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Participatory Video as a Tool for Cultivating Political and Feminist Capabilities of Women in Turkey

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This chapter considers the dialogic and participatory aspect of participatory action research (PAR) in a gender project in one Turkish university, working with undergraduate students from low-income households and conservative backgrounds. The study employs a feminist participatory video-production method and aims to (1) explore how such methods can create a safe, democratic, and deliberative environment to discuss gender issues; (2) develop the political capabilities of students; (3) voice the gender equality issues they want to discuss and bring them to the attention of other people through a public display of their videography; and (4) help them gain the skills, values, and knowledge to create change or initiatives for a gender-just society. Thus, the research is primarily concerned with the expansion of capabilities and functionings and epistemic

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injustice caused by structural inequalities. Our aim is not only to understand how participatory video contributes to participation, deliberation, and improving the capabilities of the youth but also to explore the role of PAR in epistemic functioning.

We conducted the study as a part of a Jean Monnet project[1] entitled 'Women's Development and Europeanisation of Gender Policies (WDEGP)' funded by the European Commission (EU). The module sought to understand the extent to which the EU can generate sustainable changes in the gender policies of its member and non-member states. The module was offered both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and aimed to critically scrutinise gender policies in Turkey from a feminist perspective. We purposefully worked with 'conservative'[2] students from highly patriarchal families to analyse the discourse of Islamic conservatism, which is historically associated with the subordination of women in Turkey. Therefore, the research aimed to challenge the negative identity prejudices assigned to these conservative female students, not least because, in Turkey, feminism and gender equality debates have long been the realm of urban, educated, secular, and mostly middle-class women (Arat 2000). Over time, different feminist groups, including Islamist feminist groups, began to emerge from the 1990s (Arat 1994). Islamist feminists pinpointed Western ideas exerted on Muslim societies and sought to bring the Muslim identity of society into the public domain by highlighting how women wearing a veil are systematically ignored and discriminated against (Diner and Toktas 2010, p. 50). Islamist feminists mostly worked for the empowerment of women, alleviating their poverty and drawing attention to the fact that women in Turkey are heterogenous and the voices of Muslim women should also be heard. However, Islamic feminism is prevalent mostly among well-educated, pious, intellectual women who see the defining of their Muslim identity as a priority and has failed to include less-educated Muslim women from low-income households. Nonetheless, recently, there have been some small-scale more

[1] A Jean Monnet Module is a teaching programme (or course) in the field of European Union studies at a higher education institution.

[2] Here, we use the word conservative women to define those have chosen to lead religious/pious lives and embrace traditional values or behaviours. So, the conservatism in this chapter refers to cultural conservatism rather than a political one.

inclusive grassroots movements, such as 'Women in Mosque', which challenge male domination in mosques by refusing to use separate areas allocated for women, as well as calls for more female-friendly mosques.

To be sure, in the current *Turkish conservative political* conjuncture, gender equality has become less of a priority agenda. Triggered by increasing Islamic conservatism, as of 2019, the Turkish Council of Higher Education cancelled the gender equality programme[3] in universities and removed the notion of gender equality from documents, arguing that gender equality is not compatible with cultural values. Faced with such a social and political challenge, gender equality debates have become less of a concern. Moreover, they started to be conceived as an undesirable topic for public deliberation and discussions or a so-called threat to social and family life. Under this broader context of a highly conservative country and an immature democratic environment, it would not be incorrect to argue that women from conservative and low-income families have less exposure to gender equality debates. Even if they want to be part of such debates, they are seen as having low credibility to speak about gender inequality, and to be lacking in feminist consciousness or aspirations, and unlikely to contribute to feminist debates in Turkey as knowers/subjects and producers of knowledge.

Our project therefore aimed to challenge this discourse by bringing their voices and knowledge to a PAR process and space to understand the ways in which these young women experience and see gender inequality. As a part of the project, students were asked to engage in a participatory, creative, and dialogic process, producing short films about a gender (in) equality issue of interest to them and then displaying these videos publicly to open a deliberative environment for discussion. The intention with the participatory videos was to include the women as researchers, give them the space and opportunity to reflect on their experiences and values on gender equality as producers of knowledge, and create an epistemically inclusive process that could lead to the expansion of their capabilities and functionings (Sen 2009). In doing so, we employed Miranda Fricker's account of epistemic justice (Fricker 2007) and conceptualised

[3] The gender equality programme included courses to be provided in universities to promote equality between women and men and raise awareness on gender issues.

it as a political capability (Cin 2017) drawing on Bohman's (1996) argument about political poverty.

The chapter first sets out the context for feminist PAR and our understanding of capabilities enriched by Fricker (2007) and Bohman (1996). We then outline the research process and identify three key concepts—voice and space, feminist capabilities, and epistemic contribution—that have emerged as key issues in the research. We conclude by noting some limitations that remain.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Feminism

PAR is a political action research committed to hearing the voices of the ignored, exploring their knowledge and experiences, and encouraging genuine collaboration (Reason 1994). The methods employed in PAR can be diverse and range from arts-based methods such as participatory video and photovoice to more experimental research designs, as long as dialogue with and among people remains central (Fals-Borda and Rahman 1991; Gatenby and Humphries 2000). This dialogue includes the interaction and knowledge production during the research process in which participants identify the issues that matter the most, the process of reflection, and the dissemination process in which the participants share their experiences to develop the community and seek change (Reason 1994). Unlike other approaches, PAR challenges the historical and political value system and aims to politicise the research. Therefore, it aligns itself closely with feminist research, as both expose similar concerns with including women or marginalised populations as independent actors (Lykes and Coquillon 2007).

PAR, underpinned by feminist discourse and values, can be critical of social power structures, can create democratic spaces that account for women's voices and explore hidden gender inequalities (Naples 2003), and can contribute to unearthing a feminist epistemology (Fine 2007). Feminist PAR has the potential to, empower women, demystify the research itself (Reinharz 1992), and create advocacy for and critical

consciousness about one's self and the wider social and political context participants are situated in. Most importantly, it provides an alternative tool for women who have not received formal education or who have been excluded from public discourse to express themselves and communicate their ideas, in contrast to mainstream political debate, which rests on malestream rational procedures of knowledge-making (Krumer-Nevo 2009). In this way communities may be mobilised (Gatenby and Humphries 2000). Iris Marion Young calls (2002) this alternative way of expression 'communicative democracy' that attends to the differences in society and gives an opportunity for its less powerful members to voice their personal experiences and challenge the hegemonic notions that undervalue them. Overall, feminist PAR incorporates 'all stages of knowledge production, including identifying the research problem, collecting and analyzing the data and translating the knowledge' (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller 2014, p. 344), with the aim of developing capacity, securing space for advocacy to change policies and practice, and creating collectivity (Chakma 2016).

Driven by feminist principles and PAR, we used participatory video as a tool for conducting feminist research to engage a number of conservative women who claimed to be particularly excluded from feminist debates and discourse in Turkey. The idea of participatory videos was deemed to be a conducive method for two reasons: firstly, it gathers and articulates the stories and experiences of these groups of women traditionally lacking a voice and also offers a platform for creative resistance on how they are seen and represented (Mayer 2000). Secondly, it is a dialectal and dialogic process that has the potential for raising critical consciousness regarding the social issues inherent in the participants' lives, which could, in turn, create social action and improve social wellbeing (White 2003). Our desire to use participatory videos was thus related to exploring and introducing the experiences of women whose standpoint on gender equality is seldom acknowledged, contributes to a counter-narrative, and confronts a one-dimensional depiction of what gender equality is and what feminism should look like. As Young (2002) argues, we believe that participatory video offers alternative ways of thinking, analysing, and representing knowledge and also facilitates empathetic responses and creates horizontal challenges of learning from one another,

whilst emphasising the political reality that comes with it (Moodley 2008). Furthermore, our intention to develop and employ an innovative PAR project aimed to create an alternative methodological and public space to address the epistemic injustices faced by these women, which also aligns well with the normative role of higher education institutions to promote social justice.

However, this role of universities becomes less clear in politically and socially divided countries like Turkey. On the contrary, from a Gramscian perspective, universities in such contexts can be reproducers of dominant ideology—like the education system itself—with no spaces for deliberative democracy. As the value of using PAR as a feminist practice is an important tool for revisioning the roles of universities in such contexts, conducting it at a higher education institution provided an opportunity to those with less power to speak by means of the research. We understand that PAR may not always lead to greater change at a social, political, or institutional level. Even so, the use of PAR can develop aspirations for more democratic and inclusive venues for knowledge-making (Walker et al. 2019). Therefore, the women's participation in this research aimed to disrupt their silence and passivity and foster their epistemic contribution, thereby developing their agency as epistemic contributors. Thus, PAR further aligns with the epistemic justice advocated by Fricker and the political poverty of Bohman (1996), which we categorise under political capability and discuss below.

Conceptualising Epistemic Justice as a Political Capability

Capabilities are the real opportunities each person has to lead a life that one has reason to value, whereas functionings are one's actual achievements (Sen 1999). In a higher education setting, social interactions, safe and collegial spaces, economic resources, or supportive conditions (e.g. peer support) can play an important role in enabling students to realise what they value, including being co-researchers or becoming epistemic contributors. We used participatory video production as a significant

resource to provide an enabling environment in which young women could develop new opportunities and epistemic freedoms to be change-makers in their own lives and those of others. The capabilities literature emphasises the importance of being educated, developing narrative imagination, and affiliation (showing concern for others, protecting the freedom of political speech). Nevertheless, recognition of the epistemic capability has most recently been introduced as a way to understand the 'comprehensive notion of the person as both a receiver and a giver in epistemically hospitable situations of mutual esteem and friendly trust' (Walker et al. 2019, p. 4) and to discuss the corresponding functioning of being an epistemic contributor, drawing on Fricker's account of epistemic (in)justice. Fricker (2007) identifies two forms of injustice: testimonial and hermeneutical. Testimonial injustice is a transactional issue, as a social group may suffer from credibility and lack trustworthiness due to their social identity and may face discrimination in access to goods and services. Testimonial exclusion becomes structural when institutions are set up to exclude people (Anderson 2012). Hermeneutical injustice is a structural issue and occurs when a society fails to interpret or understand the speaker's experiences because one belongs to a social group that has been prejudicially marginalised (Fricker 2007). For instance, women suffering from sexual harassment can be argued to have experienced hermeneutical injustice because they were not taken seriously as narrators of their experiences due to prejudicial epistemic marginalisation.

In this research, we frame epistemic justice as a significant political capability. We have elsewhere conceptualised a political capability in the Turkish context as 'one's freedom to express political ideas and to engage in politics; to protest and to be free from state repression' (Cin 2017, p. 44) and explained how this political capability can be gendered. For instance, women activists are being suppressed brutally because they are seen as not only challenging the dominant political ideology but also the broader gender norms that restrict women's role in the private sphere (ibid). However, it is difficult to exercise the political functioning of being listened to, getting one's voice, demands, values, and ideas heard and taken into consideration and converting them into a capability when the freedoms to exercise it are not in place and one is constantly deprived of being an epistemic contributor to a society. Therefore, Fricker's (2007)

account of epistemic injustice is a significant aspect of the political capabilities of an individual. Not being able to develop this functioning or having an enabling environment to exercise it can be regarded as a 'political poverty'.

We conceptualise both types of Fricker's injustices as a 'political poverty' of citizens to effectively participate in social and political life to make a contribution to their society/community in a way to influence or be part of the public discussions and deliberation. The term political poverty draws on James Bohman's (1996) conceptualisation of 'asymmetry of public capabilities and functioning', in which he argues for three 'deliberative inequalities': *power asymmetries* (which affect access to the public sphere), *communicative inequalities* (which affect the ability to participate and to make effective use of available opportunities to deliberate in the public sphere), and *political poverty* (which makes it less likely that politically impoverished citizens can participate in the public sphere at all). Here, *political poverty* means a failure to participate in public deliberation or joint social activity that could lead to deliberation or to raise their concerns or to receive public attention from others (Bohman 1996). Politically impoverished groups lack political and economic capabilities and adequate general functioning for full participation in social life and therefore cannot take place in public deliberation. As Sen (1999) points out, lack of inclusive public reasoning as the space for discussion and the exclusive social arrangements will prevent people from being fully included in the public arena or prevent them from becoming who they are. So, being an epistemic contributor would require these conversion conditions because they are key to fostering political efficacy for those who are politically marginal and have little political capacity to initiate public deliberation as Bohman (1996) outlines it. Thus, we propose that the conditions which do not allow for a deep discussion of knowledge are often shaped by deliberative and structural inequalities that restrict access to the public sphere. This aligns with what Bohman (1996, p. 323) refers to as 'political freedom' and highlights developing 'capacities that give people … sufficient respect and recognition so as to be able to influence decisions that affect them.' Epistemic justice (both types) can be regarded as a political capability as it requires political equality of access, skills,

resources, and space to advance capacities for public functioning and knowledge production.

Working with a conservative, working-class group of women who suffered from political poverty, we argue that despite accessing higher education, such women form a disadvantaged group as they are entrapped within a limited space, having restricted access to public space and, thus, political space in terms of expressing their opinions or speaking their minds. This entrapment is mainly driven by the low value and credibility attached to them for being woman, wearing headscarves, having conservative life styles and few economic opportunities, and coming from patriarchal families that define the familial sphere as the natural locus of women. This raises the question of which of these women can participate in political life and social life and to what extent. Although civil society in Turkey aspires to expand by widening the political space it occupies, a certain group of women remain invisible, passive agents and onlookers. Also, coercion and the feeling of fear (marginalisation, being ignored) were prevalent among the PAR participants, and many of them told us that they did not feel comfortable and confident in expressing their ideas because they were afraid of being bullied. Developing this particular form of capability (of being included in an epistemic community and being recognised as legitimate knowers) requires addressing the aforementioned three interrelated concepts of Bohman to challenge unequal power in order to ensure intelligibility and voice, envisaging alternative and new possibilities to help participants confidently express their voices in public reasoning, and enabling full and meaningful democratic participation in society. Therefore, through feminist participatory video research, our chapter focuses on these challenges that stood in the way of these women and investigated the structural injustices and difficulties that limited their potential and political capabilities. To sum up, epistemic injustice as a significant political poverty signifies a lack of political functioning and capabilities: citizens must be capable of adequate political functioning to be able to influence the outcomes of public deliberation or see their voices and ideas represented and recognised. Epistemic injustice stands for a lack of political capabilities, and developing this capability is important for one to be able to enjoy public dialogue.

The Participatory Action Research (PAR) Process

The research was conducted with 24 female students studying at a university in Istanbul as part of an award-bearing elective course in a programme on sociology and psychology. The students were all from conservative, working-class families where patriarchal and conservative values were dominant, which is hardly surprising in a patriarchal society like Turkey. Women were recruited among those who have voluntarily signed up for the course. We had decided on participatory video-production as a visual method to create room for creativity and dialogue among the group members and to involve them as producers of knowledge. To this end, students were asked to engage in a participatory, creative, and dialogic process and produce short films about a gender (in)equality issue of their interest and then display these videos publicly to open a deliberative environment for discussion. In total, they produced eight short films on LGBT rights, women's lack of representation and participation in political life, gender inequalities in the labour market, and violence and discrimination against women.

The process included several workshops over the 16-week course (see Table 7.1). The first four weeks (weeks 1–4) consisted of readings of gender literature in Turkey in order to map the field and have a discussion on the most pressing gender inequalities encountered in Turkey. These weeks were quite important to raise the critical awareness of the students on gender inequalities, to understand the ways in which they witness or experience them, and to determine how their experiences resonate or are reflected in the literature. To stimulate students' critical thinking, the readings were accompanied by several controversial case studies, videos, films, and concept maps. The following week (weeks 5–7) consisted of discussion about the aims, research questions, and structure of the project, consensus on the issues to be covered in the videos, and formation of the groups. We asked students to work in groups of three. Once the groups had been formed, they decided on their respective themes. We assigned content-specific readings for them to enrich their knowledge and exposure to the topic. This process was followed by two weeks (weeks

Table 7.1 Compiled by authors drawing on Walker and Loots (2018)

Steps	Timeline	Goals
Knowledge/ deliberation	Weeks 1–4	Identification of the most pressing gender equalities in Turkey and identifying the reflection of their experiences in the literature
Participation/ deliberation	Weeks 5–7	Formation of groups and themes, setting objectives, and determining research questions
Participation/ deliberation	Weeks 8–9	Deciding on the principles of co-production and brainstorming the story line of the videos
Knowledge	Weeks 10–11	Video production: technical training on how to shoot and edit short films
Participation/ knowledge	Weeks 12–14	Co-production of the videos
Knowledge/public deliberation	Week 15	Week-long workshop: displaying videos followed by feedback and discussion around the themes covered
Public deliberation	Week 16	Public display at the university

8–9) to decide upon the principles of co-production and to brainstorm the story line of the videos. Later on students had a two-week workshop (weeks 10–11) on producing videos, involving technical training on how to shoot and edit short films. The last step was the co-production of the videos, which lasted for three weeks (weeks 12–14). Once the videos were ready, a week-long workshop took place in which students showed the videos to the other groups, received feedback, and held a discussion on the themes they had covered (week 15). This constituted a crucial aspect of the research, as students not only reflected on different gender inequalities or issues they faced but also developed an understanding of how these inequalities can be translated into the policy goals at an institutional/local/national level or interventions. Finally, the groups held a public display at the university. This event attracted people from upper management and the administrative staff and worked as a gender-awareness day. However, not every group opted for public display. Some groups' videos were on LGBT rights, and they felt quite reluctant to share them. Finally, we conducted individual interviews with students to

understand the knowledge-making process in the PAR and to what extent the process created a change in their perception, value, and knowledge of gender issues.

The analysis of the videos was a longitudinal and shared method that took place throughout the PAR process. Mostly, the discussions after watching the videos were useful in exploring the themes, the impact of the research process on women, and being critically engaged with the structures of the wider community, family, society, and politics and understanding how these shape gender inequalities and obstruct the development of political agency and capabilities. The production of the videos was accompanied by reflection reports and exit interviews that sought to understand students' journeys throughout the project.

The in-depth analysis of the PAR process and interviews highlighted two important issues: the expansion of capabilities and the epistemic contribution of the women. Our initial concern had been to redress the political poverty of these women, which corresponds to the lack of the following functionings: not being able to express themselves, not being heard, and not being able to be part of public deliberation and make a contribution to public opinion. Furthermore, when we talk about epistemic injustice, the idea of giving voice to the participants—especially to the marginalised or less advantaged who cannot make their voices heard—dominates the debate, with less attention being paid to the content of those voices and understanding what their epistemic contribution is, rather than simply providing and enabling an opportunity for women to speak. Therefore, in this chapter, our major concern was to go beyond the act of giving voice to actually understand what these conservative women valued and what was unique in their understanding of gender issues that the gender literature (which is mostly shaped by secular or less-conservative women, including the authors) in Turkey mostly failed to recognise. Drawing on multiple data sources (videos, workshop discussions, exit interviews, reports), we first focus on the opportunities and enabling conversion factors provided by the PAR process (voice, communicative democracy, and space), then elaborate on the functionings developed through these enabling factors, which we have categorised as feminist capabilities, and then flesh out the episteme (knowledge) produced by the women.

Voice, Communicative Democracy, and Space

Participation in this research was a significant and eye-opening opportunity for many women. As conservative, working-class women, the participants often felt alienated from feminist movements and discussions around them. Although the majority of the participants had strong feelings about the everyday gender inequalities they faced, they had never felt the urge to speak up about these inequalities due to the lack of a safe space and platform that would genuinely value their ideas and participation. The PAR in this research contributed to the public debate by showing that there are different forms of gender inequalities and displaying what these women valued in terms of feminism. In this regard, we wanted to engage with both the epistemological and methodological principles of feminist research, one of which was voice. Our aim was not only to enable voices but to create a democratic and friendly space so that women could express their values, experiences, and knowledge through a methodological and more egalitarian PAR tool and bring these to the public space for discussion and scrutiny. In doing so, it is important not to decontextualise or depoliticise voice and to investigate the influence of social processes that shape their experiences as depoliticisation of voice has the risk of delegitimising their knowledge (Krumer-Nevo 2009). Therefore, the discussions and interviews with these women showed that there were several structures and conversion factors that excluded them from speaking up against the gender issues, being part of feminist discussions, or developing gender awareness and contributing to debates as knowers/subjects and producers of knowledge.

Firstly, the social and cultural capital of the women had a great influence on their upbringing and the development of certain aspirations. Participants mostly came from conservative and patriarchal families in which they were expected to comply with gendered roles. Therefore, they had been brought up within traditional gender codes and did not have an opportunity to question any of the inequalities that restricted them. Nor did they have a social environment where gender issues were discussed or in which people had an awareness and critical consciousness of such matters. Being working-class conservative women also restricted their

mobility and opportunities of what they could do, achieve, and aspire to. As one participant noted, 'In my family, we never discussed gender equality. I came from a very traditional family where I was expected to comply with gender roles. I was not brought up with such critical thinking or gender awareness, it was not part of my family culture'.

Secondly, many women felt excluded from the feminist movements in Turkey as the feminist debates and movement have long been the realm of secular, non-conservative, upper-middle income, highly educated women, and have long overlooked the needs and ignored the voices of the less advantaged, rural, or conservative women. Although this started to change in the early 2000s with Turkey's EU accession process and the rise of political Islam, which has made a symbolic attempt to improve women's rights, the feminist movement driven by Muslim women in Turkey has not always been successful in reaching out to all women. Lastly, young women expressed their concern with the recent crackdown on civil society in Turkey, which drove many youths to become apolitical, passive actors. It led to the closure of feminist NGOs and closed up the space for such movements and activism to be publicly accessible, as illustrated by the following words of another participant: 'I don't feel comfortable expressing my ideas in public due to the hostile and unfriendly environment—we were brought up to be apolitical and keep our thoughts to ourselves'.

These conversion factors were the reasons why these women had never participated in a gender-related project and movement, even if they had wanted to. The PAR offered an alternative, democratic, and safe space to enable deliberation and equal participation. A significant role of higher education is to provide spaces for the generation of critical knowledge and contribute to working towards addressing social problems (Walker 2018). Nevertheless, universities do not always provide venues for creative and life-enhancing knowledge if their practices are captured by neoliberal or ideological forces. Therefore, participatory studies like this one speak to the ethos and democratic mission of the university.

Also, participatory methods enabled communicative democracy by offering the participants an innovative and creative methodological tool to express themselves and initiate a dialogue between different actors in civil society. As Fraser (1989) and Young (2002) note, public deliberation

may not always include those (or women) who have been side-lined, and their voices may not be heard. This is because a rationalist, male, hegemonic polity ignores the differences in articulation of voice and ideas of the public. Therefore, Young (2002) argues for a model of communicative democracy to highlight the importance of using different forms of communications or methodologies for disadvantaged groups to express themselves, rather than formal political debate, which is based on assumptions about rational procedures. Students remarked that the participatory videos encouraged them to express themselves as they were the ones who decided on the topic, what to record, what to convey as a message, so they had an opportunity to think creatively, interact with other people, and think critically, which includes them in knowledge exchange (Kotzee 2017). One woman remarked: 'Creating our own videos and the process of co-production was a critical engagement with our reflection, experiences, and the literature. If I was asked to write an essay or stand in front of a crowd to deliver a speech on this topic, I don't think I would feel comfortable and confident, or express my ideas clearly. It is not only the videos, the research process itself was very intriguing and empowering.'

Arguably, the PAR process offered a transformative space and communicative democracy to these women to engage in knowledge-making and be part of the feminist discussions. All these were important conversion factors contributing to epistemic justice and the corresponding political capability.

Formation of Feminist Capabilities

Our data was drawn from the videos, recorded discussions, reflection report, and exit interviews. We identified several functionings that students had acquired during this five-month research process and that contributed to epistemic justice. These functionings (and the capabilities we extrapolated) played a significant role in redressing testimonial justice by recognising the voices of these women and inserting their voices into gender equality claims and hermeneutical injustice, as they were able to talk about their experiences and make their stories and values known.

The research process itself and the public display have not only led to the expansion of political capabilities but also helped a number of further functionings to flourish, which we refer to as 'feminist capabilities'. There are two reasons why we use the term feminist capabilities. Firstly, these women were engaged in a feminist PAR through which they talked about different gender issues. This process increased their critical consciousness about gender inequalities and also provided an enriching, friendly, and democratic environment for them to develop three important functionings for gender inequality awareness: developing confidence and voice, being able to discuss and develop good reasoning, and building collective resilience. Secondly, they were able to exercise these three functionings in a democratic space within the university, which led to their contribution to feminist knowledge. These functionings, and the conducive environment to exercise them, enabled the women to make a significant contribution to gender equality debates; develop critical consciousness, social, and collective action resilience; and support mechanisms to improve gender equality in society at large—all of which are key to feminist research and movements.

The participants developed the confidence and voice functioning through participation, presenting their videos, and by being included in public deliberation of discussion and having their experiences and views listened to. This was a unique opportunity that disrupted testimonial injustice by making their voices and experiences visible. One explained: 'I have been able to speak up freely in an open public environment for the first time without feeling any resentment. I gained self-confidence to express myself and felt very excited to see that there were so many people in the room listening to my thoughts and views. This friendly discussion was what I needed'. For some participants, this functioning of voice was important to deconstruct the image of conservative women and to challenge the discourse that 'pathologises' their experiences as women and the identity prejudice which silences them: 'I think this participatory video was a very valuable opportunity to develop my confidence and speak against the prevalent idea that we, as conservative and veiled women, do not have an understanding of gender equality or we are submissive and obedient. This is not the case at all. I am probably exposed to gender inequality more than any other women—because both men and 'other'

women are oppressive to me … I had an opportunity to share these experiences through this project'.

The functioning of developing good/critical reasoning and being able to participate in discussion is significant for people to act and speak as political agents. One may only develop critical reasoning and debate once one has developed confidence and one is positioned in a safe deliberative environment to be able to speak up. PAR can go further by providing an alternative, common, and plural space where women could be politically involved, but the research process itself can be of great value as women engage with each other and with stakeholders, in dialogue, as equals. For some women, the co-production process provided a space to debate what they collectively value: 'As I had a chance to work with the colleagues in my group, we realised that we valued the same issues, such as being recognised. In the planning phase of our video, our in-group discussions revealed that we all felt that our opinions and perspectives were not valued'. The co-production phase, the intellectual inputs and discussions, fertile relationships, and working together (not only with each other but with us, as co-researchers) were a catalyst for enabling intersecting capabilities and functionings of reasoning and discussion.

The functioning of building up collective resilience involved developing solidarity with other women and being motivated to take collective action to increase gender equality awareness among women like themselves and encouraging them to be part of the feminist debates in Turkey. This shows that the interaction and participation interacted with the women's confidence, knowledge, and values of what they ought to be and do (Lopez-Fogues and Cin 2018) and helped the women develop motivations that led them to act beyond their self-interest by speaking up about the challenges they faced in a wider public setting (the screening of short movies at the university).

The development of these three functionings is core, we think, to any feminist research and movement agenda in two ways. Firstly, feminist research aims to empower women through making their experiences visible and providing an avenue for 'subaltern' voices to speak up about their experiences and claim their space. Secondly, it aims to build up collective strength and political capabilities for social change in the long run.

From Voice to Knowledge: Unravelling the Epistemic Contribution of the Women

The importance of voice in PAR is that it is a pathway to the production of knowledge. The research has shown that these women were producers of knowledge and gained credibility as knowers, made their experiences visible and intelligible to others, and developed collective agency and action to promote gender equality at the wider university level. So far, the research on feminist PAR (Krumer-Nevo 2009) and epistemic justice (Walker et al. 2019) underlines the importance of how lived experience transforms into knowledge, how voice manifests itself in creating knowledge, what capabilities participatory research fosters, and how they create an opportunity for epistemic justice. These studies successfully document the importance of such methods in redressing epistemic injustice through challenging the structural inequalities. However, our research further asks the question of 'what is their [participants'] epistemic (knowledge) contribution?' Whilst we acknowledge the unique opportunity given by participatory methods to remedy structural inequalities, and enable conversion factors such as democratic space and creative communicative tools that lead to the expansion of capabilities, we are also interested in unearthing the episteme produced by these women.

When we co-analysed the videos with the women and looked at their reflections, the public display discussion and exit interviews, two important epistemic contributions were highlighted: the ethics of care and everyday resilience. The women's videos undoubtedly provided an entry into how these groups of students experienced and understood gender inequality in multiple and different ways. Some videos were created to reflect their everyday experience and resilience to gender inequalities. The everyday resilience in the videos and public discussions focused on navigating tension and prejudices and how they learnt from and adapted positively to life's unpleasant events. In this particular context, everyday resilience came up as a process of withstanding daily gender-related struggles.

In addition, these students' videos also challenged long-standing discourses about women. The women often stressed how their everyday

mechanisms of surviving gender inequalities were often ignored, and they highlighted that as 'conservative and veiled women', they are not only exposed to structural violence by men but also from other women. They underscored that these issues are rarely spoken of in debates on gender equality. What is more, this gender discrimination does not always stem from hegemonic structures that devalue women but is also caused by the relationships with other women who tend to exploit their labour and undervalue their position and capabilities. Some of the issues they highlighted were being undervalued by male professors; not being able to secure intern opportunities for not being 'presentable' due to their headscarves; not being seen as 'expert or professional' enough by others because of their particular Islamic dress code; and being young women, which gives them little credibility in terms of being viewed as professionals. In the literature there is qualitative evidence that there is sometimes discrimination against women in the labour market directed specifically against women wearing headscarves (Cindoğlu 2011). In response to this, the young women have developed unique everyday resilience and mechanisms to avoid such structural violence, such as 'thinking of giving up their headscarves permanently' or 'making job applications only to workplaces which attract consumers or customers from conservative segments of the society'. Some even consider not entering the job market at all: 'I am a final-year psychology student and have been looking for intern opportunities or part time jobs as a teacher in private schools or as a social worker since last year. However, I am being turned down for not being "presentable". At first, I did not understand what that meant—I thought they were expecting me to wear suits, blazers, and so on. Later on, I found out that they were referring to my headscarf. One of the private school chains told me that even though their students come from conservative families, parents were not in favour of seeing teachers with headscarves. I need to think carefully about my future and wellbeing, and there are times when I want to give up my headscarf'. Similarly, another student explained: 'I have had great difficulty in getting recognition at the university. My professors do not respect me; they see me as a young and oppressed woman who cannot be good at psychology counselling. This is quite detrimental to my educational wellbeing. I started to ignore such attitudes and even worked harder to prove myself! I did it! I will graduate

with distinction and have secured an internship at a very good public hospital'.

The second epistemic contribution that emerged from these interviews concerns ethics of care. Feminist philosophers working on care theory have raised the question of whether care is a feminine task assigned to the private sphere or gender-neutral, dislocated from women (Gilligan 1982; Hollway 2006; Raghuram 2019). In response to this question, Laugier (2015) argues that ethics of care debates are not necessarily positioned within the justice literature, which is seen as universal and malestream, and care is seen as a concept that resonates with self-sacrifice and femininity. In this research, it became clear that these women strongly valued care as a human strength which should be taught to and expected of men as well as women and challenged some dominating feminist discourses that care reinforces traditional stereotypes of what it is to be a good woman:

'There is one thing I don't like about the feminist argument; they blame women for doing care work and therefore causing a huge gender gap in employment or having low participation in the labour market. However, they don't understand that caring for someone and choosing to do such care work is a fundamental need of not only those who are being cared for, but also for us, who want to show care. It is something I value and I am ready to have a career break at some point in my life. This does not mean that I am oppressed or conforming to gender roles because I don't see care as a feminine issue, but as a human need, which men should also be taught'. Like this quote, several women have opposed positioning care in gendered bodies and challenge the argument that because they undertake such responsibilities, come from conservative families or wear a headscarf, this does not mean that they are being 'oppressed' in order to align themselves with feminine roles but see care as an inherent human value, acknowledging that the current structural and economic system exploits and creates injustices that favour men.

Overall, the PAR process revealed that these women made two important epistemic contributions to feminist literature in Turkey that have so far not been stressed in debates and discussions. It is our understanding and ethical responsibility as feminist researchers to ensure that these epistemes are legitimate knowledge that could inform the gender equality

debates as we discuss different feminisms and the needs of women who are diverse and heterogenous.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter explained how participatory video research contributed to enhancing political capabilities and reducing political poverty of conservative women and helped them to contribute to epistemic justice by making their diverse and multiple experiences of gender inequality heard and discussed in a friendly and democratic environment of co-production and screening. Findings from the analysis illustrate that providing an epistemic, friendly, and democratic space allows the expansion of political and feminist capabilities of women. On the other hand, we would also like to draw attention to a couple of limitations related to the context and space so as not to romanticise the participatory methods. Although we have argued that participatory research proved to be critical in the formation of an alternative counter public space as a response to anti-egalitarian spaces that favour dominant voices, two groups were sceptical about displaying their LGBT video publicly as they were hesitant of the reactions they would receive in a patriarchal society. Their display was only limited to the other groups in a closed environment, and they refused to go public. Despite this limitation, the discussions and interviews reflect that the co-production of the videos was important in equalising structural power and having the freedom to say what they think. The second issue was related to controlled and monitored public and political spaces. Students noted that they felt slightly more comfortable in displaying these videos to other groups in a closed environment. Due to the recent shrinkage of space in civil society in Turkey, many women self-censored some of the issues that they had wanted to raise in public discussion forums, although they found the discussion very fruitful and enjoyed the experience of speaking up for the first time in front of the public. This situation is directly related to the current political climate in Turkey and limits imposed on freedom of expression.

To sum up, we can argue that higher education institutions have a public good role to provide equal and participatory spaces. However, we

see that this is not always possible and arts-based participatory methods like video-production can be one way to enable epistemological inclusiveness, democratic space, and advancing people's political capabilities. We achieved some of this in this project. The participants expanded their political capabilities by challenging the notion of political poverty through engaging in a research process that accounted for their voices, provided a safe space to engage in deliberations to influence the agenda, and some of the debates strengthened their agency and feminist consciousness. We argue that women have gained significant functionings that are crucial for their enactment of the political capabilities of expression, thereby contributing to epistemic democracy/justice, despite the limitations outlined above.

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