



Geographies of Gender in Turkish Higher Education Institutions: Conceptualization of Women Employment

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Abstract

The significance of women employment for Turkey has been emphasized in this article. It is clear that women employment is the basis of sustainable development and pre-requisite for progress. The factors that impact women employment have been inquired and those factors have been associated with relevant gender studies theories. Within the context, Pierre Bourdieu, Simon de Beauvoir and Luce Irigaray have been some of the references. Simon de Beauvoir over-emphasizes the role of society in this issue asserting that “one is not born but made woman.” Her principle verifies the dominant role of Turkish society in this issue. The liaison between while COVID-19 period and women employment has also been inquired. Relevant general findings and findings specific to Turkey have been determined and likewise concluded. Henceforth, patriarchal social and family structure, traditionality concerning family, mass of inhouse work for women within this framework, separation about wages, lack of income and low-level education all impact women employment in Turkey in a negative way, most economic sectors are affected likewise. On the other hand, the domains such as academic life in terms of women employment are praiseworthy and give hope. On the other hand, while-COVID 19 period has affected women employment worse than it has for men. Within the context, increasing workload and household chores, increasing load of child and elderly care parallel to work at home by the pandemic, stress and negative emotions, limited access to communication and information technologies at home, rise in the lack of wage and income have been prioritized. While Turkish society has evolved into more complex form through differentiation, women employment has trend of development. This is parallel to the global trends but behind them.

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1.Introduction

The dynamics behind the association between women employment and the ratio of women academics could be summarized as follows: economic sustainability, social development and social justice and ratio of women employment are directly proportional. Not least because, according to the Founder of Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, “The saviors of nations are solely and only teachers.” (İnan, 2019, p.365). Henceforth, if the relevant principle of sociology concerning socioeconomic development and (Turkish) state philosophy have been associated, women academics in general and in Turkish context in particular have been assigned critical roles in the sustainability of development of any country in general and development of Turkey in particular. Women as the producers of human offspring and raisers of new generations have inherently a critical character in creativity and productivity in science, art, business and so forth. Their nature in relation to academic and intellectual creativity, production and instruction are like wise of uttermost strategic importance for any country.

The purpose of this article is portraying women employment in Turkey through academia, emphasizing the strategic role and significance of women employment and re-interpreting it. Thus, explaining the factors that impact women employment in Turkey by way of selected feminist theory might be of interest. The problematic of this article is how the factors which impact women employment in Turkey could be explained through re-interpreting feminist theory. The reason why this article has adopted a descriptive approach rather than an explanatory one is going to be emphasized in the method section. Given that the country has variant cultural landscape, the problematic is going to be inquired and thereby it is going to be tried to answer through the sampling that is Turkish women academics in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. The article endeavors to a pioneer study in description of the factors that impact women employment in Turkey from a feminist re-interpretation perspective based on selected feminist scholars. Henceforth, local descriptions will have been depicted and will have been graphically illustrated from a thoroughly universal standpoint.

The extant literature in Turkey concerning women employment in Turkish context hardly associates their findings with feminist mainstream theories. For instance, a review study by Yıldız (2018) named "Being a Family A Female Academician in Turkey" inquires masculine domination in Turkish academia in terms of the distribution of women academics in social sciences and physical sciences scale. Though her findings support the male hegemonic portrait that men are hegemonic in physical sciences in distribution in the scale of Turkey, she never visits any feminist theory and thereby she makes no association between the male hegemonic status quo in Turkey and feminist theory. More specifically, there are a few studies on women employment in Turkey. Some of them will have been mentioned as follows. They are important and significant, because the following argument concerning the factors which impact women employment in Turkey is the beneficiary of those references. However, first and second authors of this article do not solely rely on them because they have a certain viewpoint inspired from a (pro-) feminist perspective this is binding in classifying and interpreting the data. Therefore, their conception of the factors is self-reflective in that they associate the factors determined in somewhat diagnostic spirit with selected (pro-feminist and) feminist theory. In this study, here the term pro-feminist refers to men who are academics supporting women's movement though they are not thoroughly part of feminist mainstream.

There is a notable scholar collection of feminist mainstream in Turkish language both foreign and Turkish feminist academics and activists. According to Barış (2019), feminist literature in Turkish is rich. It could be argued that Turkish feminist mainstream is the beneficiary of Francophone translators in Turkey. Henceforth, Turkish translations of French feminist scholars are a lot. Some publishing houses are notable for feminist publications namely Sel, Say, Metis, İletişim, Ayrıntı, Otonom and Phoenix. However, only just five of them of significant relevance are of relevance for this study. The first is Masculine Domination (Bourdieu, 2001). It has a pivotal significance for pro-feminist mainstream in France with sophisticatedly elaborate style of Pierre Bourdieu. The second is Second Sex by Simon de Beauvoir (1997). It is a gospel for egalitarian feminist mainstream with the emphasis of womanhood imposed by society and not by nature. Simon de Beauvoir is one of the key scholars and activists in feminist mainstream not only in France but also in the whole world. The third is Je Tu Nous towards a Culture of Difference (Irigaray, 2006). It argues full equality of women and men on the basis of their distinction from each other by French feminist scholar Luce Irigaray. The fourth is The Chalice and the Blade (Kadeh & Kılıç, 2015) is a feminist world history by feminist scholar and activist Riane Eisler. Here the Chalice refers to all womanly half of the universe whereas the blade refers to manly half. All through history there are struggle, competition, rivalry or fight between them with matriarchal intervals when there is partnership. The fifth one is Towards a Feminist Theory of the State (MacKinnon, 2015). It is a reference for the facet of feminism concerning legal domain. Its author Catherine MacKinnon has a gender theory of her own and she is notable American feminist scholar, lawyer and activist. The final one is An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy (Feminist Felsefeye Giriş, 2019) by Alison Stone. As a professor of philosophy at Lancaster University, Stone focuses on sex, gender, sexuality, sexual distinction and birth from a feminist gaze. She prioritizes French feminist school in her work.

Given that there are a plethora of articles and reports concerning women employment in Turkish contexts, there a handful number of others concerning the factors which impact women employment and women academics in Turkish context. Given that many provides little connections to connotations of feminist theories. Having provided a theoretical background on the earlier part of this study, this study will benefit from the Report about the Role of Women in Development of the Special Expertise Commission prepared in accordance with 11th Development Plan by Turkish Republic Development Department. Within the report, education, employment, participation in decision-making mechanisms, technology and digital economy, environment and general issues have been inquired within the framework of existing and prospective status of women in Turkey. The data within employment title of the report will have been utilized in this article. The report "Women Matter in Turkey 2016 – Turkey's Potential for the Future: Women in Business" by Economic Development Foundation through Evaluation Note about Women Employment Report on Turkey within the Process of Participation in the European Union covers the titles the Characteristics of Women Employment in Turkey, the Factors that Affect Women Employment in Turkey, Women Employment in the EU, the Suggestions of Policy in

order to Increase Women Employment in Turkey and the Consequences. This article will have primarily utilized the section the Factors that Affect Women Employment in Turkey. In the study Women in Turkey by Family, Labor and Social Services Department General Directorate for Women's Status, the main titles Legal Framework and Women in Fundamental Indicators have been inquired. The information under the title Women in Fundamental Indicators will have been utilized in this article. The report by Kadir Has University Gender Studies and Women Studies Research and Practice Center namely Gender (In)equality in Higher Education in Turkey 1984-2018 delineates the portrait of Turkish women academics on national and local bases (Memiş, 2020).

Given that the problematic of this article is how the factors which impact women employment in Turkey could be explained through re-interpreting feminist theory. Women in Turkish academia especially women academics in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia has been on specific focus.

The research questions are as follows:

- 1) What are the contributions of Turkish women for economy?
- 2) What are the factors that impact women employment in Turkey?
- 3) How could the conjuncture in Turkey concerning women employment be explained through genders studies theories?

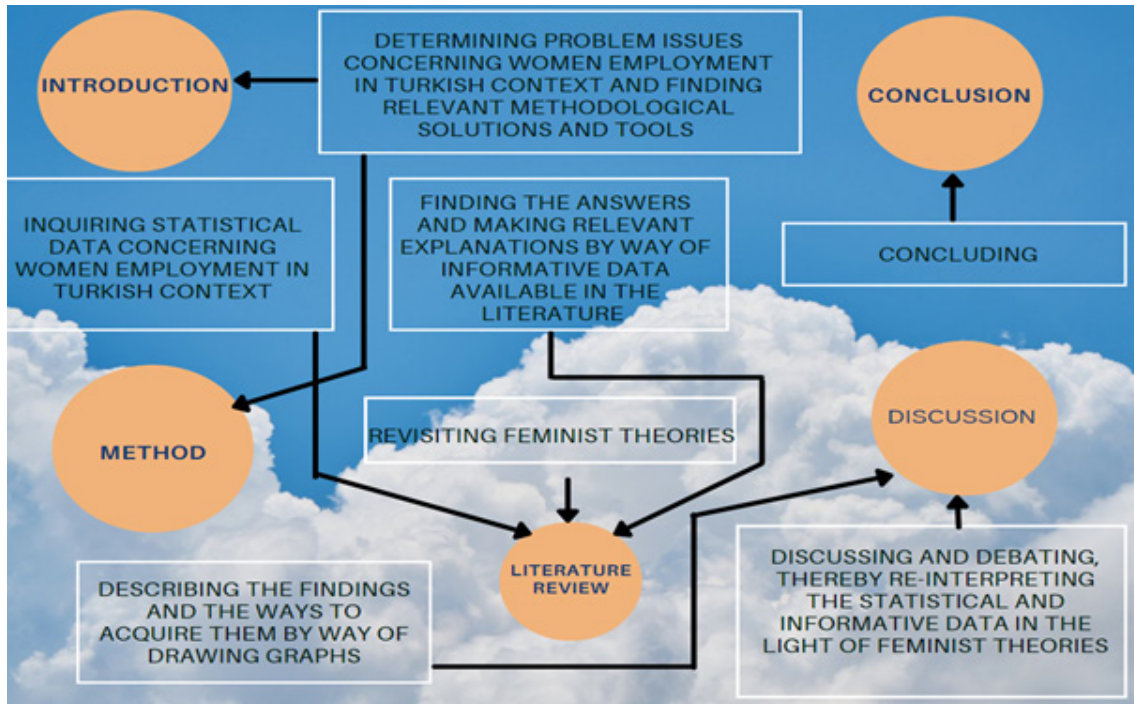
2. Method

The research paradigm of this article is feminist, thereby post-modern or critical paradigm. The methodological approach is based on the review of literature as well as using the secondary data provided by the main reports and official statistical records (Akyıl, 2015; Duarte, 2021; Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu, 2021; Memiş, 2020; T.C. Aile ve Sosyal Hizmetler (Politikalar) Bakanlığı, 2017; T.C. Kalkınma Bakanlığı, 2018; Kadir Has Üniversitesi Toplumsal Cinsiyet ve Kadın Çalışmaları Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi, 2019). The method is descriptive method. The research design is theoretical debate. Conceptual framework was designed according to the key concepts of the study within the scope of actual and potential importance and significance of them in that their potentiality sometimes overshadows their actual effects within the scope of the Literature Review. The study has a structural-functionalist spirit which places differentiation at the heart of social progress/evolution. Thereby, women have essential roles as the actual, potential or latent forces majeure of social progress as they are not only halves of society but agents as employees, mothers, child-raisers, wives or as others. Henceforth, women employment is not only crucial for economic development but also for the progress of society.

Feminism has been associated with two basic conceptions since First Women Conference in 1892 (Allan, 2020). The first one consists of a number of thoughts and believes which focus on ways of knowledge and management which are defined as purely feminist. This perspective opposes to masculine power and ways of knowing from a masculine perspective. This approach is associated with critical theory as it challenges the definition of knowledge. Second basic approach brings together various theories which try to explain how gender in-equality occurs. Though it would be overgeneralization, this approach can be part of a positivist and scientific category (Allan, 2020, pp. 234-236). It could be emphasized that the method of this article has been based on first descriptive category. However, Chafetz's approach overlaps with the second category (Allan, 2020, p.235).

The entire Figures in this article have been prepared by the researchers. Within this context, Figure 4 shows descriptive/diagnostic argument of the researchers about the factors that impact women employment in Turkey. Figure 5 signifies the supposed association between the opinions of selected relevant gender studies theorists and the factors that impact women employment in Turkey. Figure 6 compares the percentage of women academics in Turkey with those in the United States of America and the European Union by the data gathered from the Higher Education Council (2021). Finally, Figure 7 emphasizes the problems encountered by women and men workers comparatively while-COVID 19 periods upon the data available in a relevant report prepared by Memiş (2020) within the joint venture of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen Association (TÜSİAD), Turkish Venture and Business World Confederation (TÜRKONFED) and United Nations Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Association. Although there are a big variety of academic studies concerning the issue, any study which associates the issue with feminist theories could not be found in the relevant literature within the context of Turkey. This is strength for the article. As for the weaknesses, data have not been gathered in a satisfactory amount especially for while-COVID 19 periods. Figure 1 summarizes the conceptualization process for this study.

Figure 1. The research cycle



3. Literature Review

Women employment does not only involve employment as an economic and demographic parameter, but it is also a crucial element for sustainable development, egalitarian society, social progress and social justice. However, Turkish women are squeezed by societal factors which keep them out of employment. This is a sociocultural and economic bottleneck. While COVID-19 period could be compared to pandemic and epidemic periods such as plague and Spanish influenza (<https://www.bbc.com>). The scope of this article is solely limited with while-COVID-19 period. Post-COVID 19 period will be a kind predictable future as such though not fully.

3.1. Theoretical Background

3.1.1. Gender Studies Theories

Historically, capitalism has been first modern ideology founded upon economic and material base. Certainly, capitalist economy was more preferable than feudal economy. Feudal economy was primarily based on violence, unlimited killings and plunders by unsatisfied lords and kings. However, capitalism has maintained an androcratic character (the term androcratic is a suggestion by Eisler meaning patriarchal) with its emphasis on greed, rivalry, unsatisfied desire to earn more, natural hierarchies that is classes, and dependence upon violence, for example colonial wars (Eisler, 2015, p.169). Figure 2 concisely delineates three feminist waves.

Man and woman are two basic humankinds. The way of structuring the relationship between women and men is thus the basic model for human relationships. As a result, the behavior pattern as dominator-dominated has been internalized by any child who was born into traditional male hegemonic family (Eisler, 2015, p.174). It could be argued that this family structure is the core of patriarchy. Furthermore, patriarchy undoubtedly leads to gender inequality.

Law is the theory of the relationship between life and statutes. In life, women and men are coincided as human traits... In other words, gender is experienced not as epistemologically but ontologically. Law de facto tackles the procedure in which perspective turns into ontological being. Law is a strong reference for legitimacy and its symbol, a way of power use and a garment which preserves it. Use of power supports legitimacy and legitimacy hides it from the eyes of people in liberal systems... Masculine view is hegemonic over civil society in objective standard way in male hegemonic societies... The norms of family and relatives, sexual traditions, ownership of the act of re-production by men as a group guaranties men sexual freedom and control over women in these acts. Hierarchies between men have been organized as racial and class distinctions, which also divide women. State organizes these social power acts within the scope of law. That has two repercussions: law becomes legitimized and social sovereignty becomes invisible. Liberal legality finds the right milieu to legitimize and make it invisible. While doing that it adopts masculine perspective and it imposes it on society (MacKinnon, 2015, pp.271-272).

Figure 2. Family tree of feminist strands

Gender inequality as observable in Western European countries have been subject to three feminist waves. Equal rights for women are one of the consequences of Enlightenment. First notably serious feminist book was written by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792 (Wollstonecraft, 1792). Seneca Falls Women Rights Treaty proclaimed the demands for equal suffragette and property rights, full access to education, and equal wage. Second wave was in 1960's. Simon de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan are notable. Friedan's National Organization for Women (NOW) (1966) focused on just wage, access to education and job, women's command of their own bodies, sexuality, re-production, elimination of physical abuse, etc. The major division within feminist mainstream was the product of the second wave: whether women and men are identical or whether they are distinct. Third wave is interested in the fluid identities within postmodern philosophy (comp. Allan, 2020, pp.234-236). This article is more inclined to adopt second positivist feminist wave. This information is available concisely in Figure 2 to an extent.

It could be argued that the second wave could be associated with modernist and late modernist discourses and positivist science paradigm in France in 20th and 21st centuries. Albeit feminist theory is associated with post-positivist critical paradigm just like this article as mentioned in the Method section, the paradigmatic boundaries between social science research paradigms are fluid and not clear-cut as modernist dichotomies. Therefore, this article has somewhat fluid transitional character between positivism and post-positivism.

Women are not born but made. No biological, psychological or economic fate determine woman's locus in society. However, the individual could express herself as the other with the intervention of another (de Beauvoir, 1997, p.296). According to de Beauvoir (comp. 1997, p.16), woman is defined and diversified according to man, man is not defined and diversified according to woman, unlike the vital woman is not vital but coincidental. Man is the subject; man is absolute-woman is the other. Just like all other human creatures the situation of woman who is free and autonomous is shaped in a world where men try to impose her status of other (de Beauvoir, 1997, p.29). Furthermore, Mendel laws show that both mother and father have equal roles in genetics that is offspring is born with the unification of two gametes; new offspring is not under the monopoly of one sex (de Beauvoir, 1997, p.43).

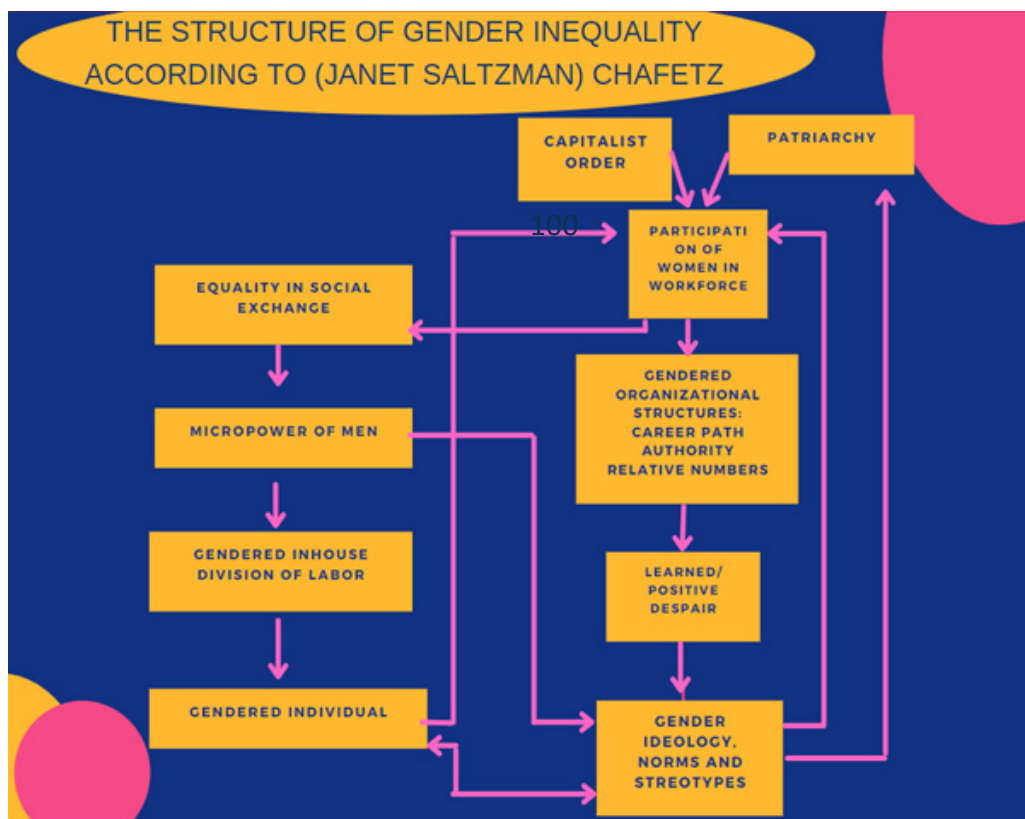
The definition of profession, the authority the profession necessitates and takes every kind of ability and skills concerning sex as the basis. If woman has no way to access this status, this is because the profession has been designed for man. Masculine features have infused into universal definition of human being throughout history as to oppose wom-

en. On the other hand, bodily traits of sexes convert their location in social universe, and the classifications between dominating and dominated into opposite and hierarchical forms by way of perception schemas. The way to display body expresses the distance between physics in practice and legitimate physics. This also results in the traits such as security and self-confidence. This may also depend on sex and location in social universe (Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 62-68). According to Bourdieu (comp. 2001, pp. 81-88), church, state, educational system, family, law and language in which law has been written re-produce androcentric doxa in France.

A sexist ideology has domination on economy and it imposes its domination on language. Within the context, it could be said that not paying equal wage for equal job has no solid basis. The argument that men are physically stronger than women, thereby they are paid more could be baseless, because there are more women workers in agricultural sector, which requires intensive physical strength. The jobs which necessitate physical power are gradually decreasing, and the jobs done by men in France are done by women in other cultures (Irigaray, 2006, pp.125-127). The jobs in cultural, agricultural and industrial areas in which more women work is devalued despite they are crucial for social production and re-production. Working hours are regulated for the masculine power whose wife has undertaken the responsibility of household and children against working woman (comp. Irigaray, 2006, 128). The preference of cultural programs which address both sexes in television programs has turned into secondary or tertiary choice compared with football matches. Schools and media produce and re-produce masculine discourse, because women do not exist in decision-making mechanisms (comp. Irigaray, 2006, pp.129-130).

According to Chafetz (2020), gender inequality is re-produced in four structural levels in society namely macro, medium, micro and individual structures. The prime factor which underlies the structuring is gendered division of labor in economy. The rate of women in economy is much lower than that of men. Women have less power, prestige and wage compared with men. This pattern in participation in workforce results in both restriction of number of women workers and opportunities to get promotion and isolation through having less power. Those three issues convene and result in the feeling of learned despair. And that causes approval of stereotypes concerning gender. As women have more limited economic resources, they find themselves in an unequal exchange relationship when they get married. Women obey to the orders of men in order to keep the exchange relationship more balanced and men utilize their power in order to keep control of women’s access to working life and apply gender inequality in household chores. Boys and girls grow up family environment where they are rewarded when they act in accordance with gender stereotypes and where they are punished when they act in an uncommon way. Accordingly, general child raising practices and men’s unparticipating in household chores results in the formation of gendered intra-psychic structures. These structures cause women to “choose” to become under pressure by way of re-production of the actions which signify primarily women’s preferences of participation in workforce and gender inequality (comp. Allan, 2020, pp.210-211).

Figure 3. The structure of gender inequality according to Chafetz



The gender inequality model by Janet Saltzman Chafetz (2020) is the beneficiary of a plethora of thoughts, ideas and theories while explain gender inequality ranging from Marx, Kanter, Chodorow, Bandura, Goffman, Dahrendorf and exchange theory, social movements theory within the disciplinary boundaries of sociology and history in positivist tradition (comp. Allan, 2020, pp.234-236). Figure 3 delineates Chafetz’s model.

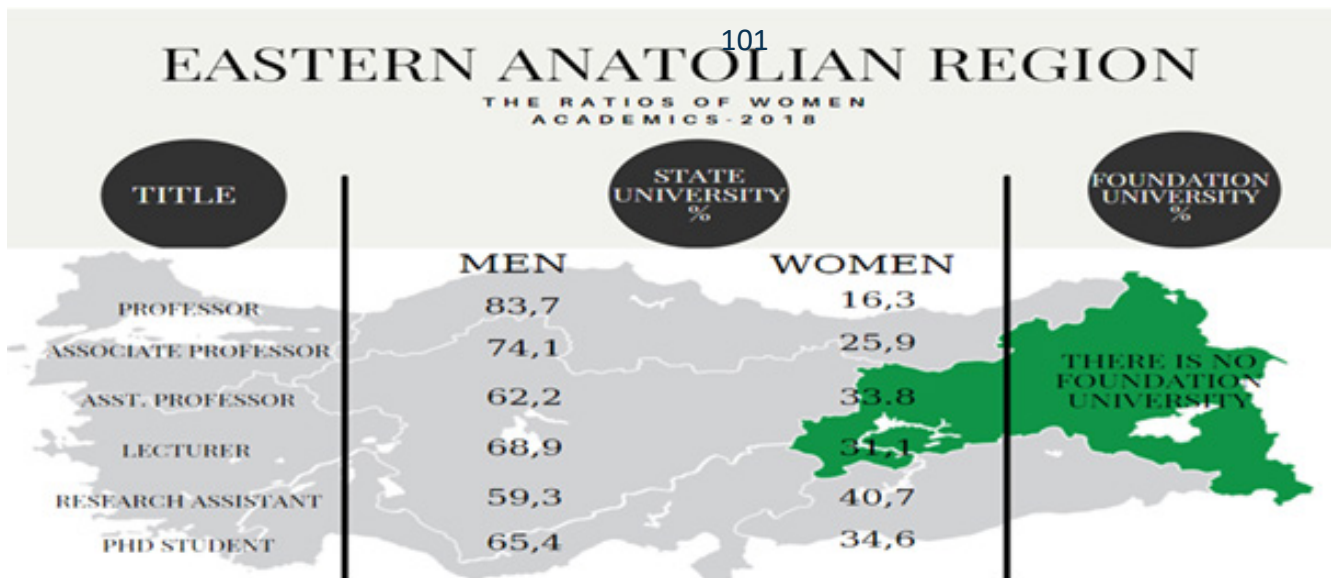
3.1.2. Reading the status of women employment in Turkey

Today the leading actors of development primarily World Bank define women’s role as part of development as a factor which increases labor force and market productivity, and thereby which creates smart economies and they argue that it creates a “win-win” solution (Chant & Sweetman, 2012, cited in www.sbb.gov.tr, p. XIII). Women’s participation in workforce and employment is the only way to attain and maintain economic sustainability, to fully achieve in social development and justice. These goals are feasible only if men and women, who are the perpetrators and beneficiary of human-centered sustainable development, fully and equally participate in all domains of social life (T.C. Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar (Hizmetler) Bakanlığı, 2017, p.36).

One factor which largely impacts women employment in Turkey is responsibilities concerning family and marriage. It has been determined that approximately 20 million women have been out of labor market and 11 million of them has been out of workforce because they do housework when those people out of workforce were inquired on the basis of their sex and the reasons why they were out of workforce in the period between 2014 and 2017. In order woman to participate in workforce, she must earn more than the wage to pay a caretaker to substitute herself in child and elderly care and housework, which are supposed to be under her responsibility in traditional family form. It has been expressed that their husbands have the authority to intervene the decision of wives whether to work unlike when they are single, a period that they themselves decide whether to work or not (Özcan, 2019, p.26).

However, according to the report by Kadir Has University Gender Studies and Women Studies Research and Practice Center (2019), and it is striking that there is an observable tendency to increase in the gender equity in the last 30 years. 61.8 % of academics consist of men and 38.2 % of academics consist of women in Turkey. Foundation universities seem to be more equal with the ratios of 57 % men and 43 % women compared to state universities with the ratios of 63 % men and 37 % women. There is inequality in the top management of universities. Only 9.1 % of rectors and only 10.3 % of vice rectors are women. The dean ratio is 21.3 %. Inequality is observable in professor level, and this results in inequality in top management. 6.88 % of professors consist of men whereas 31.2 % of them consists of women. State universities draw a more egalitarian picture in accordance with the general ration (% 70 men, 30 % women). The ration in associate professors 61.2 % men and 38.8 % women. There is no notable difference between state and foundation universities. Assistant professor ratios are more egalitarian with the ratios of 60 % men and 40 % women. In foundation universities the ratio is very close 50 % women and 50 % men. The ratios of lecturers in state universities are 60 % men and 40 % women. In foundation universities however the ratio is 58.9 %. There is gender equality in between research assistants. In state universities the ratios are 50 % women and 50 % men. In foundation universities the ratios are 60 % men and 40 % women.

Figure 4. The ratio of women academics in Eastern Anatolia



Regionally, Marmara, Central Anatolia and Aegean regions are more egalitarian with the ratios of 60 % men and 40 % women academics. All regions are close to gender equality in terms of assistant professors. Southeastern Anatolia with total 22.8 % women academics ratio is the most unequal among all regions. The ration of men professors is 80 %. Eastern Anatolia has the same character and the ratio of women professors is only 14 %. The emphasized factors are observable in Figure 4 and Figure 5.

Figure 5. The ratio of women academics in Southeastern Anatolia

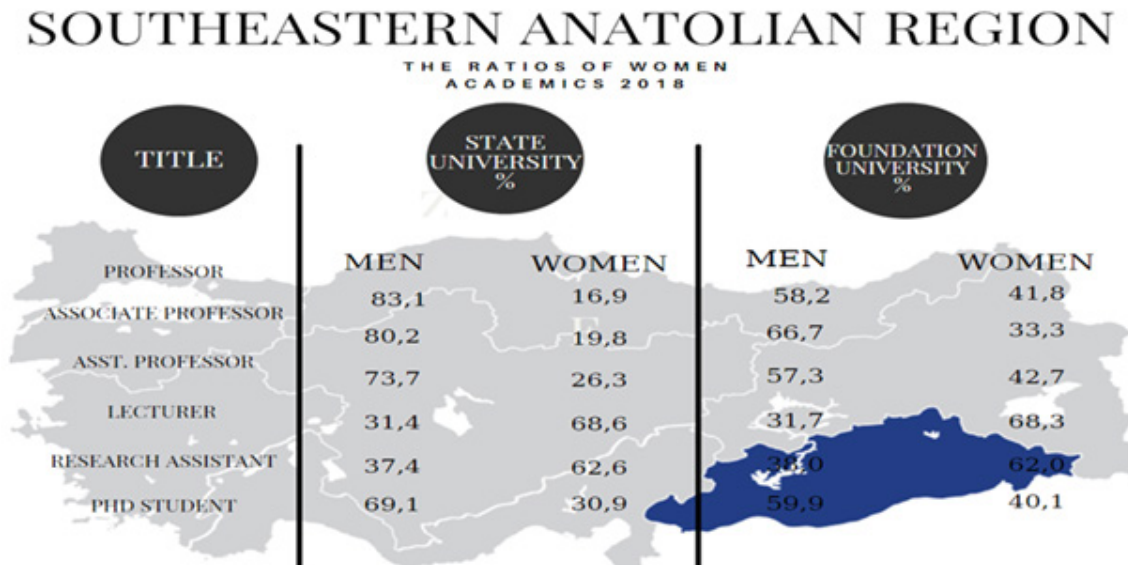


Figure 6. Comparison of the ratios of women academics in Turkey and those in the United States and those in the European Union



The following could be asserted about Figure 6 According to statistics by the Higher Education Council (2021), there are 10 thousand 11 women professors in Turkey. The percentage of women amongst total number of professors in Turkey consists of 32.5 %. Statistics show that the ratio of women professors in Turkey exceeds the average in the European Union countries. Accordingly, the ratio of 32.5 % women professors in Turkey is higher than 20.8 ratios of women professors in the European Union (EU) countries and it is equal to the 32.5 % women professors in the United States of America. Turkey has surpassed the EU average of 41.3 % and American average of 42.5 % with her average 45 % in terms of the ratio of women academics (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu, 2021).

Figure 7. Rates of female faculty members in architecture faculties-2018 (Turkey)

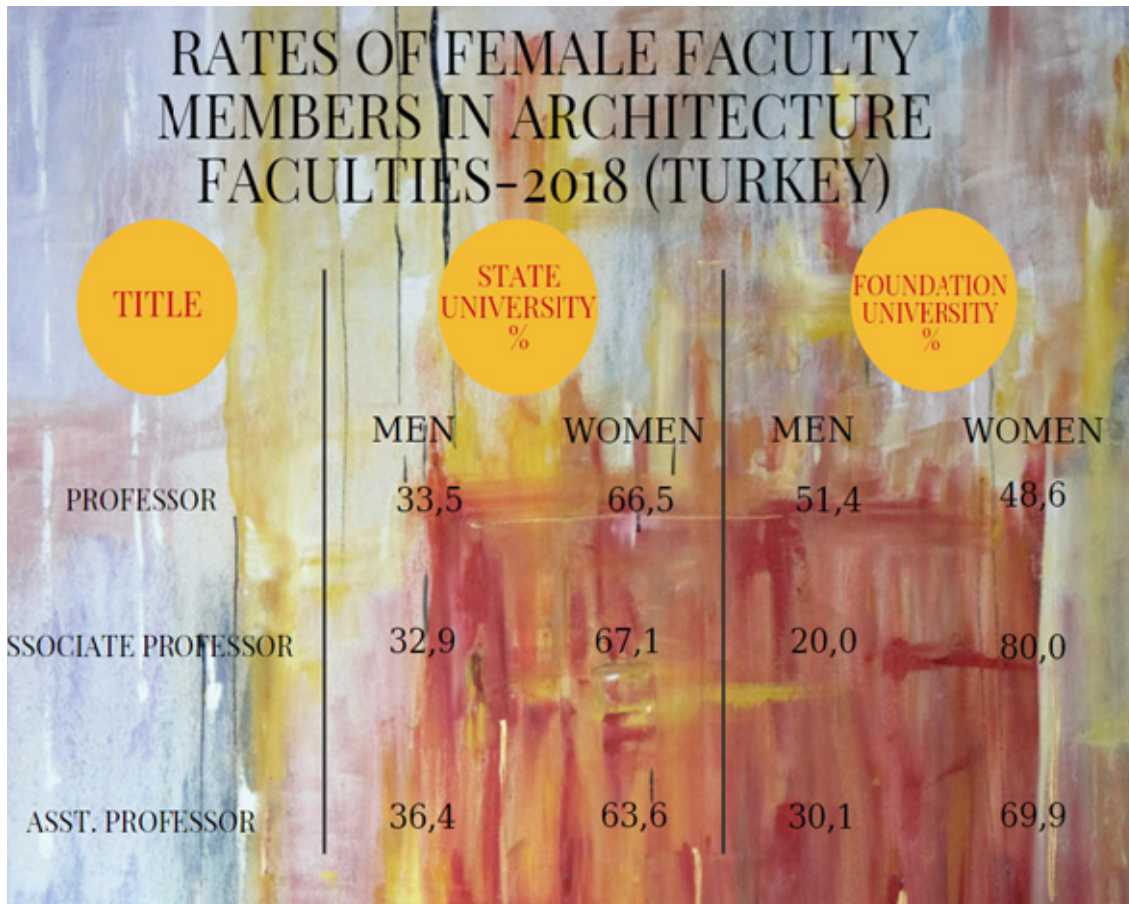


Figure 7 delineates the ratio of women academics in faculties of architecture in general in Turkey. On the other hand, another important factor that impacts the participation of women in workforce is the services including nursery schools and kindergartens. It has been expressed that the shortage of the number of nursery schools and kindergartens and their current high wages keep many women who could work out of labor market. Childcare is mostly under the responsibility of mothers in our country where the number of nursery schools and kindergartens are insufficient and where the rate of schooling for pre-school age is low (Özcan, 2019, p.26).

Another important factor that impacts women employment in Turkey is education. Women’s less educated status leads to their getting lower wages and their working for longer hours in labor-intensive sectors (Özcan, 2019, p.28).

4. Findings and Discussion

There are a lot of academic studies on women employment issue in Turkey. It could be inferred that this issue is part of hot agenda for Turkey. Furthermore, they also signify that there is an essential problem in women’s employment in Turkey. Turkish women, to a certain extent though not fully, have been squeezed by societal and cultural factors that keep them out of reach of at least some professions and jobs in general. It could be argued that some vocations such as mending, plumbing, driving, military service, construction services, butchery are thought to be masculine. Henceforth, gender in Turkey has a negative impact on vocations and jobs as such.

However, academia in Turkey is not that much separatist. The lowest ratio of women academics in Turkey is in the Southeastern Anatolia. Eastern Anatolia follows that region in the low ratio. The underlying dynamics for that situation which differentiate these two regions from the rest of Turkey may be cultural sense-making difference concerning

women. In the article by Cihangir et al. (2020) the findings and in the article by Tuysuz and Deniz (2021) the findings verify this point to a large extent though not thoroughly. Thus, the household chores are thought to be all under the responsibility of women and profession and job are identified by husbands. Men are probably thought to be sole breadwinners. Although this seems to a 'chicken-and-egg' question, more observable economic independence of women in Western regions transforms the market into a more modern outlook. This involves consumer differences and shopping habits. Furthermore, life style diversifies. Henceforth, authentic intact cultural traditions are maintained, whereas, there is always the tendency of change in Western regions. On the other hand, authenticity of culture is associated by masculinity. Masculinity is also supported by patriarchal family structure. According to Stone (2019, p.27), many radical feminists qualify masculine domination as patriarchy. Radical feminists argue that women have a common interest from the standpoint of resisting against patriarchy as a group and women need an independent mainstream of feminism that is directed by women and that perhaps consists of only women, because they conceive that men are hegemonic over women. According to radical feminist view, patriarchy infuses every facet of life... Thereby, radical feminist view also the makes the distinction between sex and gender and they argue that patriarchy is not biological but it is the repercussion of social expectations that impose women how to act (Stone, 2019, p.27). Furthermore, patriarchy may be promoted by economic elements such as pre-modern tribal or feudal socio-economic milieu. Large families and not nucleus ones depend on more hierarchical pre-modern tribal social strata. Heads of tribes are also associated with local opinion leaders as in the study Koçyiğit and Durdu (2018) about the political culture in İslahiye (township of Gaziantep). It could be argued that this social structure alienates and ex-nominates women in the East. In this bigger picture, however, it is not too optimistic to expect women academics to break this vicious circle. Such social stratification has impacts on working conditions for women in the East. On the other hand, such working conditions feed backs the existing employment ratio for women in those regions. Optimism needs change and change takes longer time.

The factors that impact women employment in Turkey have been argued to exist by the first and second writer as follows:

- 1) Sex and employer preferences according to sex,
- 2) Gender,
- 3) Education,
- 4) Wage discrimination according to gender,
- 5) Profession and job discrimination according to gender,
- 6) Marriage, child and elderly care, factors involving family,
- 7) Patriarchal social structure and mentality,
- 8) Factors concerning COVID-19 pandemic ranging on the basis of sex and gender.

Figure 8.The factors that impact women employment in Turkey



Figure 8 outlines the factors that impact women employment in Turkey from the researchers' conceptualization.

The first factor exists strongly in Turkey, but it has been denied or accepted as non-existent in conservative circles in Turkey. Sex, and sexuality which is its sociocultural and artistic context, is a basic essential human instinct, need and desire. It could be argued that when sex and sexuality have been suppressed by society for a variety of reasons such as traditions or religion, it maintains its essentiality in latent and sometimes deviant ways. Current Turkey is a typical instance for that. Certainly, there are other cases such as the Middle East, North Africa and the Republic of India (Jayachandran, 2020, pp.2-6). Furthermore, in some cases social norms may be based on religion and not economics. The social structures of the mentioned societies emphasize "purity" of women or women's limited contact with outside men. Hinduism and Islam stress such purity, thereby low women employment becomes repercussion in those societies. Employers consider physical appearance as an important parameter for recruitment in Turkey. In private sector, employees consider womanly factors such as birth, breastfeeding, childcare, and menstruation in recruitment policies. As it could be inferred from Figure 6, Turkish women have made important strides in higher education sector beyond the achievements of those women in the United States and those women in the European Union. It could be argued that no one could deny the role of Turkish women in agricultural sector in Turkey. This could be associated with the role French women in agriculture in France as mentioned in the Literature Review. It is universally plausible to assert that women have nothing less than men have in terms of physical strength and perseverance. For instance, they could resist the pain of birth. However, the structural problems for agriculture in Turkey impact the quality of employment of Turkish women. In some sectors of Turkish economy, participation in the labor force of Turkish women is notable. On the other hand, participation in labor force and employment level of Turkish women is relatively very low in other sectors. According to data provided by Anatolian News Agency news (<https://www.aa.com.tr>), the ratio of women's participation in workforce is 34 % in 2015. However, the same ration is 74 % both in the United Kingdom and Germany. Canada's ratio is 77 %. The same ration in the United States and Japan is 71 %. The ratio in France is 67 %. The same ratio in Russia is 69 %. All are in 2015.

Figure 7 emphasizes the problems encountered by women and men workers comparatively while-COVID 19 period upon the data available in a relevant report prepared by Memiş (2020) and United Nations Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women Association (TÜRKONFED, 2019) on workforce in 2015, 38.7 % of women participate in workforce in Turkey. However, the ratios of women participation in work are the key factor in raising children and they are pivotal for sustainability of economic development. By the way, the patriarchal structure of Turkish society makes women the most critical parent. Since the emergence of humankind, the patriarchal order has imposed many negative qualities on women. However, motherhood, which is a womanly feature, has remained outside this negative picture and has been the only unchangeable sacred feature of women. Exceptions to this are very rare (Korucu, 2019, p.139). It could be argued that it is woman force that challenges patriarchy that women's inborn advantage by nature equalizes universe. It could further be argued that the conception of man-made universe is an unreal masculine fantasy. According to Korucu (comp. 2019, p.138), the image of mother has the omnipotent power to shape especially man's psyche from beginning the end of life eternally from Jungian standpoint. It could be argued that the universe seems to be woman-made on the contrary. The cycles of women's life are harmonious with the cycles of nature. Women's compatibility with nature and the universe adds to their role in sustainable economic development.

It is debatable whether one is born or made woman in accordance with feminist theory. There are two basic divisions in feminist theory. According to Simon de Beauvoir and others (Griffin, Segal & Delphy), (Stone, 2019, pp.215-217) there is no difference between women and men by birth. Society makes us divided as women and men. We are made women and men by society. Whereas other feminist scholars such as Luce Irigaray and Catharine McKinnon we are born as women and men. However, separation or even discrimination is re-produced in society in general and in Turkish society in particular. Whatever the feminist stride is for a perspective, it has no legal legitimate explanation to pay women unequally and unfairly for the work done by men in the same way. According to some patriarchal mentality, women are supposed to be weak and could not fight for their rights. It could be argued that those with such mentality have themselves some weaknesses in their immature personalities. Furthermore, society in general and Turkish society in particular presupposes that men are the breadwinners and women are housewives. This is also a patriarchal biased conception. However, as Simon de Beauvoir emphasizes women are made others just like they are made women by society. This is one of the reasons why there is feminist academic activism. Some employers may have biases about women employees that they could not manage their income as efficiently as men could. Patriarchal society has traditions of its own for perhaps thousands of years. However, the progress and transformation of today's society is hopefully supposed to break such barriers just as in academic sector. It is part of patriarchal mentality that childcare, elderly care and housework belong to women. This is a significant barrier for Turkish women as cited in the Literature Review. However, it is nature that makes women live longer than men in spite of all impositions of hardship by patriarchal society. Women are born more advantageous than men due to their XX chromosomal structure (Sözen, 2014, pp.

18-19). All around the world, life expectancy for women is longer than that for men. Under the same living conditions or even in worse conditions for women than for men, women live longer. Although it is theoretically possible though not very compatible with nature, men can give birth, however the ratio for that is almost none. The reason why is the strength of women body to resist against birth pains. Furthermore, motherhood instinct is unique to women. There is no fatherly equivalent for that instinct. The cycles in women body like menstruation resembles the cycles of nature. It is nature which is matched with mother.

Patriarchal society imposes barriers on women’s access to education. It biasedly presupposes that women need not to be educated because they are never breadwinners. According to this conception, expenditure for education for women is not worth it. However, society is changing, albeit belatedly, Turkish families are more aware of importance and significance of economic independence for women than in the past. Patriarchal society imposes that wives need for husbands’ approval for work outside confined boundaries of house. This is not likewise according to Turkish Civil Code. However, social justice is directly associated with society. Furthermore, Turkey has been critiqued to make laws but not to re-enforce them fully especially in the West. It is significant to pass laws but re-enforcing them is much more important. It is part of patriarchal society mentality to conceive that women have higher responsibility in family and childcare. Thus, women are more restricted than men to access education due to family relations in Turkey. Southeastern Anatolia is striking in this fact, as it could be inferred from the fact that lowest women academic ratio in Turkey is in Southeastern Anatolia.

Figure 9. Associating the factors that impact women employment in Turkey with (pro-) feminist thinkers



The discussion and debate concerning Figure 9 occur in the Discussion in between the lines.

Figure 10. The problems experienced by women and men employees while-covid 19 period

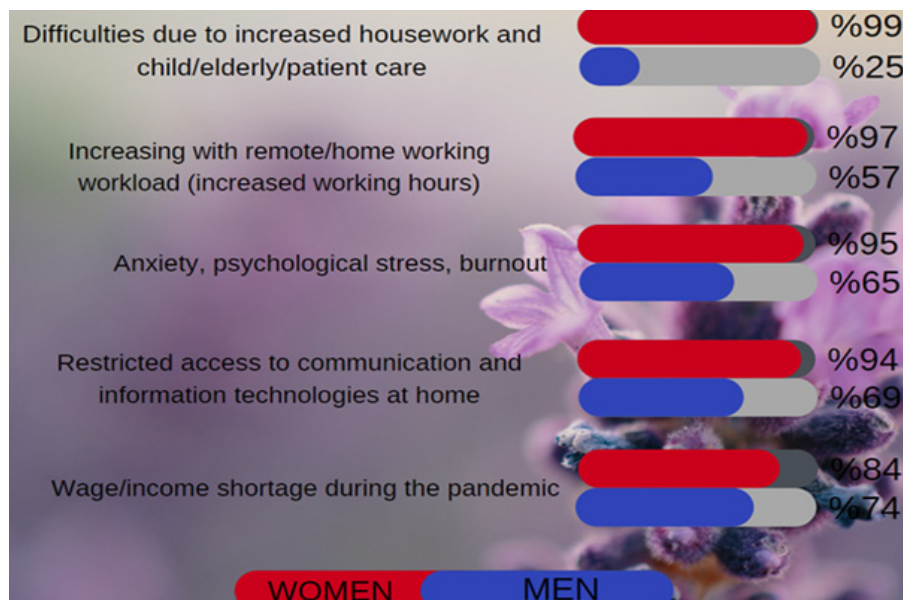


Figure 10 emphasizes the problems encountered by women and men workers comparatively while-COVID 19 period upon the data available in a relevant report prepared by Memiş (2020). It could easily be argued upon Figure 10 that Turkish women have been more badly affected by COVID-19 pandemic in terms of workload, child and elderly care, housework, psychological well-being and financial support than Turkish men have. However, as it could be inferred from the Discussion and could be supported by Gürel and Sözen (2020, pp.27-28) that women’s vulnerability to the COVID-19 infection is lower than that of men mainly due to their genetic advantage. Women are beneficiary of that genetic advantage in a lot of ways such as having longer and healthier lives that men do worldwide.

Figure 11. Covid-19 related issues and relevant feminist explanations within the terminology of feminist theorists

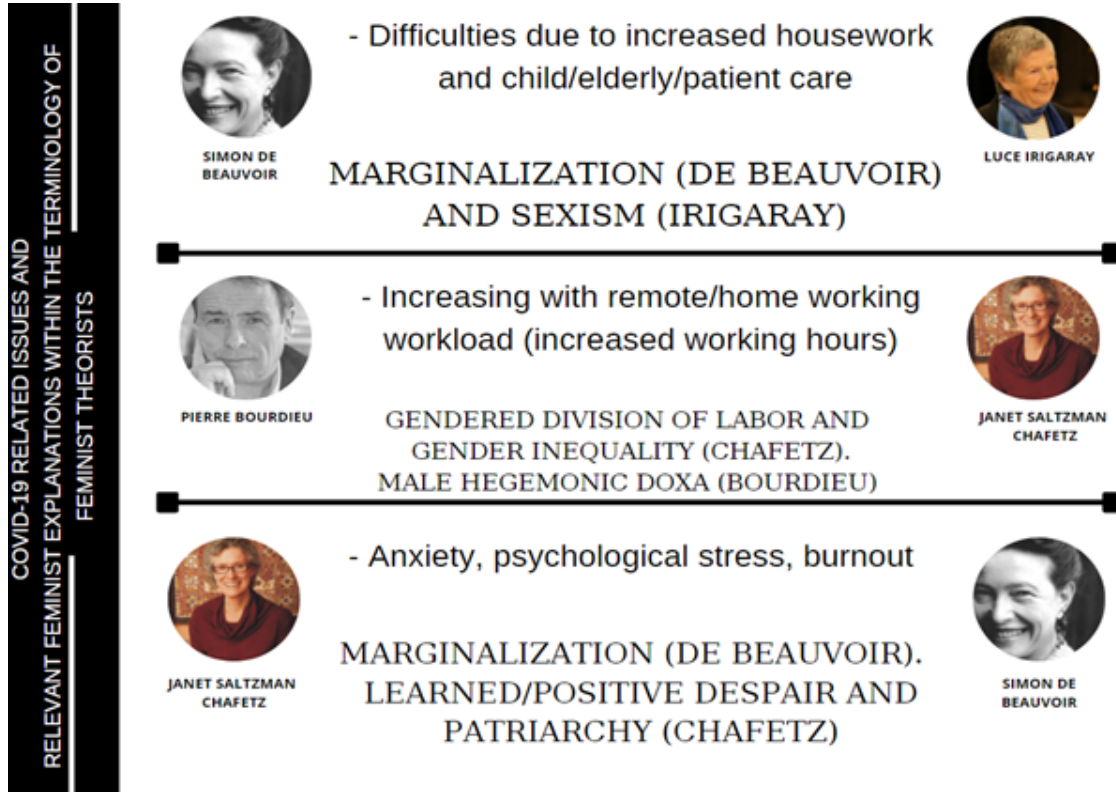


Figure 11. Covid-19 related issues and relevant feminist explanations within the terminology of feminist theorists

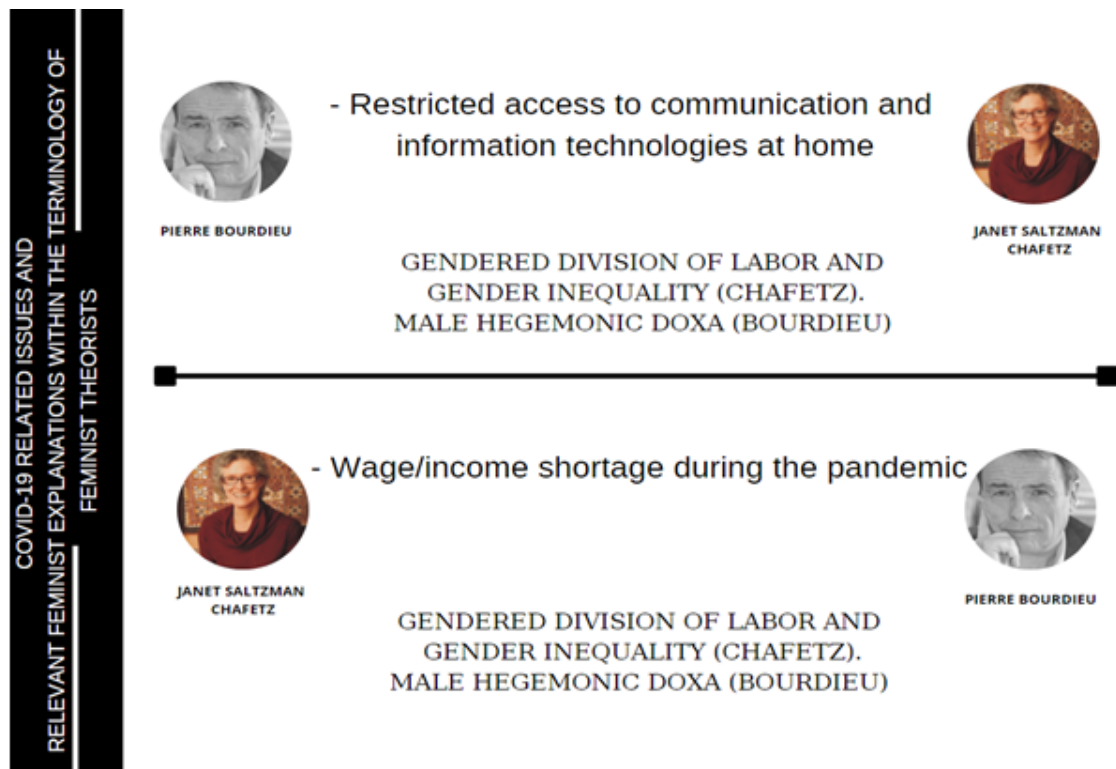


Figure 11 and Figure 12 make associations between COVID-19 related issues and relative feminist interpretations based on the terminology feminist scholars cited in the article.

The article's standpoint has just one out of a wide range of perspectives available in social sciences. However, the article does not argue that its standpoint is true, it further asserts that it has been just one of viable options.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

As it could be inferred from how women could have efficiently filled employment gap during world wars, women have equal capacity to work just as men do. However, mainly due to patriarchal and traditionalist sectors and mentality of Turkish society they have less opportunity to participate in business life and to become part of workforce in Turkey. Furthermore, in eastern regions of Turkey a more emphatic situation is viable. Due to reasons and conditions unique to east and southeast such as pre-modern social stratification, women's participation in workforce and women's participation in academia is notably lower than those in the rest of Turkey.

There are sectors of business life with notable exceptions, which gives hope for Turkish women's prospective achievement in other sectors of business. The working conditions arising from COVID-19 pandemic makes the business life less advantageous for Turkish women.

As it has been mentioned in the Introduction section of this article, there is an assumed relationship between the nature of scientific creativity and productivity and femininity. A doctoral dissertation about the quantity and quality of scientific works done by women academics could be prepared by hybrid methodology both quantitative and qualitative. Henceforth, the relationship between the nature of scientific creation and production and femininity could be inquired and interrogated.

Turkish government could tackle the women ratio of academics in these regions with positive discrimination in variety of ways. Extra increase in the salaries of women academics in these regions is just one way. Women academics in these regions could be subject to a more advantageous scoring system of academic promotion.

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