



FAKULTA
HUMANITNÍCH STUDIÍ
Univerzita Karlova

Advisor Report for Kadriye Melis Kaymak Aypulat's Master's Thesis in Gender Studies at Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.

Melis has submitted a thesis entitled, "Feminist Identity Development of Feminist Women living in Turkey, Ankara," as part of the requirements for completing a Master's degree in Gender Studies at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. The thesis explores how feminist identity develops based on the Downings and Roush model, paying particular attention to what light the Turkish situation can shed on its proposal. The author finds that in some ways the ten participants of the study model the proposed process of identity formation and in some ways their experiences are quite different. From early on, most of the participants could see gender differences within family gatherings even before they had an understanding of what feminism might be. This seems to run counter to Downings and Roush first (and some aspects of the second) stage as does the fact that most participants were not actively involved in feminist causes (the 5th stage). However, Melis finds that part of the second stage, particularly, the anger was present among the participants. The third and fourth stages seem to be quite present although they present in slightly different manners than the model.

Some interesting insights from Melis' study include: the role of higher education, class, background, and heterosexuality as contributing factors to the ease in which women are able to hold a feminist identity. Whereas being from a lower class or less financially stable, a member of an ethnic and/or sexual minority group within Turkey and lacking education seemed to make feminist identity less probable or at the very least harder. However, Melis also concludes that more research needs to be done in this area as the participants were relatively privileged and saw themselves as such. Another interesting finding of Melis' is the ways in which gender segregation happens in Turkey and how it specifically affects feminist identity development, even from an early age when the participants, unaware of feminism, still were able to recognize the unequal treatment of boys and girls, in addition to how difficult it is to maintain a feminist identity when faced with backlash towards feminism by an increasingly more conservative government and the stereotyping of feminists by the media.

I would like to commend Melis on her ability to take feedback to heart. We went over several drafts of the literature review together and many of the changes I suggested were implemented. The same can be said about the analysis section. From the final draft to this submitted one, the analysis section has been completely restructured and rewritten.

In addition, throughout the whole process, Melis worked quite independently and quickly. I am impressed that Melis was able to complete the research and writing in such a

relatively short span of time. I do think more time could have helped, particularly in the analysis section, but as her five-year limit of study approaches, I think she did quite well.

That being said, I did find some ways in which the thesis could be improved. There are several spelling errors, of which atheist in the chart on page 11 is the most obvious. I also think that the discussion of just how much Melis sees the Downings and Roush model lining up with the Turkish participants could have been clearer. I often got lost in the additional amounts of information that was also supplied when the model was discussed. That being said, I would like to have Melis comment on two questions at the defense. First, what would Melis do differently if she could? Second, how do ten participants limit the scope of Melis's conclusions?

Nonetheless, I commend Melis on this project and recommend the thesis for defense. I suggest a preliminary grade of excellent (1) dependent, of course, on the defense.

In Prague, 11 January 2024.

Ivy Helman, Ph.D.