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# A typology of gender-based needs

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Feminism—both in its activist and theoretical form—arguably always focuses on exposing, challenging and re-thinking how gender is assumed, discussed and practiced. One key focus of feminists has been to show how gender—in the sense of assumptions and practices about masculinity and femininity—significantly influences the needs and demands of people and how they—in turn—are responded to (or not) across different political and societal regimes. However, to date there is no clear definition of what characterizes what we term “gender-based needs,” which could help us understand where, how, and why issues become salient as gendered. In fact, feminist academic discussions of gender-based needs, while often based on deep empirical engagements and contemporary events, rarely reach across policy areas or theoretical perspectives. In this article, we outline the results of an in-depth mixed-method literature review of 404 academic publications from different theoretical and empirical traditions across six European epistemic communities divided by language and geographical perspectives. Through this analysis, we derive a typology of how gender-based needs have been theorized across six dimensions of (1) gender lens, (2) policy field, (3) suggested solutions, (4) epistemological approach, (5) key actors, and (6) interest. By focusing on co-occurrences of these dimensions across the literature, we identify central elements as well as a variety of ideal types of gender-based needs, which are highlighted in the academic literature. Our typology provides an evidence-based conceptualization of gender-based needs, which can help to analyze and systematize geographical and epistemic patterns of how gender factors into political needs and demands. Moreover, the typology can serve as tool for policymakers to understand which gender-based needs are currently centered, and which neglected, in policymaking and practice.

## KEYWORDS

gender, feminism, literature review, typology, policy-making

## 1 Introduction

Feminism—both in its activist and theoretical form—arguably always focuses on exposing, challenging and re-thinking how gender is assumed, discussed and practiced. Gender can be defined as the “social meaning attached to the shape of our bodies” (Shepherd, 2014, p. 26). Scholars have shown how gender works through socially constructed and historically changing assumptions and practices that are linked to these social meanings (Connell, 1987). This means that gender is inherent in all social relations, behaviors and representations and thereby influences the needs and demands of people and how they—in turn—are responded to (or not) across different political and

societal regimes (Enloe, 2014; Runyan and Peterson, 2013). Over the last decades, more insights about gender as important to social and political relations have been transferred into policymaking under the umbrella of gender mainstreaming (True, 2003). Regional and international organizations, governments and local governing bodies have thus increasingly engaged with and formulated responses to gender-based needs in a broad array of policy areas and programs. At the same time, in many regards gender remains under-assessed and invisible, thereby perpetuating informal and naturalized gender inequalities and hierarchical gender orders (Chappell and Waylen, 2013; Mazur, 2020). Feminists point out time and time again that gender-based needs are often considered more as a sidenote or serve as legitimizing means for a government while pursuing other interests and priorities (Boyd, 2016). This also means that while some aspects of gender-based needs, such as the gender pay gap, have been increasingly present in the media and political debates, others have been left to the wayside—notably those occupying minority women and men.

In addition, particularly in the last 10 years, gender-based needs have been increasingly politicized by non-feminist—often even regressive—actors, leading for example to instances of what Farris has termed “femo-nationalism,” where right-wing nationalist movements team up with parts of the women’s movement to justify racial exclusion through gendered narratives of discrimination and needs (Farris, 2017). This is often expressed in the instrumentalization of violence against women and/or LGBTQI+ persons to legitimize xenophobic policies, such as inciting hatred against Muslim communities and toughening migration regimes (Farris, 2012).

All these developments—the multiplicity and contextuality of gender-based needs, the political marginalization of some needs and the instrumentalization of others, and the politicization of gender-based needs for regressive and patriarchal populist politics—have been accompanied by a rich and growing body of feminist literature which have formed around diverse “camps” (to borrow Christine Sylvester’s term) of academic inquiry in social movement studies (see e.g., Ayoub and Stoeckl, 2024; Kuhar and Paternotte, 2017; Moghadam, 2005), feminist policy studies (Lombardo and Meier, 2022; Kantola and Verloo, 2018), studies of gender mainstreaming (Cavaghan, 2013; Caglar, 2013), and feminist inquiries into far-right extremism and populism (Verloo, 2018; Santos and Geva, 2022; Reinhardt et al., 2023). In this article we build on these insights by using *gender-based needs* as a lens to assess, categorize, and analyze patterns in feminist literature. Specifically, we examine where, how, and why gender-based needs become salient in feminist discussions. We define gender-based needs broadly as *political, social, economic, and symbolic demands that are discussed and understood as arising from a particular gender-based position within society*. The theoretical assumption is that such needs are rooted in the social and political structures that have emerged around the social distinctions between woman/female/feminine and man/male/masculine, especially the effect of certain configurations of this binary distinction. This article is based on the observation that, while much of the feminist literature is united through a focus on exposing, challenging, and addressing gender-based needs, discussions rarely reach across policy areas or theoretical perspectives. We argue that a focus on

the concept of gender-based needs offers the possibility to draw together the insights that have been gathered, thereby helping to emphasize the important contributions of feminist research across “camps” focused on different policy areas and theoretical schools, and make them more accessible for mainstream scholars and policymakers. We consider such a perspective particularly important in the current political climate, in which gender holds an unprecedented position in terms of influencing both progressive and liberal politics, but also being subverted and misrepresented in “retroregressive” politics (Bouvarit et al., 2019).

In the following sections, we first provide a quick overview of how much of the feminist literature has engaged with gender-based needs to contextualize our research goal. We then proceed by outlining our research design to assess gender-based needs through an in-depth literature review of 404 academic publications from different theoretical and empirical traditions across six European country contexts: Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, Spain, and the United Kingdom. These contexts represent a diverse set of epistemic communities, which are interrelated and united through their focus on discussing and researching gender, yet divided by language and geographical perspectives. We consider the cross-geographical perspective a crucial element to overcome the common dominance of English-speaking discussions informed by particular geographical conditions, which are then assumed to be applicable across contexts. We do not claim to speak beyond the boundaries of our particular contexts, yet, we propose that our analysis may be relevant to a broader European-centered perspective, as it includes countries from Northern (Denmark), Central (Switzerland, Germany), Eastern (Hungary), Southern (Spain), and Western (the UK) Europe.

The main part of the article outlines the findings of the large-scale, mixed methods literature review we conducted, combining manual inductive coding with quantitative co-occurrence analysis and visualization.<sup>1</sup> The findings are structured around three levels of insights into gender-based needs. First, we outline the **key dimensions** of gender-based needs, derived from the inductive analysis: (1) gender lens, (2) policy field, (3) suggested solutions, (4) epistemological approach, (5) key actors, and (6) gender interest (from now on, interest). These dimensions represent distinct conceptual features of gender-based needs, which emerged as salient from the articles. Second, we examine how these dimensions **co-occur** across three central elements of theoretical interest to gender-based needs: *location*, *perspective*, and *demand*. These elements address the research questions of where (location), how (perspective), and why (demand) these needs arise, allowing us to identify **patterns** that reveal their specific significance in feminist discussions.

Lastly, by cross-tabulating across all three elements, we focus on **distribution of types** of needs across country contexts and identify idealtypes of gender-based needs. Through this in-depth, multilayered analysis, the typology provides an evidence-based

<sup>1</sup> The literature review and typology development was conducted within the framework of the Horizon Europe project UNTWIST (REA 101060836; SERRI 22.00615). The original UNTWIST report on the Typology including extensive coverage of the data collection process is available here: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101060836/results>.

theoretical conceptualization of gender-based needs, which can help to analyze and systematize geographical and epistemic patterns. By providing a broad perspective of how gender can be understood as relevant in regard to political needs and representative demands that is not bound to specific feminist “camps,” the typology can also help policymakers to identify potential gaps in the representation of gender-based needs that may require attention through additional resources or collaborations with political actors who specialize in diverse perspectives or specific domains that have previously been overlooked.

## 2 Conceptualizing gender-based needs

While feminist contributions to political science have a long legacy, feminism is commonly understood to arrive as a consolidated field of study in political science departments around the late 70s and early 80s (Simmis, 1981). Back then, studies pointed mostly to the absences of women from politics and power raised the interest in women’s marginal position and the dominance of masculinity in politics (Bourque and Grossholtz, 1974; Phillips, 1998; Okin, 1998). Since then, while arguably often still working from the margins (Sawer, 2004; Pateman, 1982), feminism has developed into a myriad of different research streams reflective of differences in empirical, theoretical, and methodological perspectives and legacies. We now can speak of sub-fields—or “camps” (Sylvester, 2007)—of feminist political science, such as feminist institutionalism, feminist policy analysis, feminist IPE as well as specific fields of Gender and Development or feminist security studies. Moreover, gender studies and feminist literature has taken roots also in other subdisciplines of the social sciences and humanities. All of these “camps” are united by a focus on sex and gender—in the sense of gendered norms, structures, and practices—thus reflecting the main focus of feminist theory and activism to question, challenge, and overcome gender-based power disparities in patriarchal societies.

However, despite this common goal, theoretical disputes, as well as disciplinary and sub-disciplinary boundaries reflected in publishing, citing, and teaching practices often mean that there is little dialogue on findings across the empirical focus on particular political and social arenas, and theoretical schools. Instead, when looking across policy areas and “camps,” feminist theorists have most often discussed perspectives in terms of theoretical and epistemological differences.<sup>2</sup> For example, distinctions are made between a focus on revising and reforming norms of social justice—through discussions about difference and equity feminism—and a focus on questioning and deconstructing power structures, as seen in poststructuralist and critical feminist approaches (Purtschert, 2012). In the Anglophone context, scholars often distinguish between three types of feminism, originally introduced by Sandra Harding as “feminist empiricism,” “feminist

standpoint,” and “feminist postmodernism” (Harding, 1986). The limitations of these categorizations—as well as numerous other attempts to classify distinctions and commonalities across feminist approaches—have been extensively discussed and are continually renegotiated, particularly in light of emerging developments within the feminist movement (Duriesmith and Meger, 2020; Lépinard, 2020; Ferguson, 2017; Zalewski, 1993).

While we do not consider it necessarily problematic—but instead acknowledge that it is often beneficial—to focus on changes and issues “within-camp” to achieve recognition both within the academic and political mainstream, we consider a systematic “across-camp” perspective as a valuable addition, which can help to understand patterns and focal areas in feminist research. In this article, we therefore propose a focus on *gender-based needs* as an umbrella perspective which we argue is able to provide a new, empirically informed perspective on the feminist literature across “camps.” Different from the above-mentioned epistemological “camp”-discussions, our focus on gender-based needs moves toward a more empirically-rooted aspect to categorize feminist research. As such, we put the emphasis on identifying which needs are discussed in the literature as a whole, and how these can be characterized in meaningful ways, rather than separating the literature based on epistemological differences *a priori*. This means that we also allow for the emergence of similar perspectives on needs across different epistemological frameworks, providing valuable insights into the overlaps and divides between different “feminisms.”

The focus on *needs* was chosen for two reasons. First, we believe that the idea of “needs” encapsulates both the analytical and emancipatory quality of feminist scholarship, which is arguably present across “camps.” For example, feminist empiricist studies might focus on economic or political material inequalities—such as access to physical safety and protection between persons identifying as male or female—while poststructuralists would focus on questioning and exposing unequal and patriarchal gender representations in discourses on protection in counterterrorism. This example shows how a need in regards to a particular issue area (security) can be approached in quite different ways, deriving different political implications. Despite these differences in *how* the need is approached, both investigations focus on a social injustice, which is based on gendered structures and practices (*where*) which create a particular demand for change (*why*). This last element of demand for change connects the conceptualization of gender-based needs to earlier feminist discussions. Specifically, Molyneux (1985)’s analysis of gender planning in development informed scholarly discussions on *gender needs* in the form of prioritized gendered concerns translated into planning frameworks (Moser, 1989). This approach categorizes gender needs based on the extent to which they are theorized as either rooted in systemic goals resulting from a feminist *position*—i.e., developing “an alternative, more equal and satisfactory organization of society ... in terms of both structure and nature of relationships between men and women”—or in practical societal *conditions* experienced by women as a “response to an immediate perceived necessity ... within a specific context” (Moser, 1989). Gender needs, therefore, exist on a continuum between positional/strategic and conditional/practical, both underpinned by the assumption that the awareness about them can drive emancipation and change. While this emancipatory

<sup>2</sup> This is, of course, not a practice unique to feminist theorists but rather a characteristic of academic contributions more broadly, as they must navigate and fulfill requirements that extend beyond scientific exploration itself when engaging with publishing.

quality could also be described differently (e.g., as in “Molyneux” case as “interests”), we chose the terminology of *needs* to clearly derive policy-oriented implications highlighted by feminist theory and analysis.

Based on these conceptual considerations, we therefore define gender-based needs as *political, social, economic, and symbolic demands for change discussed and understood as arising from a particular gender-based position within society*. To assess how gender-based needs appear in the feminist literature and how they can be characterized and traced across geographical, epistemological and empirical camps, we operationalize this definition by focusing on three central elements, which answer the three central research questions about: (a) the particular *location* in society they emerge from (*where*), (b) the *perspective* on gender they encapsulate (*how*), and (c) the resulting political and societal *demand(s)* they carry (*why*). By capturing these three elements of discussions on gender-based needs, we assume that we can capture and categorize commonalities and differences across “camps” of the literature, which also can provide points of interest for practitioners. In other words, we hope to provide a conceptual tool with which (feminist) actors, in both academia and political and activist practice, can situate their own position and focus area in a universe of gender-based needs.

This can then help foster more targeted conversations across “camps,” as well as identify gaps and patterns in existing policy approaches by both progressive and regressive actors—both of which offer important implications for feminist theorizing and activism.

### 3 A mixed-methods approach to cross-geographical literature review

To derive our typology of gender-based needs, the analytical process followed a complex set of decisions including theoretical sampling in the data collection, in-depth manual thematic coding, and both qualitative and quantitative, computer-assisted co-occurrence analysis. While the analytical process and the underlying feminist methodological approach are discussed in more detail elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> the following two sections provide an overview of the essential conceptual decisions influencing the data collection and analysis of the 404 publications that informs the resulting typology.

#### 3.1 Data collection

The data was collected across six European country contexts: Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Spain, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The choice of the six countries was based on the participation in the EU-funded Horizon Europe project UNTWIST and offered two important benefits: first, all six countries followed the same process for locating literature, thus ensuring comparability. Second, the six included countries offered

perspectives from all main regions within Europe, including the North (Denmark), Center (Switzerland, Germany), West (UK), South (Spain), and East (Hungary).<sup>4</sup> Through this selection, the English-speaking canon is represented in particular in the UK-based selection but also in each of the countries by including texts written in English. At the same time, the selection included texts in four additional languages: Spanish, Hungarian, Danish, and German (as well as, to a more limited degree, Swiss-French). The selection process was conducted by local country teams of the partner universities in each country,<sup>5</sup> ensuring the inclusion of local knowledge about important contributions and discussions specific to the context in question, while maintaining comparability through the use of standardized selection guidelines.

To ensure sufficient coverage of “local” epistemic communities throughout data collection, country teams followed sampling instructions based on a 2-fold conceptualization of local knowledge: (1) knowledge from within the context and (2) knowledge about the context from external sources. For the first aspect, we collected academic publications produced in the context of local institutions, including universities and research institutes, as well as publications from movements and civil society organizations (e.g., white and gray papers) addressing gender-based needs. Each team followed a snowball sampling approach, starting from their local knowledge and then expanding the focus through bibliographies, CVs, and institutional websites. For the second aspect, we included articles explicitly focused on gender-based needs in the country context, thus incorporating external research perspectives (in terms of epistemic communities) about the local context.

Across all these institutional and epistemic contexts, we decided to limit the included literature to that explicitly centering gender in the sense of assessing, analyzing or discussing the role of *assumptions and practices about masculinities and femininities*. Due to this criterion, most of the included literature was from feminist and men and masculinity studies. We specifically did not sample literature based on particular epistemological perspectives but instead aimed for a broad inclusion of all available perspectives in each geographical location. To do so, we had local teams tag articles with meta-data including, if available, the broader discipline of the article as well as the epistemological and theoretical perspective taken.<sup>6</sup> We also tried to include as broad a timeframe of publication

4 Our designation of macro-regions is based on the identification of partner universities within the consortium of the EU Horizon Project UNTWIST (see Footnote 1). However, we are aware that regional designations are always the result of particular positionalities and thereby reflect a particular and highly contextual politics of space. In Europe, this has been discussed by critical geographers in particular in regards to the designation of countries to Eastern and Central European regions (see e.g. [Tamás, 2016](#)).

5 The universities were: Roskilde University in Denmark, Saarland University in Germany, University of Deusto in Spain, University of Bern in Switzerland, and the Centre for Social Sciences in Hungary. Each country team included native speakers whose participation ensured the inclusion of historically and linguistically specific practices and politics in the process of data collection and analysis.

6 Specifically, coders were asked to collect the following information to tag the articles: year of publication, author(s), journal/publisher name, discipline

3 The manuscript is currently in preparation. A link will be provided for a later version of the article.



as possible, starting our investigation in 2007 and ending in the year of the data collection (i.e., 2023). By covering this 15-year span, we aimed to capture a wide range of external events that could have influenced the perception of needs, including financial events (such as the Global Financial Crisis of 2007–2008 and the resulting austerity policies), political developments (such as the revolutions of the early 2010s, the rise of populism, including Brexit, and the onset of the Ukraine war in the mid-2010s), and health crises (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), as well as pivotal moments in feminist and social justice movements (such as the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements). This data collection process resulted in a total of 404 articles across all country contexts (Figure 1).<sup>7</sup> Except for the first 3 years of the data collection, we have at least one article from each country context per year, with notable peaks in 2021 and 2022, largely due to the increased attention given to the development of anti-gender rhetoric and antifeminist backlash.

## 3.2 Data analysis

Once the data collection was completed, local coders created translated summaries in English and filled in a survey on the narrative of each article, answering the three central elements of our definition. These included the actors covered and the issue area at hand (*location*), the theoretical approach (*perspective*), and the policy suggestions given by text authors (*demand*). Following this decentralized collection and first structuring of the data, we then turned to an in-depth analysis of the data conducted by our team at the University of Bern. We followed a thematic analysis approach, manually coding the article summaries provided by local coders to inductively “organiz[e] codes into meaningful groups to identify patterns and relationships” (Naeem et al., 2023).

To increase concept validity and inter-coder reliability, the coding process was conducted by three coders from three different disciplines (sociology, political science, and anthropology) using MaxQDA in an iterative way.<sup>8</sup> This collaborative process ultimately led to the emergence of a consolidated coding scheme that reflects the six core conceptual dimensions of gender-based needs emerging from the literature. To gain additional insight into the characteristics and relational patterns between these dimensions in our dataset, we then

of reference, type of publication (i.e., academic paper, book chapter, policy brief/report, etc.), type of contribution (i.e., empirical, theoretical, review), and methodology employed (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods).

<sup>7</sup> The complete list of articles can be made available upon request. It is also accessible in Annex 7 of the Deliverable (Typology) via the open access results page of the UNTWIST project here: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101060836/results>.

<sup>8</sup> Instead of dividing the articles by geographical location, we made sure to cross-distribute across locations, so all coders were able to capture and discuss potential different patterns. To consolidate the resulting inductive coding scheme, coders met on a weekly basis to discuss their challenges and suggest changes to the coding scheme based on their engagement with the data. A shared spreadsheet was kept to document and comment on each other's challenges, allowing coders to jointly decide on solutions for the coding scheme.

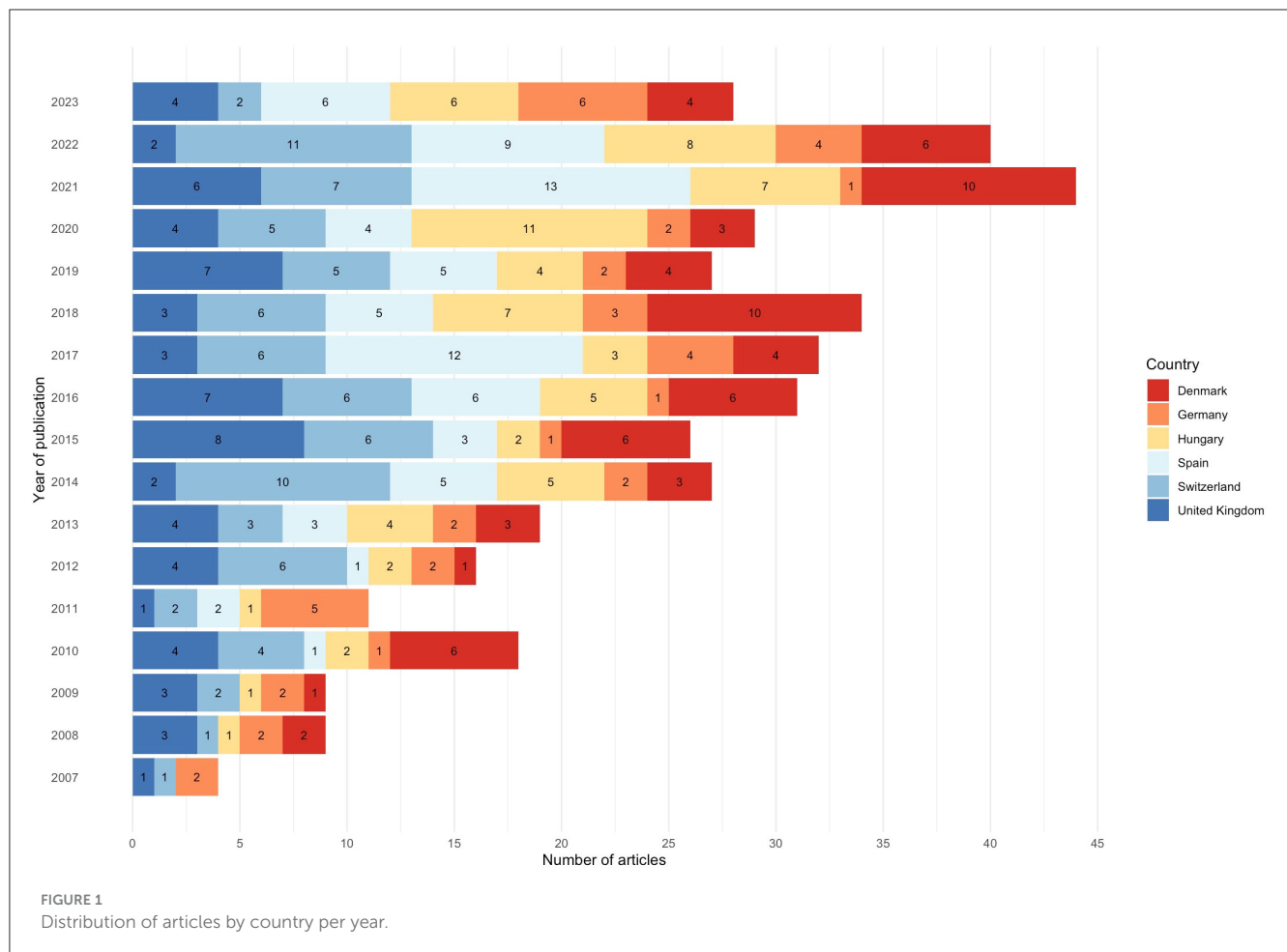
conducted a thematic co-occurrence network analysis using R. Co-occurrence network analysis is a technique employed to uncover association patterns among items, by “analyzing counts of co-occurring entities within a collection of unit” (Zhou et al., 2022). To achieve this, we used Normalized Pointwise Mutual Information (NPMI)<sup>9</sup> to calculate co-occurrence probability matrices, which we then used to derive thematic networks across the texts and explore relational patterns across dimensions and countries. This mixed method approach of a qualitative inductive coding, a thematic analytical clustering, and finally the development of quantitative co-occurrence analyses and visualizations of intersections helped us to arrive at a comprehensive typology of gender-based needs, which we detail in the next section.

## 4 A typology of gender-based needs

Typologies in the literature have been described in different ways, united through their ability to offer specific insights into a phenomenon at hand. In our case, the distinct phases of our analytical process allowed us to generate three different types of insights about gender-based needs in the feminist literature. Each of these perspectives highlights different facets of gender-based needs across all three elements of interest (*where*, *how*, *why*). Specifically, we provide:

- **a conceptual typology**, which is described in the literature as a tool to “explicate the meaning of a concept by mapping out its dimensions, which correspond to the rows and columns in the typology” (Collier et al., 2012, p. 218). Through this type of insight, a typology is able to provide an evidence-based inductive picture of the core **conceptual attributes of a phenomenon**. In our case, this is reflected in the first analytical step, where we refined the concept of gender-based needs by empirically deriving six central dimensions (i.e., policy field, actors, gender lens, epistemological approach, solution, and interest) that emerged from the data through thematic analysis.
- **a descriptive typology**, where the dimensions are assessed in detail to illustrate and derive insights about important patterns related to the phenomenon in question. Our analytical approach to achieving this second insight was grounded in our theoretical understanding of gender-based needs through three key elements: the *location* from which these needs are communicated (*where* issues become salient as gendered, in terms of policy areas and in relation to whom), the *gender perspective* through which they are explored (*how* these needs are theoretically addressed and assessed through gender

<sup>9</sup> NPMI is a measure of association between two variables (in our case, themes and sub-themes) that shows how much their actual co-occurrence probability differs from what we would expect based on their individual probabilities if they were independent of each other (Bouma 2009). NPMI values range from −1 to 1, where 1 indicates complete co-occurrence (the two items always appear together), 0 indicates complete independence (one item's presence does not affect the likelihood of the other), and −1 indicates that the two items occur separately and never together (one item's presence corresponds with the other's absence).



lenses), and the type of *demands* they entail (*why/to what aim* gender-based needs are expressed). Centering this theoretical understanding by conducting co-occurrence analysis within each of the three elements allowed us to assess how they are addressed in the literature. This second analytical step provided a clearer understanding of how gender-based needs are covered and represented across the database.

- a **multidimensional typology**, which Collier et al. (2012) describe as “captur[ing] multiple dimensions and elements of a phenomenon simultaneously.” To do so, in the final step of our analysis, we constructed a co-occurrence matrix that records instances where all three elements occur together in a text. This approach aligns with Stapley et al.’s suggestion to use typologies for identifying idealtypes that are particularly prevalent in the literature through systematic comparison. In our case, the resulting insight exposed idealtypes of gender-based needs which were particularly salient across geographical and epistemic contexts as well as over time. In our typology, this approach can give indications into particular focal areas of feminist insights and serve as a framework for contrasting these with priorities in policymaking.

The following sections describe the results in more detail. In the final part of this article, we then explore the potential of the results to contribute to both feminist academic and activist treatment of gender-based needs across “camps.”

## 4.1 Conceptual typology—dimensions, themes and sub-themes of gender-based needs

Through the in-depth coding process described in the Data Analysis section, we consolidated a hierarchical coding scheme to systematize gender-based needs’ characteristics. This scheme encompasses six distinct dimensions: the *policy field* the gender-based need in question was rooted in; the *actors* who are expressing such a need; the *epistemological approach* underlying the concept of gender adopted by the authors when assessing the need; the *gender lens* of theoretical tools and concepts used to analyze and conceptualize the need; the *solution* proposed by the authors to tackle the need; and finally the *interest* employed by the authors to conceptualize the goal of addressing the need.

These six dimensions encompass 36 themes (i.e., clusters of codes that cover the same thematic category), which are further broken down into 105 sub-themes<sup>10</sup> (i.e., specific codes that identify individual concepts within a theme) (see Figure 2). The following

<sup>10</sup> For simplicity, we have provided the overall number ( $N = 105$ ) of sub-themes (displayed in Figure 2), even though the hierarchical coding scheme included multiple levels of sub-theme specification. For instance, within the “Economy” theme under the “Policy Field” dimension, the sub-theme “Labor

sections describe the emerging characteristics of each dimension as well as how they help to refine the three central elements of our conceptualization of gender-based needs.

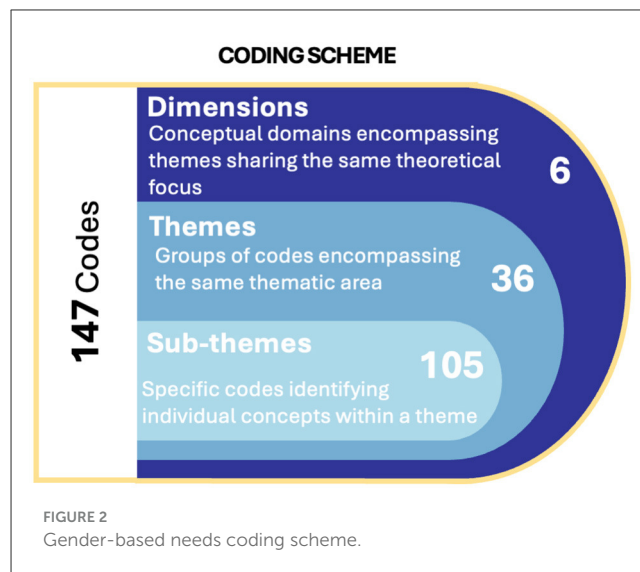
#### 4.1.1 Location

One of our main elements of interest through which we aimed to assess differences and patterns in gender-based needs was that of the location from which gender-based needs are communicated. These encompassed questions about *where* gender-based needs emerged according to the literature, and in relation to whom they are vocalized and identified. In the inductive analysis, we identified two thematic dimensions that captured distinct aspects of these questions. First, articles varied in terms of which *policy field* the gender-based need in question was considered to be rooted in. Throughout the coding process, starting from very concrete areas such as obstetrics and elder care, we were able to arrive at six broader clusters of policy fields, in which gender-based needs emerged (see Figure 3): (1) economy/labor market, including sub-themes such as (paid) care work, sex work, finance and economic crisis; (2) transnational politics, including the sub-themes of international migration, security, and gender mainstreaming; (3) human/civil rights, including sub-themes such as violence, sexuality, political representation, and asylum and citizenship; (4) health with the sub-themes mental health, reproductive healthcare, and obstetrics; (5) education/arts, including higher education and gender studies as well as primary school and civic education/media; and, finally, (6) family, comprising sub-themes such as child care, housework, marriage, and work/life balance.<sup>11</sup>

A second way to interrogate the *location* of gender-based needs was to assess which *actors* were identified as holding the need. In other words, whose needs were emphasized by the literature when covering gender-based needs. Here, we followed an intersectional approach that identities should not be seen as additive and hierarchical but rather as a perspective that “moves among and through [...] forms of domination, providing a snapshot view of their sameness and difference as a way to see their interconnections” (Hill Collins, 2019, p. 27). We consider an intersectional perspective at the location of a gender-based need important for taking the conceptualization of “need” as part of an emancipatory agenda seriously, because intersectionality “encapsulate[s] the convergence of multiple social justice projects and long-standing critical practices within academia” (Hill Collins, 2019, p. 28). In this sense, we argue that this approach in itself represents an effort to look across “camps.” Taking intersectionality seriously for us meant that we coded actors not only in terms of their gender but tried to identify a more complete vision of their societal position along axes of oppression and privilege. In practice,

Market” encompassed several hierarchically lower sub-themes, such as “care work”, “sex work”, “salary and pay gap”, and “work-life balance.”

<sup>11</sup> As scientific publications often investigate complex social phenomena, they frequently address multiple policy (sub)fields simultaneously. For example, by exploring the impact of austerity policies on migrant care workers, scholars address both the economic and human/civil rights policy fields. Consequently, in many cases, articles were double-coded for this dimension.

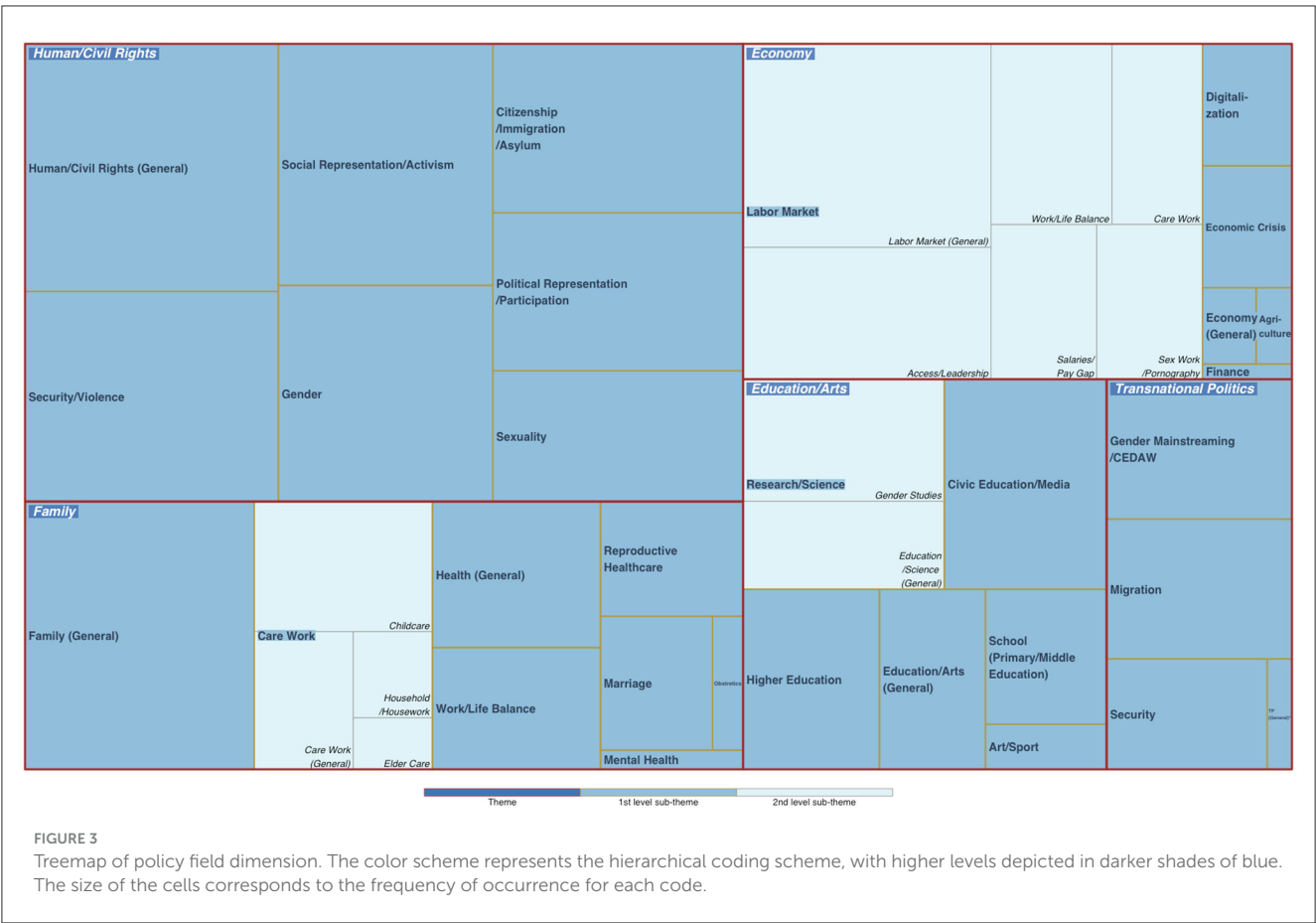


that meant that if an article was speaking to the needs of, for instance, Muslim, cisgender women, we did not only center the obviously gendered category (female) but instead created codes that captured the location of those to whom the need is linked in its entirety, including also citizenship status, welfare status, ethnicity, religion, and sexuality. This created a series of 124 unique societal locations, which represent authors’ foci ranging from singular actor categorizations and focus on “women” or “men” to more complex situatedness for actors such as “unemployed women,” “Asian, Muslim refugees,” or “gender-non-conforming youth.”<sup>12</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Perspective

The second element we wanted to emphasize was *how* authors approached the needs as gendered. For this, we identified two dimensions meant to capture the epistemological position of the authors on gender and different conceptual lenses to approach gender. While we did not want to use the epistemological position of authors as clear delineators for specific gender-based needs to emerge, we also did not want to exclude them entirely as, clearly, they influenced the perspective with which authors would approach needs and, more generally, gender. As outlined above, scholars have discussed extensively how different approaches to a theory of gender influence which research questions are asked, and how power and change are conceptualized (Harding, 1986; Hooks, 1984; Purtschert, 2012). To include these important distinctions in our considerations of gender-based needs without however centering too much on the often-contested divisions between different sub-camps of feminism, we decided to differentiate between three different notions of gender as essentialist, constructivist or poststructuralist/relational.<sup>13</sup> Unlike the other dimensions, the themes within the *epistemological approach* dimension were

<sup>12</sup> While we do think this is a useful way to capture intersections, we are aware of the limitations to do this on academic articles, as authors did not necessarily follow an intersectional approach by themselves, and we could only emphasize those actor characteristics explicitly highlighted by authors.



not inductively derived from the data but instead grounded in theoretical engagement with feminist theory. This allowed us to identify patterns of both in- and across-camp engagement and relevance of needs in our co-occurrence analysis. Additionally, this ensured the inclusion of diverse theoretical perspectives in the dataset, both across and within countries.<sup>14</sup>

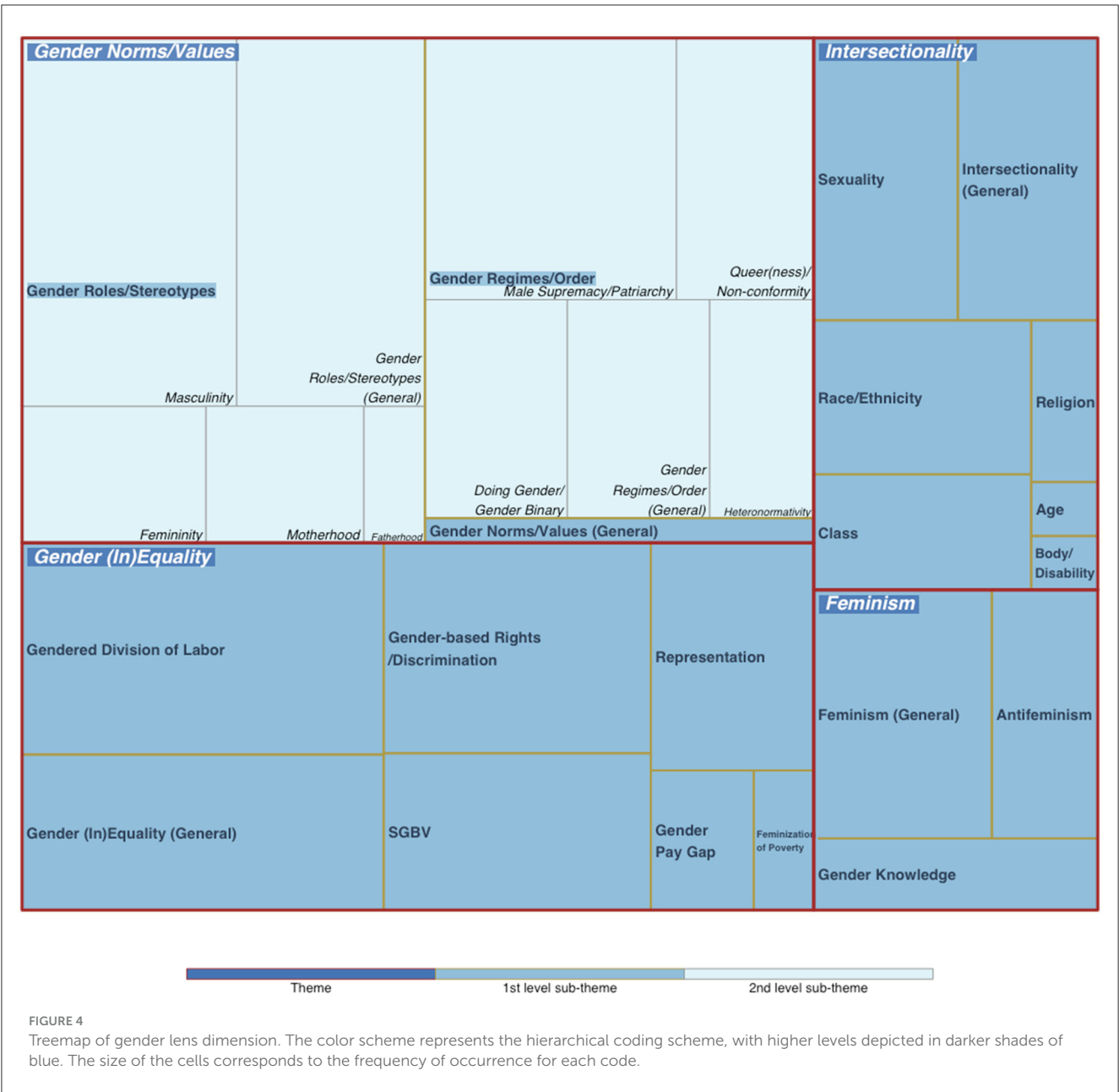
The second dimension surrounding *how* articles and authors consider gender-based needs as gendered is what we call *gender*

*lens*. This encapsulates not the epistemological position as such but rather the theoretical concepts and focus that are used to analyze and conceptualize the need. For example, a particular gendered phenomenon, such as violent extremism can be assessed through a focus on *masculinity*, which differs significantly from a focus on, for example, *gender-based violence* or *intersectionality*. The advantage of academic articles vis-à-vis other sources such as for example political speeches or policies is that these concepts are most often explicitly spelled out and their impact on the interpretation of the issue at hand is made more or less transparent. We conceptualize these perspectives not only as academic tools to interrogate a specific empirical issue but rather as central to our understanding of gender-based needs as they provide us with crucial insight on how specific needs become visible through a particular viewpoint, whilst others might stay hidden. Throughout the inductive coding process, four broad clusters of gender lenses emerged (see Figure 4): *gender inequality*, which encapsulates several types of material inequalities which manifest around political gender representation, the gender pay gap, gendered division of labor, gender-based rights, and discrimination, gender-based violence and the feminization of poverty. While these concepts vary widely in terms of the issues they are focused on, in the analysis they emerged as similar in the sense that they all emphasized the material discrepancies and power inequalities between people based on gender. The second cluster that emerged was that of *intersectionality*—here the focus of scholars was put on the intersections between gender and other axes of oppression, which were used to explain and grasp

13 With this distinction we build on discussions in the literature mentioned earlier, where scholars have distinguished feminist literature based on their understanding of gender as essentialist/rationalist (whereby gender as analytical category indistinguishable from biological sex and often binary (male/female)), constructivist/standpoint (whereby biological sex exists in interplay with but not determined through socially constructed notions of gender (femininity and masculinity)), and poststructuralist (whereby both gender and sex are understood as constituted in and co-constituting discourse) (Hansen, 2014).

14 <sup>11</sup> Overall, our corpus managed to account for this diversity in terms of “camps”. Indeed, when assessing the distribution of themes within this dimension, we found that 34.91% (N = 141) of the contributions in our corpus adopted a constructivist standpoint, while 26.98% (N = 109) reflected poststructuralist/relational perspectives, and 14.60% (N = 59) were rooted in essentialist viewpoints. This overall distribution is largely consistent across country contexts, with essentialist perspectives consistently accounting for the smallest proportion of scientific contributions.





the gender-based need. The main sub-themes that emerged from the literature for this gender lens were class, age, race/ethnicity, sexuality, religion and body/dis-/ability. The third cluster of gender lenses was that of *gender norms/values*, which comprises two broad sub-themes: gender regimes/order and gender roles/stereotypes. While these are interrelated, texts focusing on gender roles and stereotypes were mostly preoccupied with detailing the roots and impact of roles of femininity, masculinity—but also motherhood and fatherhood—on individual or group-based needs. In contrast, articles addressing gender regimes adopted a broader, more systemic perspective on the root of a need, examining systems of heteronormativity, patriarchy/male supremacy, and the gender binary (doing gender), but also assessing the impact of non-conformity and queerness. Lastly, the final emerging cluster within the dimension of gender lens was that of *feminism*. Articles using this lens interrogated gender-based needs through a focus on

changes in the core conceptual implications and meanings of feminism and gender knowledge as well as a limited number of articles that focused on the role of anti-feminism.

4.1.3 Demands

The third and final element in our conceptualization of gender-based needs was that of resulting political demands. This element captures an important aspect of feminist theory: the emancipatory drive for change toward overcoming power inequalities by addressing gender-based needs. For this element, two dimensions emerged that elucidated different aspects of the aims associated with a political treatment of gender based needs (why?). The first dimension was that of a directly suggested policy **solution** to a gender-based need itself. While only a limited number



of texts explicitly mentioned such solutions, those that did emerge can be clustered on a scale of least intrusive—i.e., requiring only marginal reforms to existing laws, policies, or institutions—to those that call for systemic changes aimed at transforming institutions, cultures, or regimes (Figure 5).

The scale comprises six steps to account for variations between the two extremes: *relief/resources*, whereby solutions focus on alleviating the “symptoms” of gender-based needs by providing relief to those suffering from them; *legal protection/anti-discrimination*, which involves changes and reforms to legal and institutional frameworks; *inclusion*, encompassing both increased representation as well as participation of underrepresented groups; *alliance/activism*, suggesting networks creation across diverse societal groups; *gender awareness* in terms of language changes to overturn oppressive and silencing language structures; and, finally, *transformation*, in turn divided into systemic/institutional transformation and attitudinal/cultural transformation.

Since authors did not always clearly define their preferred solutions (only 301 out of 404 articles were coded with one or several solutions), we added an additional, theory-based dimension to this element, informed by the above-mentioned literature on “gender interests.” The notion of *gender interests* was originally introduced by Molyneux (1985) as part of an analysis of gender planning in development, and adapted by other scholars later on Moser (1989). The approach categorizes “interest” based on the extent to which they are theorized as rooted between two opposite ends of a scale. On one end of the spectrum, gender-related *positional* interests are defined in alignment with feminist strategic goals for systemic emancipatory change—such as, for example, changes in legal or political regimes of representation, or economic incentives with the goal to correct or transform systematic disadvantages across society. On the other end, gender-related *conditional* interests are primarily identified through a gender analysis of a specific situation and contexts, focusing for example on the needs of a group of a socio-economic subsample of the population caused by specific conditions of economic crises or emergencies. To code for interests and account for various approaches, we therefore coded on a 5-step scale between conditional (1) and positional (5).

**TABLE 1** Cross-cutting framework of gender-based needs dimensions clustered around the three theoretical elements of location (where), perspective (how), and demands (why).

Location (Where?)	Perspective (How?)	Demand (Why?)
Policy field	Gender lens	Solution
Actors	Epistemological approach	Interest

To sum up, through the first analytical step of coding and thematic clustering of the 404 publications, we were able to deepen the insight in the concept of gender-based needs. We derived six central dimensions (and thematic variations within them), which emerge as crucial to situate gender-based needs within its three theoretical elements of location (where), perspective (how), and demand (why) (Table 1). In the next step, we conducted a co-occurrence analysis, which helped us to uncover descriptive patterns that further illuminate how the three elements of where, how and why gender-based needs are represented across the data.

## 4.2 Descriptive typology: elements, co-occurrences and patterns of gender-based needs

Having derived the key dimensions relevant for understanding the concept of gender-based needs, we next examined how these dimensions interact to shed light on descriptions of *where*, *how*, and *why* gender-based needs are addressed by the scholarship. This approach allowed us to concretize the particular expressions within each conceptual element and illustrate their coverage and distribution by investigating them at the example of our literature subset. We were particularly interested in the ways in which intersections across dimensions and themes can add descriptive information to the three theoretical elements (*location*, *perspective*, and *demand*). To explore these relationships between and within dimensions, we conducted a co-occurrence analysis on themes and sub-themes of the theoretically relevant dimensions for each element. Specifically, we employed the NPMI values derived from these analyses, which measure how strongly the co-occurrence of two items deviates from what would be expected by chance, normalizing for their individual probabilities (Bouma, 2009). Unlike raw frequency counts, which can be misleading in co-occurrence analysis, NPMI uncovers meaningful associations by focusing on the strength of relationships rather than absolute occurrence rates.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The rationale for employing NPMI was that raw frequencies can inflate the apparent significance of frequently occurring concepts that co-occur often simply because of their high individual prevalence, without indicating a genuine connection. Additionally, frequency counts are absolute and unscaled, making it difficult to determine whether a co-occurrence reflects a meaningful relationship or merely the dominance of certain concepts. This issue is particularly problematic in datasets where some concepts are overrepresented, overshadowing less frequent but potentially more insightful associations (Bouma, 2009). By contrast, NPMI addresses these limitations by providing a relative measure of association strength, making it a more reliable and nuanced tool for analyzing co-occurrences in textual data.

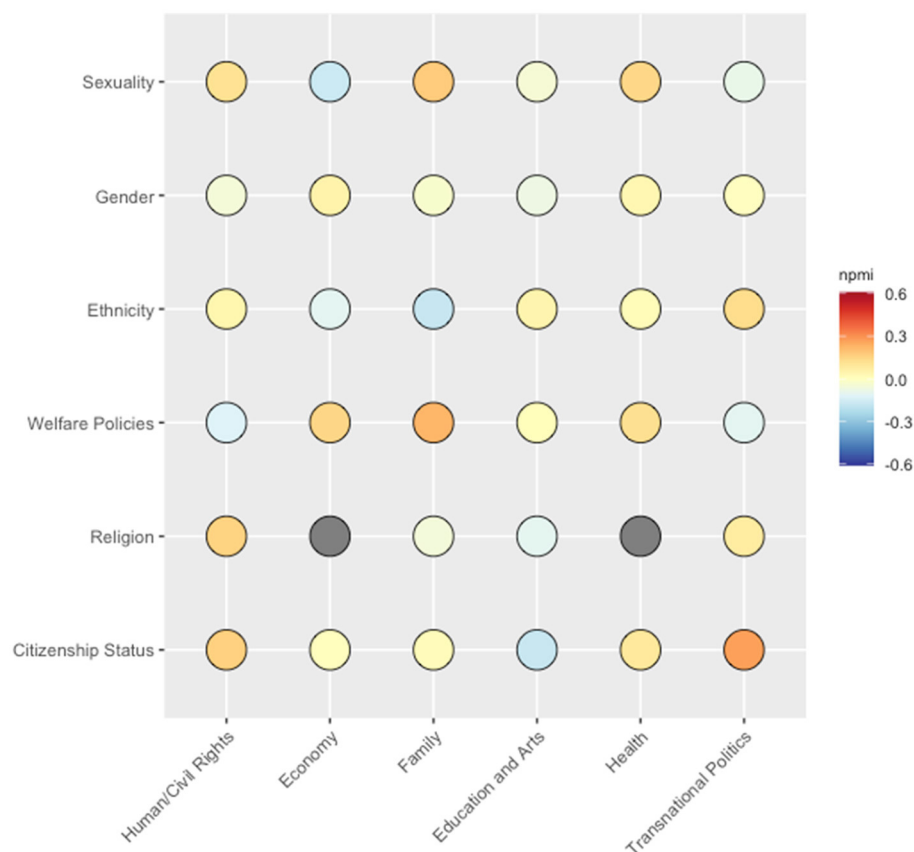


FIGURE 6

Visualization of the location element (where). Heatmap of association strength (NPMI) between themes of policy fields and actor dimensions: the color of the bubbles represents the association strength between themes from each dimension, gray bubbles indicate no intersection between two themes.

#### 4.2.1 Location

First, we focused on identifying co-occurrences between the themes and sub-themes within the dimensions of actors and policy fields—which we had identified as the two key dimensions of the location element (*where*). In the first step we obtained a  $6 \times 6$  matrix of NPMI values of these intersections. This analysis provides insights into *where* and whose gender-based needs are identified as particularly salient across the literature, revealing any specific patterns linking actors to policy fields.

Results show (see Figure 6) that the most likely co-occurrence of themes across the two dimensions in our literature sample, with an NPMI of nearly 0.3, is between actors characterized by their citizenship status and the policy field of transnational politics. This result is not surprising, as numerous publications in our sample discuss the gendered impact of migration policies—both at national and EU levels—on migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in response to the so-called “migration crisis.” In addition, this result is also influenced by the fact that several articles examine the development, design, and impact of gender mainstreaming policies on migrant and refugee women, but also on ethnic minorities—thus also explaining the rather high association between the policy field of transnational politics and ethnicity.

Another set of notable co-occurrences involves actors identified as recipients of welfare benefits and the policy fields of family, economy, and health. The first intersection captures the relationship between parenthood and a range of family

policies—including marriage, caregiving, and work-life balance—highlighting the needs arising from the gendered imbalance between paid and unpaid (domestic) labor. To a lesser extent, this intersection also reflects the link between poverty and family policies, discussed with a focus on the limited—or even absent—support from neoliberal states for parents (especially mothers) facing economic hardship. The second of these intersections reflects the presence of numerous contributions in our dataset, which examine gendered needs arising from unemployment and economic deprivation in relation to austerity policies implemented across the EU in the years following the 2007/2008 financial crisis, with a particular focus on how these policies disproportionately affected women already in precarious financial situations (i.e., feminization of poverty). Finally, the third intersection reflects the link between prospective or new parents and reproductive healthcare, specifically addressing challenges in accessing this type of care for many couples, as well as problematic practices related to childbirth (e.g., obstetric violence). Our results also show that family and health policies are often discussed in relation to actors characterized by their sexuality, as numerous contributions in our collection address the issues around access to gender-affirming and reproductive healthcare for queer people—including trans youth.

It is worth mentioning that our literature collection shows some gaps concerning the needs affecting actors characterized by their sexuality, ethnicity, and citizenship background in the areas of economic, family, and educational policies respectively. All these

intersections have indeed a negative association, indicating that when these types of actors are discussed in our literature collection, their needs are less likely to be related to the three policy fields previously mentioned.

To further explore the patterns of location of gender-based needs in our literature collection, we assessed which type of intersectional approaches had been adopted throughout our dataset. To do so, we explored co-occurrences within the actor dimension, thus identifying what type of socially relevant characteristics are investigated in connection to one another when exploring gender-based needs. In total, we found 124 unique combinations of actors' characteristics, but only a minority of them were occurring consistently across our sample. Moreover, many of these intersections occurred *within* themes, thus indicating a potential propensity of the scholarship analyzed to focus on a specific socially relevant characteristic (e.g., sexuality, or ethnicity) when addressing gender-based needs. Overall, we observe that specific "intersectional pockets of actors" emerge, with certain socially relevant characteristics co-occurring with a higher likelihood. This is particularly evident in the case of sexuality and gender identity, where queer and gender non-conforming codes are the most strongly associated throughout our literature collection. This is not surprising, as prominent strands of feminist scholarship have focused on conceptualizing and investigating the oppression experienced by non-conforming individuals and the domination of heteronormative, essentialist, and hegemonic perspectives (Marcus, 2005; Adams et al., 2016). However, it is worth noting that, particularly in the case of gender nonconforming individuals, intersections with other socially relevant characteristics—such as ethnicity, religion, or citizenship—are largely absent.

Overall, with regards to patterns of location, our analysis has highlighted how gender-based needs are discussed with regards to specific groupings of people—sometimes through an intersectional lens, but more often not—mirroring political and academic interest in certain events (e.g., migration, austerity policies, civil rights movements). In line with feminist inquiries asking "where are the women?"—or, in a more intersectional way, "where is gender?"—our assessment of the location element points to certain absences in the coverage of gender-based needs within our literature collection. Specifically, we detected some gaps in how our literature sample addresses the needs of actors characterized by sexuality, ethnicity, and citizenship in economic, family, and education policies respectively. Furthermore, our analysis of intersectionality within the actor dimension showed that a consistent intersectional approach is so far lacking, with only limited exceptions involving gender identity and sexuality, as well as religion, ethnicity, and citizenship status. While further analyses are necessary to investigate these gaps in greater detail, this initial overview suggests that intersectionality is not as widespread in gender-based needs scholarship as might be assumed.

#### 4.2.2 Perspective

The second element we analyzed, *gender perspective*, combines two key dimensions related to the question of *how* gender-based needs are approached: the inductively coded *gender*

*lens* (representing the significant theoretical and conceptual frameworks authors use to structure their discussions around gender-based needs) and the *epistemological perspective* adopted by authors when addressing gender (which we divided into broad categories of essentialist, constructivist, or poststructuralist). By analyzing the co-occurrence of these two dimensions, we are able to identify patterns in *how* different "camps" of the literature approach gender-based needs. The Sankey diagram below (Figure 7) illustrates how these two dimensions interact within our literature collection.

It is immediately noticeable that each epistemological perspective tends to co-occur with specific gender lenses, creating a relatively clear-cut division along epistemological camps. Contributions adopting an essentialist, binary perspective on gender are more likely to employ concepts grouped under the theme of material gender inequalities, such as the effects of economic deprivation on women, whether caused by financial shocks like the 2007–2008 Financial Crisis or by structural economic inequalities such as job precarity and financial uncertainty. In contrast, poststructuralist contributions are more likely to employ conceptual lenses grouped in the clusters of feminism and intersectionality. Such works explore for example the theoretical advancements of feminist theory and their potential implications for policymaking on gender-based needs. In addition, these contributions make extensive use of intersectionality to assess gender-based needs, examining how socially relevant characteristics such as ethnicity, disability, sexuality, and, to a lesser extent, age intersect with gender in shaping specific needs.

For the lens of gender norms, an interesting distinction with regards to their relations with epistemological perspectives emerges: concepts of gender regimes and orders, such as heteronormativity and male supremacy, are predominantly addressed by poststructuralist contributions. These works examine gender-based needs through the lens of power dynamics, analyzing the pervasive processes of othering and the social exclusion of individuals who fall outside narrow definitions of "normal." Notably, these contributions provide extensive analyses of how queerness and non-conformity are policed and regulated within societies structured around a dichotomous, binary understanding of gender. Meanwhile, constructivist contributions around gender norms are more likely to focus on sub-themes of gender roles and stereotypes, exploring—and challenging—the constructions of masculinity and femininity. This includes examining their implications for fatherhood and motherhood and assessing how these roles are continuously reproduced in society through everyday practices. This approach reflects constructivists' emphasis on practices rather than overarching power structures, which, by contrast, are the primary theoretical focus of poststructuralism.

Overall, the co-occurrence analysis largely confirms our expectations, illustrating how distinct "camps" within the literature gravitate toward specific types of concepts to assess gender-based needs. The analysis of the element *perspective* therefore confirms both the centrality of epistemological approaches in directing the ways in which gender-based needs are understood and articulated, as well as the pervasiveness of "camps" within the feminist literature.



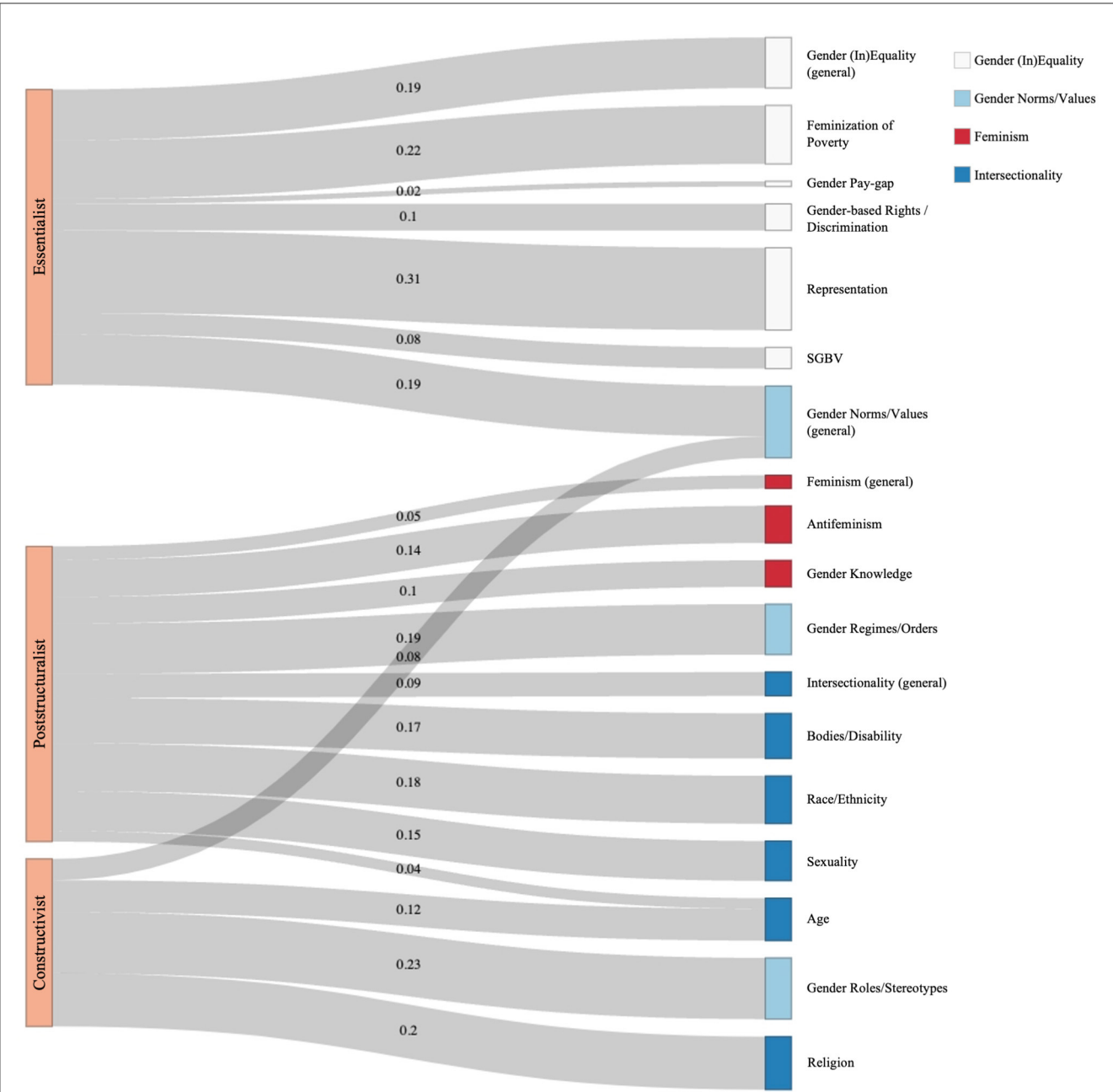


FIGURE 7 Visualization of the perspective element (how). Association strength (NPMI) of gender perspective: the edges of the Sankey diagram represent the positive NPMI values between themes of gender lens and epistemological approach dimensions.

4.2.3 Demands

The final element we analyzed, *Demands*, provided insights into the pathways for emancipatory change to address power inequalities conceptualized and proposed by the contributions in our literature collection (why). To assess this, we explored the interaction between interest and solution dimensions. This allowed us to determine whether there is a clear-cut relationship between solutions focused on addressing specific material issues with practical, conditional goals rooted in specific contextualities, and, on the other hand, solutions aimed at bringing about systemic changes with positional, transformational interests.

Our findings (Figure 8) partially confirm these connections. In particular, contributions proposing solutions aimed at addressing or correcting concrete “symptoms” of gender-based needs—like specific disadvantages for individuals or groups such as child poverty in single-parent households, unwanted or high-risk pregnancies, or the precariousness of traditionally women-dominated jobs—tend to propose targeted reforms of relief or resource allocation to address these specific needs (e.g., increasing welfare benefits or expanding the pool of beneficiaries). A similar pattern emerges for solutions involving legal actions to address gender-based needs, particularly through legal protections and anti-discrimination enforcement (e.g., legal protection from

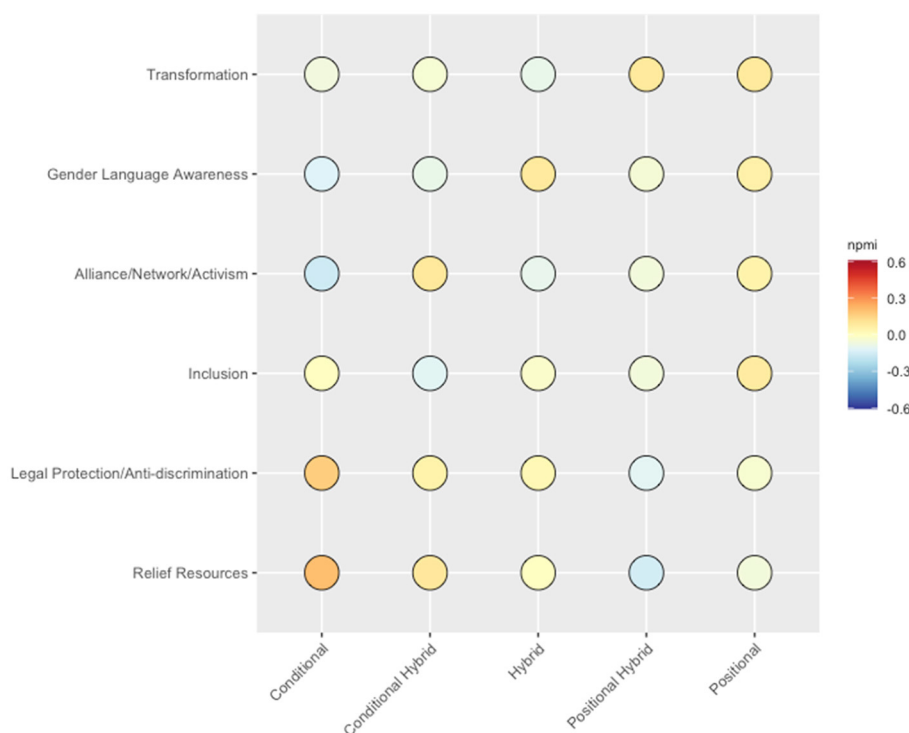


FIGURE 8

Visualization of the demand element (why). Heatmap of association strength (NPMI) between themes of solution and gender interest dimensions: the color the bubbles represents the association strength between themes from each dimension, gray bubbles indicate no intersection between two themes.

discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation or gender identity). These solutions tend to co-occur more frequently with themes of conditional interests related to specific contextual demands (e.g., policing of workplace harassment).

Advancing toward positional interests, which focus on more systemic cross-cutting transformations of regimes and mindsets, the contributions are increasingly less likely to propose this type of solution; when they do, they tend to address the underlying factors shaping specific gender-based needs. For instance, in discussing the challenges faced by disabled women in their everyday lives, contributions focusing on positional interests would prioritize challenging the perception of disabled women as irregular, deviant, or excluded bodies.

Solutions such as inclusion and alliance/activism—which focus on integrating social groups and forming coalitions among different societal groups or social movements to address gender-based needs—show a less distinct pattern along the conditional-positional interest spectrum. This ambiguity might be attributed to the relatively limited number (38 and 20 instances for inclusion and alliance/activism solutions, respectively) of contributions proposing these specific types of solutions. Finally, solutions advocating systemic change in how gender is understood and addressed—whether through challenging oppressive gendered language structures or confronting the attitudinal, cultural, institutional, and discursive practices underlying oppression—are more likely to align with positional interests. This is the case for contributions that, for instance, investigate the structural gender stereotypes characterizing the narratives of the news

media ecosystem, and advocate for a systemic deconstruction of gender roles in the language used by journalists and media personalities to avoid perpetuating structural of inequality. While the association between positional interests and solutions aimed at systemic transformation appears less pronounced (i.e., lower NPMI values) than the connection between conditional interests and less invasive solution options, this can be attributed to the relatively high absolute frequency of “positional” codes across the dataset compared to other interest themes. As previously discussed, NPMI is designed to discount the influence of high-frequency items when calculating association strength, ensuring that frequent items do not disproportionately (and artificially) inflate co-occurrence frequencies with other items. Taking this into account, we conclude that the less pronounced association between positional interests and transformational solutions can be attributed to the fact that most of our contributions explicitly situate themselves within a framework of systemic and structural change, as expected given the foundational aims of feminist literature.

Overall, the findings largely confirm our expectations, revealing a pattern between solution and interest dimensions: least intrusive solutions, which require only marginal reforms to existing policies, are more likely to co-occur with conditional interests originating from specific societal contexts and experiences. Conversely, solutions advocating for systemic changes aimed at transforming society are more likely to be associated with positional interests for structural emancipatory change.

To sum up, the descriptive typology has provided a variety of insights into the phenomenon of gender-based needs. First,

while the particular patterns we uncovered are limited to our specific dataset, they can provide impetus for particular future analyses of gender-based needs. Such analyses can draw on the insights generated with regards to, for example, expressions of solutions for gender-based needs and clusters of actors around specific policy areas to better understand the insights that have been gained from the feminist literature as well as contribute to filling some of the gaps which we identified, e.g., with regards to more intersectional analyses. Second, the descriptive typology has provided an illustration of how the typology can be applied to existing coverage of gender-based needs which can extend beyond our particular dataset. By suggesting the usage of npmi, we have shown how co-occurrence analyses might be a useful tool to gain a better understanding of the coverage of gender-based needs.

### 4.3 Multidimensional typology: idealtypes, cross-tabulation, and camps

In our final analytical step, we present a multidimensional typology that takes into account the connections *across* all three elements of gender-based needs we explored in the previous step. By examining how *location*, *perspective*, and *demand* interact altogether, we aim to synthesize the insights gained throughout the previous phases and provide a comprehensive understanding of gender-based needs. In this regard, our objectives are 2-fold. First, we aim to explore idealtypes that emerge through the intersections among the three central elements of gender-based needs and to develop a theoretical tool that can help researchers and practitioners better understand and assess gender-based needs. Second, we illustrate a possible use of this multidimensional typology by applying it to analyse our specific literature collection, providing an overview of its characteristics while also identifying potential gaps and oversights.

#### 4.3.1 Idealtypes

To create a multidimensional typology that simultaneously captures these three core elements of gender-based needs, while also remaining an accessible tool for researchers and practitioners, we first needed to identify the most salient and useful dimensions of each element (*location*, *perspective*, and *demand*). Including all seven previously identified dimensions would have resulted in an inaccessible and therefore unusable tool. We have therefore focused our attention on one specific dimension for each element that we deemed crucial for developing a tool useful for both theoretical and empirical investigations.

For *location* (*where*), we concentrated on the *policy field* because this offers broader applicability, as researchers and policymakers often focus on specific policy areas when developing proposals and conducting assessments. For the *perspective* element (*how*), we included our inductively derived *gender lens* dimension for two main reasons. First, with its several sub-categories, it provides more detailed insights than the epistemological approach alone. Second, the gender lens dimension allow us to infer with reasonable certainty the epistemological approach, as our analyses showed how specific gender concepts strongly align

with essentialist, constructivist, or poststructuralist epistemologies. Lastly, for the *demand* element (*why*), we chose to focus on the *interest* dimension for both theoretical and methodological reasons. First, our co-occurrence analysis showed that the inductively coded solution dimension broadly aligned with the theoretically informed distinction of interest. This alignment provided a robust justification for including a more encompassing and versatile dimension—one not tied to specific implementations but still capable of capturing the intended goals of political actions. Second, the ordinal, scale-like nature of the interest dimension allows for a more nuanced depiction of the demands element. This choice was further supported by our analysis, which highlighted that concrete solutions were not consistently proposed across the literature we reviewed, making interest a more broadly applicable variable. By combining insights from the previous sections, our approach thus bridges the three elements of *location*, *perspective*, and *demand* by cross-tabulating policy fields (economy, transnational politics, health, human/civil rights, education, and family), gender lens (gender norms, material inequality, feminism, and intersectionality), and interest (scale from conditional to positional) associated with gender-based needs.

The result is a multidimensional typology that is comprised of idealtype combinations of the three elements, thereby providing a map of gender-based needs. Concretely, this conceptual map provides a structured framework for identifying gender-based needs, assessing their coverage, and informing the development of policy measures to address them. In line with the objectives of a multidimensional typology, it allows to simultaneously account for the location of the need, the perspective through which the need is assessed, and the type of response envisioned. For example, taking into consideration the location of gendered medical needs, a health policy perspective might emphasize the recruitment of medical personnel specialized in gender-specific issues, whereas an economic policy focus could highlight the need of measures such as menstrual leave. Moreover, the theoretical and methodological approach used to assess these needs significantly shapes their conceptualization. An intersectional perspective on the recruitment of specialized medical personnel for instance, might emphasize the necessity of ensuring their proficiency in addressing the specific health concerns of marginalized groups, such as disabled, Black, trans, and/or Muslim women. Finally, the intended scope of policy intervention—whether a localized, context-specific measure (e.g., establishing an outpatient clinic for women in a particular neighborhood) or a broader, systemic reform (e.g., integrating gender-sensitive training into medical education and ensuring its institutional implementation)—further influences the formulation and impact of policy responses. By incorporating these dimensions, we argue that this analytical tool provides a more comprehensive and nuanced approach to understanding and addressing gender-based needs.

#### 4.3.2 Cross-tabulation

To illustrate the use of this typology and the idealtypes it generates, we applied it to our literature collection, providing an evidence-based example of one possible, though not exclusive, application of this multidimensional framework. We performed

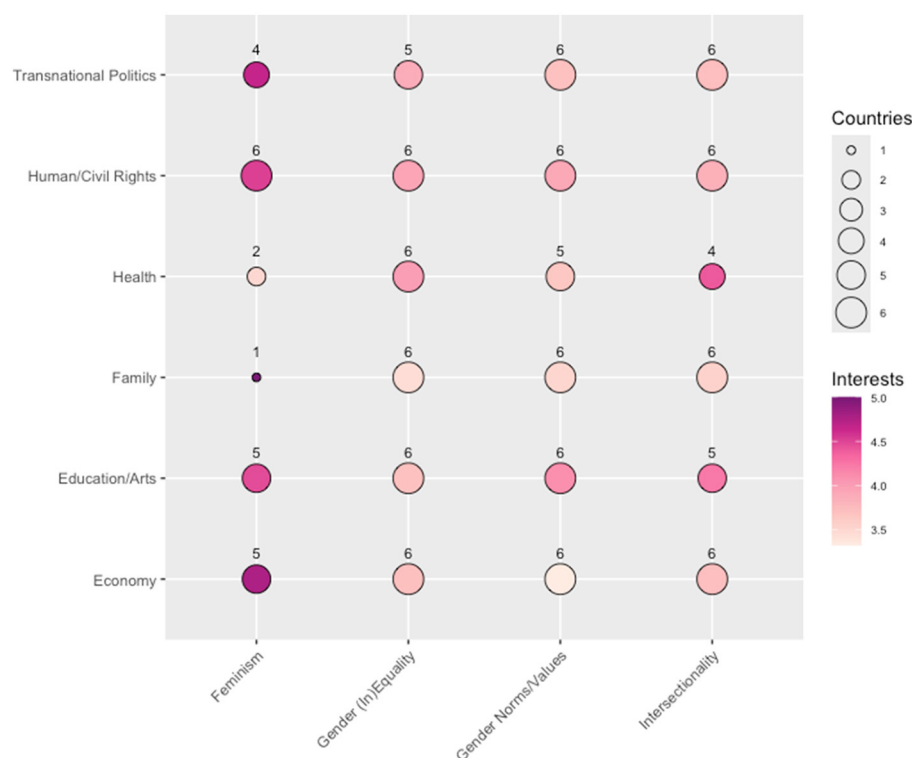


FIGURE 9

Co-occurrence of themes in policy fields and gender lens dimension by country. The size of each bubble represents the number of countries where two themes co-occur at least once. The color indicates the average interest value, calculated across all instances of co-occurrence for that intersection, ranging from 1 (conditional) to 5 (positional).

a co-occurrence analysis across the policy field, gender lens, and interest dimensions. Specifically, we began by cross-tabulating co-occurrences between themes of the first two dimensions (gender lens and policy fields), creating a  $6 \times 4$  matrix. This process resulted in a matrix with 24 cells, each of which representing an idealtype of gender-based need. To then explore the salience of these idealtypes across the geographical contexts represented in our data, we calculated the number of countries where each of the 24 co-occurrence between policy field and gender lens themes appeared at least once.<sup>16</sup> Then, for each of these 24 intersections, we computed the average interest value—ranging from 1 (conditional) to 5 (positional)—across all contributions in which the specific co-occurrence was present. This then helped to characterize the types of demands associated with each idealtype of gender-based needs.

Figure 9 provides an overview of these results. The graph shows the presence across country and interest value of all 24 idealtypes. In particular, certain intersections of policy field and gender lens are strongly associated with positional interests and transformational demands. This is especially evident when needs are approached through a feminism gender lens, where, across all policy areas except health, the idealtypes exhibit a notably high

interest value, linked to positional goals. This can be explained by the fact that in our literature, contributions focusing on a feminism gender lens tend to emphasize needs that result from patriarchal and oppressive structures as well as highlight the benefits of disrupting these through feminist interventions. For example, studies examining the policy field of economy through this lens question mainstream economic principles that are believed to govern the economy and people's behavior, as well as the objectives that economics, as a science, must pursue. In doing so, these contributions uncover how these principles reinforce long-standing discrimination against women, minorities, and vulnerable people, while also proposing alternative policies to foster a fairer, more supportive, and egalitarian society.

This is further confirmed through our previous analysis, where we found a strong relationship between the gender lens of feminism and poststructuralist approaches, which also tend to emphasize issues of gender regimes and orders. While thus, feminism gender lenses (and to a lesser degree intersectionality lenses) expose a particularly propensity for positional interest, it is noteworthy that all interest values are above 3, thus indicating an overall tendency toward more positional interests and transformational demands. This confirms our findings from section 2 that the literature generally tends to prefer more transformational and systemic approaches, which is in line with feminist theorizing.

In addition to characterizations based on the types of demands that are favored across idealtypes, Figure 9 also shows that most of our idealtypes occur across 5 or more countries from our

<sup>16</sup> To determine this value, we focused solely on the co-occurrence between policy field and gender lens. Indeed, due to the ordinal, scale-like nature of the interest dimension, its presence was consistent across all intersections, making its absence virtually impossible and, therefore, not a meaningful indicator of the salience of each type within a country context.



sample. This is not surprising given that the data that was used to derive the important qualities of gender-based needs is based on those same countries. However, the cross-tabulation confirms our previous process of deriving important dimensions and shows that their intersections are also highly salient. Only in four idealtypes (feminism—health, feminism—family, feminism—transnational politics, and intersectionality—health) we have lower values. This can be explained by the lower frequency of publications with a focus on feminism as well as health coverage (which we account for in the final step of the analysis). At the same time it is also interesting to note that only 15 out of the 24 ideal types are actually salient across *all* six countries. This exposes some differences in the geographical distribution of idealtypes, which can be interesting to explore in more detail in future research. Moreover, it will be interesting to explore whether the idealtypes remain largely salient when applying the analysis to other additional country contexts in Europe or beyond. Even if this is not the case, the idealtype grid provides a helpful tool to compare the coverage of gender-based needs in the literature to the interests and programs expressed by policymakers for each country context. This can help to sketch the cross-fertilization and dialogue between academia and practice as well as illustrate certain gaps in the policy-based coverage.<sup>17</sup>

### 4.3.3 Camps

In addition to assessing the coverage of idealtypes across countries and their characterizations in terms of demands (interest), we also added one final analysis to better shed light on how the multidimensional typology can be used to better understand “camp” formation within our sample of the literature. Specifically, similar to the analyses conducted in the research step of the Descriptive Typology, we once again turned to NPMI to account for potential frequency bias (i.e., overrepresentation of particular themes occurrences) within our theoretically sampled dataset. By using NPMI, we were able to generate insights into the strength of the associations at each intersection across the sample, as shown in Figure 10.

In this final analysis, our results show that the association between feminism and several policy fields is noticeably negative, suggesting that these policy areas are less likely to be addressed through a feminist lens in our sample. This is particularly evident in the case of family policies, a finding that aligns with the results of our previous analysis on salience across country contexts. In fact, this intersection was rarely observed in our literature sample and, when it appeared, it was exclusively in the Spanish context. This absence may stem from the tendency in our sample to discuss family policies in relation to more conditional, practical goals, which do not strongly align with the inherently more systemic and positional objectives of feminist discourse. A similar argument can be made regarding the association between feminism and health policies, as this intersection also occurred infrequently in our sample compared to others. However, a slightly different explanation may apply to the negative association between

feminism and the policy field of economy. While our earlier analysis on the salience of ideal types showed that this intersection was relatively prominent across different countries (5 out of 6), the negative NPMI result could be attributed to the nature of this measurement. Specifically, as previously discussed, NPMI accounts for the overrepresentation of specific items, which can artificially inflate co-occurrence frequencies. This appears to be the case for the economy policy field, which was highly prevalent in our sample. Therefore, although co-occurrences between economy and feminism were identified in most country contexts at least once, the direction and strength of the association suggest that economic policies are more likely not to be viewed through a feminist lens. The same argument applies to the association between this policy fields and intersectionality. Results also show that the strongest positive associations are between the policy field of education and feminism, as well as between the one of economy and gender (in)equality. The former can be attributed to the numerous contributions discussing academic research and education focusing on gender studies and gender theory, and their role in science. The latter is driven by the high presence of studies in our sample that explore gender-based inequalities in the labor market, from the gender pay-gap to the underrepresentation of women in specific sectors and positions.

## 5 Conclusion: gender-based needs as a framework to assess feminist permeation in research and policy-making

In this paper, we set out to conceptualize gender-based needs in the feminist literature as a potential concept that enables to assess where, how and why issues become salient as gendered across epistemological and empirical “camps” in the literature. Through an in-depth analysis, which accounted for but was not determined by theoretical approaches, we were able to derive six dimensions of gender-based needs (policy area, actors, epistemological approach, gender lens, interest, and solution). These dimensions combined both deductive aspects, such as epistemological approach and interest, as well as inductive aspects, such as policy fields and gender lenses. Subsequently, we cross-tabulated and compared those six core dimensions along three elements of the research question, providing insights into the location (where), perspective (how), and demands (why) of gender-based needs. Through this we were able to show how applying the typology empirically can help to uncover specific clusters of actor-policy combinations and types of solutions for gender-based needs, which dominate the literature. The assessment of the perspectives used to analyze gender-based needs in our sample for example revealed a pronounced “camp-structure” alongside existing divisions into epistemological approaches. This finding was further confirmed by the multidimensional typology, which looked at how idealtypes of gender-based-needs emerge through a focus on co-occurrences across all three elements. By applying this type of analysis to our sample, we highlighted intersections that are highly salient for particular pockets of the literature, while other interconnections receive comparatively scarce attention. A summary of both the empirical findings of each

<sup>17</sup> For policy-related usage of the Typology at the example of Switzerland, see e.g., Rothermel et al., 2024.

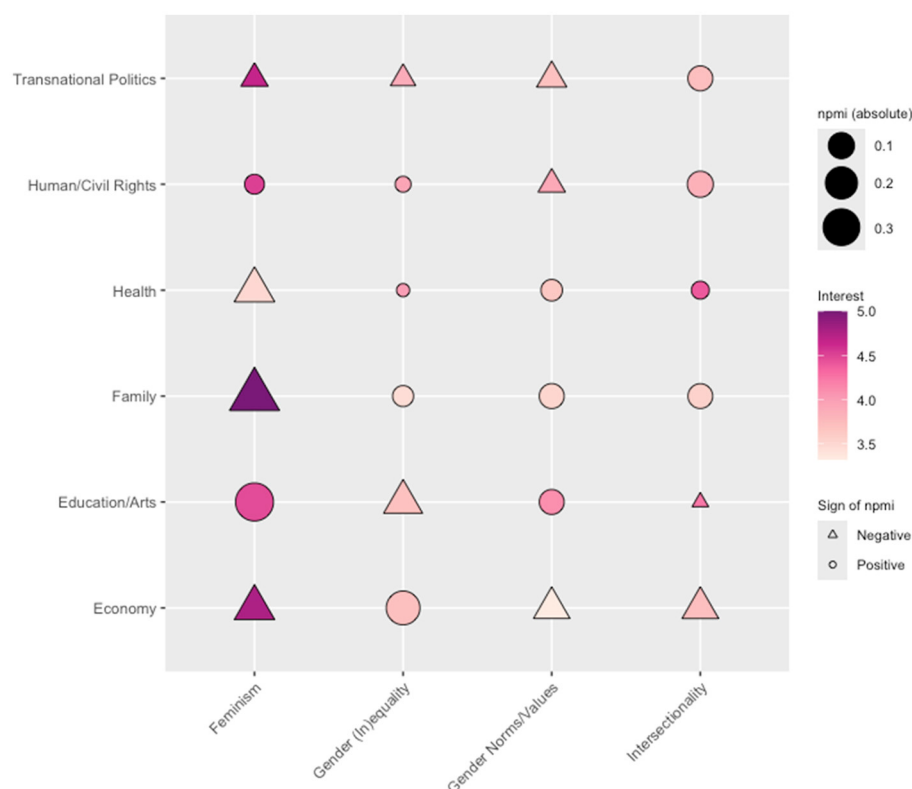


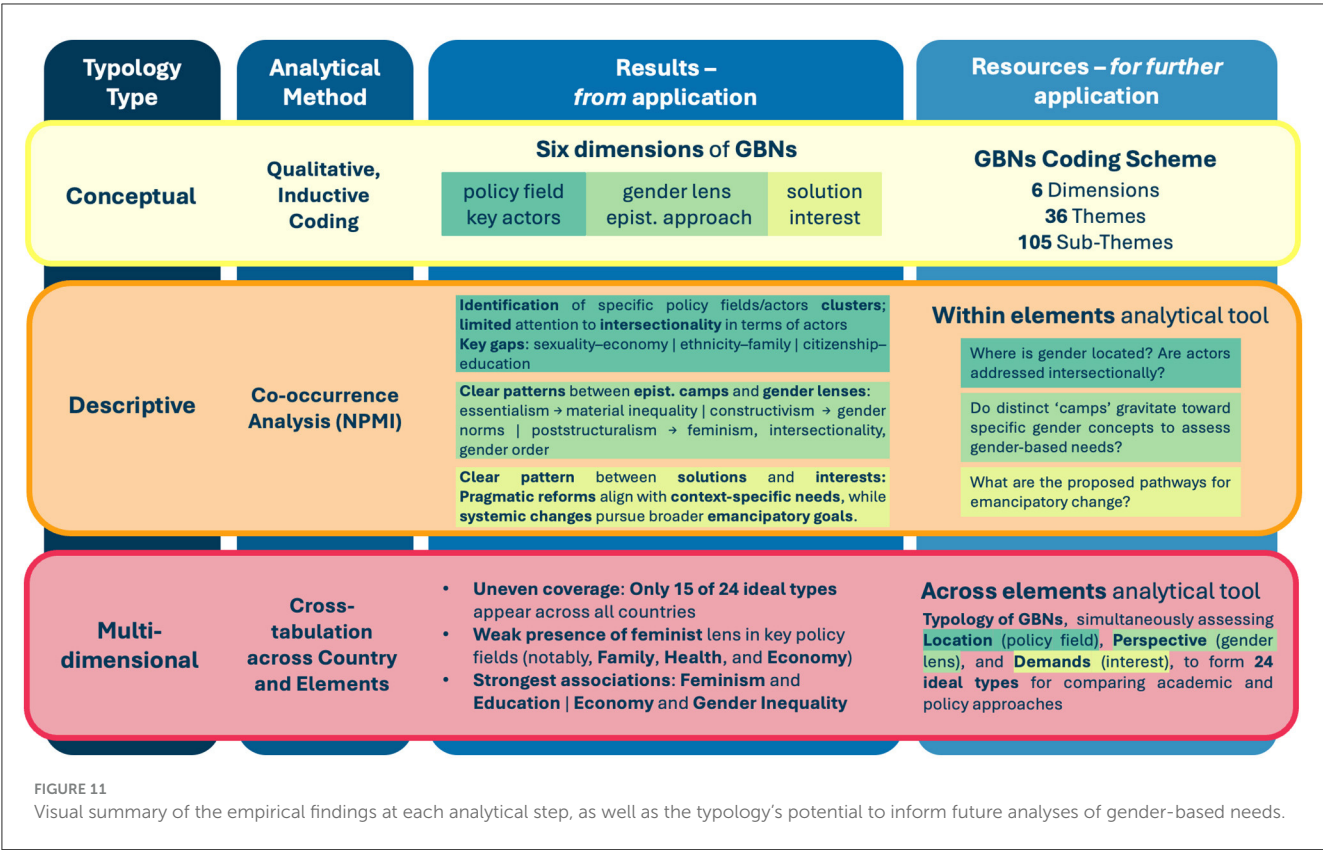
FIGURE 10

Application of the gender-based needs typology to the literature collection, accounting for association strength (NPMI) between policy fields and gender lens. The size of each bubble represents the absolute NPMI value, while its shape indicates whether such value is negative or positive. The color denotes the average interest value, calculated across all instances of co-occurrence for that intersection, ranging from 1 (conditional) to 5 (positional).

analytical step as well as the potential of the Typology to inform future analyses of gender-based needs can be found in Figure 11.

Overall, our research provides several contributions to the existing literature. First, it introduces an evidence-based, novel framework for clustering and assessing the literature on gender, grounded in a theoretically informed focus on gender-based needs. This approach is underlined by robust empirical investigations into the dimensions that emerge as useful to differentiate and cluster the literature. As such, the article presents an evidence-based tool. This tool is not only applicable to academic research but can also serve as a broader framework for understanding, where, how and when gender-based needs emerge. By highlighting methods for assessing these needs, the findings can assist policymakers and activists in identifying gaps in political and media coverage of gender. While the sampling procedure, focused on identifying variance rather than frequency, meant that the sample is not representative of the frequency of gender-based needs within each country context, we opted for this approach in order to ensure as broad as possible inclusion of needs, which have been found to be practically and theoretically significant. Since the sample of the literature remains limited to European local contexts, in the future it would also be beneficial to compare the types of gender-based needs we derived with other regional insights, thus potentially expanding the typology as well as enabling insights into regionally specific coverage of gender-based needs.

Second, by applying the insights we gathered to our initial impetus around providing an across-camps perspective, our analysis has indeed revealed pronounced tendencies within our sample of the literature to assemble around specific “camps.” While this can be partially explained through both the disciplinary and logistical divisions inherent to the social sciences, by approaching the “camp-structure” through the focus on gender-based needs, we have been able to identify areas where this segmentation creates gaps “in-between” camps (Sylvester, 2007), leaving certain perspectives overlooked. For example, for our sample, the analysis highlights a persistent lack of intersectional approaches beyond the intersection of gender and sexuality, and gender and ethnicity. At the same time, we also observed a lack of engagement with material inequalities in the education policy field, as well as an absence of a focus on the role of feminism in family policy. These gaps could point to interesting yet overlooked demands, such as rethinking needs within family structures—e.g., work-life balance and related policies—through a feminist gender lens that would challenge the patriarchal foundations of marriage and heterosexuality. While some of these gaps stem from our specific sampling context or the inherent challenges of applying concepts like, for example, intersectionality through a rationalist epistemology, others appear to be more structural in nature. These structural gaps suggest a need to address—and overcome—the disciplinary, epistemological, and political barriers and boundaries within academia, that constrain



the feminist efforts to center and illuminate the experiences of those at the margins of politics.

While our typology does not claim to depict all camps within the feminist literature, we have shown that it provides a robust tool that can help to shed light on patterns in academic feminist discussions of gender-based needs which are otherwise easily obscured. Once highlighted, the typology can serve as an impetus for scholars to focus in on expressions of gender-based needs that have received less attention to date. This approach may not only help to uncover perspectives on gender-based needs that, as of yet, have been sidelined, but also to better understand the boundaries themselves and reflect on why and when certain perspectives are chosen for analysis and others are not. In the words of feminist Cynthia Enloe: “The moment when one becomes newly curious about something is also a good time to think about what created one’s previous lack of curiosity” (Enloe, 2004). We hope that our typology, in addition to serving as a tool for clustering both theory and policies focused on gender-based needs, can inspire such moments of curiosity and reflection.

Data availability statement

The datasets presented in this study can be found in online repositories. The names of the repository/repositories and accession number(s) can be found below: <https://zenodo.org/records/10630024>.

Author contributions

A-KR: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Software, Supervision, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. VN: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. MZ: Formal analysis, Methodology, Software, Validation, Visualization, Writing – review & editing. LB: Funding acquisition, Project administration, Supervision, Writing – review & editing. MA: Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Writing – review & editing.

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