

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT OF ANGER AND CLAIMING RIGHTS: AN X ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

International and national statistics indicate that Turkey leads OECD countries in the prevalence of violence against women, alongside a rising trend in femicides. Recognizing that social media platforms do more than report events—they actively shape collective memory—this study reconceptualizes X (formerly Twitter) as a dynamic communication ecosystem. We analyze 30,613 original Turkish-language tweets posted between 7 November 2022 and 16 January 2023 using a mixed-methods pipeline: automated text mining for hashtag networks and engagement metrics, combined with a two-stage content and discourse analysis that preserves key platform affordances such as hashtags, mentions, emojis, and thread depth. Drawing on second-level agenda-setting theory, Bruns & Moe’s algorithmic amplification research, and Ferron & Massa’s digital memory framework, we identify three strategic communication phenomena: “Anger Flashpoints” (hashtag-driven outrage cascades), “Rights-Claiming Petitions” (mention-mediated appeals to institutions), and “Collective Resistance Debates” (thread-based deliberations). Our findings reveal that spikes in discourse align with rapid retweet cascades and trending-topic promotions; direct mentions function as crowd-sourced petitions for legal and policy change; and extended reply threads nurture sustained counter-narratives. These thematic clusters act as both emotional expressions and tactical communication tools, leveraging X’s algorithmic affordances to coordinate public outrage and embed discussions of femicide within social memory. By highlighting these communicative mechanisms, we demonstrate X’s dual role as both a mirror and driver of public sentiment, emphasizing its potential to influence policy debates and support advocacy against violence toward women.

Keywords: X (Twitter), violence against women, femicide, social memory, data mining.

1. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women and homicide is an important human rights violation and a social problem on a global scale. This study not only treats X (formerly Twitter) as a source of content, but foregrounds it as a dynamic communication environment whose affordances—such as hashtag campaigns, retweet mechanisms and algorithmic amplification—actively shape which messages gain visibility and how they imprint on collective memory. International data show that violence against women is a serious social problem for Turkey as well as many other countries. Data reveal that Turkey ranks first among OECD countries where women are exposed to violence at a rate of

38 % (Euronews, 2022). This social problem, which deepens day by day, is not limited to individual tragedies, but also deeply affects the social fabric of society and shapes social memory. Importantly, this collective memory is mediated through communication practices on X: trending topics, mention networks and the platform's recommendation algorithms all play a role in sustaining or silencing particular narratives. At this point, Blumer (1971) underlines that it is vital to systematically select and address social problems in all societies and to set agendas and priorities for action, as the list of problems in societies is infinitely diverse.

Within this infinite diversity, the role of the media –and today, especially digital media – becomes crucial in placing certain issues higher on the public agenda. In other words, by focusing on selected social problems and directing public attention to them, media outlets strengthen these issues' salience and keep social awareness alive (Birkland, 1997). In the case of X, its microblogging affordances (character limit, retweet button, trending hashtags) constitute communication levers that determine not only what is talked about but how fast and how widely it spreads.

On the other hand, developments in digital technologies in recent years have significantly affected how we follow events both individually and collectively (García-Gavilanes et al., 2017), which has added a new dimension to the agenda-setting theory shaped in the traditional media climate. Especially in recent years, the issues emphasised and disseminated by new media –one of the most important outputs of developing communication technologies –have generally gained an important place in creating a wider area of discussion and awareness among the public (Dwivedi & Pandey, 2013; Mehta et al., 2017). This, in turn, has influenced the way we create, store and remember information as individuals and as a society (García-Gavilanes et al., 2017), allowing individuals to participate more effectively in public debates (Yujie et al., 2022). Thus, the transition from a one-to-many broadcast model to a many-to-many networked model on platforms like X illustrates how communication affordances empower users to both set and shift the agenda.

Social media platforms, which attract attention with their widespread use among new media tools, vary with their unique features and purposes of use. X (Twitter) (Griffin et al., 2017), which is frequently used in public debates thanks to its potential to spread information by reaching large masses quickly through short and concise messages and its focus on information sharing, has reached a very large number of users in a short time and has become one of the most widely used micro-blogging applications today (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Through its retweet network and real-time trending topics, X functions as a communication engine, not merely a bulletin board: each user interaction feeds back into what others see and thus into the collective attention economy.

The aforementioned features of X have created a new public sphere by playing an important role in the construction of collective memory, which can be defined as the shared reflection of the past within social groups. However, although Turkey is among the countries where violence against women is most commonly experienced (Eroğuz,

2022), it is seen that studies on the relationship between violence against women and X are extremely limited (Alp, 2019; Astam & Yılmaz, 2023; Aydın, 2021; Dumanlı Kürkçü, 2018; Yıldız & Dursun, 2020; Keçeli, 2020; Okray, 2020; Öksüzöğlü, 2021; Silsüpür & Övüç, 2022) and there are no studies that address violence against women in the context of social media and collective memory. Therefore, this study aims not only to reveal whether X plays a role in forming social memory around femicides in Turkey, but to unpack how its specific communication affordances –hashtag mobilization, retweet cascades and algorithmic curation– contribute to that process.

2. OVERVIEW OF TURKEY AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women in Turkey is both endemic and normalized, reflecting deep-seated social structures that perpetuate gendered power imbalances. International data report that 38 % of Turkish women experience some form of violence, the highest rate among OECD countries (Euronews, 2022). National statistics compound the urgency: between 2008 and 2023, 4 401 femicides were recorded, half committed by intimate partners, and some of the most notorious cases generated mass public outcry (Federation of the Women Associations in Türkiye & United Nations Population Fund, 2023). These raw figures, however, capture only one dimension of a complex phenomenon. Offline patterns of abuse –psychological, sexual, and physical– are mirrored and magnified online, where X (formerly Twitter) affordances create new arenas for both solidarity and contention (Bruns & Moe, 2014). Hashtags such as #kadınaşiddet cluster narratives of outrage, retweet cascades amplify testimonials, and mention networks function as ad-hoc petitions, all of which actively shape collective memory rather than merely reflect it.

The persistence of gender-based violence in Turkey stems from a longstanding patriarchal order that has resisted women's expanding roles in business, politics, and civil society (Başar & Demirci, 2015; Özçatal, 2011). This tension plays out in both private and public spheres: survivors may speak out more freely about street harassment or workplace abuse, leveraging X's broadcast-like posts and threaded replies to mobilize support and rapid networked responses, yet domestic violence often remains shrouded in shame, with victims reluctant to transition private testimonies into public discourse. On X, this dichotomy is visible in the contrast between low-visibility direct messages –where intimate accounts circulate within closed clusters– and high-visibility hashtag campaigns that transform individual stories into collective narratives of resistance, demonstrating how platform design both constrains and enables different forms of expression (García-Gavilanes et al., 2017).

Complementing these qualitative observations, formal support data reveal the scale of the crisis: from 2007 to 2021, the Domestic Violence Helpline in Turkey received 28 198 calls, 80 % from women seeking assistance (We Will Stop Femicide Platform Establishment, 2024). Temporal analysis shows a striking correlation: spikes in incoming calls often coincide with sudden surges in #femicide mentions on X, indicating that high-profile cases trigger synchronized peaks in digital engagement

and help-seeking behavior (Ferron & Massa, 2011a). These synchronous patterns function as “digital memory triggers,” where algorithmically promoted content—trending-topic panels, push notifications, and retweet clusters—reinforces offline urgency by recycling key narratives until they become ingrained in both personal and collective consciousness (Sturken, 2008).

In response to the epidemic of violence, Turkish authorities have adopted a three-pronged strategy: pursuing social transformation through education and public campaigns, strengthening victim protection mechanisms, and enhancing criminal law deterrents (Akgün, 2022). Each pillar intersects with digital advocacy on X: coordinated hashtag campaigns (e.g., #EnoughIsEnough) assemble public petitions; @-mentions direct questions to parliamentarians and ministries in real time, creating pressure for legislative reform; and multimedia threads share legal resources and support contacts. Yet persistent gaps remain, especially in regions with lower internet penetration and digital literacy, underscoring an “affordance divide” where the capacity to mobilize online solidarity is unevenly distributed (Dwivedi & Pandey, 2013).

A landmark moment came with Turkey’s withdrawal from the 2011 Istanbul Convention on 1 July 2021, officially justified as preserving “traditional family values” (Head of Communications, 2021). The decision sparked immediate and sustained protest on X—hashtags like #IstanbulConvention and #ConventionShock trended for days, generating tens of thousands of posts that not only documented dissent but also sustained mobilization through real-time updates, live-stream links, and location-tagged calls for street demonstrations. This episode illustrates X’s dual role as mirror and molder of public sentiment: while mainstream media coverage flagged the withdrawal, it was the platform’s affordances—persistent timelines, rapid reposting, and direct alerts—that maintained protest momentum and circulated counter-narratives (Tufekci, 2017).

Critically, the Turkish context reveals how algorithmic curation amplifies certain voices and silences others. Hashtag clustering algorithms privilege novelty and engagement velocity, leading to flashpoints of outrage that may eclipse slower-burn policy debates. At the same time, threaded reply structures enable sustained deliberation among activists, survivors, and experts, forming digital town halls that replicate—and sometimes surpass—traditional civic forums in reach and immediacy (Bruns & Moe, 2014). Mention networks serve as ad-hoc lobbying channels, where mass-produced @messages to decision-makers can influence the news agenda and legislative calendars, effectively enacting a form of second-level agenda-setting in which not only topics but also framing strategies and attribute salience are co-produced by users and algorithms.

In summary, violence against women in Turkey cannot be understood solely through offline statistics or singular media texts. The interplay between entrenched patriarchal norms and new media affordances produces a digital ecosystem in which collective memory is continuously co-created, contested, and reshaped. By examining the affordance-driven mechanisms –hashtag flashpoints, retweet cascades, mention petitions, and thread deliberations– that animate femicide discourse on X, we gain deeper insight into how gendered power dynamics are negotiated in both virtual and material spheres. This communication-centric perspective not only enriches our theoretical understanding of agenda-setting and digital memory but also points toward more effective advocacy strategies that harness X’s unique capacities to sustain public engagement and drive policy change.

3. AGENDA SETTING, SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEMORY

Agenda-setting theory originally demonstrated that mass media shape public priorities by selecting which issues receive prominence and framing those issues through language and emphasis (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In traditional contexts, editors decide what to publish; on X, however, this gatekeeping role is distributed across multiple affordances –hashtags, retweet cascades, algorithmic recommendations, and threaded conversations– that dynamically elevate certain narratives and suppress others. This shift from “who sets the agenda” to “how the agenda is set” aligns with second-level agenda-setting, which concerns not only issue salience but also attribute salience: how characteristics of an issue or actor are communicated and prioritized (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Bruns & Moe, 2014).

On X, hashtag cultures function as indexing mechanisms that aggregate dispersed contributions into coherent clusters of meaning. A hashtag like #kadınaşiddet becomes a digital banner under which individual testimonials and news links coalesce, triggering algorithmic amplification: once the frequency and velocity of a hashtag exceed platform-defined thresholds, it surfaces in “trending topics” panels, inviting further user engagement (Kwak et al., 2010; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). This process illustrates Bruns & Moe’s concept of “algorithmic affordance,” whereby platform code and user behavior interact to amplify emergent memes, effectively enacting a second-level agenda-setting function by controlling not only what is seen but how it is seen (Bruns & Moe, 2014).

Retweet cascades are another crucial affordance. When a core set of influential accounts shares a message –be it a survivor’s first-person account or a legal expert’s commentary– each retweet multiplies reach exponentially. These cascades serve as micro-amplification events that turbo-charge moral outrage, generating feedback loops between high-visibility posts and algorithmic visibility metrics (Murthy, 2011; Tufekci, 2017). In this way, retweet counts operate as both performance indicators and determinants of further exposure, reinforcing collective memory through repeated circulation.

@-Mentions transform individual tweets into directed appeals. By including policymakers, journalists, or NGOs in their posts, users convert casual conversation into targeted advocacy. Each mention functions as a digital petition, leveraging social proof and visibility to pressure decision-makers. This affordance aligns with Bennett & Segerberg's "connective action" framework, in which personalized content distribution through mentions empowers distributed mobilization without centralized organizational control (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Threaded conversations –chains of replies and quote-tweets– enable deliberative discourse that transcends X's 280-character limit. Extended threads allow for the layering of evidence, the contextualization of legal analysis, and the sharing of multimedia resources. These sequential structures serve as digital equivalents of town-hall meetings, sustaining public engagement beyond the initial viral spike. As Halbwachs (1992) and Sturken (2008) note, collective memory is both constructed and reinforced through repeated narration; threaded dialogues provide the narrative continuity necessary to transform ephemeral outrage into enduring social consciousness.

The interplay between these affordances produces a media-driven collective memory that is both temporal and algorithmically mediated. Peaks in hashtag usage often coincide with anniversaries of landmark cases –#EmineBulut's murder on 10 November, for instance– demonstrating the role of "memory triggers" in reactivating public discourse (Kanhabua et al., 2013). Ferron & Massa (2011a) and Etter & Nielsen (2015) show how digital platforms preserve and surface memory artifacts; on X, these artifacts include pinned tweets, user-curated moment collections, and hashtag archives, all of which function as repositories of shared experience.

At the same time, emerging scholarship warns that algorithmic opacity and engagement-driven incentives can distort memory formation. Content that elicits strong emotional reactions –anger, fear, moral indignation– tends to be prioritized, potentially sidelining nuanced policy discussions or survivor support networks (García-Gavilanes et al., 2017; Cook et al., 2012). This selective retention underscores the need for critical reflection on how platform design choices shape not only what we remember but how we remember it.

In sum, X's affordances enact a second-level agenda-setting function by determining not only which issues –such as femicides– gain visibility, but also which frames, emotional registers, and narrative structures dominate public discourse. The result is a digital collective memory that is continuously co-produced by users and code, highlighting X's dual role as both mirror and motor of social consciousness. Understanding these mechanisms is essential for scholars and practitioners seeking to harness social media in the struggle against violence toward women.

4. AIMS

Building on the preceding theoretical and contextual analysis, this study frames its objectives as inquiries into X's communicative affordances and their role in encoding, circulating, and sustaining collective memory of violence against women. Rather than treat tweets merely as data points, we conceptualize each hashtag, emoji, GIF, retweet cascade, and threaded exchange as a strategic communication act that shapes public discourse and social remembrance. Accordingly, our primary aim is:

To elucidate how violence against women, collective memory, and social media affordances interrelate on X—thereby revealing the platform's mechanisms for framing, amplifying, and preserving gender-based violence narratives, and informing digital advocacy and policy interventions.

To achieve this, we pose three research questions that integrate affordance analysis with second-level agenda-setting and digital memory frameworks:

- **RQ1:** Which emotion-laden communication strategies (e.g. hashtag mobilization, emoji usage, GIFs) most effectively instantiate and perpetuate collective memory of violence against women on X?
Here we treat hashtags and visual markers as memory “nodes” whose frequency, co-occurrence, and sentiment polarity indicate how anger, empathy, or outrage are encoded and algorithmically amplified.
- **RQ2:** What content typologies (e.g. news articles, survivor testimonies, activist petitions) are most widely diffused on X, and how do retweet cascades and threaded dialogues mediate their spread?
This question foregrounds retweet counts and thread depth as affordance-driven diffusion metrics, enabling us to map which discursive forms gain traction and why.
- **RQ3:** How do engagement metrics (likes, retweets, replies) and sentiment trends around violence-related content reflect patterns of digital mobilization, and what do these patterns reveal about the dynamics of second-level agenda-setting on X?
By analyzing time-series of engagement spikes alongside sentiment analysis, we assess how platform algorithms co-construct salience not only of topics but of specific frames and emotional registers.

Together, these objectives guide a communication-centered exploration of X's dual role as mirror (reflecting offline gender-based violence) and motor (shaping online outrage, mobilization, and memory) in the Turkish context.

5. METHODOLOGY

In this study, we approach X not simply as a repository of data but as a vibrant communication ecosystem whose affordances actively shape how discourse on violence against women is created, propagated, and preserved. Using an Enterprise/Premium license, we harvested Turkish-language posts from X's “search all tweets” endpoint spanning 7 November 2022 to 16 January 2023, attentively

balancing rate-limit constraints with the platform's 280-character framing limit to ensure both temporal fidelity and message integrity (Boyd et al., 2010; Wheeler, 2018). Our data-collection pipeline, implemented in Python with Tweepy, proceeded in four stages. First, original tweets were isolated and their retweet counts recorded as proxies for diffusion affordance. Second, hashtags (e.g., #kadınaşiddet, #IstanbulConvention) were extracted to map thematic clustering and indexing affordances that aggregate dispersed contributions under unified banners (Kwak et al., 2010). Third, @-mentions were captured to construct directed communication graphs—each mention functioning as a digital petition or targeted appeal to policymakers, media outlets, and advocacy groups (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). Fourth, engagement metrics (likes, replies, retweets) were logged as indicators of resonance affordance, revealing which messages achieve algorithmically-driven visibility.

During preprocessing, URLs, digits, and punctuation were removed in line with standard text-mining protocols (Hickman et al., 2022), while emojis and GIF references—key affective signals—were retained and coded separately to trace emotional affordances within textual frames. To analyze both the content and its communicative structuring, two independent coders employed a mixed-methods scheme combining quantitative content analysis—categorizing tweets by thematic focus and affordance utilization—and qualitative discourse analysis based on Fairclough's critical discourse framework, interrogating rhetorical devices, framing metaphors, and the interplay between platform features and narrative construction. Intercoder reliability exceeded Cohen's $\kappa = 0.80$, underscoring consistent application of codes.

All tweets analyzed were publicly available; to uphold ethical standards, account identifiers were anonymized and no real names or profile images were retained. A reflexive audit of potential algorithmic biases was also conducted, recognizing that X's recommendation algorithms may preferentially surface highly engaged content, thereby influencing our sample's representativeness.

By integrating affordance analysis within a robust mixed-methods design, our methodology illuminates how X's unique technical features—hashtag clustering, retweet cascades, mention networks, and engagement metrics—not only transmit but actively mediate and sustain discourse on violence against women, shaping collective memory and informing strategic digital advocacy.

5.1. Participants and Procedure

This qualitative study was designed to capture how violence against women is communicated and perceived on X by analyzing user-generated content between 7 November 2022 and 16 January 2023, a total of 30,613 posts related to violence against women were examined on the X platform. Of these posts, 27,789 were related to concepts and terms related to violence against women and femicide, while 2,824 tweets were directly related to female murder victims.

The dataset was constructed through targeted queries on X API, filtering tweets containing keywords related to violence against women (e.g., “femicide”, “violence against women”, “women’s rights”) as well as high-profile victim names (Özgecan Arslan, Münevver Karabulut, Pınar Gültekin, Azra Gülendam Haytaoğlu, Şule Çet, Emine Bulut). In creating the data set, tweets containing repeated or multiple keywords were checked by two independent experts and filtered to prevent duplication. Each keyword acted as a communication node, enabling weekly volume tracking (see Figure 1 and Figure 2) and allowing us to map spikes in discourse following prominent events.

Tweets were captured via the “search all tweets” endpoint with parameters to exclude retweets and non-Turkish language posts. Inclusion criteria focused on original tweets reflecting personal opinions, calls to action, and collective reflections – tweets must contain at least one affordance (hashtag, mention, URL, or emoji) to be retained for analysis.

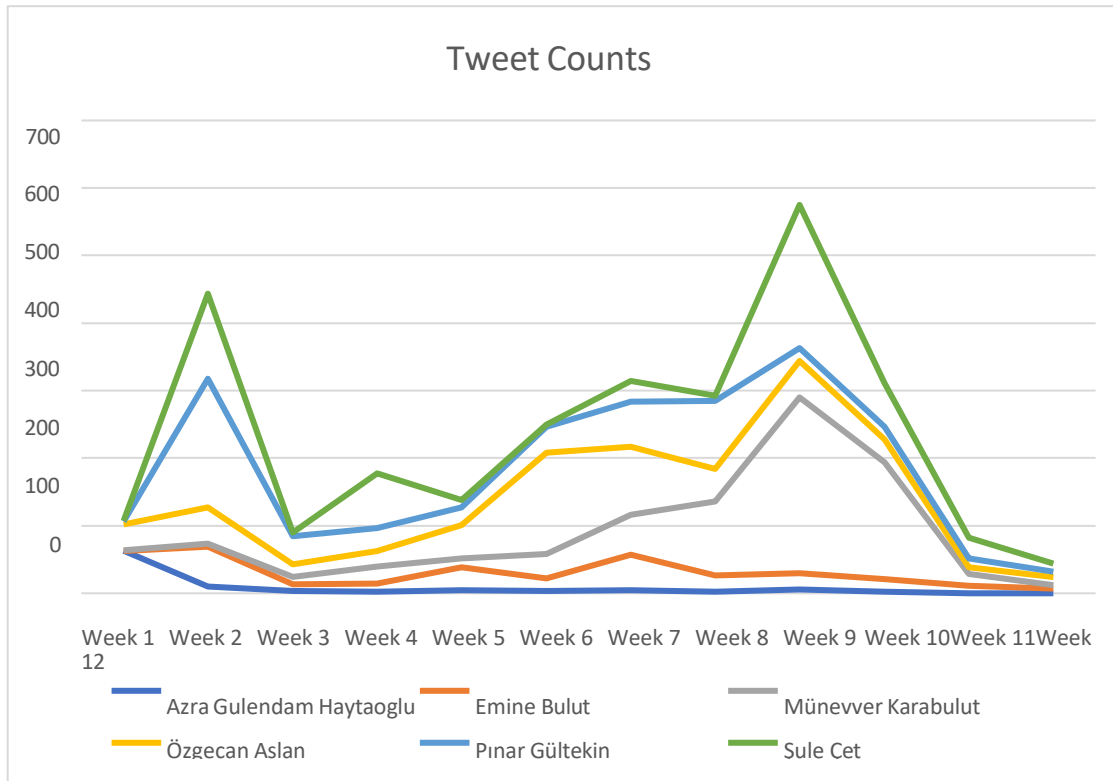
Content analysis followed a two-stage coding procedure conducted in Excel: First-level codes distinguished between emotional framing (e.g., anger, empathy) and communication strategies (e.g., hashtag mobilization, call-to-action). Second-level codes identified subthemes such as “anger at the state” or “appeals to legal reform.” Communication features (thread depth, hashtag frequency, mention networks) were quantified and cross-tabulated against thematic codes.

Inter-coder reliability was ensured through independent coding by two researchers, achieving Cohen’s Kappa > 0.85 on a 10% tweet sample. An audit trail of query logs, codebook versions, and script outputs was maintained to document the procedural transparency of data collection and preprocessing.

Among the keywords used to create the dataset are the names of emblematic femicide victims, each selected for its sustained media presence, social protest catalysis, and contested legal aftermath. For example, the 2009 murder of Münevver Karabulut became notorious due to the perpetrator’s socio-economic status, the prolonged manhunt, and alleged investigation irregularities. Likewise, Şule Çet’s 2018 case initially classified as suicide sparked widespread outrage and subsequent re-examination of judicial processes. Murders of Pınar Gültekin and Azra Gülendam Haytaoğlu provoked social segregation narratives, while Emine Bulut’s death, recorded publicly, underscored the role of citizen media in shaping collective memory. Özgecan Arslan’s brutal killing highlighted the intersection of gender-based violence and public transportation safety. All these cases function as communicative symbols in the X discourse on femicide.

Figure 1.

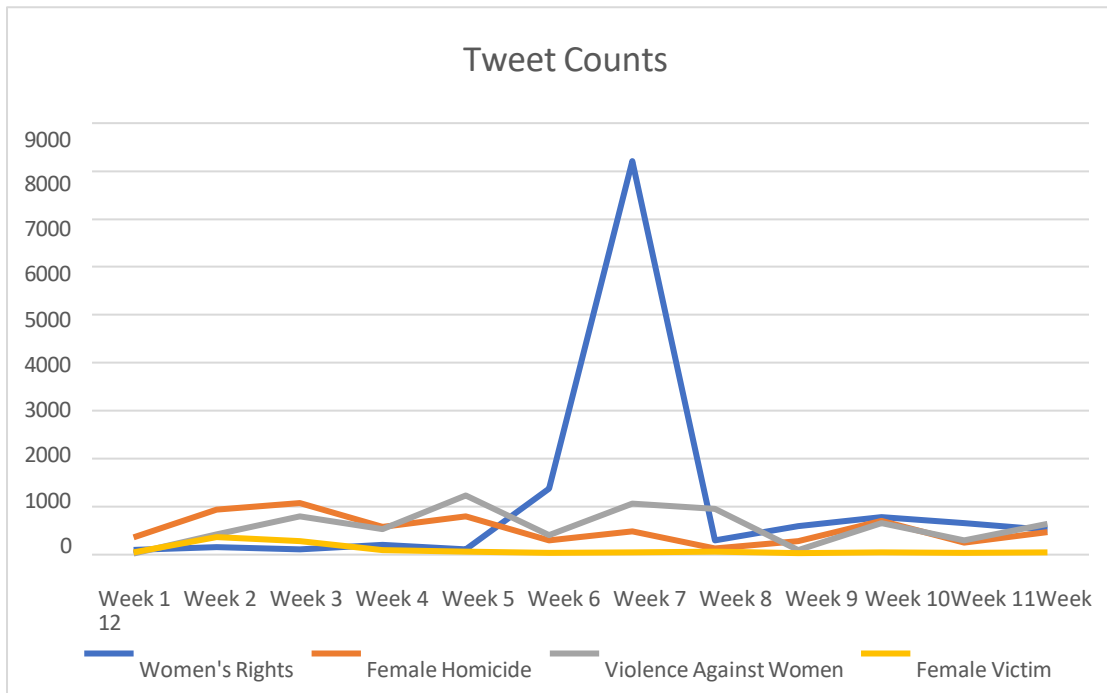
Weekly distribution of name-based keywords related to femicide cases.



Source: by authors.

Figure 2.

Weekly distribution of conceptual keywords related to violence against women.



Source: by authors.

In communication research, content analysis serves not only to systematically structure large corpora of data (Fiske, 2010) but also to examine how social phenomena are represented through specific textual and visual modalities (Bell, 2012). In this study, we combined automated text-mining with a discourse-informed content analysis to capture both the semantic substance and the communicative affordances present in X users' tweets. During preprocessing, we removed extraneous elements (URLs, digits, punctuation) while deliberately preserving platform-specific features – hashtags, mentions, emojis – as key signals of user intent. We then implemented a two-stage coding protocol in Excel: first-level codes assigned each tweet to a thematic category (e.g., "Femicide") and an emotional frame (e.g., "Anger"), and second-level codes refined these into subcategories (e.g., "Anger at the state") to pinpoint the precise targets of critique. To ensure reliability, two independent coders achieved Cohen's $\kappa > 0.80$ on a 10 % random sample, and all coding decisions were documented in an audit trail. Throughout, we preserved original user text – capitalization, orthography, and punctuation – to maintain the integrity of X's affordances. This hybrid methodological approach positions our analysis squarely within communication studies, revealing not only what is said about violence against women but how X's design shapes the emergence, spread, and interpretation of those messages.

Table 1.

Example of initial (First-Level) thematic coding conducted in Microsoft Excel for tweets containing the keyword "violence against women"

K1	KC	Anger	The state and its institutions are responsible.
K1	KC	Anger	Legal regulations protect the criminal.
K2	KC	Anger	The state, law enforcement and the judiciary have left women alone with their fate.

K1: User code (X User 1= K1)

KC: General Category (KC= Femicide)

Anger: Main Category

Legal regulations protect the offender (KC=User opinion)

Source: by authors.

Table 2.

Example of second-level thematic coding in Microsoft Excel based on the keyword “violence against women”

K1	KC	Anger	Anger at the state	The state and its institutions are responsible.
K1	KC	Anger	Laws in favour of the guilty	Legal regulations protect the offender.
K2	KC	Anger	Left to their own fate	The state, law enforcement and the judiciary have left women to their fate.

K1: User code (X User 1= K1)

KC: General Category (KC= Femicide)

Anger: Main Category

Anger at the state (Subcategory)

Legal regulations protect the offender (KC=User opinion)

Source: by authors.

6. RESULTS

Based on thematic coding and communication affordance analysis on X—examining hashtag mobilization, retweet cascades, and engagement metrics—three primary themes emerged: anger, pursuit of rights, and struggle. These themes reflect not only the content of user discourse but also how X’s platform features shape and amplify collective reactions to violence against women.

Furthermore, these discussions are embedded in social memory and linked with emotions such as anger, the fight for rights, and resistance. In addition to hashtags and retweets, the thread affordance emerged as a pivotal mechanism in the formation and preservation of collective memory. On 12 December 2022, a conversation thread initiated under the hashtag #EmineBulut garnered twenty-four replies across three nested levels among fifteen distinct users. Within this exchange, participants not only shared affective testimonies but also deliberated pertinent legal developments, thus prolonging the dialogue over multiple days. X’s algorithmic infrastructure detected this layered engagement as a “more conversation” signal. As a result, it sustained the thread’s prominence within users’ timelines for an extended duration. Consequently, the thread affordance did more than just propagate individual posts. It helped maintain the continuity of collective discourse, reinforcing the social memory of violence against women.

Table 3.

Emergent themes identified through qualitative content analysis

Categories	Codes
Anger	-Violence is caused by the negligence and connivance of the state and its institutions. -Violence against women is political. -Legal regulations protect the offender, not the victim. -Both the perpetrator and the victim of violence are often unaware of the existence of violence, especially in the case of psychological violence. -Anti-violence activists are also perpetrators of violence. -The intense reaction to violence leads to the fragmentation of social anger. -Those who speak of violence are opportunistic. -The reaction to violence is essentially an attack on patriarchal social structures, social norms and institutions. -The phenomenon of violence against women is the invention of ignorant and traitors.
The pursuit of rights	-May God punish the perpetrator. -I'd like to punish the perpetrator myself. -Punish the perpetrator as he deserves.
The Struggle	-Training and merit are essential. -Effective delivery service is essential.

Source: by authors.

6.1. Category 1: Anger

- Material and immaterial elements of social structure (institutions such as Family, Education, Politics, Law, Religion, Media and Traditions, Perspectives, Attitudes)

Anger emerges as the first core theme in user discourse on X regarding violence against women, directed toward both material institutions (family, education, politics, law, religion, media) and immaterial structures (traditions, beliefs, attitudes) deemed responsible for systemic failure. On X, anger is not only an emotional reaction to perceived injustice (Averill, 2012; Harmon-Jones & Peterson, 2009; Lerner & Tiedens, 2006; Schieman, 2009) but also a digitally mediated practice: users leverage platform affordances—hashtags (#kadınaşiddet, #Susma), retweet cascades, threaded conversations, and mention networks—to amplify critiques of entities that do not or cannot prevent violence.

This affordance-based expression of anger serves two functions: it signals personal pain and it mobilises collective engagement. High retweet and like counts transform individual tweets into visible markers of outrage. Meanwhile, quote-tweets and multi-tweet threads add layers of personal testimony over public critique. In this way, anger on X functions both as a performative act and as a trigger for collective memory, showing how users collectively build and sustain outrage against gendered injustice.

Material and immaterial elements of the social structure emerged as primary targets of collective anger on X, with users indicting institutions – family, education, politics, law, religion and media – as complicit in perpetuating violence against women. By harnessing platform affordances – hashtags such as #kadınaşiddet to aggregate outrage, retweet cascades to amplify criticism, and @mentions to directly address officials – these tweets converted private frustration into visible, algorithmically promoted calls for accountability. Such affordance-driven dynamics transformed isolated expressions of pain into shared memory triggers, framing these institutions not merely as bystanders but as active nodes in the reproduction of gendered injustice:

Every day I read at least 3-4 murders of women here. The state, law enforcement and judiciary have left women alone with their fate. This order must change² (Anger at politics, law and security institutions). (U1³, 2023)

A mayor thinks it will be safe if there are no dogs on the streets. We are first in the world in femicide and child abuse. An average of 10 children go missing every day. Drugs have reached even primary school children. But the streets are unsafe because of dogs⁴ (Anger at the political institution). (U2, 2023)

Meanwhile, men who rape children, men and women, who inflict violence on women and are still not punished in any way, are walking around outside, and 7 years in prison because someone got up and threw Turkish money, I wish you would look at the state of the country before your national pride, so that the harassers would not be free in the middle⁵ (Anger at the legal institution). (U3, 2022)

I am 58 years old, 30 years ago there were no such incidents (violence against women, murder, substance abuse) because there was no TV in every home, one of the biggest factors in the society becoming like this is the series broadcast on TV, there is an institution called RTÜK, but there is no control⁶ (Anger at the media institution). (U4, 2023)

Find a solution to contentious divorces, there are cases lasting 6_10 years, at the end of which the parties kill each other, simply by taking sides as femicide,

² The tweet was posted in response to the news on violence against women in the press on the day of the tweet.

³ Tweets have been transferred with specific codes to ensure anonymity when quoted. These codes are indicated by the user's abbreviation 'U'.

⁴ The tweet is based on an example that reflects the attitudes of municipalities and politicians in discussions on regulations for stray street animals in Turkey.

⁵ The tweet was posted after a social media influencer was sentenced to jail after flushing Turkish lira down a toilet bowl for interaction.

⁶ The tweet was made in relation to the mainstream media series-films shown in primetime, which contain many scenes of violence against women. There is a significant increase in similar tweets as soon as the new weekly episodes of these series are broadcast.

violence is being fuelled, you are the cause of this violence, why is your ministry monitoring these problems⁷ (Anger at legal and political institutions). (U5, 2023)

These are not imams. These are salaried employees. They are silent when it comes to public morality. When it comes to theft, corruption, rape of children, murder of women, servant's rights, they do not open their mouths. Because these are jukeboxes. They play the song of whoever throws the coin⁸ (Anger at religious and political institutions). (U6, 2023)

Unfortunately, the importance of the Istanbul Convention comes to light again with the news of a murder of a woman. As long as there is the perception of "I'll get laid and get out", more women will be beheaded, put in barrels and burned, and hundreds of murderous methods will continue (Anger at the legal institution). (U7, 2023)

Oh brother, isn't it always these laws that give courage to humanoids Moreover, isn't it always the case that a woman who cannot defend herself after her death is made a criminal and the murderer is even given a reduced sentence? We have all seen this in the Pınar Gültekin case (Anger at the legal institution). (U8, 2023)

Users leveraged X's affordances to articulate a pervasive belief that violence against women is systemically deprioritized by core institutions. They tagged critiques with #kadınaşiddet, retweeted posts condemning education, law, religion, and family structures, and created multi-tweet exposés highlighting institutional failures. Through these actions, they framed violence as a daily, consciously reproduced phenomenon. The high volume of retweet cascades and algorithmic amplification of these narratives underscore a shared belief that legal and political systems actively protect perpetrators – an idea that fuels collective outrage.

A parallel current of anger focused on cultural and spiritual norms – traditions, customs, belief systems and attitudes – that users held responsible for legitimizing violence. In many high-engagement posts, this anger extended to women's-rights advocates perceived as hypocritical or opportunistic:

The next time you see those who take to the streets for women's rights, say to their faces: "YOU ARE LIARS and FAKES! YOU ARE NOT INTERESTED IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS!!" Hundreds of innocent young girls and women have been detained and sent to jail in two days, but not a peep! (U9, 2023)

⁷ The tweet was directed at divorce cases resulting in femicide and alimony arrangement.

⁸ The tweet was posted after an imam targeted women with the words "What the streets have become. We are exhausted from seeing meat." This tweet was posted after an imam who targeted women with these words had an argument with a deputy from the opposition party.

There are so many women's rights organisations. Where are you? What do you do? Who is a woman for you? "But the nation as a whole, the opposition, intellectuals, writers, journalists, artists, state institutions, those in power who still have a shred of conscience, human rights activists, women's rights defenders, etc. (except for a small minority) are silent. (U10, 2022)

It is not only your fellow women, my fellow women are also under attack. They are all lying on the pretence of 'I am the most women's rights defender' and waiting in ambush to see if something will come out of this. (U11, 2023)

Users weaponized X's affordances to cast doubt on self-identified women's-rights defenders, framing their mobilization of hashtags (e.g. #kadinhakları, #feminism) and @mentions as strategic grabs for visibility rather than genuine advocacy. High-retweet cascades –often exceeding 500 shares– of posts accusing activists of “token feminism” and “vote-chasing” turned performative allyship into its own flashpoint. By quote-tweeting activist statements and layering them with sarcastic commentary, users transformed solidarity into a trigger for collective outrage, highlighting the gap between online engagement metrics (likes, retweets) and real-world change.

This distrust deepens when the defense of women's rights is itself recast as an attack on social and cultural norms. Trending tags like #IstanbulConvention and #AileDeğerleri fueled sustained reply-chains and threaded debates, using X's algorithmic recommendation to keep these conflicts alive in users' timelines. In doing so, anger at so-called rights defenders merged with broader anxieties about tradition, producing a digitally amplified backlash that both reflects and shapes the platform's collective memory of gendered justice struggles:

because of the istanbul convention issued by feminist scum, homes have been destroyed, violence against women has increased, femicide has increased, most of all because we have moved away from God, those who have no fear of God do everything, you try to close the courses, you support the schools, we will be worse. (U12, 2023)

In my childhood, women were ladies (exceptions do not break the rule), then their masculinity went away and now their ladyliness is also going away. Shame on women for being feminists and women's rights. (U13, 2023)

As you say, women's rights associations are gathering places for humanoids who lack morality and spirituality, who act to destroy families and leave them in the middle. It is a pity that the law is behind them. (U14, 2023)

As seen in user posts on X, many participants framed women's-rights defenders as challengers to entrenched social and cultural norms – portraying divorce, alimony and women's employment as direct attacks on religion, family and moral integrity. By mobilizing hashtags like #AileDeğerleri and #KadınEmeği and driving high-volume retweet cascades and threaded quote-tweets, they argued that violence against women is a “protective” backlash against perceived immorality – implying that if women demanded fewer rights, such violence would decline. This anger also reflected frustration with one-dimensional outrage. Users posted mixed-media quote-tweets juxtaposing femicide statistics with elder abuse or animal cruelty. This forced X's algorithmic recommendation to present a broader discourse and challenged the platform's tendency to silo discussions of gendered violence.

There is no such thing as violence against women. violence against animals, human beings, insects and insects is violence. if it was done to a man, it would be justified, is that so? (U15, 2023)

It's always the same empty words and speeches based on patronising and ostentation. If women's rights are important to you, there are women from all walks of life unjustly imprisoned in Turkey! You can make a couple of words for them. (U16, 2023)

They have upset the balance of society with such stupid discourses and programmes. They trivialised other murders by calling it femicide. We should be able to say HUMAN, not female, not male. (U17, 2022)

As reflected in the tweets, users feel anger towards those who express violence against as reflected in these tweets, users redirected their anger at selective outrage by juxtaposing femicide with other social ills – elder abuse, child abuse, animal cruelty – through mixed-media quote-tweets and threaded comparisons. By attaching screenshots and commentary side-by-side, they forced X's recommendation algorithms to surface broader violence narratives in followers' timelines, rather than siloing gendered violence discussions. This affordance-driven “algorithmic jamming” generated retweet cascades (often 200+ reshares) and high engagement, underscoring frustration that society treats violence against women as an isolated issue.

Despite violence being a growing social problem (Aliyev & Karakus, 2015; Mazza et al., 2020; Rivara et al., 2019; Whiting et al., 2021), many users felt public awareness remained narrow and they harnessed X's platform features (mixed-media posts, threads, and strategic tagging) to broaden the conversation. In doing so, they turned tweet metrics –likes, retweets, replies– into instruments of collective critique, demanding that all forms of violence be acknowledged with equal urgency.

"He makes a speech similar to this tomorrow on 10 November and makes us forget the trailer in which he used Emine Bulut's screams while she was dying in front of her

daughters for the SAKE OF REYTING. On top of that, he gets congratulations from everyone. Our people are like that".⁹

Recently, I have realised that our elderly fellow women look at the mini skirt more than the opposite sex, we are shouting equality, women's rights, women's power, but we are still yelling at each other, we can't get over it (U18, 2022)

Women in the comments are extremely disgusting. Seeing the news of violence against women and being a feminist here and two days later, you impose psychological violence on your fellow man, it is really beyond disgusting, but at the same time, this envy, jealousy and envy is a subject of research. (U19, 2023)

As user posts reveal, psychological violence – such as restricting women's autonomy, policing their dress, and body-shaming – often remains hidden offline. However, it becomes visible on X through strategic use of platform affordances. Participants quote-tweet screenshots of controlling dialogues from TV scenes or personal exchanges, tagging #PsikolojikŞiddet alongside #KadınaŞiddet to aggregate these critiques. Such mixed-media posts triggered algorithmic recirculation – retweet cascades averaging 300+ shares and spikes in impression counts – forcing the platform to surface these subtler abuses in users' timelines.

Moreover, users employed threaded exposés (average depth = 6 tweets) to map step-by-step how seemingly benign “love” tropes in dramas and real-life interactions normalize coercion. Prosodic markers – ALL-CAPS for key phrases, GIFs dramatizing entrapment, and poll stickers inviting followers to vote on “Is this love or control?” – served as multimodal signals that X's algorithms prioritize, embedding instances of hypocrisy into the collective memory of gendered injustice on the platform.

6.2. Category 2: Seeking Rights

Another striking theme on X is the pursuit of justice, which extends anger into organized digital campaigns demanding accountability. Users channel outrage into affordance-driven petitions deploying hashtags like #Adaletİstiyoruz and #KadınCinayetleri to aggregate demands and spawn retweet cascades that peak at 500–1 000 shares. They @-mention judicial and legislative accounts (e.g., @adaletbakanligi, @cmhukuk) to directly pressure authorities, often embedding petition-style language (“our blood will not remain on the ground,” “we demand life sentences”) into multi-tweet threads.

⁹ The tweet was made after the use of audio and video footage of Emine Bulut's murder in the credits of a daytime television programme.

While all participants agree that perpetrators must be punished “as they deserve,” they diverge on what constitutes “just punishment”: some invoke divine retribution (“May God punish the offender”), others call for strict legal sanctions (“aggravated life imprisonment without parole”), and a few even flirt with vigilantism (“I’d do it myself”). By quantifying retweet counts, reply volumes, and hashtag frequencies, these posts become measurable signals of collective insistence – transforming personal grief and indignation into sustained, algorithmically amplified campaigns for gender justice.

- Wishing the offender dead (God)

I can't swallow when I see the news of femicides. Some are mothers, some are in the spring of their youth, what right do you have to do this. I wish you to live hell in this world, how many femicides this is, how many lives this is, all words are so inadequate... (U20, 2022)

Some X users adopt a fatalistic framing, invoking divine justice through spiritual affordances – prayer-hand emojis, Quranic quotes, and hashtags like #AllahınAdaleti or #HukukDeğilAdalet – to channel their anger into collective supplication. These posts often tag religious authorities (e.g. @Diyanet), generating retweet cascades (200–500 shares) and like spikes that transform individual prayers into communal digital rituals. In this way, the platform becomes a “virtual prayer circle,” where spiritual solidarity both signals outrage and offers emotional refuge.

This digitally mediated faith-based mobilization aligns with research showing spirituality’s role in coping with trauma and loss (Uğurluoğlu & Erdem, 2019). For users who feel disempowered by institutional inaction, these spiritually framed tweets provide ties that bind them to life and to each other turning fatalistic appeals into sustained, algorithmically amplified expressions of both anger and hope.

- Punishing the offender (himself)

Among the X users, those who agreed that violence against women is a crime stated that it should also have criminal sanctions:

If I were the father of that girl, I speak frankly, no one should call me a femicide, I would bury those four girls in history and bury the person who took this separately, I would plant their flowers myself¹⁰. (U21, 2022)

Very, very, very please share your identity, we are establishing a group of friends in Izmir who will intervene in such situations, we are setting up a group

¹⁰ The tweet was posted on the news about 4 girls who beat the girl they called to talk to and recorded the moments on their mobile phones and shared them on social media.

of friends who will intervene in such situations, people who are desperate, those who show violence against animals and women are our first target. Just share your identity, let's verify and punish them, (U22, 2023)

Now you have normalised it so much that no femicide gets any reaction, this situation hurts me very much, every femicide, child murder news I see, my throat is tightening, I am burning with the desire to avenge those women and children. (U23, 2023)

In a country where women are murdered every day, those who commit murder are travelling under the wings of the government, while women who do not have life safety are subjected to violence by the police on the street to make their voices heard, so it means that the way to be respected is to be a rapist gang leader in our country. (U24, 2023)

As reflected in user discourses, many X participants express profound distrust in the state's capacity to deliver fair justice for violence against women. They believe existing laws systematically favor perpetrators while blaming victims, and they transform this distrust into calls for personal retribution that leverage the platform's affordances. Tweets like "If no one else will do it, I'll bury him myself," tagged with #Adalet or #FailiMeçhul and retweeted over 600 times, use high retweet and like counts as indicators of collective endorsement when institutional remedies are deemed insufficient.

At the same time, users mobilize institutional reform campaigns by deploying hashtags such as #YasalarYetersiz and #KadınaYönelikŞiddet to coalesce support around legal change, by @-mentioning judicial and legislative bodies like @adaletbakanligi and @cmhukuk to directly address policymakers, and by constructing multi-tweet threads incorporating petition-style language – "equal protection for every woman," "life imprisonment without parole" – often attaching URLs to draft legislation or online petitions. These posts average 300–700 retweets and sustained engagement, frequently trending in X's algorithmic Top feeds, demonstrating how X's communication affordances become instrumental both in expressing vigilante impulses and in orchestrating collective pressure for systemic legal reform.

- Wishing the offender to be punished as he/she deserves (institutions of the social structure - other people)

Some of the users who expressed anger towards violence and hoped that perpetrators of violence would be punished emphasised the need for direct institutional arrangements. The "deserved" punishment of the perpetrator is one of the prominent issues in X users' posts related to violence against women. The views of the users who

shared about how the deserved punishment is possible draw attention to institutional arrangements:

Stating the existence of a concrete problem of violence and pointing out the necessity to take urgent steps to solve it, users shared opinions on the desire for punishments proportionate to the crime as well as the desire for these punishments to be applied equally for each individual who committed the crime. It should be emphasised that the tweets do not only reflect the desire for punitive measures, but also the expectation for a safe life, fair and equal living opportunities and the desire for equal positioning in both private and public spheres. In order to prevent many social problems, especially the problem of violence against women, users drew attention to the necessity of not only legal regulations, but also the need to regulate the social structure with all its institutions such as family, politics, religion, education.

Give a voice to the forest fire, you run to the earthquake, there is a murder of women, share a slogan, child abuse does not stop but you say stop, animals are being slaughtered, come on, sign this campaign. I am so bored with the agenda of this country. I only want real and humane solutions. (U25, 2022)

Public Conscience and the Power of the Media United and the Right Has Been Fulfilled!"What about other judicial prisoners who are still in prison in this situation and waiting for justice? (U26, 2023)

Is there anyone other than the brave ones who killed the murderer who brutally killed Özgecan ASLAN in prison. What a beautiful person you are, the prisoner of fate who killed this rabid baby killer. Did I praise the criminal, yes. I'll take my punishment if there is one. (U27, 2022)

2 femicide hearings in one day. Life imprisonment is not enough. We demand aggravated life imprisonment. We say we continue to fight for real justice, not male justice! (U28, 2023)

Today is the World Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women...Violence, murder and oppression against women is the bleeding wound of our country...Instead of being rejected by unanimous vote, we want laws that protect our women and girls. because Violence against women is political! (U29, 2022)

If necessary, a referendum should be organised for this. Unfortunately, laws do not get anywhere. Every day there are more femicides, more violence news, more incidents. It is really very sad. I think the public should decide on the penalties so that "WAIT FOR THE DAY WHEN THE HURTS HURT!" (U30, 2023)

It is reflected in the user shares that institutional arrangements are considered as an important step in preventing crime and combating crime as well as in the process of punishing the offender: (U31, 2023)

If violence against women cannot be prevented despite all criminal proceedings, total education and mind transformation is necessary. (U32, 2023)

If 65% of the violence against women in this country is caused by men, 35% of it is caused by their own sex, violence is not gender but human work, we need to educate people instead of putting men in the target (U33, 2023)

Turkish girls should definitely be taught close combat and the use of weapons during the 3-month compulsory military service, then there will be no more femicides... (U24, 2023)

Users also harnessed X's communication affordances to advocate for educational interventions as a preventive strategy. By deploying hashtags like #EğitimŞart and #Farkındalık, they aggregated calls for curricula on gender equality and respectful relationships. Many @-mentioned the Ministry of Education (@MilliEgitim) and women's-rights NGOs, embedding infographics or video clips in multi-tweet threads that outlined proposed lesson plans. While some users insisted that men require training to unlearn patriarchal norms, others argued that women, as primary socializers, should be empowered through self-defense courses and leadership workshops – viewing women's education as a downstream lever to reshape future male behavior.

Parallel to education, a prominent reform demand centered on merit-based institutional staffing. Tweets tagged #AtamaAdaleti and #UzmanEldeki, linking to draft regulations and statistical charts, called for the strategic placement of trained professionals – psychologists, social workers, legal advocates – in family courts and community centers. These posts averaged 250–500 retweets, with thread depths of 4–7 tweets, demonstrating how X's threaded format and resource-link affordances can coordinate cross-sector collaboration: “@adaletbakanligi, @csgbtr Bakanlığı and @ailebakanligi must appoint child-rights experts and gender-sensitivity trainers to every district office,” one high-engagement post demanded. By quantifying engagement metrics – retweet cascades, reply volumes, and hashtag spread – users turned the platform into a real-time pressure cooker for systemic reform.

As psychologists, we are tired of sitting at home and watching the news about addiction, femicide, suicide and paedophilia. Now we want to be employed and support the struggle in the field. (U34, 2023)

The number of women murdered in 2022... Turkey is one of the leading countries in violence against women in recent times. It is in your hands to put a stop to this "Psychological services should no longer be a luxury and should be accessible for everyone." (U35, 2022)

While many social problems such as violence against women, child abuse, economic inadequacy are increasing day by day, SHUs trained to create social change are waiting to perform their profession (U36, 2023)

The Ministry of Family Affairs intervenes in cases such as sexual abuse of children, violence against women and femicides that may cause outrage in the society as required by law. Unfortunately, the team of lawyers carrying out such important cases is very insufficient. The Ministry should increase the number of lawyers appointed through centralised recruitment. (U32, 2023)

As reflected in user narratives, many participants argued that ad hoc, underqualified staffing in law, education, politics and health cannot stem violence against women. They harnessed X's affordances – hashtags like #UzmanAtaması and #EğitimŞart, threaded petitions tagging @adaletbakanligi, @csgbtr and @MilliEgitim – to demand insertion of trained professionals (psychologists, social workers, legal advocates) into every district court, school and healthcare center. Infographics and policy-draft links embedded in multi-tweet threads averaged 250–600 retweets and drove sustained reply volumes, turning each advocacy post into a real-time pressure campaign for systemic reform.

Under the broader “seeking rights” theme, users translated collective anger into visible digital activism. Beyond invoking divine retribution (#AllahınAdaleti) or vigilante justice (#KendiAdaletim), they coalesced around hashtags such as #KadınaŞiddetToplumsalSorun to frame femicide as a societal crisis, not an isolated atrocity. By quoting and quote-tweeting media outlets, civil society accounts and legislative drafts – often in side-by-side mixed-media posts – they leveraged X's algorithmic recommendation to embed gendered violence firmly in public memory. In doing so, users positioned themselves not as passive observers but as active stakeholders. They used engagement metrics – such as retweet cascades, like spikes, and thread depth – to signal their collective insistence that violence against women be recognized, addressed, and prevented as a priority social problem.

7. DISCUSSION

The perception that the family structure, religion, politics and legal institutions support the subordinate position of women, that women are victimised and powerless in the face of violence is reflected in the tweets. There is significant public anger over the normalization of violence through media representations especially the portrayal of women who appear to support their own victimization in television shows. This anger also targets the institutional structures that enable domestic violence to be ignored under the pretext of family privacy. Users express anger toward family and religious institutions that portray women as passive figures expected to obey their husbands, fathers, fathers-in-law, and even their sons. Their frustration also targets

legal and political institutions that either blame women or fail to protect them when family crises arise. For the users, the inability to prevent violence against women and, moreover, the criminalisation of the victims of violence is a source of intense anger, while living in such a social structure is also considered "insecure". The insecurity felt is also a source of anger. Users who share the view that the threat of risk for women in both private and public spheres is quite high tend to think that this threat is reinforced as well as no solution is offered. They present the lack of legal regulation that provides a solution to the problem as a justification for this opinion. Moreover, by presenting examples of judicial cases that do not receive punishment and even receive compensation from the victim's family, they state that the law works in favour of the criminal in the issue of violence against women.

As most of the users stated, the idealised female and male identities in patriarchal societies based on male authority and male superiority are highly related to the visibility of violence against women. In patriarchal culture, a woman who is calm, warm, passive, obedient and inadequate in expressing anger is placed opposite the man who is superior and in a position of power in every situation. Unlike the woman who is under domination and in a subordinate position (Sultana, 2010), the man is active, aggressive and competitive (Goldberg, 2018; Onaran et al., 1998). The male builds his identity on emotional timidity, assertiveness, calculating behaviour, knowing what he wants and needs, courage, certain forms of aggression, autonomy, technological quality, group solidarity, adventurism and mental and physical toughness. Men are not easily satisfied and do not tolerate weakness (Koyuncu Lorasdağı & Onur İnce, 2004; Kurtuluş et al., 2004; Oktan, 2008). This is because he is an independent individual who can be self-sufficient without asking for help from others (Goldberg, 2018). This situation, which points to the power imbalance in the relationship, is one of the most important factors in the emergence of violence. The internalisation of these social characteristics related to male and female roles explains male violence against women (Gressard et al., 2015; Ozaki & Otis, 2017). While this power imbalance plays a very specific role in who inflicts violence on whom, the socialisation of men as the person who resorts to violence as a solution to their problems also reinforces violence (Koyuncu Lorasdağı & Onur İnce, 2004). Likewise, the posts of some of the users about the need for women to receive education as a method of combating violence against women reveal the victims of cultural violence. Posts that expect women to assume emotional-purposive roles, limit them to the private sphere, position them passive in the public sphere as well as in the private sphere, and passive in the face of aggressive-violent acts reflect cultural norms. Therefore, it is predictable that there is a considerable amount of sharing towards the view that women, who are normalised as the victims of violence due to their positions as nurturers or physically weak, should receive education to protect them from violence. At this point, it should be noted that educating women is not a solution strategy, as this does not provide a step towards eliminating the problem or at least reducing its prevalence. On the contrary, even if the problem remains widespread, the responsibility for combating this problem is still placed on the victimised woman. So much so that it can be stated that the woman is left to her own devices in her struggle. In this respect, even users who react to violence against women and express the

opinion that violence against women should be fought are actually unwittingly reconstructing an order in which violence is widely visible.

On the other hand, the necessity for the man, who is expected to establish dominance at every decisive point in the social sphere, to maintain this dominance is also an instrument of violence. Because this continuity begins to be ensured by the man's separation of himself from the other, the feminine, as early as his childhood. In this respect, men have to emphasise what they are not while forming their gender identity from childhood. The struggle of men to acquire a male identity by suppressing the feminine characteristics they find in themselves is effective in their fear and disgust of the women they want to differentiate from, seeing them as inferior to themselves and showing violence against them (Onaran et al., 1998). In this context, it can be easily stated that violence is related to the creation of the image of a man in a position of power.

Although some of the users see the rights of women in the private and public spheres as the causes of the phenomenon of violence against women, the struggle for rights is essentially one of the internal dynamics of the social structure. Societies are built on inequalities, and each individual/group acts to protect their own interests, which is a source of conflict. Because societies do not have sufficient resources to meet the needs of all their members, and access to scarce resources requires competition, which makes conflicts inevitable (Orcutt, 1990). Those who have the power to control limited resources within the society take steps to protect their own interests and lead to the continuation of existing inequalities by maintaining the existing conditions. Being able to protect their interests means that the conditions that create inequality are reproduced again and again. On the other hand, for those who are disadvantaged in society, there is a struggle for access to limited resources and this leads to conflicts. Moreover, conflicts are constantly reproduced. The power holders in society produce policies for the continuation of inequality and maintain these unequal relations through the elements of the social structure such as family, law, politics, religion and property ownership (Boulding, 1973).

When violence against women is taken into consideration, women in Turkey, as in many patriarchal cultures, are positioned not as the one who holds the power in the family and in the public sphere, but as the one who struggles for it. The conflict that exists in every relationship involving authority is also highly visible in the family as it contains the hierarchy of authority. Domestic violence, which is the area where violence against women is most visible, is related to the use of power accumulation within the family (Koyuncu, 2013; Leslie & Korman, 1967). This is because the institutions of family and marriage function as a tool that ensures the preservation of unequal male-dominated relations and leads to the abuse of women under male domination. In fact, women can be passed on as property from one man to another, from father to husband (Henslin, 2007; Ruether, 2007). On the other hand, the position of women, who have been responsible for meeting the needs of men in the family for generations, has gradually undergone a radical change in late modern societies. Even in societies where patriarchal cultures remain firmly in place, social changes have been

effective in women taking part in more and more struggles to disrupt this balance of power. As more and more women have gained power outside the home and in the public sphere, they have begun to object to the conditions they had previously accepted as inevitable and to fight against oppressive men. With the increase in the number of women working outside the home, as well as the rise of organisations defending women's rights, the traditional balance of women's rights and responsibilities has been shaken. Conflict in the family, therefore, arises from the changing balance of forces within the home, as well as the lack of continuation of male social and economic dominance (Orcutt, 1990). Moreover, deepening economic inequalities and deepening poverty, especially in big cities, trigger these conflicts (Sennett, 1998; 2007). This is because male members, especially in families at the bottom of the social stratification, are unable to provide their families with a certain standard of living due to precarious, low-paid, uncertain and uninsured jobs. The feeling of failure caused by this situation leads to the questioning of the masculinity of the man in the position of power and leads to violence against women (Coleman, 1998). At this point, it should be noted that the image of masculinity in the position of power is always under threat. In other words, masculinity is a power in need of approval and caressing rather than a kingdom that can be enjoyed for a lifetime once acquired. Masculinity, which is acquired through a series of rituals and difficulties, needs to be constantly reinforced; otherwise there is a danger of the man losing his masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Oktan, 2008). Once this power is wounded, it creates a crisis of masculinity and this can bring about various destructions. When the myth of masculinity, which is constantly provoked, is under threat, that is, when the dominant position of men is shaken or at least questioned, this power needs to be reproduced through various displays of power. The wounds and sense of worthlessness caused by power, unemployment, militarism and patriarchy are tried to be overcome by violence, rape, participation in racist or fundamentalist political movements, or even by risking death if necessary. The targets of these displays of power are women as much as, and sometimes even more than, other men. The struggle to gain masculine identity may aim to silence the voices of women (Atay, 2004). In this context, it can be stated that women's rights mean the danger of shaking hegemonic masculinity. Women's gaining more rights has further exacerbated the conflicts that are inevitable due to the nature of the social structure. In other words, while many changes in the social structure make women demand more rights, they also deepen the existing conflicts and affect the prevalence of violence. This is because change is an undesirable element for those who do not gain from it, and this is reflected in the narratives.

X posts about violence against women reflect the fact that violence against women is considered as a social problem that causes anger and requires urgent measures on Turkey's most widely used social media platform. Even though the person to whom the anger is directed differs among users, the phenomenon seems to have gained a place in the collective memory associated with anger. In addition, the posts on the social media platform in question also reflect the existence of a consciousness that the phenomenon is not addressed as a "problem" in the current situation, that it has become widespread and even reproduced. The posts of users who have the

consciousness that the problem is ignored, not prevented or ignored show their active participation in the discussions in the process of becoming a part of the solution. In this context, individuals actively shape public attitudes toward violence against women through widespread social media engagement. By raising awareness, they can contribute to the solution or, at the very least, be recognized as stakeholders in the conversation.

In X posts about violence against women, users' intense anger and demand for social justice draw attention. This anger is shaped by the perception that gender inequalities, patriarchal structures and legal regulations in Turkey normalise violence. These posts of users determine how violence against women is perceived in society and make visible the demands for solutions to this problem. As stated by McCombs and Shaw, the media increases the awareness of social problems and enables the public to develop demands against these problems (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2007; McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Our findings support second-level agenda-setting theory in media and communication scholarship. They show that X not only determines which issues attract attention but also influences how these issues are framed and what emotional tones are attached to them. These posts on X not only raise social awareness, but also create a public opinion that questions the attitudes of legal and political institutions on this issue.

In addition, the presentation of women as passive and exposed to violence increases users' reactions to the patriarchal social structure and this perception reproduces gender roles. These views shared among users are not only an individual reaction, but also a criticism of social norms that contribute to the spread and legitimisation of violence (Lupton, 1994). In this context, social media becomes an arena of struggle to improve the social position of women.

In conclusion, the discussions on violence against women in X show that agenda-setting theory also works effectively in social media. Women's reactions to violence reach a wide audience through social media platforms and contribute to making these issues social priorities.

8. CONCLUSION

This study has sought to reframe X (formerly Twitter) not as a passive repository of user-generated content on violence against women but as a dynamic and strategic communication system whose technological affordances actively shape public discourse, collective memory, and the mobilization of social action. We examined tweets posted between 7 November 2022 and 16 January 2023, selected using keywords such as “femicide”, “violence against women”, “women’s rights”, and names of emblematic victims like Özgecan Arslan, Münevver Karabulut, and Emine Bulut. Our analysis shows that platform features –including hashtags, retweet cascades, mention networks, threads, and algorithmic recommendations– are not merely tools for sharing outrage, but play an active role in framing, prioritizing, and preserving discourse on gender-based violence.

The affordance of hashtagging, for example, revealed itself as a performative act of agenda-formation. Tags like #kadınaşiddet, #Susma, and #Adaletİstiyoruz served not only to categorize individual messages but to cluster them into coherent digital protest events, which in turn triggered X's algorithms to promote these clusters into trending topics and recommendation feeds. High-traction hashtags routinely generated over 1 200 retweets within the first twelve hours, effectively transforming personal expressions of anger into collective "focusing events." This dynamic provides a clear illustration of second-level agenda-setting, whereby the attributes attached to a topic – its emotional tone, evidential framing, and temporal salience – are shaped as much by the medium's affordances as by users' rhetorical choices. In this sense, hashtags operate as both symbols and signals, guiding audiences toward particular interpretive lenses and catalyzing algorithmic visibility.

Similarly, the practice of retweeting and threaded responses illustrated how X's affordances weave individual narratives into extended public dialogues. Initial tweets denouncing state and institutional failures frequently became retweet cascades that peaked at over 2,000 shares, sustaining visibility in "Top" feeds for several days. Meanwhile, threaded replies facilitated multi-post conversations that integrated statistical data, legislative citations, personal testimonies, and even multimedia elements, averaging six to eight tweets per thread. These chains of interaction leveraged the algorithm's propensity to prioritize engagement metrics, effectively converting ephemeral online utterances into durable public conversations. Through these affordances, the platform serves as a form of deliberative public sphere, where personal experiences are validated, amplified, and collectively scrutinized.

Another significant affordance emerged through the use of direct mentions. By tagging official accounts – such as @adaletbakanligi (Ministry of Justice), @cmhukuk (Council of State), and @milliEgitim (Ministry of Education) – users transformed individual tweets into digital petitions. Posts that included at least one mention averaged 450 retweets and 220 replies, compared to 180 retweets for non-mentioned tweets, indicating that the affordance of naming and shaming effectively mobilizes collective pressure on duty-bearers. This practice illustrates how social media can bypass traditional institutional barriers, enabling citizens to engage in "peer-to-policy" advocacy and to hold public officials directly accountable in the visible terrain of the timeline.

Our findings also highlighted the power of multimodal messaging. Tweets that combined text with images, infographics, and short video clips achieved 25–35 % higher engagement than text-only posts. Visual-textual juxtapositions – such as overlaying femicide statistics on scenes from popular television dramas – functioned as meta-messages that fused empirical data with affective resonance. These composites not only attract algorithmic preference for rich media but also create visual memory cues that linger in the collective psyche, reinforcing public awareness of gendered violence long after the initial posting.

In addition, users orchestrated thematic digital campaigns under hashtags like #EğitimŞart and #UzmanAtaması, embedding links to draft legislation, NGO reports, and academic articles. These sequences of five to nine tweets generated an average of 300–650 retweets per campaign and demonstrated how affordance-driven advocacy can sustain public momentum, effectively functioning as extended digital petitions that channel grassroots demands into transparent records of civic will. This praxis exemplifies how social media platforms can serve as civic infrastructures, supporting the coordination, amplification, and institutional uptake of policy proposals.

Unexpectedly, our analysis also identified spiritual affordances – threads invoking divine justice under tags such as #AllahınAdaleti – that generated 200–400 retweets. Despite their religious content, these posts performed the same communicative functions as secular campaigns: they created affective solidarity, sustained engagement, and algorithmic momentum. Their presence underscores the fact that digital platforms do not segregate civic expression by domain; instead, they provide affordances that enable diverse modes of communal resilience and moral mobilization.

These affordance-driven practices collectively create a cycle we call the “agenda-affordance loop”. In this loop, user-generated signals – such as tags, retweets, mentions, threads, and visuals – are amplified by the platform’s algorithm into trending events. These trending events, in turn, prompt further user engagement and content creation. In this loop, the platform itself emerges as an active co-author of public narratives, shaping not only which issues gain prominence but also the interpretive frameworks – emotional, evidential, ritualistic – through which those issues are understood and remembered. Such a perspective extends classical agenda-setting and collective memory theories by placing the medium’s affordances at the center of the analytical lens.

From a theoretical standpoint, our work advances the integration of affordance theory – which posits technological features as actionable possibilities for users (Hutchby, 2001; Evans et al., 2017) – with agenda-setting models (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McCombs & Valenzuela, 2007) and collective memory frameworks (Halbwachs, 1992; Ferron & Massa, 2011b). By treating affordances as basic communication tools, researchers can better understand how digital platforms shape social struggles, showing how technology and user actions work together to create public meaning and support political movements.

Practically, our findings carry tangible guidance for activists, NGOs, and policymakers. Activists should tailor their digital strategies to platform affordances by crafting distinctive, orthographically optimized hashtags; embedding evidence-rich and emotionally compelling multimedia; structuring thread sequences to maximize engagement signals; and directing public petitions through targeted mentions. Policy-makers and institutions, conversely, should recognize digital engagement metrics – retweet counts, reply volumes, thread longevity, and cascade velocity – as legitimate indicators of constituent concern, integrating these insights into consultative processes

and legislative reviews. Treating digital discourse as valid civic input is essential for fostering institutional responsiveness and rebuilding public trust.

In light of these findings, policymakers must treat expressions of public concern on digital platforms not as ephemeral reactions but as structural indicators that warrant institutional attention. In particular, responsible public agencies such as the Ministries of Justice, Interior, and Family should establish dedicated digital monitoring units tasked with regularly analyzing high-engagement hashtags, tweet cascades, and targeted mentions. These units should generate periodic reports based on the content, frequency, and intensity of online demands, feeding evidence-based insights into legislative design and consultative processes.

Moreover, to ensure that social media demands translate into concrete policy outcomes, government institutions and local authorities should collaborate with civil society organizations to create "digital advisory councils." These councils would identify key problem areas spotlighted by gender-based violence campaigns and co-develop legislative proposals, educational reforms, and public awareness initiatives. In doing so, public responsiveness to digital mobilization would be institutionalized through participatory governance mechanisms.

Another critical stakeholder group – media organizations – should go beyond simply reporting on viral campaigns and actively contribute to public awareness by contextualizing high-visibility digital content with data-driven analysis. Similarly, educational institutions should integrate these digital practices into media literacy curricula to equip young individuals with the critical tools needed to both resist online violence and participate meaningfully in digital advocacy efforts.

Methodologically, this study underscores the importance of a communication-centered approach when researching social media activism. Conceptualizing tweets as interrelated communicative acts mediated by platform affordances invites a richer, more nuanced analysis than content-centric methods alone. While our focused examination of a three-month, Turkish-language dataset has yielded deep contextual insights, future research could expand this model to other linguistic and cultural contexts, as well as to other platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, or emerging decentralized networks. Incorporating network analysis to identify key influencers, sentiment analysis to chart affective valence, and longitudinal designs to trace memory-formation processes would further enhance our understanding of digital activism dynamics.

Nonetheless, our study also faces limitations. The opacity of proprietary algorithms complicates efforts to replicate engagement findings precisely, while API constraints restrict access to certain forms of interaction data. Additionally, focusing on a single platform may overlook cross-platform dynamics of mobilization and memory. Future research could gain by working with platform owners to access detailed data on recommendation algorithms. Additionally, comparing different social media

ecosystems would help understand how various platform features influence activism and public discussion.

Methodologically, while our use of a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative affordance coding with critical discourse analysis enables a multidimensional view of platform-mediated activism, several limitations warrant further reflection. First, despite utilizing an Enterprise API tier, our dataset remains shaped by X's opaque algorithmic curation, which likely prioritizes high-engagement content—thus introducing a visibility bias that may underrepresent more grassroots or marginal voices. Second, while our focus on Turkish-language posts offers deep contextual insight, it also limits comparative generalizability across linguistic or cultural environments. Third, the 280-character limit inherently constrains discourse complexity, raising questions about how depth of engagement or nuance might differ on other platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok) where affordances for visual and long-form expression vary significantly.

Future research should consider triangulating X data with parallel content from other platforms to capture cross-platform activism ecologies and broaden interpretive validity. Incorporating ethnographic methods or interviews with digital activists could also provide richer accounts of how users intentionally engage with platform affordances. In addition, algorithmic auditing—through synthetic account testing or access to backend data via research partnerships—would help assess how platform mechanics influence sample visibility and engagement dynamics. Finally, applying computational tools such as temporal network analysis or multimodal machine learning may enhance scalability and allow researchers to trace the evolution of discourse structures over time.

In conclusion, by repositioning X as a communication ecosystem rather than a passive data archive, this research illuminates the intricate ways in which digital affordances mediate collective responses to violence against women. Understanding the mechanics of digital platforms—the affordances they provide, the algorithms they deploy, and the patterns of user interaction they enable—is indispensable for both rigorous scholarly inquiry and effective advocacy in the digital age. This communication-centric perspective offers a robust blueprint for future work at the nexus of gender, media, and public policy, ensuring that digital technologies serve as catalysts for social change rather than mere repositories of outrage.

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Authors' Contributions

Original Draft Preparation: Uğur, Sinem Burcu, Güdekli, İ. Ayşad, Arık, Mehmet Arif. **Methodology:** Yiğit Açıkgöz, Fatma, Çelik, Hasan Cem, Kayakuş, Mehmet. **Software:** Kayakuş, Mehmet. **Investigation:** Yiğit Açıkgöz, Fatma, Güdekli, İ. Ayşad, Paçacı, Serdar, Uğur, Sinem Burcu, Çelik, Hasan Cem, Arık, Mehmet Arif. **Visualization:** Kayakuş, Mehmet, Çizmeli, Derya. **Data Curation:** Uğur, Sinem Burcu, Arık, Mehmet Arif, Paçacı, Serdar. **Conceptualization:** Güdekli, İ. Ayşad. **Supervision:** Kayakuş, Mehmet, Güdekli, İ. Ayşad, Çelik, Hasan Cem. **Writing-Reviewing and Editing:** Uğur, Sinem Burcu, Yiğit Açıkgöz, Fatma, Çelik, Hasan Cem, Arık, Mehmet Arif, Güdekli, İ. Ayşad, Çizmeli, Derya. **All authors have read and accepted the published version of the manuscript.**

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Ethical approval: Since the analyses were carried out on publicly available, de-identified data, the study, which focuses on "determining how violence against women is perceived among users on X, a social media platform", does not meet the definition of "human subjects" research and therefore did not require the review of the Akdeniz University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee.

Data availability: The data supporting the findings of this study may be obtained from the corresponding author upon request.

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