



Gendered Citizenship: A Post-structural and Critical Analysis of the Citizenship Curriculum Regarding Gender *

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze primary school students' experiences from a gender-based perspective throughout the primary school curriculum taking the curriculum as a phenomenological construct and an apparatus to reproduce orthodoxies in a diverse context in the Southern region of Turkey. Via utilizing a multi-phase embedded case study, this research included the qualitative data that obtained from 4th grade textbooks and 11 schools, including site visits, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews with 27 teachers, 10 managers, and 10 counselors. Thick data were subjected to inductive qualitative analysis and triangulated for trustworthiness. Findings revealed the gendered character of citizenship and the reproduction of gender roles through formal education, in which boys had more space to act flexible and free compared to girls. Findings also manifested the intersections of class, ethnicity, and nationality with gender, leading to girls' diverse experiences from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. In addition, the existence of resistance was also apparent in a few participants' discourses through which education could be defined as a 'praxis' rather than 'reproduction.'

Keywords

Gendered citizenship
Curriculum as a phenomenological construct
Intersectionality
Education as 'praxis'
Critical qualitative inquiry

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Introduction

Citizenship education has always been considered a crucial part of the formal curriculum, yet how it is defined and practiced and how it would result in developing citizens has been debated a lot in the international arena. In its simplest form, the primary purpose of citizenship education can be defined as educating democratic citizens (Schugurensky & Myers, 2003). The achievement of democracy is claimed to be impossible without the engagement of all citizens in all aspects of society, regardless of their sex (Arnot, 2005). Yet, 'citizenship' has a masculine character, and citizenship education has a gendered perspective in which male citizens are glorified while the voices of female citizens are more strictly regulated (Gordon, 2006). Paradoxically, the model of democratic and modern citizenship often excludes gender concerns (Arnot, 2002, 2005) and constructs women as 'second-class' or 'second-sex' citizens (Voet, 1998).

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As a modern concept, citizenship refers to the membership that is 'imagined' inside the boundaries of a nation-state (Anderson, 2006). Historically, men's and women's roles and responsibilities towards the nation and the state have been signified differently (Anthias & Yuval-Davies, 1989). Hence, in the process of time, gender differences among citizens have been institutionalized. Therefore, it has been essential to examine the gendered perspective of the states, and for more than four decades, feminist scholars have been analyzing 'why and how citizenship is gendered?' (Kandiyoti, 1991; Lister, 1990; Pateman, 1988; Walby, 1994; Yuval-Davis, 2016). They, additionally, criticized how gender had been ignored from many discussions of citizenship and why this issue had been rarely explored while women did not have the same access to citizenship as men. Thenceforth, there has been a growing literature that queries the reflections of gendered citizenship in the field of education (Arnot, 2002, 2005; Davies, 1989; Davies & Banks, 1992; Jones, 1993; Paechter, 1998; Taubman, 1982; Walkerdine, 1989; Yates, 1988).

On the other hand, feminist analyses that zoom in on the relationship between gender and education vary in their theoretical stance (Aikman & Unterhalter, 2005; Sayılan, 2012). The ones based on liberal assumptions have concentrated on the equal opportunities given to girls and boys. Removing the obstacles for girls to reach education and providing girls quality education through opportunities that ensure equal representation in curriculum and school have been advocated. However, liberal theories have not considered the structural inequalities based on the power relations and hegemonic discourse. Critical and post-structural feminist approaches, on the other hand, acknowledge the structural inequalities and the intersections between class and gender and illuminate how school contributes to the perpetuation of the classed and gendered discourses. Therefore, there is not solely one feminist understanding examining the relationship between gender and education in the context of citizenship construction.

The post-modern breaking of the 1980s affected feminist analysis of citizenship and education in Turkey. The feminist critiques of citizenship mainly focused on the instrumentalization of women's revolution historically and criticized the gendered nature of Turkish citizenship (Arat, 1993, 2001; Kandiyoti, 1987; Sancar, 2014; Tekeli, 1989). Although they acknowledge the progressive actions to promote women's existence in the public sphere during the 1930s, they uncovered the existence and continuity of the structural patriarchal dominancy. Concordantly, the feminist analysis of education, by reviewing the national curriculum and textbooks, revealed the gendered and classed nature of education from the past to the present (Altınay, 2004; Aratemur-Çimen & Bayhan, 2018; Dökmen, 1995; Esen, 2007; İnce, 2018; Kancı, 2007; Kancı & Altınay, 2007; Sayılan, 2012; Tan, 2007; Tanrıöver, 2003). Ultimately, the flourishing feminist literature reminds the essential character of democratic citizenship based on equal recognition and equal participation of all citizens in society.

Alongside the curriculum and textbook analysis, in recent years, the statistics about schooling rates of girls and boys were discussed concerning gender equality in education in Turkey. The decreasing gap between boys and girls in school enrolment was presented as a 'big achievement,' and the policy understanding of gender equality was based on and reduced to gender parity (Aydagül, 2019; Cin & Walker, 2016). In other words, gender equality in education was reduced to the numbers corresponding to school enrolment rates of girls year by year.

In other respects, according to research based on Turkey's PISA 2015 data; although the girls in the sample had more advantages, such as going to better-off schools in terms of academic achievement, having better child-parent relationships, being more ambitious, and feeling more sense of belonging towards their schools; the boys in the sample were found to better transform their advantages into earning higher PISA scores (Batyra, 2017). This was considered an alarming finding that might illuminate the barriers for girls who could not achieve their full potentials at schools; since boys could transform their potentials despite having fewer advantages. Therefore, we need more research to

determine the barriers and discuss the pedagogical practices and methods at school through which girls find space to reach their fullest potentials (Esen, 2018 as cited in Aydagül, 2019).

In the light of the literature and latest policy understanding of gender equality, this article is an attempt to criticize and build on two significant outcomes; the research that solely analyzes the textbooks and curriculum to evaluate gender equality and the policy understanding that announces the tremendous success in gender equality by only emphasizing increasing school enrolment of girls. Shortly, we believe that we need more than policy analysis to transform, and girls need more consideration beyond school attendance to have equal social and academic experiences.

Thanks to the pioneering works, today, we could find a base to discuss 'citizenship' by deconstructing the concept regarding gender. Following these footsteps, we analyze the 4th grade Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy (HRCD) curriculum aiming to make the 'gender' a visible issue by recalling the role of school through Connell's (1987) words "every school has an active, though not always articulate, politics of gender regime" (p. 120). Curriculum, within this context, is defined more than a text; instead, it is a political and phenomenological construct that includes implicit and explicit messages and lived experiences of school members (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2002). We base our argumentation on the feminist criticisms through which the masculine character of nation-states -both in practice and theory- is aimed to be questioned, analyzed, and dismantled. On the other hand, we do not attempt to analyze only the female experiences against male experiences regarding citizenship. Through a post-structural perspective, we try to make the influence of ethnicity and social class visible since separating citizens into two blocks without considering the intersections has the potential of reproducing orthodoxies (Crenshaw, 1989) that we are criticizing. Hence, the following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the constructed discourses on gender in the 4th grade textbooks?
2. How does the official discourse on gender affect the lived experiences of students, teachers, counselors, and managers in culturally-diverse school settings in a province located in Southern Turkey?

1.1. The Reproduction of Gender in Nation-States

After briefly introducing the reproduction of gender in nation-states and the concept of 'gendered citizenship,' we expand on the discussion to present the conceptual framework through feminist literature. However, from a critical and post-structural perspective that we base our main concepts, such as citizenship, curriculum, and discourse, 'reproduction' is used with caution considering the critiques from feminist literature (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1989) and critical science of schooling (Giroux, 1983). 'Reproduction' signifies a static and top to the down process by overlooking the power of women through a feminist reading or power of teachers, students, or other school members from a critical reading of education. That is the reason for approaching curriculum as a phenomenological construct (Pinar, 2004) discussed further.

Since the 1980s, the rapidly flourished feminist literature has uncovered how citizenship has been gendered by putting women into the private sphere and how the theories to analyze the nations, nationalism, or citizenship ignored women in the discussions (Kandiyoti, 1991; Pateman, 1988; Yuval-Davis, 2016; Yuval-Davis, Anthias, & Campling, 1989). According to this rich literature, in modern nation-states, the concept of citizenship was related to and constructed through men's world and their roles, status, or practices. Women had to be inside the house and mainly dominated by men when *civil*, *political*, and *social rights*³ were defined (Walby, 1994). The modern family was connected to the public sphere through 'the father.' Eventually, modern citizenship has constructed and reproduced men and women differently. While male capacity has been centralized for the continuity of the state, women have been considered biological, cultural, national, and ideological reproducers of the state. Nevertheless,

³ For Marshall's (1950) three stages of the attainment of citizenship see his work titled *Citizenship, Social Class and Other Essays*.

there is a substantial body of empirical and theoretical research exploring the feminist frameworks that criticize the male-dominant conceptualizations of citizenship (Roseneil, Crowhurst, Santos, & Stoilova, 2013). Thus, when the field of citizenship education is examined from a feminist perspective, it will be possible to make a more in-depth interpretation of the criticisms developed against the nation-state idea.

Education is at the heart of state formation or nation-building as the carrier of 'cultural revolution' (Green, 1990). Nation-states have used education to sustain their national, political, and territorial continuity and citizenship education have been highly gendered within the male-dominant framework of modern citizenship (Pateman, 1988). Besides, theorists of reproduction claim the reproduction of economic power, social divisions of labor, society's class structure, the elite class, the dominant culture, the state hegemony, and hegemonic power through education (Althusser, 1971; Bernstein, 2003; Bourdieu & Passeron, 2015; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Whitty, 1985). The feminist reproduction theories in the context of education, on the other hand, remind the reproduction of gender through schooling (Sayılan, 2012). Despite their limitations, Arnot (2002) finds the social and cultural reproduction theories invaluable to examine the role of education. However, by combining them with feminist theory, she provided a ground to explore the intersections of identities -such as the intersections between class, ethnicity, and gender- and the position of education to reproduce.

We critically expand the conceptual framework from a critical and post-structuralist perspective starting from this context. By acknowledging the reproduction of official knowledge through classed and gendered education, we recall and argue the possibilities of counter-hegemonic actions through which official knowledge can be challenged (Apple, 2000). Therefore, in the first research question, we attempted to analyze the content of 4th grade textbooks (Math's, English Language, Music, Science, Turkish Literature, Traffic Security, Religious Culture and Ethics, Physical Education and Play, Social Studies, and Human Rights, Civics and Democracy); since textbooks provide a rich data to examine the main ideas about the present and future of a nation (Pingel, 2010) from several points including gender. On the other hand, the second research question explores the reproduction of official discourse to construct the gender dimension of citizenship and the production of counter-discourses against this hegemonic discourse. Curriculum, within this context, is defined as a *living organism* and a *complicated conversation* (Pinar, 2004), including (1) values, norms, dispositions, and routines of the schools, namely the hidden curriculum⁴, (2) the academic knowledge taught in the schools, and (3) the perspectives, practices, and acts of educators (Apple, 2004).

1.2. A Historical Overview to Citizenship Education in Turkey from a Gender Perspective

In this article, we focus on the nation-construction to understand the basis of citizenship construction through education regarding gender. We assume that both the nation and citizenship are produced and reproduced discursively (Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl, & Liebhart, 2009).⁵ Hence, we try to give a brief outlook on the history of the Turkish Republic in terms of the discursive construction of women's citizenship in formal primary education.

There have been studies focusing on the gender perspective of citizenship education. Yet, they mainly included analysis of textbooks since textbooks are accepted as the essential tools for exploring the *official knowledge*. In these studies, there are some apparent discussions about the exclusion of women due to military-nation understanding, gender role differences in terms of the dichotomy between private and public sphere, gender division of labor, and the instrumentalization of women revolution to declare the Turkish modernization (Arat, 1998; Aratemur-Çimen & Bayhan, 2018; Dökmen, 1995;

⁴ Giroux (2001) defines hidden curriculum as "those unstated norms, values, and beliefs embedded in and transmitted to students through the underlying rules that structure the routines and social relationships in school and classroom".

⁵ Discourse, within this context, refers to an ideological and complex set of relations that carries the hierarchical structure in the society and always socially, politically, economically, and culturally loaded (Gee, 1996; Rogers, 2004).

Esen, 2007; Kancı, 2007; Kancı & Altınay, 2007; İnce, 2018; Sancar, 2014; Sayılan, 2012; Tanrıöver, 2003). Though, they all trace the changes from past to present.

Paying taxes, voting, and military service were the three essential citizenship duties included in the textbooks in Turkey; and most of these could not be performed by women until the 1930s⁶ (İnce, 2018). In the Early Republican period, 'military service' was given a cultural character, and the Turkish nation was defined as a *military nation* in those textbooks. For instance, '*Every (male) Turk is born a soldier*' was one of the foundational myths that excluded women and caused a martial and masculine citizenship definition that can be exemplified in the textbooks of the Turkish Republic from past to present (Kancı & Altınay, 2007).

On the other hand, the studies focusing on changing gender roles in the private and public sphere mainly reach a similar conclusion. Women were depicted as mothers in their homes and had limited occupation options even they would work. In contrast, men were depicted as 'leaders' and the breadwinners of the family, and the safeguards of the nation. In the Early Republican Era, every member of the modern family was attributed with specific roles, and women were illustrated as the 'mothers' and 'teachers' of the nation (Sancar, 2014). Besides, they were used to symbolize modernity through their modern clothes/outfits, stylish hairstyles, and modern make-ups (Kancı, 2007). Although some civil, political, and social rights of women were legislated and protected by law -such as the right to elect, be elected, work, or education-, according to some feminist scholars, during the Early Republican period, women's revolution was instrumentalized to declare the success of Turkish modernization and secularization to the West (Arat, 1998; Sayılan, 2012).

After 1946⁷, the representation of women changed; they were still with their modern clothes, yet some were wearing headscarves. Regardless of their outfit, they were still mothering as the 'vice-president' of the family and had occupations that were perceived and accepted as 'female occupations' -teacher, nurse, secretary- even though they worked (İnce, 2018). During 1970ies, women were additionally illustrated as doctors, nurses, or air-stewardesses; however, their roles inside the house had not yet changed much (Kancı, 2007). Studies in the 1990s and 2000s also showed that textbooks were still prone to be male-dominant. Male figures appeared in higher numbers, the presence of sexist narratives existed, and women were still portrayed as 'mothers' and with a limited number of occupations while men represented a broader perspective of occupations (Aratemur-Çimen & Bayhan, 2018; Dökmen, 1995; Esen, 2007; Tanrıöver, 2003).

In the light of the past literature, in this study, 'gender' is included as a relational construct to highlight and voice its necessity while discussing citizenship education. However, as Turner and Hamilton (1994) reminded the Janus-faced character of citizenship -as both a struggling arena to extend the boundaries and an incorporation mechanism to thicken the limits by protecting the included ones-; from a feminist, post-structural, yet a critical perspective, we aim to study citizenship education regarding gender by recalling its 'radical' potential as we are also reminded by Werbner and Yuval-Davis (1988, as cited in Yuval-Davis, 2016). In this respect, the post-structural stance diffused to citizenship understanding of the study.⁸ That is also the reason for considering the curriculum as a phenomenological construct.

⁶ Women gained the right to elect and be elected in regional elections in 1930 and national elections in 1934.

⁷ Transition to a multi-party system with a softer perspective on secularism (İnce, 2018).

⁸ Post-structural stance corresponds to multi-dimensionality of curriculum more than a text by including school members, their experiences, and interactions with each other and with the norms, values, rituals or routines; and it also corresponds to multiple identities (intersections) or subject positions by considering citizenship not as a reproduction unit rather as a struggle arena (Best & Kellner, 1991).

From this perspective, in addition to the reviewed literature, which dominated research mainly through document analysis of the curriculum and textbooks to understand the gender perspective of citizenship education, we attempted to analyze the curriculum not only as an ideological text but also focused on the discourses and experiences in the schools.

1.3. Curriculum as a Phenomenological Construct

In Turkey, the curriculum development process is highly centralized from past to present (Çobanoğlu & Yıldırım, 2021). Despite the differences between regions and the diversity of the population, a uniform curriculum is developed to be implemented in every corner of the country. The textbook-writing process is also strictly regulated and controlled by the committees set up by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE).⁹ Teachers cannot be the 'subjects' of the curriculum development process in such a controlled and strict process. They are expected to be solely the 'implementers.' The latest report of the Education Reform Initiative (Aktaş-Salman, 2020) revealed teachers' feelings who indicated how unconsidered, and voiceless they felt by being regarded as the 'objects' of the education system.

Another essential point in the report was how the centralized and uniform curricular understanding made teachers feel 'exhausted' in their profession along the years passing by. Consequently, in time, this poses an obstacle for their motivation to improve themselves. Teachers become nothing but the 'mimes' of the curriculum developers or textbook authors (Pinar, 2004), rather than being the 'subjects' to transform the curriculum by engaging with and dismantling it towards the needs of the students and the society at large.

As revealed in many studies based on the analysis studies of the curriculum and textbooks from the past up to today, citizenship was found gendered in Turkey (Aratemur-Çimen & Bayhan, 2018; Dökmen, 1995; Esen, 2007; İnce, 2018; Kancı, 2007; Kancı & Altınay, 2007; Tanrıöver, 2003). However, by recalling the efforts to reconceptualize the field of curriculum, we believe in the necessity to widen the understanding about curriculum research and 'read' the curriculum more than a text that needs to be implemented. The curriculum is envisaged as a '*deconstructed text*' that carries the possibilities to transform the society (Pinar, 1978, 2004; Pinar et al., 2002; Vagle, 2015). By placing the curriculum to a critical standpoint, we believe in the necessity of addressing the continuing ignorance and discrimination that *perpetuate sexism, heterosexism, racism, and ethnic divisions* (Slattery, 2006, p. 144). Not only the curriculum, but also the transformative role of education as 'praxis' (Freire, 2005), and the transforming role of discursive practice (Wodak et al., 2009) are considered by acknowledging the hegemonic roles of existing discourses and education. Therefore, a unilateral and hierarchical relationship between the state and the citizen is rejected and by extension, curriculum is defined more than a political text to construct the citizen. Although we agree that curriculum is political and carries the knowledge of the hegemony (Apple, 2004, 2012) by accepting the criticism from the standpoint of critical pedagogy; we believe that curriculum has the potential to be more than a hegemonic text, and it can pave the way for the 'praxis' (Freire, 2005).

In that regard, we believe in the necessity of a discussion that can broaden our 'imagination' and remind us of possibilities through a critical standpoint by hearing the voices and observing the experiences of boys and girls, and viewing the curriculum as a phenomenological construct. From this perspective, this study attempts to make a post-structural and critical analysis of the citizenship curriculum regarding gender.

⁹ For detailed information, see The regulation on Textbooks and Educational Tools of the Ministry of National Education: <http://mevzuat.meb.gov.tr/dosyalar/1605.pdf>

Method

The concept of citizenship constructs boundaries that include 'some' while excluding 'some others', and it has been highly gendered as a status and practice (Lister, 1998). By basing our methodology on critical qualitative inquiry, we aim to analyze the oppression and ignorance and critique *the forms of inequality that operate in everyday life* (Denzin & Giardina, 2010) in primary school settings regarding gender. This study seeks to analyze the gender perspective of citizenship education to *understand how unjust and oppressive social conditions came to be reified as historical 'givens'* (Denzin & Giardina, 2010, p. 54). Ultimately, the study was designed as a critical qualitative inquiry-based multi-phase case study with embedded units.

There are divergent perspectives towards *case study* methodology diversified through scholars' epistemological understandings and scholarly viewpoints. The two well-known approaches belong to Stake (1995) and Yin (2018). While Stake (1995) defines the case as a choice of what is to be explored, Yin (2018) defines case study as an empirical inquiry that aims to explore a phenomenon in its real-life context. Our choices in terms of methodology are grounded over Stake's intrinsic case study approach since we define the case as the object of the study. The phenomenon studied was the understanding of citizenship regarding gender in primary education. To narrow down the context to make the phenomenon more workable, citizenship education in primary schools was investigated regarding gender through the case of the 4th grade Human Rights, Citizenship and Democracy (HRCD) curriculum.

Both Yin (2018) and Stake (1995) finds case study suitable and instrumental for program analysis. However, Stake has a clearer perspective; he defines the program as a case, which provides flexibility for methodology and research design since a program has its boundaries. Through this flexibility, in this study, case study became a choice to draw boundaries about the studied phenomenon, more than a methodological choice.

Besides these, our understanding of 'citizenship education' and 'curriculum' navigated the research design. Citizenship education is both delivered as a separate subject and integrated into other compulsory subjects in Turkey (Eurydice, 2017). Therefore, citizenship education was considered as a broad concept that exceeds the limits of one course on citizenship. Furthermore, we defined curriculum more than a text and as a *living organism* from a post-structural understanding (Pinar, 2004). These perspectives guided our methodological decisions in two points. First, the units of analysis exceeded the HRCD curriculum and its textbook; in other terms, the school members, namely teachers, managers, students, and counselors, and the textbooks of the other courses that used to be taught in 4th grade were included in the research process as part of the citizenship curriculum. Secondly, the textbooks were considered more than the curriculum documents as their interactions with teachers and students were much higher.

Eventually, the first phase of the study focused on the document analysis to uncover the official discourse on citizenship regarding gender, while in the second phase, the lived experiences of teachers, students, managers, and counselors, and their interactions with each other and with the different aspects (such as textbooks, or values and routines of the school as an institution) were considered through an ethnographic understanding shown in the context of citizenship education. Hence the below steps were carried out in this process:

1. 4th grade textbooks (Math's, English Language, Music, Science, Turkish Literature, Traffic Security, Religious Culture and Ethics, Physical Education and Play, Social Studies, and Human Rights, Civics and Democracy) were analyzed;
2. 4th grade elementary school teachers, school managers, and psychological counselors were interviewed, and in-school and in-class observations were conducted to gather in-depth data.

Data sources were diversified to analyze the issue from multiple perspectives and comprised the 4th grade textbooks, educators' oral views, including teachers, managers, and counselors, and observation field notes. All interview and observation data were vis-à-vis collected by the first researcher between September and December 2018 from the central districts of the city in Southern Turkey and reflected a culturally-diverse population. The below figure shows the design and participants of the study:

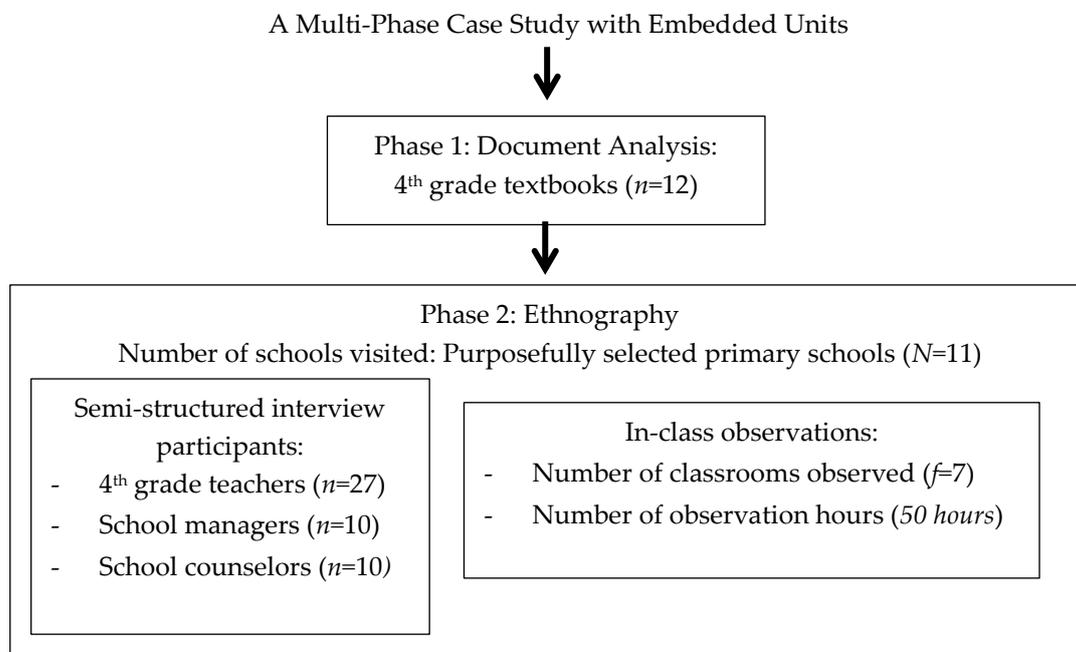


Figure 1. Design and participants of the study

The research process started by analyzing and identifying the discourses about gender in the 4th grade textbooks ($n=12$). The textbooks were downloaded from the Education Information Network's (EBA) website -it is an official website in which the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) publishes all the official textbooks- and uploaded to the NVivo 12 Pro for analysis. The list of the textbooks is shared in Table 1 below. In this phase, we did not add a curriculum analysis since teachers', as practitioners, were prone to use textbooks as the curriculum itself.

Table 1. List of analyzed textbooks

No	Textbooks	Writers	Page number	Publisher	Year
1	English Language Textbook	Akseki et al.	150	MoNE	2018
2	Human Rights, Civics and Democracy Textbook	Altay et al.	112	MoNE	2018
3	Math's Textbook	Özçelik	304	ATA	2018
4	Music Textbook	Çalışkan, et al.	111	MoNE	2019
5	Physical Education and Play Activity Book	İnce et al.	88	MoNE	2018
6	Religious Culture and Ethics Textbook	Yiğit	134	MoNE	2018
7	Religious Culture and Ethics Textbook	Demirtaş	144	İLKE	2018
8	Science Textbook	Yaman et al.	288	MoNE	2018
9	Science Textbook	Çetin et al.	224	ATA	2018
10	Social Studies Textbook	Tüysüz	208	TUNA	2018
11	Traffic Security Textbook	Yurdusever et al.	80	S.E.K	2018
12	Turkish Literature Textbook	Kaftan-Ayan et al.	265	MoNE	2019

Documents were analyzed prior to the site visits to determine the framework of the interviews and observations. Inductive content analysis was conducted through the framework, which appeared while iteratively reading the documents to immerse the data (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). The inductive data analysis yielded a framework consisting of gender roles, gendered games/plays, gendered interests, gendered occupations, male domination of illustrations, and male domination of national and international celebrities. Although the documents were formerly analyzed to organize the data into clusters, all the thick data, including textbooks, interview transcriptions, field notes, and observation notes, were subjected to interpretation to combine and present a holistic picture at the end.

The second phase of the study focused on the lived experiences of teachers, managers, counselors, and students to manifest the interactions regarding gender. Three parallel semi-structured interview forms for teachers, managers, and counselors and one classroom observation form were developed to explore the discourses and lived experiences of the school members.

Data collection form development happened in four steps. First, interview questions were developed through the literature and the findings from the document analysis. Second, expert opinions from diverse fields - from the departments of Curriculum and instruction ($n=3$), Philosophical, social and historical foundations of education ($n=1$), Sociology ($n=1$), and School counselling ($n=1$) - were taken and the forms were revised accordingly. Third, the revised forms were piloted for face and content validity purposes with the participation of 4th grade school teachers ($n=4$), school managers ($n=4$), and counselors ($n=3$). After clarifying the questions by revising some wordings or rewriting some of them, in the fourth step, pilot interviews were conducted with 4th grade teachers ($n=2$), counselors ($n=2$), and a school manager ($n=1$). All the forms were revised through, by adding or removing some questions to enable a structure for smooth running interviews with valid responses in the authentic contexts of the study.

The final forms consisted of two sections: demographics and the main part. With the questions related to demographics, participants were asked about their salient characteristics such as work experience and graduation credentials, and school or classroom profiles probing the socio-economic levels and cultural characteristics of parents and students. For the main part, teachers were asked about their opinions on the gender perspective of textbooks, and all participants were asked about their observations related to the social *-interaction with peers, interaction in the classroom, responsibilities taken in school activities, responsibilities given by educators-*, and academic *-performance in the classroom, school drop-outs, and absenteeism-* experiences of girls and boys in the classroom or school context.

The classroom observation form evolved after observations started. A rather structured classroom observation form was developed at the beginning of the research. However, during the observations, it was realized that a flexible classroom observation form would be more functional since it was not possible to write down the activities, responses, emotions, questions, or feedback in a structured manner separately from one another. Therefore, the classroom observation form was transformed into a less-structured and more flexible format facilitating in depth note-taking. During the class observations, after specifying the content of the observed course hour, the researcher took notes of every detail, including the questions asked by teachers, the questions asked by students, student reflections, student interactions, the responsibilities students taken and be given, and the used discourses and narratives by both students and teachers to capture the discourses and attitudes holistically in the context of gender. Meanwhile, the gender of students was also noted to examine the classroom contexts regarding gender.

To collect data from public schools, the necessary permissions from the Human Subjects Ethics Committee of Middle East Technical University (METU) and the MoNE were received in February, 2018. Before applying to the MoNE for data collection permission, half of the schools ($N= 68$) in the province were chosen randomly to ease both the permission and the school selection process by using IBM SPSS 22. METU version. After getting the permission, the list of 68 schools was shared with a former school manager who had worked in the province for more than 30 years. It was essential to be supported

by an experienced educator to find information-rich schools and conduct multi-dimensional observations regarding cultural diversity and socio-economic profile of students. Ultimately, the schools ($N=11$) were purposefully selected based on the socio-economic level and cultural structure¹⁰ of the neighborhood they were located, and only volunteer teachers, managers, and counselors became participants in the study. Table 2 reveals the demographics of the participants.

Table 2. Salient characteristics of the schools and participants

District	School code	School profile (SES)	Teachers		Counselors		Managers	
			Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1	E	Low	3	-	1	-	-	-
	F	Low	-	2	-	1	-	1
	X	Low	1	-	1	-	-	1
2	H	Low	2	-	1	-	1	-
	J	Low	-	1	-	1	-	1
	K	Low	1	1	1	-	-	1
	L	Lower-middle	2	1	1	-	-	1
3	O	Middle	3	-	-	1	2	-
	P	Middle	2	1	-	-	-	-
	V	Middle	2	2	1	-	-	1
4	AC	Upper-middle	1	2	-	1	-	1
Total	11		17	10	6	4	3	7

Note: Managers indicate school principals and the vice principals together.

All schools were culturally-diverse and reflected the multi-culturality of the city's population, which constituted a considerable number of Kurdish, Arabic, and Turkish natives and immigrants such as Syrians. Most of the population living in low income districts were Kurdish and Arabic natives and Syrian immigrants. Interviews were audio-recorded upon receiving the participants' consent and lasted between 14 to 44 minutes. More than half of the teachers ($n=17$, 63%) and counselors ($n=6$, 60%) interviewed were female, while most of the school managers were male ($n=7$, 70%); while the rest were female ($n=3$) and all affiliated as deputy managers. The classrooms of seven interviewed teachers were observed during the HRCD course, and field notes were taken at least five class hours in each classroom. Three of the classrooms were in low SES schools (E, X, H), while the other three were in lower-middle and middle (L, V) SES schools, and one was in an upper-middle (AC) SES school. The classroom sizes were changing between 25 and 41. In total, 50 class-hour in-class observations took three months to be completed, indicating persistent observation during class hours and staying in the school sites to become a part of the school contexts similar to what an ethnographic researcher would engage in.

Inductive content analysis was utilized using NVivo 12 Pro software to analyze the collected data, namely textbooks, interview transcriptions, field notes, and observation forms. Data analysis was conducted in three steps. First, the data was iteratively read, then each data collected from diverse data sources were organized into chunks and analyzed separately. Finally, meanings of the codes, categories, and themes from diverse sources were discussed and interpreted altogether to reach a holistic view (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Ultimately, three themes emerged. The official discourse, that was prone to reproduce the gendered citizenship, was appeared as one of the themes through the analysis of the textbooks which later 'echoed'¹¹ in schools through the hidden curriculum or from the discourses and attitudes of the educators. The intersection of class, gender and ethnicity was the second theme that uncovered the structural academic and social inequalities among girls regarding their ethnic, socio-economic, or national background and how these inequalities are reproduced by the educators in

¹⁰ The cultural structure refers to the diversity regarding ethnicity (Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic), religion/sect (Sunni, Alevist), and nationality (Local/Native or Syrian).

¹¹ The discourses of gender used by some participants reminded the discourses used in the textbooks. That is why we decided to use the concept of 'echo'.

schools. Although the curriculum was mainly reproduced the gendered citizenship and the structural inequalities in the context of citizenship education, education as ‘praxis’ emerged as the third theme through the discourses from a small number of educators since they were prone to challenge the official discourse of gender.

Trustworthiness of data analysis initiated with first exploring the embedded meanings of the content in all documents, interview transcriptions, and field notes to uncover discourses and understanding regarding gendered citizenship. Member checking was done manually by examining the transcriptions, and codings. Later, four meetings were organized to reach an agreement on the coding process for inter-coder reliability, the code descriptions, and themes by both authors. Thereby, the data sources, data gathering methods, and researcher perspectives were diversified for triangulation purposes.

Results

The analysis of thick data yielded three main themes: (1) education as reproduction, (2) the intersection of class, gender, and ethnicity, and (3) education as ‘praxis,’ each is reported and discussed respectively.

3.1. Education as Reproduction: The Reproduction Cycle

The reproduction cycle starts with presenting the official discourses from the textbooks and then continues with the echoes of official discourses in schools, school buildings and classrooms.

3.1.1. Official Discourses from Textbooks

All 4th grade textbooks used in the schools were analyzed, and a dramatic amount of gender-related discourses were found. The discourses emerged into four codes and were named as ‘gender roles,’ ‘gendered games and interests,’ ‘gendered occupations,’ and ‘male domination of national/international celebrities’.

Gender roles. In the Turkish Literature and Social Science textbooks, a gendered language is sensed through which only men are mainly considered. For instance, in the Turkish Literature textbook (in Kaftan-Ayan, Arslan, Kul, & Yılmaz, 2018), students are given some examples of proverbs. One of them is “*the art of the ancestor is a legacy to the son*”¹² (p. 237), which marks ‘father and son’ while explaining the transfer of artistry as a legacy. Women, on the other hand, are defined as potential brides, both historically and culturally:

My daughter, it is a tradition in Turkish culture that young girls prepare dowry and keep their dowry in a chest...mothers started preparations early for their daughter's marriage by saying, “girl to a cradle, dowry to a chest.” (in Tüysüz, 2018, p. 39)

Further, we found that almost all visuals in the Religious Culture and Ethics (RCE) textbooks (Demirtaş, 2018; Yiğit et al., 2018) includes only men, except two pictures depict mothers taking care of their children as an indicator of gender roles. Some examples seem to reproduce the traditional attitudes in compliance with private/public sphere duality accepting men as active and visible in society, while women as wives and mothers belong at home.

Yet there are a small number of examples that challenge the traditional gender roles such as a boy putting the dishes into the dishwasher (in Tüysüz, 2018, p. 156); a father cooking for his daughter and a grandfather preparing lemonade for his grandchild (in Çetin, Şatıroğlu, & Yanık, 2018, p. 114, p. 121), or a father pushing a baby pushchair (in Yaman, Akan, Doğan, & Sarı, 2018, p. 88). However, the traditional gender roles still predominate, such as defining cooking as a mother’s task in the below quotation from a Science textbook:

¹² The proverb in Turkish is ‘Atanın sanatı oğula mirastr’. Etymologically explained, ‘ata (ancestor)’ means ‘father, grandfather’ and ‘oğul (son)’ means ‘child’ without indicating the gender in old Turkish. However, ‘oğul’ is still being used by assigning the meaning of ‘male child’ (www.nisanyansozluk.com).

I came from school. My mother was not at home. My brother was studying in his room. I was so hungry, and I could not wait for my mother. As far as I heard, pasta was easy to cook, and I decided to cook pasta... (in Çetin et al. 2018, p. 124)

Further, in RCE textbooks (in Demirtaş, 2018; Yiğit et al., 2018) mothers' caring role, either directly or implicitly is emphasized several times, such as stressing the holy mother figure through Prophet Muhammad's sayings. Conversely, fathers are attributed a leadership role; such as being the financial leader by giving pocket-money, preaching for the planning of the monthly budget (Tüysüz, 2018, p. 138), or being responsible from the car before leaving for the family journey and driving throughout the trip (Çetin et al., 2018, p. 107).

Gendered games and interests. Driving, in general, is illustrated with men more than women. In a similar vein, some differences are observed for games and interests regarding gender. Boys, for instance, are illustrated with playing basketball, volleyball, or football; yet only in one illustration, a girl is playing football. Other than playing with a ball, cycling, playing table tennis, playing the fishing game, paddling, swimming, taking photographs, designing cars are deemed suitable for boys. Girls, meanwhile, are illustrated while cycling, playing with dolls, playing chess, playing tennis, performing ballet, drawing, or playing the violin. Pursuant to these preferences, in a problem in Mathematics textbook, a boy has four kinds of toys with diverse numbers, listed as cars, balls, marbles, and airplanes (in Özçelik, 2018, p. 178). Ultimately, a boy does not perform a ballet, or play with a doll and a girl does not prefer balls, marbles, or design cars in the 4th grade textbooks. Therefore, high *cultural capital* is being introduced (Bourdieu, 1986) through activities such as performing ballet, playing tennis, paddling, taking photographs, or playing the violin, while each activity is gendered.

Gendered occupations. Alongside some common occupations such as being a teacher, health officer, doctor, ambulance technician, police officer, architect, pilot, archaeologist, farmer, herbalist, actor/actress, factory worker, market owner; there are clear distinctions between male and female occupations (Table 2):

Table 3. Occupations in 4th grade textbooks regarding gender

Area of occupation	Female occupations	Male occupations
Education-related	Teacher, Librarian	Teacher
Health-related	Health officer, Doctor, Dietician, Nurse, Pharmacist, Veterinary	Health officer, Doctor, Dentist
Private business	Market owner, Florist, Herbalist, Farmer	Bag store owner, Tour company owner, Herbalist, Farmer
Architectural	Architect	Architect, Construction worker
Transportation related	Pilot	Pilot, Driver (ambulance, school bus, bus, truck), Machinist, Sea captain, Traffic police
Engineering-related	-	Engineer, Technician,
Technical	-	Mineworker, Road worker
Others	Baker	Tailor, Gardener

Men are presented through a wider variety of occupations. For instance, occupations about driving any vehicle are represented by men except for being a pilot. Technical, physical strength requiring and engineering-related occupations are also illustrated with men. Women are illustrated less and the occupations chosen for them mostly do not contradict their 'accepted' roles or status in society.

In addition to the above-occupations, both men and women are presented as scientists. Nevertheless, one issue needs to be clarified. In the Turkish language, the word 'scientist' can be gendered '*bilimadamı*' (science man/man of science) and have a masculine character depending on the word used with 'science'. Although we observed the existence of gender-neutral '*biliminsanı*' (science person/person of science) use in the textbooks, it is still possible to find both usages even in the same textbook (in Yaman et al., 2018).

Male domination of national or international celebrities. As a final point, the sex of historical characters, scientists, inventors, sportspeople, or artists, namely ‘celebrities,’ is revealed through the findings. First and foremost, male celebrities are mentioned nine times more than female celebrities in the Social Studies, Music, Science, and Turkish Literature textbooks:

Table 4. Celebrities included in 4th grade textbooks regarding gender

Area of occupation	Male celebrities	Female celebrities
Scientist	Aziz Sancar Cezeri Galileo Galilei Hiroshi Amano İsamu Akasaki Louis Pasteur Newton Shuji Nakamura Salih Acar	Canan Dağdeviren Marie Curie
Inventor	Claude Chappe Graf Volta Graham Bell Peter Hewitt Thomas Edison	
Artist	Âşık Veysel Neşet Ertaş Carls Tiscar Wilson Alwyn Bentley	April Deniz
Sportsperson	Koca Yusuf	

Similarly, the same issue is observed in the presentation of ‘national heroes.’ The narratives on the nation’s foundations are established over the national struggle, and the professional soldiers holding titles or people from the public sphere that joined the war courageously are introduced. So many male heroes of the national struggle are included showing the masculine narrations that glorify men over women and the military character of the nation-state idea in the Turkish Literature and Social Studies textbooks. Besides, a perspective that equalizes all women and men without considering the social structures such as ethnic differences in society is strongly sensed from the figures deemed worthy.

3.1.2. Official Discourses Echoed in Schools

This category mainly covers teachers’ attitude regarding gender equality. Only a small portion of the teachers interviewed ($n=7$) commented critically on the gender perspective of the textbooks, and five among those teachers were females, while the majority of the teacher interviewees ($n=20$) indicated no negative opinions about the gender perspective at all. Teachers’ mainly remained indifferent to the issue and lacked a critical standpoint that would possibly cause the reproduction of inequalities in everyday school life.

For instance, during the observations in classrooms H, X, and E, while discussing the content related to comparing responsibilities of children and adults, students, regardless of gender, responded as mothers’ being responsible for housework and fathers’ for going out to work. Further, female students listed housework or taking care of their siblings as their prime responsibility. However, teachers did not support students to think beyond the box regarding gender roles.

Besides, excerpts drawn from the field notes revealed how the educators reproduce gender roles. In classroom L, a class president election was held. After the class president (male student) was elected, the teacher L-1 (male) stated facetiously that *“do not worry, I was not elected as a class president throughout my education life, but I am the president of my home now.”* He tried to console those not elected with a joke that reproduces traditional gender roles. Moreover, in the same classroom, while students were rehearsing the play they prepared for the parent’s meeting, the teacher told a joke; *“Once, a teacher complained about a female student to her father about her talking a lot; and her father said: ‘you should also see her mother, she has not stopped talking since we got married’”*.

In another example, a manager (V-Y1) associated the school with ‘a family’ while discussing positive discrimination regarding gender. He defined the school management as ‘*the father*’ of the school and justified being just over a ‘gendered discourse.’ Eventually, the schools and the society acting similarly may cause the reproduction of gender roles and people’s blinding to inequalities.

Awareness of gender equality. Another observation is to illustrate teachers’ unawareness about gender equality. In classroom AC (in upper-middle SES school), while the teacher introduced the researcher to the classroom, the below conversation took place:

Teacher: We have a guest, and she is a PhD student. What will you become after finishing a PhD?

Researcher: I will specialize in my field.

Teacher: Let’s say, you will be a science man.

Student A (female): Science woman, not science man...

Student B (female): We can say person of science.

Some of the girls to be conscious of discriminative statements regarding gender inequality and gender-neutral language. Conversely, during one of the in-class observations in classroom E (in a low SES migration-receiving district), the below conversation was noted:

Teacher E-1 (female): Her husband beats your sister, she called you, what would you do? (*here, she specified the severity of the violence by normalizing the slap*). A slap could be but he beats with hose, or skewer?

Student A (female): I would call the police!

Student B (male): We can solve it among ourselves...

The topic of the class was the Right for Protection from Violence; very unfortunate though, the teacher normalized violence in the way she uttered it. Making a distinction between a slap and beating with a hose or skewer and accepting ‘slapping’ is likely to give a wrong message. The teacher’s opening such a subject without reacting to the student who responded they could *solve it among themselves* could be misinterpreted by students and cause the approval of the response given.

When we compare those two observations, the intersection of class and gender can be explicitly observed. The socio-economic conditions of the neighborhoods were different. In the first one using gender-neutral language was reminded by girls. In contrast, in the second one, the normalization of violence against women was observed through the reactions of students and the teacher’s statements. In both examples, teachers were unaware that their attitudes were prone to reproduce gender inequality.

3.1.3. Schools as Gendered Buildings

As Apple (2004) specified, values, norms, dispositions, and routines of the schools, namely the hidden curriculum, carries messages strengthening the hegemonic knowledge. In other words, school buildings convey written and unwritten messages consonant to the aimed uniform understanding to reproduce the hegemonic knowledge. Throughout the visits, one of the most interesting observations was the resemblance of school buildings in terms of portraits of former historical figures or sayings that hung along the walls regardless of schools’ socio-economic levels in the province. The male dominance visualized in the portraits could be easily sensed at first sight.

In school V (middle SES school), there was one of the sayings of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Founder of the Turkish Republic) “*As the Turkish nation gets to know its ancestors, it will find strength in itself.*” Under this saying, there were 23 pictures representing ‘*ancestors of the Turkish nation.*’ 21 of them were portraits of male figures depicting mostly from early Middle Ages Middle Asian Turkish leaders, some Ottoman Empire Sultans, and a few were heroes of the Turkish Republic. Only one picture mentioned ‘*Turkish Women*’ representatively, and the last picture symbolized the meaning and importance of the Turkish flag. How a girl finds herself and finds motivation inside a building emphasizing only men’s importance remains as a big question that needs to be answered. Moreover, how an ethnic-minority or immigrant child, either girl or boy, would find themselves and find motivation in a building emphasizing Turkishness is the other important question, especially in culturally diverse school settings.

Observations in school V provided essential insights to analyze the school as a gendered building. Once, the researcher was in the school corridor, and students were in recess time; a group of boys ran fast inside the corridor; meanwhile, a group of girls was trying to go to their classroom. The hall monitor (a female teacher) warned the girls to wait till the running group of boys passed through the corridor. Boys’ being energetic was normalized, internalized and tolerated, while girls needed to keep pace with this and learn to be compatible. Similarly, another relevant observation was noted on the same day mentioning about the dominance of boys playing in the school garden.

These findings manifested the reproduction of gender roles by the discourses and attitudes of the educators or through the messages that were overtly or covertly conveyed in the school buildings.

3.1.4. *Discourses on Academic and Social Experiences Regarding Gender*

As found in the interview data, the school members have similar visions of how they perceive boys’ and girls’ academic and social experiences.

Perceptions of gender-related academic experiences. The interview data obtained from teachers and counselors reveal consistency between teachers’ and counselors’ responses. Most of the counselors ($n=6$) and teachers ($n=21$) described girls as more successful and eager to succeed compared to boys. Some narratives obtained from the participants were quite striking:

...girls feel a necessity to succeed, try to show themselves by their success, and say, ‘look mum, dad, I am here, I am an individual’. But boys do not have this feeling. They are sure that they will come to school regardless of their success. (J-1, male teacher)

I observe girls as more conscious and responsible about their courses...because it is difficult to live for women in our society. I inculcate my daughters with this idea, as my parents inculcated me with the same idea... that is why girls are more successful. Boys are not responsible, because we spoil boys as a society. (O-Y1, female manager)

Teacher J-1 and manager O-Y1 highlighted the gender roles identified in public opinion causing the inequalities and aiming to be successful was illustrated as a way of standing out for girls to be accepted and become visible. On the other hand, teacher O-2 reproduced the gendered characteristics without noticing:

...regarding academic success, girls are more emotional, I think they are always more successful than boys. Why? Because boys are smarter but many factors draw their attention, their view of life is different, but girls are more planned and they succeed. (O-2, female teacher)

Some teachers, just like teacher O-2, were prone to reproduce the sexist prejudice that draws a difference between being smart and emotionally intelligent and place girls to the emotionally intelligent part. Besides this, according to some teachers, mothers give their daughters responsibilities at home which is why girls do their homework more responsibly and becoming more successful. Ultimately, there were commonalities in the teachers' views and observations about girls' academic experiences regardless of their social class or ethnicity.

Perceptions of gender-related social experiences. A similar tendency was realized about interviewees' perceptions of gender-related social experiences. They defined boys as freer, active, problematic, mischievous, violent, reluctant, bully, disobedient, and maladaptive. For instance, teacher L-3 had 23 male and 10 female students and complained about having more male students. According to her, the number of female and male students in a classroom determines the classroom climate and having more girls provides teachers with a comfortable classroom experience. Another teacher (H-1, female) affirmed this point by describing girls as more equipped with advanced listening skills compared to boys; while two others were apt to explain these differences through the girls' and boys' *nature* or girls' *maternal instinct*:

Girls are neater by nature. I also observe them outside; they stay at home longer. The boys are always out. Therefore, they lack completing some assignments. Females are more attentive and meticulous. Their writings are better, for example. They do extra study. (K-1, male teacher).

I think this is a bit instinctive, frankly. Girls have this maternal instinct or something. I think it is more related to home life while school girls help their mothers at home or in the kitchen, in that sense, yes girls are more...For example, we have a bulletin board, and every week I assign tasks to students by asking who wants to prepare. Female students always raise their fingers; males do not... (O-3, female teacher)

Similarly, the counselor K-R1 also normalized girls' being more responsible due to their roles at home, such as helping their mothers to do housework. Findings illuminated that teachers mostly internalized gender roles rather than being challenged. For instance, a teacher (O-S2) openheartedly criticized herself about reproducing gender roles by requesting more responsibility from girls, by telling them that they should '*act like a girl*' and be more organized.

Before discussing the struggle to challenge the gender roles, the intersection of class, gender, and ethnicity are reminded through the findings since social class and ethnicity are significant determinants that may change children's experiences with different backgrounds.

3.2. Uncovering the Invisible: The Intersection of Class, Gender, and Ethnicity

A uniform citizenship understanding is observed in the textbooks since differences are not mentioned. Nevertheless, the findings from schools explicitly show the intersection of social class, ethnicity, immigrant status, and gender. Yet, the intersectionality of gender and social class were more visible than ethnicity or nationality in the context of the data bounded by this study. On the other hand, we are aware that these distinctions are abstractions to analyze the phenomenon from different aspects; there is a mutual relationship between class, ethnicity, and immigrant status.

In the schools visited, the students' mothers mostly did not have a steady job. Having a steady job as a woman was more usual in middle or upper-middle income neighborhoods, while early marriage¹³ was perceived as 'normal' in some low income neighborhoods. Further, the issues of early marriage and school dropouts of girls were remarked only by the teachers from low income and in-migration neighborhoods. Eventually, being a woman was a more disadvantaged status in low socio-economic areas, and intersectionality is an emergent need to be included to analyze the factors behind inequalities.

3.2.1. Structural Inequalities Regarding Girls' Dropouts and Academic Experiences

The intersection of social class, gender, and ethnicity was quite the fact that determined girls' and boys' school dropout and academic experiences. In low SES neighborhoods, boys have to work to support their families financially, causing school dropouts or absences. The class appeared as a determinant of reaching or continuing education for all children; however, findings revealed that considering boys' education as more essential resulted in increasing dropout rates of girls from low income families.

While girls' education was considered significant in the schools O and AC which were located in middle and upper-middle SES neighborhoods; parents were prone to marry their daughters early to lighten the family's financial burden in the school F or E that located in migration-receiving and low SES neighborhoods. Eventually, girls' school dropout was more prevalent in low income and in-migration neighborhoods. Managers from low SES schools reported more absence of female students due to their domestic responsibilities ($f=4$) that included looking after their siblings or helping out with household chores while their mothers were at work. For instance, one teacher (E-2) from a low SES school in a Kurdish-dense area remarked that girls' academic success decreased when they realized they had to drop out from school at one point. The counselor from the same school affirmed this observation, as she remarked that early marriage is quite prevalent among girls, and there are not many female students who finish 8th grade. *Role modeling* was exhibited as one reason for early marriages; since their mothers were primarily illiterate and married very early ages, girls *emulated marriage* and started *dreaming* of it early, even at the primary school level¹⁴.

The crucial point was that teachers did not critically analyze the problem and were prone to blame only parents' culture, background, or ethnicity for not sending their daughters to school. The majority did not critically question the educational or social policies or the system that reproduces inequalities in disadvantaged schools, mainly in poor neighborhoods.

3.2.2. Structural Inequalities Regarding Social Experiences

In addition to school dropouts, the social activities of boys and girls were also changing through the intersection of class, ethnicity, or migration status. As teachers indicated, parents' income level was quite influential on students' participation in extracurricular or social activities inside or outside the school. Extracurricular activities, that organized outside of the school hours to meet students' interests, were not generally offered in low SES schools, and students did not have any social activities other than playing with peers outside. However, this freedom was only possible for boys, as some of the participants in low SES schools highlighted. Girls were not allowed to do that. For instance, in one of the classrooms from a low SES school (X), children's right to rest was being discussed; the teacher asked students their spare time activities, and three students were given the floor. A girl listed her activities as looking after her brother, studying, and resting; meanwhile, two boys responded as resting, playing, and studying.

¹³ In Turkey, the legal age of marriage is 18. However, when children turn 17, they can marry with the permission of their parents or legal guardians.

¹⁴ The *italic* words used directly by the counselor.

On the other hand, when upper-middle SES classroom students were asked about their spare time activities, they listed a wider variety of activities from cycling to computer games or from family trips to online meetings with their classmates. Educators from middle or upper-middle in-come neighborhoods also remarked no big difference between boys and girls regarding their social activities; however, there were still differences where boys owned more freedom. For instance, one of the teachers (AC-2) from the upper-middle SES school indicated that boys are doing more social activities outside the school, while girls generally had to ask their parents to take them to the cinema or a shopping mall.

As can be seen, there were huge gaps between low and middle or upper-middle SES students' spare-time activities. However, girls living in low socio-economic conditions were more disadvantaged compared to the same status boys. Shortly, this case study showed that when low SES intersects with gender, girls fall into the bottom line regarding their rights.

3.3. Education as 'Praxis': The Possibilities to Challenge the Orthodoxies Regarding Gender

One counselor highlighted the role of education as praxis by which the standard and internalized beliefs can be changed. Apart from that, this theme includes teachers' observed and realized perceptions between the lines and reminds the need for education as 'praxis' which refers to *reflection and action in order to transform* (Freire, 2005, p. 51).

According to a small number of teachers ($n=5$), the textbooks illustrate women in the kitchen, doing housework, or looking after their children. The teacher P-S2 further claimed that even toys, clothes, or occupations are gendered, such as showing a man as the judge while the secretary is a woman. The male-dominant understanding, such as expecting different behaviors from a girl and a boy causing girls to become more responsible, organized, mature, and successful, and contrarily boys' being more active and irresponsible was criticized by a very small number of educators. Besides, showing more toleration to boys than girls, through which the latter is expected to be more easygoing and acquiescent, was another point that was criticized by some others. However, in only one classroom, the teacher's challenges against gender inequality were observed by opening a discussion about women's rights.

Discussion and Conclusion

During the two-phase analysis, starting from the official discourses and continuing through the lived experiences of school members in schools located in culturally-diverse districts, we found that the textbooks still reproduce traditional gender roles through which women are restricted in the private sphere. Moreover, the games or interests a boy and girl likes are gendered, as well as the occupations. In exploring the lived experiences of the participant school members, the findings unmasked that citizenship is still a gendered construct in a province in Southern Turkey.

The studies conducted so far examine the curriculum regarding gender perspective, mostly focused on the curriculum and textbook analysis (Aratemur-Çimen & Bayhan, 2018; Carlson & Kancı, 2016; Dökmen, 1995; Esen, 2007; İnce, 2018; Kancı, 2007; Kancı & Altınay, 2007; Tan, 2007; Tanrıöver, 2003). However, we envisage the curriculum more than a 'text' that is expected to be implemented in the classrooms, and findings revealed, as a phenomenological construct, curriculum could be enriched through classroom discussions or teachers' realizing the importance of critical reading of the textbooks or their own attitudes and behaviors regarding gender.

Here, we would like to cite Arnot's (1997) seminal analysis that themed the feminist perspectives on education and citizenship in the European context. She explored four perspectives that challenge gendered citizenship in education. By referring to the *theoretical critique of the male-dominant citizenship narrative* and the *socio-historical perspective on women's struggle for equal citizenship through education*, she manifested the contribution of liberal feminist theory and practice to challenge the male-dominancy in education. Liberal feminism has paved the way to challenge and reject the second-class education given to girls by advocating for equal opportunities to reach education, equal representation and freedom at school through curriculum and teacher-student interactions, and equal opportunities while using spaces and attending activities. Liberal feminism positively affected the development of educational policies to ensure girls' equality.

In the current policy documents, namely *For a Stronger Tomorrow: Education Vision 2023 and Eleventh Development Plan (2019)*, the discourse of equality and equal opportunities for all in education is quite distinct. While *Education Vision 2023* does not specifically highlight the strategies to overcome gender inequality, *Eleventh Development Plan (2019)* emphasizes ensuring equal access to education and resources for girls and women. On the other hand, almost 1.7 million women (4.5%), over the age of 6, were illiterate, while the number of illiterate men is 262.5 thousand (0.7%) (TUIK, 2021a); the employment rate of men is twice of that of women in November, 2021 (TUIK, 2022); 81.8% of the manager positions in labor market (TUIK, 2021b), and 95.5% rector positions at universities are filled by men, (TUIK, 2021c); and only 8.4% of the senior managers, 1.92% of the managers, and 5.3% of the school principals are women in the MoNE (Bildircin, 2019; Yaman, 2020). These statistics reveal a huge gap between men and women participating in labor force and education, and being in managerial positions. Thus, to some extent, they illuminate the superficiality of the official discourses on ensuring gender equality *in and through education*. Without challenging the gender roles and structural inequalities in society, it is impossible to reach gender equality *in or through education*. To recall Arnot's (1997) words is meaningful in this point, "*without any reference to the sources of power in society, was there likely to be any realistic carrying forward of the democratic project?*" (p. 277)" regarding gender.

Another feminist perspective manifested by Arnot (1997) to challenge the inequalities in citizenship education was *teachers and the gendered languages of citizenship*. Teachers, as citizens, are tend to carry the legacy of citizenship understanding that has been reproduced and internalized for years (Arnot, 1997). We also found that teachers mostly normalized gender inequalities and they were not critical at all towards the discourses that are apt to cause the reproduction of inequalities regarding gender as can be evidenced in previous studies (Baç, 1997; Polat, 2010; Streitmatter, 1994; Tan, 2006; Torun, 2002). Such attitude needs deeper scrutiny indeed, especially in terms of teacher decision-making processes, as teachers are not able to engage in curriculum development are likely to use the textbook as a source for educating the young.

In addition, findings showed the difference between descriptions used for girls and boys by the educators in line with other studies that teachers or teacher candidates defined boys as more naughty and disruptive than girls (Baba, 2007; Paechter, 1998). On the surface, these binaries - *compatible/disruptive, responsible/irresponsible, or mature/immature* - between boys and girls in terms of their academic and social experiences seem to be liberating for girls. However, these differences need to be critically analyzed since having higher expectations and more responsibilities from girls and providing more freedom to boys might reproduce inequalities. Besides, as Arnot (2005) highlights male-dominancy in education is a threat for boys since they are also restricted through a gendered framework. Therefore, awareness raising of teachers related to the gender issue requires the need for self-evaluation for the educators to work on their attitudes, practices and skills not to reproduce the inequalities is quite distinct finding of this case study. Moreover, these findings are essential to address a need to working on policies at teacher education institutions both at university and Ministerial level in the course of material development as well as gender neutral pedagogy implementation. Ultimately, the outcomes of this study shows the importance of reviewing the educational or instructional materials taking the

gender issue as a focal point and benefit from the knowledge and expertise of experts who research gender and education related topics to provide an opportunity for a gender neutral language and a similar understanding in all educational materials, especially for the ones exposed to the young and utilized in the school contexts.

Findings also uncovered the danger of seeing girls as one category since the intersection of social class, migration, or ethnicity profoundly influences girls' educational experiences (Ünal & Özsoy, 1999). Girls living in-migration, low in-come neighborhoods had more difficulties continuing with their education than girls living in middle and upper-middle in-come neighborhoods. Ethnicity is also quite a fact to experience challenges in education. Most girls from native ethnic cultures such as Kurds, Arabs, or immigrant Syrians, were facing difficulties continuing their education. However, many of the educators witnessing girls' school dropout mutually blamed their parents. Actually, their views seem to reproduce the common belief, which becomes a hinder to discern the issue. To some extent, traditional views of parents' on gender roles -concern for girls' chastity, girls' being the 'helper' to the housework and early marriages- affect girls' education (Rankin & Aytaç, 2006; Caner, Güven, Ökten, & Sakallı, 2015; Carlson & Kancı, 2016). Yet, there are nested facts, and it is not possible to explain the issue by blaming parents and their socio-cultural characteristics they are identified with. Rather, the 'hegemonic discourse' determines how to explain a social reality by which the hegemony finds ways to canalize the discussion (Paechter, 1998).

Furthermore, a deep structural inequality was observed between the experiences of low, middle and upper-middle school students in terms of the extracurricular activities implemented in the school context. Low SES girls fall into the bottom line in being able to attend extracurricular activities. This is not consistent with Turkey's recent policy titled *For a Stronger Tomorrow: Education Vision 2023* that addresses two concrete targets *reducing gaps between schools* and *improving school learning environments* through a holistic and human-centered approach (MoNE, 2018).

Besides the messages conveyed through the textbooks, the discourses and acts by the educators or structural inequalities regarding the opportunities of the schools; the schools were observed as places in which women and men maintained their expected social roles. For instance, although teaching has been considered a female-dominant profession, most of the school managers, in this study, were men while women in the management positions were deputies. Moreover, the dominance of boys' in the school buildings, in the garden, halls, and the entire school contexts was observed. As cited in Paechter (1998) based on a selection of the results of several studies; boys, in general, predominate the school building, which means that their games cover the larger area in the school. Our analyses also showed that gender roles are reproduced even by the pictures on school walls or inside the school halls. As highlighted earlier, besides a personal and professional self-evaluation process of educators, schools should have strategies to improve the practices applied and the experiences of both girls and boys by providing them spaces to reach their fullest potentials. However, the visited schools found to be lack of *an educational perspective on the gender principles underlying education for citizenship* which was defined as the fourth perspective by Arnot (1997) to challenge the gender inequalities in education. When this issue is interpreted in the centralized and standardized Turkish education system, the need for deeper analysis and effective policies and practices emerges through which an inclusive education can be reached.

The findings, ultimately, uncovered the need for critical educators who can advance emancipatory and egalitarian practices, by considering the structural inequalities, for the sake of all children having equal experiences to reach their fullest potential regardless of their gender, ethnicity, class, or nationality (Arnot, 1997). Education as 'praxis' could be possible through critical educators (Freire, 2005). Being a transformative educator requires, if needed, to criticize and act against the state's existing conventions, structures or discourses (Banks, 2008). Although this was observed over a few educators during this research study, the need to have transformative educators was found. Therefore, the most important question is how teachers can become 'critical readers' of the curriculum as a phenomenological construct to struggle against the orthodoxies and inequalities while they are not at the center of the curriculum development process. Hence, we believe that by combining critical and post-structural curriculum research with participatory action research, educators' curricular 'space' can be enlarged. In other terms, both the personal and professional self-evaluation processes of educators and schools as a whole can be combined with action research to reach the best practices. Research that focuses on using action research to improve the curriculum both as a text and practice by teachers (Burnaford, Beane, & Brodhagen, 1994; Saban, 2021) and teacher-educators (Campbell, 2013; Simms, 2013) provide a rich discussion. Thereby, the curricular space of teacher training institutions and academicians needs to be enlarged which eventually may increase the network between universities and schools and among teachers.

The knowledge obtained in this study showed that a rigid citizenship discourse is overwhelmingly constructed regarding gender. As educators and researchers we need to face, voice, and discuss to act for change. Thus, from this perspective this study reveals the orthodoxies as a reminder of 'praxis' through education to challenge the gendered citizenship related discourses. Yet, there were limitations such as not taking students perspectives or making deeper observations to analyze the intersections among ethnicity, nationality, class, and gender. Therefore, future research is suggested that could pave the way for a queer perspective and a deeper analysis of intersectionality.

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