



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
Abstract	iii
Özet	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
The Subject of The Research	6
<b>1. METHODOLOGY</b>	9
1.1. Literature On Auto-Ethnography	9
1.1.1. The Story of The Research	13
<b>2. THE EMERGENCE OF TRANS EXCLUSIONARY VIEWS IN FEMINISM</b>	22
2.1. Radical Feminism	23
2.1.1 Cultural Feminism	27
2.1.1.1 Transgender People in Feminist Politics	29
<b>3. TRANS EXCLUSIONARY RADICAL FEMINISM</b>	34
<b>4. TERF DEBATES in TURKEY</b>	41
4.1. Trans/Feminist Struggle in Turkey	47
CONCLUSION	58
REFERENCES	61

## **Abstract**

Based on an auto-ethnographic engagement with the feminist and transgender communities in Turkey, this research presents a historical examination of trans exclusionary radical feminist discourse emanated in the Anglo-American context, with a particular focus on its implications on local and political specificities of feminism and transgender politics in contemporary Turkey.

Keywords: Gender, Feminism, Trans, Exclusion, History

## **Özet**

Türkiye'deki feminist ve trans topluluklarıyla oto-etnografik bir ilişkilene dayanan bu araştırma, Anglo-Amerikan bağlamda ortaya çıkan trans dışlayıcı radikal feminist söylemin - özellikle günümüz Türkiye'sindeki feminizm ve trans politikalarının özgüllüğü üzerindeki etkilerine odaklanarak - tarihsel bir analizini sunar.

Anahtar kelimeler: Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Feminizm, Trans, Dışlama, Tarih

*Disclaimer: This text discusses transphobic and misogynist ideas and may be triggering to some readers.*

## INTRODUCTION

She was a male when she came to university and then discovered the woman inside. Feminist and transsexual Sema does not want to be boiled down with a woman who stays in a male dormitory, or a man wearing skirts. Her body is a political symbol; she struggles for existence in another way at university. [...] A detail that is not visible in the photos is worth mentioning. Because it is her definitive characteristic. Sema does not want to be shaved because womanhood necessitates not having hairs on the face. But she wears red lipstick when she wants. [...] She does not have long hair. No. She does not hang around with a purple wig that you see in the photo. But she can wear a mini skirt or a file dress when she craves. This situation also makes some of her friends to react. Her transgender friends accuse her of not making up enough, not waxing, not being 'woman enough.'<sup>1</sup>

I am Sema. It is my real name. I was born in İstanbul 1987, July 15th. When I first opened my eyes to the world, the nurses said to my mother: "Magnificent! (Maşallah!) It is a boy, but it is like a girl, if you get pregnant again, it will be a girl." I don't know why they thought so, but this was my first day on earth, and it was the first time I have been perceived as a girl. Since the times that I had a little or no sense of whom I was or what my gender was, most people around me kept saying that I was like a girl or I was not manly enough.

During my childhood, unlike the other men around, I was not interested in watching football games, playing horse races, playing *okey* in coffeehouses,

---

<sup>1</sup> October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010 - Interview with Sema by Pınar Ögünç, *Transseksüel Feminist Üniversiteli Hem Sakallı Hem Etekli (Transsexual, Feminist and University Student, both having Beard and Skirt)*, *Radikal Newspaper*

sacrificing animals, swearing, bodybuilding, flirting with the girls, guarding girls, protecting the honor of the family, making a fight for the mothers and sisters, popping the cherry (milli olmak), walking without swinging my hips, counting beads, being a soldier, hunting, talking about the brands of cars or motorcycles, and watching constructions without a purpose. Instead, I preferred playing at home alone, cooking with mom, combing the hair of the dolls which were a part of my mother's dowry, knitting together with my grandmother, offering cologne for guests, listening to my friend's love stories, watching soap operas, magazine programs and music channels; cleaning, dancing in front of the mirror, speaking politely, requesting, not making a lot of noise, and making a *Sibel Can* cleavage with the fabrics I found when nobody was at home. It was my desire.

I felt guilt and shame when I did not match the expectations of people who advised me to behave like men. 5-year-old vendor children in the streets, my friends in primary school, the head of the Registry Office, and my mathematics teacher, among others, tried to teach me how a man must be. I was angry and embarrassed at times because they thought I was like a girl. But I had no answer to what they said. I did not choose to be like a girl. First the people around me expressed that I am like a girl, and it required courage to accept that. Thanks to feminism, I found the courage to say that "yes, I am like a girl." Accepting that I was like a girl as a person whose gender assigned at birth was male in a heteropatriarchal society meant both showing the courage and exposing the vulnerability.

When I came to Boğaziçi University in 2005, I found myself in a sociality that includes feminist women. For the feminists in my environment, being a woman was a precondition for being a feminist. Men could only be supporters of the feminist movement, or they just could become pro-feminists. According to them, men did not experience womanhood, and they had the privilege of being men in the patriarchal system. Hence, feminists

used to create women-only spaces which regarded as free from patriarchy or sexism. When I first met with feminists, it was the first time I had difficulty in socializing with women. My feminist friends were organizing women-only meetings to which I was not invited. Before, I was a part of the Gold days (Altın Günü) of my mother, and I had always been in sociality with the girls. But feminists were different. Then, I came out as transgender<sup>2</sup> and feminist in 2006.

What played a significant role in my coming-out as a transgender and being visible was that I was a member of a women-only feminist group. However, I have to confess that I had some moments in which I felt weird. Being part of a group led by feminists was different than my previous experiences in women's sociality. In feminist spaces, being a woman was a must. Coming out as a transgender enabled me to get involved in these spaces. Unlike my previous experiences in women gatherings that I was naturally part of, I was supposed to attend feminist meetings as a woman. This was a completely new experience for me and the people around me.

I was staying in a dormitory for men, and I was using toilets for men as an "official" man. Meanwhile, I was coming together with feminist women, and I would socialize with them. All of these brought along a sense of ambivalence. I was struggling with the psyche caused by this ambivalence, although the feminist women gladly "accepted me" among them. I had never used the changing rooms for women. I do not know how they would have reacted if I had chosen to use the changing room for women. However, since I was not an "official" woman, entering spaces reserved for women could pose a problem for me.

---

<sup>2</sup> In transgender studies literature, transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people who do not conform to the sex/gender that is assigned at birth. It encompasses diverse bodies, gender expressions, and sexual characteristics that defy easy categorization and challenge the conventional understanding of sex/gender binary that produces or reinforces violence, discrimination, hatred, and intolerance. It has been conventionally denoted transvestites, transsexuals, crossdressers, drag kings, drag queens, tranny bois and genderqueers, non-binary, and intersex people.

The women in the group I was a part of were very supportive, and they have never questioned if I could count as a feminist or not. They did not investigate why I was walking around with my beard or with my skirt or why I did not have a gender reassignment surgery. While I was relentlessly questioning my gender, I finally found a space where I could fight against the challenges that I faced. Therefore, I have neither felt the need nor found the time for questioning if I am a feminist or not. Having got my share of gender inequality, patriarchy, transphobia, and homophobia, I was occupied with building strategies to survive. Being under the wings of a movement aiming to struggle against sexism gave me the relaxation that I had been looking for.

After a while, I started to attend women-only meetings and events of other feminist groups, and I encountered various reactions. For the feminists who did not know my story, I was a man, having the privilege or appearance of a man, and I had better not to be in the feminist spaces. I was thinking that being asked if I was transgender or not is itself a form of harassment. And, I felt fragile when some feminists excluded me in some situations. I did not think that I had the luxury of asking anyone about their gender or sexual orientation after looking at their body and clothes.

Furthermore, I did not have the authority or privilege to question how feminist a person could be. Ironically, whether I could be a feminist, or a woman was an issue for some people. It was disappointing and exhausting for me to have conflicts with some people fighting against sexism and patriarchy for years, considering themselves as "the subject of feminism" and believing that they have the right to question whether a person could be the subject of feminism.

Today, I may say that the first 15 years of my life have marked by the questions of whom I was, why I felt different, why people expected me to behave in specific ways. In childhood and puberty years, I did not have the vocabulary to understand my suffering. After attending university, meeting with feminist women by chance, and taking courses on gender, feminist consciousness has always become a useful resource for me to name the violence and oppression I had faced with. However, the heterosexist cultural constructions of feminist political spaces, often depending on the gender binary have become a challenge for me. Thus, the last fifteen years of my life have been marked by the questions of if I was a feminist, if I was a woman or if I was a trans.

I believe that binaries have to be transgressed all the time. It is impossible to situate transgender people in an understanding of feminism based on the man/woman binary. I think that sexualities, desires, and genders are numerous. I believe that the number of gender expressions equals the number of human beings on earth. This number also shows parallels with the sorts of sexual violence, abuse, and oppression. Yet, it is essential to find common grounds for resistance.

When I look back, I may say that masculinity has been a burden, not an advantage, for me. Femininity has been a big wound. And still, as a feminist whose self-identification is neither woman nor man, I continue working in a gender research center with a lot of feminists and queers around. I do not care much about how I am perceived, which gender identity I get and which one I lose. I lived. I survived. I have a herstory.

## The Subject of The Research

Based on an auto-ethnographic engagement with the feminist and transgender communities in Turkey, this research presents a historical examination of trans exclusionary radical feminist discourse emanated in the Anglo-American context, with a particular focus on its implications on local and political specificities of feminism and transgender politics in contemporary Turkey.

Trans-exclusionary views have constituted an ideological position in radical feminist politics within the historical framework that encompasses a) the transformation of human rights discourse regarding sexual orientation<sup>3</sup> and gender identity<sup>4</sup>, b) changing regulations in local and international legislative mechanisms concerning gender recognition<sup>5</sup>, c) rising visibility of gender-based political movements and their uneven distribution in distinct socio-historical locations, d) epistemological shift from woman to gender as the central analytical category in feminist thought<sup>6</sup> e) growing scholarly work on (trans)gender and queer that crosses across disciplines<sup>7</sup>,

---

<sup>3</sup> In 2006, an exclusive group including judges, academics, a former Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Special Procedures, members of treaty bodies, NGOs, and others from different regions who have expertise on Human Rights came together in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The group worked on defining international standards regarding human rights of LGBTIs. Since then, *Yogyakarta Principles* has been highly referred to in several courts, both national and international contexts, and it has been an essential guide for the application of international human rights law concerning sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics. The principles were revised in 2017 and supplemented by the new 10 (The Yogyakarta Principles 2017). Besides, on March 2010, the *Committee of Ministers' recommendation of the Council of Europe* to its member governments on measures to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity had been the first and only international agreement regarding LGBTI+ rights, voted by the 47 member states anonymously. It was a big step for the advancement and protection of transgender rights of the EU citizens, though it was not legally binding. (Karsay 2018)

<sup>4</sup> Social, cultural, and legal recognition of gender identity is one of the most essential demands of the transgender movement on a global scale. In Yogyakarta Principles, it is defined as follows:

Gender identity is understood to refer to each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, including the personal sense of the body (which may involve, if freely chosen, modification of bodily appearance or function by medical, surgical or other means) and other expressions of gender, including dress, speech and mannerisms. (Yogyakarta Principles 2017)

<sup>5</sup> In 2012, Argentina passed a law which determined the gold standard for legal gender recognition. Accordingly, anyone over the age of 18 can choose their gender identity, undergo gender reassignment, and revise official documents without any prior judicial or medical approval. Children can do so with the consent of their legal representatives or through summary proceedings before a judge. In 2007 Nepal affirmed third gender category based on an individual's "self-feeling". In 2009, Pakistan recognized third gender. In 2013, Bangladesh recognized Hijras as Hijras. In 2014 India passed a law that acknowledges "the right of every person to choose their gender." In 2015 New Zealand and Australia added an "unspecified" gender option to official documents. In 2015, Malta (Gender Identity, Gender Expression, and Sex Characteristics Act) and Ireland (Gender Recognition Bill), in 2016 Norway (Legal Gender Amendment Act), in 2017 Belgium (Legal Gender Recognition Law), in 2018 Portugal (Gender Identity Law) allowed legal gender change based on statutory declaration (Ghoshal&Knight 2016). Although massive steps have been taken, there are still many needs to prevent the human rights violations of transgender people. There are ad hoc procedures in implementation in many countries, such as mandatory psychiatric diagnosis, divorce, sterilization, irreversible surgical interventions (including requirements for expert opinions, hormonal therapy, forensic exams, and even measurements of genitalia) and evidence for a life experience in the self-declared gender. In Macedonia and Serbia, there are still no laws or administrative procedures mentioning gender recognition. According to Human Rights Watch 2016 report, there are also many countries in the world having laws that ban posing as the opposite sex/gender like Nigeria, Malaysia, and Kuwait. (Ghoshal&Knight 2016) In Turkey, gender reassignment surgeries were legalized in 1988. According to Article 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, legal gender can be changed if one matches specific criteria such as having mental health requirements in terms of gender transition and not being married. People who apply to the court to change their legal gender must have had gender transition surgery. Turkey is far behind the international human rights standards regarding gender transition.

<sup>6</sup> With the rising voices of the marginalized, colonized, working-class, and ethnic minorities in feminist spaces, the universal narratives on the category of 'woman' were being called into question. Besides, together with the influence of postmodern critiques that challenged the grand narrative on women liberation, an epistemological shift from women to gender occurred in feminist thought. In her 1984 article, Joan Scott writes that "feminists have in a more literal and serious vein begun to use "gender" as a way of referring to the social organization of the relationship between sexes." However, the distinction between sex and gender challenged by Judith Butler, when she said sex itself a gendered category:

If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called 'sex' is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all. (Butler 1999, 10-11)

<sup>7</sup> The term gender, in fact, is first appropriated by the psychiatrists and sexologists working with transgender clients, such as Harry Benjamin, John Money, and Robert Stoller. Based on their case studies with transgender as well as intersex people, they described the psychiatric terms and conditions of transsexuality with their analysis of gender. According to Stoller, gender has psychological and cultural connotations, and it is different from biological sex:

and f) anti-gender right-wing political movements that have lately grown in mostly illiberal European countries.

Having this broad picture in mind, I will argue that the form that trans exclusionary radical feminist discourse takes in Turkey has different historical associations, cultural understandings, and political implications. However, it follows partially overlapping trajectories with the traveling of ideas, theories, and concepts within and around the feminist movement in broader contexts.

Although there is an extensive literature on feminism, gender, and sexuality in Turkey context, the scholarly works on the relationship between feminist and transgender politics are highly limited. Aligül and Gülkan's presentation, *Transfeminism*, in 2011 which was published in the book *Amargi Feminizm Tartışmaları* (Amargi Feminism Debates) and Aslı Zengin's article *Mortal Life of Trans/Feminism: Notes on "Gender Killings in Turkey"* which was published in *Transgender Studies Quarterly* in 2016 are rare examples which reflect the conflicts between transgender activists and cis feminists in Turkey. Besides, Tuna Erdem's article, *Feminizm ve Kuir Düşmanlığı* (Feminism and Queer Hostility) published in *Lubunya* journal in 2011 is one of the earliest examples that challenge critical feminist discourses on trans and queer subjectivities. Through an historical inquiry on the trans exclusionary assumptions which have formed an ideological position in radical feminist politics since the 1970s and along with an analysis of their reflections on the local feminist struggles, I hope

---

Gender is the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a person, and, obviously, while there are mixtures of both in many humans, the normal male has a preponderance of masculinity and the normal female a preponderance of femininity (Stoller 2006, p.56).

To explain the transsexual cases which are not normal according to his time's heteronormative medical discourse, Stoller uses the term gender identity, which refers to a person's knowledge and awareness - whether conscious or unconscious - to feel belonging one sex or the other. Moreover, he claims that "while gender, gender identity, and gender role are almost synonymous in the usual person, in certain abnormal cases, they are at variance" (p.56). In his formulation, gender identity is a psychological concept which explains why some people felt like trapped in the wrong bodies. This psychological claim made gender reassignment surgeries legitimate. In order for the operations to take place, it was necessary to detect that the person had a medical problem, and psychiatrists appropriated the term gender to explain the assumed abnormality of their clients. Although it may seem that Stoller explained the transsexuality with gender terminology, instead, he adopted the heteronormative and essentialist assumptions of his time based on dichotomous sex. In this way, he redefined the social norms of manhood and womanhood by categorizing the transsexual behavior as abnormal. His conceptualization reinforced the patriarchal and binary gender roles, reproduced sexual essentialism, and failed to recognize that sex is not binary. In contemporary researches in biology, various factors describe a person's sex, including chromosomes, genetics, hormones (estrogen and testosterone), gonads, sexual organs, reproductive capacity, and other associated internal organs. Moreover, those factors are not fixed and consistent in every person (Baird, 2001). Since it is impossible to determine one's own sex on the grounds of genital structure according to this perspective, it is appropriated by transgender politics that what is assumed as biological sex is, in fact, the gender assigned at birth.

to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on transgender studies as well as feminism in Turkey.

## **1. METHODOLOGY**

This text has been written as an outcome of an auto-ethnographic engagement with the transgender and feminist political communities in Turkey. In the first part of this section, I will attempt to outline the auto-ethnography literature with a particular selection of the scholars who enlighten my path during the research process. Then I will clarify how I made use of auto-ethnographic approaches to position myself concerning the issue and as Patricia Hill Collins would call it as an "outsider within" the community.

### **1.1. Literature on Auto-Ethnography**

The emergence of auto-ethnographic and self-reflexive accounts in social sciences is intimately related to an increased focus on body, emotions, and affect, as well as the "postmodern skepticism regarding generalizations of knowledge claims." (Anderson 2006, p.373) David Hayano is often credited as the originator of the term auto-ethnography. However, in his piece, *Auto-ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects* (1979), he stresses that he first heard the term in 1966, during a presentation by Jomo Kenyatta on his study on his native Kikuyu people. In Hayano's account, auto-ethnography is "not a specific research technique, method or theory, it colors all three when employed in the fieldwork." (p.99) According to him, auto-ethnographic engagement with the field contrasts with the detached outsider features of colonial anthropologists. He inscribes the term to describe the works of his contemporaneous colleagues who research with the communities they belong (Anderson, p.376). He defines two types of auto-ethnography: the ones that are written by researchers who "studied their own cultural, social, ethnic, racial, religious, residential or sex membership group or a combination of one or two of these categories" and, the ones who were done by the ethnographers who have "acquired intimate

familiarity with certain subcultural, recreational or occupational groups" (Hayano 1979, p.100). According to Hayano, the practice of auto-ethnography fosters a paradigm shift in field works through a) new concepts and theories coming from "other possible epistemologies"; b) use of interdisciplinary techniques and c) calling for "applied, action or radical anthropology in support of one's people" (p.101).

Contemporary meanings and applications of auto-ethnography are quite different from Hayano's understanding, and today it is challenging to give a precise definition of the term (Ellis & Bochner 2000). According to Norman Denzin (1992a), auto-ethnography is a critical stance against the realist and empiricist approaches in social sciences "which privilege the researcher over the subject, method over the subject matter, and maintain commitments to outmoded conceptions of validity, truth, and generalizability" (p. 20). In a similar vein, Mark Neuman (1996) stresses that auto-ethnographies "identify zones of contact, conquest, and contested meanings of self and culture that accompany the exercise of representational authority" (p.191). He contends that auto-ethnography is a form of critique and resistance.

According to Ellis & Bochner (2000), auto-ethnography is a writing style and a research methodology that "displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal and the cultural (p. 739). It poses questions and produces alternatives for the conventional methods of ethnography and traditional academic writing styles by emphasizing first-person perspective and experience to describe and criticize the socio-cultural phenomena. It welcomes and reinforces the researchers' relationship with her environment. Through a self-reflexive manner, auto-ethnographer points out the intersections "between self and society, the particular and the general, the personal and the political." (Adams&Jones&Ellis, 2015 p.2). She confronts "the tension between insider and outsider perspectives, between social practice and social constraint through fostering "fluidity, intersubjectivity, and responsiveness to particularities" (Adams&Jones

2008, p.379). Feminism has an undeniable impact on the rise of autobiographical voices and self-reflexivity in social sciences. Elizabeth Ettore (2016) writes that she considers auto-ethnography "as a way of doing feminism in society" (p.1). Auto-ethnography is queer when it "resists definitional and conceptual fixity" (Adams&Jones 2008, p.384).

Auto-ethnographic texts are often criticized as "self-indulging", "narcissistic", "introspective", "individualized" (Méndez 2000, p. 283), "non-analytic", "an abuse of privilege", "irreverent, self-absorbed, sentimental and romantic" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). However, auto-ethnographers have responded to the critiques by offering more embodied, political, truthful, reflexive, and experimental ways of conducting research and knowledge production (Jackson & Mazzei, 2008, p.299). In most critics, objectivity and/or reality of auto-ethnographic texts and evaluation procedures have become the main issues of address. As a response to these challenges, Anderson states that although traditional ethnographers are often invisible in their research, they are always and already omnisciently present in the text. In a similar vein, anthropologist Johannes Fabian claims that "subjectivity informs the production and representation of knowledge even in those cases of writing where autobiography is absent. The subject, as a speaker, as an authority is always present" (Fabian 2001, p.13). In Fabian's account, autobiography is an aspect of ethnographic objectivity:

It should be clear that autobiography need not be an escape from objectivity. On the contrary, critically understood, autobiography is a condition of ethnographic objectivity [...] Autobiography, as I posited, be a condition of (rather than an impediment to) ethnographic objectivity, in the sense that it own's the writing subject's actual history and involvement to be considered critically. (pp.13-18)

Auto-ethnographic texts are ranging from short stories to photographic essays, from journals to fragmented and layered writing (Ellis & Bochner 2000, p.739). There are several creative ways of doing auto-ethnography. Here, I will clarify two dominant approaches. First is evocative auto-ethnography, which has been firmly characterized in the works of Ellis and Bochner (2000). This form of auto-ethnographic practice depends on the artistic and aesthetic aspects of storytelling. According to them, their work "emphasized and underscored subjectivity, self-reflexivity, emotionality, and the goal of connecting social sciences to humanities through first-person, ethnographic storytelling." (p.52) Besides, they also aim that their readers would not only know but also "*feel the truth* of first-person accounts," and they will be "fully immersed and engaged - morally, aesthetically, emotionally, politically, and intellectually." (Ellis&Bochner 2016, p.52)

The second form of auto-ethnographic practice is analytical. According to Leon Anderson, analytic autoethnography depends on the following criteria: researcher's "complete membership in the research group, analytic reflexivity, narrative visibility, dialogue with informants beyond self, commitment to theoretical analysis." (Anderson 2006, p.373) Whereas the primary focus in the evocative form is the researcher's introspection, the analytic form is more engaged with "objective writing and analysis of a particular group" (Méndez 2000, p.280).

In the light of the literature on auto-ethnography that I sketched here; I will attempt to explain what I have done in the research process in the following part.

### **1.1.1. The Story of The Research**

This research has been concluded in ten years. Auto-ethnographic approaches provided me with new horizons to make sense of my conduct and relationality with the social, cultural, and political phenomena. The research process itself turned out to be a transformative adventure. In the process, I have situated myself in a blurred space that intermingles the conventional boundaries between academia and activism.

When I started to study Cultural Studies at Istanbul Bilgi University in 2011, I was thinking of conducting fieldwork with transgender people who were in the process of gender reassignment. I was planning to do in-depth interviews and provide an analysis of trans-subject formation concerning psychiatric and legal discourses and practices on gender identity. Meanwhile, I was also a volunteer of the Lambdaistanbul LGBTI+ Association. Many students were coming to the organization to get information about LGBTI+ issues to support their researches. I was inclined to think that increasing LGBTI visibility in academia was necessary. Yet, I have witnessed how other people were disturbed by the circulation of people who were keen on writing our stories in their academic papers. As a transgender person, I was also interviewed by many people, and most of the time, I experienced uncanny feelings afterward.

How can a researcher provide a better relationship with the field, and how and in which ways can a research feed not only academia but also the field concerned? What is the role of the social scientist in society?

Having these questions in mind, I read Petra Doan's brilliant piece, *Tyranny of Gendered Spaces: Reflections from Beyond the Gender Dichotomy* (2010). In her work, Doan questions the binary system of gender relations, and how they are experienced as constraints for the people with gender

variance, through an auto-ethnographic engagement. She intervenes in the broad literature on gender and space - which mostly focuses on women's subjectivity - and presents a unique picture of how gendered spaces have consequences for those who transgress gender norms. She argues that gender variance colors every space that she enters. (Doan 2010) Her work has provided me new horizons for innovative ways of knowledge production. Besides, I started to think about for what purposes, for whom, and as whom I have been doing the research. Inspired from Doan's piece, I decided to conduct an auto-ethnography with a gender lens.

The concept of gender has always been a significant aspect of my social relations. I have often found myself introspectively asking how people perceive me under which conditions, and how I respond to their gender assignments. Transgender has often been the easiest way to describe my gender identity. However, it has been not functional at times and place settings - particularly in the official ones- where people do not have much idea of what it means. Yet, transgressing and transforming gendered social norms, intentionally and non-intentionally, have been the essential aspects of my political actions. Thus, it was indispensable for me to point out an issue with a gender perspective. However, it was challenging to decide on a single research question or problem among many experiences, stories, and gender issues.

I spent much time thinking about what to write, how to write, and why to write. Auto-ethnography might have been an excellent way to free me from speaking in the name of others. Yet, it was also challenging to talk about myself because I was searching the ways of speaking beyond identity categories. Adopting a historical perspective and using the tools of (auto)biographical storytelling and writing might have helped me to overcome my concerns and questions of representation and identity claims.

When it was time to decide on a research topic, I thought to focus on an issue that may contribute to Turkey's feminist and transgender community, which I have been also a part of. Meanwhile, the debates on trans exclusionary radical feminism started in online activist communities. By late 2018, some feminists – most of them also academics – in Turkey began to share their critical views about several transgender issues on their social media accounts. The problems were centered on the puberty blockers for young transgender people, de-transition stories, the formulation of inner gender identity by transgender folks, and the previous “male socialization” of transgender women. The LGBTI+ community has not welcomed the comments and attitudes of the cis feminists about transgender issues. In August 2019, LGBTI+ institutions and groups published declarations criticizing the transphobic or trans-exclusionary stances of cis feminist academics. The debates - often referred to as "TERF (trans-exclusionary radical feminism) debates” in activist and academic communities - have created a climate of violence and discrimination and led to a polarization between a group of cis feminist academics and transgender activists. Along with the cyberwars on TERF ideology, many articles were published, and feminist and LGBTI+ groups have organized several events with the aims of conflict resolution and experience sharing.

The ongoing conflicts between transgender activists and feminist academics became a departure point for me to ask the following questions which have I attempted to answer throughout the research process: Why and in which ways did TERF emerge as a category in Turkey? Why have trans exclusionary attitudes become a subject of debate in this specific historical moment? How have feminist approaches to transgender topics have been transformed through history?

I have witnessed and experienced exclusion in feminist spaces since my first involvement in gender activism. Since I felt exhausted and disappointed of

being part of these issues, I was reluctant to contribute to the ongoing debates on TERF ideology. Yet, I changed my mind when my dear trans activist friend Çayan from Pembe Hayat LGBTI+ Association invited me to a panel to make a presentation on transfeminism in Turkey. I accepted *their*<sup>8</sup> invitation considering that it would be good to tell my story regarding the issue and provide a perspective beyond the polarization between transgender activists and cis feminists. In addition to that, I felt the responsibility to reclaim the history of the trans/feminist struggle in Turkey, which emerged in the 2010s with the great efforts of my dear friend Aligül Arıkan among others. Aligül, unfortunately, passed away in 2013. It could be relevant to remember his struggle to be recognized as a trans man in feminist spaces.

After I decided to work on this topic, I was invited to the below events during the research process:

- November 17th, 2019 – *Debates on Feminism Subject Conference* (Feminist Özne Tartışmaları Konferansı) organized by İzmir Young LGBTI+ group,
- November 20th, 2019 – *Transfeminism Talk* organized by *Pembe Hayat LGBTI+ Association*.
- November 29th, 2020 – *Transfeminism Struggle in Turkey: Notes for Future from Yesterday* (Türkiye’de Transfeminizm Mücadelesi: Dünden Bugüne Yarın İçin Notlar), organized by *Feminist Mekan*.
- February 25th, 2020 – *Transfeminism Workshop* organized by *İstanbul LGBTI+ Pride Committee*.
- March 12th, 2020 – *Cinsiyete Dayalı Ayrımcılık ve Şiddet: Deneyimler ve Mücadeleler* (Gender Based Violence and Discrimination: Experiences and Struggles) Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University organized the seminar but it

---

<sup>8</sup> Singular they.

was unfortunately cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Yet, I prepared a presentation for the event.

During these presentations, I have engaged with the community through autobiographical storytelling. I told my stories based on my manifestation in various contexts as feminist and/or transgender. Besides, I adopted the art of storytelling as a method of non-violent communication and a political stance in the time of TERF conflict. As Parmer Palker (2011) expresses in her book, *Healing the Heart of Democracy*;

When two people discover that parallel experiences lead them to contrary conclusions, they are more likely to hold their differences respectfully, knowing that they have experienced similar forms of grief. The more you know other people's story the less possible it is to see that person as your enemy (p.3)

In all these events, I attempted to emphasize that exclusion – i.e. ignoring the existence of another and not giving *them* space, not recognizing, silencing, manipulating, censoring, controlling, policing, naming, categorizing - effects transgender lives in differential layers. In the meetings, I also shared what I witnessed concerning the ongoing socio-political issues about the exclusion of transgender people from feminist spaces since my first involvement in feminist and transgender politics in 2006.

Although I shared my story in those meetings along with diverse emotions, expressions and affects that targeting the activist audience, I was reluctant to integrate it fully into a text written for the academic audience and will be open to public. My initial intention to write an auto-ethnography has

transformed during the research process due to some personal<sup>9</sup>, theoretical<sup>10</sup> and political<sup>11</sup> questions and concerns.

The debates on trans exclusionary radical feminism are still an issue in trans/feminist activist communities in Turkey. While I was writing this text, many new articles have been published and cyber conflicts concerning the trans exclusion have continued. That's why it was challenging to construct a full narration of the self, and a satisfying analysis of my subject position within an ongoing atmosphere of conflict. Considering this, I'll attempt to provide not an auto-ethnographic text, but a historical narration based on a self-reflexive research process and review of the activist and academic resources on the issue. With this aim, I'll be presenting an overview of how the trans exclusionary radical feminism has become a point of debate, and how feminists with trans exclusionary views have formed a category in the last decade.

Sandy Stone writes that transsexuals who were the clients of Gender Research Clinics established in the Anglo-Saxon context wrote their experiences in the form of autobiography until the early 1990s. Besides, they kept newspaper articles and diary entries in a file which they named "obligatory trans file". (Stone 2006) Inspired by this practice of the transsexuals of the previous generations, I aimed at building up not an autobiography but a scholarly and contemporary version of an obligatory trans file as an outcome of my research. With this aim, I collected various news, articles, and reports written in diverse contexts on how transgender people experienced exclusion in feminist spaces to better understand the ongoing conflicts.

---

<sup>9</sup> Since it was traumatic to remember my past experiences on exclusion in feminist circles, it was also challenging to write on them. That's why I preferred partially inserting my story to this text. Besides, instead of an analysis of the self, I found it more crucial to present an historical account and remember and remind the names and struggles of the others who contributed trans/feminism in Turkey and in broad contexts.

<sup>10</sup> As stated in the part, Literature on Auto-Ethnography; auto-ethnographic texts have been criticized as being quite subjective. Thus, I preferred to bring diverse activist and academic resources together and attempted to present a descriptive historical narrative based on factual data. Yet, my experience has become a foundational dimension of my analysis of diverse theoretical and activist stances that are mentioned.

<sup>11</sup> Since it was difficult and risky to speak in a socio-political setting in which the freedom of expression is controlled and suspended by authorities, I felt the anxiety of "coming out" as a narrative I in an academic paper on trans/feminist politics.

As a starting point, I followed TERF debates in online activist communities to understand the forms that trans exclusionary radical feminist discourse take. In the initial phase of my study, I realized that TERF as a category was often expressed by transgender activists in the United Kingdom, to point to the feminists who are against the government's proposed revision of the Gender Recognition Act. I investigated the official documents regarding legal gender recognition and the transformation of international human rights standards regarding transgender subjects. That has become an excellent start to understand the background of conflicting demands of feminists and transgender politics in a global context. Legal recognition of gender identity based on self-identification has not been welcomed by the feminists, who considered that self-identification might erase the woman as a legitimate legal category. Hence, disputes arose on the grounds of legal definitions of women as well as transgender. The feminists who are against the legal regulations that make possible gender change based on self-identification raised essentialist views to distinguish cis women and trans women experience, or to preserve the women as a legal category. In contrast, transgender activists argued that ongoing legislation concerning gender identity that depends on the medical model violates the human rights of transgender subjects.

Secondly, I was curious about how radical feminist politics served the ground for trans exclusionary views in contemporary times. I returned to the writings of radical feminist scholars that kept lightening my activist and academic paths, among whom were bell hooks, Simone De Beauvoir, and Shulamith Firestone. I realized that trans exclusionary assumptions in feminist thought have stemmed not from radical but cultural feminism. The latter has been described as a divergent political lineage among radical feminists in the 1970s US, in the texts of Linda Martin Alcoff, Alice Echols, and Ellen Willis. Cultural feminism marks the period when radical feminists

in the Anglo-Saxon context attempted to define who women were and form their women-only communities in the 1970s. To understand the transgender people's positionality in radical feminist politics, I have utilized Transgender Studies literature and read the experiences of transgender activists and scholars.

Thirdly, I made an online inquiry to see how TERF has become a category, a point of address by transgender people in a global context. It was challenging to present diverse discourses and positionalities in online activist communities. Thus, I limited my research with mostly online articles written on trans exclusion in feminist politics, and the books which raise voice to the TERF rhetoric.

Fourthly, I outlined the trans-feminist history that I witnessed in Turkey and supported my narration with feminist scholars' writings on transgender issues and the discourse of transgender activists. With this aim, I traced in the archives of activist communities.

Throughout the process, I introspectively questioned my position; I shared my findings with the community and contemplated my conversations regarding the issue with my trans and/or feminist friends. These productive exchanges also fed this text.

I have no claims to prove a historical fact, or a purpose of presenting the whole picture regarding the issue. In contrast, I propose a particular narration, a personal account of the relationship between feminist and transgender politics, which is informed by the related academic literature and activist struggles. This research should also be read as a critique of the violence and discrimination coming out of the hetero-patriarchal scientific discourse that makes transgender people its research objects and academic privileges that silence the demands and criticisms of transgender subjects.

In the first section, I will attempt to outline the underlying assumptions of radical feminist politics in the Anglo-Saxon context, focusing on the discourses that pave the way for trans exclusionary attitudes. In the second section, I will explain the trans-exclusionary radical feminism as a category in contemporary feminist consciousness. Having the ongoing debates on trans exclusionary radical feminism in Turkey as a departure point, I will offer a historical analysis of the relationship between feminism and transgender politics in Turkey in the third section. I hope that my study might add a new layer to the ongoing theoretical and political discussions on gender and contribute to the lives of transgender people as well as cis feminist allies.

## 2. THE EMERGENCE OF TRANS EXCLUSIONARY VIEWS IN FEMINISM

"Where are the women?" "Are there even women?" "What is a woman?" "Does the word "woman" have no content?" asks Simone de Beauvoir, who is the legendary figure of the second-wave feminism, in her seminal work *The Second Sex* (1949). She describes the specific ways that the natural and social sciences and the European literary, political, social and religious traditions through which the woman has been referred as "negative", the "lack of qualities", "incomplete man", "an incidental being", "drawn from Adam's supernumerary bone", "a relative being", "the Other", "inessential", "object", "inferior", "a womb", "an ovary", "frivolous", "infantile", and "irresponsible". (Beauvoir 1972) According to Beauvoir, the patriarchal domination justifies and reinforces itself through biological or nature-based assumptions about women's inferiority. Considered as the "default" human being within and around patriarchal discourse and practices, "man defines woman, not in herself but in relation to himself, she is not considered as an autonomous being" (p.26).

Second-wave feminism marks an epistemological shift in dominant feminist thought from women's rights to women's liberation in the 1960s. Upon the legacy of their previous generation that had struggled to be recognized as equal citizens, hence political actors, second-wave feminists fought for social, cultural, and political recognition of their difference and oppression as women.

In light of the scholarly and political atmosphere of second-wave feminism, radical feminism has formed as a particular position which mainly raised the notion of patriarchy or male domination, as an impediment to women's liberation. The struggles and scholarly works of radical feminists have contributed to the vocabulary of second-wave feminist discourse. It is essential to note that radical feminism is not a monolithic category. It

revealed as a mixture of diverse political and theoretical understandings, and its discursive formation has controversies, inconsistencies, and challenges. In addition to that, the issues and analytical concepts of radical feminists have been transformed throughout the years.

Cultural feminism emerged as a fraction in radical feminist politics, which re-emphasized the biological features of being male and female in the mid-1970s. Although earlier radical feminists fought for cultural equality by rejecting patriarchal definitions of being woman; cultural feminists considered that they have the right to define the terms and conditions of being a woman and being a feminist. (Echols 1983, Willis 1983, Alcoff 1989) Since the cultural feminists defined womanhood with a biological base, their perspectives have served the ground for transgender exclusion in feminist politics.

In this section, I will attempt to outline the basic assumptions of radical feminist politics with a particular focus on its cultural feminist current. Besides, I will exemplify some incidents between cultural feminists and transgender people that paved the way for the trans exclusionary rhetoric as well as trans-feminist approaches in contemporary feminist consciousness.

## **2.1. Radical Feminism**

Radical feminists were a part of the civil rights movement, New Left, student movements, and anti-war movement in the United States. They raised their voices for women's emancipation and the elimination of patriarchy in all social life layers. (Bryson 2016) They provided powerful critiques to prior philosophical and political thoughts such as Marxism and psychoanalysis; and incorporated their vocabulary into feminist agendas. In radical feminist politics, the patriarchy was often understood as an ahistorical, cross-cultural and monolithic system of male domination, which

reinforces women's subordination as a group through "controlling their sexual and procreative potential" (Kandiyoti 1996 p.4) According to bell hooks:

Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence. (hooks, date unspecified)

Through a large number of scholarly works and political actions that largely depend on the concept of "sisterhood," radical feminists have offered critiques for several crucial social and cultural issues, including motherhood, rape, domestic violence, beauty industry, and compulsory heterosexuality, abortion and pornography. They have struggled for the recognition of sexuality and so-called "private issues" as public and political problems and demanded total equality not only in the public sphere but also in the household.

Critical to the political understandings that were mostly shaped by and for men, many radical women adopted "consciousness-raising" as a political strategy. They came together as women to share their experiences and think through their situation. These experience sharing sessions were one of the most effective organizing of radical feminists, which unveiled the altered dynamics behind women's oppression and increased public awareness of women's lives. Since the male-dominated political groups in the US were reluctant to understand women's specific needs and demands, radical women formed an autonomous movement by creating their theory and practices and defining their priorities. They were often criticized by men in the mix-gendered political communities as "bourgeois and antileft" and exposed to sexist attitudes and jokes. Nevertheless, their main focus was

"radicalizing the left by expanding the definition of radical to include feminism" (Willis 1983, p.93).

As Alice Echols states "radical feminists of 60s and 70s were raging materialists", they often emphasized the material conditions that are shaped by patriarchy (Echols 1983, p.36). In their accounts, the "identification of women with nature" was a cultural, and thus patriarchal, construct (p.37). Early radical feminists provided cultural, historical, economic, and psychological explanations for unrevealing the inner workings of patriarchy and sexism. Nature-based patriarchal approaches or biological determinism that perpetuated the inequality between men and women were disputed, and reordering of society over the annihilation of sexism and male domination was intended:

...just as the end goal of socialist revolution was not only the elimination of the economic class privilege but of the economic class distinction itself, so the end goal of feminist revolution must be, unlike that of the first feminist movement, not just the elimination of male privilege but of sex distinction itself: genital differences between human beings would no matter culturally. (Firestone 1970, p.11)

The relations between men and women - precisely the function of sexuality in shaping those relations as asymmetrical and hierarchical - were explained "through the filter of prior political and philosophical assumptions" such as psychoanalysis, existentialism, and Marxism (Willis 1984, p.94). The divergent views among radical feminists on gender and sexuality emerged as an implication of that filtering. Nevertheless, they met in a feminist setting and "ignore or agree to disagree on other political issues" (p.95). They mostly agreed that patriarchy is the primary form of oppression that brings women into being a political class or caste:

Traditional feminism is caught in the dilemma of demanding equal treatment for unequal functions, because it is unwilling to challenge

political (functional) classification by sex. Radical women, on the other hand, grasp that as a group somehow fit into a political analysis of society, but err in refusing to explore the significance of the fact that, women form a class, the uniqueness of this class, and the implications of this description to the system of political classes. Both traditional feminists and radical women have evaded questioning any part of their *raison d'etre*: women are a class, and the terms that make up that initial assumption must be examined. (Atkinson 1968)

Radical feminists offered quite striking perspectives to equalize or eliminate gender roles. Gender, specifically in earlier years of radical feminism, has been used to emphasize the gender roles and their uneven distribution between males and females. Their critical stance on women's status in society often reproduced or reaffirmed patriarchal claims on sex/gender binary. In these accounts, gender was initially referred to as the social or psychological interpretation of sex. Although a quite number of radical feminist scholars provide perspectives for dismantling inner and differential workings of sexism and gender-based violence in society, their accounts have been often based on sexual essentialism:

(Essentialism) entails the belief that those characteristics defined as women's essence are shared in common by all women at all times. It implies a limit of the variations and possibilities of change—it is not possible for a subject to act in a manner contrary to her essence. Her essence underlies all the apparent variations differentiating women from each other. Essentialism thus refers to the existence of fixed characteristic, given attributes, and ahistorical functions that limit the possibilities of change and thus of social reorganization. (Grosz 1989)

The essentialist and universalizing approaches of radical feminists in mid 1970s led to the emergence of cultural feminism as a divergent position.

### **2.1.1. Cultural Feminism**

As Linda Alcoff puts it “in attempting to speak for women, feminism often seems to presuppose that it knows what women truly are”. However, it has always been and already central, yet a controversial issue, in feminism that who women are and how the "woman" or women constitute a unified category (Alcoff 1989, p.405). What commonalities all women share, and which women have been represented, and hence which women have been excluded in feminist politics? Among the numerous efforts of feminists to grapple with the patriarchal system, conflicting views have arisen in connection with the question "who are the women?"

In contrast to the earlier tenets of radical feminist politics, cultural feminism has evolved in the mid-1970s as a different position within radical feminist tradition, which re-defined woman and put more emphasis on innate and biological differences between males and females. Cultural feminists have pointed out male nature as the source of all social tragedies and overvalued the feminine characteristics as a counterstrategy to the patriarchal order. They have associated male sexuality with violence and compulsion, whereas, for them, the feminine nature is "nurturant, loving and egalitarian" (p.38). Their approach contests the notion of femininity, which has been characterized as passive and submissive within the patriarchal system. While earlier radical feminists sought the ways of abolishing sex roles or stereotypes, cultural feminists reinforced and reproduced the cultural notions of femininity as well as masculinity. Instead of positing structural critiques as earlier radical women did, cultural feminists have targeted the "imposition of so-called "male values" or masculinity that were analyzed as the reason behind women's subordination. The underlying aspect of their struggle was the "development and preservation of a female counterculture" (p.35).

In this period, along with the debates on pornography and the objectification of women's bodies, anti-sex attitudes flourished among feminists. They considered heterosexuality as a form of male rapaciousness. Below statements exemplify how heterosexual intercourse and pornography were considered during that time among cultural feminists:

“Heterosexual intercourse is a metaphor of male rapaciousness.”  
(Rita Brown) “Rape is a function of male biology” (Susan Brownmiller) “Pornography reflects culture’s misogyny; it perpetuates violence against women. Pornography is theory, rape is practice.” (Robin Morgan) (Echols 1983 p.37)

Woman separatism, anti-pornography movement, and discussions on the formations of women-only spaces have served the ground of cultural feminist politics. In the 70s’ socio-political landscape in which males were considered the cause of women's suffering or the advantage of being men in the society, lesbianism manifested itself as a political stance, as a feminist choice against the patriarchy that reproduces itself through heterosexuality. Lesbian feminists such as Sheila Jeffreys and Julie Bindel defined political lesbian as a “woman identified woman who does not fuck man” (Onlywomen Press 1981, p.5). According to them, “feminists have no choice but to abandon heterosexuality” (p.5).

According to Alice Echols:

"By defining lesbianism as political choice, implying the immutability of gender differences, and promoting a sentimental view of female sexuality, lesbian feminists deprived heterosexual feminists of one of their favorite charges against lesbianism – that it was male-identified. Establishing lesbianism as a true measure of one's commitment to feminism. Lesbian separatists defined women, lesbian and feminist again” (p.40).

The cultural feminists, and specifically political lesbians - Robin Morgan, Mary Daly, and Janice Raymond among others - critically repeated the generalizations on women, and their positions resurfaced the essentialist views on sex. In *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (1978), Mary Daly writes a section on transsexuality, and makes a comparison between transsexuality and Frankenstein:

Today the Frankenstein phenomenon is omnipresent not only in religious myth but in its offspring, phallocratic technology. The insane desire for power, the madness of boundary violation, is the mark of necrophiliacs who sense the lack of soul/spirit/life-loving principle with themselves and therefore try to invade and kill off all spirit, substituting conglomerates of corpses. This necrophilic invasion/elimination takes a variety of forms. Transsexualism is an example. (Daly 1978, pp 70 – 71)

Following Mary Daly's account, Robin Morgan and Janice Raymond see the transsexuals as the invaders of women-only feminist spaces. I will explain their stances in the following section. In their accounts, prescriptive perspectives were given for the categories of the woman and the feminist. Thus, they ignored or excluded the ones who were beyond their normative horizon like transgender people.

### **2.3. Transgender People in Feminist Politics**

In the 1970s, both lesbians and transgender people were not visible in the gay and male-dominated activist environment. While lesbian feminists formed their political communities, transsexual women were regarded as a threat to feminism or women-only spaces. In this part, I will present the conflicts between lesbian feminists who adopted the views of the cultural feminist lineage and transsexual women who struggled to be recognized in the feminist spaces.

In 1973, Jean O'leary, the founder of Lesbian Feminist in New York, read a statement in Washington Square during the fourth annual Christopher Street Liberation Day Rally: "We support the right of every person to dress in the way that she or he wishes. But we are opposed to the exploitation of women by men for entertainment or profit." (LoveTapesCollective, 2019) As a reaction to O'leary's statement, drag queens, Sylvia Rivera<sup>12</sup> and Lee Brewster, reacted as such: "You go to bars because of what drag queens did for you, and *these bitches* tell us to quit being ourselves!" (Stein 2019, p.296) And, Sylvia continued as the following:

"You all tell me, go and hide my tail between my legs. I will no longer put up with this shit. I have been beaten. I have had my nose broken. I have been thrown in jail. I have lost my job. I have lost my apartment. For gay liberation, and you all treat me this way? What the fuck's wrong with you all? Think about that!" (Defares 2018)

In 1972, lesbian, transsexual folk singer Beth Elliot was expelled from the group, Daughter of Bilitis - which was the first national lesbian organization in America - since she was considered as not a "real woman". (The Terfs 2013) She was one of the organizers of the West Coast Lesbian Conference and would have played music during the entertainment part of the conference program. The conference was the largest lesbian meeting to date, 12000 lesbians participated. During the conference, the feminists having trans exclusionary attitudes beat the other radical feminists who support Elliot's involvement in the program (Williams 2014). Robin Morgan made her keynote speech titled "Lesbianism and Feminism: Synonyms or Contradictions?" and accused Elliot of being "an opportunist, an infiltrator, and a destroyer—with the mentality of a rapist:" (Morgan 1978, p. 181)

---

<sup>12</sup> Sylvia Rivera is a legendary activist in transgender history. She did not believe in labels and said that "I am Sylvia, just Sylvia". She was marginalized in activist communities as "poor, trans, a drag queen, a person of color, a former sex worker, and someone who also experienced drug addiction, incarceration, and homelessness." (Biography.com Editors, 2020) Many gay activists regarded her as a troublemaker. She was affiliated with the civil rights movement and women's movement and participated in demonstrations against the Vietnam War. In other words, she also rose her voice for economic, racial, and criminal justice issues (ibid). She challenged both the gay and lesbian community of her time and fought against the dominant gender norms that threaten the existence of transgender people.

“No, I will not call a male ‘she’; thirty-two years of suffering in this androcentric society and of surviving, have earned me the title ‘woman’; one walk down the street by a male transvestite, five minutes of his being hassled (which he may enjoy), and then he dares, he dares to think he understands our pain? No, in our mothers’ names and in our own, we must not call him sister.” (p.180)

In 1977, a group of feminists named Gorgons, an armed group, threatened *Olivia Records*, an all-women recording company, for its inclusion of Sandy Stone, an openly transsexual woman and an engineer. After boycotting and violent protests targeting Sandy Stone and other members of the company, they attempted to prevent Stone's Seattle concert. They expressed that they would kill Stone, if she came to Seattle. Gorgon members were disarmed while entering the concert hall by Olivia's security. (Drucker 2018)

At the same time, Janice Raymond explicitly targeted both Sandy Stone and Olivia in her book, *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of The She-Male* (1979). According to Raymond, transsexuality is an outcome of the traditional understandings of femininity and masculinity, and transsexuals reject one to move to another; that is why transsexuality is a social problem for her:

All transsexuals rape women's bodies by reducing the real female form to an artifact, appropriating this body for themselves. However, the transsexually constructed lesbian-feminist violates women's sexuality and spirit, as well. Rape, although it is usually done by force, can also be accomplished by deception. It is significant that in the case of the transsexually constructed lesbian-feminist, often, he is able to gain entrance and a dominant position in women's spaces because the women involved do not know he is a transsexual and he just does not happen to mention it. (Raymond 1979, p.104)

Raymond argues that she knows, she is sure that she is a woman, she was born with female chromosomes, and patriarchal society treats her as a woman. Moreover, she claims that all women are sure that they are women. Transsexuals (men in her vocabulary) have not the history of being born as a woman; instead, transsexuality “reinforce sex roles, and it destroys the boundaries between maleness and femaleness.” No man on earth can get the status of being a woman:

He can have the history of *wishing* to be a woman and of *acting* like a woman, but this gender experience is that of a transsexual, not of a woman. Surgery may confer the artifacts of outward and inward female organs, but it cannot confer the history of being born a woman in this society. (Raymond 1994, p. 114)

Last but not least, Raymond comes up with a conspiracy theory and claims that transsexual women may seduce lesbian feminist women and may remind them of their "residual heterosexuality." In that way, transsexuals are threads for the “revolutionary potential” of lesbian feminist politics in Raymond’s mind. (p.113)

According to trans historian Cristian Williams, Raymond is the architect of the anti-trans stance that the US government adopted in the 1980s. National Center for Health Care Technology commissioned Raymond to write a report on "social and ethical aspects of transsexual surgery” in 1981 (Williams 2014). In that report, Raymond claimed that "trans care is controversial." As an outcome of that report, the National Coverage Determination decided to exclude trans care from public insurance in 1989. Until 2013, transgender care was covered neither by public nor private insurances in the US.

In 1992, Sandy Stone wrote “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto” as a response to Raymond's rhetoric on transsexuality. Her

article undermining Raymond's assumptions became a foundational resource for the emergence of Transgender Studies in the Anglo-American context. She critically examined the (auto-)biographical accounts of transsexuals. She presented a unique picture of how transgender history has been erased through medical discourse and how transgender experience have been invalidated by radical feminist accounts.

### 3. TRANS EXCLUSIONARY RADICAL FEMINISM

In 1991, Nancy Jean Burkholder, a transsexual woman, was expelled from Michigan Womyn's Music Fest which is an event open to only "womyn-born-womyn", with the claim that she was not a woman. In the following years, trans activists continued to protest the exclusionary reactions of the festival organizers. In 1994, the trans camp was organized as an alternative festival space, and the tension between the two groups increased. (The TERFs 2013) Throughout the long-lasting conflict in Michigan, transfeminism manifested itself as a political stance in feminist consciousness (Aligül&Gülkan 2012).

Transfeminism is primarily a movement by and for trans women who view their liberation to be intrinsically linked to the liberation of all women and beyond. It is also open to other queers, intersex people, trans men, non-trans women, non-trans men and others who are sympathetic toward needs of trans women and consider their alliance with trans women to be essential for their own liberation. (Koyama 2003)

Beside transfeminism, TERF as a category emerged as a result of the conflicts between transgender people and feminists who rejected transgender women's involvement in Michigan Womyn's Music Fest. The term trans-exclusionary radical feminist – or shortly TERF – was firstly coined by a cis radical feminist herself, Viv Smythe in an online article published on FinallyFeminism101 blog in 2008. The author neutrally used the term, "a shorthand to describe one cohort of feminists" at Michigan Womyn's Music Music Fest, "who self-identify as radical and are unwilling to recognize trans women as sisters" (Smythe 2018). After that, TERF has become a buzzword in online activist communities and has been used to characterize feminist individuals and groups - and even non-feminist ones - who ignore or erase transgender experience, "identity, subjectivity and existence" (Serano 2018) in their discourses and practices.

Most of the feminists labeled as TERF by trans activists accept that "TERF is a slur or hate speech" (Murphy 2017) and define themselves as gender critical radical feminists. In contrast, trans activists state that the concept is used just for showing how some feminists engage with anti-trans activism and it is "a euphemism akin to white supremacists calling themselves race realists" (Burns 2019). Furthermore, it is important to stress that a cis radical feminist firstly used the term, and that the TERF rhetoric often goes hand in hand with the right-wing conservative ideologies and opposes the rights and demands of transgender people (Burns 2019).

Numerous other examples exist showing that TERFs (or self-identified gender-critical radical feminists) does not accept that trans women are women. Julie Bindel expresses that she has not a "problem with men disposing of their genitals, but it does not make them women" (Bindel 2004). In a similar vein, Germaine Greer expresses that transgender women are "ghastly parodies with too much eye shadow" and goes further and says that "they do not know what it is like to "have a big, hairy, smelly vagina" (Selby 2015).

As stated earlier, TERF has often been pronounced along with the debates circulating in the UK's proposed revision on its *Gender Recognition Act*.<sup>13</sup> Today, the international human rights standards regarding gender identity promote the Self-ID model and enlistment of third gender option in official documents.<sup>14</sup> The European governments have started to make new

---

<sup>13</sup> According to the Gender Recognition Act of the UK, a new birth certificate can be issued in accordance with the acquired new gender of the person concerned. Under the Act, an application for legal gender recognition can be made to the Gender Recognition Panel of the medical experts for being eligible for change. Although the Act is world-leading for transgender rights, the state has continued to have the right to determine, assign, and approve the gender of its citizens. Only two gender categories- man and woman- were recognized, though biology has been no longer considered as destiny for gender assignment. The criteria needed for legal gender change depends on, now outdated, medical framework that diagnoses transsexuality as a mental disorder, which classified as gender identity disorder. This framework takes its roots from Harry Benjamin's book *Transsexual Phenomenon*, which was published in 1966. According to Sandy's Stone "when the first (Gender Research) clinics were constituted, Benjamin's book was the researchers' standard reference" (Stone 2006, p. 36). According to Benjamin:

Transsexualism [...] indicates more than just playing a role. It denotes the intense and often obsessive desire to change the entire sexual status including the anatomical structure. While the male transvestite, enacts the role of a woman, the transsexualist wants to be one and function as one, wishing to assume as many of her characteristics as possible, physical, mental and sexual. [...] The condition requires psychiatric help, reinforced by hormone treatment and, in some cases, by surgery. (Benjamin 2006)

That medical understanding was invalidated by the World's Health Organization's 2019 revision on Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). Accordingly, "gender identity disorder" was removed from diagnostic chapter, and transgender condition was classified as gender incongruence in the section dedicated to sexual health. (UN News 2019)

<sup>14</sup> PACE Resolution 2048, on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, called for legal gender recognition that is based on self-declaration. It also recommended the enlistment of the third gender alternative in official documents. Accordingly, the states' procedures should be quick, transparent, and accessible for changing the name and sex on identity

arrangements in their laws concerning legal gender recognition. Following this, the UK government also announced a public consultation in 2018 in order to make a reform on its Gender Recognition Act. However, the government's reform on legal gender recognition in the UK created a polarization between cis feminists opposing and transgender activists supporting the revisions. On the one hand, transgender activists were criticizing the ongoing legislation, which were highly bureaucratic, expensive, and violating international human rights standards regarding legal gender change. On the other hand, some feminists engaged with diverse counter-discourses that have silencing effects on the demands of transgenders. For the cis feminist cohort, the self-ID system was putting women's identity and experience in danger. According to them, if the changes in the act were to be put into force, women-only public spaces – such as women toilets, women prisons, gender-segregated hospital yards, rape crisis centers, women shelters, and changing rooms - would be at risk. Because the category of woman will lose its significance in the legal sense, and "evil men" will invade women-only spaces in the disguise of transgender women. (Persio 2018) They raised questions regarding a) transgender people's involvement in women-only public spaces and services, b) the regulations concerning gender reassignment processes of young transgender people; c) the concerns related to blood donation and statistical data collection; d) the status of sex workers in feminism (Özkazanç, 2019).

As part of this cis feminist cohort, Woman's Place UK was founded in September 2017 "to ensure women's voices would be heard in the consultation on proposals to change the Gender Recognition Act." According to them, "Violence against women and sex discrimination still

---

documents. Furthermore, forced sterilization of transgender people, unnecessary medical surgeries on intersex infants, and psychiatric diagnosis of gender dysphoria should not be the requirements for legal gender recognition. (Parliamentary Assembly 2015) In 2017, PACE Resolution 2191 promoted the human rights of intersex people and called the member states for eliminating the unnecessary medical interventions on intersex people such as forced sterilization, non-consensual surgeries, or other related treatments. Accordingly, sex registration should be optional, and it also recommends eliminating discrimination based on sex characteristics (Parliamentary Assembly, 2017).

exists. Women need reserved places, separate spaces, and distinct services." They are against a revision on the act, which makes the assignment of legal gender based on self-identification possible. (WPUK 2019)

In a similar vein, The Women Liberation Front, shortly WoLF, in the US, is a radical feminist organization that has opposed state regulations on gender identity. It filed a lawsuit against the Title XI, which the Obama administration worked to revise regarding discriminations based on gender identity. WoLF members reacted to reforms in diverse ways. The WoLF representatives referred to the transgender as "a social contagion all over the internet" and "the new eating disorder." The partnership between WoLF and *Focus on The Family*, known as a conservative Christian organization, is just another example of the collaborations between TERF organizations and right-wing and conservative groups (Fitzsimons 2019).

As I mentioned in the methodology part, I limited my research to online articles and books concerning the TERF rhetoric. That is why I will examine Sheila Jeffrey's book *Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of the Politics of Transgenderism (2014)*, which is the ultimate resource for TERF rhetoric in contemporary feminist consciousness. Jeffrey repeats and reproduces a variety of TERF assumptions in her book.

Jeffrey is a self-defined gender critical radical feminist and a vigorous advocate of anti-trans rhetoric in contemporary feminist thought. She defines women through a biological base and reduces transgender subjects into merely social constructs. She thinks transgender people are trapped not in the wrong body but within the patriarchal system, which manifests through advances in medical technology. For her, transgender is a recent phenomenon, whereas the woman is an essence. However, it may be that herself is trapped in patriarchy and leaves no option for cis women and transgender people out of being victims of the system. Her thought

perpetuates both misogyny and transphobia disguised as gender-critical feminism.

Most importantly, her book is blind to transgender subjectivity and experience. Although she focuses on them throughout her book, the only transgender people she gave a place are the ones who regret having gender reassignment surgery. She does interviews with the partners, families, or children of transgender people, and presents a distorted picture of how their loved ones' transgender experience hurts them.

In her formulation, gender is a conservative ideology that forms the foundation of women's subordination. It is "the foundation of the political system of male domination" (p.1). And, transgenderism is just another aspect of gender which hurts individuals and societies in various ways. The existence of transgenderism depends on the assumption that there is "an essence of gender, a psychology and pattern of behavior which is situated to persons with particular bodies and identities" (p.1)

Being critical to postmodernism and queer approaches that attribute transgressive potentials to transgender subjectivity, Jeffrey argues that transgenderism transgresses women's rights. It perpetuates the concept of gender identity, which allows for the disappearance of males as the agents of violence against women and women as a subordinate sex caste. According to her, sex caste is "a political system in which women are subordinate to men based on their biology," and thus, they have an inferior status in society throughout their lives (p.5). Transgender people, on the other hand, are impossible to be counted as women and become a member of that caste, since "the physical transformations created by hormones and surgery do not change the biological sex of the person upon whom they are visited"(p.8).

Referring to Janice Raymond's *Transsexual Empire: The Making of The Shemale*, she writes that transgenderism has been historically and politically constructed throughout medical specialism, such as endocrinology, anesthesia, and plastic surgery. Hence, transgender ideology and practices have been invented by male power, and it has become only possible through medical developments in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, along with a misreading of Judith Butler's theory of performativity, she suggests that "transsexual surgery [...] is not playful or flexible and goes way beyond performance, since amputated penises cannot be reattached (p.44)."

According to Jeffreys, people who demand sex change played a crucial role in these developments by being complicit with the medical discourse. She rejects using the terms, male to female or female to male transgenders since she thinks that this terminology creates a wrong impression that sex can change. She calls transgender women as men who transgender and transgender men as women who transgender throughout her book.

Although there are feminists like Julie Bindel and Lorene Gottschalk<sup>15</sup> who supports Jeffrey's assumptions, her stance has been met with criticism by other pioneer radical feminists including Andrea Dworkin, Gloria Steinem, and Catharine MacKinnon express their support for transgender people. Gloria Steinem expresses her stance as the following:

"I believe that transgender people, including those who have transitioned, are living out real, authentic lives. Those lives should be celebrated, not questioned. Their health care decisions should be theirs and theirs alone to make. And what I wrote decades ago does not reflect what we know today as we move away from only the binary boxes of 'masculine' or 'feminine,' and begin to live along the full human continuum of identity and expression." (Steinem 2013)

---

<sup>15</sup> Gottschalk also contributed to Jeffreys's book.

As I tried to explain in the previous section, radical feminism is a mixture of various overlapping and contradictory assumptions. Besides, as Steinem's statement shows us, the radical feminists transformed their opinions and ways of struggle about changing gender issues. The transgender movement has got more power in recent years. Along with the rise of transgender people's voices in feminist politics, debates on transgender people's involvement in feminist or women-only spaces have become one of the most controversial issues that create polarization, violence, and discrimination in the Anglo-Saxon feminist context.

#### 4. TERF DEBATES in TURKEY

When we tell its (transfeminism) history started in America, it is perceived as if there exist no such problems here. We often faced the question, "They may have happened there, but why do we have these concerns? It is perceived as if we imported Transfeminism from America. However, I think the reason for this distance is that after many trans individuals came out here, their experiences have been approached with surprise and shock in the feminist movement and how to talk about transgender experience could not be known.

Aligül Arıkan (Aligül&Gülkan 2012 p.258)

By late 2018, *dunyadanceviri*, a blog including a variety of articles on political history, the right to the city and feminism, started to publish the Turkish translation of some articles on the gender-critical views of feminists such as Megan Murphy, Jane Clare Jones, and Kathleen Stock. The latter are the pioneers of the anti-trans rhetoric in the Anglo-Saxon context. Similar contents were also published on the blog *gaste*, which is composed of historical resources on radical feminist politics in Turkey and broader contexts. Although both platforms appear as the ultimate guide to understand the TERF ideology, they also include a selection on transfeminism and transgender subjectivities. TERF as a category firstly appeared in these internet blogs in the Turkish context, resulting in a clash on social media between some cis feminists and transgender activists over several issues like trans children's right to use puberty blockers, de-transition cases, Self-ID regulation in the world, and transgender people's involvement in the woman only public spaces.

In fall 2018, Öznur Karakaş, who is a self-defined feminist academics, shared her views on de-transition literature on Twitter. Detransition or decession means the cessation of transgender identity or gender dysphoria.

In her August 2019 article titled *Hınç ve Linç Siyaseti* (The Politics of Resentment and Lynching) on the online newspaper, *Duvar*, she expresses:

“All” existing scientific researches, the last one being conducted by the Dutch scientists who are the pioneers in this field, show that the dysphoria heals by itself in a significant majority of children along with the adolescence. (Karakaş 2019)

In the article, she also mentions a piece of news on the harmful effects of puberty blockers published in BBC News. Puberty blockers “work on the brain to stop the eventual release of estrogens or testosterone” – the sex hormones that increase during puberty and delay the “development of sex characteristics such as periods, breasts, or voice-breaking” (Cohen&Barnes 2019). Assuming the issues of de-transition and puberty blockers are considered as “prohibited subject topics” in transgender politics, Karakaş stated that she was assaulted and lynched by transgender activists on social media because she posed critical views on these issues. Furthermore, she claimed that the politics of the transgender movement in Turkey aim to harm radical feminist politics. After several tweets and Facebook statuses, exposing critical views on transgender issues, she was labeled as TERF by the transgender activist community in 2019.

While Karakaş expresses her need to talk on the issues in question - because she thinks that they have controversial implications - she does not leave a room for different opinions by claiming that all scientific inquiries affirm her position that the puberty blockers are harmful and that gender dysphoria can go away with the adolescence. Stating that dysphoria is ephemeral may also mean that gender reassignment surgeries are not legitimate because of the de-transition "fact." Hence, she poses an inevitable anti-transgender stance - whether intentionally or non-intentionally - by effacing and invalidating transgender experience and discourse. She positions politics of transgender movement and its vocabulary as in opposition to the radical feminist tradition in Turkey. I found this polarizing discourse problematic

because it underestimates the legacy of transgender activists who have made valuable contributions to the feminist organizations, and silences radical feminist voices who support transgender movement with an intersectional understanding.

As a response to the critical stance of Karakaş concerning puberty blockers, transgender activists emphasized that the subjective experiences of those who use or who require puberty blockers should be considered. They also shared their painful memories from puberty years and stressed how the advancements of hormone therapy can support the lives of young transgender people having dysphoria (Yükler 2019, Tosunlu 2019, Tetik 2019). During the social media debates between Karakaş and some transgender activists, feminist academician Zeynep Direk made the following unfortunate comment to criticize the aggressive attitudes of transgender activists:

Here, there is an attempt to claim power over the feminist movement. An endeavor to lead the feminist movement and a sense of resentment and an attempt to kill the multivocality of feminism. I think this is not a democratic attitude, and it does not embrace the philosophy. At the same time, it smells like misogyny. The desire to enter a space like men do and to dominate it. I suppose that they feel like they could oppress women. After all, they experienced the privileges of having been treated as men. They rejected masculinity to become women, but they are in peace with this masculinity; the body can change, the real relationship is to provide a relation. It is abided in them.

The screenshot of the above comment was shared on social media. To be honest, I was not interested in the ongoing online TERF debates until I saw this comment. It was very shocking for many people around me to read such a comment written by an academic who made significant contributions to the feminist as well as queer literature. I do not exactly know which attitudes

of transgender activists made Direk do such an analysis, yet I would like to point out two concerns about her thoughts. Direk assumes that being treated like a man is a privilege. I may agree that being a man is a privileged subject position in Turkish society yet being treated like a man is not. Trans women do not have the male privilege because they, in most instances, are not perceived as "proper men" before the transition. Because of their misfit to gendered norms, they face several troubles in their daily lives and while growing up. Being treated as a man is misgendering and a virulent form of violence in transgender women's experience. Secondly, Direk's conflation of aggression with masculinity revitalizes the patriarchal construct that men are aggressive, whereas women are peaceful. Being aggressive does not necessarily make a woman masculine. By relating masculinity with the male body, her thought reproduces conventional gender norms. As Judith Butler expresses in terms of femininity:

The very attribution of femininity to female bodies as if it were a natural or necessary property takes place within a normative framework in which the assignment of femininity to femaleness is one mechanism for the production of gender itself. (Butler 2004 p.10)

Besides, her comment may be considered *ad hominem*, which means targeting the character or behavior instead of challenging the argumentation of the person concerned. In *The Second Sex*, Simone De Beauvoir writes "I used to get annoyed in abstract discussions to hear men tell me: "You think such and such a thing because you are a woman." (Beauvoir 1949 p.25) Is there any reason, other than transphobia or misogyny, behind questioning, problematizing, or pointing out the gender of a person who is a self-declared woman?

In August 2019, LGBTI+ NGOs and groups in Turkey published declarations denouncing the transphobic attitudes of Zeynep Direk and Öznur Karakaş. The general statement in all remarks was that trans women

are women. This statement was also used as a hashtag. It was also stated that questioning the gender of trans women or making explanations and implications that trans women are “not women” is misogyny, transphobia, hate, and discrimination. (KAOS GL 2019). ODTÜ LGBTI+ Solidarity called for an academic boycott and claimed that “the womanhood/femaleness of trans women is not subject to any debates, whether theoretical or practical.” (ODTÜ LGBTI+ 2019) The Association for Struggle Against Sexual Violence wrote that assuming that trans women experience male privilege in their childhood have silencing effects on the troubles that trans children may experience. LGBTI+ Families<sup>16</sup> groups asked the following question: “Do you think that the male privilege which we offered to our trans children who perceive themselves as girls make them happy?” Criticizing the abuse of academic and philosophical knowledge for laying the so-called rational ground for exclusion and hatred, Erktolia reminded the political responsibilities of feminist academics and asked them to apologize. (Erktolia 2019) Pembe Hayat LGBTI+ called for action and announced that they would organize meetings on the issues like “struggle against TERFs” and “transfeminism.” They also problematized the instrumentalization of theories for transphobia and hatred (Pembe Hayat LGBTI+ 2019).

Regarding the statements of LGBTI+ groups, some political implications can be addressed. I believe that every person has the right to express or name his/her experience in the way s/he wants. Yet, stating trans women are women is an erroneous generalization that shadows the particularity of experiences. It erases the experience of passing or transition and the specific form of violence and discrimination coming along with it. A trans woman may also have an intersex experience. A trans woman may also claim that she is not a woman in every part of her life. A trans woman can state that

---

<sup>16</sup> Ankara Rainbow Family Group, Antalya Akdeniz Family Group, Denizli LGBTI+Families Group, İzmir LGBTI+ Family Group and LİSTAG LGBTI+ Families and Friends signed the declaration.

she was a man, and she preferred being women to celebrate the transformation itself. As Judith Butler expresses with referring to Kate Bornstein:

The transsexual desire to become a man or a woman is not to be dismissed as a simple desire to conform to established identity categories. As Kate Bornstein points out, it can be a desire for transformation itself, a pursuit of identity as a transformative exercise, an example of desire itself as a transformative activity. (Butler 2004, p.8)

ODTÜ LGBTI+ group goes further and states that "trans women are women in every phase of their lives." To my view, this statement does not leave an option for trans women other than being women throughout their lives. It perpetuates the gender binary, re-defines the norms of being a trans woman, and ignores the fluid, unstable and contradictory aspects of the individual lived experience.

After the declarations, TERF has been incorporated into the academic and activist vocabularies in Turkey. In the aftermath of the declarations, feminist academics and transgender activists published articles and provided unique perspectives on the ongoing issues. Alev Özkazanç's (2019) review, "Toplumsal Cinsiyet Belası TERF vs. Trans Tartışması Üzerine Düşünceler" ("Gender Trouble: Thoughts on TERF vs. Trans Debate"); and Sibel Yardımcı's (2019) article, "Trans.Candır", offered detailed accounts to clarify theoretical and practical difficulties that draw the contours of the debates. Trans/feminist activists who witnessed the transformation of feminist discourse on transgender inclusion in the last decades shared their perspectives in the gatherings organized by diverse feminist and LGBTI+ groups<sup>17</sup>. It was worth noting that most of the people in the meetings were searching to provide common ground between feminist and transgender

---

<sup>17</sup> I provided the list of the gatherings I attended in the Methodology part. In addition to this list, the gatherings have continued while I was writing the text.

politics in Turkey. One of the most frequently asked questions during the meetings was whether there was TERFs in Turkey or not. Although transphobic and trans-exclusionary views are at stake in contemporary feminist politics in Turkey, it is early to conclude that they form a divergent ideological position.

#### 4.1. Trans/Feminist Struggle in Turkey

Although women's movement in Turkey has a long history, radical feminist currents emerged after 1980s. LGBTI+ politics gradually grown in the last decades and transgender movement appeared as a divergent political movement after the millennial turn. Although transsexuals<sup>18</sup> were involved in feminist spaces since the first women's demonstration in 1987; they faced exclusionary attitudes and divergent views on transgender inclusion aroused in feminist politics, along with the rising visibility of trans men and gender expansive subjects around the 2010s.

Women organized the first public demonstration after the 1980 *coup d'etat* and the military regime in Turkey. In Çankırı, a woman wanted to divorce her husband due to the violence she experienced in the household and applied to the local court. The judge rejected woman's demand and said that "a woman's belly should not be left without a child and her back without a stick," (*Kadının sırtından sopayı, karnından sıpayı eksik etmeyeceksin.*). Feminist lawyers in Eskişehir protested the decision and they called for action against violence against women. About 3000 women came together in Yoğurtçu Park in 1987, May 17. They, for the first time, publicly raised their voices against domestic violence. According to Nükhet Sirman:

---

<sup>18</sup> In 1990s, transgenders were referred to as transvestites and transsexuals, and LGBTI+ movement's name was LBGT movement. While transvestite denotes the people, who do not undergo gender assignment surgery, transsexuals were the ones who completed their gender reassignment period. As the transgender movement developed throughout the years; the distinction was left behind and the concept of trans was started to be used as an umbrella term by the LGBTI+ movement. In a similar vein, along with the growing visibility of intersex subjects, "I" was added to the movement's name. In this text, I used the identity categories, transvestite and transsexual, in which I mentioned the historical periods in which they are in use.

This was not the first time that women in Turkey had taken to the streets, but it certainly was the first time that that had voiced demands specific to their conditions of existence in Turkish society. As stated by one of the speakers at the rally marking the end of the march, women were not marching for their nation, their class, not for their husbands, brothers and sons, but for themselves. (Sirman 1989, p.1)

Filiz Kerestecioğlu - who is a feminist politician currently working as a member of Turkish Parliament - in an interview, mentioned that transsexual women were also in the protest, and they also made speeches. (Şakir 2020) Unfortunately, I could only learn one transsexual's name who participated in the demonstration. Trans activist Demet Demir told me that her name was Sevtap<sup>19</sup>. In the first public action of feminist movement in Turkey, transsexual women were among the others, and were also on the stage, represented. However, transsexual's involvement in feminist spaces did not mean that they were the full members of the feminist movement. In the following passage, trans activist and comedian Esmeray explains her dialogue with a cis feminist woman:

She said to me that "We gave a place to transsexual women on the stage in one of the demonstrations in the 80s, and she spoke. And, here you are. But I think that the trans movement must be in a separate place. [...]"

The issues are very different. For example, trans people are physically powerful. If I am assaulted while walking at the street, I cannot protect myself because I cannot give a reflex of being men, but a trans woman can protect herself." And I said, is that why a transvestite is killed on highway every day? (Aligül&Gülkan 2012, p.270)

---

<sup>19</sup> My conversation with Demet Demir on Messenger. 2019, December 11.

By late 1980s, transsexuals were active in political groups. The *Radical Democratic Green Party* - which was initiated by İbrahim Eren and never officially founded - was populated with gays and transsexuals. The party publicly declared that it was supportive of gay rights. (İnce 2014) Transsexual activist Demet Demir worked for the party where she raised her consciousness on feminism, environmentalism, militarism, homosexual rights and animal rights. In 1989, she also participated in the *Human Rights Association* as the first transvestite delegate. Together with fellow feminists, she contributed to the foundation of the *Sexual Minorities Commission*. She was excluded by the mostly socialist majority in the organization. Once she was discriminated against during a court trial, which she attended in the name of HRA, due to the mismatch of her gender expression and legal gender. According to her, the gay movement in Turkey started in 1987 when 37 lesbians, gay and transgenders launched hunger strike at Gezi Park, Taksim due to police oppression. In the same year with women, gays, as another political category based on identity claims, were on the streets against violence and discrimination in Turkey:

The movement was started by transvestites and transsexuals. The homosexual group of the Radical Democratic Green Party<sup>20</sup> went on hunger strike and the next action was sitting at Taksim Park. Then I was not involved in the movement yet. I had some contacts in 1988 and devoted myself to the struggle for sexual rights. (Çetin 2015)

After the 1980 military coup, transsexuals have become the direct target of police violence along with the military regime. The state authorities forcedly displaced the ones living in İstanbul. Due to the stage ban, most transsexuals working in entertainment businesses faced problems concerning employment, housing, besides social exclusion. In the 80s, the terms transsexual, gay, and transvestites were used interchangeably; the ones who are beyond gender normativity of that time were labeled as homosexuals in the media coverage. The "homosexuals" of that time faced

---

<sup>20</sup> The party was not officially founded.

systemic violence, and they were stigmatized as being HIV+. They were taken under custody and exposed to arbitrary treatment, violence, and discrimination of diverse sorts. (Siyah Pembe Üçgen 2012)

In the 1990s, first LGBTI+ organizations in Turkey were founded. However, in the 1990s, lesbians, and transgenders were not visible in gay/male dominated LGBTT groups. That is why lesbian feminists formed their own women-only communities. They were both a part of LGBTT groups and feminist organizations. In 1994, *Sisters of Venus* (Venüs'ün Kızkardeşleri) in Istanbul and 1998 *Daughters of Sappho* (Sappho'nun Kızları) in Ankara were formed as lesbian feminist groups. Yeşim Başaran states the need for lesbian-feminist separation as such:

When Kaos GL Cultural Center was opened, there were only men, men. When you come, it is like a coffeehouse (kahvehane), all of them are men. We listened to their experiences, and when we talked, we talked about their experiences. That's how we founded Daughters of Sappho. (İnce 2014)

On the other hand, transsexuals were not visible in LGBTT organizations and women-only feminist and lesbian circles. Gay activist İlker Çakmak explains the trans exclusion in LGBTT community of the 90s as the following:

Yes, there were hot debates on the participation of trans people. For the cohort I was also a part of, the existence of transgender people was not a problem because we were socializing with them in our everyday lives. The other cohort was saying: There are enough negative perceptions on homosexuals; we need to fix this. Daily news on "transvestite terror" is at stake; we do not want to be seen on the same page with the trans people who work as sex workers." In the end, the majority won and trans people were excluded. (Ince 2014b)

The main reason for transgender invisibility in the newly founded LGBTTT NGOs was that transsexual sex workers were the direct targets of systemic violence, and they were struggling for their right to live in their ghettos. Besides, they were often represented in mainstream media as terrorists or marginals creating social unrest, and that reinforced the transphobic reactions in the political spaces.

In 1996, a "cleansing operation" was conducted against transvestites and transsexuals living in Ülker Street, a neighborhood in İstanbul city center. Transgender people living in Ülker Street both experienced oppression and assault of neighborhood inhabitants and were forcedly displaced to the different parts of the city due to incessant police raids targeting their living spaces. The residents of Ülker Street collaborated with the state authorities to "clean" their neighborhood from sex workers. 13 transsexuals were killed during operations. The Ülker Sokak incidents were handled in the book *Maskeler Süvarilar Gacılar* (2001) written by feminist academician Pınar Selek. Lawyer and feminist human rights activist Eren Keskin stated in an interview that institutional violence against transgender women was also very intense in the beginning of the 1990s:

There was a torturer police officer known as Hose Süleyman (Hortum Süleyman) [...] Trans women, at that time, started to come to the association (Human Rights Association), because at that time there were no other civil society organizations, the only address for them was İHD (Human Rights Association), and they came to the İHD. [...] We entered the Hose Süleyman's room together with three or four friends. I said to him "Are you human? Are you not ashamed of doing that torture to these people?" I never forget, he sat back and said "Ms. lawyer, you go and take care of your terrorists, are these people human that you are interested in?" I never forget this sentence. He said precisely that. (Yükler 2020)

In 1996, Kadın Kapısı (Woman Door) was founded in Beyoğlu to support sex workers' legal, social, and medical needs. The "sex work" concept was firstly used by this organization. Şevval Kılıç explains their organizing as following:

There were many sex workers, maybe they would not call themselves feminists then, but in terms of mobility and organizing, they were feminist. Because they ideologically struggled against patriarchy.

Kılıç also emphasized that although their organizing was a feminist one, “there were not trans women in the feminist groups *like Sisters of Venüs* and *Daughters of Sappho*.”

*Bursa Rainbow Association* was established in Bursa and Pembe Hayat LGBTI+ Association in Ankara in 2006 were founded first trans organisations. In 2007, Voltrans was founded as the first trans men initiative. The governorates of Ankara, İstanbul and Bursa applied to the court to close the LGBTT NGOs the same year. After its foundation, *Bursa Rainbow Association* announced its event titled the "1<sup>st</sup> Homosexual Gathering." (Birinci Eşcinsel Buluşması). The minister of the Craftsman Association in Bursa, Fevzinur Dünder, made the following comments concerning the gathering:

Bursa is not a meeting place for homosexuals; it's the city of *erens* (saints) and *evliyas* (mahatmas). The city cannot be named by people in this style. We will prevent the demonstration of these people whose identities are indefinite and stirring hatred. On Sunday, the Bursaspor fans who adopt *Bursalı* identity will be ready there. In this big Bursa, we will not let them walk. We will be 5000 people. We will not allow the destruction of the family structure and the association of the city's name with such people. We will not let them walk where the mothers, fathers, and children hang out. Let them walk somewhere else. (Atasay 2006)

In the gathering day, Bursaspor football fans - some of them were the clients of transsexual sex workers (Mutluer 2008) - assaulted to the LGBTT activists. LGBTT activists were forced to get on a bus, and they were sent away by the police forces for safety reasons. *Bursa Rainbow Association* filed a complaint about Dündar for inciting people to hatred and enmity, yet he was acquitted in 2009.

In 2010, the first Trans Pride Week and the first Trans Pride Walk were organized. In the following year, the organization committee released the *Trans Manifesto (İstanbul LGBTI 2011)* and raised voice for several transgender issues, including access to health and social services, education, housing, and employment. The manifesto also called for ending sexism, homophobia and transphobia, and a constitutional reform regarding the Equality Act (which still does not encompass violence and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation). In the 2000s, the systematic destruction and raids by extremist groups against transgender ghettos in Ankara and İstanbul (Eryaman - 2008, Esat - 2006 and Avcılar/Meis - 2012) have continued, and the number of hate crimes has unfortunately increased. Notwithstanding, the transgender struggle has gained more power in recent years.

On October 23, 2010, people came together to protest the pathologizing of trans identities in various cities all over the world. The *Stop Trans Pathologization* campaign was used to remove gender identity disorder from the diagnosis manuals and insurance of the health rights of trans and intersex people. Transgender activists in Turkey became a part of the campaign and organized a public demonstration with the other groups around the world. The five demands in the campaign were as follows: 1) The category of gender identity disorder must be removed from diagnostic manuals of DSM-V and ICD-11. 2) Public health insurance for gender reassignment surgeries, 3) Prevention of psychological therapies that aim to

"normalize" intersex people. 4) Free access to hormone therapy and medical support without compulsory psychiatric follow up 5) Struggle against social and institutional transphobia. According to İlksen Gürsoy, this campaign was inspired by the abortion movement's motto: My body is mine. According to *them*<sup>21</sup>:

"We (transgender people) demanded our rights to change or not change our bodies freely. We demanded to sustain our lives without bureaucratic, political and economic barriers, and any invasive medical interventions." (Tabur&Gürsoy, to be published.)

In the same year, Gabrielle Le Roux, an artist, and activist collaborated with transgender activists in Turkey. Her project, *Proudly Trans in Turkey*, with the support of Amnesty International, drew attention to the human rights violations faced by transgender people in Turkey. She made the portraits of transgender activists living in diverse parts of Turkey and asked them to write their own words on the paintings. Together with the exhibition, she also interviewed the participants, and the videos were broadcasted on *Youtube*. The project, which presents a diversity of transgender experiences, contributed much to transgender visibility and positive representation. In the interviews, transgender activists gave different accounts on their relationship with feminism. While some called themselves feminists without hesitation, a trans man defined himself as pro-feminist while others rejected the feminist label for various reasons. (Trans Onurlu ve Türkiyeli, 2010)

In 2011, some cis feminists during the March 8 demonstration - which is a woman-only public protest - wanted to get transgender people away from the gathering. A transgender woman was excluded from the march because she was perceived as a man by some feminists. Trans men were also put on the spot by others, and they showed their pink birth certificates (pink ones

---

<sup>21</sup> Singular they

are given to woman-assigned people in Turkey) to protest the exclusionary attitudes. Moreover, placards such as "Trans exists (Translar Vardır)" and "Trans is Beautiful (Trans Güzeldir)" were criticized on the grounds that feminism was about women's liberation, whereas transgender people were dreaming a genderless world which was an impediment for feminism.

A year later, on March 8, 2012, a group of transgender activists carried the placard the "Transfeminists are here" during the walk. (Aslı Zengin 2015)

Before and after these incidents in 2011 and 2012, several events in İstanbul were organized with the participation of transgender and cis feminists to discuss the conflicts. As distinct from the trans exclusionary rhetoric in Anglo-Saxon feminism, which often targets transsexual women, trans-exclusionary stances in feminism in Turkey revealed to be at the juncture where trans men and other gender expansive subjects have become visible in feminist spaces. While transgender women had to face the prejudices against sex work, trans men and non-binary transgender people were challenged due to their outlook by some cis feminists. To a great extent, the reason behind trans exclusionary attitudes in feminist circles was that cis feminists had concerns protecting women-only spaces from cis men's invasion:

It was after March 8. The trans men from Ankara were not allowed to participate in the demonstration. [...] They (cis feminists) said, "If we accept you, if we struggle with you, then heterosexual men will come one day, and they will say that they are also women. We will not be able to question them, so March 8 will be a mixed gendered demonstration. (Aligül&Gülkan 2012, p.273)

Although trans-exclusionary stances were based on different grounds, the point of discussion was what kind of policy would be followed if someone who is gender nonconforming or is "perceived as a man" tries to enter a

woman-only space. Beside this anxiety, issues such as prejudice against sex workers, insufficient knowledge in queer subjectivity and experiences, questions about trans men's being feminist, and sex negative attitudes have flourished. Trans activist Ecmem, explains the sex negative reactions as the following:

"Do they (transgenders) never get raped?" "They always talk about sex." They (cis feminists with trans exclusionary views) say. They think that we (transgenders) are perfect, we are fantastic, we are happy with our sexuality, and we have sex, but unfortunately, it is not like that. [...] In the March 8, 2009, Feminist Night Walk, we made a kissing action with the *Rhythms of Resistance* (Direnişin Ritimleri). Some people booed. And then criticisms came. We heard such statements: "Your voice is pushing a lot." "What if there are rainbow flags everywhere", "What if the number of the lesbian flags increase". So, as our numbers grew, we started to feel that we were seen as a threat. (p.272)

There was confusion over how to create a common ground and how to identify the woman or feminist subject. The struggles and subjective experiences of Kurdish and Muslim women who have become visible in feminist politics throughout years and divergent political and theoretical approaches have also added many different dimensions to the discussions on the feminist subject(s). Many feminist groups started to organize their meetings as "women and trans only" as an outcome of the long-lasting debates, specifically around transfeminism. This was a gain for transgender struggle as well as a valuable contribution to an understanding of the diversity and intersectionality in feminist politics, yet it was not enough to eliminate transphobia and trans-exclusionary attitudes.

During the Gezi Uprising in 2013, LGBTI+s gained new public visibility and were recognized as political subjects among the Gezi community.

Around 100.000 people attended the Pride Walk, which was organized right after the resistance. It was the most crowded LGBTI+ demonstration to that date, and it was the last one that could be put into practice without police intervention. In the following years, the LGBTI+ marches and events have been banned by state authorities. The institutionalized violence and oppression over civil society have grown. The country's socio-political climate has dramatically changed as an outcome of the state of emergency rule that was declared immediately after the failed coup attempt on July 15, 2015. In the unsettled political situation, gender-based violence and discrimination have increased in recent years.

According to *Bianet's* 2019 report, 302 women were killed in 324 days between January 1, 2019, and November 20, 2019. 532 women were subjected to violence. Men shot 49 percent of women with firearms. Four of these women were transgender women. (Kepenek 2019) According to TGEU's Trans Murder Monitoring report, since 2008, 3,314 trans people were killed in 74 countries; 561 were sex workers, 43 of whom are from Turkey. However, the real numbers are, of course, much more than what appears in the reports. Because in most countries, information about violence and discrimination experienced by trans and gender diverse people is not systematically produced.

## CONCLUSION

In this research, I provided a historical account of trans exclusionary radical feminist assumptions, focusing on their reflections on feminist and transgender politics in Turkey. Auto-ethnographic methods have enlightened my path during the research process. Upon my experience in feminist and activist circles in Turkey since 2006, I started to participate in the local meetings on trans exclusionary radical feminism ideology, organized by feminist and LGBTI+ groups between November 2019 and March 2020. In these meetings, I made presentations concerning my experiences of being trans and feminist.

These meetings have become an opportunity for me to engage with the community and to follow up on the ongoing debates on trans exclusionary radical feminism ideology. In addition, I brought together the diverse discourses and historical incidents that have served the ground for trans exclusionary radical feminism ideology in a broad context to understand the issues better.

In the first section, I focused on the underlying assumptions of radical feminism, and I argued that radical feminism fed from diverse political and theoretical perspectives. Besides, radical feminist discourses have transformed throughout history, as a response to changing needs and rising voices of women living in various times and places settings. Trans exclusionary views were formed in the 1970s when radical feminists started to organize women-only meetings and adopted an anti-sex and anti-pornography stances. This period in which radical women put forward nature-based and essentialist discourses was categorized as cultural feminism. Besides, political lesbianism became a strategy for feminists of the 1970s to fight against male domination in all layers of social, cultural, and political life, to criticize the objectification of women by the male gaze and to reclaim the characteristics of women which were seen as secondary by the

patriarchal understandings. Transsexual women in this period were seen as a thread to the feminist spaces, and they faced discriminatory attitudes. I outlined the critical encounters between transsexual women and cultural feminists (mostly political lesbians) in the first section.

In the second section, I made a review of the contemporary issues concerning transgender phenomena in feminist perspectives. Trans exclusionary radical feminism has been pointed out as a category mostly in online activist communities after the millennial turn. It has formed an ideological position in diverse contexts in contemporary feminist consciousness. I explained the oppositional stances of cis feminists and transgender activists to the transformations of human rights discourse regarding legal gender identity and made a review of Sheila Jeffrey's book *Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of the Politics of Transgenderism*.

In the third section, I described the atmosphere of ongoing debates on trans exclusionary radical feminism in Turkey. Present-day conflicts between cis feminists and transgender activists have become a departure point for me to look back and investigate the historical transformation of the relationship between feminism and transgender politics in Turkey. I point out both commonalities and divergences in feminist politics in Turkey concerning transgender phenomena. Besides, I outlined the rapid development of the transgender movement in Turkey as a response to growing violence and oppression, targeting transgender lives. Compared to trans-exclusionary stances in Anglo-Saxon contexts, trans-exclusionary feminist assumptions in Turkey emerged at the juncture when trans men and gender expansive subjects became visible in women-only feminist spaces. However, as a reflection of the Anglo-Saxon feminist thought, anti-sex attitudes and controversies concerning the definition of the woman or the feminist subject have served the ground for trans exclusion in feminist spaces. Yet, I would love to stress that it is promising that several feminist and transgender

political groups have been in search of discovering common grounds for overcoming conflicts and providing a space for peaceful co-existence.

## REFERENCES

Alecia Y. Jackson and Lisa A. Mazzei (2008) "Experience "I" in Autoethnography: A Deconstruction." *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 1:3, University of California Press. Berkeley.

Alev Özkazanç (2019) "Toplumsal Cinsiyet Belası TERF vs. Trans Tartışması Üzerine Düşünceler" *VireVerita*  
<https://viraverita.org/yazilar/toplumsal-cinsiyet-belasi-trans-vs-terf-tartismasi-uzerine-dusunceler>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Aligül&Gülkan (2012) "Transfeminizm" *Amargi Feminist Tartışmaları*. Amargi Press. İstanbul

Aykut Atasay (2006) *Yürüyoruz (Documentary)*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhFbKWqFa0>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Aslı Zengin (2015) "Cinayetlere Karşı! Trans/Feminizmler ve Ortak Yaşam Mücadelesi" *5Harfliler*  
<http://www.5harfliler.com/cinayetlere-karsi-transfeminizmler/>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Aslı Zengin (2016) "Mortal Life of Trans/Feminism: Notes on "Gender Killings" *Transgender Studies Quarterly*, 3 (1-2) pp. 266–271.  
<https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-3334487>

bell hooks (date unspecified) "Understanding Patriarchy" *Imagine No Borders*  
<https://imagineborders.org/pdf/zines/UnderstandingPatriarchy.pdf>  
(Access Date: 29 May 2020)

bell hooks (2000) *Feminism for Everybody*. South End Press, Cambridge.

Berkay Tosunlu (2019) "Trans Kadınlar Kadındır, Dişidir!" *Platform 24*  
<http://platform24.org/p24blog/yazi/3901/trans-kadinlar-kadindir--disidir->  
(Access Date: 29 May 2020)

Burçin Tetik (2019) "Terfler Dışarı: Kadınlar Kadınlığını Kanıtlamak Zorunda mı?" *Taz*  
<https://taz.de/Terfler-dar/!5618500/>  
(Access Date: 29 May 2020)

Carolyn Ellis & Arthur P. Bochner (2000) “Autoethnography Personal Narrative, Reflexivity” *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln eds.) Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks, California.

Carolyn Ellis & Arthur P. Bochner (2000) *Evocative Autoethnography: Writing Lives and Telling Stories*. Routledge. New York.

Cinsel Şiddetle Mücadele Derneği (2019) *Cinsel Şiddetle Mücadele Derneği*  
<https://www.facebook.com/cinselsiddetlemucadele/photos/a.1588437744761150/2464928230445426/?type=3>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Cristian Williams (2014) “Fact Checking Janice Raymond: The NCHT Report” *Trans Advocate*  
[https://www.transadvocate.com/fact-checking-janice-raymond-the-nchct-report\\_n\\_14554.htm](https://www.transadvocate.com/fact-checking-janice-raymond-the-nchct-report_n_14554.htm)  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Cristian Williams (2014b) “That time TERFs beat RadFems for protecting a trans woman from their assault” *Trans Advocate*  
[https://www.transadvocate.com/that-time-terfs-beat-radfems-for-protecting-a-trans-woman-from-assault\\_n\\_14382.htm](https://www.transadvocate.com/that-time-terfs-beat-radfems-for-protecting-a-trans-woman-from-assault_n_14382.htm)  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

David M. Hayano (1979) “Auto-Ethnography: Paradigms, Problems, and Prospects” *Human Organization*, 38:1, 99-104, Society for Applied Anthropology.

Deborah Cohen and Hannah Barnes (2019) “Transgender treatment: Puberty blockers study under investigation” *BBC News*  
<https://www.bbc.com/news/health-49036145>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Deniz Kandiyoti (1996) “Introduction” *Gendering the Middle East: Emerging Perspectives* (Deniz Kandiyoti eds.) pp. 1-28. I.B. Tauris, London.

Dünyadan Çeviri (2019) “Feminizm Tartışmaları”  
<https://dunyadanceviri.wordpress.com/terf-tra-tartismasi/>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Elif İnce (2014) “Kaldırımın Altından Gökkuşuğu Çıkıyor” *Bianet Bağımsız İletişim Ağı*  
[http://bianet.org/bianet/print/160544-lgbti-kaldirim-altindan-gokkusagi-cikiyor#\\_ftn2](http://bianet.org/bianet/print/160544-lgbti-kaldirim-altindan-gokkusagi-cikiyor#_ftn2)  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Elif İnce (2014) “93’ün Yasaklı Onur Yürüyüşü” *Bianet Bağımsız İletişim Ağı*

<http://bianet.org/bianet/lgbti/160555-93-un-yasakli-onur-yuruyusu>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Elizabeth Ettore (2017) *Autoethnography as Feminist Method: Sensitizing the feminist "I"*. Routledge, New York.

Emi Koyama (2003) "Transfeminist Manifesto" *A Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the Twenty-First Century* ed. by Rory Dicker and Alison Piepmeie. Northeastern University Press.

Ellen Willis (1984) "Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism" *Social Text, No 9/10 The 60's without Apology*. Duke University Press. pp. 91 – 118

Erktolia (2019) "TERF (Trans Dışlayıcı Radikal Feminizm) tartışmasına dair açıklamamızdır" *Erktolia*  
<https://twitter.com/erktolia/status/1159424387982024704/photo/1>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Evrin Kepenek (2019) "Erkekler 324 Günde 302 Kadını Öldürdü, 532 Kadına Şiddet Uyguladı" *Bianet*  
<http://bianet.org/bianet/toplumsal-cinsiyet/216047-erkekler-324-gunde-302-kadini-oldurdu-532-kadina-siddet-uyguladi>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Gaste (2020) "Terf Tartışmaları Üzerine Derleme" *Gaste*  
<https://gaste.wordpress.com/2018/09/08/trans-dislayici-radikal-feminizm-tartismasi-uzerine-bir-derleme/>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Giselle defares (2018) "The Crusade of Transgender Activist Sylvia Rivera" *Bese*  
<https://www.bese.com/the-crusade-of-transgender-activist-sylvia-rivera/>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020),

Gloria Steinem (2013) "Op-ed Working Together Over Time" *Advocate*  
<https://www.advocate.com/commentary/2013/10/02/op-ed-working-together-over-time>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Harry Benjamin (1966) *The Transsexual Phenomenon*. Julian Press, New York.

Harry Benjamin (2006) "Transsexualism and Transvestism as Psycho-Somatic and Somato-Psychic Syndromes" *Transgender Studies Reader*. (Susan Stryker & Stephen Whittle eds.) pp. 46-52. Routledge, New York.

House of Commons - Women and Equalities Committee (2015) *Transgender Equality: First Report of Session 2015-16, UK Parliament*

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmwomeq/390/390.pdf>  
(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

İlksen Gürsoy & İpek Tabur (2020) “Transfeminizmler Dile Gelince: Her Şeyimiz Tamdı Sanki Bir Bizdik Noksan” *unpublished article*, with the consent of the authors.

İstanbul LGBTI (2011) “Nefret Suçlarına Karşı Kampanya - Basın Açıklaması ve Trans Manifesto” *İstanbul Lgbti*  
<http://www.istanbullgbti.org/lgbtt/popup/haber-yazdir.asp?haber=139&resim=False>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Janice Raymond (1979) *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of The She-Male* New York: Beacon Press.

Jenn Selby (2015) “Germaine Greer 'should not be invited back' to Cambridge University after appearing to deny the existence of transphobia” *Independent*  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/germaine-greer-not-invited-back-to-cambridge-university-after-appearing-to-deny-the-existence-of-10010405.html>  
(Access Date: 20.06.2020)

Johannes Fabian (2001) *Anthropology with an Attitude: Critical Essays*. Stanford University Press, California.

Juan E. Méndez (2013) Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, *United Nations General Assembly*  
[https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session22/A.HRC.22.53\\_English.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/RegularSession/Session22/A.HRC.22.53_English.pdf)  
(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Julia Serano. (2018, 30 Ocak) “Thoughts About Transphobia, TERFs and TUMFs” *Medium*  
<https://medium.com/@juliaserano/thoughts-about-transphobia-terfs-and-tumfs-b77a18c1a225>  
(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Julie Bindel (2004) “Gender Benders, Beware”, *The Guardian*  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/jan/31/gender.weekend7>  
(Access Date: 20.06.2020)

Joan W. Scott 1984 “Gender A Useful Category of Historical Analysis” *The American Historical Review* Vol. 91:5. Oxford University Press. pp. 1053-1075

Judith Butler (2004) *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge

Judith Butler (2011) “Bodies in Alliance and The Politics of The Street” *European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies*

<https://scalar.usc.edu/works/bodies/Judith%20Butler:%20Bodies%20in%20Alliance%20and%20the%20Politics%20of%20the%20Street%20%7c%20eipcp.net.pdf>

Kaos GL (2019) “Kaos GL: “Trans kadınların “kadın olmadığı” yönündeki açıklamalar; kadın düşmanlığı ve transfobidir!” *Kaos GL*

<https://www.kaosgl.org/haber/kaos-gl-trans-kadinlarin-kadin-olmadigi-yonundeki-aciklamalar-kadin-dusmanligi-ve-transfobidir>

(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Katelyn Burns (2019, 5 Eylül) “The Rise of Anti-trans “Radical” Feminists, Explained” *Vox*

<https://www.vox.com/identities/2019/9/5/20840101/terfs-radical-feminists-gender-critical>

(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Laboria Cubonics (2018) “*Xenofeminist Manifesto Politics for Alienation*” *Laboria Cubonics*

[https://laboriacuboniks.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/20150612-xf\\_layout\\_web.pdf](https://laboriacuboniks.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/20150612-xf_layout_web.pdf)

(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Leon Anderson (2006) *Analytic Autoethnography*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35:4, 373-395, Sage Publications. DOI: 10.1177/0891241605280449

Linda Alcoff (1988) “Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crises in Feminist Theory.” *Signs*, 13:3. The University of Chicago Press. pp. 405 - 436

LoveTapesCollective (2019) “L039A Jean O’Leary speech at 1973 Gay Rally with watermark” *Youtube*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USWWUVEFLUU>

(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Marc Stein (2019) *The Stonewall Riots: A Documentary History*. New York: NYU Press p.296.

Mariza Méndez (2013) *Autoethnography as a research method: Advantages, limitations and criticisms*. *Colomb. Appl. Linguist. J.* 15:2 Bogotá, Colombia. p.279-287.

Mark Neuman (1996). Collecting ourselves at the end of the century. In C. Ellis & A. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing*. London: Alta Mira Press.

Mary Daly (1978) *Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press

Meghan Muphy (2017, 21 Eylül) ‘TERF’ isn’t Just a Slur, It’s a Hate Speech. *Feminist Current*  
<https://www.feministcurrent.com/2017/09/21/terf-isnt-slur-hate-speech/>  
(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Neela Ghoshal and Kyle Knight (2016) “Making Legal Recognition for Transgender People a Global Priority” *Human Rights Watch World Report 2016* pp. 21-33.

Nil Mutluer (2008) *Cinsiyet Halleri Türkiye’de Toplumsal Cinsiyetin Kesişim Sınırları*. İstanbul: Varlık Publications.

Norman, K. Denzin (1992a) The Many Faces of Emotionality. In C. Ellis, *Investigating Subjectivity: Research on Lived Experience*. Sage Publications, London. pp. 17-30

Nükhet Sirman (1989) “Feminism in Turkey: A Short History. *New Perspectives on Turkey* 3:1. pp.1-34.

Only Women Press (1981) *Love Your Enemy: The Debate Between Heterosexual Feminism and Political Lesbianism*. Only Women Press. London.

Odtü LGBTİ+ Dayanışması (2019) “TERF (Trans Dışlayıcı Radikal Feminizm) tartışmasına dair açıklamamızdır” *Odtü LGBTİ+ Dayanışması*  
<https://www.facebook.com/odtulgbti/posts/2470092099930441/>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Öznur Karakaş (2019) “Hınç Ve Linç Siyaseti”  
<https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/forum/2019/08/12/hinc-ve-linc-siyaseti/>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Parker J. Palmer (2011), *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of The Human Spirit*, Jossey Bass Publications.

Parliamentary Assembly (2013) “Children’s Right to Physical Integrity” *Parliamentary Assembly*  
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=20057&lang=en>  
(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Parliamentary Assembly (2015) “Discrimination Against Transgender People in Europe” *Parliamentary Assembly*

<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=21736&lang=en>  
(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Parliamentary Assembly (2017) “Promoting the human rights of and eliminating discrimination against intersex people” *Parliamentary Assembly*  
<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=21736&lang=en>  
(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Pembe Hayat LGBTI+ Dayanışma Derneği (2019) “Trans dışlayıcı feminizm ve heteropatriyarka öldürür, transfeminizm yaşatır!” *Pembe Hayat LGBTI+ Dayanışma Derneği*  
<http://www.pembehayat.org/haberler/detay/2214/ldquotrans-dislayici-feminizm-ve-heteropatriyarka-oldurur-transfeminizm-yasatirrdquo>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Petra L. Doan (2010) “The Tyranny of Gendered Spaces – Reflections from Beyond the Gender Dichotomy” *Gender, Place & Culture*. 17:5, 635-654,  
DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2010.503121

Pınar Selek (2001) *Maskeler, Süvariler, Gacılar* İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları

Robert Stoller (2016) “Selection from Biological Substrates of Sexual Behavior” *The Transgender Studies Reader* (Susan Stryker & Stephen Whittle eds.) Routledge. New York.

Robin Morgan (1978) *Going Too Far: The Personal Chronicle of A Feminist*. USA: Vintage Books

Sandy Stone (2006) “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto” *Transgender Studies Reader*. (Susan Stryker & Stephen Whittle eds.) Routledge. New York.

Sheila Jeffreys (2014) *Gender Hurts: A Feminist Analysis of Politics Of Transgenderism* Routledge: New York.

Shon Faye (2018) A Brief History of Gender Recognition Act. *Vice*  
[https://www.vice.com/en\\_uk/article/negm4k/a-brief-history-of-the-gender-recognition-act](https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/negm4k/a-brief-history-of-the-gender-recognition-act) (Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Shulamith Firestone (1970) *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* Bantam Books: New York.

Sibel Yardımcı (2019) Trans.Candır, *e-skop*  
<https://www.e-skop.com/skopbulten/trans-candır/5427>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Sibel Ykler (2019) “Feminist Bir Yntemle Transfobiye Bakmak” *Kaos GL*  
<https://www.kaosgl.org/gokkusagi-forumu-kose-yazisi/feminist-bir-yontemle-transfobiye-bakmak>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Sibel Ykler (2020) “imdi tam da sirası: “Kim, ‘Hakkım ihlal edildi’ diyorsa, o nceliklidir” *Kaos GL*  
<https://www.kaosgl.org/haber/simdi-tam-da-sirasi-kim-hakkim-ihlal-edildi-diyorsa-o-oceliklidir>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Simone De Beauvoir (1972) *The Second Sex* (translated by H. M. Parshley)  
Penguin: New York

Siyah Pembe gen (2012) *80’lerde Lubunya Olmak. İzmir: Pembe gen Derneđi*

Susan Edelman (2002) “Darker Side to the 9/11 Pill” *New York Post*  
<https://nypost.com/2002/10/20/darker-side-to-the-911-wonder-pill/>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

kran akir (2020) “17 Mayıs 1987: Dayađa Karşı Dayanışma Yryş” *atlak Zemin*  
<https://www.catlakzemin.com/17-mayis-1987-dayaga-karsi-dayanisma-yuruyusu/>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Tony E. Adams & Stacy Holman Jones (2008) “Autoethnography is Queer.” *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln & Linda Tuhiwai Smith eds.) pp. 373-390.  
DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483385686.n18>.

UN News (2019) “A major win for transgender rights: UN health agency drops ‘gender identity disorder’, as official diagnosis” *UN News*  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/05/1039531>  
(Access Date: 23.05.2020)

The Conversation (2019) “Shulamith Firestone: why the radical feminist who wanted to abolish pregnancy remains relevant” *The Conversation*  
<https://theconversation.com/shulamith-firestone-why-the-radical-feminist-who-wanted-to-abolish-pregnancy-remains-relevant-115730>  
(Access Date: 13.04 2020)

The Terfs (2013) 1973: “West Coast TERFs” *The TERFs*  
<http://theterfs.com/2013/10/12/1973-west-coast-terfs/>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

The Terfs (2013) “1991: Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival” *The Terfs*  
<http://theterfs.com/2013/10/13/1991-michigan-womyns-music-festival/>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Tim Fitzsimons (2019) “Conservative group hosts anti-transgender panel of feminists 'from the left'” *nbcnews*  
<https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/conservative-group-hosts-anti-transgender-panel-feminists-left-n964246>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Trans Advocate (2015) “The Trans Advocate Interviews with Catharine MacKinnon” *Trans Advocate*  
<https://feministphilosophers.wordpress.com/2015/04/10/the-transadvocate-interviews-catharine-mackinnon/>

Trans Onurlu ve Türkiyeli (2010) *Trans Onurlu ve Türkiyeli*  
<https://transonurluветurkiyeli.tumblr.com>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Tuna Erdem (2011) “Feminizm ve Kuir Düşmanlığı” *Lubunya Dergisi*. Pembe Hayat Derneği.

Vanessa Baird (2001) *The No-Nonsense Guide to Sexual Diversity*. Oxford: New Internationalist Publications.

Viv Smythe. (2018, 28 Kasım) I'm credited with having coined the word 'Terf'. Here's how it happened. *Guardian*.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/nov/29/im-credited-with-having-coined-the-acronym-terf-heres-how-it-happened>  
(Access Date: 13.04 2020)

Yogyakarta Principles (2017) *The Yogyakarta Principles Plus 10*  
[http://yogyakartaprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A5\\_yogyakartaWEB-2.pdf](http://yogyakartaprinciples.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A5_yogyakartaWEB-2.pdf) (Access Date: 23.05.2020)

Zackary Drucker (2018) “Sandy Stone on Living Among Lesbian Separatists as a Trans Woman in the 70s” *Vice*  
[https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/zmd5k5/sandy-stone-biography-transgender-history](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/zmd5k5/sandy-stone-biography-transgender-history)  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)

Zülfikar Çetin (2015) “The Dynamics of the Queer Movement in Turkey”, *Heinrich Böll Stiftung Brussels*  
<https://eu.boell.org/en/2015/09/30/dynamics-queer-movement-turkey>  
(Access Date: 01.06.2020)