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Sociology Data Lab

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2024 Turkish Social Values Study

Family Report



2024 Turkish Social Values Study Family Report

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Executive Summary

This report examines family, fertility, and gender dynamics in Turkey based on data from the 2024 Turkey Social Values Study (TSVS), supported by TÜBİTAK 1001. The survey was conducted using the Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) method with 1587 participants across Turkey's NUTS-2 units, utilizing a multi-stage cluster sampling design.

Fertility: In Turkey, the total fertility rate has declined to 1.48 births per woman as of 2024 (TURKSTAT 2025). Our findings indicate that men of reproductive age desire to have more children than women do. The fact that the reported ideal number of children exceeds the current number of children for both genders suggests that fertility intentions are constrained more by structural conditions than by individual desires. Moreover, considering working women have both a lower current number of children and a lower desired number of children compared to unemployed women and housewives highlights the difficulty of reconciling paid work with caregiving responsibilities.

Housework Division: Among married participants, women spend an average of 258 minutes (4 hours and 18 minutes) per day on household chores, while men spend 114 minutes (1 hour and 54 minutes). In contrast, while 90% of men reported being satisfied with the division of household chores, only about 60% of women expressed satisfaction. The view that household chores should be shared equally is supported by both genders, but women endorse this principle more strongly.

Gender and Family Values: Women are more likely than men to oppose the notion that “when a mother is employed, the children suffer”, and this trend is particularly pronounced among working women. Social pressure to have children is felt more intensely by women than by men. The view that men should be given priority in employment during periods of limited job opportunities receives less support among women, regardless of their own employment status. Traditional views that assume male authority in political and family decision-making processes are also rejected much more strongly by women than by men.

Assessment and Policy Recommendations: The research findings demonstrate that the pronatalist rhetoric and cash support policies implemented in recent years have had an extremely limited impact on halting the decline in fertility. Our data indicates that family and fertility policies must be reoriented based on an understanding that prioritizes the equal sharing of parenting responsibilities. In this regard, flexible leave arrangements covering both parents, accessible and high-quality child care services, and incentives to increase men’s participation in domestic labor should be prioritized as key policy tools. From the perspective of NGOs, the tension points highlighted in the report can be addressed through programs that integrate equitable family practices into daily life, strengthen care infrastructure, and create empowering communication spaces that challenge stigmatizing norms.

Introduction

The Turkish Social Values Study (TSVS), supported by TUBITAK 1001, aims to understand the value orientations and attitudes of Turkish individuals. This project aims to better understand issues perceived as social problems in society and to raise awareness about these issues among researchers, policymakers, and the wider public.

Especially in the wake of the economic and demographic fluctuations following the pandemic, the uncertainties created by climate change and natural disasters have reinforced feelings of threat and insecurity in society. This situation has made it essential to examine social values within the framework of the “risk society” theory.

Therefore, our project examines the change in social values through three fundamental issues that have emerged as risk factors after the pandemic:

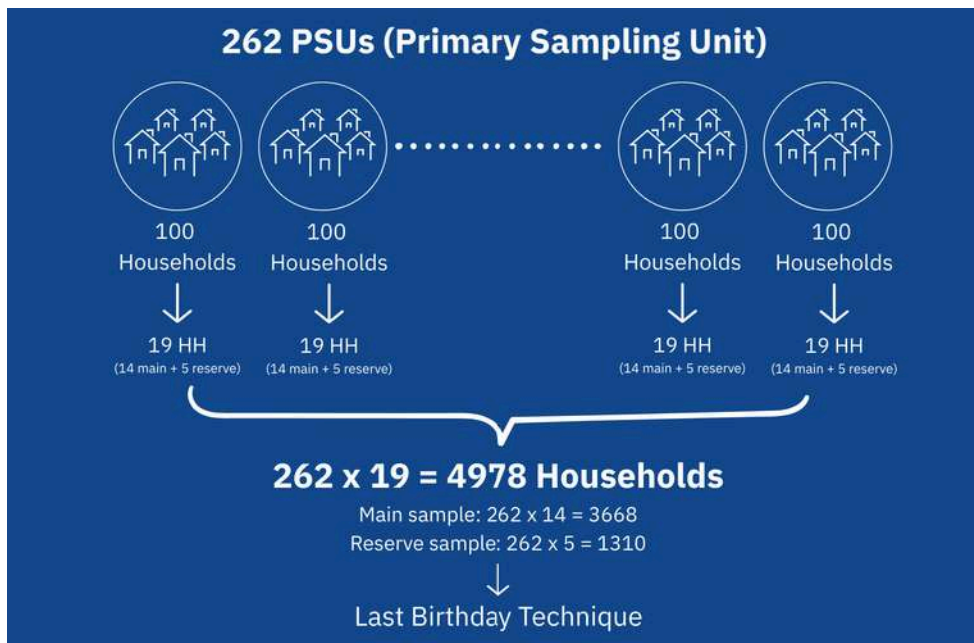
- Fertility intentions in the context of family and gender
- Tendency to believe in conspiracy theories
- Attitudes toward immigrants

This report particularly focuses on the fertility intentions and attitudes toward having children among Turkish individuals, using data from the Turkish Social Values Study (TSVS) survey. In addition, the study examines participants' views on gender roles and their attitudes toward the distribution of housework.

The Turkish Social Values Study (TSVS 2024) measures changing values across Turkey through a nationally representative survey. Consistent with other international studies in the field, data were collected using the Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) method.

The TSVS sample was designed to be representative of all Turkish-speaking citizens aged 18 and older residing in Turkey. Respondents were selected using random probability sampling methods at every stage. Data were collected according to the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics Level 2 (NUTS-2) classification. Accordingly, a multistage cluster sampling design was employed based on Turkey's 26 NUTS-2 subregions, which group the country's 81 provinces according to their socioeconomic similarities.

The sample selection process consisted of three stages in line with the multistage cluster sampling design. In the first stage, 262 geographic clusters (Primary Sampling Units, PSUs), each consisting of 100 households, were identified across Turkey's 26 NUTS-2 geographic subregions. In the second stage, a total of 19 addresses were selected from each PSU through simple random sampling, including 14 primary and 5 reserve addresses. In the third stage, one respondent was selected from each address using the last birthday method. During data collection, it was not necessary to activate the reserve sample.

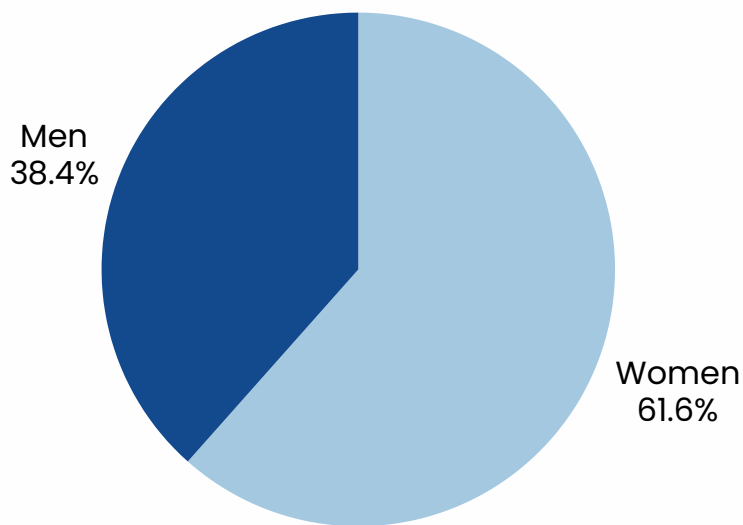


The Turkish Social Values Study (TSVS) survey, which included 1,587 respondents, examined values and attitudes related to fertility intentions, conspiracy theories, and migration through a range of quantitative measures. Data collected during the fieldwork were cleaned and analyzed using the statistical software program STATA. This report specifically focuses on questions regarding family, fertility and gender from the TSVS survey.

1.2

Sociodemographic characteristics

Figure 1.1 Gender distribution, N=1587



Figures 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 show the sociodemographic characteristics of TSVS participants. The survey sample consists of 61.6% women and 38.4% men.

Figure 1.2 Age distribution, N=1587

The ages of the survey participants range from 18 to 86. When respondents are grouped by age, 21% fall into the 18–29 age group, 44.6% into the 30–44 age group, 28% into the 45–59 age group, and 6.4% are aged 60 and above.

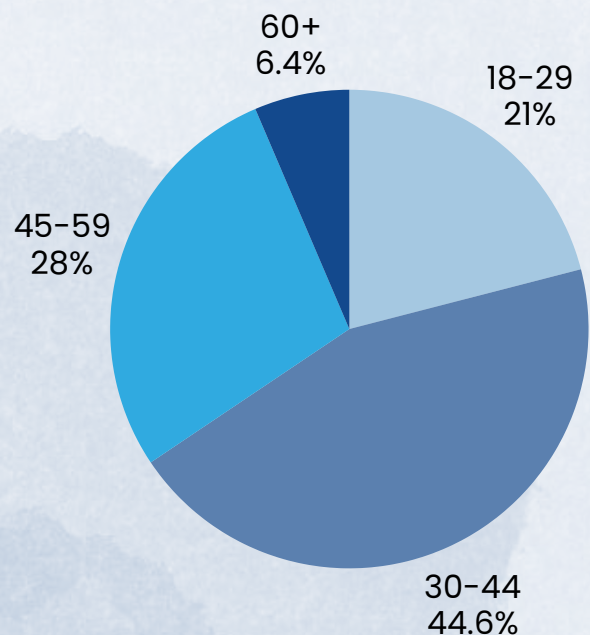
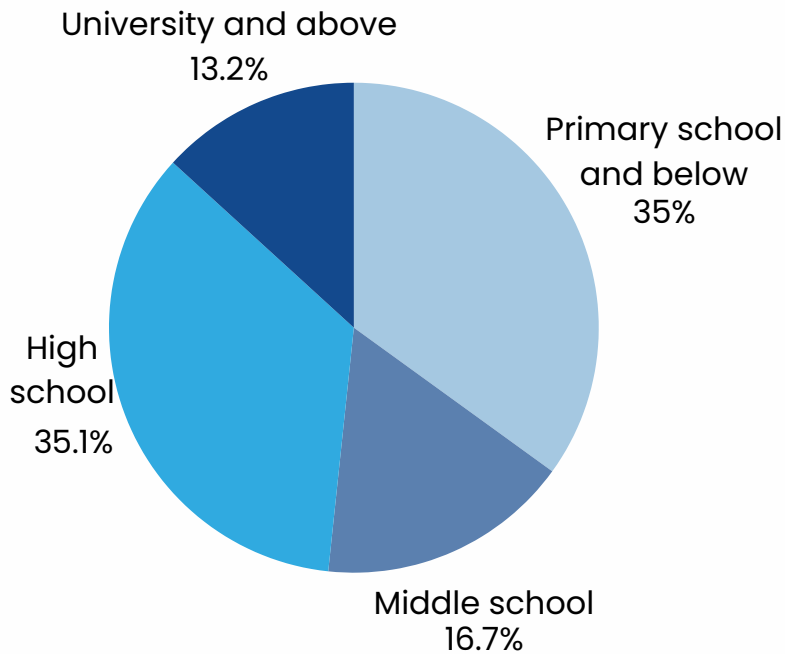


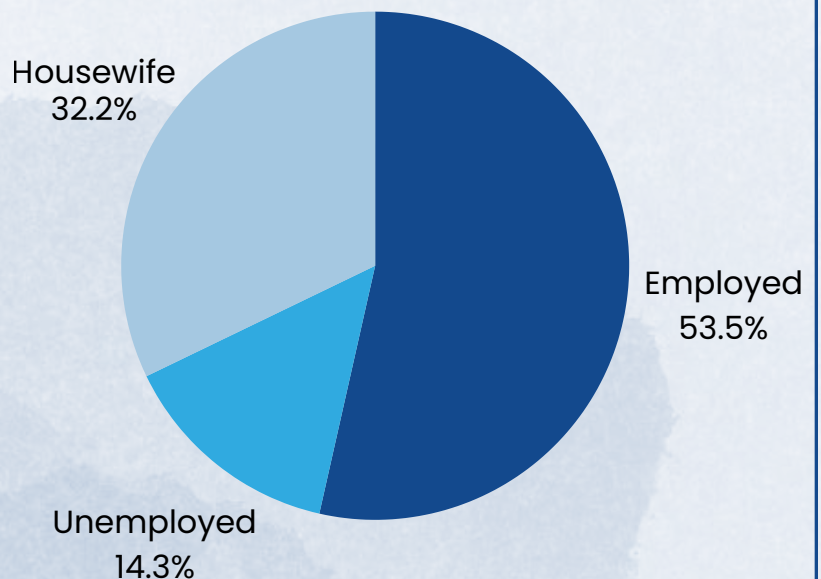
Figure 1.3 Educational attainment, N=1587



The educational attainment of the survey participants ranges from “never attended school” to “master’s degree and above.” When respondents are classified according to the highest level of education they have completed, 35% fall into the “primary school or below” category, while 16.7% have completed middle school. In addition, 35.1% of participants have completed high school, and the remaining 13.2% have obtained a university degree or higher.

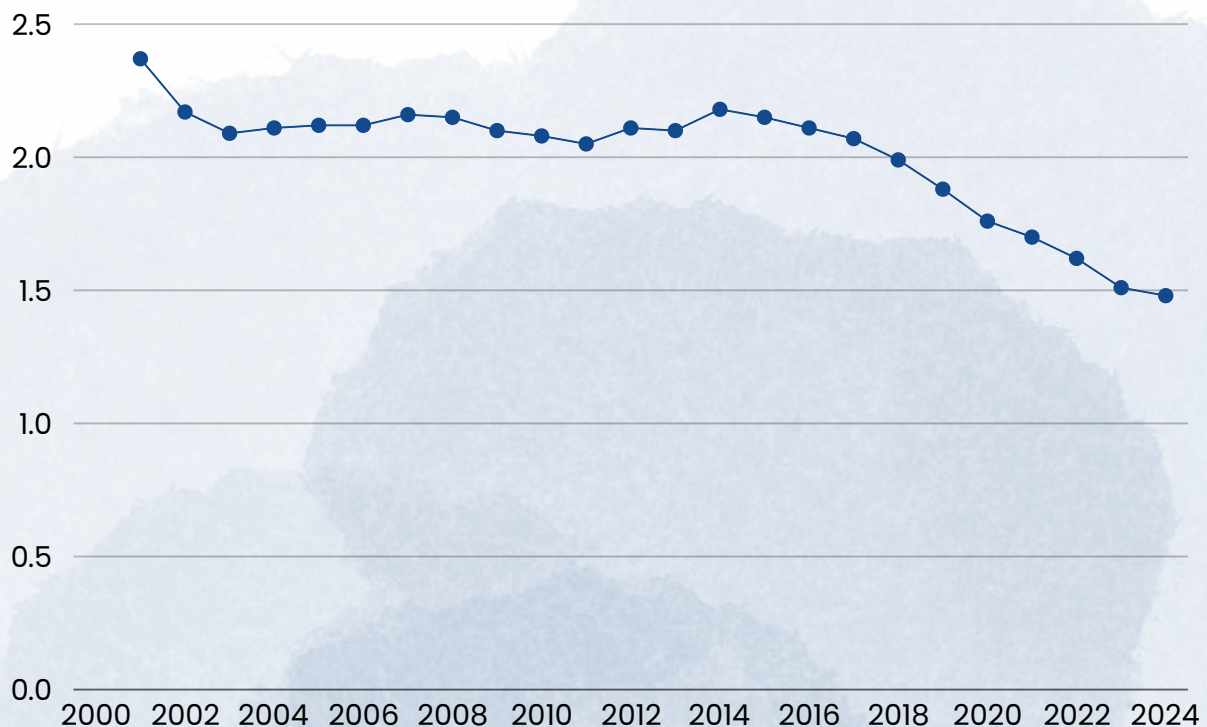
Figure 1.4 Employment status, N=1586

When classified by employment status, 53.5% of the respondents are employed either full-time or part-time, 14.3% are not employed, and 32.2% are homemakers.



The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) fell below the replacement level in 2017 in Turkey. Especially after the pandemic, compared to the decline in the previous years, TFR decreased more drastically and reached 1.48 births per woman in 2024 (see **Figure 2.a**). The rapid decline in the fertility rate is not only related to economic uncertainties and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the transformations in social values. To better understand these changes, the existing literature focuses especially on the framework of The Second Demographic Transition Theory, Gender Equity Theory and Gender Revolution Theory (Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Lappegård 2015; Lesthaeghe 2010; McDonald 2000a, 2000b).

Figure 2.a. Total Fertility Rate, Turkey, 2001-2024



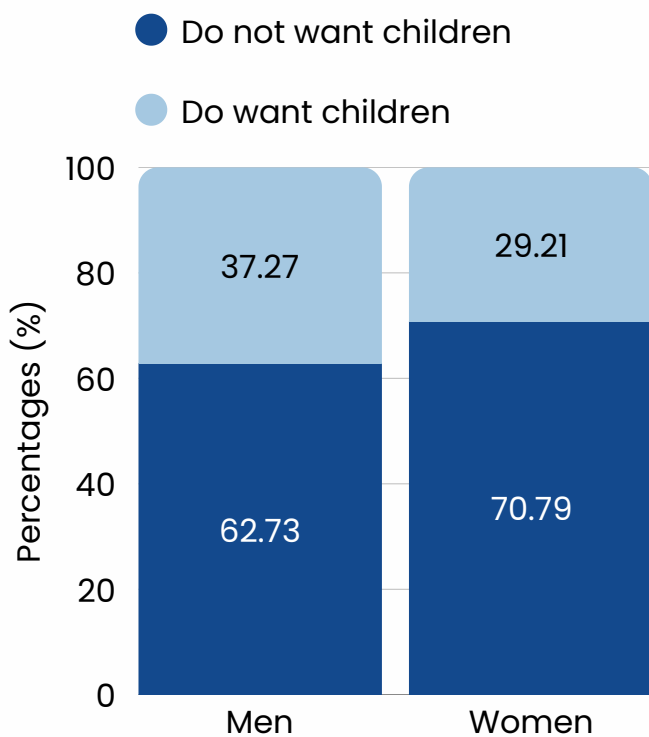
Source: TURKSTAT, 2025

In this context, one of the recurring themes in the literature is the difference between the number of children individuals want to have and the actual number of children they have had (fertility gap), and possible reasons for this gap (Beaujouan ve Berghammer 2019). The studies conducted in the context of countries with very low levels of fertility rates, the fertility gap is defined by the “tempo effect”, meaning that the decision to postpone having children for later ages is not always compensated, therefore emphasizing that especially second births are not realized (Beaujouan and Berghammer 2019; Lesthaeghe 2010).

Additionally, Lesthaeghe (2010) shows that in countries with very low rates of fertility, the decline happens not in first births but second or subsequent births. A study conducted in South Korea, an example of very low fertility, shows that in families where men participate more in housework and childcare, the possibility of having a second child increases significantly (Yoon 2016).

For the first part of our report, we will be presenting our findings on fertility, and then focus on the societal changes playing a part on fertility change.

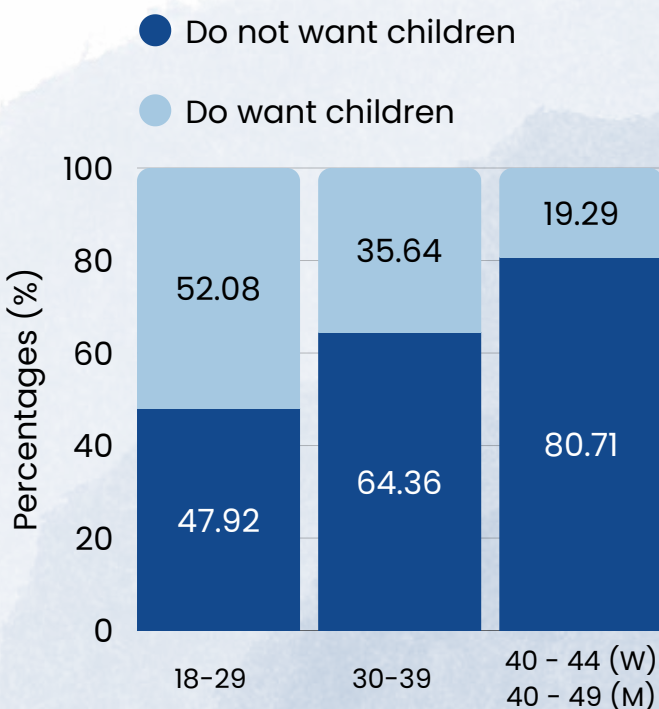
Figure 2.1. Changes in fertility intentions by gender, N=740



When examining the participants of reproductive age (women aged 18-44, men aged 18-49) by gender, it is observed that men express a higher desire to have children compared to women (32.27% of men and 29.21% of women). On the other hand, a majority of women say that they do not want children (70.79%) compared to men, who reported at lower rates (62.73%). The discrepancy in fertility intentions by gender suggests that having children can carry different meanings for men and women.

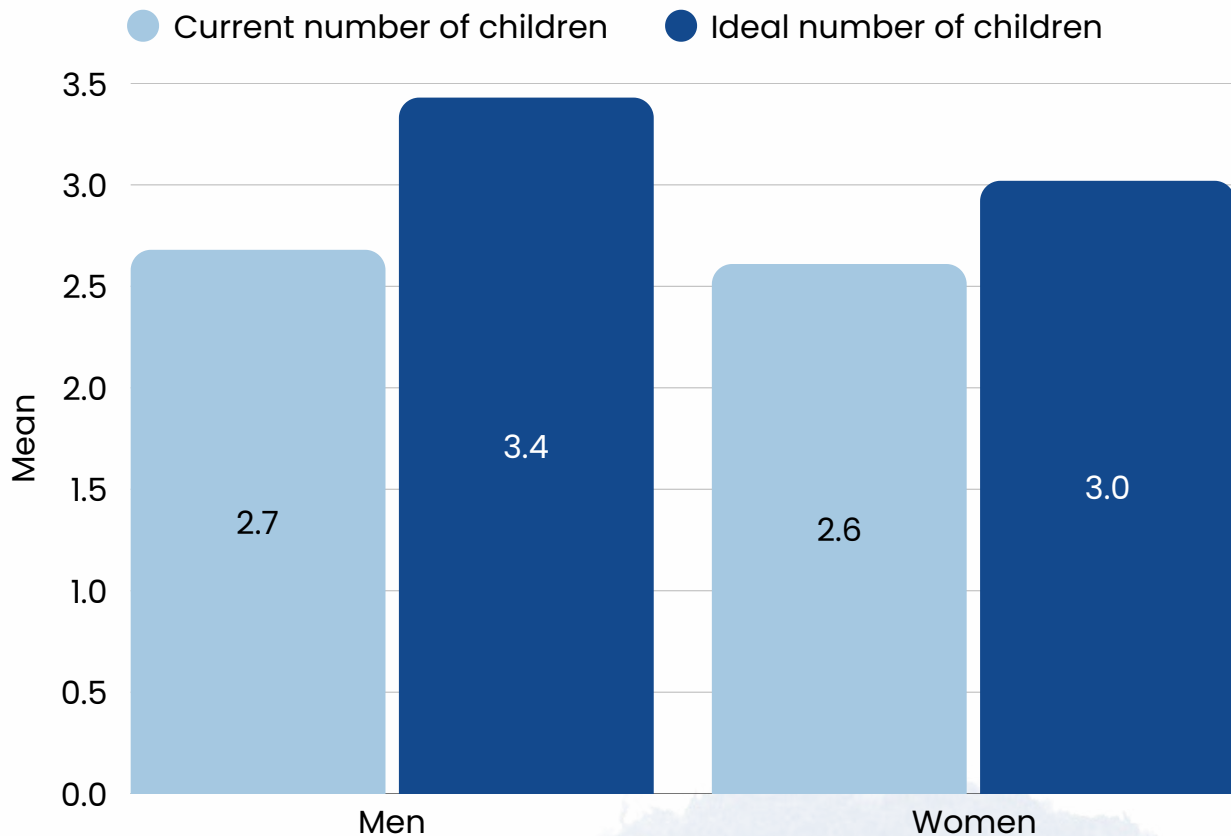
The fact that men are expressing higher desire levels to have children than women becomes meaningful in the context where parental responsibilities are not equally distributed and emphasizes that fertility intentions are not merely a desire issue but are intertwined with structural conditions (Goldscheider, Bernhardt, and Brandén 2013).

Figure 2.2. Changes in fertility intentions by age groups, N=740



When examining fertility intentions by age groups, the desire to have children is especially higher among the youngest group (52.08% between the ages 18-29). This rate drops to 35.64% in the 30-39 age group, and then to 19.29% in the 40-49 age group. Therefore, a significant decrease in the desire to have children is observed as the age increases. To reflect the analysis, only participants of reproductive age were included in this graph (18-44 for women and 18-49 for men).

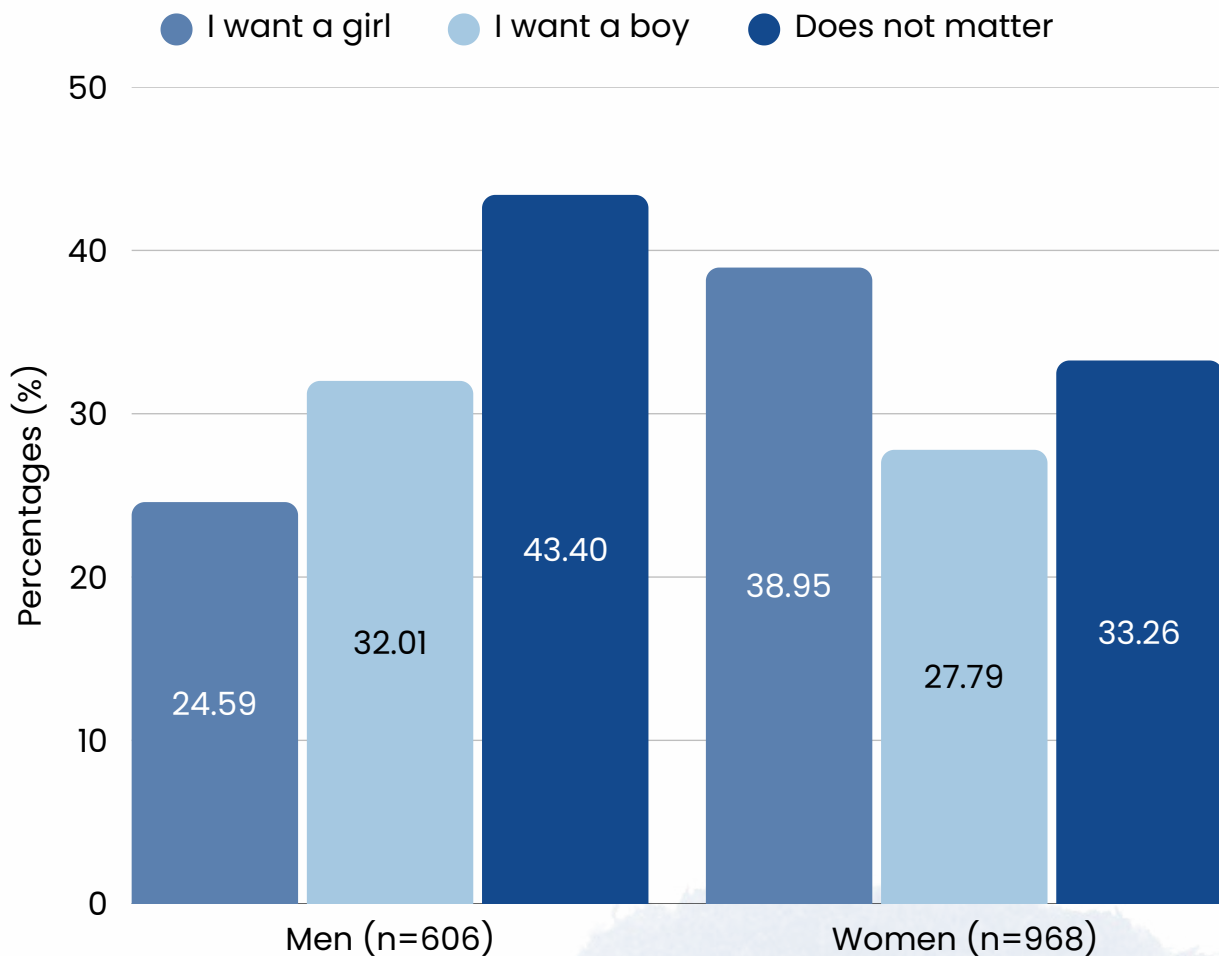
Figure 2.3 Gender distribution of the average number of children individuals have and the average number of ideal children they desire to have, N=1573



The participants were asked about their ideal number of children regardless of the conditions/their current number of children. **Figure 2.3** shows the distribution of the averages of the answers to this question by gender. When they were asked about their current number of children, it was observed that there was no significant difference between male (2.7) and female (2.6) participants' answers. However, the average number of children men reported they want to have (3.4) is more than that of women (3). Still, it can be said that for all participants, the average ideal number of children is higher than the current number.

For both male and female participants, their ideal number of children being higher than their current number of children indicates that people's intentions on having children are influenced and shaped by economic, social, and structural conditions, thus, cannot be fully realized (Beaujouan and Berghammer 2019).

Figure 2.4 Preferred gender for a single child by gender, N=1574



The participants were asked what gender they would prefer if they had only one child, regardless of their current number of children. Most of the male participants (43.40%) stated that it does not matter if they have a boy or a girl, 32% of them wanted their child to be a boy, and 24.59%, a girl. The majority of the female participants (%38.95) answered that they prefer their child to be a girl, 33.3% stated that the gender does not matter to them, and 27.79% stated that they would prefer a boy.

Figure 2.5. Distribution of women’s current, ideal, and additional desired number of children by their employment status, N= 916

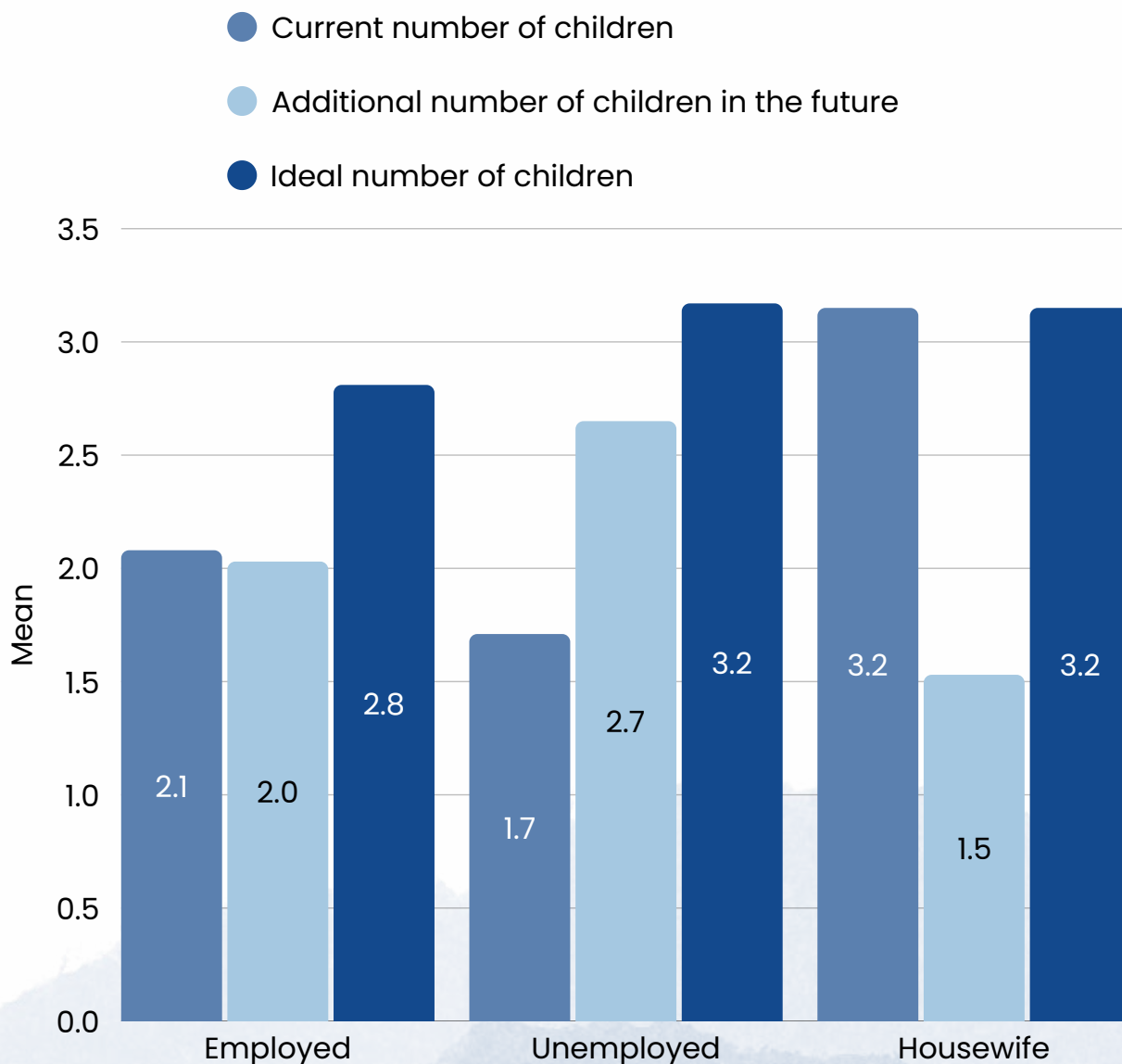


Figure 2.5 compares female participants’ current number of children, the additional number of children they desire for the future, and their ideal number of children according to their employment status. Employed women’s current number of children is reported as approximately 2, but their ideal number of children remains slightly higher (2.8). Among unemployed women, even though the current number of children is relatively lower (1.7), their desire for additional children (2.7) and their ideal number of children (3.2) are higher than those of working women. Housewives, on the other hand, currently have more children compared to the other two groups (2.2). The number of additional children they desire is slightly lower (1.5), but their ideal number of children is again at higher rates (3.2).

Figure 2.6 Distribution of agreement with the statement “Having children increases commitment to life” by gender, N=1583

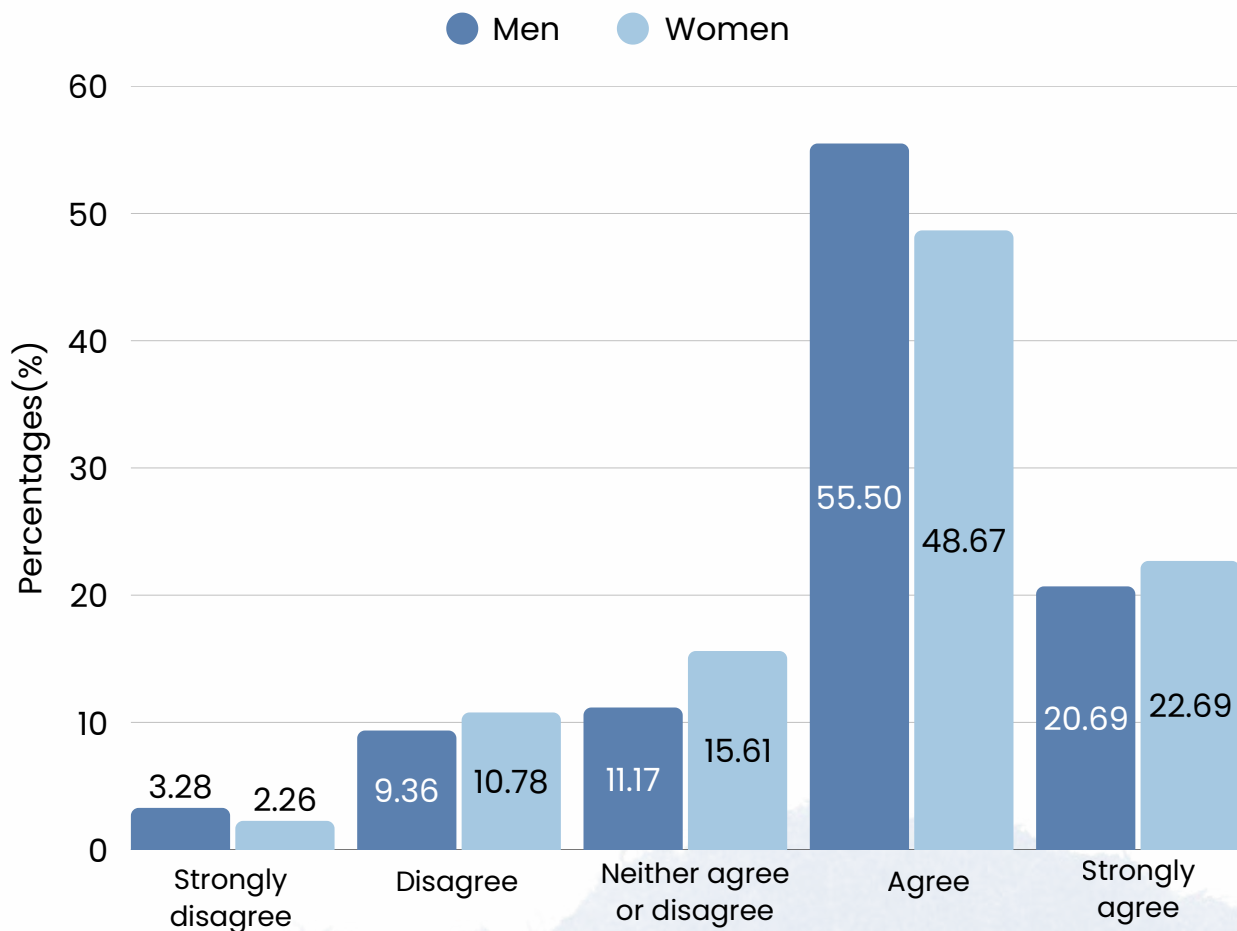


Figure 2.6 shows the gender distribution of agreement levels to the statement “Having children increases commitment to life” (N=1583). In general, both men and women show high levels of agreement with this statement: 76.19% of male participants responded “Agree” or “Strongly agree”. In comparison, women reported their agreement at a slightly lower rate (71.36%).

Negative attitudes towards the statement are low for both men and women, with 12.64% of men and 13.04% of women responding “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree”. In summary, the perception of having children increasing commitment to life is quite common for both groups.

Section Review

The findings we examine in this section indicate that fertility intentions in Turkey are not only a reflection of individual choices but are also shaped and influenced by structural conditions that vary along axes such as gender, age, and employment. Men expressing a greater desire to have children and a higher ideal number of children suggest that carework and economic responsibilities are not experienced equally by men and women. The fact that the ideal number of children exceeds their realized fertility (the current number of their children) for both men and women highlights that structural conditions limit the realization of their fertility intentions.

Looking at women's current number of children and their desired ideal and additional number of children by employment status, it is possible to think that the potential incompatibility between paid labor and care work has a limiting effect on fertility decisions. On the other hand, for housewives, the proximity of their declared ideal number of children and their desired number of additional children suggests a narrowing between intention and realization for this group. However, this pattern should be understood in a gendered context where the responsibility of care work is assigned primarily to women.

These findings indicate that fertility decisions should be considered not only in terms of individual desires but also in terms of how care work is shared within the household and who bears the burden. For this reason, the next section will examine attitudes and behaviors regarding the division of household labor and the sharing of care work to understand the mechanisms by which fertility intentions are shaped in everyday life.

3

Housework Division

One of the significant factors affecting fertility is the division of household labor. Studies conducted in Western Europe and Scandinavian countries show that fertility intentions are higher when domestic labor is shared more equally (Miettinen, Basten, and Rotkirch 2011; Oláh 2003; Raybould and Sear 2021). In the context of Turkey, although there have been significant improvements in women's participation in education and the workforce in the public sphere, domestic and care work remain largely the responsibility of women (TURKSTAT 2022, EUROSTAT 2019). For example, according to the Turkish Family Structure Survey, 94.4% of childcare, 85.6% of laundry, and 85.4% of cooking is done by women (TURKSTAT 2022). Furthermore, comparative time use data compiled by Eurostat (2019) revealed that Turkey has the greatest gender inequality in terms of time spent on unpaid household chores and family care among 18 European countries. Women spend an average of 3 hours and 16 minutes more per day on such tasks than men.

In this regard, the Gender Revolution Theory becomes relevant. McDonald (2000a, 2000b) explains low fertility by the “double burden” created by persistent inequalities in the private sphere (e.g., the family institution) despite increasing equality in the public sphere (e.g., education and the workforce). Goldscheider et al. (2015), however, view this process as a two-stage “revolution.” In the first stage, as women's gains in the public sphere increase, men's failure to take on domestic responsibilities in the private sphere leads to a decline in fertility (Hochschild and Machung 1989; McDonald 2000b). In the second stage, an increase in men's participation in domestic labor may be accompanied by a resurgence in women's fertility intentions (Dommermuth, Hohmann-Marriott, and Lappegård 2017; Goldscheider et al. 2013).

In this vein, the questions in our survey regarding the division of household chores are categorized and presented by gender, thereby enabling a comparative analysis of the household tasks undertaken by women and men and the level of satisfaction both parties derive from this arrangement.

Figure 3.1. Average time spent on household chores per day among married participants (minutes), N=1185

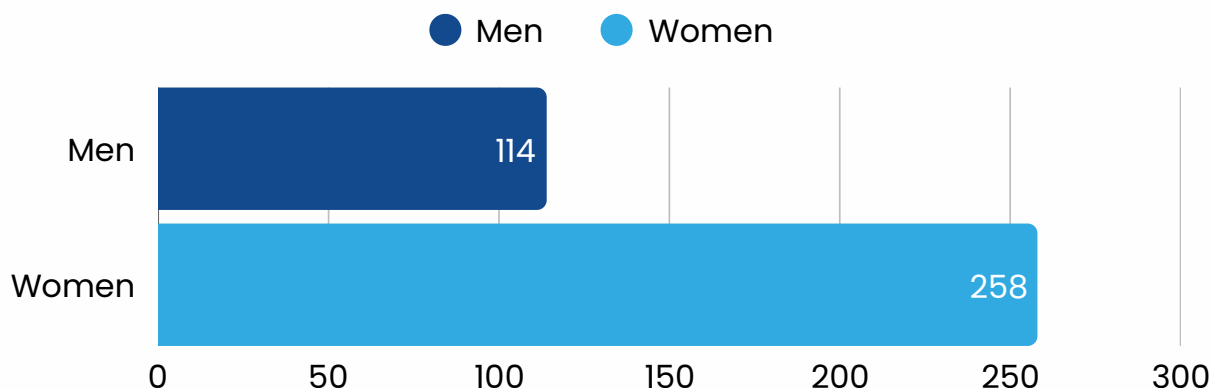
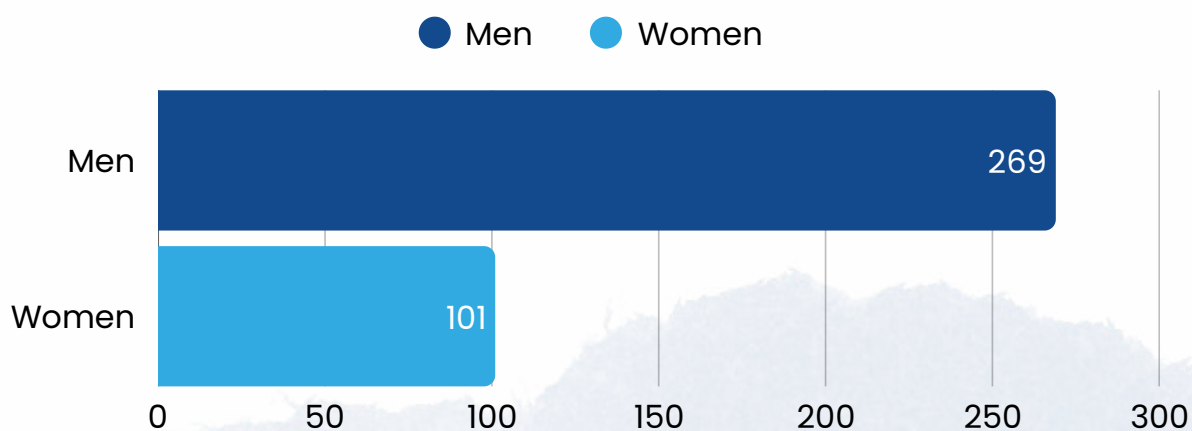


Figure 3.2. Average time (minutes) spent daily on household chores by partners of married participants, N=1145



Figures 3.1 and **3.2** show the distribution of household chores among married participants. Participants were asked about both the average time they spent on daily household chores (**Figure 3.1**) and the time their partners spent (**Figure 3.2**), in minutes. Examining participants' time spent on household chores, it is evident that women devote significantly more time to household tasks than men. Women spend an average of 258 minutes (4 hours and 18 minutes) per day on household chores, while men spend an average of 114 minutes (1 hour and 54 minutes) per day on household tasks. This means that women do 2 hours and 24 minutes more housework than men every day. However, when looking at the amount of time partners spend on housework, the picture is reversed. Male participants say their partners (women) spend an average of 269 minutes (4 hours and 29 minutes) per day on housework, while female participants report that their partners (men) spend an average of 101 minutes (1 hour and 41 minutes) per day on housework. In other words, men indicate that their partners do approximately 2 hours and 48 minutes more housework per day than they do.

Figure 3.3. Satisfaction with the distribution of household chores among married participants, N=1190

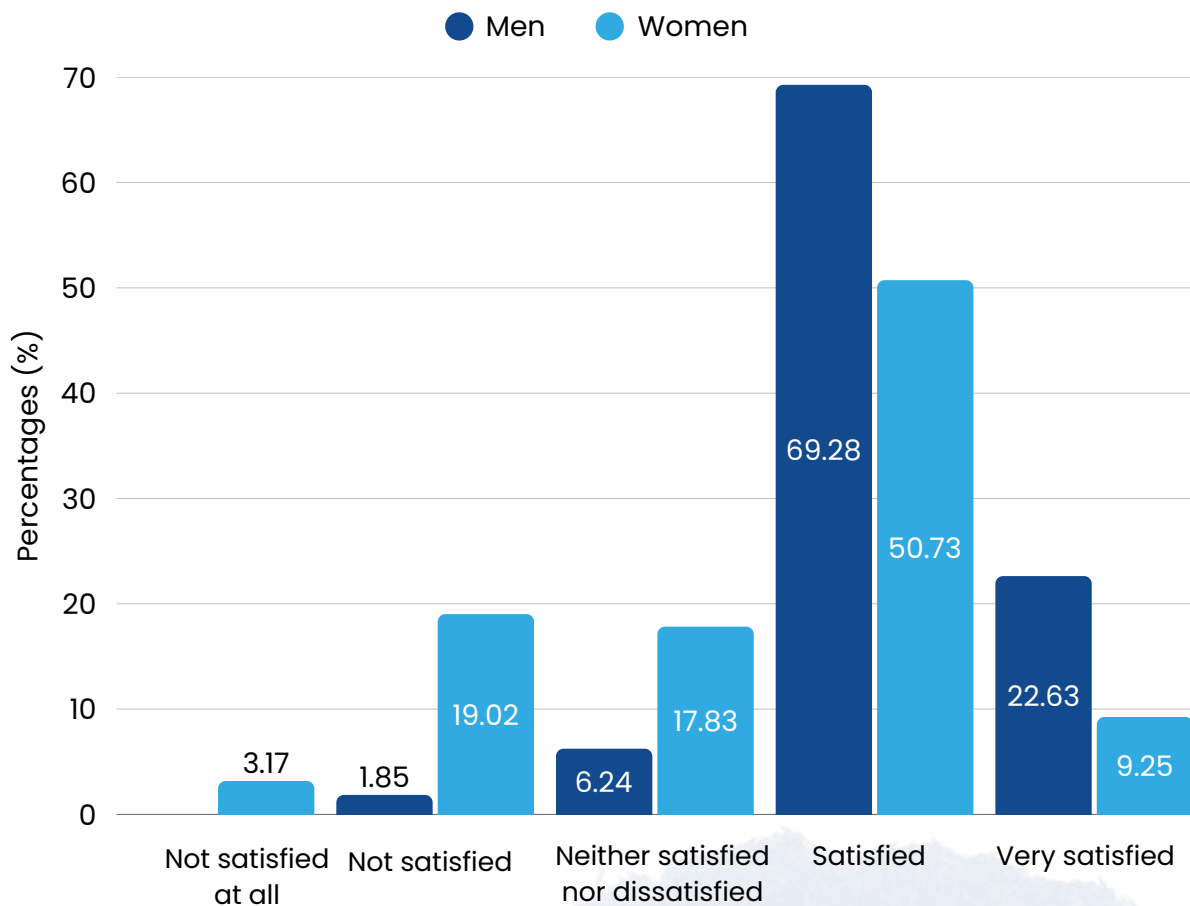


Figure 3.3 shows how satisfied married participants are with the distribution of household chores. Men are more satisfied with the division of household chores than women. While 69.28% of men stated that they were “satisfied” with the sharing of household chores between them and their spouses, this rate was 50.73% among women. Similarly, the percentage of those who say they are “very satisfied” is also significantly higher among men (22.63%) than women (9.25%). When these two responses are combined, it is observed that 9 out of 10 men are satisfied with the division of household chores. Only about 60% of women say they are satisfied or very satisfied with the division of household chores, while 19.02% say they are “not satisfied” and 17.83% say they are “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.”

Figure 3.4. The distribution of agreement with the statement “Men should share housework and childcare equally with women.” by gender, N=1580

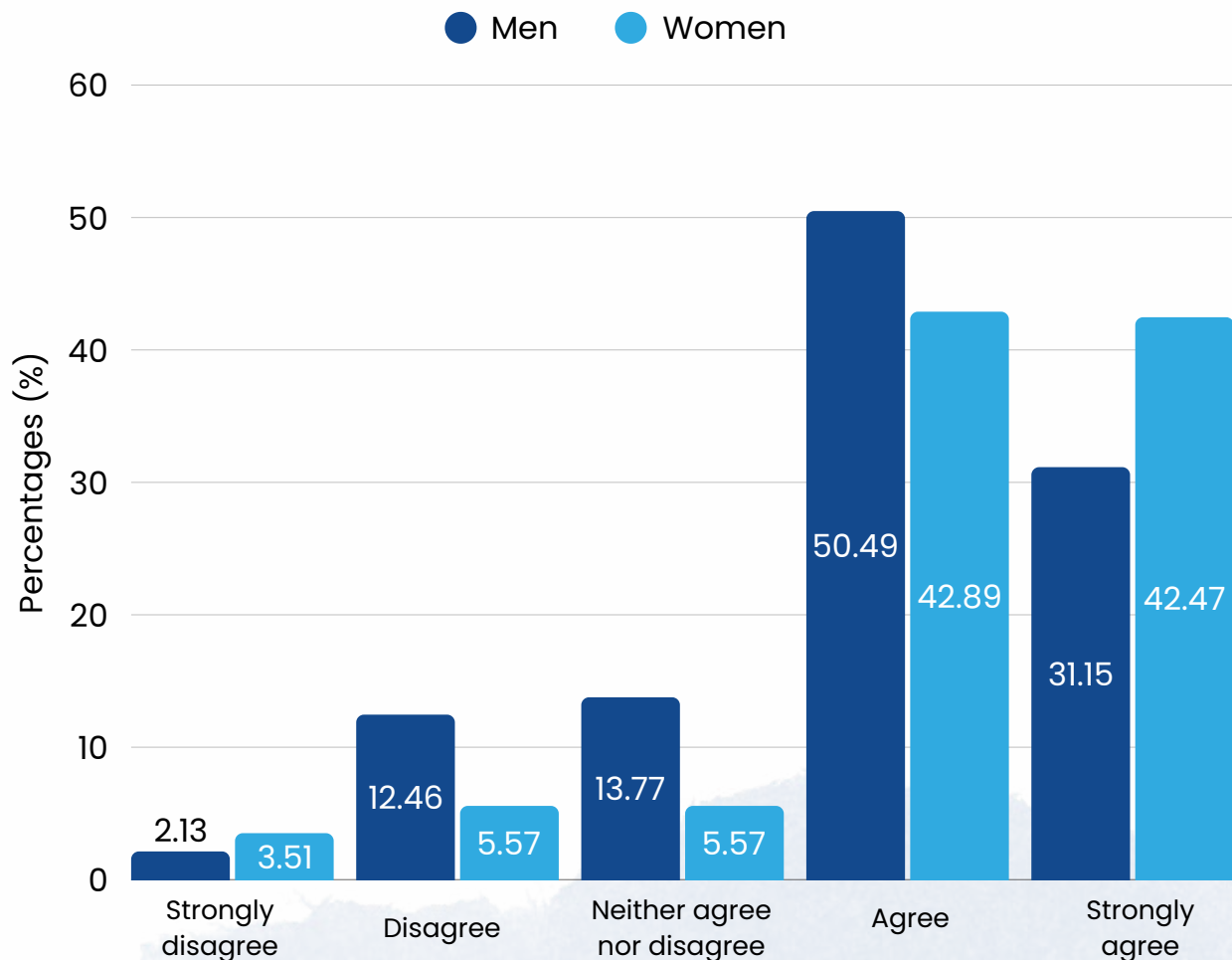


Figure 3.4 shows the distribution of responses to the statement “Men should share housework and childcare equally with women” by gender. In general, both women and men agree with this statement, but it can be said that women agree with it more strongly. More than half of men (50.49%) responded “I agree,” while this rate is slightly lower among women (42.89%). In contrast, 31.15% of men stated that they strongly agree with the statement, while this rate is much higher among women (42.47%). In other words, women support this statement more strongly by saying “I strongly agree.” Negative and undecided responses are more common among men than women. 12.46% of men responded “I disagree,” while 13.77% responded, “I neither agree nor disagree.” Among women, these rates are 5.57%. The percentage of those who say “I strongly disagree” is quite low in both groups (2.13% among men and 3.51% among women).

Section Review

Findings on the division of domestic labor indicate that domestic work is significantly gendered among married participants. Participants' own statements reveal that women devote more time to household chores than men. However, a perception gap is evident in participants' assessments of how much time their partners spend on household chores. While female participants indicate that their partners devote less time to domestic labor, male participants report that their partners devote more time to household chores, suggesting that the perceived inequality in domestic labor is even greater than it actually is.

This perception gap is also evident in satisfaction patterns. It is observed that men express higher satisfaction with the division of domestic labor than women do, while women exhibit a lower level of satisfaction. In contrast, the view that housework and childcare workloads should be shared equally at the normative level is supported, though women adhere more strongly to this principle. Within this context, the chapter demonstrates that the division of domestic labor in Turkey should be approached not only as a practical matter of time and workload, but also as an area of inequality reproduced at levels of legitimacy, perception, and expectation. It suggests that the domestic labor order functions as a mechanism linked to decisions regarding family life.

4

Gender and Family Values

Research on the relationship between attitudes toward gender and fertility intentions is somewhat limited, yet it still reveals significant differences across regions and genders. In “developed” countries, there’s usually a positive relationship between egalitarian attitudes and fertility intentions (Puur, Vseviov, & Abuladze 2019; Yoon 2016). In countries where both traditional and egalitarian values prevail, a U-shaped relationship has emerged, showing that these extremes lead to higher fertility intentions than moderate attitudes (Arpino, Esping-Andersen, and Pessin 2015; Miettinen et al. 2011). The literature review revealed that research on gender attitudes and fertility remains extremely limited. Research conducted in countries with socio-economic structures similar to those of Turkey has revealed a negative relationship between egalitarian gender values and fertility intentions (Bueno and Pardo 2023; Kan 2023). This situation can be explained by the fact that government policies promote gender equality in the labor market while supporting traditional roles within the home (e.g., long-term maternity leave). This contradiction may produce similar effects in other contexts comparable to Turkey.

Patriarchal values maintain a strong presence in Turkey (Engin and Pals 2018; Ozdemir-Sarigil and Sarigil 2021), and the country is in the first phase of the Gender Revolution. Consequently, gender values and inequalities regarding the division of labor within the household directly influence fertility intentions.

Traditional ideas about family, where the man is the breadwinner, and the woman is the caregiver, play a big role in understanding how patriarchal gender norms affect attitudes toward women in the workforce and working moms. Dedeoğlu (2012) addresses the intersection of women’s role in working life and motherhood as an important dimension of gender values, noting that family policies in Turkey have historically defined women primarily in terms of their roles as “wife and mother.”

According to this study, the idealized role of motherhood does not support women's participation in the workforce; rather, it creates a normative framework that results in low labor force participation and confines women's labor to domestic roles. The fact that the female labor force participation rate in Turkey declined steadily from 65.4% in 1960 to 30.8% in 2013 can be cited as an example of this situation (Dildar 2015).

Figure 4.1. Distribution of agreement with the statement “When a mother is employed, the children suffer.” by gender, N=1572

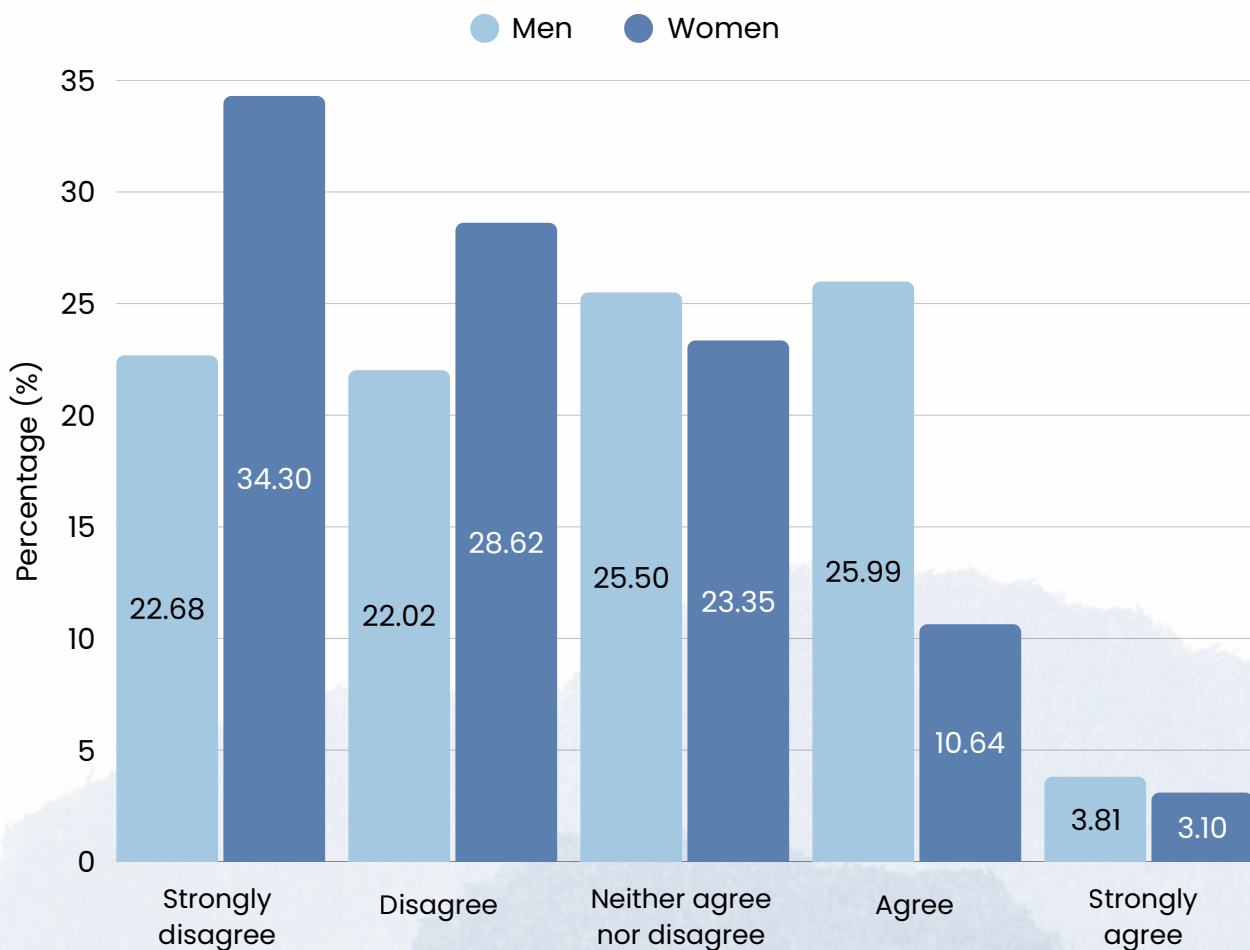


Figure 4.2 illustrates the distribution of the responses to the statement “Children suffer because their mothers work” by gender. Women are more likely than men to disagree with this statement. About one-third of women (34.3%) report that they strongly disagree with the statement, compared to 22.7% of men. Similarly, the share of respondents who say they “disagree” is higher among women (28.6%) than among men (22.0%). In contrast, agreement with the statement is more common among men. While 26% of men say they “agree,” this figure is only 10.6% among women. The proportion who “strongly agree” is quite low in both groups, although it is slightly higher among men (3.8%) than among women (3.1%).

Figure 4.2. Distribution of agreement with the statement “When a mother is employed, the children suffer.” among women by employment status, N=968

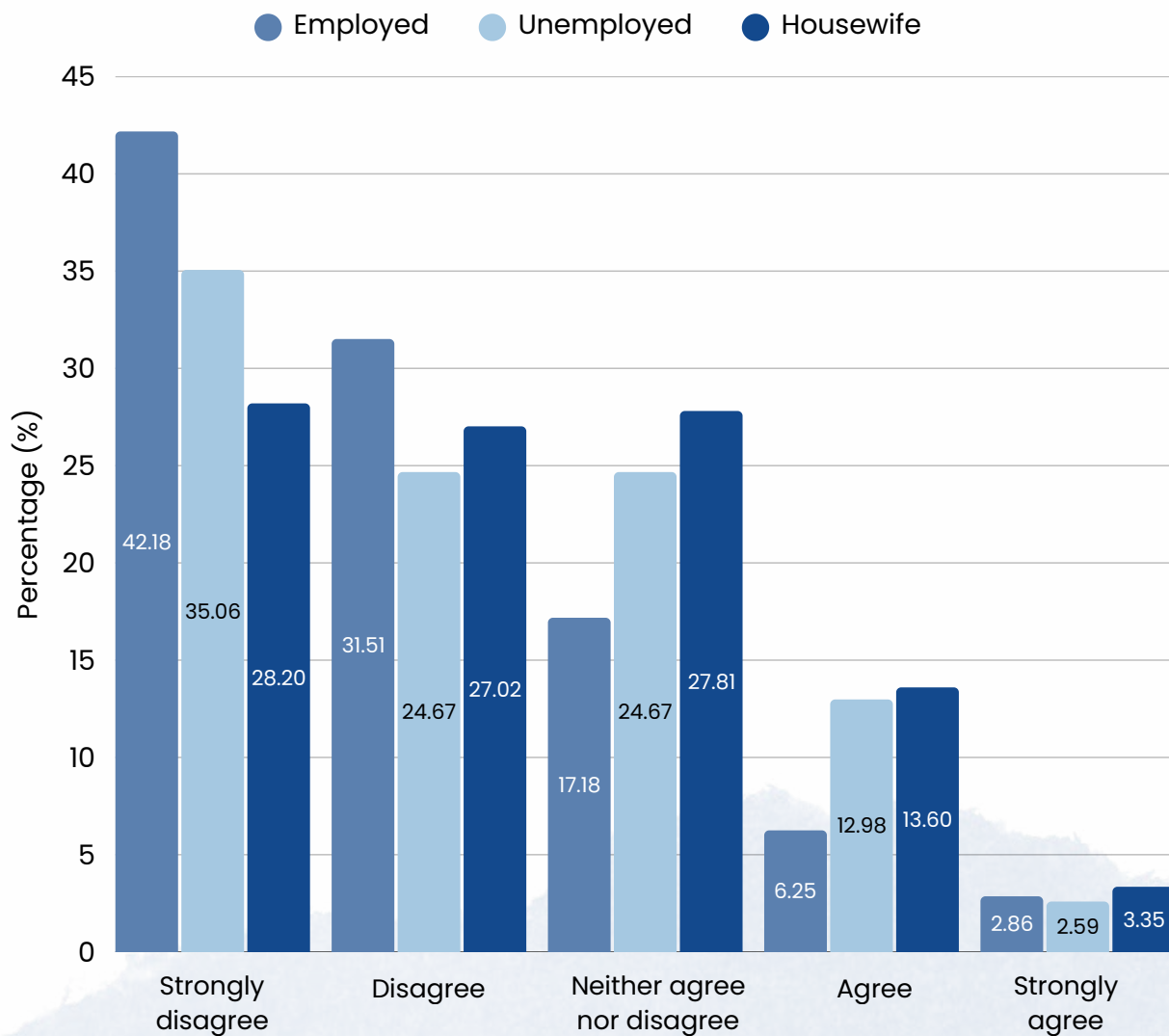


Figure 4.2 shows the distribution of responses to the statement “Children suffer because their mothers work” by employment status among women only. Women who are employed are more likely to disagree with this statement than other groups. Among those who are employed, 42.18% indicated that they “strongly disagree”, while this rate drops to 35.06% among those who are unemployed and 28.20% among housewives. Similarly, the proportion of those who “disagree” is higher among employed women (31.51%) than among the other two groups. In contrast, housewives are the group that is most likely to agree with the statement among the three groups. The percentage of those who “agree” is 13.60% among housewives, while this rate is 12.98% among unemployed women and only 6.25% among employed women.

Figure 4.3. Distribution of agreement with the statement “People around me (family and friends) insist/insisted that I have/had children.” by gender, N=1582

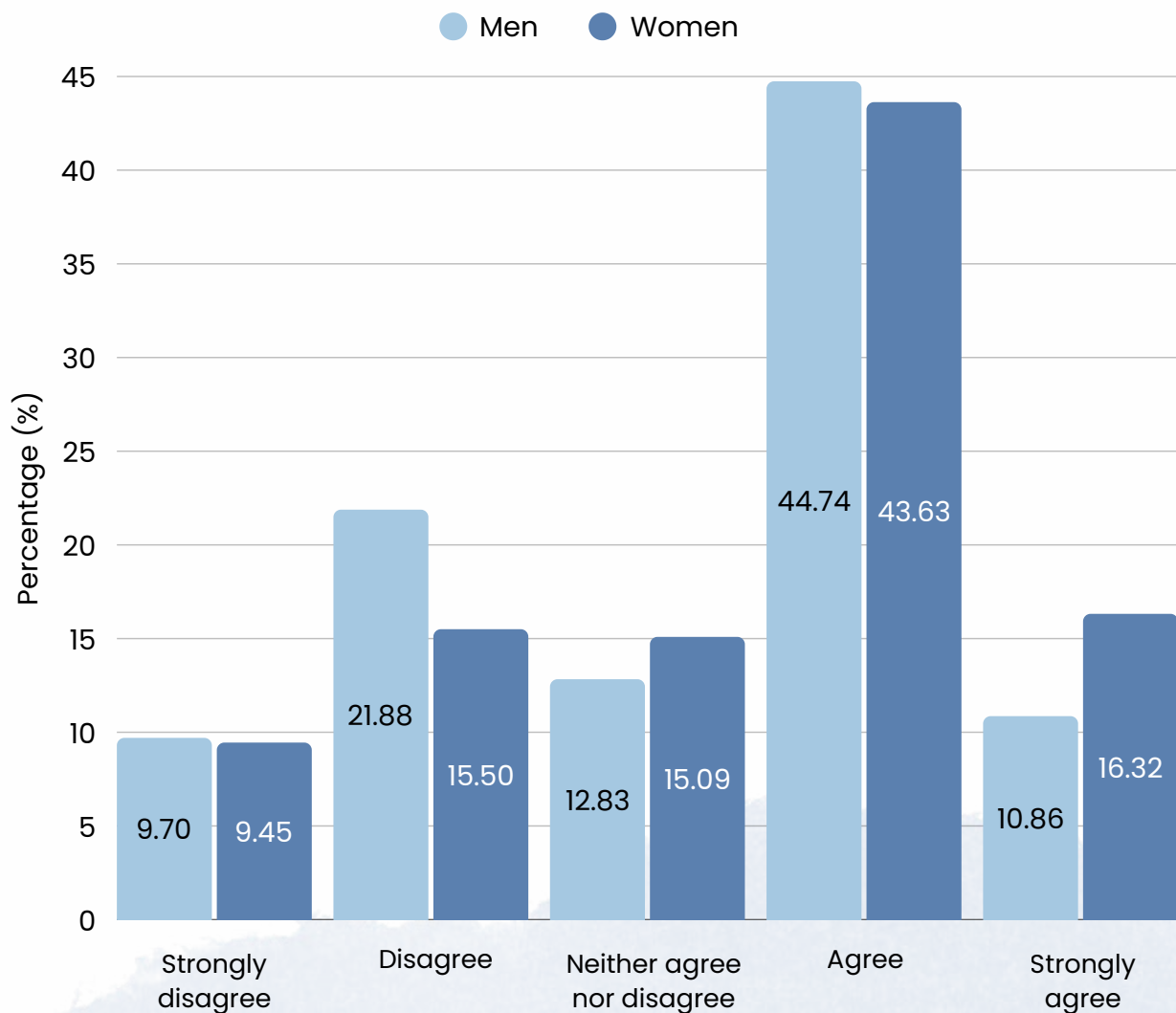


Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of responses to the statement “People around me (family and friends) insist/insisted that I have/had children” by gender. Both women and men report that their social circles are insistent about having children, but this pressure appears to be felt more strongly among women. The proportion of respondents who say they “agree” is quite high for both groups (44.74% among men and 43.63% among women), indicating similar levels across genders. However, the share who “strongly agree” is higher among women (16.32%) than among men (10.86%). Meanwhile, the proportion who say they “disagree” is 21.88% among men, compared to 15.5% among women. The share who “strongly disagree” is relatively low in both groups and nearly identical (9.70% for men and 9.45% for women).

Figure 4.4. Distribution of agreement with the statement “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women” by gender, N=1582

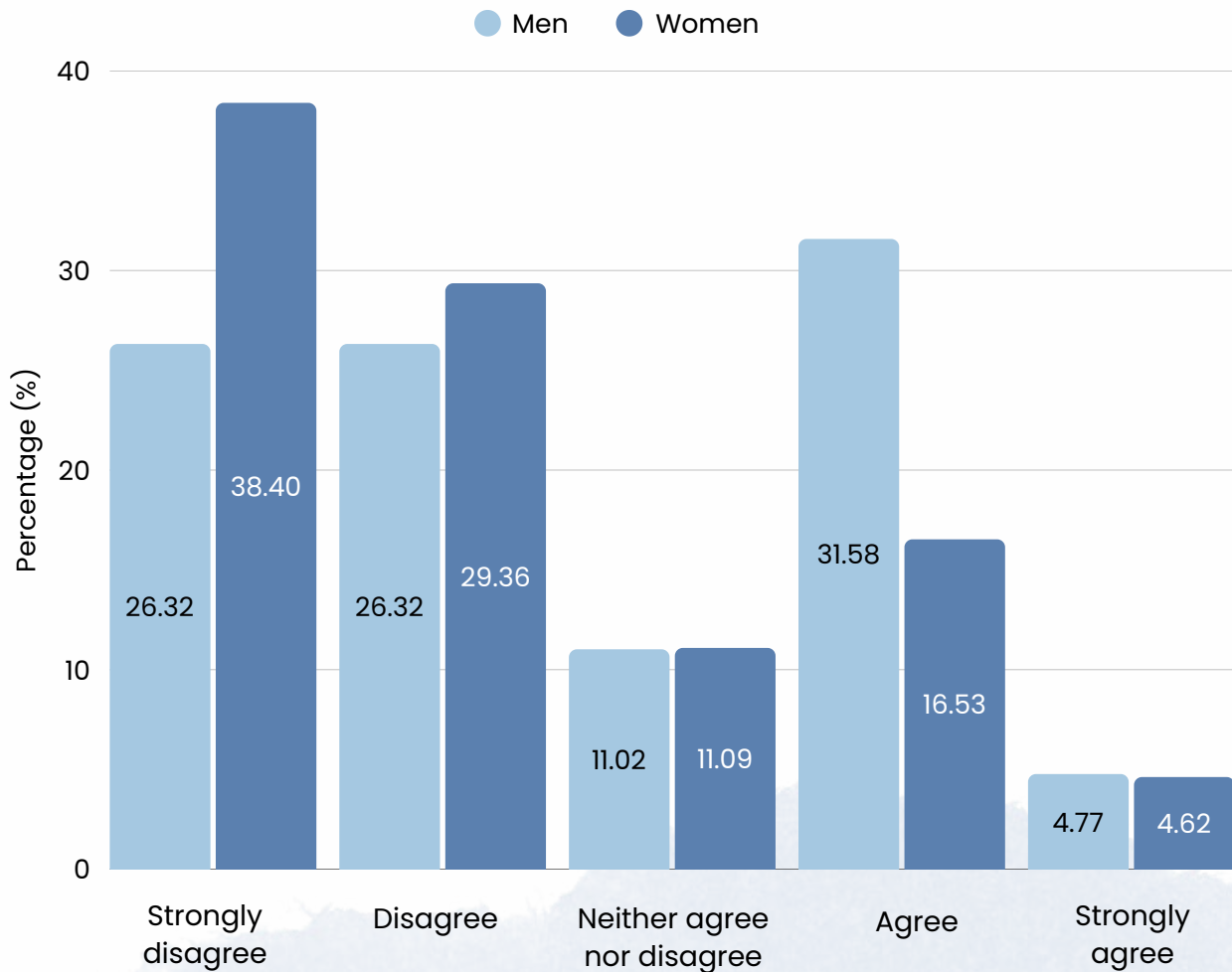


Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of responses to the statement “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women” by gender. Women disagree with this statement more strongly, while men are more likely to agree with it. Among women, 38.4% report that they strongly disagree with the statement, compared to 26.32% of men. Similarly, the share of respondents who say they disagree is also slightly higher among women (29.36%) than among men (26.32%). Men, by contrast, are more likely to express support for the statement. While 31.58% of men say they agree, this proportion is only 16.53% among women. The share who strongly agree is low and very similar across genders (4.77% for men and 4.62% for women).

Figure 4.5. Distribution of agreement with the statement “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women.” by employment status among women, N=974

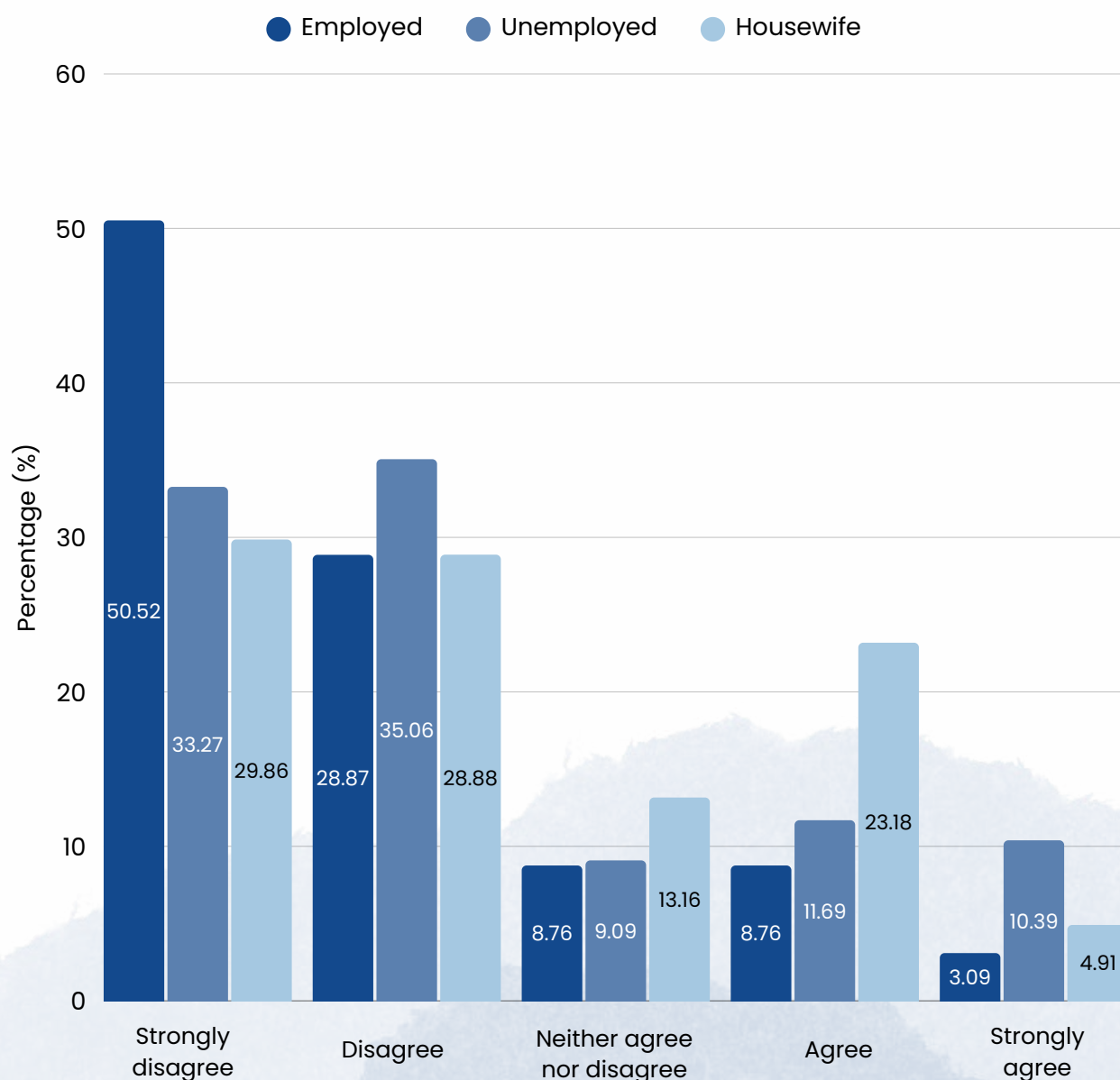


Figure 4.5 shows the distribution of responses to the statement “When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women” by employment status among women only. Compared with unemployed women and housewives, employed women are the most likely to disagree or strongly disagree with this statement (79.4%). In contrast, the share of respondents who agree or strongly agree with the statement is highest among housewives (28.1%), followed by unemployed women (22.1%), and lowest among employed women (11.9%).

Figure 4.6. Distribution of agreement with the statement “University education is more important for a boy than for a girl” by gender, N=1585

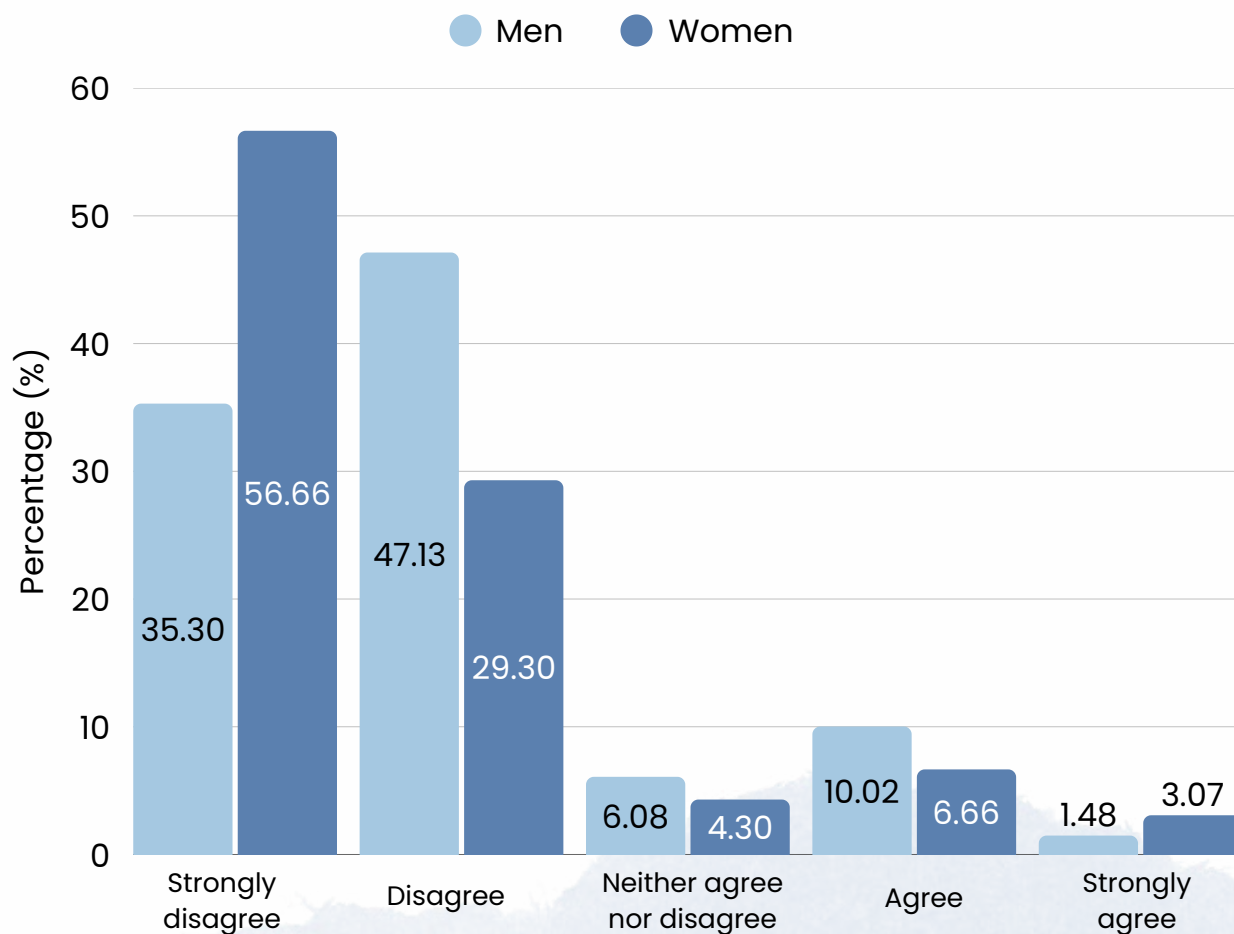


Figure 4.6 shows the distribution of responses to the statement “University education is more important for a boy than for a girl” by gender. Both women and men generally reject this statement. However, the level of opposition is higher among women than among men. The majority of women (56.66%) report that they strongly disagree with the statement, whereas this proportion is lower among men (35.30%). Nearly half of the men (47.13%) say they disagree with the statement. The share of respondents who agree with the statement is relatively low in both groups, although it is slightly higher among men than among women. About 10% of men report that they agree, compared to roughly 7% of women. The proportion who strongly agree remains low for both genders (1.48 for men and 3.07 for women).

Figure 4.7. Distribution of agreement with the statement “Men should take a more active role in government than women” by gender, N=1577

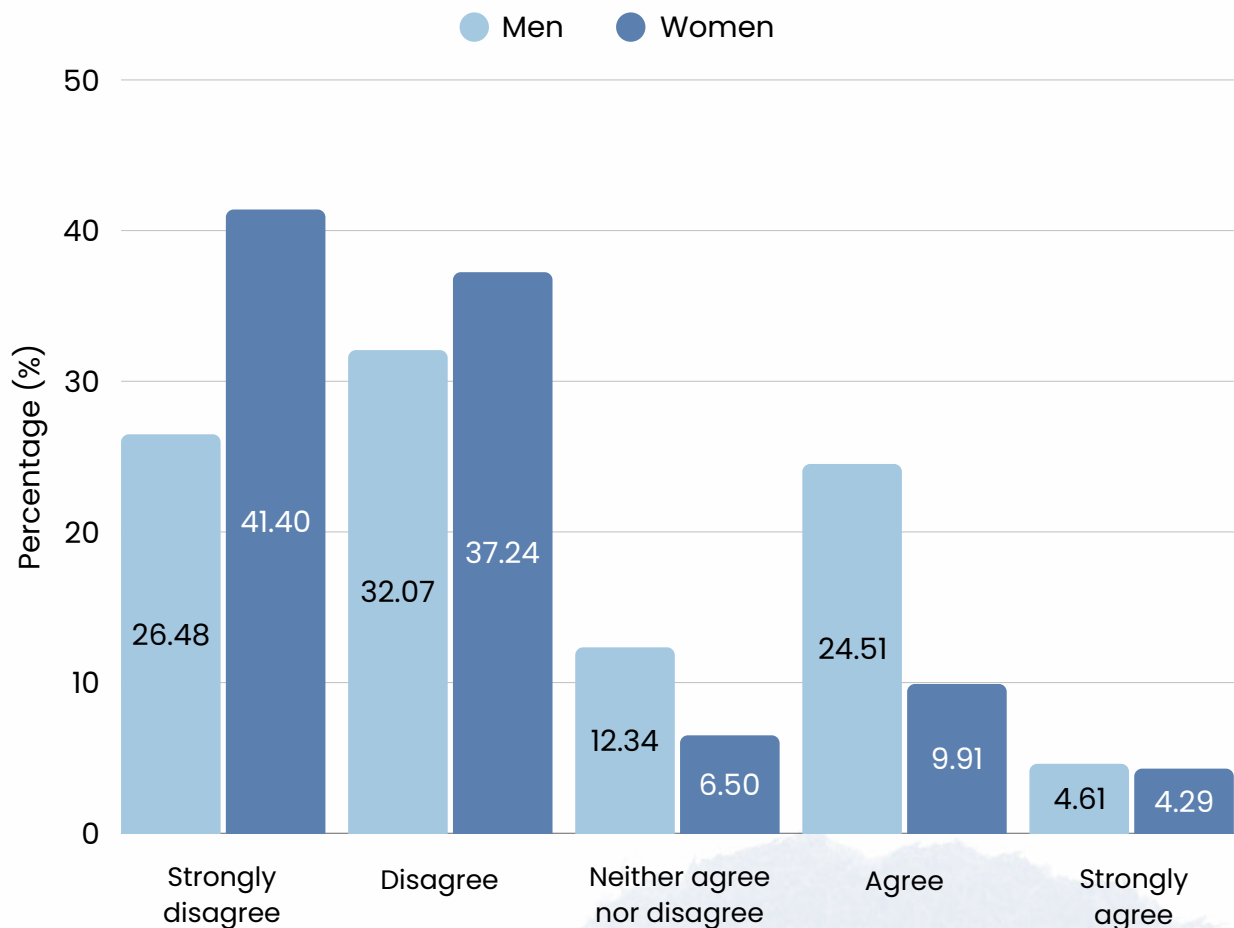


Figure 4.7 shows the distribution of responses to the statement “Men should take a more active role in government than women” by gender. Overall, women are more likely than men to oppose this statement. Among women, 41.40% report that they strongly disagree, and 37.24% say they disagree with the statement. Among men, these proportions are lower, at 26.48% and 32.07%, respectively. Men are more likely to support the statement. While 24.51% of men say they agree and 4.61% strongly agree, the corresponding figures among women are 9.91% and 4.29%. The level of indecision is relatively low in both groups compared to most other response categories, although it is higher among men (12.34%) than among women (6.50%). Overall, the vast majority of women oppose the idea that men should play a more active role in governing the country, and support for this view is considerably more common among men than among women.

Figure 4.8. Distribution of agreement with the statement “Important decisions in the family should generally be taken by men” by gender, N=1583

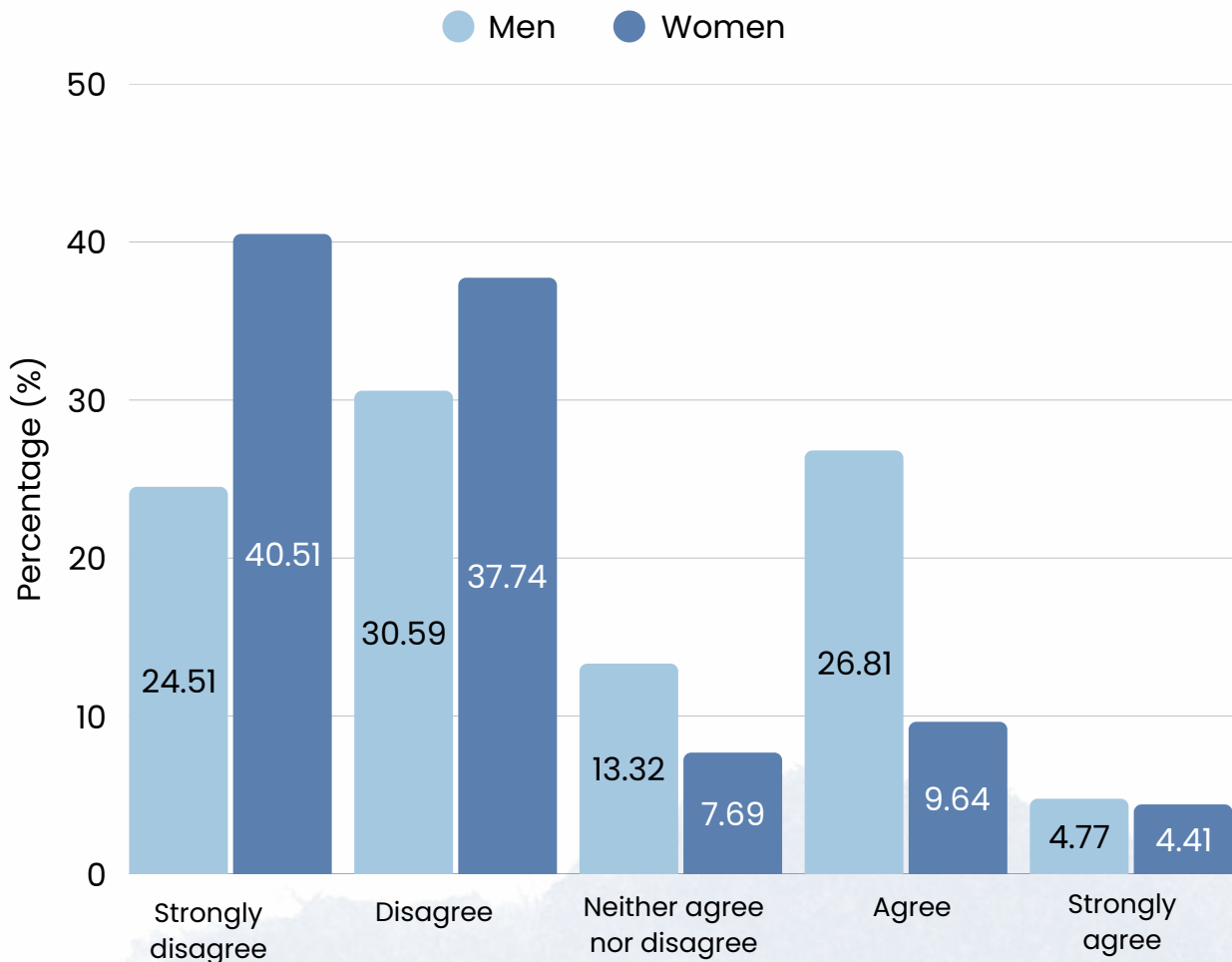


Figure 4.8 shows the distribution of responses to the statement “Important decisions in the family should generally be taken by men” by gender. Overall, women are more likely than men to oppose this statement. Among women, 40.51% report that they strongly disagree, and 37.74% say they disagree. Among men, these proportions are lower, at 24.51% and 30.59%, respectively. Support for the statement is also more common among men: While 26.81% of men say they agree and 4.77% strongly agree, the corresponding figures among women are 9.64% and 4.41%. Looking at the undecided group, 13.32% of men choose the option “neither agree nor disagree,” compared to 7.69% of women. Overall, the majority of women oppose the traditional view that important family decisions should be made by men, whereas support for this idea is more prevalent among men than among women.

Section Review

The findings in this section show that gender norms still operate strongly at the intersection of motherhood and paid labor. Women appear to take a more distant stance toward the statement that “children suffer when their mother works”, whereas men are relatively more likely to agree with this view. When the same statement is examined by employment status among women only, we see that employed women are the most likely to oppose it, while agreement is relatively higher among homemakers. This pattern suggests that the ideal of “good motherhood” continues to restrict women’s participation in paid work.

The section also shows that social pressure to have children is a gendered experience. Women feel pressure from their social circles more strongly than men do, and when this pressure intersects with expectations surrounding women’s participation in the workforce, it creates a double tension for women.

Considering the norms related to work life and public space alongside authority and decision-making practices, it is evident that a more traditional notion of “male priority” is reproduced across various domains. Women tend to oppose more strongly the view that men should be given priority in employment when jobs are scarce, whereas support for this idea is more widespread among men. When the same statement is examined by employment status among women only, employed women are more clearly positioned against this view, while supportive attitudes are relatively more visible among housewives. Similarly, although the overall tendency is to reject the view that university education is more important for boys than for girls, women again express stronger opposition to this idea than men.

A similar difference between the attitudes of men and women is also observed in statements that directly address political and familial authority. Women tend to oppose more strongly the views that men should take a more active role in governing the country and that important decisions within the family should generally be made by men, whereas these views receive greater support among men. These findings suggest that norms related to gender equality are not uniformly internalized across society; rather, noticeable differences in attitudes between women and men persist, particularly in areas such as authority, decision-making, and employment.

The 2024 Turkey Social Values Study (TSVS) data and methodological framework show that intentions to start a family and have children are not solely based on individual preferences, but are shaped by gender, the division of labor within the home, and institutional conditions. This finding shows that, in addition to what people want, the conditions under which this desire can be realized are also important.

Social expectations regarding the family remain strong, but these expectations can be constrained by concrete arrangements, such as how work and responsibilities are shared within the household, the conditions under which women can participate in the workforce, and the extent to which access to care services is available. Therefore, the trends observed in the report indicate that intentions must be interpreted through both values and attitudes as well as the material and relational realities of daily life.

The findings suggest that egalitarian expectations are met at the societal level, but persistent inequalities remain in practice. In particular, the ongoing imbalance in domestic labor and care work constrains women's life planning within a narrower framework, leading to greater pressure and negotiation for women where norms related to working life and motherhood intersect. Certain assumptions rooted in masculinity, authority, and prioritization influence decision-making at both the public and domestic levels, demonstrating that transformation is not progressing at the same pace across all areas of life.

In this context, the report indicates that approaches aimed at strengthening the institution of the family should not be limited to rhetorical appeals but should include interventions that transform concrete conditions, which are decisive. Regulations that strengthen the care infrastructure, reduce the invisibility of domestic labor, increase men's participation in care and domestic responsibilities, and reduce the barriers women face in the workplace ensure that targeted improvements in the family are based on a more realistic foundation. At the same time, reducing the social pressure surrounding reproductive decisions supports people's ability to make decisions in line with their own life cycles and makes the family experience less fraught.

The findings should also be evaluated in conjunction with the pronatalist discourse and policies developed in response to the decline in fertility in Turkey. In our country, traditional family values have been emphasized, particularly over the last 20 years, and women's social role is often defined in terms of motherhood, domestic labor, and caregiving, and this role is presented as a social responsibility. The declaration of 2025 as the “Year of the Family” also reflects this approach. The accompanying policies have largely been limited to cash support for marriage and after childbirth. However, despite all this rhetoric and incentives, the fertility rate continued to decline in 2025. In essence, the decline in fertility has not been prevented, and the impact of current policies on this issue is quite limited.

According to the data presented in this report, policies aimed at strengthening fertility intentions should primarily target reducing gender inequalities. Findings from different countries show that greater participation by men in domestic work and childcare positively affects fertility intentions. Despite women's increasing participation in education and employment, defining motherhood as women's primary social role is not consistent with the realities of contemporary life. Therefore, family and fertility policies should be rethought within a framework that moves away from patriarchal discourse and promotes a more equal sharing of parental responsibilities, supported by long-term arrangements such as leave for both parents and accessible childcare services.

From a civil society perspective, the area of need highlighted in this report requires that the family be approached as a living space where relationships and responsibilities are constantly being reestablished. It will be effective in reducing the tensions observed in the report for NGOs to develop care and support mechanisms at the local level, to spread programs that bring egalitarian family practices into everyday life, to establish empowering communication and solidarity spaces against stigmatizing norms, and to produce sustainable collaborations with local administrations and institutions through data-driven advocacy. This approach will shift the debate on family life away from abstract values and towards establishing more equitable, shared, and predictable conditions for everyone.

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