

Women's Studies in Turkish Academia: Exploring Knowledge Production through Doctoral Dissertations

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In this study, 33 dissertations conducted in women's studies doctoral programs in Turkey between 2018 and 2024, spanning from the earliest completed dissertation to the most recent with finalized data analysis, were thematically analyzed to systematically identify the prevailing trends, themes, and social issues addressed in the generation of feminist knowledge. Theoretically, the study is based on Haraway's concept of situated knowledge and feminist critique of knowledge. Methodologically, a qualitative research design based on document analysis was used, and the data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-step thematic analysis, which was supported by MAXQDA software. The findings identified the following six main themes: "Feminist Activism and Empowerment," "Migration, Identity and Gender," "The Body, Health and Life Cycle Experiences," "Gender Roles and Masculinity," "Cultural, Familial and Ecological Representations," and "Everyday Life and Gender." These themes elucidate how feminist knowledge contributes to social transformation and its connection to contemporary debates regarding digitalization, care work, ecofeminism, and everyday life. The findings, which underscore the practical relevance of doctoral research and its academic contributions, emphasize the importance of women's studies doctoral programs in developing policies based on gender equality and provide a guiding framework for future research .

Keywords: Feminist activism, gender roles, gender studies, thematic analysis, women's studies

Women's studies have gained a noticeable presence within academic discourse in recent years as a multidisciplinary research field that seeks to understand the historical, structural, and cultural underpinnings of gender inequalities. This area of academic inquiry, which has emerged as a significant source of theoretical and empirical knowledge, challenges established patriarchal epistemologies by transforming women's experiential knowledge into academically recognized forms (Anderlini-D'Onofrio, 2004; Collins, 2011; Mozeley, 2019). The rise of women's studies in Turkey coincided with the feminist movement of the 1980s, which led to increased academic engagement, as

evidenced by the founding of the Istanbul University Women's Issues Research and Application Center in 1989 (Yelsalı Parmaksız, 2019). The impact of these developments on educational programs was evident with the establishment of the first master's program in women's studies at Istanbul University in 1990 and the doctoral program at Ankara University in 2011 (Sancar, 2003; Soyer, 2013). While the institutionalization of the field has navigated complex sociopolitical climates and changing higher education policies, these programs have successfully embedded academic practices that interrogate women's experiences and patriarchal knowledge production. These practices have become increasingly embedded within university institutions, shaping the academic landscape.

Doctoral dissertations are essential to academic research, as they reflect the primary dynamics and direction of a particular academic field by focusing on the most current research topics (Delamont et al., 2000; Park, 2007). By identifying gaps, controversies, current trends, and emerging research areas in the existing literature, doctoral dissertations contribute significantly to the advancement of knowledge (Grover, 2007; Trafford & Leshem, 2008). Despite the significant number of doctoral dissertations in the field of women's studies in Turkey since 2018, it has been observed that there is a lack of research focusing directly on these dissertations. While extant literature on the subject (Balıcı, 2016; Çubukçu, 2022; Kandiyoti, 2010; Yelsalı Parmaksız, 2019) has focused more on the quantitative development or institutional issues of women's research centers, the core directions, associations with social issues, and the diversity of doctoral dissertations have been largely overlooked. This knowledge gap signifies a substantial deficiency in comprehending the field's scholarly aspect and its potential for societal impact.

A focus on doctoral dissertations in women's studies enables an analysis of the field's most profound, theoretical, and interdisciplinary contributions to knowledge production. Indeed, doctoral dissertations in this field aggregate extant literature, introduce novel concepts, engage in authentic field research, and contribute to feminist epistemologies. Furthermore, as the doctoral level signifies the pinnacle of knowledge production in academic domains, the thematic shifts observed in these dissertations serve as key indicators of the overarching direction of the field and its prospective future research trends. However, a comprehensive thematic analysis of doctoral dissertations in the field of women's studies in Turkey is conspicuously lacking. In this particular context, the principal issue of this research lies in the absence of a comprehensive analysis of the thematic boundaries of doctoral dissertations within the domain of women's studies programs in Turkey.

This study aims to identify the contextual trends of the field by thematically analyzing doctoral dissertations conducted in women's studies programs in Turkey. Specifically, it addresses the following research question: What are the dominant themes and patterns of knowledge production within the doctoral dissertations in this field? As an inductive, thesis-based inquiry, the study focuses on the internal intellectual landscape revealed by these documents rather than evaluating them against the external sociopolitical backdrop of the period. Theoretically, this study is based on Haraway's "situated knowledge" conception and feminist critique of knowledge. According to this conception, knowledge is not merely neutral or universal but a historically, spatially, and socially situated construction (Haraway, 1988). In doctoral dissertations conducted in Turkey, this perspective is manifested in field-based, participatory, and critical studies grounded in women's experiences. At this juncture, it can be posited that doctoral dissertations in this domain should be regarded not solely as academic knowledge production but also as a praxis of political response and resistance. In this context, this research aims to provide substantial contributions on both academic and practical levels.

While a content analysis of doctoral dissertations in the field of women's studies provides insight into the current theoretical state of the field, in practice, it offers strategically relevant information regarding educational policies and gender equality studies.

Consequently, this study focuses on a comprehensive thematic analysis of doctoral dissertations conducted in the field of women's studies in Turkey to reveal the trends and potential areas of transformation in knowledge production. Doctoral dissertations in this field serve a dual role, functioning as both an academic artifact and a historical memory of feminist knowledge production. Thematic mapping of this memory offers a comprehensive overview of the past and guidance for future research. In other words, the exploration of the relationship between feminist knowledge production and academic institutionalization processes, the identification of subjects that have been prioritized, and the examination of issues that remain invisible provide a highly significant basis for researchers in the field.

Method

This study was structured on a basic qualitative research design, which serves as one of the qualitative research approaches. Basic qualitative research offers a paradigm for an in-depth understanding of lived experiences and the meanings associated with these experiences (Creswell, 2013; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this context, this research endeavors to unveil the thematic patterns, academic directions, and knowledge production processes within the content of these studies by thoroughly analyzing doctoral dissertations conducted in the domain of women's studies in Turkey. This method was selected because its flexibility and interpretative depth align with the feminist goal of rendering visible the nuanced and situated meanings within women's experiences. By allowing themes to emerge from the data rather than imposing pre-existing categories, the method supports an inductive approach consistent with feminist critiques of positivist rigidity.

The document analysis method has been the preferred approach in the data collection process. This method systematically evaluates written documents containing information on a specific phenomenon (Bowen, 2009; Güler et al., 2025; Kırıl, 2020). The sample was determined using criterion sampling, which is a purposive sampling technique. As a criterion, the sample consisted of doctoral dissertations conducted in women's studies programs, which were open to access. Following these established criteria, the analysis was conducted on a sample of 33 doctoral dissertations. The documents under analysis in this study consist of doctoral dissertations conducted in women's studies programs of universities in Turkey between 2018 and 2024. The year 2018 was selected as the starting point to capture the emergence of the first cohort of graduates from dedicated women's studies doctoral programs established in the preceding decade. These documents are accessible in the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK). As the data consists of publicly published scientific documents, author names and university affiliations were not anonymized. This decision aligns with the feminist ethical principle of citation justice, ensuring that the intellectual labor of women scholars is visibly acknowledged rather than obscured.

The study employed the six-stage Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019), which posits researcher subjectivity as an analytic resource rather than a bias. This methodological choice operationalizes Haraway's (1988) "situated knowledges" by acknowledging that the generated themes are not passive discoveries but interpretative constructions shaped by the researcher's engagement with the data. The analysis moved iteratively through six phases: familiarization, coding, theme generation, reviewing, defining, and reporting. In the initial

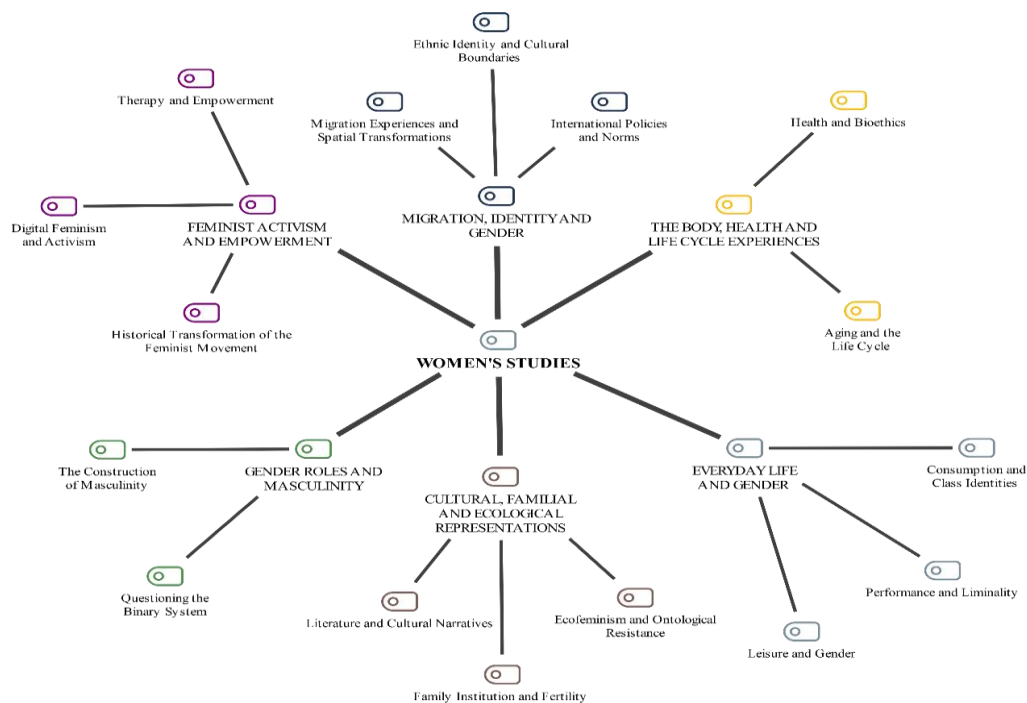
phase, the researcher cultivated comprehensive familiarity with the data by meticulously reviewing the abstracts of 33 doctoral dissertations. At this stage, preliminary coding was executed using MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2024 software. Beyond this initial phase, the software facilitated the systematic management of the dataset and supported theme construction through the hierarchical grouping and iterative refinement of codes. Additionally, it was employed to visualize the conceptual relationships between categories, ensuring the coherence of the final thematic map. In the subsequent stage, analogous phrases were classified by these codings to form categories for potential themes. In the third stage, these categories underwent a comparative analysis with the broader dataset comprising the study to ensure contextual dependability. In the fourth and fifth stages, the conceptual associations between the categories were established, and the final themes were identified based on these associations. In the sixth stage, each finding was supported by categories and reported. This process yielded the identification of 16 categories and 6 main themes.

Results and Discussion

The themes and categories that have emerged following the systematic and inductive analysis of doctoral dissertations in women's studies programs in Turkey to reveal the contextual trends of the field are presented below. Figure 1 illustrates the hierarchical relationship between the sixteen identified categories and the six overarching themes, mapping the conceptual landscape of the analyzed dissertations.

Figure 1.

Themes and Categories of Doctoral Dissertations



Feminist Activism and Empowerment

Contemporary feminist activism has emerged on digital platforms, presenting novel strategies and opportunities that differ from those available through conventional forms of activism. Tuna Dur's (2024) examination of the methods employed by women-focused civil society organizations in utilizing social media as a medium for cyberfeminist activism revealed that these platforms function as a pivotal instrument in the pursuit of gender equality, primarily by augmenting the visibility of women within the digital domain. Similarly, Kama Özelkan (2024) analyzed

the reflections of the #MeToo movement in Turkey and explored the continuum relations between online and offline feminist activism in the case of the Susma Bitsin Platform (Speak Up to End Platform). The extant research demonstrates that digital feminist activism does not merely function as a conduit for raising awareness; it also engenders substantive contributions in domains such as women's solidarity and organization, economic empowerment, and policy-making.

A comprehensive analysis of the historical evolution of the feminist movement in Turkey necessitates an examination of generational differences and the diversification of political approaches. Morsünbül's (2019) examination of the transformation of the movement revealed that the feminist movement is characterized by fragmentation and diversification, as indicated by the personal experience narratives of feminist women. This finding challenges the prevailing notion of a unified feminist movement, suggesting a more complex and heterogeneous social landscape. Aygüneş's (2022) study explored feminist struggle practices in relation to affect theory, positing that participants cultivated emotional volunteering practices within the feminist movement by oscillating between affect contradiction, affect solidarity, and affect belonging, thereby enhancing the resilience of their activism. These findings imply that generational distinctions and the metropolitan-provincial dichotomy have influenced the feminist movement. Moreover, it suggests that the movement has undergone a multifaceted transformation.

Empowerment and therapy have become key strategies in addressing gender inequality. Bozkur's (2022) investigation examined the impact of a feminist therapy-based group program on women's perceptions of empowerment, reporting a decline in internalized sexism levels among the participants, concurrent with an increase in their psychological power. In a recent curriculum development study for the gender equality education course, Şanlı (2022) examined the effects of the intervention on pre-service teachers' awareness of gender equality and their subsequent acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to gender equality education. The study's results demonstrated that the intervention increased the pre-service teachers' awareness of gender equality and their knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to gender equality education.

This theme encompasses contemporary transformations of the feminist movement and processes of women's empowerment. Cyber feminist practices on digital platforms engender horizontal communication networks that transform traditional hierarchies following Castells' (2015) concept of a "network society." Digital activism is also being integrated with local resistance practices, becoming a space of communication and political activism for feminist organizations (Baer, 2016). Affective solidarity practices establish a continuum between online and offline activism, thereby rendering the feminist struggle more flexible and widespread (Chen, 2025; Crossley, 2015). Conversely, feminist therapy-based practices aim to address internalized sexism by empowering women, while educational programs promote this transformation at the institutional level (Brown, 2018; Lampthey et al., 2015). The studies under this theme illuminate the innovative potential of digital technologies in fostering feminist activism, the methods through which practices of affect and solidarity contribute to the sustainability of activism, and the pivotal role of educational and therapeutic programs in empowering women to combat internalized sexism.

Migration, Identity and Gender

Moving from the collective mobilization of activism to individual trajectories of displacement, the second theme addresses the intersection of mobility and identity. Studies of migrant women's experiences reveal how gender and migration intersect. Güdekli's (2024) examination of crime fear experiences among women immigrating to Antalya

in the context of international migration revealed a correlation between the migrants' disadvantaged status and crime fear, particularly in cases involving male perpetrators and sexual crimes. The study also identified factors contributing to this fear, including language barriers, cultural differences, and inadequate social support. Hatipoğlu (2020) examined refugee women's experiences in a small city by studying the everyday lives of Somali women in Kütahya. This study revealed that Kütahya is not only a satellite city but also a place that affects these women's lives. Kemik (2020) revealed that migrant women construct remote motherhood strategies for their children within the framework of transnational motherhood by focusing on the motherhood experiences of Filipino care workers in Hong Kong.

Ethnic identity and cultural boundaries emerged as important factors that shape women's experiences. Atalar (2024) examined the transformation of the Circassian family structure, revealing that it is organized to ensure community cohesion and collective solidarity within the framework of khabze norms. However, this structure shows diversification in rituals and interactions due to urbanization. Harnuboğlu (2022) discussed intercultural marriages between Arab Alevi women and Turkish/Arab Sunni men, exploring how they crossed ethnic boundaries to create a space for themselves in Sunni society. On the other hand, Boztaş (2020) examined 19th-century American missionary women and revealed that the interactions of women of different classes, races, ethnicities, and religious beliefs within the context of missionary work differed from Western Orientalist discourse.

Substantial findings are provided by international norm production processes and their impact on gender policies. Doğan's (2021) postcolonial critique of the UN gender regime reveals a discernible hierarchy between global and domestic norms. This hierarchy is maintained by abjection, whereby global norms are elevated above domestic norms. Additionally, Akgül's (2019) examination of conflict and gender equality approaches in UN documents analyzes the evolution of gender equality approaches within the UN, shaped by the global women's movement, over time.

This theme encompasses an exhaustive exploration of the experiences of migrant women, the transformation of ethnic identities, and the intricacies of international policy-making processes. The experiences of migrant women are influenced by transnational labor and care networks and spatial dynamics (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Kofman et al., 2000). The processes of reconstructing ethnic identities in everyday life create a space of tension between social norms and individual strategies (Anthias, 2020). The discordance between international norms and local contexts indicates Mohanty's (2003) critique, which asserts that the conceptualization of "woman" as promoted by Western-centered feminism obscures the significance of locality. This theme explores how the intersections between migration processes, intercultural interactions, and global-local political dynamics shape women's experiences.

The Body, Health and Life Cycle Experiences

A critical examination of women's experiences and bioethical issues in the health field from a feminist perspective has yielded significant findings. Demirhan (2024) examined the experiences of living organ donor women in the context of feminist bioethics, demonstrating that the donor experience has wide-ranging effects on women's lives. The analysis revealed that the donor experience can be examined through autonomy, family relations, motherhood, and the body. Özsağ (2023) evaluated the concept of informed consent in cesarean-section practices and revealed that there are difficulties in obtaining informed consent promptly before cesarean-section practices in Turkey and that women lack autonomy in their choice of mode of delivery. Türkmenoğlu's (2024) examination of the gender role stress levels of

healthcare professionals revealed that these professionals predominantly experienced stress due to gender dynamics, including gendered stereotypes and expectations. Their conflicting emotions influenced role stress, subsequently leading to professional dilemmas and emotional tensions.

A comprehensive examination of the role of age in gender experiences across the life cycle has been conducted, encompassing diverse dimensions. Kılıç's (2023) examination of age discrimination against women revealed that ageism is not limited to the elderly but also affects younger demographics. This phenomenon has been observed to manifest in various aspects of life, including intimate relationships, reproduction, biological processes, academic pursuits, and identity construction. Elmas (2024) examined the remarriage experiences of men in later life in the context of masculinity and found that remarriage plays an important role in the process of reconstruction and negotiation of gender identities for men. The study also found that remarriage leads to a tendency to re-establish heteronormative family relations in case of weakening of hegemonic masculinity values with aging.

Focusing on this theme, the investigation delves into the gender dynamics of health experiences across the life cycle. Within a social structure shaped by power relations, which prioritize patriarchal standards of health, the female body becomes the subject of male-dominated surveillance (Demez & Tunca, 2018; Hesse-Biber, 2007; Karahan & Adak, 2019). The limitation of the autonomy of the female body by medical norms is related to Foucault's (1973) concept of biopolitics, while the intersection of age discrimination with gender is supported by the gendered nature of aging (Leontowitsch, 2022; Thompson, 2019). Conrad's (2007) conceptualization of the "medicalization of society" offers a compelling explanation for transforming health experiences into mechanisms of social control. Research conducted under this theme has yielded insights regarding the limitations imposed on female autonomy due to prevailing medical and social norms, the manifestation of age discrimination at the intersection of gender, and how gender inequalities in healthcare exert a significant impact on both professional and personal domains.

Gender Roles and Masculinity

The construction and transformation of masculinity represents a significant domain within the broader field of contemporary gender studies. Ok (2023) examined the processes through which white-collar men construct masculinity in the context of domestic kitchens and found that their participation in kitchen activities merely creates a suitable environment for hybrid masculinity maneuvers without producing multidimensional egalitarian behaviors that affect all activities requiring unpaid domestic labor. Akgün (2018) examined the behavior of male senior executives in terms of working with women and found an increase in competitive gendered attitudes of professional men, especially regarding career women. Yetiş (2019) examined men's perceptions and experiences of violence, and explored the relationship between the dominant culture of masculinity and violence in Turkey by analyzing the fragility of masculinity through the sense of shame.

The experiences of gender identities excluded from the traditional gender order present findings with significant evidence regarding their transformative impact on societal norms. İpekçi (2024) revealed the insidious effects of systemic cisheteronormative violence on the life experiences of queer individuals and showcased how these communities resist the systematic oppression and marginalization they face. Sarıtaş's (2018) historical analysis of heteronormativity and sexual modernity argued that unstable and inconsistent subjectivities and discourses emerged during the late Ottoman and Republican periods. This analysis posited that these instabilities were a consequence of

heteronormativity's incapability to function without giving rise to its own instabilities.

This theme encompasses the construction and transformation of masculine identities and the experiences of gender identities that deviate from the binary order. Masculine identities are shaped by both hegemonic norms and alternative forms of masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). The selective engagement in domestic practices fosters the emergence of forms of "hybrid masculinity" rather than promoting equality by perpetuating the patriarchal order (Prattes, 2022). Individuals who are situated outside the binary gender system become the object of both violence and social exclusion, where they have to develop alternative strategies against these pressures (Massaquoi, 2020; Munt, 2007). The studies under this theme illustrate how hegemonic values of masculinity are reproduced and transformed simultaneously, the instabilities within the binary gender system, and the ways in which alternative gender identities challenge this system.

Cultural, Familial and Ecological Representations

Gender representations in literature and cultural artifacts provide significant insights regarding their role in social transformation. Çakmak (2024) analyzed gothic and grotesque body representations in contemporary women's literature and revealed that abject and grotesque female body representations aim to overthrow the patriarchal system by opposing it and that the metamorphosed female body can be handled through an ecogothic lens. Engin (2024) examined the theme of the child in Republican-era poetry with literary sociology, demonstrating that the themes of children and childhood in the poems of the 1950-1980 period have evolved in tandem with modernization, positioning the child as the most valuable member of society. Conversely, Özkan's (2018) study examined the impact of popular culture icons on social transformation, highlighting the pivotal role of queer popular culture icons in this process. The study demonstrated that performative acts, spanning from the individual to the social level, significantly influence social transformation.

Several dimensions of family institutions and social transformations are discussed regarding fertility and motivation to have children. Duran's (2024) study examined the motivations of families in Hakkari to have children, finding that the participants predominantly desired to have children and ascribed significance to family, foundation, future, joy, and love concepts to the child. The analysis revealed that personal factors, societal culture, social environment, religious teachings, and physical and economic problems significantly influence the motivation to have children.

The relationship between the ecological crisis and feminist philosophy constitutes one of the fields of contemporary feminist theory. Toprak (2022) explores the intersection of quantum philosophy and new materialist feminism, highlighting the parallels between the principles of quantum philosophy (operationality, indeterminacy, and entanglement) and queer theory through the lens of Deleuzian existential philosophy. This study indicates a significant interconnection between the foundations of New Materialist feminist ontology and quantum physics, suggesting a shared underlying theoretical basis. Kurtuluş (2020), on the other hand, provided an ecofeminist critique of the concept of human rights, emphasizing that human rights and ecology are not opposing concepts and that ecofeminism opposes not only the domination of women and nature but all forms of domination.

This theme explores gender representation in literature and cultural productions, the transformation of the family institution, and the convergence of feminist philosophy with ecology. The presence of grotesque body representations in contemporary women's literature indicates Kristeva's (1982) theory of abjection, which posits that the female body is a medium of resistance against the patriarchal system (Katrak, 2006). The restructuring processes of the family institution indicate that preferences regarding fertility are shaped by individual and social dynamics (Atalay, 2019; Gillespie, 2003). The domination of women is seen as a product of patriarchal and instrumentalist approach in line with the domination of nature, and for this reason, ecofeminists argue that human-nature relations should be rebuilt on a healthy basis in order to end these forms of domination (Şimşek & Nalbant, 2025). The intersection of ecofeminist ontology and quantum philosophy evokes Barad's (2007) "entanglement" theory, while the transcendence of nature-culture dualism is integrated with Plumwood's (1993) ecofeminist critique. An examination of studies within this theme reveals how literature and art function as agents of challenge to patriarchal norms, how the institution of the family experiences transformation in the process of modernization, and how the convergence of feminist theory with the natural sciences gives rise to novel ontological possibilities.

Everyday Life and Gender

The interplay between leisure and gender can be examined through travel experiences. Elnur's (2022) analysis of solo travel experiences among both women and men, within the context of gender, revealed that gender-based spatiotemporal constraints experienced in everyday life substantially influence the processes associated with solo travel. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that the concept of the "geography of fear," a phenomenon perpetually reproduced by the patriarchal control system, exerts a significant influence on women's mobility during travel, predominantly through the medium of security concerns.

The consumption practices and the processes of constructing a class identity that have been observed can be discussed in the context of conservative identity. An examination of the consumption practices of upper-middle-class conservative women in Gaziantep was conducted by Çöçel (2019), with findings indicating that these subjects' evolving relationships with consumption offer significant insights into their lives, social and familial positions, as well as the growing factions associated with conservatism among the upper and middle classes since the 2000s.

The performativity dimensions of everyday life and liminal identity experiences offer valuable findings in transcending normative categories. Barutçu (2019) examined the liminal experiences of *köçeks* within the framework of performance and the body, positing that they establish a domain that disrupts conventional oppositional frameworks and surpasses conventional categories. The study shows that this domain signifies liminality and is distinguished by its distinctive attributes. It has been posited that *köçeks*' artistic praxis challenges established normative categories while concurrently engendering a novel non-normative identity representation through their dance performances at the liminal threshold. It has been argued that the construction of this novel identity representation through performance offers insights into the social construction of diverse identities.

This theme explores how gender relations influence everyday life practices. The present study contributes to Massey's (1994) theoretical framework by analyzing gender constraints in leisure experiences, such as traveling, and their relationship to gendered control of space. The consumption practices of individuals have been identified as a critical factor in the production of both material forms and symbolic gender identities (Kehily & Nayak, 2018; Zayer et al.,

2012). Performance-based experiences of liminality demonstrate that gender is not a stable identity but a socially constructed process (Butler, 1990). According to the aforementioned theme, studies have been conducted that have revealed how a patriarchal social order influences quotidian practices. These studies have also revealed the strategies women develop to cope with these processes, as well as how alternative identity performances are constructed. Collectively, this theme highlights how the mundane and quotidian spheres function as critical sites where patriarchal norms are both enforced and subtly subverted.

The six identified themes collectively delineate a dynamic intellectual topography, wherein patriarchal norms are not only critiqued but also actively deconstructed through various sites of resistance. These themes are not isolated entities; instead, they are profoundly interrelated, with the macro-political struggles of digital activism and migration policies reverberating through the micro-political domains of bodily autonomy and quotidian interaction. This synthesis reveals a disciplinary shift in the field from descriptive accounts of victimization to a more nuanced engagement with agency, intersectionality, and the "situated knowledge's" that challenge hegemonic epistemologies. For the field of women's studies in Turkey, these findings underscore the necessity of methodological pluralism in capturing the complexity of gendered experience. In terms of policy, the research suggests that effective interventions for gender equality cannot be purely legislative. Nevertheless, it must also address the deep-seated cultural, spatial, and embodied mechanisms of exclusion identified within these dissertations, thereby bridging the gap between academic knowledge production and social transformation.

Conclusion

A comprehensive analysis of 33 doctoral dissertations reveals a diverse array of themes, with a particular focus on feminist activism, gender roles, health, migration, ethnic identities, cultural representations, and everyday life. This analysis delves into the forms of inequality experienced by women within these themes and approaches to knowledge production. The meticulous examination addresses these inequalities and the strategies employed to address them. Digital activism and affect-based forms of solidarity reveal the evolving nature of contemporary feminist movements. At the same time, the effects of gender-based roles on health, labor, and family structures are evaluated in different contexts. The spatial experiences of migrant women and their relations with cultural identities serve as indicators of broader structural inequalities. These thematic areas indicate that knowledge production in the field of women's studies in Turkey is developing at the theoretical level and in a field-based manner that contributes to social transformation. By centering women's experiences, these dissertations exemplify Haraway's (1988) "situated knowledges," rejecting universalist patriarchal narratives in favor of localized, embodied, and partial perspectives that are critical for genuine epistemic objectivity. A limitation of this study is its reliance solely on doctoral dissertations within the YÖK database; future research could expand this scope to include master's theses or comparative analyses with international programs.

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