

Toward Equal Rights for Women in Turkey: Nonformal Education and the Law

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Abstract

The study of civil rights, one element of the social sciences curricula, has direct implications for recipients of the educational process. Academicians, policy makers, and practitioners alike have expressed concern that adult women without a formal education may not have basic understanding of these rights. The purpose of this paper is to examine the civil rights taught in a curriculum used in one non-formal education literacy class for women in Turkey, and their relationship to official law. The first section of the paper offers a brief background of the status of women's literacy in Turkey and general information on the system of non-formal education. Next, the piece provides a review of the literature pertaining to civil rights curriculum in general and adult literacy education in Turkey. The methodology section is followed by a content analysis of the program's curriculum. Connections are made between Turkish law and civil rights in the last section of the work. We conclude this non-formal educational program's curriculum offers the learner academic content knowledge about civil rights through real-life situations. Recommendations for increased participatory activities that link women's understanding of the material with individual and collective action to assert their civil rights are offered.

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Introduction

The Republic of Turkey Census reports 19.4% of the adult female population is illiterate (Census of Population, SIS, 2000). If one examines that Census data by age group, approximately 60% of women over the age of 65, 50% of women in the 55-59 age group, and 25% of the women in the 45-49 age group are illiterate.¹ In other words, a substantial proportion of the older female adult population cannot read and write. These figures are not surprising if one examines the population and enrolment data for girls in school during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, when today's women (ages 45-70) were of school-going age. Primary school data were collected because these years are the most likely ones in which one learns to read and write.

¹ I am aware of the complexity of the term "literacy" and the numerous ways in which it has been defined. Here, I use the most basic definition -- the inability to read and write more than one's own name.

Table 1 shows the percentage of Turkish girls (and boys) of school-going age enrolled in primary school during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, and their graduation rates.

Table 1: Primary School Enrolment Rates of Turkish Females and Males (ages 5-9)

Year	Males (ages 5-9) Enrolled in School	Females (ages- 5-9) Enrolled in School
1935	37%	21%
1940	47%	23%
1945	64%	40%
1950	76%	48%

Although the percentage of girls enrolled in school between 1935 and 1950 more than doubled, the graduation rates increased only two percentage points (from 5% to 7%). This bleak statistic does not offer all we need to know about girls' literacy levels. If we base our assumptions about formally educated girls solely on enrolment statistics, we would mistakenly assume that in 1935, 21% of girls were literate; 23% of girls were literate in 1940, and 40% and 48% were literate in 1945 and 1950, respectively. However, if we examine graduation rates, we find a very low percentage of girls actually finished primary school. Table 2 shows the percentage of female graduates from primary school.

Table 2: Percentage of Female and Male Primary School Graduates

Year	Percentage of Male Primary School Graduates	Percentage of Female Primary School Graduates
1935	.06	.05
1940	.08	.06
1945	.09	.06
1950	.10	.07

Specifically, the table indicates less than 10% of girls enrolled in primary school completed primary school during the period of 1935–1950. Although it is possible girls developed literacy skills prior to dropping out, it is highly unlikely that they did.

One fundamental purpose of education is to develop an awareness of civil rights. If Turkish women did not graduate from even the most basic level of school, it is also unlikely they learned about their civil rights, a fundamental component of a school curriculum. Do adult women in this situation learn about these rights? Although adult literacy programs are continually developing new curricula that meet the needs of their illiterate or semi-literate populations (Santa, 2006; Taylor, 2006), few incorporate the concept of civil rights into programmatic materials (Suarez, 2007). One exception to this is the case of the Republic of Turkey. As the country seeks entry into the European Union, it has undergone significant changes in terms of both policies and practices that seek to put the country on equal footing with countries that are aware of the importance of civil rights. The purpose of this paper is two-fold: to determine themes existent in the curriculum of one non-formal

education literacy program for women in Turkey; and to examine the civil rights that relate to those themes according to official law.

Literature pertaining to civil rights curriculum and the Mother-Child Education Foundation's literacy program in Turkey

While the fundamental principles of human rights are basic in all cultures, that which constitutes the “basics” of civil rights education can be studied from a variety of ways (Akinbode, 2006; Long, 1999). The most appropriate for this study includes the intellectual, subjective and participative perspectives (Osler & Starkey, 1996). The intellectual component provides the information about rights which can inform future action (Birthistle, 2000, 2002). Central ideas here include standards for teaching, learning, and assessing democratic citizenship which emphasise the importance of legal documents, such as the Constitution. Teaching should strive to educate about both national and international democracies. Learning should be based on informative lessons specific to the law. Assessments should gauge understanding of the extent to which learning was accomplished. The subjective element focuses on empathetic concerns which seek to prompt action. The lessons engage the learner by relating topics to the student's own life experiences, thus creating an immediate point of reference. This dimension may evoke a wide range of emotions, of which the teacher should be aware and prepared. The participatory element offers the learner experiential situations that provide real-life learning opportunities (Birthistle, 2000, 2002). In their most simple form, these experiences may occur as role-playing in the classroom. Experiences outside the classroom may be most effectively conducted in small groups, organised in the neighbourhood, under the direction of the program's personnel.

The framework put forth by Osler and Starkey is used in this work to identify the civil rights taught in the Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı (hereafter referred to as AÇEV) or the Mother-Child Education Foundation, a non-governmental organisation whose main office is located in Istanbul, Turkey.² Founded in 1993, the Centre is grounded in the philosophy that learning is a life-long process whose formal education should begin in early childhood, but recognises the reality that middle-aged women are often illiterate. Hence, AÇEV acknowledges the need for literacy classes for women, and offers the Functional Adult Literacy Program (FALP). The aim of FALP is to “... impart functional literacy skills to women while raising their awareness about issues which limit their legal, social and familial well-being.” How does it accomplish this goal? FALP has maintained a 98% graduation rate during the fourteen years of the program's existence with over 65,000 women in 17 provinces participating in the program, see Bekman (1997), Durgunoğlu, Öney and Kuşçul (2003), and Kagıtcıbası (1997) for evaluations of the program; see Esşioğlu

2 One of the most well-known and widely used alternatives to formal education for adults is non-formal education. Non-formal education pertains to “... learning and training which takes place outside recognised educational institutions” (Tight, 1996, p. 68). Combs and Ahmed (1974) offer four characteristics largely associated with the development of nonformal education in the 1970s that are still relevant today. First, this form of educational service is relevant to the needs of disadvantaged groups. Second, it concerns a particular category of person. Third, there are clearly defined purposes. Fourth, there is flexibility in organisation and methods.

and Sirman (2007) for research on citizens' education; for the impact of the program, see Kağıtcıbaşı, Goksen and Golgoz (2005); for program development and implementation, see Kuşcul, Çiğdem and Sirman (2007).

Developed by Drs Banu Oney and Aydın Durgunoglu in 1995, the program has operated from October 2005–June 2008 in Diyarbakır, Mardin, İstanbul, and Şanlıurfa. The 120 hour, 14-week program requires participants to meet three times a week for three-hour sessions at the respective Centre or office. Students are taught lessons from the text entitled “Yurttaşlık Eğitimi: İnsan Hakları ve Kadın Seçmen Olmak” (Citizens' Education: Human Rights and to be a Women Voter) under the direct instruction of a trained, volunteer teacher. The text consists of two parts. The following table provides the lesson titles for the first section.

Table 3: Part 1 of the AÇEV Curriculum

Section 1 Human Rights (İnsan Hakları)	Main Idea
Lesson 1 No Title	Human beings
Lesson 2 Yaşama Hakkı	Right to live
Lesson 3 Eğitim Hakkı	Right to an education
Lesson 4 Çalışma Hakkı	Right to work outside the home
Lesson 5 Eş Seçme ve Evlenme Hakkı	Right to choose a spouse and to marry
Lesson 6 Boşanma Hakkı	Right to divorce
Lesson 7 Anne Olma Hakkı	Right to be a mother
Lesson 8 Mülk Edinme Hakkı	Right to property
Lesson 9 (İş Yerinde Güvenli Çalışma Hakkı)	Right to work in a safe environment
Lesson 10 Seyahat Etme Hakkı	Right to travel
Lesson 11 Miras Hakkı	Right to inheritance
Lesson 12 Şiddet Görmeme Hakkı	Right to avoid violated
Lesson 13 Seçme ve Seçilme Hakkı	Right to elect and to be elected

The second part of the program, “To Be a Woman Voter” (Kadın Seçmen Olmak) includes eight lessons. The following table provides the lessons titles for this section of the text.

Table 4: Part 2 of the AÇEV Curriculum

Section 2 To Be a Woman Voter (Kadın Seçmen Olmak)	Main Idea
Lesson 14 Yönetim Muhtarlık ve Aile Yönetimi)	Local Governance and Family Management
Lesson 15 Yönetim Belediye ve Meclis Yönetimi	Municipality Management and Assembly/Council Management
Lesson 16 Kadınlar Ne Yapar?	Women's Roles
Lesson 17 Kadınların Talapleri	Women's Demands
Lesson 18 Kadınsız Toplum	A Society without Women
Lesson 19 Kadın Seçmen Olmak	Women Voters
Lesson 20 Oy Vermek	Voting

Methodology

The ideals of justice and human rights, in the context of the sociology of education, are frequently examined by evaluating the association between power and knowledge (Ingram & Simon-Ingram 1991; Lennon & Whitford, 1994). In order to promote democratic participation, thus attaining normative systemic change and heightened status of the individual, a critical theory approach is a useful foundation because it is grounded in the social system, out of which the government and legal system are based (Shapiro, 1995). Specifically, critical theorists have examined macroscopic segments of society, social institutions and the processes in the social system. Feminists, who adopt a critical theory approach to their work in gender equity, social justice and human rights, typically study the social structures that seek to assist women in gaining an equitable place in society. Education is oft cited as one of the fundamental agents promoting women's empowerment. This work draws on these general schools of thought.

Literacy classes in non-formal educational programs in general, and curriculum in particular form one type of macroscopic structure that shapes and communicates messages which seek to instil the ideals of justice and human rights. Hence, a content analysis of a textbook that seeks to teach women civil rights may hold interesting and informative lessons for disciplines. During one of my visits to Istanbul, I spoke with AÇEV's director and her members staff. As a result of my expressed interest in the literacy program's curriculum, she offered a copy of the textbook used in the program. I conducted the research in Turkey during the summer of 2008. The initial steps included translations of the Turkish textbook, conducted by three persons – one native English speaker and two native Turkish speakers. Next, back translations – the process of translating a document back to the original language – were conducted by the Turkish speakers in order to improve reliability and validity of the research. After a comparison of the original and back-translated text, a content analysis was conducted.

Content analysis is a methodology used to determine the existence and occurrence of particular words or concepts in texts or sets of texts. Conceptual content analysis involves the selection of a concept, in this case, civil rights, for examination. The steps involved the following. First, I determined the level of analysis—the word—(opposed to the phrase) because of the small amount of text in each chapter. Second, I decided the number of concepts to code. In this case, I expected to find no more than three or four concepts prevalent in the text, again, because of the short length of the book. Next, quantification of words related to that concept was made. Although explicit terms are easily identifiable, implicit terms were based on a subjective system of identification. I selected the following terms: woman/women, man/men, husband, wife, in-laws, parents, children, independence, dependence, job, profession, hours, conditions, home, neighbourhood, tea, tea houses, market. Third, I decided to code for existence rather than frequency of words because of the short passages in the text. Fourth, I determined how concepts were differentiated. I opted to use different forms of the words. Fifth, I acknowledged but did not find irrelevant information in the text, possibly because of the focused nature of the text (unlike a book written at a higher level, which may include extraneous information). Sixth, I coded the texts and analysed the results. The quantification of the existence of words appearing more than three times, and the analysis of their meanings and relationships amongst and between words (or concepts) are used understand the main ideas present to the students. The main ideas I identified as a result of this analysis are personhood, work, and community and politics.

Themes: Personhood, Work, Community and Politics

Personhood

Lessons are related to the basic concepts of the adult's selfhood largely in terms of spouse and home. As a foundation, the basic rights of food, drink, clothing, shelter and health are discussed. The text quickly shifts to emphasise the rights of the 'unmarried' and 'married' woman. Lessons articulate the unmarried woman's right to the ownership of property and collection of inheritance. Her right to marry when and with whom she chooses is also presented. Here, the text discusses a woman's right to a love marriage and the right to keep the wedding gifts she is given at the celebration, even in the case of divorce. If divorce is likely, the text teaches her right to be represented in the court system. Here, the text emphasises the right to a share of the assets, material wealth and monetary compensation in the case of divorce.

Also related to personhood, the theme of woman as the manager of the home and family members appears throughout the text. The right to be a mother when, and with as many children as she prefers is taught. With regard to childcare, the text emphasises the right to a child's education because, as the lesson itself states, mothers are responsible for the education of their children. Lessons on the legal protection of mothers and their children in the case of domestic violence are also discussed. Finally, the reoccurring notion view of mother as the manager of a physically healthy family, and one responsible for it, is evident.

Work

Work is the second theme that emerged from the content analysis. Here, two subthemes were identified: work opportunities and conditions in the work place. A variety of women's work is depicted in pictures—women working in the field, at a textile factory and in the home. Text also states women do not typically work at jobs that provide salary and social security, assuming women should indeed be aware of this inequity.

Lessons on sex discrimination in the work force draw attention to the fact that in salaried positions, women are not always treated the same as men. Here, the text suggests a difficulty for women to enter the paid workforce. It also notes the difficulty of remaining in the position, enduring pressures from husband and family. Sex discrimination is also discussed in terms of the right to equal pay for equal work. Finally, treatment in the workplace is another idea related to sex discrimination. The text clearly describes the right to respect at work, and the inappropriateness of unsolicited sexually explicit remarks.

Community and Politics

Women's representation in leadership roles is evident in this theme. The textbook teaches women leadership in two ways. First, women's roles in elections are highlighted. These lessons note women not only have the right to vote, but also have the right to be elected. A picture of a sample ballot is used, asking the reader to not only distinguish how the parties differ from each other, but also which party may be more sensitive to women's needs and demands than others. Each party is distinguished by a different logo and short description below each logo. Second, lessons also highlight woman's rights and roles in the community as a manager of community politics, both at the local and national levels. In the local context, the text emphasises the fact that only .005% of the recently elected mayors have been women (18 of 3,234). It provides statistics from 2006 which reflect a 4%

representation of women in the Parliament (24 women out of a total of 550 seats).³ The text also states if there are more women in politics, issues directly related to women, including education, health, and poverty, could be easily resolved.

In sum, the content analysis reveals attention to women's rights described by informal, ever-present social norms. Presented in a clear way, pictures and text help the adult learner not only gain literacy skills, but also learn about civil rights they did not learn because of their lack of a formal education where these rights would have been learned. The awareness of civil rights has direct implications for citizens in a community.

Most recently, the Republic of Turkey has shown great interest in joining the European Union. The country has earmarked considerable financial resources and employed personnel in both governmental offices and nongovernment organizations to promote gender equitable practices. By showing how Turkish law relates to AÇEV's text, we are able to reveal the ways in which, and extent to which this program's curriculum relates to the EU's legal structure, a fundamental underpinning required for entry. The following section provides a critical analysis of the text in terms of the Constitution and Civil Code, two official government documents.

Laws and Women's Rights

The Constitution and Civil Code⁴ are the two documents on which the path to equity between the sexes was paved in Turkey. They directly relate to that which the content analysis revealed in three ways – personhood, work and community and politics.

Personhood

Turkey recognises the right of the individual and supports equal rights for women. Article 10 of the Constitution, Equality before the Law, states:

- (1) All individuals are equal without any discrimination before the law, irrespective of language, race, colour, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such considerations.
- (2) Men and women have equal rights. The State shall have the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice.
- (3) No privilege shall be granted to any individual, family, group or class.
- (4) State organs and administrative authorities shall act in compliance with the principle of equality before the law in all their proceedings.

According to the Law of Persons, Article 8 of the Turkish Civil Code, all persons are eligible for basic human rights.

The woman's role of wife and mother are addressed in Article 41 of the Constitution, Protection of the Family, revised in 2001, which states:

³ The European Stability Initiative Web site
<http://www.esiweb.org/index.php?lang=en&id=245> reports elections women comprise 9.1% of the legislators as per the recent elections on 22 July 2009.

⁴ This was approved by the Turkish Parliament on November 22, 2001, and went into effect on 1 January 1 2002, http://www.wvhr.org/turkish_civilcode.php

- (1) The family is the foundation of the Turkish society and based on the equality between the spouses.
- (2) The state shall take the necessary measures and establish the necessary organisation to ensure the peace and welfare of the family, especially where the protection of the mother and children is involved, and recognizing the need for education in the practical application of family planning.

The Civil Code No. 4721 regulates the details of Family Law, which provides for case workers, including but not limited to a social worker and psychologist, to assist in the case of divorce.⁵

According to Articles 185-6 of the new Civil Code, the relationship between spouses is important. In this Article, spouses jointly make decisions regarding the marriage union. It also states the husband and wife "... contribute towards the expenditures of the union with their labor and possessions to a degree commensurate with their capabilities." They are legally bound to agree on how much each of them contributes to the maintenance of the household, including but not limited to family finances, childcare responsibilities, and support of each other's profession or trade. The ambiguity of that which constitutes support for work has the potential to place more importance of the job of the husband (the one whom has traditionally served as the family's main income earner), than the profession of the woman (who has typically served as the caretaker of the home and children).

There are several other Articles that refer to the equity in the family in general, and in the marriage union in particular. First, Article 192 of the new Civil Code clearly indicates neither spouse is obliged to seek permission from the other when choosing work or profession. However, a second clause added to the same Article states "... the harmony and welfare of the marriage union should be borne in mind when choosing and performing a job or profession." This quote, when interpreted under the guise of traditional norms and beliefs, may disadvantage the wife in the type or amount of work she chooses. Second, Article 189 of the Civil Code states men and women have equal rights to represent the family, and are jointly responsible for it.

Article 1 of the Law on the *Protection of the Family* (No 4320) was adopted to address cases of domestic violence.⁶ According to this law, if a family member in the home is the victim of abuse, and notification is made either by the victim or by the Public Prosecutor, a Justice of the Peace can pass one or more of the following rulings (or take actions deemed appropriate in the Civil Code). The accused individual can be ordered to:

⁵ Articles 15 (paragraphs 2 and 4) and 16 (paragraphs 1/c through 1/g) of the Convention were incompatible with the Family Law section of the Turkish Civil Code, particularly those pertaining to women's legal capacity, such as the right to enter into contractual relationships; responsibilities concerning children; and choice of domicile, family name, work and job. These reservations were withdrawn on September 1999 in the light of the review and amendment of the Civil Code.

⁶4320 Sayılı Aylık Ailenin Korunmasına Dair Kanun Hakkında Bilgi. Acknowledgement of Law of Family Protection. Kanun Numarası: 4320 Kabul Tarihi: 14/1/1998. Yayımlandığı R.Gazete Tarih: 17/1/1998 Sayısı: 23233. Madde 1 - (Değişik: 26/4/2007-5636/1 md.)

- a.) not use violence or threatening behavior against the other spouse or children another member of the family living under the same roof);
- b.) leave the residence and not to approach the residence or place of work;
- c.) not damage the property of the spouse or children (or of others living under the same roof);
- d.) not cause distress to the spouse or children (or others living under the same roof) using means of communication;
- e.) surrender a weapon or other similar instruments to the police;
- f.) not arrive at the residence under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicating substances.

Work

Working outside the home is yet another focus of legislation in Turkey, especially important for women because they have not traditionally worked outside the home, but are increasingly present in the workforce. Under this theme, there are several important points clear under the law. As per Articles 48 and 49 of the Constitution, every individual has the right and “duty” to work. Neither of the spouses needs the agreement of the other when choosing a profession or trade. Second, when at work, women and men are entitled equal pay for equal work. Third, Article 50 of the Constitution, related, protects the individual against working in a capacity that is “... unsuited to his age, sex and capacity” and provides “special protection” to women. This Article may discriminate on the basis of a woman’s choice of work not considered suitable by governmental standards.

When a positive workplace environment is threatened by unwanted or unsolicited sexual acts, Articles 24 and 25 of the *Labor Act* provide guidelines. Sexual violence has been defined as:

... any non-consensual activity including: sexual taunts and jokes, staring and leering, unwelcome comments, flashing (exposure), offensive phone calls unwanted sexual propositions, forced viewing of/or participation in pornography, unwanted touching, coerced sex, rape, incest, being made to perform sexual acts the woman finds painful or humiliating, forced pregnancies, trafficking and exploitation in the sex industry.

Sexual harassment is defined as “... any act of harassment with sexual intent” (Penal Code, Article 105). Sexual harassment by employers, superiors or coworkers in the workplace is illegal (see Labor Code in Article 24, Civil Servants Law No. 657 as well as Labor Law No. 1475) and can entail up to three years in prison.⁷

Community and Politics

This is, by far, the shortest section in the book. Under Article 70 of the Constitution, every Turkish citizen has the right to enter public service. According to Law No. 2820 of Article 76, every Turkish citizen over the age of 30 is eligible to be a parliamentary deputy. These are the shortest lessons in the text, simply stating these points. No details are provided.

⁷4857 Sayılı İş Kanunu (Law for Work). Kanun Numarası: 4857.Kabul Tarihi : 22/05/2003. Ürülük Tarihi: 10/06/2003.Yayımlandığı R. Gazete Tarih: 10/06/2003 Sayı: 25134. <http://www.iskanunu.com/4857-sayili-is-kanunu/4857-labor-law-english/4857-labor-law-english-by-article.html>

Conclusion

Gender equity requires situations in which women can benefit and contribute to her self, home and neighborhood communities. In particular, the examination of civil rights in the curriculum of a non-formal educational program is an important and timely scholarly exercise because examination offers the chance for critical reflection in *how* education may promote equity between the sexes (Fernandez, 2000). In the context of adult women's education, civil rights often focus on equal opportunities, including equity in the distribution of power and resources, and the ability to participate in both the public and the private sphere (Esplen & Bell, 2007). Both public and private contexts offer different yet complementary perspectives of this understanding.

In the public sphere, civil rights are deeply imbued in messages articulated by the organisation, its mission, purpose and program. The very existence of multiple AÇEV offices demonstrates the need and support for centers that address the country's adult female population. The organisation's mission to serve women in need undertakes a first step toward gender equity. The centre's purpose is to promote life-long learning. It offers a literacy program, which, upon completion, will undoubtedly impress the learner with ideas related to social justice prevalent in Turkish society. The program itself has been proven to raise literacy level of its students while teaching about civil rights. The particular curriculum both offers lessons that individualise learning and links learning to national law.

In other words, the public context, the program and curriculum offer women the opportunity to gain an education unobtainable during childhood. In this way, the organisation (and its materials) can be considered a "public sphere." Benhabib (1992) refers to the setting of the NGO as an "associational public sphere" whereby it is related to but not part of the State. It is an entity that promotes a particular agenda. AÇEV can be considered a 'sphere' of social movement because it offers the opportunity to not only learn about gender equity, but also question gender inequalities. This sphere, or space, is described by Benhabib (1992, p. 78) as potentially becoming "sites of power." In this way, this work seeks to extend Benhabib's work. It is not only the NGO that maintains this role, as Benhabib suggests often occurs. Here, the program's curriculum is a site of power that has the ability to impress and influence the learner. Although the themes of personhood, work and community and politics serve important roles in the women's path toward learning about civil rights, they are not met without constructive criticism. In the personhood section, more emphasis is placed upon the women's rights as a wife and mother. Less emphasis is put on her rights as an individual (to get an education, express her thoughts, take action, etc.). In the work section, less emphasis is placed on her right manage a household, *delegating* work that is required in it (she usually assumes all responsibility for cleaning, cleaning and child caring). The community and politics section emerged as per the result of the numeric association I put on relevant information. However, this section was the shortest, with least amount of emphasis. More work should investigate whether this category was, indeed, an important element to include by the textbook's writers, or if my standards for recognition of concepts were set too low. Moreover, the content of this section should be scrutinised. We can cautiously expect that if women are aware of their rights, they may be more able to not only recognise inequity as it occurs, but also feel more empowered to take the necessary actions change it. However, to expect women's representation in public office equates with the advancement of women's rights, as one lesson in the text clearly stated, may be naïve.

In short, in the public context, the lessons taught in this program are based on civil rights directly related to laws from the Constitution and Civil Code. The efforts made by AÇEV in terms of a space where women can meet to learn how to read and write, and the curriculum in which they learn about current law, bode well for Turkish women's empowerment, that is, the process by which women become aware of the subordination under which they live, and identify and execute actions to transcend it.

The private context, on the other hand, is a site to examine how behaviour influences social-cultural structures of the public context. Winter (2006), drawing on the works of Charlesworth and Chinkin (2000), notes the private space is based on and within human experiences with others. AÇEV's curriculum is rooted in the women's individual life and her challenges in Turkish society. As Wickramasinghe (2006, p. 606) argues, "... aspects of women's experiences of realities, often contested, form the foundation of ... feminist knowledge making." In so doing, the program's curriculum articulates a "... prioritization of ... knowledges – as personal experiences ... [and] woman-specific standpoints" (p. 606). The curriculum focuses on the individual in terms of her everyday life as wife and mother, while at the same time, offering information on work and politics. In addition, the curriculum utilises the individual's perspective throughout the text by referencing the woman's gender throughout many of the lessons. Herein, gender is inextricably "... lodged in social structures, ideologies and discourses; as constituents of identities; as social performances and interactions" (p. 608). These conceptualisations of gender subtly suggest the linkages between individuals and their notions of and ability to express power" (p. 608). Herein, the curriculum includes civil rights learning in terms of gender identities and responsibilities defined by the Turkish gendered notion of the individual, gendered associations and relations between and amongst women and men, and positions influenced by gender stereotypes, all of which relate to civil rights.

Although the curriculum focuses on the individual, its approach is largely limited to her own experience as one that is concerned for others. With the exception of the few, short statements that describe her basic rights (food, shelter, etc.) the text presents civil rights in terms of her role as manager of the home and the person responsible for those in it. Although the woman's role is largely associated with the home, more emphasis could have been placed on her rights to develop personal interests (such as a skill or hobby), which may (or may not) lead to the development of a business, or an educational path that requires a plan (literacy, primary and secondary school equivalents, and a higher education).

How does the public and the private relate to the conceptual framework of Osler and Starkey (1996)? With regard to the *intellectual* component, the text links information about rights and governmental documents. They are introduced, albeit indirectly, to the Constitution, Civil Code and Penal Code. These guiding principles are realised by the individual in real-life cases. The *subjective* element is also utilised, especially in lessons which show the woman as the mother of the children and manager of the household. Discussions about the woman's identity as a wife and mother, her roles and her responsibilities are positioned in terms of her civil rights, and the husband's responsibility in the home. Lessons which deal with sexual harassment bring forth the degrading behaviour women should not endure as a reflection of their civil rights. The least represented element of the framework is the *participatory* element. The use of experiential situations and/or real-life learning opportunities was not incorporated into the text. While impromptu activities and discussions *may* take place in the classroom, this initiative would be

the sole responsibility of the facilitator/teacher, who may or may not have the pedagogical expertise to encourage and execute such activities. Moreover, women in the class may not take the initiative to suggest ways to act on their own learning, either in class, in the home, or in the neighbourhood community. Although it is highly improbable a woman will be able to make a conscious effort to change all behaviours (of herself and family), the program and its curriculum could include a participatory perspective and approach. The program (within its curriculum) could encourage each participant to select one area of particular interest to change. Each student could keep an audio journal of her thoughts and experiences related to lessons particularly important to her. Then, she can discuss these ideas with the centre's volunteer (or literacy class facilitator). As a result, a plan to execute strategies to promote her own empowerment in the home and/or the workplace could be attempted. An on-going relationship with those at the centre's office, as well as with other classmates engaged in the same type of activity, is one way to engage the learner in participatory activities, thus seeking change. Second, leaders in the class of newly literate women could serve as leaders speaking on behalf of those in their class. A select student could represent students in the non-formal literacy program and represent that population at regularly scheduled meetings of non-formal education program personnel. These existing, regular meetings of non-formal educational program and service directors offer a rich source of camaraderie to not only brainstorm but also plan specific ways to promote women's civil rights. The needs of women who remain at home in what is largely considered the traditional setting for women's work differ from those whom have entered into the public life of their communities (in terms of a business or governmental position). Graduates of the program could play a role in these meetings, discussing the current situation in their own neighbourhoods, and ways to further promote civil rights. As per conversations and observations at two of AÇEV's centres the venue offers an inviting opportunity for this type of action.

In short, we know trend and panel studies have shown that increased education is associated with increased gender egalitarianism (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Brewster & Padavic, 2000; Cunningham et al., 2005; Fan & Marini, 2000; Tallichet & Willits, 1986). Education about civil rights can impact one's perspectives by exposing the individual to egalitarian ideas related to the law, thus countering accepted myths and stereotypes of women's rights in society (Cassidy & Warren, 1996; Davis & Robinson, 1991; Rhodebeck, 1996). Feminists also believe individual women need to gain consciousness and achieve empowerment to become agents capable of changing these norms, coexisting equally in society (Weiler, 1988). The purpose of this paper, a content analysis of curriculum and its relationship to Turkish law, supports and extends previous research on this non-formal literacy program and its curriculum by offering an analysis of texts that reveal how women's learning relates to law, and, thus, the chance for empowerment.

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