

Reflexivity in Social Sciences in Türkiye: Methodological Reflections and Applications¹

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ABSTRACT

Reflexivity, especially in recent years, has become one of the most discussed concepts in qualitative research methodology. Although reflexivity can be a challenging endeavor, its significance makes it indispensable for qualitative research methodology. In this article, as authors, we aimed to comprehensively address the concept of reflexivity by examining articles accessed through DergiPark in the field of social sciences in Türkiye. In this regard, we discussed the methodological contributions of reflexivity, its connection with subjectivity and positionality, its role in facilitating the sharing of experiences, and its importance in maintaining research ethics. With this article, we seek to offer new perspectives on the subject through the example of Türkiye, contribute to scientific discourse, and support the advancement of the academic discussion environment.

Keywords: *Reflexivity, Qualitative research, Subjectivity, Positionality.*

Türkiye'deki Sosyal Bilimlerde Düşünümsellik: Metodolojik Yansımalar ve Uygulamalar

ÖZET

Düşünümsellik, özellikle son yıllarda, nitel araştırma metodolojisinde en çok tartışılan kavramlardan birisidir. Düşünümsellik, zorlu bir çaba olmasına karşın, sahip olduğu önem, onu nitel araştırma metodolojisi için vazgeçilmez kılmaktadır. Bu makalede yazarlar olarak, Türkiye'deki

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sosyal bilimler alanında DergiPark üzerinden erişilen makaleleri inceleyerek, düşünümSELLİK kavramını kapsamlı bir şekilde ele almayı amaçladık. Bu hedef doğrultusunda, düşünümSELLİĞİN metodolojik katkılarını, öznellik ve konumsallık ile olan bağlantısını, deneyim paylaşımı kolaylaştırmadaki rolünü ve araştırma etiğini sürdürmedeki önemini tartıştık. Bu makale ile Türkiye örneği üzerinden konuya dair yeni bakış açıları sunmayı, bilimsel söyleme katkıda bulunmayı ve akademik tartışma ortamının gelişimine katkı sağlamayı hedefliyoruz.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *DüşünümSELLİK, Nitel araştırma, Öznellik, Konumsallık.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Reflexivity is fundamentally about self-examination, introspection, and questioning. While this concept can be traced back to philosophical texts from ancient times, it has gained significance in the discipline of methodology, particularly in qualitative research. The practice of reflexivity, also known as self-reflexivity, has emerged as an indispensable aspect of qualitative research.

Despite the absence of a universally agreed-upon definition of reflexivity due to its complex and multifaceted nature, the definitions found in the literature exhibit certain commonalities. For instance, Giddens defined reflexivity as "self-awareness" (1976, p. 17). Years later, Finlay (2002a, p. 209) offered a similar definition of reflexivity, underscoring the importance of explicit self-awareness in qualitative research. Cunliffe (2003) expanded the concept by drawing attention to the role of social context and power dynamics, defining reflexivity as a deeper engagement with the research context, in which the researcher continuously reflects on their role and the dynamics at play. Finally, from a more thorough lens, Mason (2002, p. 5) emphasizes critical thinking in her definition: "thinking critically about what you are doing and why, confronting and often challenging your own assumptions, and recognizing the extent to which your thoughts, actions and decisions shape how you research and what you see." As these definitions suggest, reflexivity requires researchers (subject) to critically reflect on, question, and acknowledge their subjectivity, positionality, and the social context of their research, while actively engaging in the research process.

Reflexivity underscores the impact of existing knowledge on our thought processes and the way research findings are formulated. While it is recognized as a crucial element in producing high-quality qualitative research, it is often difficult and sometimes overlooked (Mason, 2002, p. 5; Probst, 2015). Reflexivity allows for deep discussions on the researcher's experiences, subjectivity, research context, and power dynamics, contributing to a broader discourse on ontology, epistemology, and knowledge colonization (Berger, 2015, p. 220). By addressing methodological dilemmas, reflexivity enhances transparency, rigor, and understanding of both the research process and phenomena (Day, 2012).

When examining the literature on reflexivity, the first observation was the absence of agreement on the terminology used to define this concept. In English literature, "reflexivity" and "self-reflexivity" are often used interchangeably and share overlapping meanings. However, we consider reflexivity to be a broader concept that encompasses self-reflexivity. Methodologically, we interpret reflexivity as the researcher's critical evaluation and assessment of not only themselves but also all aspects of their research. Therefore, for the remainder of this article, we will use the term "reflexivity", rather than "self-reflexivity."

For the past two years, we have been intensively studying the concept of reflexivity in the context of my doctoral thesis under the supervision of this article's co-author. I was deeply influenced by the comprehensive nature of the concept during the courses I took in my doctoral program and realized that merely thinking about it could significantly contribute to the development of my researcher identity. Furthermore, upon reviewing the literature, we observed that studies directly addressing reflexivity are notably limited in Türkiye. As far as we have observed, this article is the first comprehensive attempt to systematically examine reflexivity in the context of Türkiye's social sciences literature across various disciplines. Therefore, it was mutually agreed that writing a thesis on reflexivity would be a valuable endeavor and that the research would necessitate extensive fieldwork, as this abstract concept is believed to manifest uniquely among different researchers. To capture these diverse experiences, we prepared a guideline, and I conducted in-depth interviews with thirty-one researchers across the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, and women's studies in Türkiye. However, this article includes an evaluation of the literature in Türkiye, rather than an analysis of the data from the fieldwork conducted within the scope of the thesis.

As researchers who prioritize the concept of reflexivity and aspire to delve deeper into this subject, we aimed in this article to understand the importance of the concept within the context of methodological reflexivity. The literature on qualitative research in Türkiye is expanding, with an increasing emphasis on personal experiences that engage with key concepts such as reflexivity, subjectivity, positionality, and the researcher-researched relationship (Akarsu, 2029, p. 2-3). Given this context, we believe understanding researchers' experiences of reflexivity is particularly important in a country like Türkiye, which has a multitude of cultural, political, and identity differences, along with various complexities and conflicts arising from these differences. Thus, this article explores the significance of reflexivity, contextualizing it with applications from the social science literature in Türkiye, while aiming to clarify what reflexivity signifies within this context and examining the reasons behind its limited consideration. Furthermore, it seeks to deepen our understanding of the concept, contribute to the existing academic literature, and foster a discussion environment regarding reflexivity in Türkiye.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Significant efforts regarding reflexivity have been made in the academic field in Türkiye, and it is essential to examine these contributions systematically. These efforts include reflexive texts from various research fields, such as women's studies (Bayrakçeken Tüzel et al., 2023), migration studies (Soysüren and Poyraz, 2024), ethnographic research (Harmanşah and Nahya, 2018), and social work studies (Akçay et al., 2020), which reflect on research experiences. Additionally, methodological works specifically addressing reflexivity, such as the edited volume by Hattatoğlu and Ertuğrul (2009), provide valuable insights where scholars critically examine their positionality and the complexities of their research processes. However, to conduct a systematic assessment, we have chosen to limit our study to articles and have preferred to contribute to literature within this framework. In this regard, we accessed the articles via DergiPark.

Searches on DergiPark were conducted using the following keywords: 'reflexivity', 'reflexive', 'self-reflexivity', 'field experience', 'research experience', and 'field notes'. These searches resulted in twenty-one publications related to reflexivity, covering the period from 2015 to 2024. It is worth emphasizing that it is quite difficult to determine the disciplinary distribution of these articles. Our observation suggests that most of the published studies have an interdisciplinary nature; however, we can note that most articles can be evaluated within the frameworks of women's studies, sociology, and anthropology. As co-authors of this study, we engaged in multiple online discussions and exchanged numerous emails throughout the article process. We held extensive deliberations on the objectives and scope of our study while also making a concerted effort to stay updated on the continuously evolving literature in the field. Considering our readings and discussions, we decided it would be valuable to explore the discussion around four key themes that generated from our review of the literature: reflexivity as a methodological contribution, reflexivity as subjectivity and positionality, reflexivity as a space for sharing research experiences, and reflexivity as a path to ethical research.

3. REFLEXIVITY AS A METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION

Reflexivity in Türkiye's social science literature is not only discussed from a methodological perspective but also frequently within conceptual and theoretical frameworks, particularly in sociology and anthropology. Therefore, we believe examining the conceptual and theoretical contributions of reflexivity through anthropology, sociology, and women's studies, while considering their developmental processes, will be valuable.

The concept of reflexivity prominently emerged in anthropology, largely attributed to British cultural anthropologist Victor Turner. Turner's phenomenological approach, marked by heightened self-awareness, facilitated reflexivity as a subject of discourse within the discipline (Jules-Rosetta, 1994, p. 172). He introduced the idea of plural reflexivity, describing it as "the ways in which a group or community seeks to portray, understand, and

then act on itself" (Turner, 1979, p. 465). A significant turning point in reflexivity's development occurred with the publication of Bronislaw Malinowski's field diaries in 1967. Madden (2023, p. 9) noted that these diaries revealed a stark contrast between Malinowski's scholarly work and his personal reflections, igniting debates about ethnographic data and emphasizing reflexivity's importance in research methodologies. Following this, Scholte contributed to the reflexivity discourse in his work "Towards a Reflective and Critical Anthropology," asserting that anthropological activities are both scientific and expressive of a cultural world that requires further reflexive understanding (Scholte, 1972, p. 431). The 1980s introduced the "reflexive turn" in anthropology, driven by critical and feminist theories that addressed ethnocentrism and androcentrism. This period saw an increase in feminist ethnographies and post-modern narratives, establishing reflexivity as a central component of ethnographic research. The evolution of autobiographical data and narrative styles further facilitated this trend. Contemporary anthropology showcases reflexivity through self-centered monologues and introspective narratives (Nazaruk, 2011).

A scrutiny of the literature reveals several significant publications in Türkiye that address the intersection of ethnography and reflexivity, particularly in the sociology discipline. Notably, Değirmenci (2018), as a sociologist, discussed how photography could be employed as data in sociological and anthropological research. His study addressed photography both as a source of data in ethnography and as a methodological tool for expressing reflexivity, emphasizing that photography, with its iconic and symbolic elements, served as a powerful tool that enhanced the rhetoric of the text.

This notable contribution in the literature, while examining visual materials within ethnographic narratives, also reveals the new possibilities that visual methods offer for reflexive practices. By proposing a multi-sensory and broader approach to field experience, it provides a noteworthy contribution to literature traditionally dominated by text-based research paradigms. However, deliberations on reflexivity are not limited to the realm of methodological choices; they also call for a rethinking of theoretical orientations that guide such choices. In this regard, relational ethnography offers a productive framework through which to critically engage not only with the researcher's positioning, but also with the multidimensional nature and full trajectory of knowledge generation.

In 2022, Özuz Dağdelen, a scholar specializing in media sociology, examined the importance of reflexivity and relationality within media ethnography. She explored the integration of critical-realist Bhaskar's theories with those of Mead, who is renowned for his work in symbolic interactionism and pragmatic philosophy. Dağdelen suggested that this combined approach could enhance relational ethnography by giving equal weight to both epistemological and ontological considerations. She emphasized that a media ethnography rooted in reflexivity and relationality, viewed through a critical-realist lens, can achieve this balance.

Reflexivity also manifests as a process through which researchers experience their presence in the field in tangible and embodied ways. In this context, the academic literature in Türkiye includes studies that approach ethnographic research from a methodological standpoint and place reflexivity at the heart of these discussions.

In the article co-authored by sociologist Güllüpınar and his doctoral student Işık (2021), they discussed the significance of reflexivity throughout all stages of research. The authors focus on strategies for effectively taking ethnographic field notes, offering a theoretical framework for participatory observation, and exploring the unique literary style of field notes. They also provide a thorough literature review on the writing techniques used in ethnographic research. According to the authors, field notes are not only a crucial part of the research process but also play a key role in the analysis phase. However, they acknowledge that field notes are inherently selective and shaped by the researcher's own perspective. Additionally, the note-taking process is influenced by the researcher's personal preferences and the varied experiences they encounter in the field. Reflexivity becomes essential at this stage, as it enables researchers to critically examine their positionality, resulting in a more transparent analysis. By engaging in reflexive note-taking, researchers can explore how their presence and perspective shape both the field itself and the data they generate.

Beyond writing and observational practices, reflexivity is also shaped by the researcher's positionality and the socio-cultural context in which they are embedded. Accordingly, studies that focus on how subjectivity intertwines with structural factors and identity-based dimensions offer valuable insights for a more profound understanding of reflexivity.

Another notable study by Nuhurat (2020), a prominent scholar in sports and football anthropology, delved into reflexivity through the framework of ongoing self-criticism and inquiry, core principles of anthropology. She emphasized the importance of reflexivity in critically evaluating positionalities, particularly concerning spatial locations and cultural frameworks. In her research on football and traffic, she explored the intersectionality of gender and class subjectivities. Nuhurat highlighted how her class position shaped her approach to studying football, while her gender influenced her research on traffic and urban issues. She argued that reflexivity requires considering all dimensions of subjectivity, viewing them through an intersectional lens.

From a wider analytical perspective, Nuhurat's work situates reflexivity within a multilayered framework that encompasses spatial, class-based, and cultural dimensions. This orientation resonates with ongoing scholarly discussions that frame reflexivity as a concept with both historical depth and interdisciplinary scope. Indeed, the development of reflexivity within the social sciences literature has been shaped by multilayered debates and evolving lines of inquiry.

The historical development of reflexivity in sociology presents challenges, given that the discipline emerged in the 19th century, although its philosophical roots can be traced back to Ancient Greece. Key starting points for discussing reflexivity include the German Historical School and Dilthey's focus on the historical and cultural dimensions of knowledge (Dilthey, 2002). Weber (1947), in a manner related to reflexivity, defined sociology as the interpretive understanding of social action, emphasizing that social actions are influenced by individuals' social positions, interests, and values. Reflexivity became significant in later sociological discourse, featuring in the works of scholars like Mills, Giddens, and Bourdieu. On the other hand, Giddens understands reflexivity particularly in the context of modernity. He contended that modern social life is characterized by the constant critiquing and reform of practices based on new information (Giddens, 1990). Beck also related reflexivity to modernization, identifying reflexive modernization as the final stage of social change, addressing risks in a "risk society" (Beck et al., 1994). Garfinkel viewed reflexivity as essential for understanding social order, allowing individuals to reflect on their actions naturally (Dogan and Oral, 2020, p. 45-46). Contemporary discussions focus on "reflexive sociology," a term popularized by Gouldner (1972), who argued that sociological knowledge is intertwined with both the knower and the context. Bourdieu expanded this concept, critiquing dualistic thinking in sociology and foregrounding the need for sociologists to critically engage with their own doxa, identity, and position within the scientific community (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2003).

A significant portion of the sociological literature on reflexivity in Türkiye consists of articles addressing the concept of reflexive sociology, which is grounded in Bourdieu's works. For instance, Akarca (2024) who is an expert in political science, discussed the reflexive method based on Bourdieu's theoretical approach in his article. Adopting a conceptual content analysis approach, the author attempted to explain reflexive methodology by drawing on Bourdieu's conceptualizations such as scientific field, scientific capital, scientific habitus, and scientific attitude, making a significant contribution to the relevant literature. Additionally, Kineşçi (2017) analyzed reflexive sociology through the perspectives of the renowned thinker Bauman. In this study, which was prepared by using the method of text analysis, reflexive sociology was understood as "a process of critical thinking and evaluation that focuses on the ontological, epistemological, and methodological foundations of sociology" (2017, p. 61). In the discussions that formed the foundation of Bauman's understanding of modernity and postmodernity, reflexivity was presented by the author as an element that "expands the horizon of sociology, which is concerned with the science of being a society and additionally, the formation of this society" (2017, p. 69).

These theoretical contributions, which are critically engaged with the epistemological and ontological dimensions of reflexive sociology, are particularly instructive for revealing the

analytical potential of reflexivity - not only in examining social events and phenomena but also in making sense of contemporary social transformations.

Reflecting this line of inquiry, Çelik (2024) explored artificial intelligence discussions through the reflexivity analyses of Beck and Giddens. She argued that their theories provide a deeper understanding of humanity's historical trajectory and modernity's new dimensions, while expanding views on AI's impact. The article emphasizes the significance of reflexivity in modernity and its relationship with AI, offering a critical perspective (2024, p. 3-4). She explains that Beck and Giddens' analyses show modernity's continual reshaping, with evolving identities. As part of reflexive modernity, AI reshapes social structures, boundaries, and identities, deepening reflexivity while introducing uncertainties and risks, prompting individuals to engage more with their existence.

In a different vein, women's studies, as an interdisciplinary field, exemplify intense discussions on reflexivity, primarily through feminist research rooted in feminist theory. Feminist theory interrogates the relationship between epistemology and ontology, challenging the assumptions inherent in positivist paradigms, especially regarding objectivity (Hemmings, 2012, p. 148) and they highlight the subjective character of knowledge and the importance of being reflexive (Mazanderani, 2017, p. 81). Scholars agree that a neutral stance is neither possible nor desirable, highlighting reflexivity as a central topic in feminist literature (Oakley, 1981; Mauthner and Doucet, 2003, p. 416).

In feminist research, reflexivity reflects the researcher's identity and a commitment to recognizing silences within epistemological frameworks and power dynamics (Finlay, 2002b, p. 695). The power-knowledge relationship is critically examined, with a focus on the significance of the researcher's positionality (Ramazanoğlu and Holland, 1999, p. 386). Harding plays a key role in reflexivity discussions, critiquing traditional objectivity as androcentric and advocating for "strong objectivity," which includes diverse subjective experiences (Harding, 1995). She argued that traditional science, shaped by Western, male perspectives, is a "bad science" and that researcher positionality should be acknowledged (Harding, 1986, p. 8). Standpoint theory, to which Harding contributed, asserts that knowledge arises from struggles between dominant and marginalized voices, with knowledge from marginalized groups often being more reliable due to inequality (Hemmings, 2012, p. 155). Feminist standpoint theory, evolving through theorists like Hartsock and Collins, emphasizes the importance of marginalized perspectives in enhancing feminism and social science. Reflexivity, central to feminist theory, underscores the value of personal experiences and subjective insights in knowledge production.

At this juncture, it is important to note that the feminist literature on reflexivity in Türkiye primarily centers on the personal experiences of researchers. In this context, one of the most notable academic contributions is by Karababa Demircan (2020). She explored the evolution of research methodologies in response to the widespread impact of the COVID-

19 pandemic, drawing on her own fieldwork experiences in the article. She conceptualized reflexivity as a process that 'takes responsibility for the silenced voices within relations of opposition, established and transformed through space, and occurs within a framework in which the researcher does not evade their own emotions and experiences.' In this respect, she offered critical insights into the researcher-researched relationship, particularly addressing strategies to minimize potential hierarchies in interviews that are not conducted face-to-face and discussing the responsibility of the consulted individual.

As this section illustrates, reflexivity occupies a multifaceted position in the social science literature in Türkiye, as both a methodological tool and a critical theoretical lens. Through the contributions of visual and textual methodologies, relational and reflexive sociological frameworks, and feminist epistemologies, reflexivity helps to forge a strong connection between methodological rigor and theoretical depth.

4. REFLEXIVITY AS SUBJECTIVITY AND POSITIONALITY

Reflexivity is a concept intrinsically linked to subjectivity and positionality. Subjectivity forms the foundation of reflexivity, as researchers cannot be entirely independent or objective when generating data. Instead, they must recognize and engage with this inherent bias to better understand their roles in the research process (Mason, 2002, p. 7). The relationship between reflexivity and subjectivity lies in the necessity to incorporate the researcher's emotions, thoughts, viewpoints, and experiences into the research. Reflexivity enables researchers to acknowledge the impact they have on the research, considering how these influences shape social realities. In this context, subjectivity is seen not only as an individual phenomenon but also as a social and cultural construct.

The researcher's subjectivity is more than just an element to be considered; it plays an active role throughout the research process. Rather than viewing it as a limitation to minimize, it should be recognized as a valuable resource to be utilized (Fook, 1999, p. 13). Therefore, researchers must openly articulate their assumptions, decisions, and personal experiences during the research process. Failing to do so may lead to the misconception that research outcomes represent objective 'realities,' when, in fact, they are socially constructed. Thus, reflecting on and documenting research subjectivity is essential for conducting reflexive research. This process requires the constant evaluation of the researcher's positionality, how it is perceived by others, and the impact of these perceptions on the research journey.

Moreover, reflexivity is a vital methodological approach that acknowledges the impact of subjectivity on the research process and explores its consequences for the findings. Rather than disregarding subjectivity, researchers embrace it as a tool to deepen their understanding of social realities. Reflexivity is an ongoing and relational process that encourages active engagement, allowing researchers to critically examine how their personal biases, beliefs, and experiences shape their work (Berger, 2015). Ultimately, this

approach enhances scholarly contributions by offering a more nuanced understanding of the researcher's role and by situating their work within broader social contexts (Gordon, 2022).

Another concept closely related to reflexivity is positionality. Maintaining reflexivity involves researchers consistently locating (and relocating) themselves within their work, actively engaging with the research process, participants, and methodologies (Bott, 2010, p. 160). The researcher's positionality, shaped by factors such as class, gender, ethnicity, and other social identities, plays a crucial role in shaping the scope, interpretations, and outcomes of the research. Thus, positionality involves not only recognizing an individual's subjectivity but also understanding how it interacts with broader social structures. Reflexivity serves as a tool for cultivating this awareness, enabling researchers to acknowledge and critically engage with the influence of their position throughout the research process. In contemporary qualitative methodology, reflections on researcher positionality have become increasingly central to knowledge production, reshaping discussions on the researcher's role.

We contend that feminist literature has been instrumental in advancing discussions on positionality. Feminist frameworks, which inherently challenge hierarchical power dynamics, have extended this critique to include the positionality of the researcher, examining its influence on knowledge generation and interpretation. Standpoint theory emphasizes the perspectives of marginalized groups in knowledge production, arguing that these groups may possess a more critical and nuanced understanding of social structures and power relations (Harding, 2016). Through the lens of positionality, feminist scholars engage with their own social positions, reflecting on how these positions shape the research process. This approach not only deepens the understanding of how personal experiences, but also broader social and cultural contexts, influence the production of knowledge (Collins, 1990; Haraway, 1988). Ultimately, it fosters more critical, nuanced, and transparent knowledge generation.

One of the key contributions to the discussion of researcher positionality in the literature of Türkiye is an article by sociologist Kaçar Tunç. In her 2020 article, Kaçar Tunç provided an in-depth methodological discussion of researcher positionality, questioning the binary notion of being either fully an insider or an outsider within the research process. She argued that conceptualizing researcher positionality as a fixed or static entity is both misleading and overly simplistic. Instead, she posited that positionality is inherently fluid, continuously shifting and evolving throughout the research process. As a result, she underscored the importance of understanding positionality as "the space between," a dynamic and relational concept that captures the ongoing negotiation of the researcher's position within the research context.

This perspective, which argues that the researcher's position cannot be defined through fixed, immutable, or binary categories, has been gaining increasing traction in the literature on reflexivity and positionality. Feminist scholars, in particular, tend to conceptualize positionality not as a static attribute but as a continuously evolving process shaped through interactions with shifting contexts. Within this framework, another notable contribution comes from Dinçer, known for her work in gender studies and political science.

In 2019, Dinçer explored researcher positionality through the insider-outsider dichotomy, investigating the complex and often dual role of the researcher. She argued that in feminist research, reflexivity serves as a vital mechanism, bridging the gap between academia and activism, thus enabling a more profound engagement with both fields. Dinçer noted that conceptualizing academia and activism as opposing forces may reinforce hierarchies within the research process. Therefore, engaging in reflexivity about this duality can facilitate the connection of these seemingly disparate spheres (2019, p. 3738).

In conclusion, studies in the literature from Türkiye clearly demonstrate that any analysis of reflexivity that lacks a critical awareness of subjectivity and positionality is inevitably incomplete. Particularly within feminist and critical perspectives, the literature emphasizes that researchers must continuously interrogate their own subjectivities and positionalities, as well as the hierarchical power dynamics of research and the broader social context in which they operate. Building on this foundation, the following section turns to studies that focus on researcher experiences in Türkiye, aiming to explore how reflexivity creates space for experiential reflection and contributes to research practice.

5. REFLEXIVITY AS A SPACE FOR SHARING RESEARCH EXPERIENCES

The sharing of research experiences within the academic community plays a crucial role in the context of reflexivity. This process allows researchers to critically examine their own positionality and assess the impact of their presence on the research. Reflexivity involves incorporating the researcher's personal perspectives, emotions, and experiences into the research, while also being aware of how these factors are shaped by broader social and cultural contexts. When researchers candidly share their experiences -acknowledging challenges, biases, and significant moments encountered during the research- such openness not only enhances the transparency of the research but also provides a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the findings.

In the social science literature in Türkiye, the sharing of research experiences is most notably seen in the fields of sociology and women's studies, particularly within feminist studies. The article by feminist sociologist Tuncer (2015) made a significant contribution to the discourse on sharing field experiences. She highlighted that public space, as a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by gender, is experienced and perceived differently by women. In her study, she explored how women's experiences in public spaces necessitate a distinct methodological approach. Drawing on her doctoral research, she highlighted the

fluidity of boundaries between public and private spaces, which are continuously redefined through women's everyday use. To address this, Tuncer employed a qualitative research method that places 'public space' within a broader context, revealing the processes and relationships involved in daily life outside the home. Tuncer's work not only contributes to feminist urban research but also offers a valuable methodological perspective on how public spaces can be reconceptualized through experience-based inquiry.

The researcher's presence in the field and the way this presence is represented in the text inevitably carry ethical and political dimensions. When field tensions, ethical dilemmas, and uncertainties - especially those rooted in class and ethnicity- are shared reflexively, it allows the research process to be understood by readers in a more comprehensive and layered way. In this regard, a notable contribution to the academic literature comes from Deniz, who critically interrogated her own positionality as a researcher in her fieldwork with Russian immigrant women. In this work, Deniz (2017) analyzed the relationship between the researcher and the researched by examining the intersection of categories like ethnicity, gender, and socio-economic status, while reflecting critically on the researcher's positionality. She emphasized that in Türkiye's field research tradition, experiences deemed 'insignificant' or 'contradictory' are often excluded from research texts. These overlooked moments, such as identity conflicts or bureaucratic barriers, can significantly affect the research process, potentially altering its direction. By sharing these field experiences, Deniz argued that acknowledging the dynamic nature of the field is essential to fully understanding and evaluating research findings.

Reflexivity is not confined to experiences in the field; it also shapes how researchers engage with their data and determine which aspects are included in the academic text and in what form. In this regard, studies that focus on the methodological and emotional dilemmas researchers face after returning from the field—rather than solely on the fieldwork itself—play a crucial role in illuminating reflexivity as a multidimensional research practice.

Özkan, a scholar specialized in mass communication and media studies, presented an article rooted in fieldwork experiences and framed within a feminist perspective. In her ethnographic study on female tailors in Bursa, Türkiye, Özkan (2017) shared her fieldwork experiences and challenges while reflecting on feminist methodology. A key point highlighted in her article is the difficulty researchers face when returning from the field, especially when dealing with large amounts of data (such as interview transcriptions, field notes, and diaries) and deciding how to select and process it. One challenge is determining how to integrate the voices of research subjects with theory, and to what extent this should happen. Establishing a balance in this process is both challenging and instructive for the researcher (2019, p. 6). Reflexive practices play an important role in making this process more effective.

Undoubtedly, factors such as the researcher's sense of belonging to the community they study, as well as their proximity or distance to it, are integral components of reflexive inquiry. In light of this, sociologist Zırh (2017), in a different academic work, drew extensively on his personal field experiences, offering insights that enriched both ethnographic and sociological literature. By reflecting on his research on Aleviism as a non-Alevi, he deepened our understanding of the research context's dynamics, enhancing theoretical frameworks and offering practical perspectives for future studies. A key emphasis of the study was researcher positionality. Instead of debating whether being an insider or outsider offers a better perspective, Zırh argued that assessing the unique characteristics of each position is more valuable. He underscored the importance of questioning one's own position and experiences in the field, highlighting the significance of reflexivity.

After referencing articles from the literature in Türkiye, it would be valuable to briefly address academic journals. *Moment Journal*, published since 2014 by the Faculty of Communication at Hacettepe University, and *Fe Dergi: Feminist Eleştiri*, an international peer-reviewed journal published by the Women's Studies Research and Practice Center (KASAUM) at Ankara University, both contribute significantly to the academic discourse in their respective fields. It is remarkable that many of the studies we have discussed are published in these two journals, which may point to a broader trend or pattern rather than being purely coincidental. The approach of these journals can be seen in their openness to feminist and critical methodologies, their encouragement of reflexive writing that weaves in personal narratives, and their relatively flexible attitude toward alternative scholarly forms. At this point, it is worth noting that the opportunities for publishing articles that integrate field experiences in Türkiye are quite limited, and expanding such opportunities that encourage experiential sharing holds considerable value.

In conclusion, it becomes evident that the sharing of research experiences holds critical significance for reflexivity within the social sciences literature in Türkiye. The originality and significance of these publications arise from the researchers' ability to confront challenges, uncertainties, and occasional failures, providing a critical and honest evaluation of their positions in the research process. The sincere sharing of experiences throughout the research process contributes to making knowledge generation more accessible. It is reasonable to predict that publications incorporating subjective evaluations of field experiences will continue to increase, especially with contributions from a younger generation of scholars more inclined to adopt reflexive methodologies.

6. REFLEXIVITY AS A PATH TO ETHICAL RESEARCH

Reflexivity can make significant ethical contributions to research. However, in Unger's framework, the ethical dimension of reflexivity encompasses and goes beyond its methodological dimension and includes the following steps: "a) anticipating potential

ethical issues to the best of one's ability and available knowledge, b) addressing ethically important moments as they emerge during the research process c) reflecting on more fundamental issues concerning the larger role of social science research in society.” (2021, p. 199)

The first step of reflexivity, as outlined by Unger (2021), involves researchers being clear about their position and aware of potential biases or assumptions. This is vital for assessing the credibility of qualitative research findings. Reflexivity goes beyond critically evaluating the researcher's role, position, and biases; it also involves recognizing how personal history, experiences, and social identity shape the research process and outcomes. When applied effectively, reflexivity ensures a transparent acknowledgment of the researcher's influence, fostering more honest and ethical research outcomes.

In qualitative research methodology, it is crucial to share power between the researcher and the participants, ensuring that the voices of those being studied are acknowledged. This concern encompasses several key practices, such as co-developing the research focus and analysis, sharing data with participants, conducting extensive member checks, and engaging in co-writing practices (Pillow, 2003, p. 185).

Beyond understanding the internal dynamics of the research process and the researcher's positionality, reflexivity also involves addressing the ethical dimensions of the research itself. In this sense, researchers must maintain a critical perspective throughout every stage of the study, constantly questioning both their own position and the ethical integrity of their research to ensure that ethical standards are upheld throughout.

Moreover, ethical reflexivity extends beyond simply assessing research based on scientific rigor and the reliability of findings. It recognizes research as a social process with significant consequences for all participants involved (Unger, 2021, p. 189). In this respect, we argue that reflexivity does not eliminate ethical tensions but instead, creates opportunities for developing new ethical frameworks that allow for a more honest and nuanced exploration of ethical dilemmas.

The increasing number of publications addressing reflexivity in the social sciences literature in Türkiye is expected to contribute significantly to ethical discussions and foster the development of more ethically informed research practices. However, works specifically exploring the intersection of ethics and reflexivity remain limited. The only article on this topic, by Güllüpınar and Özkan (2021), discussed ethical issues in ethnographic research and the role of reflexivity in addressing them. The article highlights how the close relationships formed in ethnography can blur the distance between the researcher and participants, raising concerns about confidentiality and trust. It also addresses the emotional and social harm researchers may experience, emphasizing the importance of self-awareness and reflexivity in mitigating these risks.

As a final remark, it can be stated that, although studies in Türkiye's social science literature that directly address the relationship between reflexivity and ethics remain limited and still in an early stage, they carry significant potential. Future research in this area could make original and meaningful contributions by focusing on the development of context-sensitive, experience-based ethical frameworks.

7. CONCLUSION

As researchers who consider reflexivity to be of critical importance, we explored its significance by reviewing existing literature and incorporating articles from the social sciences in Türkiye. We focused on its methodological contributions, relationship with subjectivity and positionality, role in facilitating the sharing of research experiences, and ethical aspects. Our aim was to examine reflexivity comprehensively, structuring our discussion under four key headings. However, it's important to note that these categories are interconnected, with reflexivity's dimensions often overlapping.

Throughout our focus on the various dimensions of reflexivity, we deliberately chose to include the context of Türkiye in our discussion. This preference is primarily rooted in the observation that, although our literature review has identified studies that address the concept of reflexivity across various disciplines, we have found no academic works that specifically examine reflexivity in the context of studies conducted in a country. We hope that such an academic endeavor could provide valuable insights and serve as an example for future research in this area. Furthermore, we assert that an inquiry situated within the specific context of Türkiye would hold intrinsic value in its own right.

Recently marking its 100th anniversary, Türkiye is situated at the crossroads of Asia and Europe, established in a region that has hosted numerous civilizations for thousands of years. With a population exceeding 80 million, Türkiye is characterized by significant ethnic and cultural diversity. Moreover, over the past 15 years, the increasing mobility of international migrants and refugees has rapidly transformed Türkiye's demographic structure, as the country has evolved into both a transit and destination point (Karataş & Ayyıldız, 2021; Şişman & Bolun, 2020). Given these shifts, it can be argued that Türkiye's complex cultural, ethnic, and religious landscape heightens the significance of reflexivity discussions. The variety of researchers, research topics, and methodological concerns—such as positionality and power relations in the field—offers valuable avenues for further exploration. These discussions not only enrich the academic community but also contribute to broader societal dialogues.

In recent years, Türkiye has undergone significant structural transformations across political, socio-economic, and cultural spheres, leading to the development of a polarized social structure. Some social dynamics have been suppressed, while at other times, resistance and reactions have surfaced. Reflecting these shifts, the academic field - especially the social sciences- has also experienced notable divisions. Voices from

opposition groups, whether organized or unorganized, do not solely arise from political, socio-economic, or cultural foundations; they have had a particularly significant impact within the women's movement. The field of women's studies, in particular, has adopted a more assertive and proactive approach aimed at social transformation. Therefore, it is unsurprising that reflexivity is most prominently observed in this discipline in Türkiye, especially given the broader influence of the women's movement in the country.

In this context, the ways in which researchers navigate the evolving and polarized socio-political and socio-cultural climate, the extent to which they can freely express their perspectives during fieldwork and writing, and the ethical implications of these practices are crucial areas of inquiry within reflexivity. Understanding how scholars engage with these challenges provides valuable insights into the intersection of research and the broader societal shifts currently shaping Türkiye.

Reflexivity not only contributes to our understanding of the changing conditions of the world through its theoretical insights but also facilitates the creation of a space for sharing research experiences, ultimately enabling us to conduct more rigorous and ethically sound research. In this regard, cultivating a research environment where such a crucial issue is addressed with greater transparency—and where, through honest and critically reflective perspectives, we can learn more from each other (and, through reflective thinking, from ourselves)—has the potential to transform the way we approach research. Considering these aspects, we believe that increasing the number of publications focused on reflexivity or those that openly share field experiences, as well as expanding the availability of journals where such academic works can be published, is of great importance. By doing so, such engagements help raise awareness of the challenges others may face in similar contexts, thereby contributing to the development of a more robust culture of dialogue and critical reflection within academic communities, while also fostering a more ethical and responsible research culture.

LIMITATIONS

We acknowledge that, like all academic works, this study has several limitations. We have limited this study to three disciplines within the social sciences: sociology, anthropology, and women's studies. However, the inclusion of other disciplines such as health sciences and social policy could have helped broaden the understanding of the topic. Furthermore, to conduct the research in a more systematic manner, we focused exclusively on studies accessible through DergiPark. Nevertheless, we are aware that there are numerous other academic initiatives related to reflexivity, including books and articles not indexed by DergiPark. Another limitation of our study is that, although we have approached the subject from a theoretical perspective, we were unable to present the results of our own fieldwork on reflexivity, as the analysis is still ongoing. We hope to present our analysis of the

experiences and perspectives of researchers in Türkiye to the academic community in a separate study.

Statement of Research and Publication Ethics

All processes of the article were conducted in accordance with the research and publication ethics principles of the *Journal of the Institute of Social Sciences, Manisa Celal Bayar University*.

Authors' Contributions

Emine Dündar, a doctoral candidate, was responsible for the conceptualization of the study, identification and review of the relevant articles, analysis and interpretation of the data, and the preparation of the initial draft of the manuscript. As the advisor and second author, İlknur Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu contributed to the conceptualization and analysis through revisions and supported the writing and design of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with any individual or institution.

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