

# INTERGENERATIONAL CHANGES IN GENDER EQUALITY AND GENDERED ELECTORAL CHOICES: X, Y, AND Z GENERATIONS IN TÜRKİYE

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**Abstract:** Gender is an interdisciplinary topic essential for understanding society and its development. Social expectations, cultural norms, economic conditions, education, technology, and media influence societal gender roles across generations. Gender roles are learned through socialization and reflect the responsibilities assigned by society. The transformation of gender roles is a significant area of sociological and cultural research. Generations inherit the values and experiences of those before them while creating new identities that match current social, economic, and technological contexts. A person's generation can be a key factor in predicting voting choices. Voting decisions are linked to various gender labels and shape gendered electoral patterns from one generation to another. This study analyzes how intergenerational gender roles and gender equality change within society using a quantitative approach from the perspectives of X, Y, and Z generations. The gendered electoral patterns among these generations are examined by connecting intergenerational shifts in gender roles and gender equality in Türkiye. The aim of studying perceptions across X, Y, and Z generations is to identify differences and similarities in the intergenerational gender equality changes and how these relate to gendered voting choices in Türkiye. The survey involves 500 participants selected through simple random sampling from the X, Y, and Z generations. Data will be gathered using the "Perceptions of Gender Scale" and "The Perceptions of Women in Politics Scale." This study concluded that individuals from X, Y, and Z generations should be empowered in education and knowledge to evolve their gender perspectives and eliminate gendered electoral choices.

**Keyword:** intergenerational changes, gendered voting choices, gender equality, gender roles

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## Introduction

Gender includes the socially built traits, roles, and behaviors assigned to individuals based on their biological sex (Yiğit & Ali, 2024). It is essential to recognize that gender is a social framework; it can change over time and be influenced by culture and family. Humans create it, and it can be altered. Gender and attitudes are affected by socialization within specific contexts, as attitudes are cultural and a part of the larger system of values. Gender roles are learned through socialization and reflect society's predefined responsibilities assigned to individuals. Social norms evolve in response to changing circumstances, influencing people's lives across different periods. Mannheim (1952) described society as a combination of continuity and change. People may hold different perceptions, priorities, expectations, and behaviors related to sex. As a component of social structure, gender varies between societies and evolves. The ongoing shift in attitudes toward gender roles remains an important area of research (Eagly et al., 2020; Haines et al., 2016; Yiğit & Ali, 2024).

The development of gender roles is a significant focus within sociological and cultural studies. Social change and young people's attempts to make "fresh contact" with culture give rise to a new

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generation, which frequently struggles to adopt values and attitudes that align with the times. Generations inherit values and experiences of those before them while creating a new identity that reflects current social, economic, and technological realities. However, shaping social roles by gender can lead to gender-based inequality and discrimination (Darmstadt et al., 2019; Heise et al., 2019; United Nations, 2015). Research into gender-related social processes has highlighted resource and opportunity distribution disparities between men and women in Western and Eastern European countries (Hanson & Wells-Dang, 2006). The concept of generations is common in public discussion (Woodman, 2018). However, the widespread use of generational labels often results in generationalism, a form of unfair stereotyping (White, 2013). A generational framework can help identify various intra-generational perspectives in response to shared challenges and opportunities (Woodman, 2018).

Gender-role stereotypes influence people's choices in several ways (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Manolov, Ivanov, & Chavdarova, 2023). Notably, gender stereotypes impact individuals' electoral decisions. These voting patterns vary with age, gender, political sophistication, group consciousness, and gender ideology (Holli & Wass, 2010; Marien, Schouteden, and Wauters, 2017; Erzeel & Caluwaerts, 2015; Dolan, 1994; Helimäki, Sipinen, Söderlund, and von Schoultz, 2024). From early childhood, individuals are exposed to gender stereotypes and ideas about the presumed characteristics of men and women (Bussey & Bandura, 1999), which can significantly influence voters' preferences for a candidate's gender (Dolan, 2014; Sanbonmatsu, 2002). Numerous studies have examined gendered stereotypes in the context of elections and how women are represented in politics. Making electoral decisions is a complicated process, and there are other potential factors affecting voters' choices, such as other demographic backgrounds (e.g., racial identities, ethnic identities, and geographic areas of residency), the voters' previous electoral decisions, and the topics that voters consider essential (Chang, 2023). Women are often portrayed as untrustworthy or overly emotional in politics, which harms the reputations of female public figures and discourages women from participating in politics (Di Meco & Wilfore, 2021; Alcantara & Valentim, 2023). Similarly, Bardall (2023) refers to it as a form of violence against women in politics, aiming to exclude women from public spaces and opportunities for societal power. The dominance of men in political life is also attributed to persistent gender stereotypes, which suggest that men are considered more competent in politics (Huddy & Terkildsen, 1993; Eagly et al., 2004; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Helimäki, Sipinen, Söderlund & Von Schoultz, 2024). These stereotypes imply that men are less obligated to navigate work and home responsibilities (Campbell & Childs, 2017; McKay, 2011; Helimäki, Sipinen, Söderlund & Von Schoultz, 2024). Different voter groups may have varying reasons for using gender in their voting decisions, which can stem from a sense of group identity or partiality within a group. Still, it might also simply result from the unconscious use of gender as a shortcut when faced with an overload of political information and many candidates to choose from (Goodyear-Grant & Croskill, 2011). The Finnish National Election Study (FNES) data conducted in 2011 and 2019 indicate that women are, on average, more likely to vote for a female candidate than male voters. Traditionally, both genders have tended to vote for male candidates, partly due to the overrepresentation of men among the nominated candidates (McElroy & Marsh, 2010; Giger, Holli, Lefkofridi, and Wass, 2014; Helimäki, Sipinen, Söderlund & Von Schoultz, 2024). Research has demonstrated that voters who believe women should be better represented in the office are more inclined to vote for female candidates (Holli & Wass, 2010). Di Meco (2020) emphasizes the dissemination of deceptive or inaccurate information and images targeting women political leaders, journalists, and female public

figures, following narratives rooted in misogyny and stereotypical gender roles. (Alcantara & Valentim, 2023).

Women's representation in politics in Türkiye is largely dominated by men, underscoring the need for structural reforms to increase female participation (Dalaman, 2024). Despite notable legislative advancements, such as early voting rights and legal changes, genuine gender equality remains out of reach (Dalaman, 2024). Research by Matland and Tezcür offers experimental evidence that a politician's gender influences how Turkish university students perceive them, indicating that voters in Türkiye often judge candidates based on their sex. This research shows that female candidates may be viewed as outsiders and less connected to the traditional power structures that have long governed Turkish politics (Matland & Tezcür, 2011). Similarly, in Türkiye, Çağlar's study on women's political participation suggests that increased participation does not necessarily lead to empowerment. Women may still be seen as tokens, limited to symbolic roles, and excluded from key positions and important issues (Çağlar, 2025). Çağlar emphasizes that having more women in politics does not automatically result in greater empowerment in decision-making.

A person's generation might be a crucial determinant of voting choices. Voting choices are linked to different gender labels, affecting gendered electoral decisions across generations. Considering previous research findings on evolving social dynamics, gender roles, and attitudes, it is posited that voters' preferences regarding a candidate's gender significantly influence their voting decisions, which may vary across generations.

Research on intergenerational relationships in Türkiye has a relatively short history. Studies have indicated that intergenerational conflict in Türkiye often arises from cultural and attitudinal differences between generations (Özdemir, 2013; Özdemir-Ocaklı, 2017; Ocaklı and Yalçın, 2021). According to Cangöz's research (2008), it is revealed that there is a dispute among younger and older generations regarding the attitudes, goals, and values. A relatable number of research also examines how shifting attitudes among generations contribute to intergenerational changes in Türkiye (Adıbelli, Türkoğlu, and Kılıç, 2013; Göçer and Ceyhan, 2012; Kulakçı, 2010; Özdemir, 2009; Ünalın, Soyuer, and Elmalı, 2012; Vefikuluçay, 2008; Yılmaz and Özkan, 2010; Ocaklı and Yalçın, 2021).

As previously mentioned, intergenerational relationship studies in Türkiye have recently emerged. However, they are limited both in numbers and, more importantly, in the scope of the research. These studies only reflect young people's perceptions towards older individuals and not vice versa. Thus, the results cannot be generalized to the whole population. There are many researches in Turkish literature examining intergenerational changes in gender and electoral choices, however there are very limited studies available discussing the connection between the perceptions of gender and gendered electoral choice from the point of different generations in Türkiye. This research examines the perceptions of Generations X, Y, and Z to highlight the differences and similarities in how gender equality has evolved across generations and its link to gendered voting choices in Türkiye. This research explores the perceptions of Generations X, Y, and Z towards gender, gender roles in society, and women in politics and the correlation between the perceptions of Generations X, Y, and Z towards gender,

gender roles in society, and women in politics and their gendered voting choices. The research offers an initial analysis and relevant answers to the questions:

- What are the intergenerational differences or similarities regarding gender roles, attitudes, and perceptions of Generations X, Y, and Z in Türkiye?
- What are the intergenerational perceptions of women in politics in Türkiye?
- Are there any gendered electoral changes regarding Generations X, Y, and Z in Türkiye?
- Is there a connection between the intergenerational gender roles and attitudes of Generations X, Y, and Z in Türkiye and the gendered electoral changes?

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Research Group**

The research involved 500 participants from Generations X, Y, and Z in Türkiye (Table 1), as it is a pan-country survey. These participants were volunteers, creating a diverse group. Generations X, Y, and Z each represent different perspectives, values, and behaviors shaped by their unique backgrounds. The differences among these generations go beyond birth years, reflecting shared experiences and cultural influences that have shaped their lives. From the traditional values of Generation X to the digital connectivity of Generation Z, each group has a distinct identity that impacts their decisions and goals. In this study, Generation X includes those born between 1965 and 1980; Generation Y includes those born between 1981 and 1999; and Generation Z consists of those born after 2000. The survey involves 500 participants selected through simple random sampling from the X, Y, and Z generations from various cities and regions of Türkiye. This sample size is relatively “good” for the factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974). The respondents' participation was voluntary, and they were informed about the process and progress of the research. The participants were informed of the consent process, anonymity, voluntary participation, and confidentiality.

### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

*Table 1: The demographic information of participants*

| <b>Variables</b>   | <b>Categories</b>        | <b>N</b>   | <b>%</b>    |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------|
| <b>Generations</b> | X                        | <b>150</b> | <b>30</b>   |
|                    | Y                        | <b>201</b> | <b>40.2</b> |
|                    | Z                        | <b>149</b> | <b>29.8</b> |
| <b>Education</b>   | Primary School Education | <b>9</b>   | <b>1.8</b>  |
|                    | High School Education    | <b>54</b>  | <b>10.8</b> |
|                    | Associate Degree         | <b>18</b>  | <b>3.6</b>  |
|                    | Bachelor's Degree        | <b>337</b> | <b>67.4</b> |
|                    | Master's Degree          | <b>67</b>  | <b>13.4</b> |
|                    | Doctoral Degree          | <b>15</b>  | <b>3</b>    |

The online questionnaire (see Appendix 1) gathered information from 500 participants selected using simple random sampling of the X, Y, and Z generations, aiming to comprehend the intergenerational (X, Y, and Z) changes: **Gender roles, attitudes, and equality;**

- Intergenerational perceptions of women in politics;
- Gendered electoral choices;
- The connection between intergenerational gender-related perceptions and electoral choices.

The online questionnaire was combined into the Perception of Gender Scale and the Perceptions of Women in Politics. The first part of the questionnaire is the “Perception of Gender Scale,” designed by Hasan Hüseyin Altınova and Veli Duyan (Altınova & Uyan, 2013). The Perception of Gender Scale is a five-point Likert scale with 25 items that measure individuals' perceptions of gender. The study found that the measurement tool has a single dimension, and the alpha reliability coefficients were acceptable. The reliability analysis results for the Gender Perception Scale were calculated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which was 0.872. The Perception of Gender Scale is considered valid and reliable. The second part of the questionnaire, titled “The Perceptions of Women in Politics,” is 10-item Likert scale gauges people's perceptions of women in politics. The online questionnaire combined a five-point Likert scale (25 items) and a three-point Likert scale (10 items). It was used for the quantitative analysis. The questionnaire was written in Turkish, which is suitable for the participants' native language. It was created using Google Forms and distributed via social media, including the informed consent process and voluntary participation confidentiality.

As a result of the research, the data analysis obtained from 500 participants was evaluated using appropriate statistical methods in IBM SPSS Statistics 22 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, IL). The normality related to the total scores of the scales used was assessed based on the skewness and kurtosis values. When examining the skewness and kurtosis values associated with the total scores of the scales, it was determined that they fell between +2 and -2, indicating a normal distribution. Therefore, parametric tests were employed to compare the total scores of the scales. For the scales used in the research, the Independent Sample T Test was utilized for two-group comparisons of the total scores, showing a normal distribution. At the same time, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied for comparisons involving more than two groups. When significant differences were observed in comparisons of more than two groups, the Scheffe test was used when the variances were homogeneous. Tamhane's T2 test was employed when the variances were not homogeneous. In the data analysis, descriptive categorical data are presented as numbers (n) and percentages (%), while quantitative data are displayed as mean, standard deviation values, skewness, kurtosis, minimum, and maximum values. It was determined that there was no missing data. Additionally, Pearson Correlation

analysis was employed to examine whether a relationship existed between quantitative variables. A significance level of  $P < 0.05$  was used as the basis.

*Table 2: Reliability analysis results for the perceptions of women in politics questionnaire*

| <b>Items</b> | <b>Average</b> | <b>Standard deflection</b> | <b>The mean scale when an item is removed</b> | <b>Scale variance when an item is removed</b> | <b>Item Total Correlation</b> | <b>Cronbach's Alpha when an item is removed</b> |
|--------------|----------------|----------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>M1</b>    | 2.26           | 0.92                       | 22.66   | 10.87   | 0.269                         | 0.731   |
| <b>M2</b>    | 1.41           | 0.72                       | 23.50   | 12.05   | 0.159                         | 0.738   |
| <b>M3</b>    | 2.38           | 0.85                       | 22.53   | 10.26   | 0.436                         | 0.693   |
| <b>M4</b>    | 2.45           | 0.67                       | 22.46   | 11.86   | 0.223                         | 0.726   |
| <b>M5</b>    | 2.84           | 0.46                       | 22.07   | 11.26   | 0.598                         | 0.681   |
| <b>M6</b>    | 2.84           | 0.47                       | 22.08   | 11.17   | 0.614                         | 0.679   |
| <b>M7</b>    | 2.77           | 0.58                       | 22.15   | 10.74   | 0.597                         | 0.672   |
| <b>M8</b>    | 2.61           | 0.74                       | 22.30   | 10.71   | 0.430                         | 0.694   |
| <b>M9</b>    | 2.81           | 0.52                       | 22.10   | 12.14   | 0.258                         | 0.719   |
| <b>M10</b>   | 2.54           | 0.70                       | 22.38   | 10.49   | 0.525                         | 0.678   |

**Cronbach Alpha (CA): 0.723**

The table above presents the item mean, standard deviation, scale mean when the item is removed, item total correlation, scale variance when the item is removed, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values when the item is removed. When the reliability coefficients (CA) in the table above are examined;

If  $0.00 \leq \alpha < 0.40$ , the scale is not reliable,

If  $0.40 \leq \alpha < 0.60$ , the scale has low reliability,

If  $0.60 \leq \alpha < 0.80$ , the scale is quite reliable,

If  $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$ , the scale is considered to be a highly reliable scale,

The general reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of the questions regarding the role and significance of women in political life is 0.723, indicating that the questions are pretty reliable. However, since the item-total correlation of the M2 question is less than 0.25, removing this item increases the reliability to 0.738. Therefore, it was decided to remove M2. The scale is considered reliable when the Cronbach Alpha value is 0.70 or higher (Büyüköztürk, 2006).

In the table below (Table 3), the factor structure was determined using the principal component analysis method and examined using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The Bartlett test and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test results were considered for the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The KMO value was found to be 0.796,  $p < 0.001$ , and this value is relatively “good” for the factor analysis of the sample size (Kaiser, 1974).

Table 3: Exploratory factor analysis results for the perceptions of women in politics questionnaire

| Items | Factor Loadings | Eigenvalue | Explained variance |
|-------|-----------------|------------|--------------------|
| M1    | 0.815           | 3.428      | 38.092             |
| M3    | 0.807           |            |                    |
| M4    | 0.802           |            |                    |
| M5    | 0.674           |            |                    |
| M6    | 0.556           |            |                    |
| M7    | 0.533           |            |                    |
| M8    | 0.427           |            |                    |
| M9    | 0.357           |            |                    |
| M10   | 0.337           |            |                    |

Another critical indicator in confirmatory factor analysis is the significance of regression coefficients. The standardized regression weights related to questions about the place and importance of women in political life are presented in the table above. Regression values indicate the ability of observed variables to predict latent variables, known as factor loadings. The factor loadings are significant since the “p” values for each binary relationship in the table above are less than 0.001. The significance of the factor loadings shows that the items are appropriately loaded on the factors. Furthermore, as shown in the table, most regression coefficients for all items are high. Additionally, when the  $R^2$  values were examined, the explanatory power of each item was also displayed in the table.

Table 4: Regression coefficient for the perceptions of women in politics questionnaire

| Item | Regression Coefficient | $R^2$ | P      |
|------|------------------------|-------|--------|
| M1   | 0.268                  | 0.319 | <0.001 |
| M3   | 0.419                  | 0.057 | <0.001 |
| M4   | 0.379                  | 0.183 | <0.001 |
| M5   | 0.829                  | 0.563 | <0.001 |
| M6   | 0.821                  | 0.674 | <0.001 |
| M7   | 0.751                  | 0.687 | <0.001 |

|     |       |       |        |
|-----|-------|-------|--------|
| M8  | 0.429 | 0.144 | <0.001 |
| M9  | 0.239 | 0.176 | <0.001 |
| M10 | 0.565 | 0.072 | <0.001 |

Table 5: Examining descriptive statistics regarding the gender perception scale and the perceptions of women in politics.

| Scales                               | Average $\pm$ SS   | Min | Max | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-----|-----|----------|----------|
| The gender perceptions               | 101.91 $\pm$ 15.73 | 49  | 125 | -0.689   | -0.190   |
| The perceptions of women in politics | 23.5 $\pm$ 3.47    | 9   | 27  | -1.545   | -1.705   |

The table above presents descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, skewness, and kurtosis) for the perceptions of the gender scale and questions regarding the importance of women in political life. When examining the skewness and kurtosis values, it can be said that the scores show a normal distribution. For this reason, parametric methods were chosen for score comparisons.

## Results

### 1. The intergenerational differences or similarities regarding gender roles, attitudes, and perceptions of X, Y, and Z generations in Türkiye

Table 7: A comparison of the questions regarding perceptions of gender across generations

| Scale                           | Categories   | n   | Average $\pm$ SS   | F Value | p     |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-----|--------------------|---------|-------|
| Perceptions of the Gender Scale | X Generation | 150 | 102.76 $\pm$ 15.59 | 0.408   | 0.665 |
|                                 | Y Generation | 201 | 101.23 $\pm$ 16.55 |         |       |
|                                 | Z Generation | 149 | 101.96 $\pm$ 14.75 |         |       |

In the table above, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted to compare responses regarding the gender roles, attitudes, and perceptions of X, Y, and Z generations. No significant difference was found between generations concerning the perceptions of the gender scale ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 8: Comparison of questions regarding statements regarding the perceptions of gender across generations

| Scale                                  | Categories                     | n   | Average $\bar{x}$ SS | F Value | p            | Fark                     |
|--|--------------------------------|-----|----------------------|---------|--------------|--------------------------|
| <b>The Perceptions of Gender Scale</b> | Primary School <sup>1</sup>    | 9   | 110.66 $\pm$ 3.5     | 9.029   | <b>0.001</b> | <b>4-5</b><br><b>4-6</b> |
|  | High School <sup>2</sup>       | 54  | 99.14 $\pm$ 17.83    |         |              |                          |
|  | Associate Degree <sup>3</sup>  | 18  | 98.94 $\pm$ 8.50     |         |              |                          |
|  | Bachelor's Degree <sup>4</sup> | 337 | 104.48 $\pm$ 14.79   |         |              |                          |
|  | Master's Degree <sup>5</sup>   | 67  | 93.35 $\pm$ 15.56    |         |              |                          |
|  | Doctoral Degree <sup>6</sup>   | 15  | 90.53 $\pm$ 19.68    |         |              |                          |

In the table above, a One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to compare responses regarding the statements about the perceptions of gender across generations. A significant difference was found in the mean scores based on educational background ( $p < 0.001$ ). Specifically, the mean gender perception score for those with a bachelor's degree (mean = 104.48) was higher than that for those with a master's degree (mean = 93.35) and a doctorate (mean = 90.53). In other words, individuals with a bachelor's degree exhibited a higher gender perception than those with a master's and doctorate degrees.

## 2. The intergenerational perceptions of women in politics in Türkiye

Table 9: Analyzing descriptive statistics regarding the perceptions of women in politics

| Items   | No (%)     | Neutral (%) | Yes (%)    |
|---|------------|-------------|------------|
| (M1) Have you ever voted for a female candidate in any election (local, general polls, etc.)?                                       | 164 (32.8) | 43 (8.6)    | 293 (58.6) |
| (M2) Would your choice of party change if the candidate were a woman?   | 362 (72.4) | 69 (13.8)   | 69 (13.8)  |
| (M3) Would you favor a party specifically because it has specific policies for women?   | 122 (24.4) | 64 (12.8)   | 314 (62.8) |
| (M4) Is the party you voted for, or plan to vote for, working to increase women's participation in politics?                        | 52 (10.4)  | 170 (34)    | 278 (55.6) |
| (M5) Would you support a woman entering politics?   | 22 (4.4)   | 34 (6.8)    | 444 (88.8) |
| (M6) I would like to see more women in political decision-making roles, local governments, and the Turkish Grand National Assembly. | 23 (4.6)   | 36 (7.2)    | 441 (88.2) |
| (M7) Ensuring equality between men and women in politics  | 40 (8)     | 37 (7.4)    | 423        |

|       |   |           |            |            |
|-------|---|-----------|------------|------------|
|       | is essential for democracy.   |           |            | (84.6)     |
| (M8)  | The traditional patriarchal perspective is a major obstacle to women's participation in political life.           | 79 (15.8) | 37 (7.4)   | 384 (76.8) |
| (M9)  | Family support is a key factor in women's involvement in politics.  | 31 (6.2)  | 32 (6.4)   | 437 (87.4) |
| (M10) | If women have a greater influence in the political arena, the country's issues can be addressed more effectively. | 60 (12)   | 111 (22.2) | 329 (65.8) |

The table above presents descriptive statistics regarding the role and significance of women in political life. To the question “Have you ever voted for a female candidate in any election (local, general polls, etc.)?” 32.8% of the participants answered “No,” 8.6% “I have no idea,” and 58.6% “Yes.” To the question “Would your choice of party change if the candidate were a woman?” 72.4% answered “No,” 13.8% “I have no idea,” and 13.8% “Yes.” To the question, “Would you favor a party specifically because it has specific policies for women?” 24.4% of the participants answered “No,” 12.8% responded “I have no idea,” and 62.8% answered “Yes.” To the question “Is the party you voted for, or plan to vote for, working to increase women's political participation?” 10.4% of the participants answered “No”, 34% “I have no idea,” and 55.6% “Yes.” To the question “Would you support a woman entering politics?” 4.4% of the participants answered “No”, 6.8% stated “I have no idea”, and 88.8% responded “Yes”. Regarding the question “I would like to see more women in political decision-making roles, local governments, and the Turkish Grand National Assembly,” 4.6% of the participants answered “No,” 7.2% said “I have no idea,” and 88.2% said “Yes.” To the question “Ensuring equality between men and women in politics is essential for democracy,” 8% of the participants answered “No”, 7.4% said “I have no idea”, and 84.6% responded “Yes”. To the question “The traditional patriarchal perspective is a major obstacle to women's participation in political life,” 15.8% of participants answered “No,” 7.4% responded “I have no idea,” and 76.8% answered “Yes.” To the question “Family support is a key factor in women's involvement in politics,” 6.2% of participants answered “No,” 6.4% responded “I have no idea,” and 87.4% answered “Yes.” To the question “If women have a greater influence in the political arena, the country's issues can be addressed more effectively,” 12% of participants answered “No”, 22.2% responded “I have no idea”, and 65.8% answered “Yes”.

Table 10: A comparison of the questions regarding perceptions of women in politics, generations

| Scale                                       | Categories   | n   | Average $\bar{x}$ SS | F Value | p     |
|---|--------------|-----|----------------------|---------|-------|
| <b>The Perceptions of Women in Politics</b> | X Generation | 150 | 23.86 $\bar{x}$ 3.52 | 1.278   | 0.280 |
|   | Y Generation | 201 | 23.27 $\bar{x}$ 3.82 |         |       |
|   | Z Generation | 149 | 23.42 $\bar{x}$ 2.85 |         |       |

In the table above, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted to compare responses regarding the perceptions of women in politics of Generations X, Y, and Z across different generations. No significant difference was found between generations concerning the perceptions of women in politics ( $p > 0.05$ ).

### 3. The gendered electoral changes regarding Generations X, Y, and Z in Türkiye

Table 11: Comparison of questions regarding women in politics across generations

| Scale                                       | Categories                     | n   | Average $\bar{x}$ SS | F Value | p            | Difference   |
|---|--------------------------------|-----|----------------------|---------|--------------|--|
| <b>The Perceptions of Women in Politics</b> | Primary School <sup>1</sup>    | 9   | 25.66 $\mp$ 1        | 3.677   | <b>0.003</b> | <b>6-5</b><br><b>6-4</b><br><b>6-3</b><br><b>6-2</b><br><b>6-1</b> |
|   | High School <sup>2</sup>       | 54  | 22.57 $\mp$ 3.65     |         |              |  |
|   | Associate Degree <sup>3</sup>  | 18  | 23.61 $\mp$ 1.64     |         |              |  |
|   | Bachelor's Degree <sup>4</sup> | 337 | 23.76 $\mp$ 3.51     |         |              |  |
|   | Master's Degree <sup>5</sup>   | 67  | 23.13 $\mp$ 3.22     |         |              |  |
|   | Doctoral Degree <sup>6</sup>   | 15  | 21 $\mp$ 3.72        |         |              |  |

In the table above, a One-Way ANOVA test was conducted to compare responses regarding the statements about the role and importance of women in political life across generations. Furthermore, a significant difference was found among the participants' educational background in their responses to the questions about the role and importance of women in political life ( $p < 0.05$ ). Consequently, those with a doctorate scored lower on the role and importance of women in political life compared to those with a master's degree and a bachelor's degree.

#### 4. The connection between the intergenerational gender roles and attitudes of X, Y, and Z generations in Türkiye and the gendered electoral changes

Table 12: Examining the relationship between gender perception and women in politics

| Variables                | Gender Perception | Women in Politics |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Gender Perception</b> | r                 | 0.599**           |
|                          | p                 | 0.001             |
| <b>Women in Politics</b> | r                 | 0.599**           |
|                          | p                 | 0.001             |

In the table above, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between gender perception and the place and importance of women in political life. A significant, positive, and moderate relationship was found between gender perception and the importance of women in political life ( $r = 0.599$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Accordingly, it can be concluded that as gender perception increases, thoughts about the place and importance of women in political life will also increase.

## Discussion

In the context of Türkiye, this research examined the gender roles, attitudes, and equality among X, Y, and Z generations; intergenerational perceptions of women in politics; gendered electoral choices; and the connection between intergenerational gender-related perceptions and electoral choices. The research revealed no differences in average scores between X, Y, and Z generations regarding the gender role scales, and only the educational background of the participants impacts the given responses concerning gender perceptions in society and their voting choices regarding the role of women in politics. This research revealed a connection between intergenerational changes in gender perceptions of participants and their electoral decisions.

Similarly, the study by Chang (2023) titled "The Gendered Electoral Choices: Insights from an Experiment on Gender Stereotypes in Political Issues, Parties, and Voters' Preferences for Candidates" was conducted with 1,238 individuals. The results indicate no significant difference in the views of Gen X and Gen Z regarding specific gender roles. Gen X and Gen Z are inclined towards traditional gender role beliefs, suggesting that, despite time and cultural and social norms changes, certain gender role beliefs may remain relatively stable across generations. The study by Chang (2023) aligns with the results of this study, which found no significant differences between X, Y, and Z generations in their perceptions of gender in society.

However, multiple studies support the idea that there are differences in average scores between X, Y, and Z generations regarding the gender role scales. The survey by Öztürk, Akman, Bektaş, and Yıldırım (2020), which examined the attitudes of three generations of women toward gender roles, found that the grandparents had more egalitarian attitudes than the students and mothers. The average scores of the mothers were the lowest. Likewise, a study by Beyazgul and Koruk (2021), which compared the gender attitudes of three generations, has found that women in the Y generation have a more egalitarian attitude towards gender roles than women in the X generation and Baby Boomers. Moreover, aligned with one of the significant results of this study, their study has observed that the gender roles attitude score increased as women's education and employment level increased. Yigit and Ali (2024) have studied the generational differences in attitudes towards gender roles, and they found that attitudes towards gender roles differ across generations. Generation X had more traditional attitudes and gender roles than other generations. Generation X had the least favorable attitudes towards violence against women. Similarly, a study by Manolov et al. (2023) reported that participants from the younger generation held significantly more egalitarian attitudes than those from the older generation. In studies by Eagly et al. (2020) and Moya and Moya-Garófano (2021), which examined changes in gender stereotypes over time, it was reported that there have been changes in gender role behaviors, and egalitarian attitudes towards women have increased. Moreover, Oláh et al. (2018) and Sweeting et al. (2014) suggest that attitudes are becoming more egalitarian, and traditionalism significantly increases with age for both genders.

Our study concluded that as gender perception evolves among X, Y, and Z generations, so do thoughts regarding the importance of women in political life. The educational backgrounds of each generation play a significant role in the gendered electoral choices. Similarly, some studies confirm that gender stereotypes are utilized as cognitive shortcuts that individuals adopt when making electoral decisions. Risman's (2018) study highlights the different ways of doing gender, including

masculinity and gender politics, which are now circulating and in tension with each other as they take different positions on new generational challenges.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This research sheds light on the perceptions of X, Y, and Z generations, exploring the differences and similarities in intergenerational changes regarding gender equality in society and their connection to gendered voting choices in Türkiye. In this study;

1. No significant differences were found between X, Y, and Z generations in their perceptions of gender in society and their voting choices regarding the role of women in politics.
2. Educational backgrounds make a significant difference when compared to the given responses concerning gender perceptions in society and their voting choices regarding the role of women in politics:
  - 2.1. Individuals with a bachelor's degree from X, Y, and Z generations exhibited a higher gender perception than those with a master's degree or a doctorate.
  - 2.2. Individuals with a doctorate from X, Y, and Z generations scored lower on women's role and importance in political life than those with a master's and bachelor's degrees.
3. As the gender perception of individuals from X, Y, and Z generations evolves, so do thoughts about women's role and importance in political life.

This study concluded that individuals from X, Y, and Z generations should be empowered in education and knowledge to evolve their gender perspectives and eliminate gendered electoral choices.

The findings are based on a small sample and cannot be generalized, which limits the research. It is recommended that these findings be discussed further, and future studies should use larger sample groups while considering volunteer bias, as the results may not reflect the entire population.

Future iterations could compare findings with other countries or political systems to contextualize Türkiye's trajectory more broadly by giving relatable answers to the question: How do the evolving gender perceptions across generations impact political engagement and representation of women in Türkiye's policymaking spaces?

### **Disclosure statement**

The author reported no potential conflict of interest.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1 – The Online Questionnaire

| Perceptions of the Gender Scale | Items  | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| 1                               | Marriage does not hinder a woman's ability to work.  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 2                               | A woman should only work if her family is struggling financially.                            |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 3                               | Working mothers are also able to give their kids enough time.                                |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 4                               | After becoming mothers, women shouldn't continue working.                                    |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 5                               | Women in politics can also be successful.  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 6                               | After marriage, women shouldn't work.  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 7                               | Working life does not lead women to neglect their household chores.                          |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 8                               | A working woman has a greater appreciation for life.   |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 9                               | Men should consistently protect women.   |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 10                              | A woman shouldn't work unless her husband gives her permission to do so.                     |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 11                              | Women are capable of being managers.   |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 12                              | A working woman should contribute her earnings to her husband.                               |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 13                              | A woman who works is a better mother to her kids.  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 14                              | Men should also participate in housework, including tasks like laundry and dishes.           |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 14                              | A woman without a husband is like a house lacking an owner.                                  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 16                              | Men should support the family's income.  |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 17                              | It is not appropriate for women to start their own markets, cafes, or real estate companies. |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 18                              | The primary responsibility of women is to perform household chores.                          |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 19                              | It is improper for a woman to earn more than her husband.                                    |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 20                              | The man must be the leader of the household.   |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 21                              | Leadership in society should generally be held by men.                                       |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 22                              | The same freedoms that boys enjoy should be extended to girls.                               |                |       |         |          |                   |
| 23                              | A woman needs to be able to confront her   |                |       |         |          |                   |

|   |  |            |           |                |
|---|--|------------|-----------|----------------|
|   | husband when needed in order to stand up for herself.  |            |           |                |
| <b>24</b>                                   | The woman is likely younger than her husband.  |            |           |                |
| <b>25</b>                                   | Men should take the lead in making important family decisions.   |            |           |                |
| <b>Perceptions of the Women in Politics</b> |  | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Neutral</b> |
| <b>1</b>                                    | Have you ever voted for a female candidate in any election (local, general polls, etc.)?                                       |            |           |                |
| <b>2</b>                                    | Would your choice of party change if the candidate were a woman?   |            |           |                |
| <b>3</b>                                    | Would you favor a party specifically because it has specific policies for women?   |            |           |                |
| <b>4</b>                                    | Is the party you voted for, or plan to vote for, working to increase the participation of women in politics?                   |            |           |                |
| <b>5</b>                                    | Would you be in favor of a woman going into politics?  |            |           |                |
| <b>6</b>                                    | I would like to see more women in political decision-making roles, local governments, and the Turkish Grand National Assembly. |            |           |                |
| <b>7</b>                                    | Ensuring equality between men and women in politics is essential for democracy.  |            |           |                |
| <b>8</b>                                    | The traditional patriarchal perspective is a major obstacle to women's participation in political life.                        |            |           |                |
| <b>9</b>                                    | Family support is a key factor in women's involvement in politics.   |            |           |                |
| <b>10</b>                                   | If women have a greater influence in the political arena, the country's issues can be addressed more effectively.              |            |           |                |