

Perspectives on gender studies in Turkey

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Introduction

In this roundtable three scholars gathered to discuss the present and future state of gender studies in Turkey. The authors represent relatively distinct perspectives and each takes up a different thread through the discussion which was a deliberate strategy. The authors were selected in part due to the varying viewpoints they could bring to the topic. Two of the authors received post graduate education outside of Turkey (Mary Lou O'Neil, Zeynep Gülrü Göker) while the other (Sevgi Uçan Çabukçu) is entirely "home-grown".

Furthermore, Sevgi Uçan Çabukçu has spent the majority of her career in academia in government universities while Mary Lou O'Neil and Zeynep Gülrü Göker are currently

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at private universities which brings a different culture and set of dynamics. Despite the fact that the vast majority of universities in Turkey are state universities, the current neo-liberal economic realities particularly concerning funding have made private universities with their gender centers serious agenda setters in this area. In this respect, the author's bring a slightly different educational background as well as experiences in varying contexts of academia in Turkey all of which informs the diverse perspectives offered in the roundtable discussion.

1. What is the state of gender studies in Turkey, strengths and weaknesses?

Zeynep Gülrü Göker - In Turkey, the institutionalization of gender studies as an academic discipline dates back to the 1990s when gender and women's studies programs were established at the graduate level in major universities such as Istanbul University, Ankara University and Middle East Technical University. These programs have been critical in the evolution of gender studies in Turkey as their graduates went on to teach gender studies in various other universities. The academics who came around these programs published academic journals and organized conferences which played a crucial role in the dissemination of scholarship on women and gender. Nevertheless, it would be mistaken to say that gender scholarship is limited to universities where there are graduate programs.

Despite the non-existence of gender or women's studies at the undergraduate level in any Turkish university, as a cross-disciplinary area of study, gender studies is conducted in many universities, and classes that cover gender issues are taught at the undergraduate level mostly in social sciences but also in other departments. There are also a few universities that grant minor degrees or certificates at the undergraduate level to students who take a certain number of classes coded as gender studies. As in many other countries, gender studies in Turkey is conducted as an inter-disciplinary area of study with the predominant number of classes in sociology departments but also in departments of communications, literature, political science, cultural studies, philosophy, public health among others.

I believe that it is important to note that gender studies evolved in Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s with the initiative of academics who were in close contact with the women's movements and feminist movement in Turkey. Academic, activist and civil societal work went hand in hand for the advancement of women's rights. A similar impetus can be noted within the universities, as feminist scholars not only teach classes and conduct research in gender studies, but sometimes with the support of student clubs, also push for change towards gender equality in the university by challenging sexism in the university, creating awareness on the problems women face in the university as women such as sexual harassment and discrimination, and institutionalizing gender equality through the formation of units for the prevention of sexual harassment on campus, implementation of statutes against discrimination and development of gender action plans. A major institutional hub for such work in higher education are gender and women's studies centers, or "centers for scientific research and application" in gender and women's studies as they are officially referred to by the Council of Higher Education of Turkey. In the 1990s and 2000s, gender and women's studies centers were opened in many universities with the collective or individual efforts of academics interested in gender issues. Their numbers steadily increased and today there are close to 100 centers listed under the category of gender and women's studies centers by the Council of Higher Education, however, not all of them are well-functioning or even functioning centers, and it is debatable whether they all endorse similar visions when it comes to gender studies, let alone endorse a shared aspiration for gender equality.

Well-functioning research centers and gender studies programs are pivotal in carrying on gender studies in Turkey. They produce research, sometimes fund research, bring together scholars in conferences and workshops, translate or publish academic scholarship and build national and international academic alliances. Some well-connected centers also use their international networks to participate in multi-national research consortiums and receive funding from the European Union, United Nations or other international grant giving programs to produce research or undertake various other projects geared towards awareness raising, education and outreach. As such, recently, project-led research and activities have become an important aspect of gender studies in Turkey. International research funds or grants are critical as they not only provide gender studies

with much needed resources, foremost being funds and human resources, but also bring gender actions and studies credibility within the university. Of course, not all universities and university centers have the same monetary capacity to support gender studies. Especially in public universities where funds are limited, many scholars conduct gender research with limited resources, and especially outside of big cities such as Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara, feminist academics often express concerns about not being supported, or being discriminated against due to patriarchal attitudes. Hence, I find it crucial that we work towards increasing mechanisms of support for scholars in gender studies, enhancing existing networks and encouraging and supporting young scholars by creating opportunities for employment, funding for research and improving the largely underappreciated status of gender studies as an academic area.

Mary Lou O'Neil - Over the years, Turkey has produced a substantial amount of gender studies scholarship and there have been and continue to be a number of academics doing gender research. Due to the lack of gender studies as a recognized branch of study, gender research has of necessity been inter and multidisciplinary and it is housed in many different departments and research areas. This lent to its vibrancy and sustained it through much turbulence. However, the focus has been more traditionally women's studies. The few graduate programs in this area that do exist in Turkey reflect this. There are any number of women's studies research centres located at various universities but very few carry the title gender studies. The focus on women is perhaps not a surprise given the general lack of equality that women face in the country. Unfortunately, the continued focus on women has, at times, unwittingly reproduced the binary construction of gender and has left masculinity and sexuality understudied in Turkey. In just the last few years there has begun to emerge a focus on men and masculinity. At the same time, more and more research has begun to explore Lgbti issues as well. While in the 1990's more research began to include Kurdish and Islamic women's experiences, gender research that focuses on women still needs to be more diverse accounting for the multitude of experiences of women in Turkey.

One of the major problems facing gender studies in Turkey today remains the lack of recognition of the discipline itself. Turkey today boasts 200 universities but only a

handful MA programs in gender/women's studies. There are only two doctoral level programs. Furthermore, in the centrally administered associate professor's exam, gender studies is not a recognized field. While it is a key word for constitution of the jury, this keyword is only available to those in the social sciences thus creating a disincentive for scholars to employ gender research in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Stem) in particular. Furthermore, the national funding agency, the Scientific and Research Technology Council of Turkey (TübitakÜ) does not provide gender as a key-word in project applications.

The potential for gender studies as a discipline in Turkey are enormous. Following the horrific murder of Özgecan Aslan in 2015⁴, the Council of Higher Education which controls universities in Turkey issued a position paper regarding gender equality (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu 2015). The paper called for a number of changes some of which include: the inclusion of classes on gender equality; the founding of women's research centres; and incentives for education related to gender at the graduate level. The publication of this document gave many who had already been working on these issues official support for gender related initiatives. This has led to a wider consciousness of the gendered nature of society including universities and has helped lay the foundation for what I hope will become a widening area of study in Turkey.

Sevgi Uçan Çabukçu - When we look at the history of academic feminism, we see very few studies on women in the universities before the 80s, and most of the existing work did not use a feminist perspective but within the paradigm of modernization (Arat 1993). These studies examine woman eclectically, as a variable. Nevertheless, there is a great accumulation of information on the private and public spheres, family, politics, education and employment of women. In the 80s, together with the rise of the feminist movement, instead of academic work conceptualized as "the woman issue", we have studies that have woman in the center, as the subject. There were also studies that made

⁴ Özgecan Aslan was a university female student who was murdered and burned as she resisted a rape attempt on 11 February 2015 on a minibus in Mersin, Turkey.

visible the feminist objections in history and covered feminist movement after the 80s (Uçan Çabukçu 2004).

We can divide the institutionalization of women's studies in Turkey in 3 major areas:

1. Between 1990-2000 when these institutions started. In 1995, after the decisions of the 5th World Women's Conference in Beijing, Centers for Research and Application of Women's Problems were founded (Kandiyoti 1996). This way, the biggest motivations behind the institutionalization were demands of equality and criticisms of knowledge and the production of knowledge, which were considered neutral and genderless. It was then possible to use knowledge, experience and production that belonged to women as a part of scientific knowledge (Çakır 1995). Even though this process was not simultaneous with the universities in Europe, it started to gain territory fighting against masculine power relations both in society and inside the academia. The first center was the Center for Research and Application of Women's Problems in Istanbul University in 1989. In 1990 there was a master's program. In 1993, a center in Ankara University, in 1994 a master's program in Metu, in 1996 another center in Aegean University and in 1999 a master's program in the same university were established. The main concept of this period was "women's problems and research", as you can see from the titles.
2. 2000-2010 was the second major period. During this time women and gender studies established legitimacy, legal changes were made, and women's status progressed. The demand for equality coming from the feminist movement affected state policies, partially. Women studies at the universities penetrated every area of social sciences. It is in this period that gender and women studies became autonomous and acquired an inter-disciplinary quality. The center concept and title "woman" now also had "gender" next to it. Nevertheless, the concept of gender used in this period still included heterosexual male and female identity, role and contradictions. The content of the concept is to change after 2010 (Timisi 2003).
3. The third period in academic feminism is the period after 2010. During this time an increasing number of private and state universities founded gender and women

centers. Today, we have 95 centers in total (Women's and Gender Research Centres 2017). The central concept in feminist literature and nomenclature is gender, which not only includes heterosexual men and women but also gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and intersex individuals. It is also more comprehensive in terms of differences between women. This pluralism included other genders into the academic feminism in a moment of crisis. We can say that this was the period when women and gender studies became mainstream (Uçan Çabukçu 2014). Thanks to the institutionalization process women academics were able to criticize masculine understanding of science and included knowledge regarding women in the scientific area. This way, "women" and "gender" became fundamental categories in the production of knowledge. It was important to draw attention to the transformative potential of this knowledge in women's lives (Alkan 2007). This process got larger and more diverse because it included gender focused studies and masculinity, diverging from the heterosexist understanding of "women's problems" in the 1990s. Traditional scientific approaches take women's issues from a homogenous point of view ignoring differences between women, whereas this new approach uncovers discrimination and exclusion practices and open them for discussion. We can argue that academic feminism is now positioned inside "critical epistemology" that uses class, culture, ethnicity, religion, education, region etc. that includes gender-based exclusion and discrimination mechanisms as concrete data, and it develops critical, heterogeneous approaches and methods (Sancar 2003). Since women's studies became an academic education and research area, national and international funds started targeting the area, giving academics important motivation

2. In your opinion, what are the emergent challenges in Turkey?

Zeynep Gülrü Göker - When answering this question, I would like to focus on three pressing issues which are insufficient resources, lack of effective institutional or other mechanisms of support for encouraging and sustaining scholarship in gender studies,

and the proliferation of centers, programs and activities using the title gender and women's studies albeit lacking gender equality perspectives or expertise in gender studies, feminist pedagogies and methodologies.

As I noted in my previous answer, three major drivers of gender studies in Turkey are graduate programs, research centers and academics who teach gender studies classes who might or might not be affiliated with a center or a graduate program. The interdisciplinary programs and centers bring together academics from various departments to conduct research or awareness raising and outreach activities. However, aside from a number of private universities and major public universities, many of these centers do not have sufficient funds to sustain their activities or to employ people who can coordinate and run them. Most of the time, academics voluntarily conduct these activities, give trainings, do research along with their various other departmental academic and administrative requirements. Another much needed resource for gender studies is research funding. At the moment, the biggest national funding resource in Turkey is the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (Tubitak), yet, there is currently no option for marking the submitted proposal to be considered as a gender studies proposal, nor the option to choose such a review panel. It would be very interesting if one were to conduct research to compare the distribution of research funds in Turkish universities and other fund giving programs in Turkey based on the gender of receivers as well as the area of proposed studies. Aside from two small scale research funds allocated by two Istanbul based private universities' gender studies centers, and a few other international grants that mostly fund outreach and applied activities rather than research, there is currently no major funding source specifically geared towards gender research.

As any gender studies scholar would know, funds are also not enough for sustaining gender studies and gender research, which brings me to the second pressing issue and that is the continued undervaluation of gender scholarship as a legitimate academic area of study. The lower status of gender studies in the hierarchy of academic disciplines affects employment opportunities, allocation of resources as well as academic performance review processes which necessarily reflect upon scholars' choices for continuing research in gender studies and young scholars' motivations for choosing this field of study in the first place. In line with the growing impetus in the European research area

towards gender mainstreaming in higher education and academic research, in Turkey, we should find ways to build mechanisms to support existing scholarship and encourage new ones.

I also want to address a more foundational issue when it comes to challenges to gender studies in Turkey, and that is the increasing lack of shared understanding and vision when it comes to what it means to do gender studies. Gender studies and women's studies are often conflated in Turkey, and it would not be wrong to state that the major body of work produced under the rubric of gender studies is limited to women's studies and is conducted with a binary understanding of gender. Research based on a non-binary conception of gender, sexuality, Lgbti+ and the perspective of intersectionality are still largely missing. Moreover, although there are now close to 100 university-based research centers in Turkey which are listed under the category of gender and women's studies centers by the Council of Higher Education, to what extent they conduct gender scholarship and whether academics who are appointed to run these centers endorse a gender equality perspective is highly debatable. In 2015, the Council of Higher Education of Turkey invited academics from all around Turkey to a workshop on gender sensitive higher education. In the aftermath of the workshop, a committee was created to guide and support gender equality actions in universities; and the Council issued a position paper directed to all university administrations suggesting the promotion of gender equality actions in universities in three areas: opening mandatory or elective classes on gender in the undergraduate level, taking measures to prevent sexual harassment on campus, and promoting the establishment of gender and women's studies centers. Although this is a very good development, it is crucial to address that a notable number of these centers are defined as family research centers and they have a very conservative outlook on gender issues in tune with increasing conservatism in society and politics. Without expertise, resources and materials, and in a context of increasing accommodation of gender studies by conservative discourses, the question "who is going to teach these classes and how," needs to be urgently addressed.

Mary Lou O'Neil - The fact that the Council of Higher Education does not recognize gender studies per se as a discipline means that Turkey does not produce its own experts in this area. With the exception of two PhD programs which offer limited spaces, this means that those who want to pursue graduate education in gender studies must do so abroad. This vastly limits the number of individuals who will be able to obtain such opportunities. Perhaps the larger problem here is that we educate very few gender experts who are fully rooted in Turkey. The confluence of influences of theories and perspectives from varying locations is important but an understanding and approach to gender that emerges from Turkey in all its complexities is vital to understanding the gender mechanisms at work in the culture. To achieve this, we need experts that are educated both in Turkey and abroad. We also need to be able to produce our own scholars in order to build the discipline of gender studies as well as to ensure that it is sustainable.

Another emergent issue centres on the definition of gender studies. While Turkey has not experienced the outright opposition to gender studies that we are seeing in the Balkans, there are those who object to the idea of gender as a social construction rather than a biological certainty. While I believe there is room for discussion of this issue, many do not and refuse to engage in discussion, academic or otherwise. For many who view sex as biological and as a settled and stationary category, there is no need for discussion, therefore no need for gender studies. Moreover, women are generally viewed not as individuals but as members of families, read heterosexual patriarchal families. Issues related to women, including legislation, are often framed in the context of family. Many women are, of course, part of families but that does not supersede their existence and women and individuals. In 2011, the then named Ministry for Women and Family became the Ministry for Family and Social Policies with women disappearing into the concept of family. This trend has crept into academia as many newly formed research centres that are to focus on women also carry the word family in their name. There is a legitimate concern that new graduate programs will lack a gender perspective that is rooted in ideas of equality and diversity.

For those of us based at private universities, where some of the most active gender research is being done today in Turkey, there is the ever present reality of funding. Gender Research Centres are often expected to be large self-sustaining. Moreover, gender

studies programs are often not revenue producing which makes university administrators reluctant to open such programs. This leaves research centres and future programs without trained personnel and trapped in the current cycle of lack. This raises the issue of research funding, specifically international funding, and its vital importance to gender research in Turkey. There is very little national funding for gender studies based research in Turkey. Overall, national funding gives priority to Stem and what little remains for the social sciences and humanities does not prioritize in any way gender research. In this respect, international funding becomes a life line of sorts. However, it also means that too often research funding organizations are setting the research agenda rather than local interests and needs.

Sevgi Uçan Çabukçu - When we look at the development of gender and women studies since the 1980s, we can say that this area is now accepted as a sub category, an independent academic area that has authentic questions, subjects and methods. This acceptance can be tracked down in the increasing number of women and gender studies centers, departments, gender courses under a variety of departments, student clubs, thesis, researches, and books. In addition, this separate and autonomous area that is limited in terms of faculty, financing and subjects gives way to marginalization. Women and gender studies presents an epistemological criticism towards other scientific areas, which is ignored and prevents this area from getting in touch with other social and physical sciences. Whereas gender and women's studies has an interdisciplinary quality not limited to one program, linked with other areas it could make progress in the academic production of knowledge as a whole. The marginal position also blocks its potential opportunities for the academia.

A recent development in the field has the risk to increase this marginality: increasing studies of motherhood that reduces women to one identity and invites them to private sphere using patriarchal codes.

There are a couple of reasons why gender and women studies is unable to have the support it needs in social and academic areas. One of the major problems is that the centers do not have faculty and budgets of their own. When I was the head of Istanbul University Women's Problems Research and Application Center, I saw the need for autonomous

budgets that help the center decide on its own on theoretical research and field work. This issue of budget is a great obstacle on the way to progress for academic feminism and a disadvantage compared to Ngo_s that are working and researching on women. Ngo_s are proven to have better financial conditions.

Another obstacle on the way to institutionalization is that these research centers are unable to make decisions on their own academic staff. Studies conducted, courses given and knowledge produced come from the faculty of other departments and disciplines working on subjects of gender and women studies. So most of these studies are the results of personal efforts of feminist academics.

In Turkey, associate professorship is acquired after a comprehensive exam process organized by Higher Education Council. Despite the fact that there are two PhD programs (Ankara and Sabancı Universities) on the area, Gender and Women Studies is not one of the areas recognized by the Council. The fact that gender and women's studies is not a specialization area creates a glass ceiling for academic promotions.

The effect of academic feminism on knowledge production in Turkey and its qualitative importance can be tracked down in its plurality, diversity and prevalence. But, examined deeply, there are other threads regarding the area. The risk of instrumentalization is one of them. According to the Statement of Gender Equality in Higher Education in 2015, universities should address the problem of gender inequality, organize courses and events on gender equality and create a life environment accordingly. In order to achieve these goals, Gender Centers should be empowered, and founded in universities where there are none. The decision coming from a higher institution binds universities, which is both positive and negative in its effects because the first experiences of institutionalization in the area come from the criticism against gender-based discrimination. This approach aims to eliminate gender-based discrimination, exclusion and exploitation that women have to face just because they are women. Therefore, academic feminism is political in terms of its ontology. The question is how appropriate it would be to found centers with scholars not working in the area or giving courses with the Council's advice. Another aspect of the risk of instrumentalization is the effect of international funds channeled in the area. These funds create an environment of academic rent and give way to what we call "feminism for projects".

Before the institutionalization of feminist thought in the academia, there were academic studies that lacked that a critical and transformative character. Therefore, the increase in numbers of gender centers does not mean anything on its own and has the risk of instrumentalization, domestication and reification. The purpose of feminist research is not to reproduce hegemonic masculine relationships but to produce new knowledge that would challenge and change these methods and mechanisms. Therefore “feminist studies is an ideological and political area” (Berktaş 1991). Despite all the negative aspects, we still have very important scholars and institutions in the area. At the same time some recently founded private universities and institutions such as SU Gender at Sabancı University, Gender Center at Kadir Has University, Koç-Kam at Koç University contribute to both feminist production of knowledge and university-society relationship through projects, programs, trainings and field research (<https://sugender.sabanciuniv.edu/> & www.khas.edu.tr/gender/100).

Nevertheless, after the 2015 document of the Council, there are new gender centers in every little university in every city. But these “nameplate centers” (Uçan Çabukçu 2018) do not have adequate personnel to be run with a feminist method and approach and causes the discipline to be emptied academically and, even worse, to be filled again with contents that would reproduce gender inequality. That is why required/elective courses on gender thought by scholars outside feminist theory and methodology do not help the cause.

3. Looking ahead, can you try to identify some trends and perspectives for gender studies in Turkey?

Zeynep Gülrü Göker - I believe that gender studies in Turkey has to evolve in the direction of cutting-edge research on gender and sexuality, move beyond binary gender conceptions, pay attention to intersectionality and not conflate gender studies with women’s studies. I see that young scholars are taking the lead in this direction and hence their efforts need to be well supported. On the other hand, I also think that, in Turkey and beyond, we need to do gender studies more at the foundational level, and by this, I refer to both teaching gender at the undergraduate level but also encouraging gender

mainstreaming to curriculum especially in foundational programs and courses such as humanities, history and philosophy. This would help stop the treatment gender studies receives as a marginal field of interest and also help students as well as scholars to grasp and acknowledge the ethical *raison d'être* of employing a gender perspective when studying major questions of humanity, history, society and philosophy.

I also think that gender studies scholarship in Turkey has to follow another emerging trend in the world and that is cross-disciplinary gender studies that bring together social sciences, arts and Stem scholarship. University administrators, research institutions and grant-giving organizations should build mechanisms to foster and encourage such alliances and to integrate gender studies to Stem scholarship and education where it is currently absent. Cutting edge engineering, technology and natural sciences research can benefit a lot from a gender perspective, and current scholarship on gender studies can be enriched to a great extent via innovative technologies and methodologies that are not so commonly used in social sciences.

In Turkey, as elsewhere, two critical area of studies where gender studies are increasingly being integrated to is migration studies and urban studies. The growing number of conferences and published papers that look at questions of gender and migration, gender, urban planning and urban transformation show these two areas to be the emerging trend in Turkey. On the other hand, an area where gender perspective is much needed although insufficiently endorsed is education studies. Despite the fact that many gender studies departments and centers give gender equality trainings within and outside the university, there is still a considerable lack of interaction between faculties of social sciences and faculties of education. Aside from a few well-known scholars and departments of education studies, research on feminist pedagogies and gender and education from a theoretical perspective is largely missing and much needed.

Based on my experience and observations, I can say that the main body of research conducted in gender studies in Turkey is qualitative small-scale research. Notwithstanding the significance of research on a micro scale which takes into consideration contextual particularities and allows in-depth analysis, I think that we also need more large-scale, comparative research on the national and international level. To qualify, I do not refer to large-n studies that only treat women as a variable; on the contrary, I refer to national or

international empirical research that endorse a gender perspective in all aspects of research, including research design, theoretical framework, methodology, the formulation of expected impacts as well as in the structure and governance of the research team. For this, we need more opportunities for discussing research ethics and methodologies, and the availability and accessibility of opportunities and resources for cross-country as well as cross-regional research. Gender studies needs to take its share from global trends in mobility in research, and we need to think about ways in which we can combine micro-level research with macro, cross-country research, disseminate research outputs effectively and conduct collaborative research on shared societal problems from a gender perspective. To be able to do all of these, we need to keep on building networks, directing attention to the even distribution of resources and strengthening mechanisms of solidarity to keep gender studies alive and flourishing.

Mary Lou O'Neil - There are several paths that I see for gender studies in the future in Turkey. One involves institutionalization and the recognition of it as a discipline that can then be further developed through the establishment of departments including graduate programs. New programs need to be established especially at the graduate level so that we are educating new generations of scholars ourselves. At the same time, we need to move more fully into the heart of gender studies and all of the possibilities that it embodies. Gender studies in Turkey needs to embrace an intersectional approach which of necessity means moving beyond simple binaries of gender but also recognizing diversity within and between genders. Moreover, we need to continue the emergent work on men and masculinities as well as sexuality studies while also exploring all of this in the context Islam and pious communities.

While institutionalization is an important avenue for the future, the integration of sex/gender analysis into all areas of academic research is equally important. Gender research can no longer be confined to the social sciences and humanities. The push to introduce gender research into Stem in particular is vital. Gender analysis which is so often missing in these fields often yields incomplete and/or biased research, which then leads to the formulation of inadequate policies, programs, theories, and outcomes. Gender analysis contributes to excellence in research through stimulating innovation and

new knowledge. The integration of gender analysis into research, without doubt, has the possibility to produce better science but it may also provide some protection from shifting political winds. As we have witnessed recently in Hungary, gender studies programs make easy targets but if gender analysis and a gender perspective are embedded in all aspects of research regardless of discipline it will be much more difficult to target and root out.

Finally, gender studies cannot exist without gender mainstreaming of our institutions. Women in Turkey have been fighting for an equal place in society and in higher education for decades. While there are more women in academia and at the rank of full professor in Turkey (30%) (Yüksek Öğretim Bilgi Sistemi) than in many European countries, the number is still far from equal. The goal now needs to be transformation of our institutions to ensure equal opportunities for women and men at all levels and in all disciplines. Gender studies provide a means for understanding the ways in which much of our knowledge, practices and institutional mechanisms are deeply gendered. At the same time, gender mainstreaming provides a practical application for ensuring that our institutions also embrace a gender perspective, but it is also important to ensure that we are not merely adding women and/or reproducing conventional gender roles. An intersectional approach to both gender studies in theory and in application is vital to ensuring the widest possible opportunities for the most people to produce the best possible research and create the most inclusive of institutions.

Sevgi Uçan Çabukçu - Even though there are different geographies, different societies in different qualities and time frames, we are living in a historical period when political systems and societies are under the influence of neoliberal policies. The motives of profit and utilitarianism that come with the market becomes the central motivation in social, cultural and economic context. Political power, political choices, budgets and decision making are shaped with these motives. The violence of populist, authoritarian, strict, anti-democratic and masculine political organization are on the rise. This changes the structures, relationships and production of the universities as products of enlightenment. The acceptance that education is a basic human right, that the production of

knowledge has a public value, the *raison d'être* of the modern state deteriorates and has a transformative effect on the universities.

Paradoxically, universities and processes of production of knowledge have their share of profit maximization and individual utilitarianism, the two basic principles of liberalism. Marketization and utilitarian approach show themselves as marginalization and reification. Gender studies is discredited and emptied. We notice similar problems in many European and American universities. For example, the Ceu Women and Gender Studies Center in Budapest has been closed. It was a center that employed important feminist academics and conducted important research. In some cases, the problem is not closure directly but a decrease in funds and academic personnel. In other cases, the centers are not run for social benefit but by motives like profit maximization and efficiency increase mentioned above. The discipline is reified. For example, in Turkey, research centers are not shut down, on the contrary, their numbers increase every day. So does the number of universities. But it is not possible to talk about an increase in quality together with an increase in quantity. The first examples, like Kasaum at Istanbul University, Ksaum at Ankara University, Eskişehir, Çukurova, Aegean and Dokuz Eylül Universities, were the main institutions where academic faculty and knowledge regarding women, gender and academic feminism were generated. But recently these institutions lost a significant amount of personnel due to 1st generation feminists retiring on the one hand and 2nd generation feminists being fired on the other. For example, there are many feminist scholars that work on gender issues among the Academics for Peace (Göregenli 2018). The institutional autonomy, independence in the production of knowledge and the principle of social benefit were always matters of discussion depending on the democratic qualities of the existing political system. But this global crisis advances so fast that these discussions are without meaning and a structural change in the universities is on its way. We should also point out that academic feminism depends very much on the university system and on the faith of authoritarian/democratic regimes. A global wave of authoritarianism and conservatism took control of the academic world and organization. Knowledge turning into a commodity, students into customers and academic labor becoming valueless are neoliberal system's applications and it looks like that will hit academic feminism and gender studies the most.

Academic feminism exposed sexist content in processes, methods and tools of knowledge and knowledge production. And its institutionalization was a radical intervention to the modern university system. Feminist production of knowledge was then able to hold a position inside critical thinking and epistemology of knowledge, become widespread thanks to academic institutions and gained respect. It was able to come up with new approaches to modern traditional, academia-society relationships. Despite its transformative effects and processes, gender or feminist studies will be among the first disciplines to be abandoned because of the structural crisis universities and knowledge production are in.

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