence. In choosing the response options we started from two criteria: on the one hand, we chose acts of violence present in the legislation and identified in existing research and reports; on the other hand, we tried to keep a series of questions identical or very similar to the 2003 survey, to see if and what changes have occurred in these almost 20 years.

Overall, we find that for physical, verbal and sexual violence the level of intolerance is much higher in 2022 than in 2003. The increase in the cumulative percentages of those who consider these acts very serious and serious is on average 10%, but more importantly, those who consider these acts very serious are much more numerous in 2022. In this respect, the highest increase is 47%: in 2003, only 28% of respondents considered it very serious if a woman is threatened by her partner, whereas in 2022 75% consider it very serious (*Figure 8*).

Figure 8 Changes in attitudes towards violence against women, 2003 - 2022

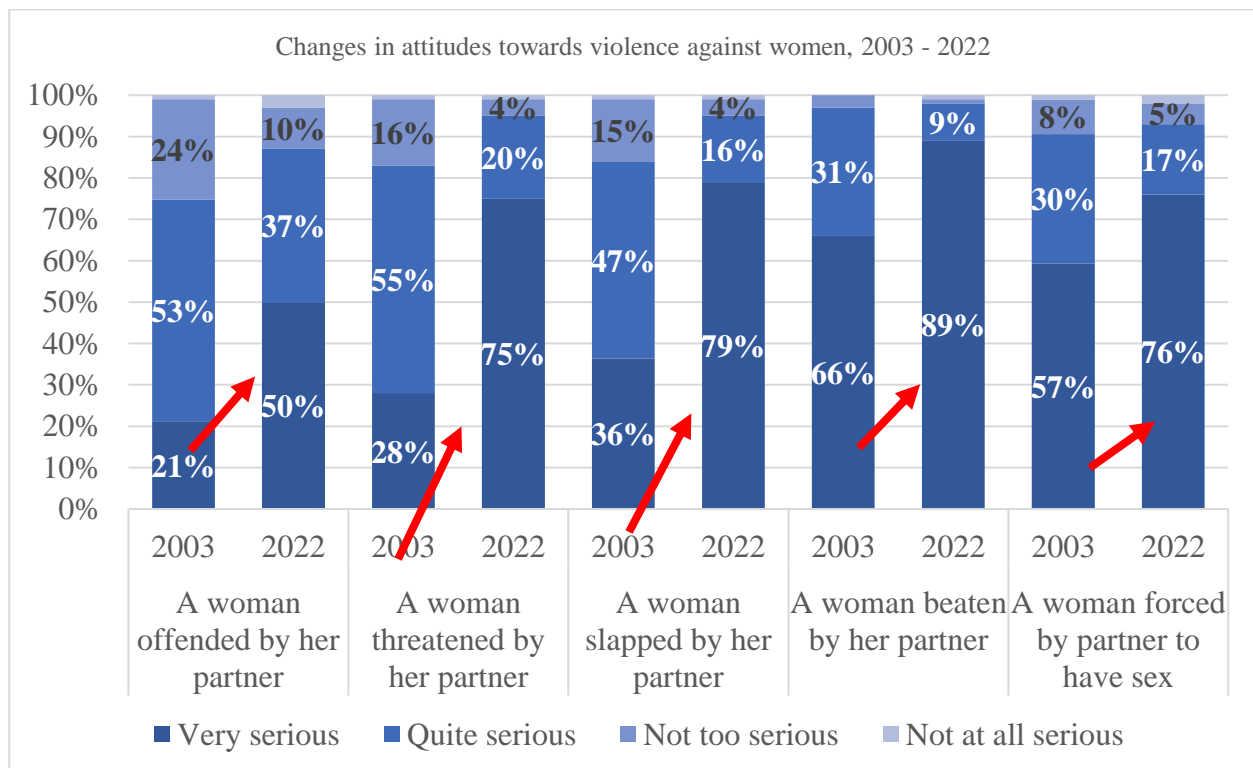
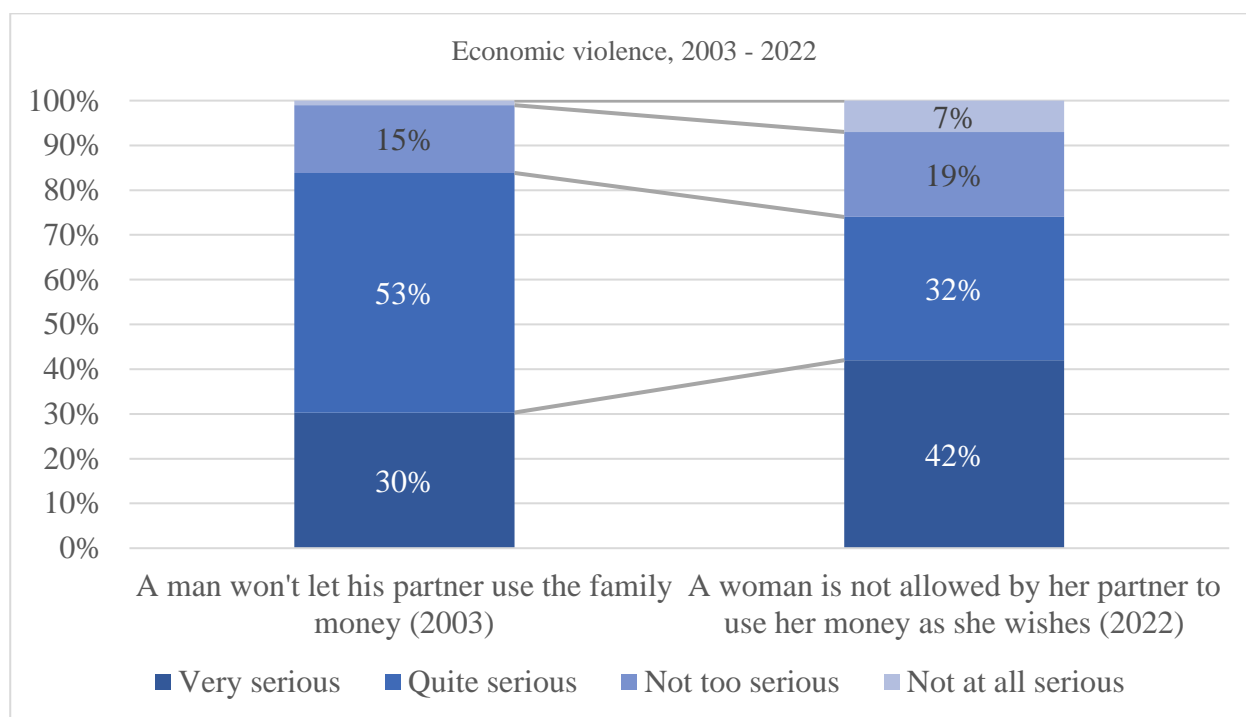


Figure 9 Changes in attitudes towards violence against women, 2003 - 2022



The second series of questions, relating more to economic and psychological violence, shows far less change in attitudes. Granted, the questions were not identical, we rather used the way in which these forms of violence are currently defined and favoured an approach from a gender equality perspective (we point out that the subject of the 2003 survey was "domestic violence"). For instance, in terms of money, we focused on money earned by women, and not on family money.

The total (severe + very severe) of those who reject this behaviour is 83% in 2003 and only 74% in 2022 (*Figure 9*). While one would have expected a much greater rejection reaction, especially since it is their own money (not the family's), this time around respondents seem to be more tolerant of the economic control of women overall. **Basically, in 2022, 1 in 4 people (26%) consider it acceptable for a man not to let his partner use her money as she pleases.**

A similar situation is observed with respect to the control of women's freedom of movement (a form of social violence, according to Law 217/2003, Article 4, f): despite the fact that in 2022 46% of respondents considered this very severe (compared to 39% in 2003), overall (severe + very severe) tolerance of this type of behaviour increased by 9%. While it is true that in our question we insisted that a woman is not allowed to go out without a partner (not on the fact that she is not allowed to leave the house), the tolerant attitude towards women's social control seems to be on an upward trend nevertheless. **One in four respondents has no problem accepting the idea that a woman cannot go out unaccompanied by her partner.**

Figure 10 Changes in attitudes towards social violence against women, 2003 - 2022

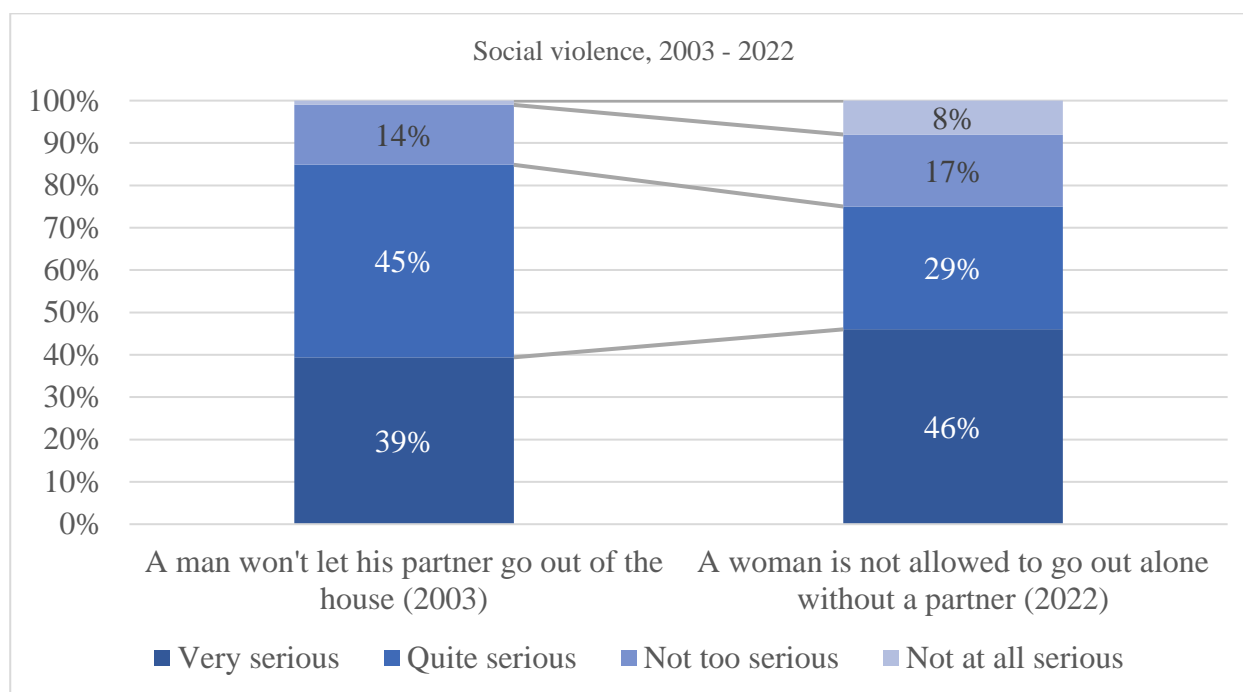
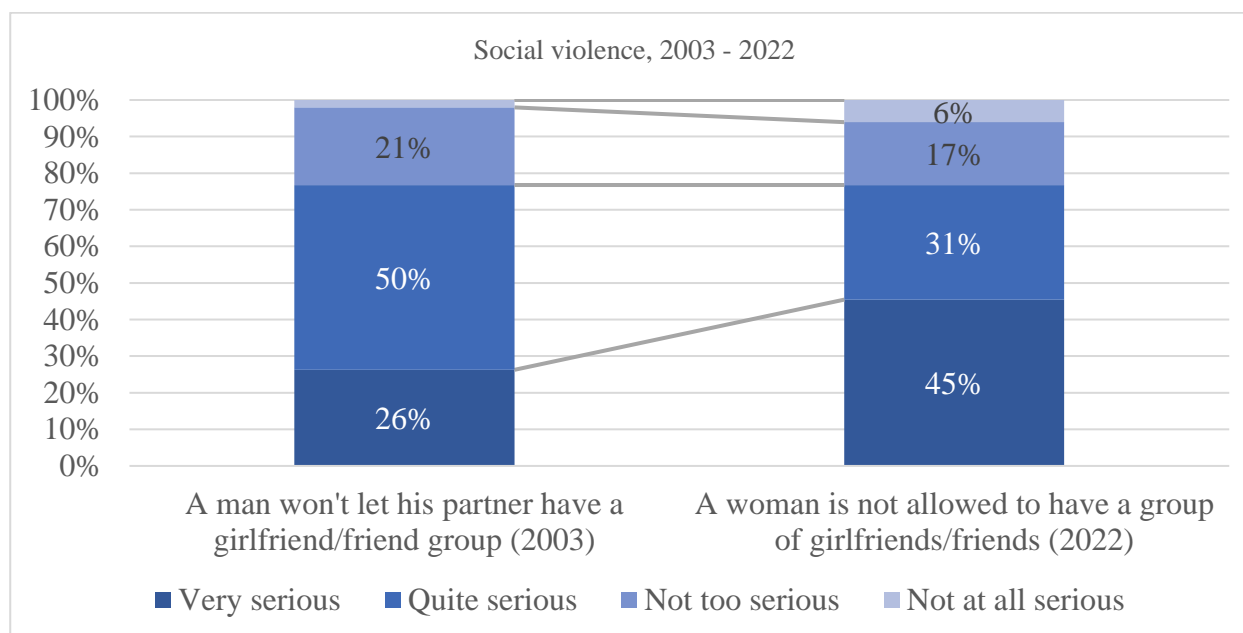


Figure 11 Changes in attitudes towards social violence against women, 2003 - 2022



Isolation and control of social relations (*Figure 11*) are rejected overall as much as in 2003 (76%), except that in 2022 the percentage of those who consider this behaviour very severe has increased (45% compared to 26% in 2003). **Yet, currently, 23% of Romanians consider it acceptable for a woman to be forbidden from having a group of friends.**

The fact that the percentage of those who consider the economic, social and psychological control of women to be acceptable has remained constant over 20 years may be indicative of structural factors that favour violence against women. The explanations cannot be simplistic and require further

research, however, one hypothesis we advance is that the dominance of patriarchal values and a traditional gender contract (which among other things is based on the subordination and control of women) is an element that strongly influences (violent) couple relationships. Unfortunately, in Romania this issue is insufficiently studied and correlated with the analysis of violence against women.

Perceptions on partner violence against women

Violence against women by their partners is the most widespread, although it is invisible in Romanian legislation and public policies, because of the fact that a domestic violence-family violence approach is still maintained. Given that changing this approach (urgently recommended in the GREVIO report) requires first and foremost the collection of specific data, we asked two questions about verbal, physical, sexual, psychological, economic, social and reproductive violence perpetrated against women by their partners.

Figure 12 Perceptions of partner violence against women

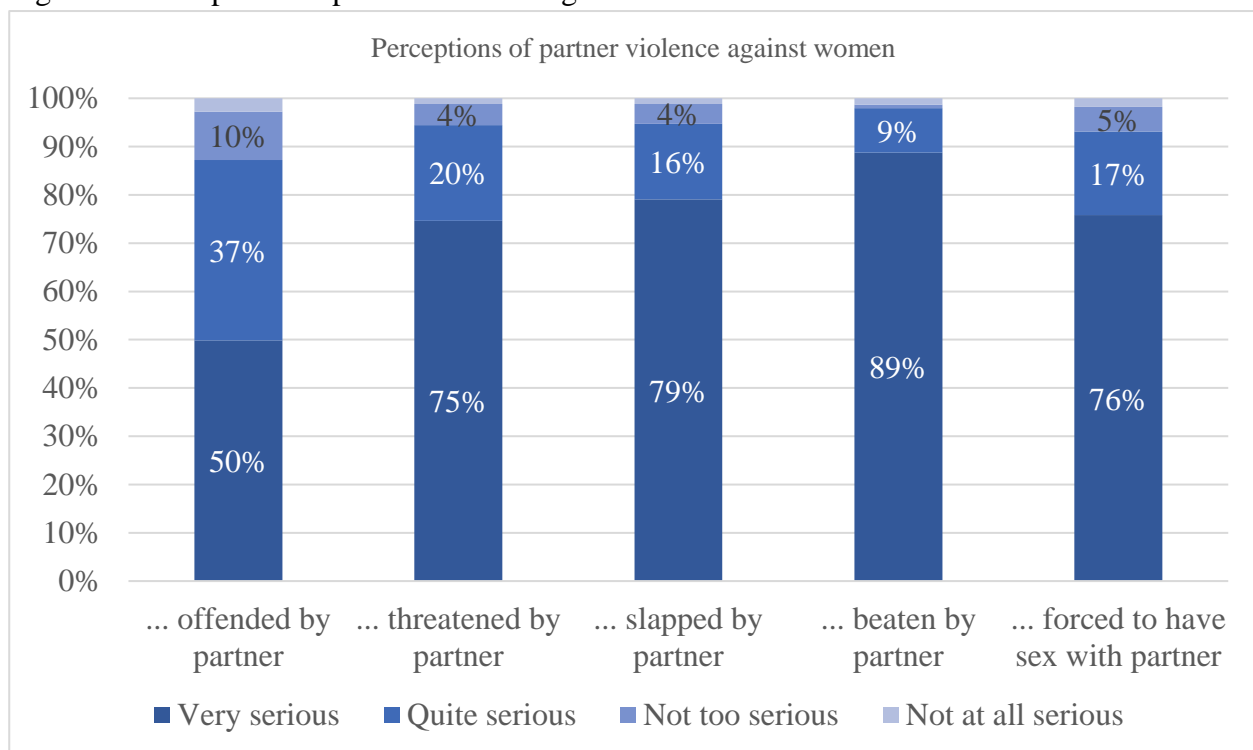
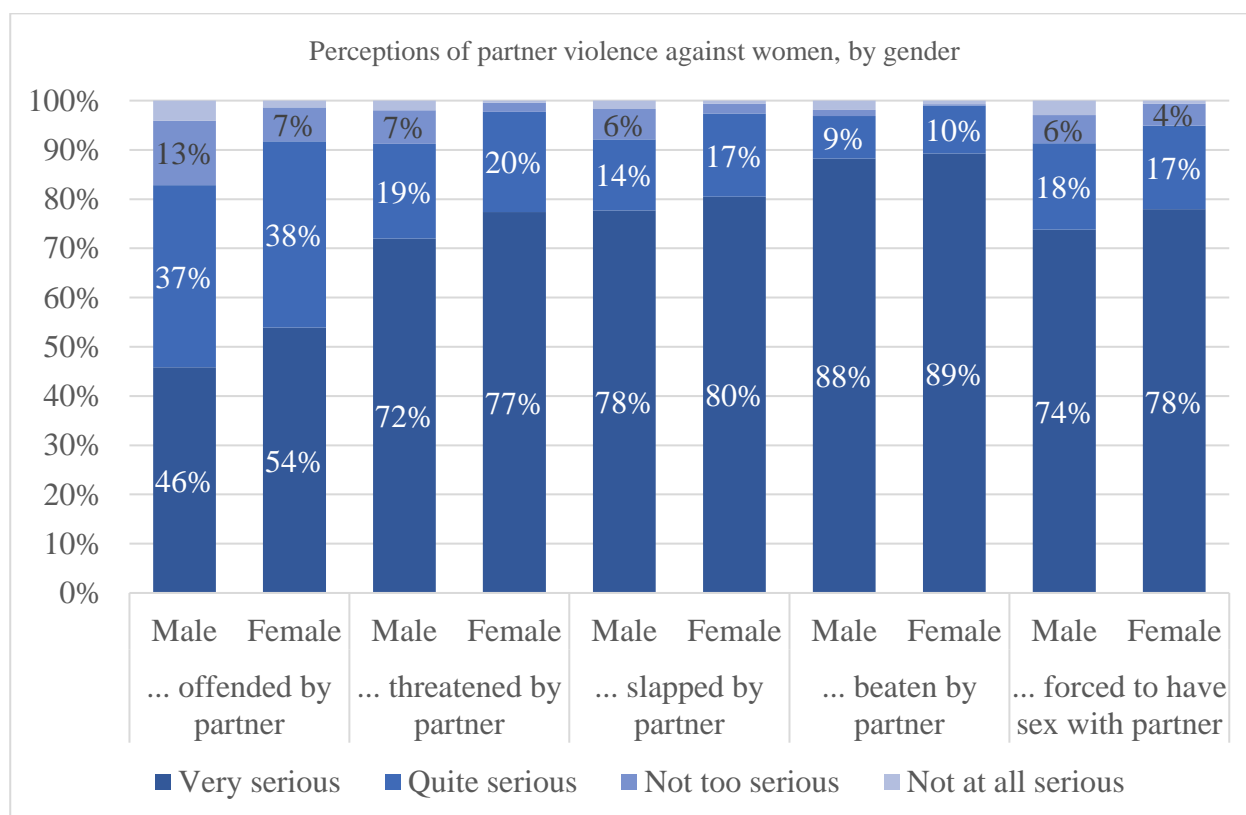


Figure 13 Perceptions of violence against women by gender



As shown by the data in *Figure 12*, all forms of verbal, physical and sexual violence are considered unacceptable (severe and very severe) by an absolute majority of respondents. The worst form of violence is considered to be beatings (98% consider it severe and very severe), followed by threats and slapping (95%), forced sexual intercourse (93%) and insults (87%).

Women identify and reject all these acts to a greater extent, (*Figure 13*), the biggest difference being in the case of insult by a partner, which is considered very serious by 54% of women compared to 46% of men.

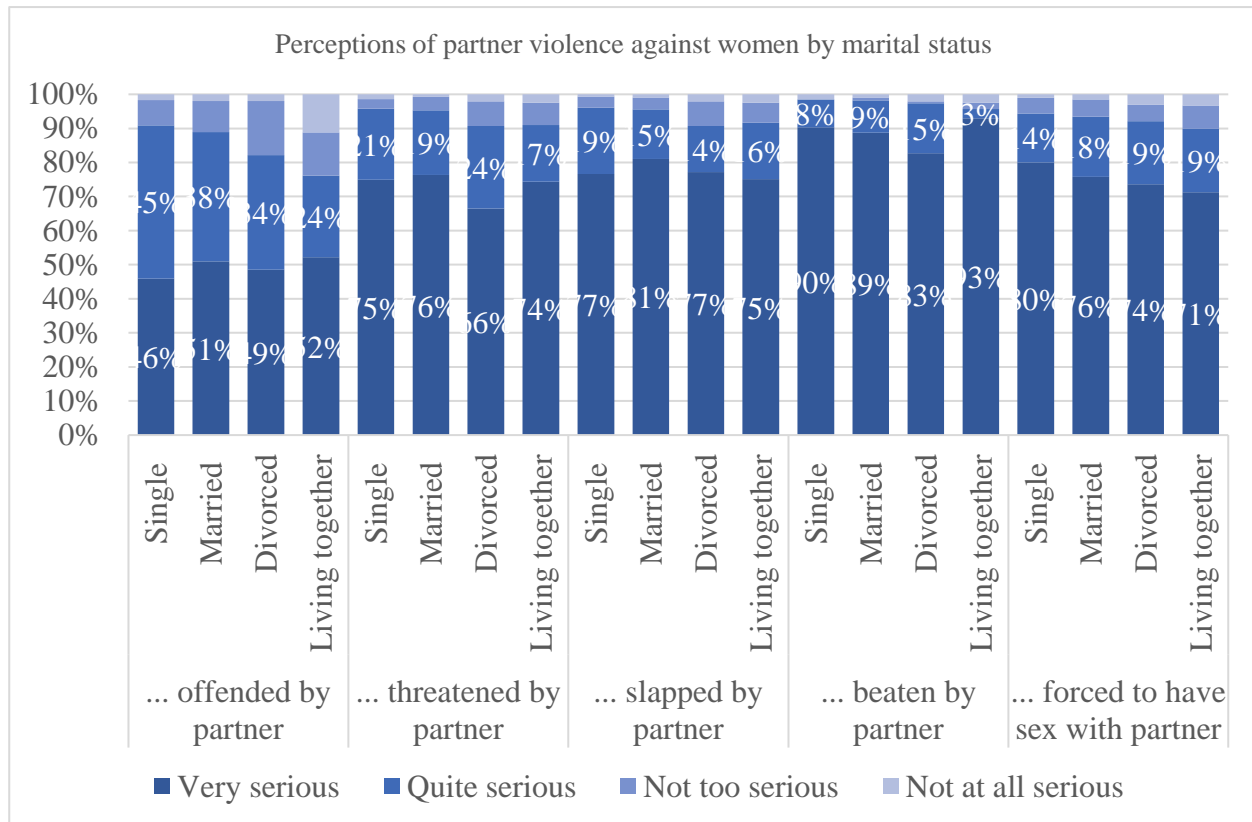
Differences in perception associated with respondents' age are minor. Of the age categories analysed, people between 60 and 65 years old are slightly more tolerant of violence: 80% consider insults to be severe and very severe (compared to 87% overall); for threats the gap is 5% and for forced sex 4%.

Depending on the place of residence, couple violence is considered more severe (in urban areas) or less severe (in rural areas), with the gap ranging from 2% for beatings to 6% for threats.

The marital status (*Figure 14*) is an indicator which influences the way violence against women is perceived and judged: single people sanction all 5 types of violence most harshly, while

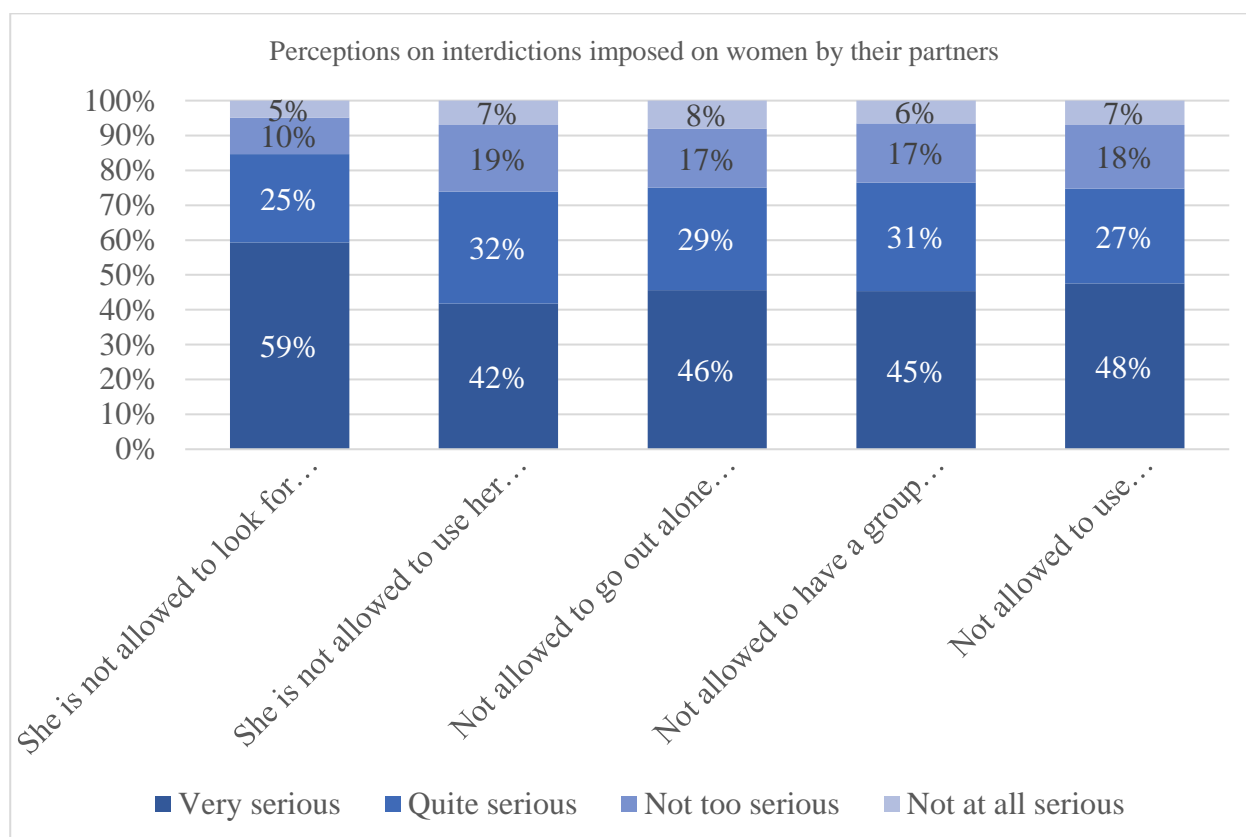
divorced, separated, widowed and cohabiting people accept them more easily: insults are taken less seriously by cohabiting people (76% compared to 91% for single people), with a gap of about 5% in the other cases.

Figure 14 Perceptions of violence against women by marital status



Economic, psychological, social and reproductive violence are overall considered severe and very severe, but at lower rates than verbal, physical and sexual violence (*Figure 14*). This is also because, as shown in the section on knowledge of types of violence, they are less known/recognised by the population. There is a clear perception that women's right to work is unrestricted, while control over the use of money, freedom of movement and social relations is more accepted. This should also be construed through the combination of neoliberal labour market policies and the widespread acceptance of the active status of women and the traditional/patriarchal gender contract, which considers family and children as the primary responsibility (and fulfilment) of women (Băluță 2014; Dohotariu & Băluță 2021).

Figure 15 Perceptions on interdictions imposed on women by their partners



Once again, women are much more critical of all five situations mentioned (*Figure 16*), with a 12% gap in the case of being forbidden to use their money as they please, 8% in the case of being forbidden to go out unaccompanied by a partner and 7% in the case of being forbidden to use contraception.

Education is an even more obvious factor that shapes more tolerant or less tolerant perceptions and attitudes towards these five situations (*Figure 17*). 94% of people with higher education condemn the limitation of women's social relations by their partner, while only 65% of those with elementary education reject this. There is also a 29% gap between the two categories for men who forbid their partners to go out unaccompanied. The gap between people with higher education and those with elementary education who condemn the ban on contraceptive use is 25%.

Figure 16 Perceptions of interdictions imposed on women

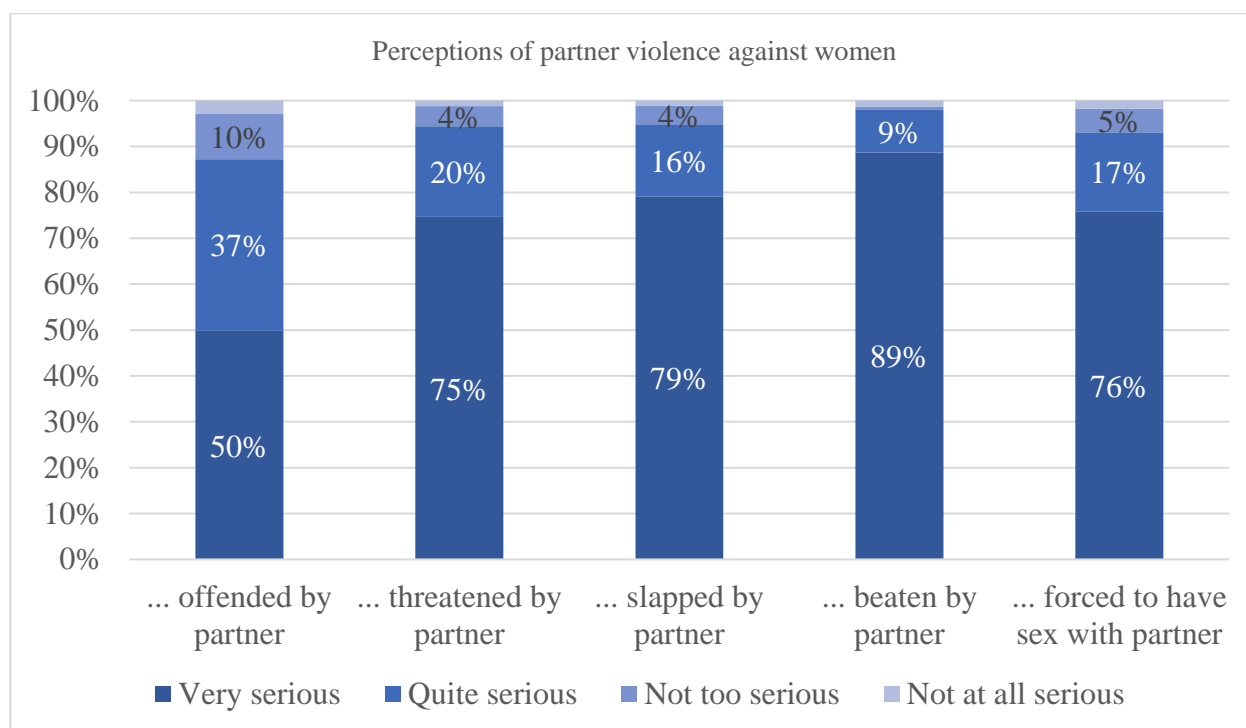
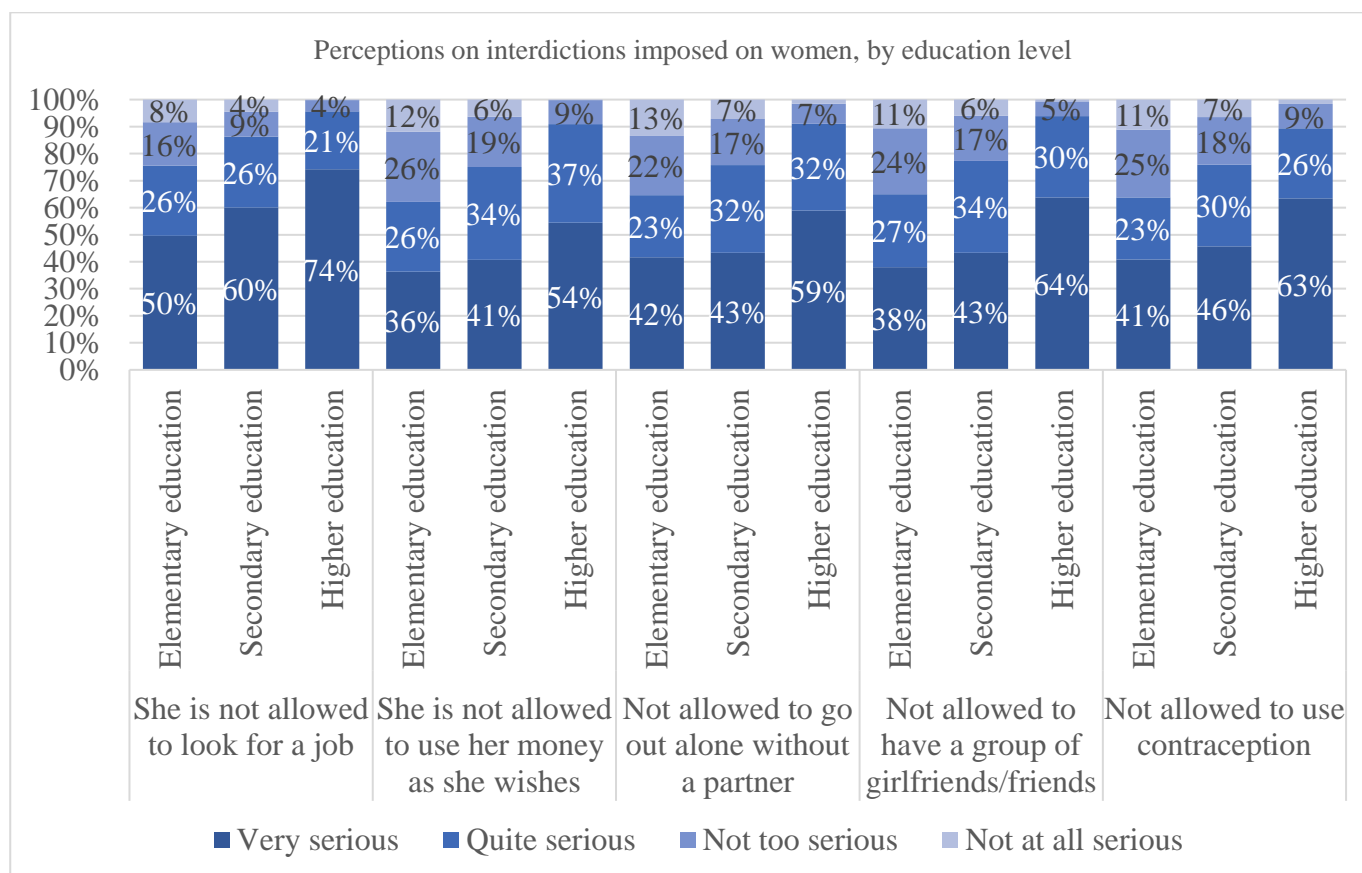


Figure 17 Perceptions of interdictions imposed on women by gender, by education level

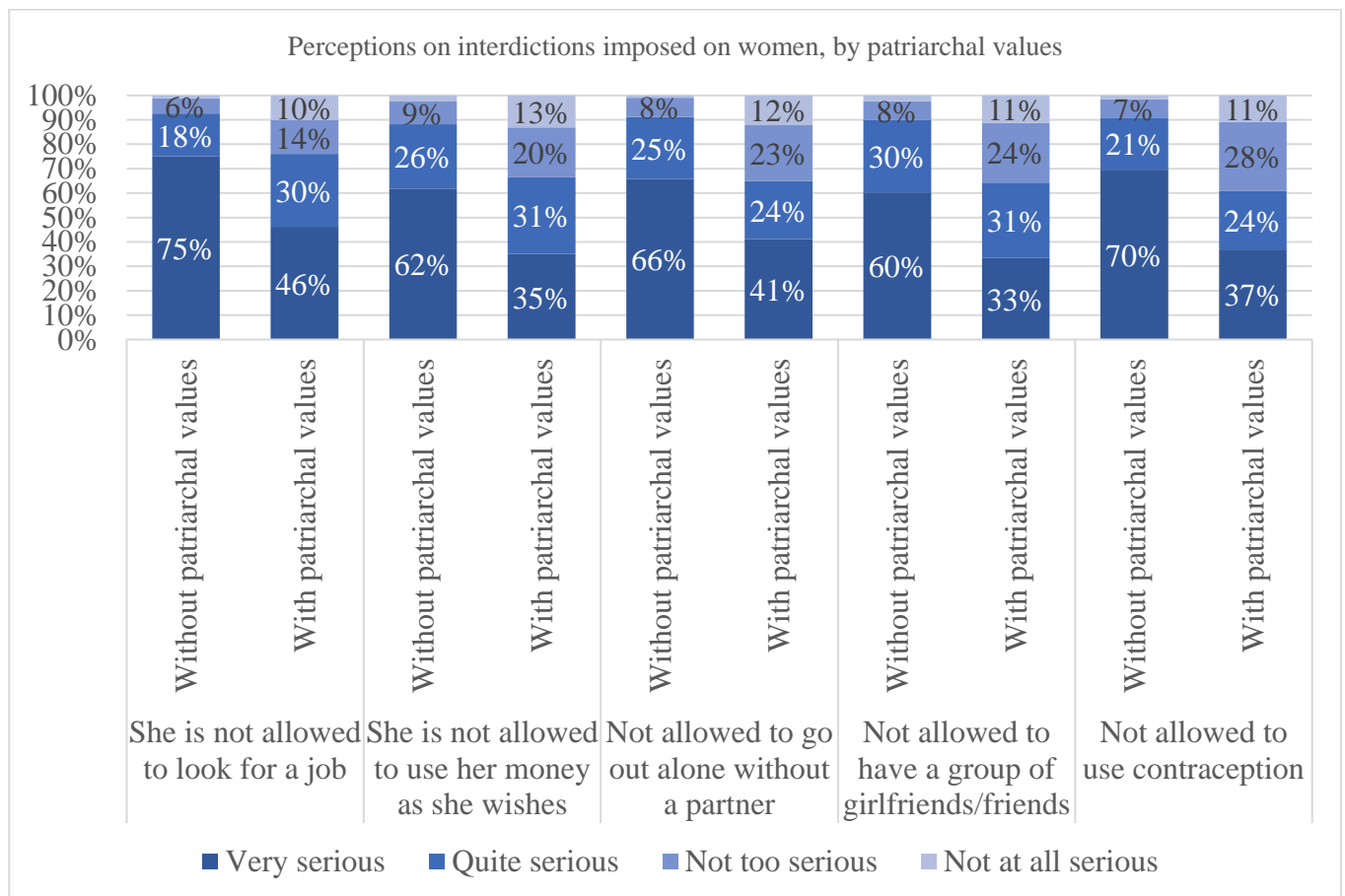


The survey used in this research also included a set of items by which we measured the agreement or disagreement with a series of five statements indicating patriarchal values:

1. The man is the head of the family
2. Women need a man's protection
3. Women should listen to (obey) their partner/husband
4. It is better to stay in an unsuccessful marriage than not to get married at all
5. It is preferable to stay in a violent relationship for the sake of the children

On the basis of these questions, we calculated a patriarchal values acceptance score, which shows how many of the five statements the respondent agreed with. Thus, the score can range from 0 (the respondent does not agree with any of the five statements) to 4 (the respondent agrees with at least four of the five statements). The higher the score, the greater the respondent's acceptance of patriarchal values. We have charted the distribution of responses for two groups diametrically opposed (those who did not agree with any of the five statements versus those who agreed with at least four of the five statements) as they show the greatest differences in how they perceive the restrictions imposed on women (*Figure 18*).

Figure 18 Perceptions on interdictions imposed on women, by patriarchal values



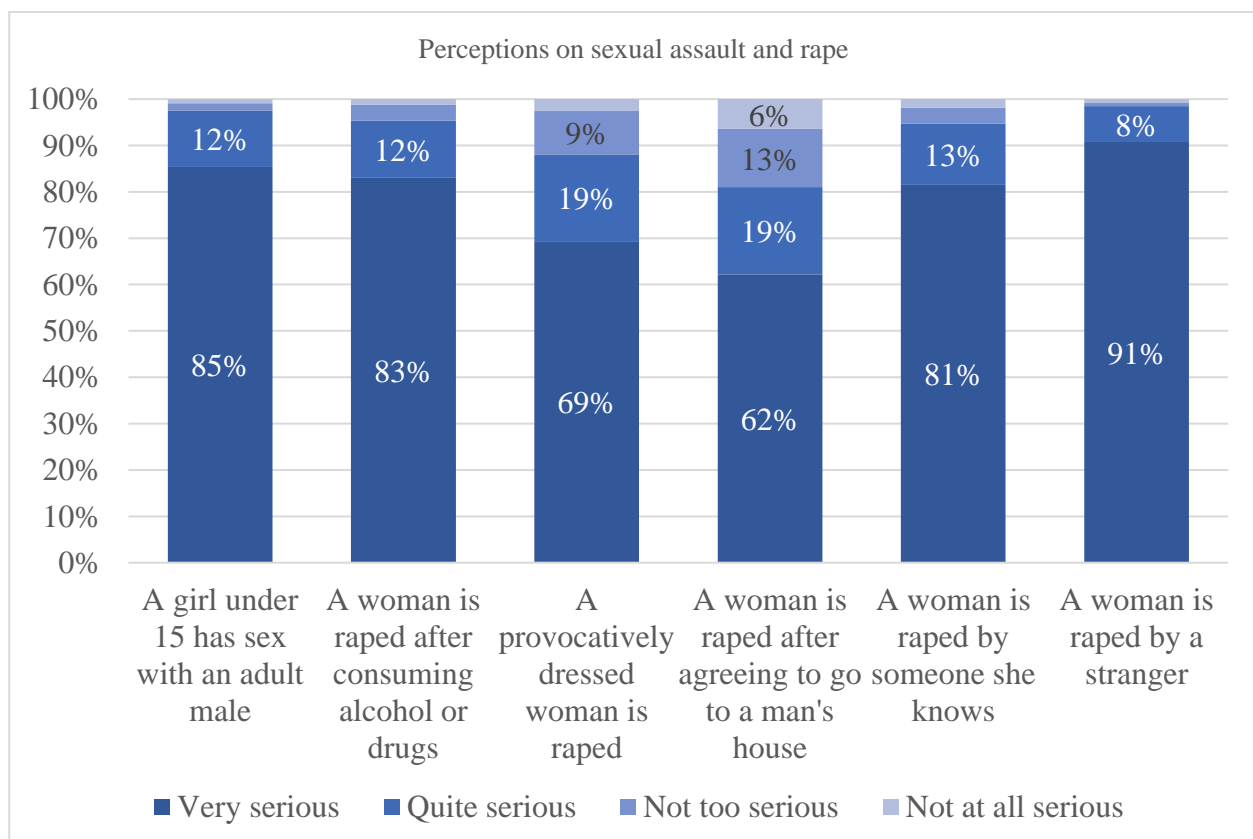
People who share the most patriarchal and conservative views of gender roles are also the least sensitive to the forms of violence listed. For economic violence the gap is 26% (banning from

work) and 22% (use of money). Isolation and limiting social relationships is accepted 26% more than by persons who disagree with patriarchal gender values and roles. The biggest gap is in the use of contraceptives: 30%. **Rephrased, the proportion of people who consider the various interdictions on women to be only slightly or not at all severe is three to four times higher among those who accept all patriarchal values than among those who reject them all.**

Perceptions on sexual assault and rape

Sexual assault and rape are among the most traumatic experiences girls and women go through. As pointed out in the introductory study, the approach and resolution of cases very often collides with stereotypes that minimize the severity of the crime, blame the victim and influence both the police reaction and case processing by the justice system and the decision of judges. We rephrased six of these into response variants to measure people's perceptions. Results are shown in *Figure 19*. The very high overall percentages (severe + very severe) show that at the perception level, the respondents are not very influenced by stereotypes when judging the six selected situations. Furthermore, the fact that the answer "very severe" has the highest weight in all variants shows a strong rejection position.

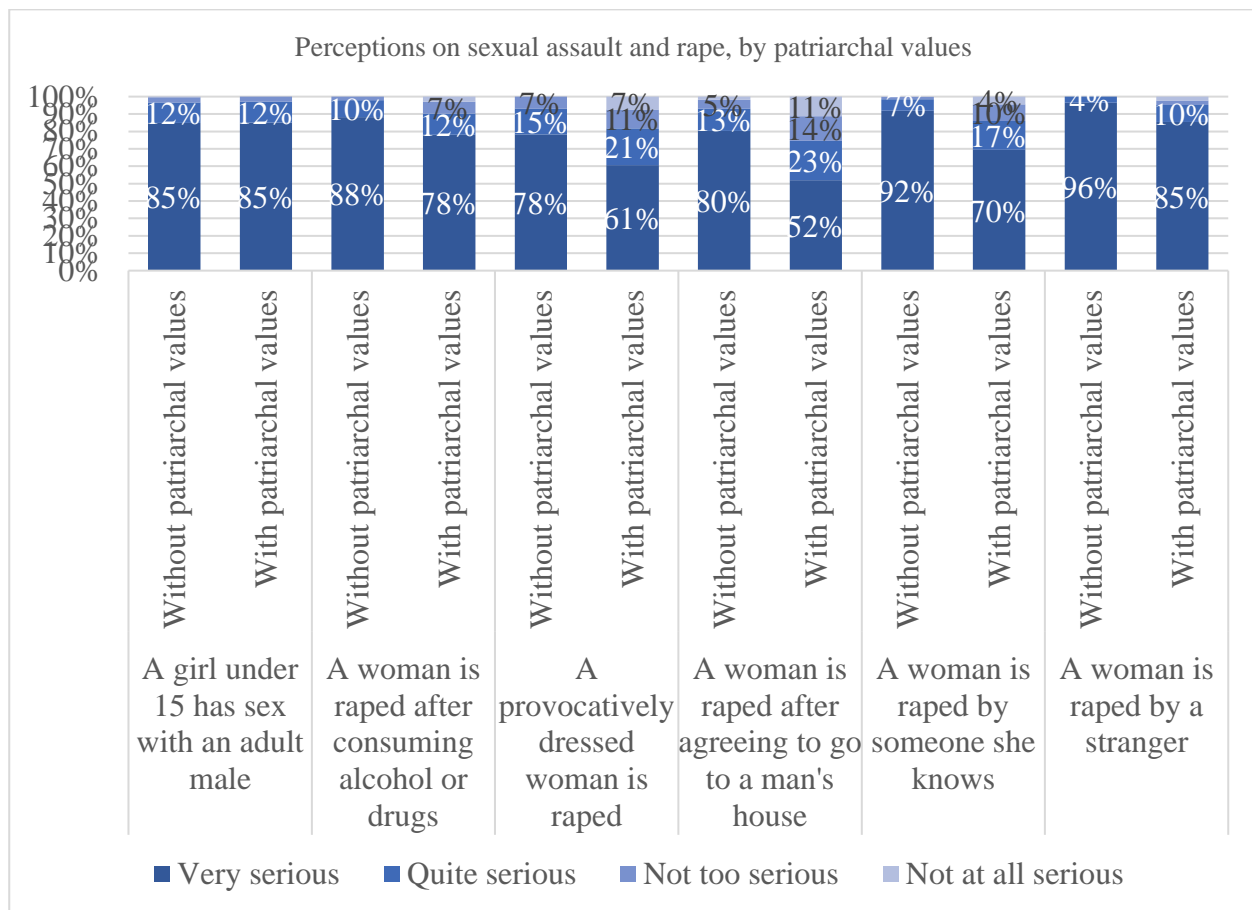
Figure 19 Perceptions on sexual assault and rape



If we were to compare the five options given, we find that the most severe situation is considered to be when a woman is raped by a stranger (91% very severe + 8% severe), followed by a minor having sex with an adult (85% very severe + 12% severe). We chose to address sexual relations with a girl under the age of 15 specifically to measure the stereotype on consent. While 97% of respondents believe that sexual relations between a minor and an adult are unacceptable, less people consider the situation to be very severe compared to response option 6, showing that the idea that it is impossible to speak of consent in a minor (i.e. rape, not sexual intercourse) is not known and/or accepted enough. **Respondents do not seem to realise that the first option actually means that a girl under 15 is raped by an adult male.** It is also the definition of consent that is behind the fourth option (a man rapes a woman who has agreed to go to his home), which has the lowest percentage of rejection: only 62% consider this situation very severe, 6% do not consider it severe at all and 13% consider it not severe at all. The other version which is considered less serious is related to a very strong stereotype: a woman dressed provocatively "asks" or "deserves" to be raped. Therefore, only 69% of respondents consider rape in this case to be very severe and 11% do not see it as a problem. Lastly, the fact that rape by a stranger is considered to be more severe than rape by someone known to us refers once again to the idea of consent, to the stereotype that "maybe she wanted it too".

Here again, we repeat the analysis from the previous section, in which we report the differences in perceptions of sexual assault and rape by those who reject patriarchal values and those who embrace them (*Figure 20*). The more patriarchal the respondents' values, the greater the tolerance on rape. People who reject all five patriarchal values (without patriarchal values) condemn rape most strongly, whatever the 'situation' - in fact the stereotypes used to minimise the fact and blame the woman.

Figure 20 Perceptions on sexual assault and rape, by patriarchal values



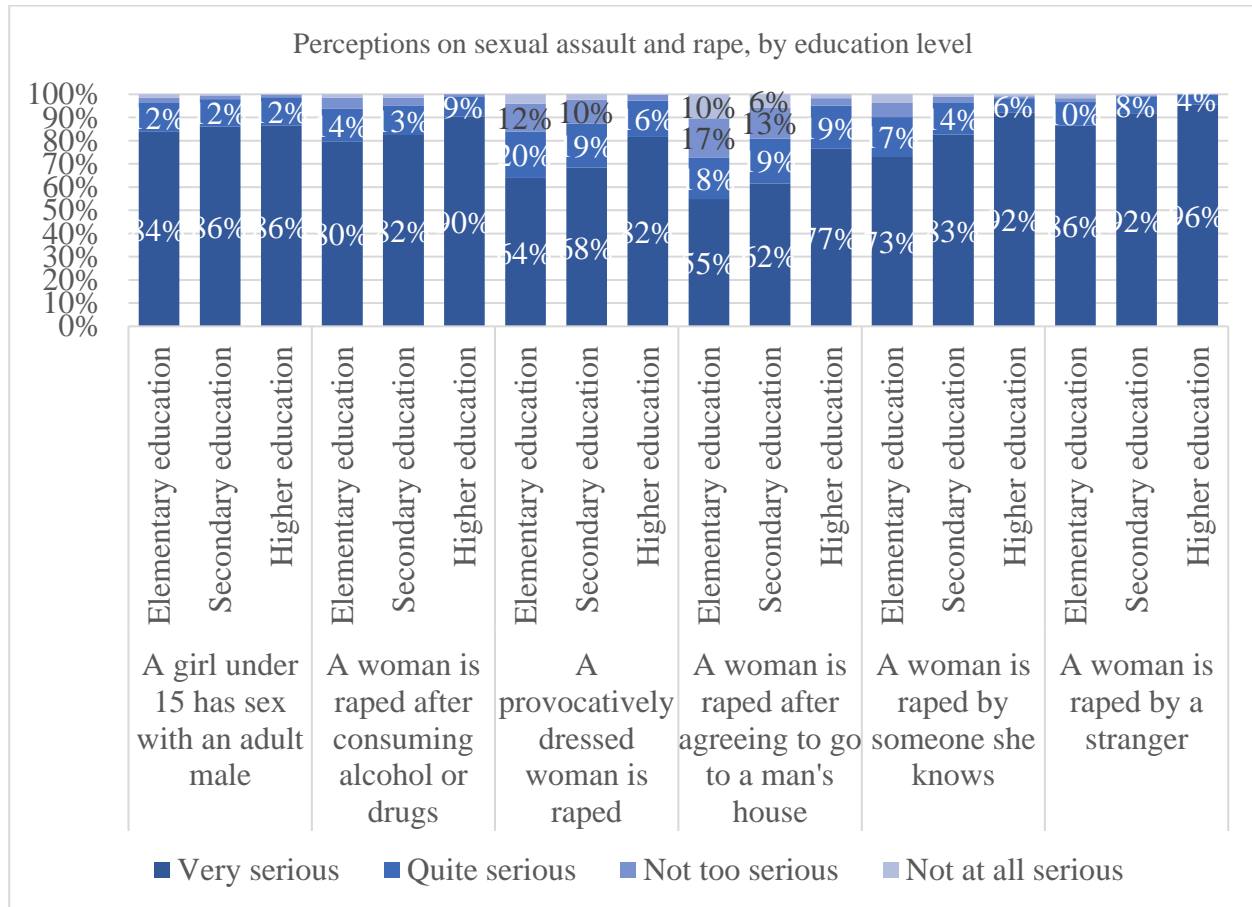
On the other hand, respondents who agreed with 4-5 of these statements (with patriarchal values) are significantly more tolerant of the types of sexual assault and rape mentioned, except for sexual relations between a minor and an adult: 14% of them believe that it is not too severe if the woman is raped by someone she knows and 18% of them believe that if the raped woman was dressed provocatively then the rape is not so severe. The biggest gap (a difference of 18%) refers to the situation where a woman who agrees to go to a man's house is raped. **Basically, a quarter of those who have accepted the full set of patriarchal values believe that in this case the rape is of minor or no consequence (so the woman "asked for it", to use a very common stereotype).**

Residential environment is once again associated with significant differences in tolerance of rape (which is an extremely severe form of violence): the biggest gap (6%) is observed in the case of women being raped when dressed "provocatively", followed by a woman being raped after agreeing to go to a man's house (5% gap).

The level of education matters in attitudes and opinions towards rape (*Figure 21*): people with higher education consider all six situations analysed as severe and very severe (percentages ranging from 95% to 100%), while people with elementary education are more influenced by stereotypes and

become more tolerant of rape. If a woman is raped after agreeing to go to a man's house, **27% of them (so more than a quarter)** believe that the rape is not serious or not serious at all, therefore ... justified. The stereotype of "provocative" dressing is also more present among respondents with elementary education, with a 13% gap in relation to those with higher education.

Figure 21 Perceptions on sexual assault and rape, by education level



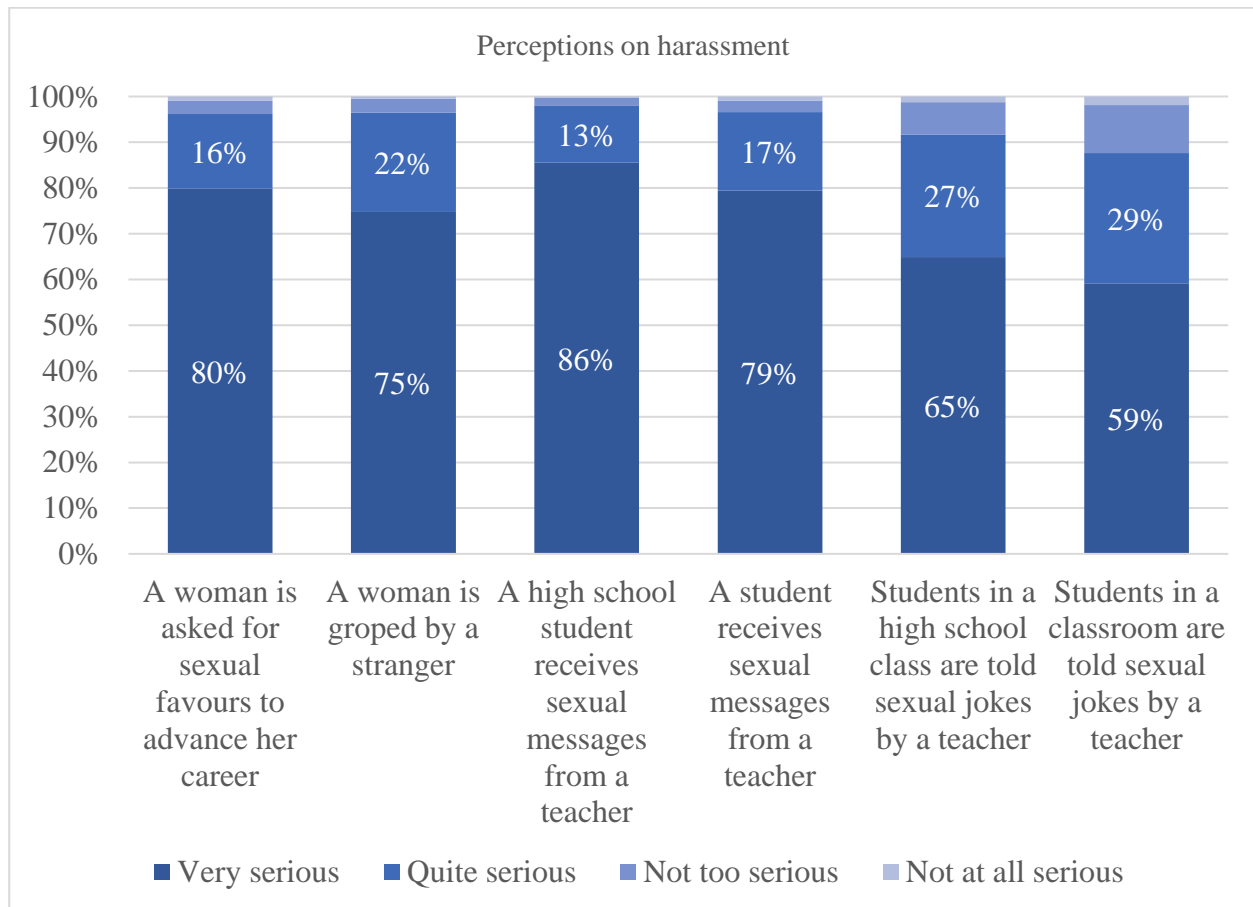
Perceptions towards harassment

The fourth in this series of questions aimed at measuring perceptions and attitudes towards various types of violence focused on street harassment, workplace harassment and sexual harassment in schools and universities.

All the harassment situations presented are considered by a very high proportion of respondents to be very severe and severe (*Figure 22*). The situation which is identified as less problematic is when a teacher tells students sexually explicit jokes in the classroom: only 59%

consider it very severe, and 12% of respondents believe it to be slightly or not severe at all - therefore acceptable. Of all the examples given to respondents, "little jokes" seem to be the most accepted form of violence against girls and women. It is highly likely that respondents in no way associate a sexist or sexual joke with a violent act: institutionalised sexism and internalised sexism are two powerful barriers which cannot be removed unless there is awareness and education.

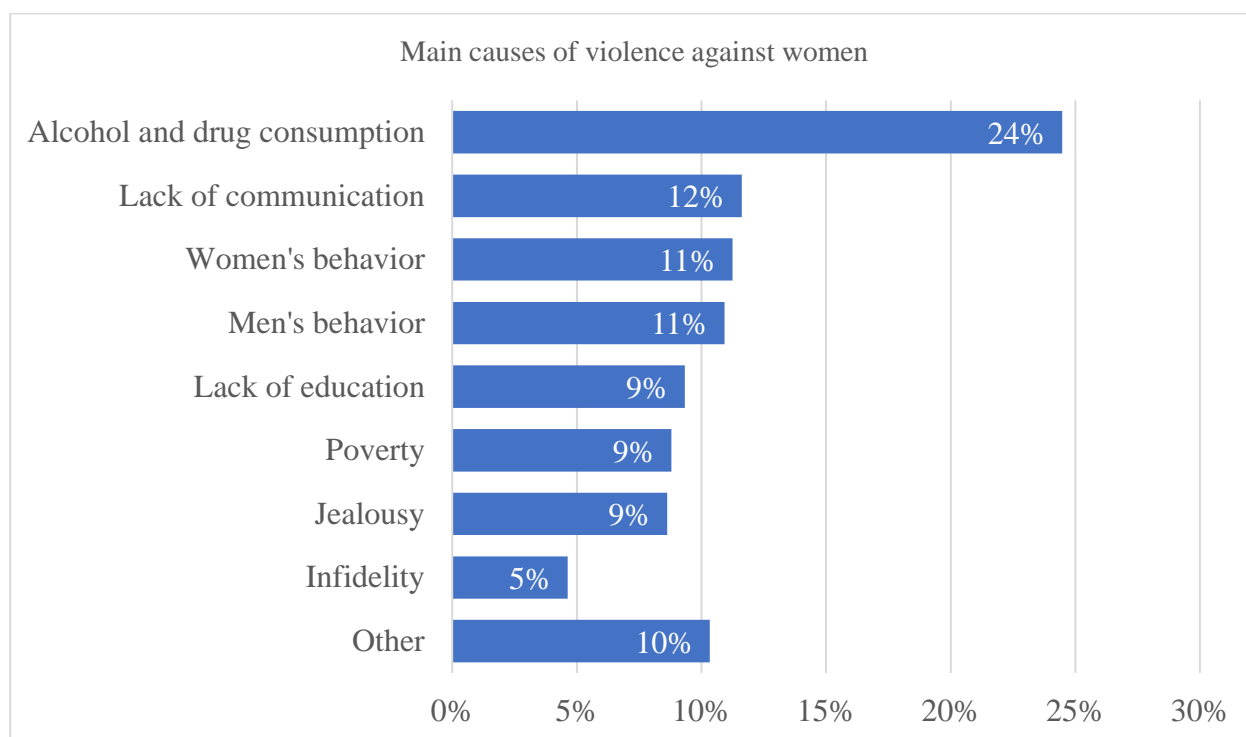
Figure 22 Perceptions on harassment



Causes of violence against women

Our survey subjects were also asked to indicate their opinion of the two most common causes of violence against women. The question was open-ended and we recoded the responses received into the categories shown in *Figure 23*.

Figure 23 The main causes of violence against women



A quarter of the responses indicate alcohol and drug use as the main cause of violence against women. The second most common causes are grouped equally into three categories: lack of communication, women's behaviour and men's behaviour, all present in 11%-12% of responses. A third category of causes includes the lack of education (9%), poverty (9%) and jealousy (9%). The last cause mentioned was infidelity, mentioned in 5% of responses. Other causes were also mentioned in 10% of cases, but none of them were mentioned in more than 5% of cases.

The frequency of violence against women in Romania

We asked respondents to also tell us how widespread they think various types of violence against women are in Romania. Between 87% and 96% of respondents consider that verbal violence, psychological violence, moderate physical violence and sexual harassment are quite widespread or very widespread in Romania (*Figure 4*). Slightly lower percentages, between 72% and 81%, consider that severe physical violence, rape and sex without consent in couples are quite widespread or very widespread in Romania.

As expected, women perceive the prevalence of the most severe forms of violence differently from men: physical violence in severe forms is perceived as prevalent by only 71% of men, but by 84% of women. Rape is perceived as widespread by 75% of men yet 87% of women. A similar difference of 13% is found for non-consensual sex in couples: 65% of men see them as widespread, as compared to 78% of women.

Figure 24 The widespread forms of violence against women in Romania

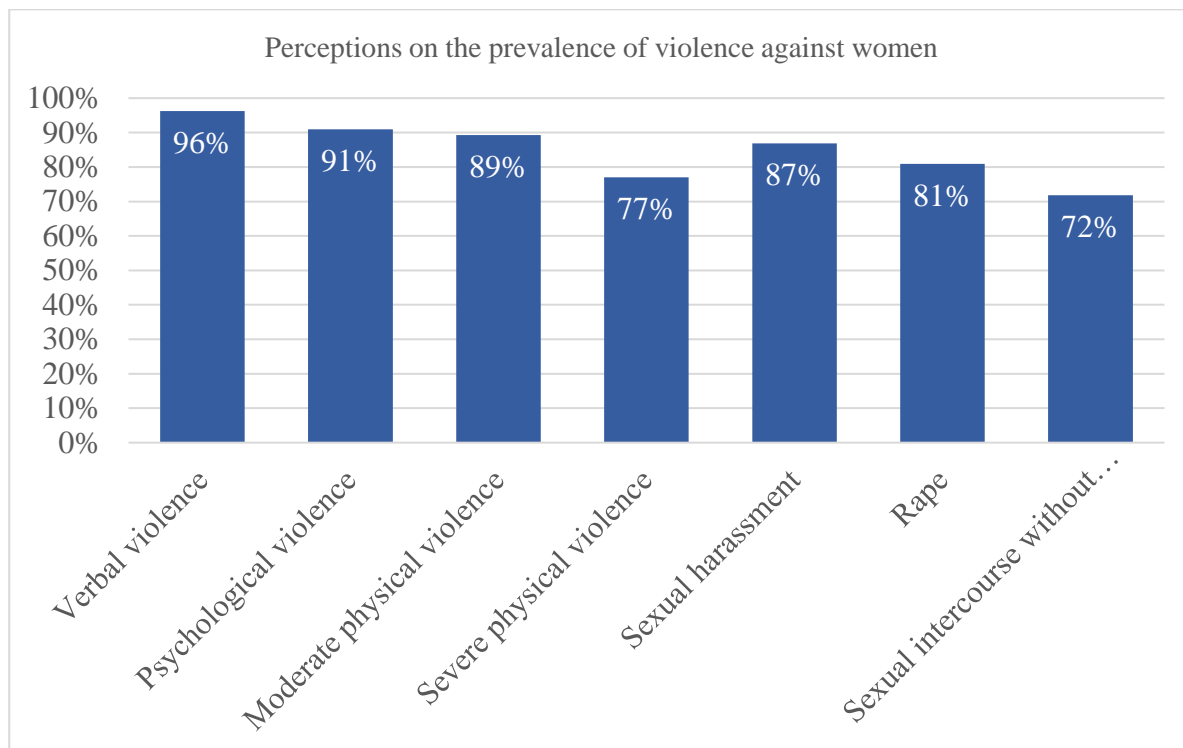
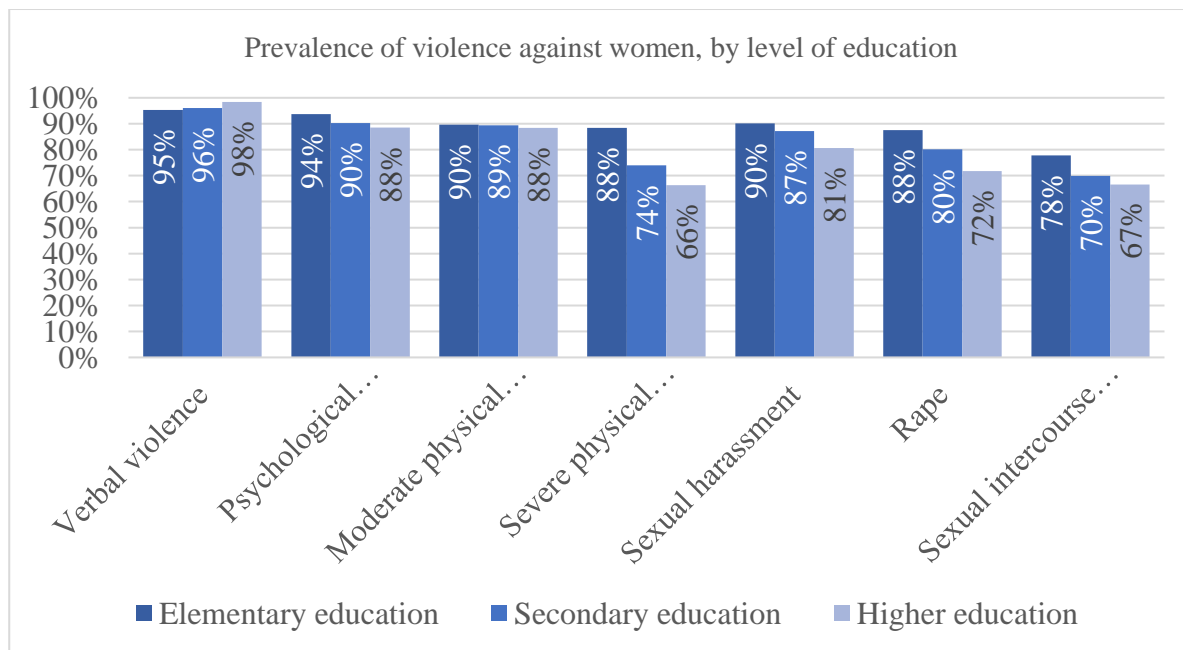


Figure 25 The widespread forms of violence against women, by education



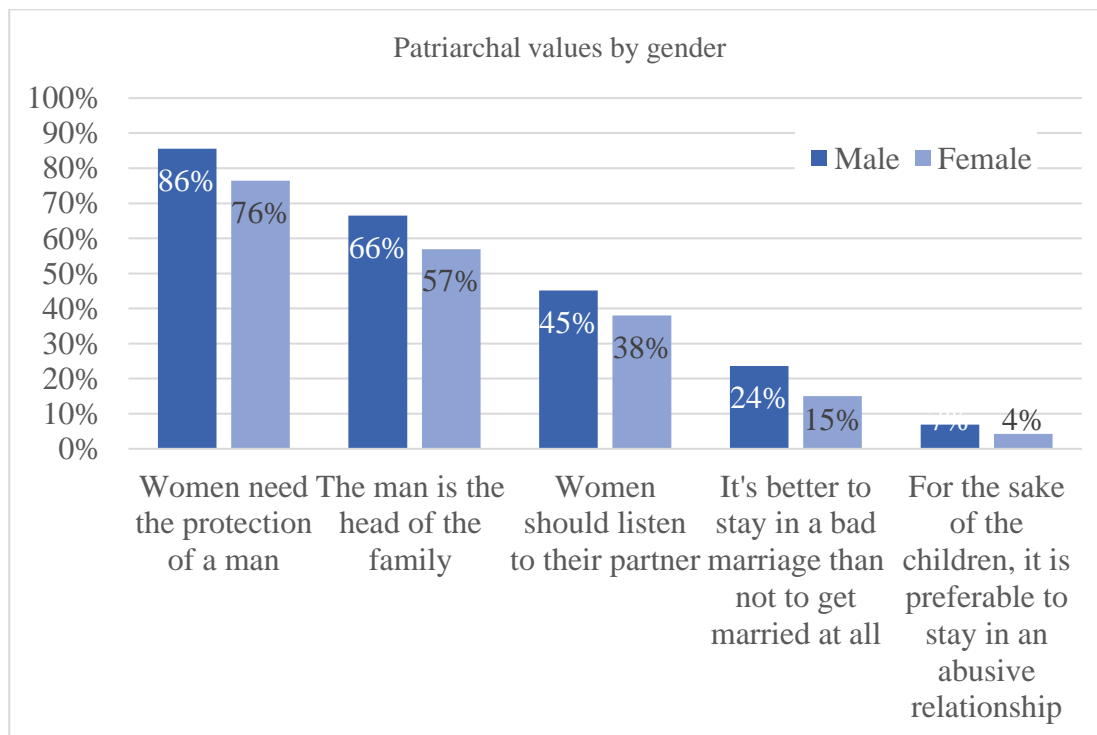
The perceptions of the prevalence of these forms of violence are also greatly influenced by the respondent's education (*Figure 25*). The most severe forms of violence are perceived to be significantly less prevalent in Romania by those with higher education, the differences ranging from 10% for sexual harassment to 22% for severe physical violence. From the data available to us, we

cannot exactly determine the causes of these differences in perception, but we can assume that they may originate from different life experiences (although research shows that rape, sexual harassment and physical violence also occur among educated people, these are not behaviours that characterise only less educated people), from different media consumption patterns (we saw earlier that those with higher education have a more balanced media consumption, not mainly centred on TV). Another explanation may also be connected to the type of gender equality values that respondents share (or do not share): patriarchal and traditional gender values and roles are factors that contribute to normalising or minimising aggression and violence against women.

Patriarchal values

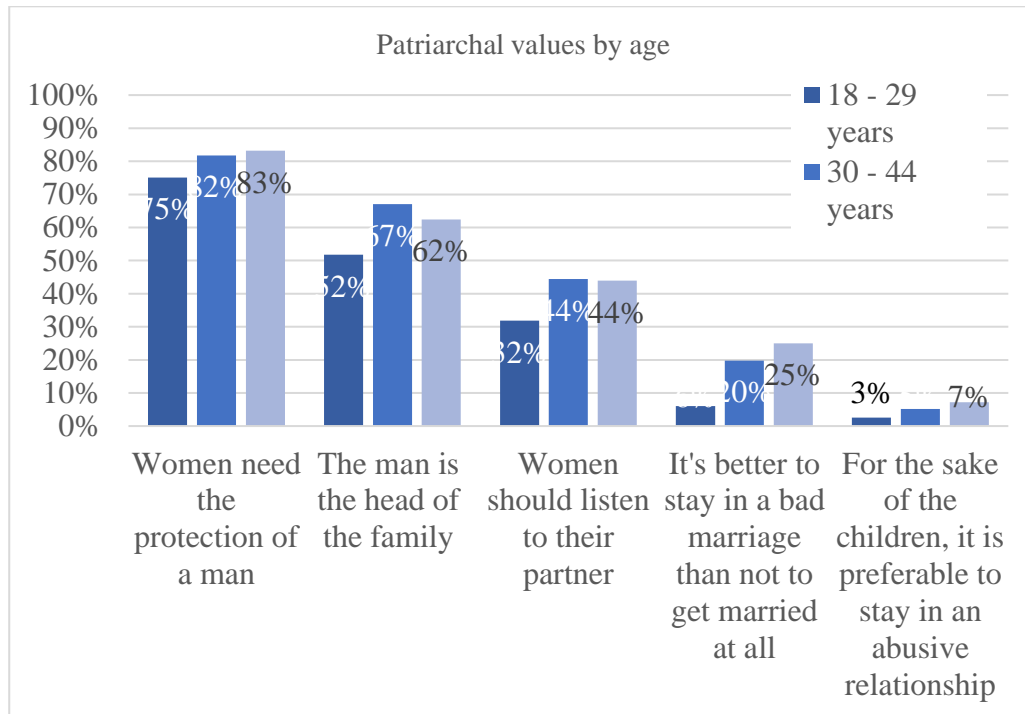
The questionnaire also included a module with questions by which we tried to measure the degree of acceptance or rejection of patriarchal values which define rather rigid roles for women and men. The set of questions included five such values: (1) the man is the head of the family - 62% of respondents agree, (2) women need a man's protection - 81% agree with this statement, (3) women should listen to their partner/husband, obey him - 42% agree, (4) it is better to stay in a bad marriage than not to get married at all - 19% agree, (5) it is better to stay in an abusive relationship for the sake of the children - 6% agree.

Figure 26 Patriarchal values by gender



As expected, women are less accepting of such patriarchal values (*Figure 26*). Except for the last value, which is almost unanimously rejected by everyone, for the four other values the percentage of women who agree with them is 7% to 10% lower than the corresponding percentage among men.

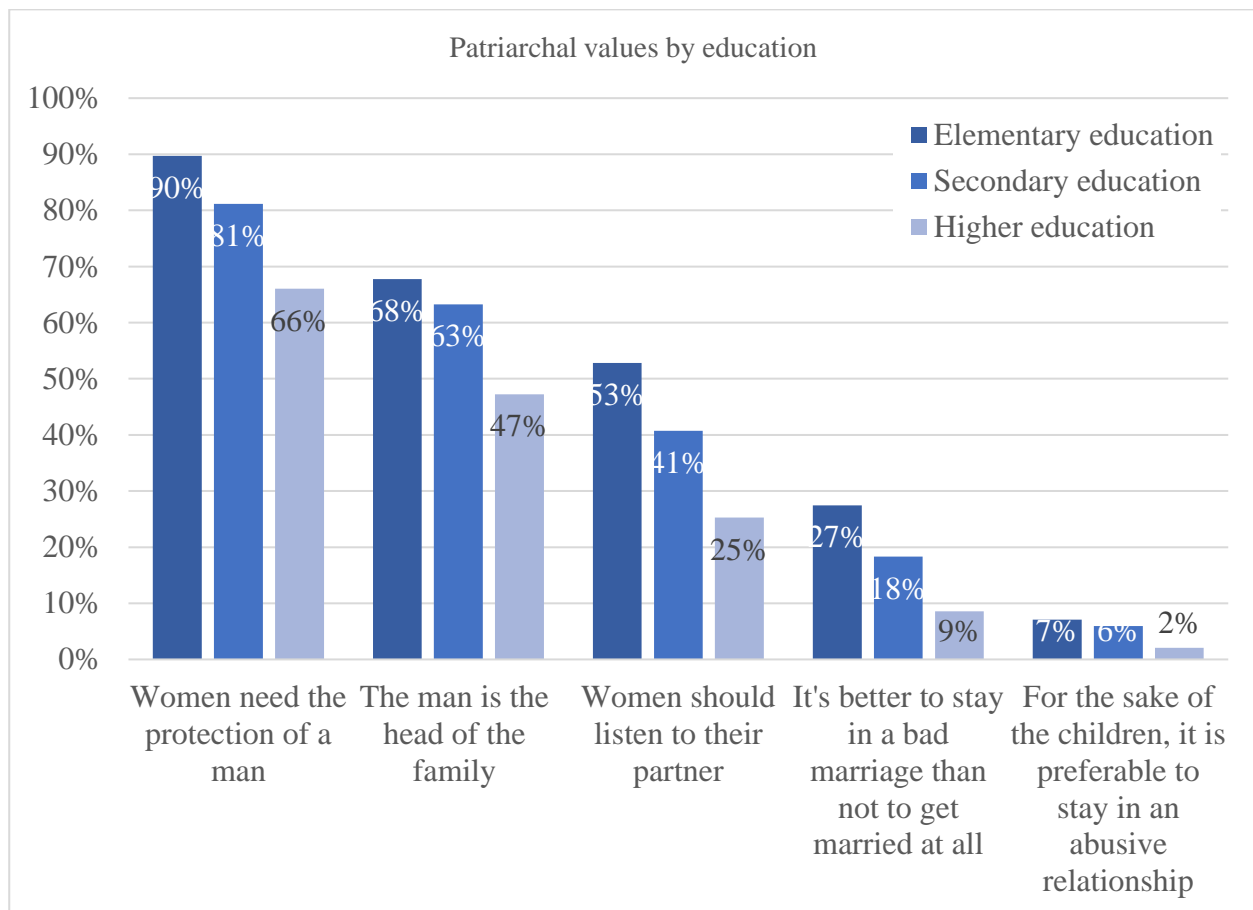
Figure 27 Patriarchal values by age



Age also has a significant effect in the expected sense: patriarchal values are significantly less accepted by respondents under 30, with differences ranging from 8% to 19% compared to those aged 45 and over (*Figure 27*).

A similar effect is found in the association with the level of education (*Figure 28*). If 90% of people with elementary education agree with the statement that women need a man's protection, the corresponding percentage drops to only 66% among those with higher education. Similar differences are found for the other two statements related to the role of women and men: the man is the head of the family (a 21% decrease is associated with level of education) and women should listen to their partner (a 28% decrease is associated with level of education). Clearly education is one of the main factors leading to less acceptance of patriarchal values.

Figure 28 Patriarchal values, by education



Knowing the legal framework

We set out to see to what extent the legal framework is known and what the perceptions and attitudes towards authorities/institutions are, by asking a question aimed at finding out who people trust in dealing with cases of violence. We chose to formulate the question without using the phrase "whom do you trust", because we would have oriented the answer more on the subjective dimension. We tried to measure potential behaviour by asking respondents to tell us who they think a woman who is a victim of partner violence should turn to first.

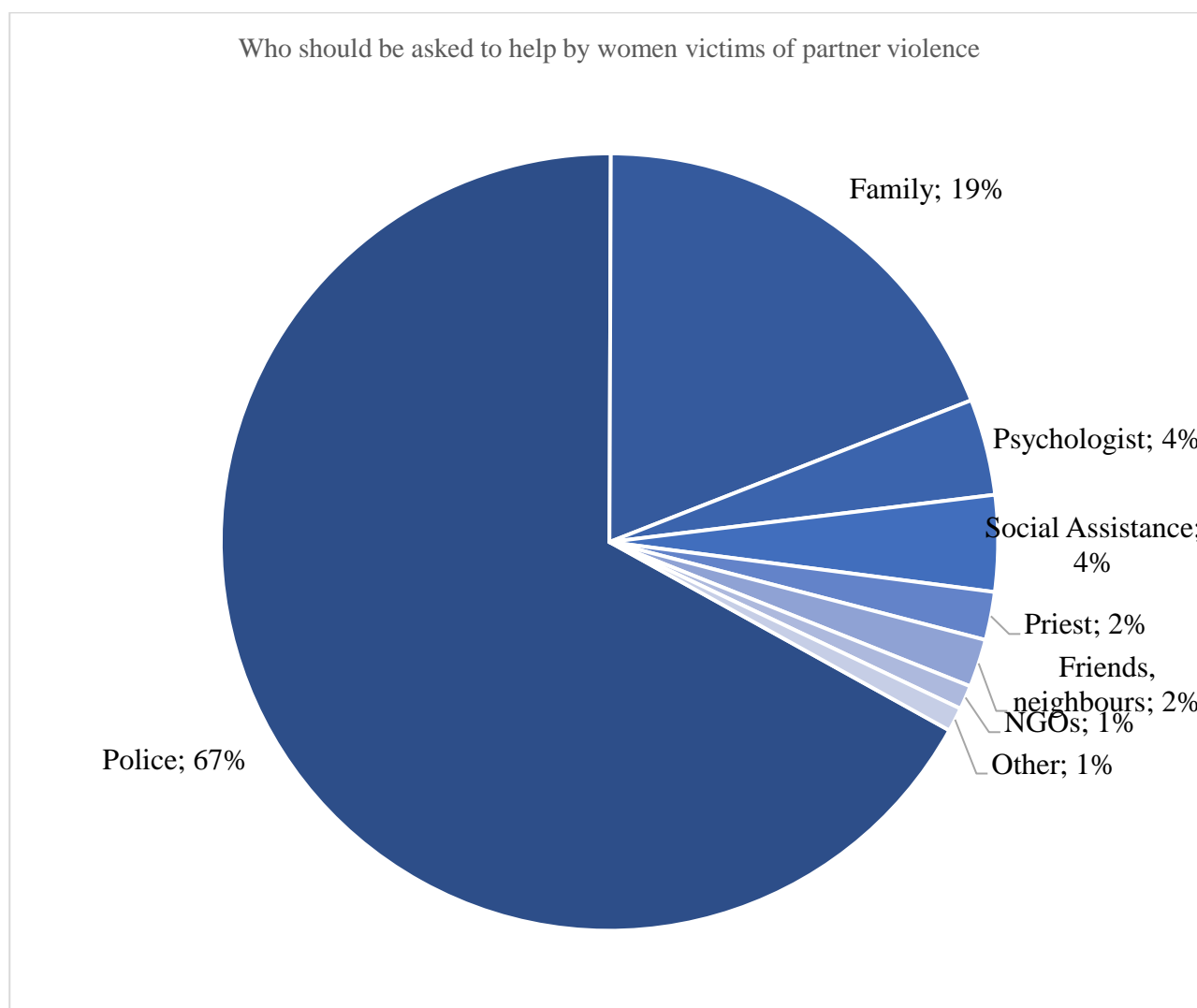
In the 2003 Domestic Violence Investigation, the question was worded differently: In your opinion, who should step in if someone beats their partner/husband/wife? The 2018 gender barometer used the same question. Both in 2003 and in 2018 respondents could choose two options, whereas in our questionnaire they had to choose only one. The response options and the different application do

not allow us to present the results side by side. Specific comparisons allow us to get a picture, even a schematic one, of how Romanians' opinions on this issue have changed over the last almost 20 years.

The main change since 2003 is not only that the police are now at the top of the list, but also that the percentage of those who think the police should be called if a woman is assaulted by her partner is 67%. Together with the fact that 79% of respondents say they have heard of the restraining order, we can state that there is significantly better information about who handles cases of violence and at least one of the legal forms of protection. Compared to 2018, there is also a significant increase (of 14.1%) in those who think the police should be called if a female is the victim of partner violence. Likewise, the fact that the police were mentioned in such a high proportion, despite the fact that eight response options were mentioned, shows not only that people are informed, but also that they have increased confidence in calling the police at least in violent situations.

A second important change since 2003 is that 20 years ago almost half of the respondents considered that relatives, family, godparents are the ones who should intervene in such situations, and another 22% considered that friends or neighbours should intervene. In 2022, when they were given only one response option to choose, the percentage of those who think the victim should turn to family is only 19% and those who think the victim should turn to friends or neighbours is only 2%. These changes indicated by the 2003 and 2022 data suggest a significant institutionalisation of the procedures to be followed when dealing with violence against women, a shift from a traditional way of resolving conflicts in the family to an approach in which it is the state institutions and the law that must protect the victim, not the family.

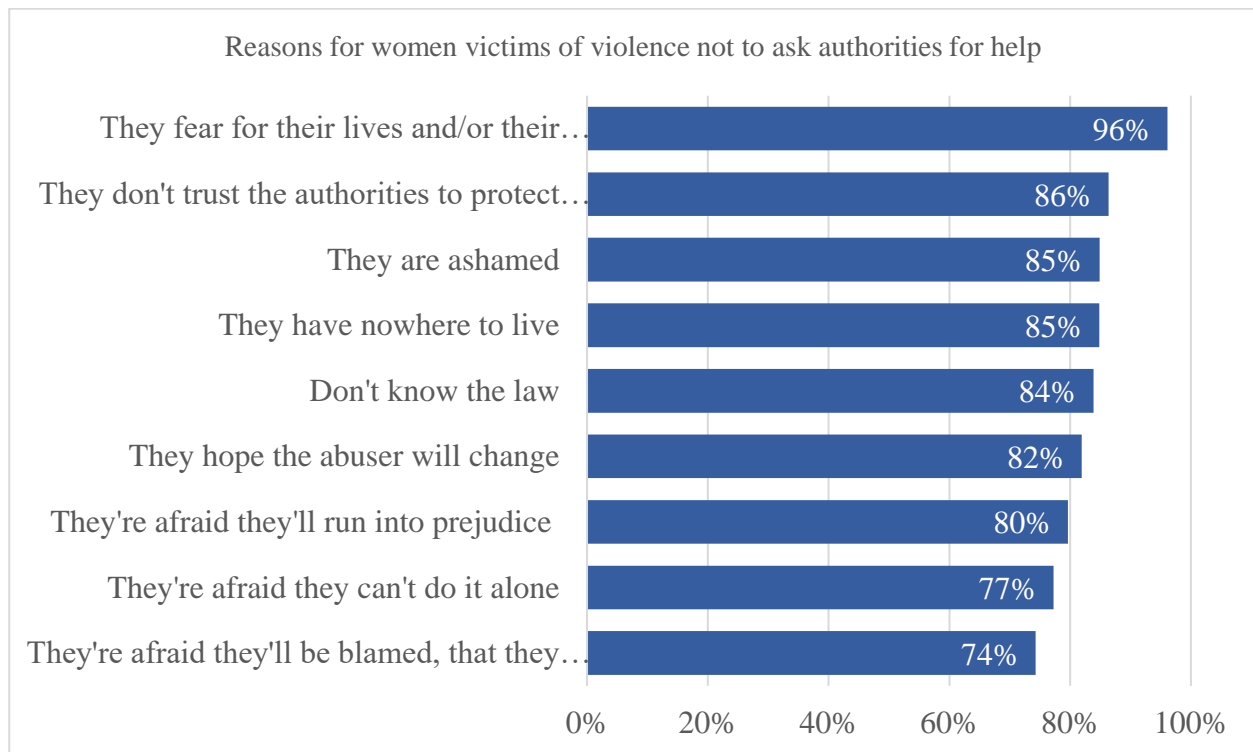
Figure 29 Who should be asked to help by women victims of partner violence?



Why is it that women do not report violence?

It may seem counterintuitive that although the majority of respondents say that violence against women should be reported to the police, this is often not the case. The behaviour of women, however, is neither irrational nor counterintuitive, but is influenced by gender stereotypes and structural gender inequalities. As variants, we have elaborated nine of the most common stereotypes and explanations for non-reporting violence or not addressing violence as identified in previous research: (1) They hope the abuser will change; (2) They feel ashamed; (3) They fear they will be blamed, that they instigated; (4) They fear for their lives and/or their children's lives; (5) They fear they can't handle it. (6) They have no place to live; (7) They fear prejudice; (8) They don't trust the authorities to protect them; (9) They don't know the law. The answers indicate that all these reasons are perceived as factors that influence women's decision not to report violence: the percentages range from 74% (fear of being blamed) to 96% (fear for their lives and the lives of their children).

Figure 30 Reasons for women victims of violence not to ask authorities for help



The differences between the answers to this question in terms of place of residence or level of education are minor (5-6%). The largest differences are for unmarried people (*Figure 31*), who mostly agree with two of the reasons given (lack of trust in authorities and fear for their own and their children's lives); for all the other reasons, they agree less than people who are or have been in a couple (the differences reach 13-14% for the options fear they cannot do it alone or have nowhere to live). Differences vary from 6% for lack of trust in authorities to as much as 15% for shame as a reason. Generally, widowed or divorced people are more sensitive to these reasons.

Figure 31 Reasons for women victims of violence not to ask authorities for help, by marital status

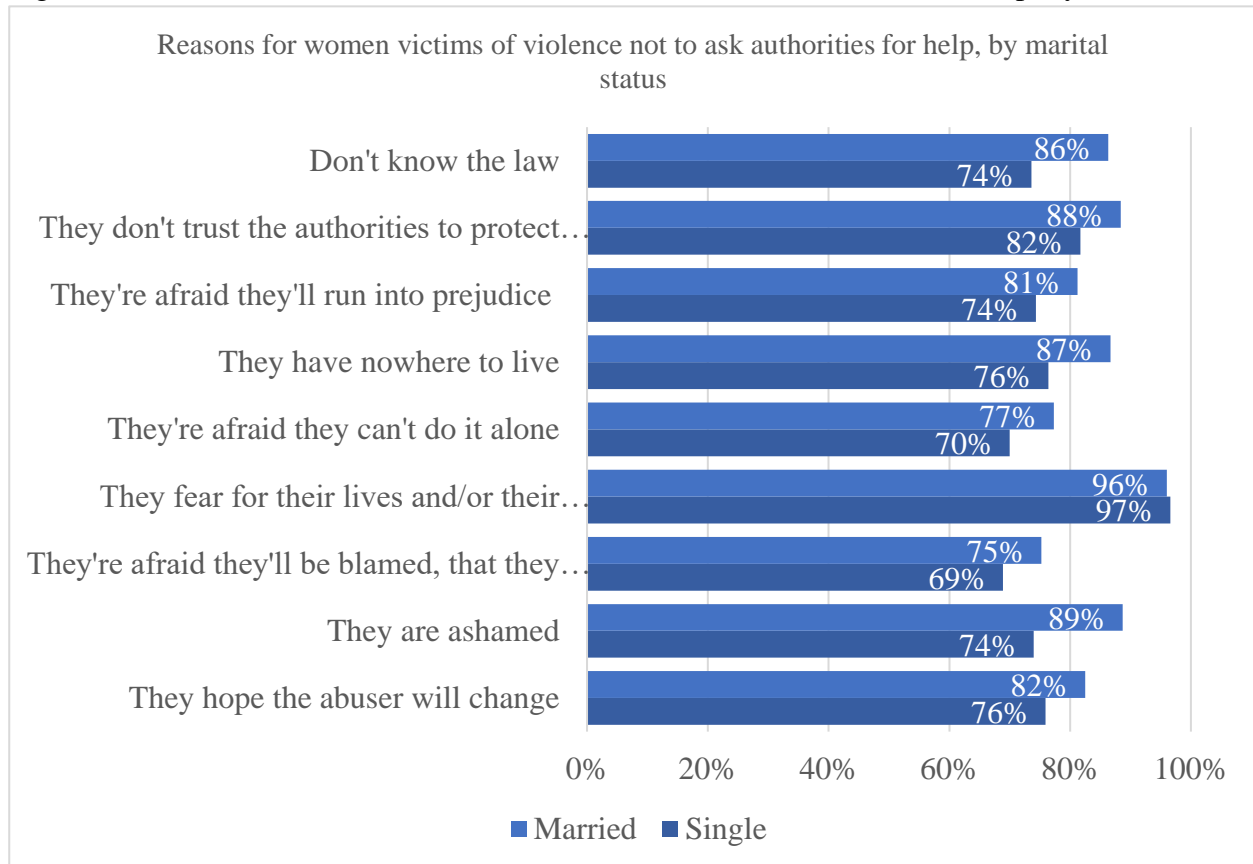
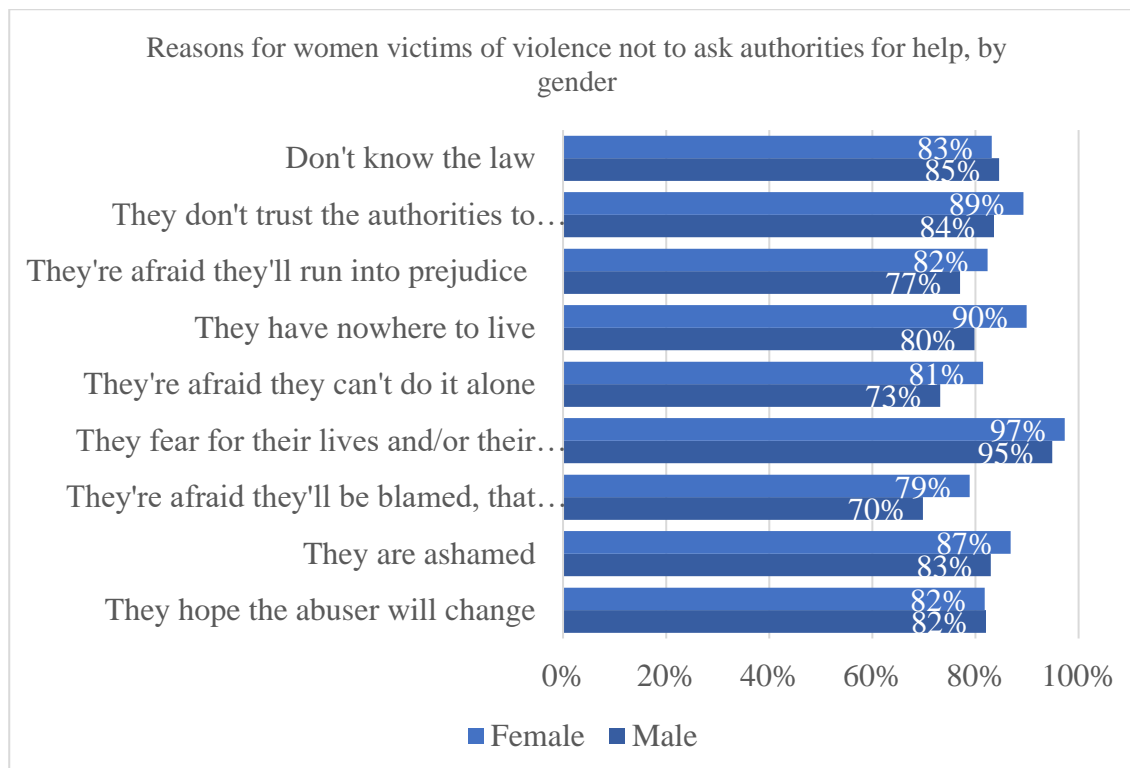


Figure 32 Reasons for women victims of violence not to ask authorities for help, by gender

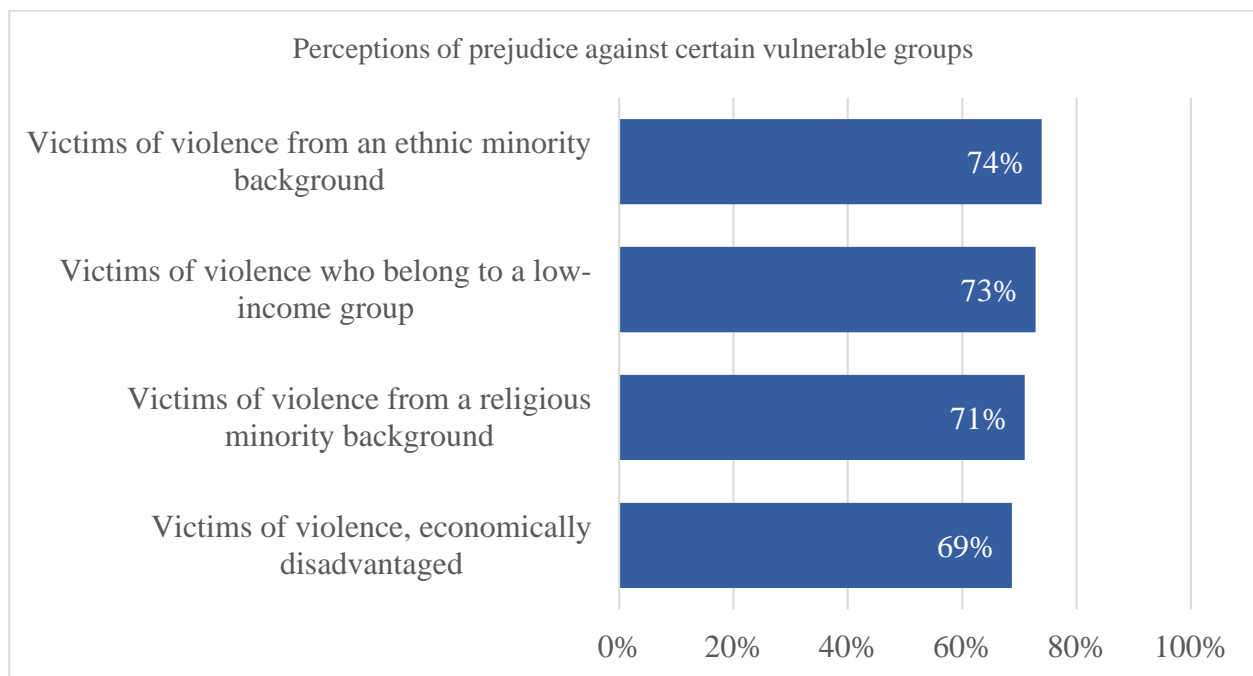


Women are also more likely to agree with all the reasons listed than men (*Figure 32*). As opposed to men, more women (+10%) consider homelessness and fear of being alone (+8%) as one of the reasons, which may be a reflection of material dependence, which women feel and are more aware of than men. Women also feel the social pressure more, and fear of being blamed for causing it is also an important reason why women do not complain (9% less than men).

Violence against women from an intersectional perspective

The material limitations outlined in the introductory study (methodological section) prevented us from sufficiently exploring perceptions and attitudes related to other structural inequalities that intersect with violence against women. By means of socio-demographic indicators related to education level, residential environment, income level and household size we particularly explored the dimension related to social category differences (economic hardship, lack of education).

Figure 33 Perceptions on the existence of prejudices towards certain vulnerable groups



By the last question we wanted to see to what extent belonging to a vulnerable group is perceived as an additional reason to fear that the authorities will not help women victims of violence. Thus, we invited respondents to answer to what extent victims of violence who belong to certain vulnerable groups (defined on the basis of ethnicity, religion, poverty or poor education) and who do not turn to the authorities because they fear they will be prejudiced are right or wrong to believe this.

Overall, in all four situations, respondents agree, in percentages of over 70%, that they are a cause for concern as regards the attitude and reaction of the authorities (*Figure 33*). Ethnicity (74%) and

lack of education (73%) are considered to be more prevalent/important than religion (71%) and poverty (69%). Once again, women are more sensitive to behaviours and more aware of these barriers and difficulties. Women are more likely to perceive the risk of discriminatory treatment caused by religious (+8%), poverty and education (6%) and ethnic (only 4%) stereotypes.