

FAMILY EDUCATION POLICIES IN TURKEY:  
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS  
OF A FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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FAMILY EDUCATION POLICIES IN TURKEY:  
A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS  
OF A FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Ayça Günaydın Kaymakçioğlu, certify that

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## ABSTRACT

### Family Education Policies in Turkey:

#### A Critical Discourse Analysis of a Family Life Education Program

The purpose of this study was to examine the construction of family within the Family Education Program (FEP) of the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services. This qualitative study utilized Critical Discourse Analysis. Seven textbooks from the field of family education and communication were chosen for the analysis. FEP posits a claim to “strengthen and protect” the family and improve its wellbeing through education. This study reveals that the authors utilized a number of textual instruments to normalize the nuclear family as a privileged institution in society. In the texts a heteronormative discourse with an emphasis on reproductivity is reinforced. It is also apparent that no attention is paid to diverse families from different social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. The study also reveals that women were presented as the primary care providers in the family. In this regard, it is argued that the lack of progressive or critical approaches to the conceptualization of family inhibits a wider understanding of families and therefore limits understandings of needs and educational practices available. It is concluded that by understanding multiplicity, complexity, and diversity of families it becomes possible to envision new opportunities for support and education.

## ÖZET

Türkiye’de Aile Eğitimi Politikaları:

Aile Yaşam Eğitimi Programı Üzerine Eleştirel Söylem Analizi

Bu çalışmanın amacı Aile, Çalışma ve Sosyal Hizmetler Bakanlığı’nın Aile Eğitimi Programı’nda (AEP) ailenin nasıl inşa edildiğini incelemektir. Bu nitel çalışma eleştirel söylem analizi yöntemini kullanmıştır. Programın aile eğitimi ve iletişimi alanına ait yedi kitap inceleme için seçilmiştir. AEP ailenin “güçlendirilmesi ve korunması” ve eğitim yoluyla iyileştirilmesini hedeflemektedir. Bu çalışma, yazarların bir dizi metinsel araç yardımıyla çekirdek aileyi toplumda ayrıcalıklı model olarak normalleştirdiklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Metinlerde üreme vurgusuna sahip heteronormatif söylem baskın gelmektedir. Ailelerin çeşitliliğine ve farklı sosyal, kültürel ve ekonomik geçmişlerine dikkat edilmediği açıktır. Çalışma ayrıca, kadınların bakım konusunda ailede esas sorumlu kişi olarak sunulduğunu ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, ailenin kavramsallaştırılmasına dair yenilikçi veya eleştirel yaklaşımların eksikliği ailelere dair daha geniş tanımlamalara yönelik sınırlı alternatifler sunmakta ve bu doğrultuda ailelerin ihtiyaçlarına ve eğitim pratiklerine dair anlayışları kısıtlamaktadır. Ailenin çok yönlü, karmaşık ve çeşitliliğine dair bir anlayış ailelere yönelik destek ve eğitim hizmetlerine dair yeni olasılıklar yaratacaktır.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Purpose of the study.....	4
1.2 Context of the study.....	5
1.3 Significance of the study.....	8
1.4 Definition of the terms .....	9
1.5 Organization of the thesis .....	10
CHAPTER 2: FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAM.....	12
2.1 The vision of FEP .....	13
2.2 Basic approach of FEP.....	14
2.3 Target population and training materials .....	14
2.4 Sponsors of FEP .....	15
2.5 Implementation of FEP.....	16
2.6 Summary of chapter two.....	18
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	20
3.1 Definitions and purpose of FLE .....	20
3.2 Examples of FLE programs .....	27
3.3 Contributions of feminist scholarship on FLE.....	31
3.4 Studies on critical analysis of texts addressing families.....	37
3.5 Family education in Turkey .....	42
3.6 Discursive context of family education policies in Turkey .....	55
3.7 Summary of chapter three.....	81
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY .....	82
4.1 Purpose of the study.....	82
4.2 Research questions.....	82
4.3 Research design .....	83
4.4 Critical discourse analysis (CDA) .....	85
4.5 Data source .....	87
4.6 Sampling.....	88
4.7 Data analysis.....	90
4.8 Coding.....	92
4.9 Issues of ethics .....	94
4.10 The researcher's role.....	94



4.11 Summary of chapter four .....	95
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....	97
5.1 Pictorial depiction .....	97
5.2 Textual analysis .....	111
5.3 Data set 1: First quarter of life .....	115
5.4 Data set 2: Marriage and family life .....	123
5.5 Data set 3: Family life skills .....	139
5.6 Data set 4: School and family .....	145
5.7 Data set 5: Gifted children and their families .....	150
5.8 Data set 6: The role of family in the acquisition of values .....	153
5.9 Data set 7: Single parent families .....	154
5.10 A closer look at prefaces .....	161
5.11 Summary of chapter five .....	166
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION .....	167
6.1 Discursive context of family .....	168
6.2 Politics of reproduction .....	170
6.3 Gendered division of labor .....	171
6.4 Concluding remarks .....	174
6.5 Limitations of the study and suggestions for future studies .....	174
APPENDIX A: FAIRCLOUGH'S ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CDA .....	176
APPENDIX B: CODING FRAME .....	177
APPENDIX C: SAMPLES OF VISUALS .....	178
REFERENCES .....	183

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Target Groups for FEP.....	14
Table 2. Number of FEP Trainings and Participants.....	18
Table 3. A Framework for Designing Family Life Prevention Programs .....	24
Table 4. Family Education Programs Implemented, 1993–2010 .....	48
Table 5. Number of Publications in FEP .....	88
Table 6. Publications in the Family Education and Communication Field .....	90
Table 7. Frequencies of Child Numbers Depicted in Each Family Portrait .....	100
Table 8. Frequencies of Boys and Girls in Visuals.....	107

## LIST OF APPENDIX FIGURES

Figure C1. A dinner table .....	178
Figure C2. Family members reading books.....	178
Figure C3. A family with three children portrait.....	178
Figure C4. A man doing ironing.....	179
Figure C5. A man cooking and ironing .....	179
Figure C6. A man and a girl making cake .....	179
Figure C7. A woman in suit holding a baby .....	180
Figure C8. A woman at an office with a baby .....	180
Figure C9. A woman in suit with a computer and a baby .....	180
Figure C10. A woman with children and a computer.....	180
Figure C11. A boy with a pencil and notebook .....	181
Figure C12. A boy depicted as handyman.....	181
Figure C13. A boy playing chess.....	181
Figure C14. A girl painting.....	182
Figure C15. A woman and a caregiver .....	182
Figure C16. A group of boys and a man's hand.....	182

## ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
ASAGEM	Directorate General for Family and Social Research
FLE	Family Life Education
FEP	Family Education Program
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
MoFSP	(former) Ministry of Family and Social Policies
MoFLSS	Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Services
NCFR	National Council on Family Relations
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
TURKSTAT	Turkish Statistical Institute
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Family has always been a primary area of interest of public policies and the subject of vigorous debates regarding its character, composition, and care. In the eyes of traditionalists, “the family” is under attack; changing gender dynamics in relationships, alternative models of marriage, delaying marriage, lower fertility rates, higher divorce rates, new forms of parenting, and unconventional childbearing practices are weakening “the family,” which will then eventually threaten social order and society at large. Therefore, it is frequently stated that there is an urgent need to preserve and protect “family unity.” Progressives, on the other hand, identify what they view as positive shifts reshaping family life—increased involvement of women in labor force, their increased level of education, the transformation of domestic roles and responsibilities, and new forms of families—as not the causes but the consequences of pervasive social, economic, and political dislocations. Family life education (FLE) emerged in this context—as a discipline and movement—as a means of supporting and educating families to adapt them to the changing world, equipping them with necessary knowledge and skills.

The concept of supporting families and “educating” individuals to learn the practices of family life is far from new. However, by the beginning of the twentieth century, FLE became popular as an educational practice for supporting families and diminishing family-related social issues (Arcus, 1992, 1995; Bredehoft, 2001; Duncan & Goddard, 2011; Powell & Cassidy, 2001). It is assumed that divorce or delinquency issues would be avoided or reduced if individuals were trained through structured programs targeted to families (Arcus, 1995).

Broadly defining, FLE has the goals to “strengthen and enrich individual and family well-being” (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, & Moss, 1993, p. 21). Currently, on its website, the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) describes FLE as “the practice of equipping and empowering family members to develop knowledge and skills that enhance well-being and strengthen interpersonal relationships through educational, preventive, and strengths-based approach.”<sup>1</sup> FLE programs’ subject areas include human development, sexuality, relationships, parent education, family law, resource management, and ethics (NCFR, 2014). Simply put, as a discipline FLE is an attempt to provide education to individuals and families to enrich their lives and well-being.

Historically, the family lies at the heart of societies, and thus many public policies are centered around it. In the case of Turkey, while supporting the family structure has always been emphasized in public policies, a proactive “strengthening [of] the family” has become the primary focus of government policies and discourse with the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*; hereafter AKP) (Akkan, 2018; Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011; Kaya, 2014; Yazıcı, 2012; Yılmaz, 2015). In the 59th Government Program, released in 2003, family was referred to as a fundamental institution in building national unity, and it was declared that family-oriented policies would be prioritized:

Family is the pillar of society, and it is a significant institution which has a role to play in building social solidarity. The path to social happiness, solidarity, peace, love, and respect goes through family. Despite all the negative developments and economic problems, it is clear that thanks to a strong family structure we stand as a society. Our government will give priority to family-centered policies. (AKP, 2003, p. 26-27)

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.ncfr.org/cfle-certification/what-family-life-education>

In the 2007 election manifesto, it was stated that the government had adopted policies oriented towards families “in order to solve the problems of women, children, the elderly, and disabled” (AKP, 2007, p. 92). Of note here is the declaration of the determination to pursue family-centered policies, embodied in the slogan “strong individual, strong family, strong society” (AKP, 2007, p. 92). It was further specified that efforts would continue to strengthen the family institution and increase the well-being of individuals in families. Indeed, policies addressing the strengthening of families encompassed various dimensions, including education. In this regard, it was declared in the manifesto that the scope of FLE practices, in both formal and non-formal settings, would be extended (AKP, 2007, p. 96).

This emphasis on the strong family discourse continued in the subsequent years. In the 64th Government Program, released in 2015, strengthening family was listed as a policy priority: “As the 64th Government, we regard strengthening family institution, increasing the number of children, and raising them as competent persons as the main axis of our people-centered development policies” (AKP, 2015, p. 48). In this vein, it was mentioned in the program that policies on housing, education, social security, and income distribution would be administered with a complementary understanding of policies on protecting and strengthening family integrity.

Similarly, the former Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP)<sup>2</sup> launched a wide range of projects particularly designed to strengthen the family institution and preserve its unity. These included counseling and guidance services, social and financial assistance programs, national and international conferences on the subject, and a broad range of education programs. As one component, the Family Education Program (FEP), as an example of FLE, was designed by MoFSP. The idea

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<sup>2</sup> The Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services (MoFLSS) as of 2018.

of FEP first arose in 2009, but it was not until 2013 that it was implemented nationwide.<sup>3</sup> The program's ultimate goal is to ensure "healthy, happy, and prosperous families in the country" (MoFSP, 2013, p. 22). An adult education program, FEP targets all families in the country with an intention of enhancing the quality of family life by providing knowledge on broader issues of family life and communication, law, finance, media, and health.

Though FEP is not the sole example of education programs targeting families in Turkey—there exists a variety of others developed by both governmental and non-governmental institutions—what makes FEP significant for the present study is that it was produced by a state ministry responsible for families, with an intention to provide a "holistic approach" to the complex structure of family education in the country (Alpaydın & Canel, 2011, p. 7). Overall, FEP is the most extensive and broadly aimed adult education program initiated by a state institution targeting families in the country.

### 1.1 Purpose of the study

This study explores the construction of family in FEP developed and disseminated by MoFSP in Turkey. What is of particular interest is to examine how gender is embodied and how family is constructed in the language of FEP.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What textual devices and discursive practices are used to construct family in FEP?
2. What gender messages (manifest and/or latent) are presented in the FEP texts?
3. How are gender roles portrayed in the visuals of the program materials?

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<sup>3</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.aep.gov.tr/>.



4. How is the discursive context of time concerning gender and family reflected in the program materials?
5. How do the texts reinforce or challenge prevailing conceptions of family in society?

## 1.2 Context of the study

I have conducted this study in a period that witnessed a rise of conservatism surrounding the ongoing debates focused on family and women in Turkey.

Discussions on reproductive rights of women and the intention to restrict abortion,<sup>4</sup> condemnations of mixed-gender student houses,<sup>5</sup> increasing numbers of family and religious counseling offices,<sup>6</sup> granting religious officials authority to perform marriage ceremonies,<sup>7</sup> and claims to eliminate women's rights to alimony (arguing that it produces a financial burden for men)<sup>8</sup> are some examples of the controversial debates.

The country also saw an increase in violence against and murders of women in the past decade. Although official statistics are unavailable, according to the women's platform We Will Stop Femicide, men killed 474 women in 2019, continuing a trend documented in their 2018 annual report.<sup>9</sup> Similar findings have been reported elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In 2012, a law was drafted that aimed to restrict abortion. The proposal was dropped, but women continue to experience difficulties to access services since then.

<sup>5</sup> In 2017, Prime Minister (now president) Erdoğan complained about mixed gender students' housing (Dettmer, J., 2017).

<sup>6</sup> First established in 2003, the number of family and religious counseling offices reached 385 in 81 cities throughout 304 provinces as of 2019. Retrieved from <https://dinhizmetleri.diyaret.gov.tr/>

<sup>7</sup> Religious state officials in Turkey were allowed to administer civil marriages as of 2019.

<sup>8</sup> Women's right to alimony has been discussed, as a group of men objected to it, deeming it the cause of suffering (Özkaya Günaydın, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> In 2018, the number of victims of femicide was over 400, and the number of women sexually assaulted was 317. Retrieved from <http://kadincinayetlerininidurduracagiz.net>

<sup>10</sup> In 2019, men killed at least 328 women and 15 children in Turkey. Overall, the rate of male violence increased by 27% when compared to 2018 (Kepenek, 2020).

Transitions in demographic statistics—particularly fertility, marriage, and divorce rates—were among the concerns of public policies in recent years. In the 2018 data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (*Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu*; hereafter TurkStat), the fertility rate decreased from 2.17 in 2002 to 1.99 in 2018. In terms of marriage, the crude marriage rate decreased from 7.73 in 2012 to 6.8 in 2018. Concurrently, an increase occurred in the crude divorce rate, rising from 1.44 in 2002 to 1.75 in 2018. These changes in rates are frequently held by the government itself or by pro-government initiatives as signs of the disintegration of the traditional family in the country and presented as reasons for pursuing pro-family policies.

Regarding women's achievement, Turkey has one of the lowest rates for women's employment among OECD countries. The rate of women in labor force was 33.9%, while this was 71.6% for men in November 2019 statistics of TurkStat. Additionally, in the Global Gender Gap 2020 index, the country was placed 136 (out of 153 countries) in economic participation and opportunity, and 113 in educational attainment (World Economic Forum, 2019).

A recent nationwide research on family structure in Turkey has also identified significant findings on gendered practices of families. In household decision-making, when it came to house selection, matters related to children, relations with relatives, and holiday and entertainment, males surpassed females, while in matters related to house, shopping, and relations with neighbors, females surpassed males (TurkStat, 2016). According to the statistics on persons responsible for household chores, females exceeded males in cooking, laundry, basic needlework, serving tea in the evenings, laying and clearing the table, daily ordering and cleaning of the house, daily shopping for food and beverage, dishes, and ironing. Males exceeded females only in basic maintenance and repair, paying monthly bills,

and painting the house. Furthermore, statistics regarding the daycare of children illustrated the gendered division of labor, with 86% of mothers being the sole responsible person (grandmothers follow, at 7.4%). The proportion of professional day care centers (such as nursery and kindergarten), on the other hand, is only 2.9% (TurkStat, 2016).

While recent statistics and research on family structures highlight imbalance and inequality in gendered relations in Turkey, public policies focusing on the protection of family structure and the institutional investments in strengthening families point to a contested situation. The country is undergoing a period in which policies champion the strengthening of family, however women's low rates of employment, overburden of caring responsibility, and the prevalence of domestic violence and femicide are matters that require attention. Furthermore, recent decisions of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Council of Higher Education to end gender equality projects, condemning the concept of "gender equality" as "unacceptable,"<sup>11</sup> as well as state representatives' statements regarding "gender equality as against nature,"<sup>12</sup> exemplify the extent of regressive policies geared towards women and their rights in the country.

At this point, questions concerning the scope of interventions on families through education become more significant. Therefore, this study concerns to investigate whether the regressive climate and discourses regarding women and families are mirrored in FEP. To do so requires the critical analysis of the program to determine what information is being provided, what is being excluded, and how and

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<sup>11</sup> In 2019, the Council of Higher Education cancelled the project entitled Gender Equality Project for Higher Education Institutions. The Promoting Gender Equality in Education Project that was carried out from 2014 to 2016 was also cancelled by MoNE.

<sup>12</sup> In 2014, the then Prime Minister Erdoğan stated in a speech that "You cannot bring women and men into equal positions; that is against nature because their nature is different." Retrieved from [www.hurriyetdailynews.com](http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com).

through which discursive practices families are being trained in a government-initiated adult education program.

### 1.3 Significance of the study

In the *Strategy Paper and Action Plan on Women's Empowerment 2018-2023*,

MoFSP (2018) proclaims “Strong Women, Strong Family, Strong Turkey” (p. 6).

The action plan includes five main policy pillars for the empowerment of women—education, health, economy, participation in decision-making mechanisms, and media—and outlines the current situation, the main objectives, strategies, and actions to be taken regarding the pillars. Among the six strategies defined under the “education” section, strategy five seeks “to increase the awareness and skills of all educators on the equality of women and men” (MoFSP, 2018, p. 142), while strategy six calls “to increase the awareness of all education programs and training materials regarding the equality of women and men” (MoFSP, 2018, p. 143). In this vein, the action plan sets out the following agenda:

- Awareness of FEP trainers on the equality of women and men will be increased. (MoFSP, 2018, p. 142)
- In the in-service trainings provided for the FEP facilitators, the issue of equality of women and men will be allotted sufficient time and discussed by experts in the fields. (MoFSP, 2018, p. 143)
- Program materials will be reviewed, and necessary changes will be made in order to increase the awareness of FEP modules on the equality of women and men. (MoFSP, 2018, p. 147)

This present study aims to critically analyze the FEP publications, and thus I believe it will make an important contribution to the realization of the declared goals of the aforementioned *Strategy Paper and Action Plan on Women's Empowerment 2018-2023*. Findings of this study will provide the program developers, facilitators, and trainers of FEP with information on the discursive role of language in the

construction of family, providing a basis on which to review the existing materials and make the necessary revisions for a better awareness of gender equality.

This study will also be a worthy contribution to the existing scholarly literature in the field. Studies taking a critical lens to FLE programs are rare in general and there has been limited discussion of critical inquiries of FLE program materials in Turkey. Most of the studies to date have focused on the evaluation of the impacts of trainings for specific target groups. The present study builds upon the existing literature by honing in on the social and discursive context of family education programs by using a qualitative and critical approach. It also discusses the country's family policies and the ways in which they are reflected in educational practices, shedding light on the interactions between policies and their implementation in the field of adult education. I believe that a critical exploration of policies and their implementation in adult education will contribute to the studies in FLE and provide insights for the development for future practices. Findings of this study will also contribute to the gender studies discipline by providing valuable insights on gendered conceptualizations represented and circulated in an education program.

#### 1.4 Definition of the terms

Specific terms are defined to maintain clarity and consistency. The terms and abbreviations regarding the education program under inquiry were used in accordance with instructions detailed in the FEP booklet (MoFSP, 2013).

*FEP* refers to Family Education Program launched by former MoFSP.

*Participants* are the adults who attend the program. *Practitioners* or *trainers* are the instructors who deliver the modules of FEP. *Facilitators* are specialized in the FEP

modules and carry out trainings for the education of trainers. *Textbooks* are FEP's primary training materials. They are given to the participants during the trainings. *Handouts* are additional resources which are prepared to support the trainings. The trainers distribute them to the participants when necessary.

I use the term *discourse* in accordance with Fairclough's description as "social conditions of production, and social conditions of interpretation" (2001, p. 20). *Gender* is used to imply the socially constructed aspect of identity (Butler, 1990). As argued by Sunderland and Litosseliti (2002), "gender identities are represented, constructed and contested through language" (p. 1). I see *family* through a feminist framework as an institution that may assume diverse and changing forms (Allen & Baber, 1992), therefore, I use "the family" to signify its monotype in discursive practices. Lastly, the terms *neoliberalism* and *neoconservatism* are mostly used together to address the intersection of free market economic policies and fierce moral regulations with respect to their devastating effects on political liberty, equality, substantive citizenship, and constitutional democracy (Brown, 2006).

### 1.5 Organization of the thesis

This section provides an overview of the organization of the chapters of the study. Chapter 1 outlines the topic at hand, the context of the study, its purpose, the research questions guiding it, and its significance. Chapter 2 provides background information on FEP, including the content and vision of the program as well as the target population and the specific objectives. Chapter 3 reviews the literature. It is separated into two parts. First is an exploration of the concept of FLE as a discipline and practice, followed by the contributions of feminist scholarship to the field of family studies, which will be discussed via examples of relevant studies. The second

part of the review examines the specific country context for this study, including literature on family education in Turkey. Chapter 3 concludes with a discursive analysis of the social context regarding family policies and the implications for adult education practices in the country. Chapter 4 describes the design of the study, involving information on methodology, sample, data analysis tools, and role of the researcher. Chapter 5 presents and discusses the visual and textual findings of the study, and the final chapter, Chapter 6, closes with conclusions containing a summary of discussions, limitations and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### FAMILY EDUCATION PROGRAM

FEP is an adult education program developed by the Directorate General for Family and Social Research (*Aile ve Sosyal Arařtırmalar Genel M¼d¼rl¼ę¼*; hereafter ASAGEM), which is now housed under the umbrella of the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services (MoFLSS). The program was developed by the FEP Program Development Commission, established in 2009. This was an expert commission that worked actively during the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the program. Members of the commission included a program development specialist, a measurement and evaluation specialist, a subject-area expert, subject-area trainers, an adult education specialist, a family counselor, an education director and planner, a researcher, and a secretary (MoFSP, 2013, pp. 8-9).

Following the curriculum development stage in 2009, the material development phase of the project started in 2010, and training materials (such as textbooks and handouts for participants, and presentations, introductory films, and guidelines for trainers) were prepared by the commission. In 2011, the training program for FEP trainers was completed, with the introduction of the program to 1,200 trainers in seven city centers (MoFSP, 2012, p. 3).

The first materials of the program (a total of 39 textbooks) were published in Turkish in 2012. Later, in 2014, nine of the textbooks were translated to Arabic for Syrians registered in Turkey under temporary protection status. In 2018, the *Parenting School* and *Education Package for Young People* textbooks were published, which consisted of units from previous textbooks with the addition of new subjects. All program materials can be downloaded from the program website free of



charge. In addition, access to the program is possible via the mobile application and the distance education system through its website.

The program development model of FEP is based on a model designed and implemented by MoNE in 2004. Firstly, the needs identification and establishment of goals stages were completed. Then, the content was developed and later revised after various workshops. At the final stages, a pilot program was implemented and subsequently evaluated. According to the FEP booklet (MoFSP, 2013), throughout the program design process, a number of experts contributed to the curriculum development of the training program, and the input of many institutions was reflected in the revisions of the content of the overall program.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.1 The vision of FEP

FEP was developed with the intention of “protecting the family and aiming to improve its peace and welfare” (MoFSP, 2013, p. 19). The stated vision of the program is to contribute:

- to improve the peace and welfare of families by providing solid, strong, functional, and coherent family togetherness;
- to support families economically by teaching responsible use of family resources;
- to create awareness of their rights and responsibilities;
- to be respectful of democratic values and human rights;
- to develop balanced and healthy individuals in terms of body, mind, morality, and emotion;
- to be sensitive to the environment in which they live;
- to raise constructive, creative, and productive individuals. (MoFSP, 2013, p. 21)

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<sup>13</sup> A total number of people and institutions contributing to the curriculum development studies is stated as 226, including 153 experts and 73 institutions (MoFSP, 2013, p. 18).

## 2.2 Basic approach of FEP

FEP incorporates preventive, informative, and educational approaches, primarily embracing an educational intervention approach (MoFSP, 2013, p. 22). However, it is stated that it is not to be used as treatment or therapy for conflict situations. The program rationalizes its approach as a social support service as follows:

It is possible to see the reflections of transitions occurring in a rapidly changing world in family lifestyles, consumption patterns, gender relations, the workforce, and other areas in our country. Family life education programs have become an important social support service in transforming these reflections into positive outcomes. (MoFSP, 2013, p. 22)

## 2.3 Target population and training materials

The extensive FEP modules is free of charge, thus allowing anyone to participate. In the FEP booklet (MoFSP, 2013), it is stated that the target group of FEP is all families:

FEP contains the basic competencies that a contemporary individual must acquire. For this reason, it is recommended that each module should be taken by everyone. Therefore, in most of the modules, the target audience is all families, and therefore the whole society. (MoFSP, 2013, p. 24)

The booklet also specifies target groups for each module, as shown in Table 1

Table 1. Target Groups for FEP

Single adults	Adult individuals who have already reached the age of legal marriage but are not currently preparing for marriage (including divorced persons with no children)
People who are preparing for marriage	Engaged individuals
Married and childless	Individuals who are married and childless at present
Married with children	Individuals who are married and have children of any age (including adoptive, caretaking, or foster family)
Married and separated from their children	Especially persons in the later stages of life whose children have left the home for education, marriage, work, or other reasons
Single parent	A mother or a father who has raised her/his child without the other spouse for any reason

FEP is comprised of 28 modules covering five different fields. The first field is family education and communication. This field aims to approach family life and provide information on problems that families encounter in different stages of their

lives. It involves modules on the first stage of life (ages 0–18), marriage and family life, family life skills, school and family, gifted children and their families, the role of family in the acquisition of values, and single parent families. The second field of legal issues involves modules on legal literacy, individual rights, family law, business life and law, and special interest groups. Modules in the field of finance aim to equip families with awareness of financial mechanisms and help them to manage their current financial resources effectively. This includes units on family budget and resource management, financial literacy, energy saving, family and shopping, and micro-entrepreneurships. The media field of the program seeks to create and strengthen intellectual, emotional, aesthetic, and ethical understandings of family members regarding the effects of media, so as to aid them in utilizing media most beneficially. Modules in this section involve units on recognizing and understanding media, conscious use of media, and family and the internet. The final field of the program is health, which serves to protect and improve family health through medical science, prolong family life, and increase the quality of life. Modules created for this section involve units on health literacy, healthy living and illness prevention, child and adolescent health, elderly health, reproductive health and healthy motherhood, first aid, and risk of substance use and protection from substance addiction.

#### 2.4 Sponsors of FEP

Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*; hereafter Diyanet) is the main sponsor of FEP. The aim and scope of the protocol signed in 2013 between ASAGEM and Diyanet is described:

With this cooperation protocol, it is aimed to enhance the efficiency of protective and preventive social services, especially through the education of women; to raise awareness of family, woman, child, youth, and disabled; and contribute to the solution of problems by strengthening social support networks. (para.1)

With this protocol, Diyanet undertook the duty to reproduce and distribute the education materials on the related units to trainees and specifically provincial/district religious offices free of charge; to determine which Diyanet staff were to be trained and to organize the location of the trainings; to promote the program on Diyanet's television channel; to provide a link to the program on Diyanet web sites; and to carry out joint work for the organization of campaigns, conferences, panels, symposiums, and seminars for the education of families. Additionally, this cooperation protocol enables Diyanet's staff to take part in the trainings as trainers after receiving the necessary certificate.

## 2.5 Implementation of FEP

The FEP design is based on a modular structure that enables the program to be implemented flexibly. The program can either be implemented as a whole or as selected modules, tailored to the needs and interests of participants. Furthermore, as an adult education program, FEP can be conducted by a variety of institutions in different styles, locations, and times. NGOs, cultural centers, public institutions, public education centers, higher education institutions, religious institutions, health institutions, shopping malls, private enterprises, banks, and private courses (such as driving courses, foreign language and computer training centers) are among the institutions that can be partnered with in the organization of trainings.

An *Administrator Guide* (Şentürk, 2012) that provides standards for the implementation of FEP is available. The guide was prepared for administrators who

will coordinate trainings for different organizations. The guide introduces procedures to be followed in relation to pre-training preparation, during the training itself, as well as post-training. Similarly, there exists a *Handbook for Practitioners* (Alpaydın, 2012a), which serves as the main resource to guide trainers in the implementation of the program. Issues covered in this booklet are general principles of adult learning, preparation for the modules, descriptions of the published materials, introduction of teaching methods, and classroom management skills. Other important resources are the material guides. These guides, which are prepared separately for the five fields, detail the contents of the related modules, significant points to be mentioned in each unit, and the answer keys for the activities. In addition to the participants' textbooks, handouts and presentation samples are among the resources that trainers may utilize.

An attitude assessment scale, a self-assessment form for participants, a training assessment form for participants, and a self-assessment form for trainers are included in the program materials. An overall evaluation of the program is sought after each training (Alpaydın, 2012a). However, although the program has been implemented and assessed for a number of years, no evaluation or assessment report regarding the trainings has been released by any of the institutions to date. Nor has a comprehensive official report been made available documenting the number of participants or the list of trainings implemented by the different institutions. There is also the scarcity of data available on the number and profile of facilitators and/or trainers who have conducted FEP in varied settings.

Although there are slight deviations between the figures provided for each year and the overall numbers in the annual MoFSP reports, Table 2 shows the documentation of FEP activities between the years 2013 and 2016.

Table 2. Number of FEP Trainings and Participants

	Trainers' trainings		Trainings for public	
	Number of trainings	Number of participants	Number of trainings	Number of participants
2013	153	4,934	1,394	86,823
2014	55	1,637	2,989	203,412
2015	25	691	2,199	116,577
2016	9	288	2,066	110,083
Total	242	7,550	8,648	516,895

As shown in Table 2, the overall number of participants between 2013 and 2016 is 516,895. In the 2018 Annual Report of the Ministry of Family, it was mentioned that 313 participants completed their trainers' trainings and 464,139 people participated in public trainings. The total number since 2013 was given as 8,898 participants in trainers' trainings and 1,380,138 participants in public trainings (MoFLSS, 2018, p. 86). Furthermore, the 2020 Annual Report of the Presidency of the Turkish Republic includes the total number of participants through the end of October 2019 as 1,785,029 (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 2019b, p. 284). These recent reports point to a sharp increase in numbers who have participated in FEP in the last three years. As well, in the MoFSP's *2018-2022 Strategic Plan*, the aim of reaching two million adults, both with FEP and premarital education programs, was noted. It was also stated that the efforts to protect and strengthen families would continue in the following years (MoFSP, 2017, p. 41).

## 2.6 Summary of chapter two

This chapter included information on FEP. It is an adult education program launched by the government that concerns families in Turkey. The program covers a broad range of topics, which are addressed in modules on family education and communication, finance, law, media, and health. FEP aims to enable families to

benefit from health and education services more effectively, as well as manage their financial resources, empowering them to better address challenges they may encounter, therefore improving their quality of life. It is the most extensive family education program to have been implemented in the country, reaching almost two million people between 2013 and 2020. In the chapter, the vision and the basic approach of FEP have been introduced. Additionally, details have been provided regarding the target populations, program materials, program sponsors and scope of the practice.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the scholarly literature to develop an understanding of the concept of FLE and its significance, as well as to discuss advances and recent challenges in theory and practice. This review is separated into two sections. It commences with an overview of the FLE concept and debates regarding its definition. Examples of FLE programs broadly applied are included in this section. It continues with the contributions of feminist thinking in the discipline of FLE. This first section concludes with a review of studies critically analyzing FLE programs and parenting publications. In the second section, attention is given to family education practices and family-centered policies in Turkey. This section begins with the historical development of FLE in Turkey before turning to the discursive context of family education policies in the country. Lastly, the review concludes with an overall summary of the chapter.

#### 3.1 Definitions and purpose of FLE

The FLE movement began at the start of the twentieth century with an aim of supporting family well-being. Indeed, as a result of the effects of industrialization, urbanization, and changing gender roles in the early twentieth century, the stature of FLE grew (Arcus, 1992; Bredehoft, 2001). Through formal training programs, it was aimed to find solutions to problems or problem-creating conditions in families (Arcus, 1995; Duncan & Goddard, 2011). Therefore, the overall goal of FLE can be defined as assisting families through well-organized educational programs intended to improve their family well-being (Arcus, Schvaneveldt, & Moss, 1993).



However, although it has a long tradition as a profession and practice, defining the field of FLE has remained a challenging issue for many years (Bredehoft & Cassidy, 1995; Powell & Cassidy, 2001). As argued by Arcus et al. (1993), definitions ranging from educational programs in formal school settings to training activities designed for adults to improve their quality of life are found “too vague, too ambiguous, and/or too idealistic” (p. 3). In this regard, before defining the term, they highlighted three significant rationales that are central in establishing the purpose of FLE. The first of these is “the need to help families deal with the social problems of the time” (Arcus et al., 1993, p. 4). The second is related to the belief that “if only families learn to ‘do the right things,’ then many family problems could and would be prevented” (Arcus et al., 1993, p. 4). The final rationale is the reflection of the view that “families also needed to have the opportunity to develop their individual and family potentials” (Arcus et al., 1993, p. 4). Based on these three rationales, primary aims of FLE include:

- Gaining insight into self and others,
- Learning about human development and behavior in the family setting over the life cycle,
- Learning about marriage and family patterns and processes,
- Acquiring skills essential for family living,
- Developing the potentials of individuals in their current and future family roles,
- Building strengths in families. (Arcus et al., 1993, p. 5)

In addition to the rationales and objectives, Arcus et al. (1993) established the following operational principles for FLE. These seven principles still serve as guides for the field of FLE:

- Family life education is relevant to individuals and families throughout the life span.
- Family life education should be based on the needs of individuals and families.
- Family life education is a multidisciplinary area of study and is multiprofessional in its practice.
- Family life education programs are offered in many different settings.

- Family life education takes an educational rather than therapeutic approach.
- Family life education should present and respect differing family values.
- Qualified educators are crucial to the successful realization of the goals of family life education. (Arcus et al., 1993, pp. 15–20)

As Bredehoft (2001) explains, FLE incorporates a multitude of disciplines including psychology, history, medicine, sociology, anthropology, biology, adult education, counseling, law, religion, and economics. While in many countries it has generally been addressed at the governmental level, in other countries it has been provided by non-governmental or civil society organizations (Taylor & Robila, 2018). However, in any context, FLE is essentially proposed as a “preventive” and “educational” approach for family well-being (Darling, Cassidy, & Rehm, 2019). In this growing field, parent education, sexuality education, marriage and relationship education, financial and budget management, communication, and conflict resolution are FLE programs that are implemented worldwide (Bredehoft, 2001).

Established in 1938, the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) brought a shared focus on family studies, policies, and practices, playing an important role in the professionalization of the discipline. Notably, NCFR provided guidelines and criteria for family life educators in 1984, one of the initial steps in the professional development of FLE (Darling, Fleming, & Cassidy, 2009). Since then, NCFR developed and administers the globally recognized Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) credential. *The Framework for Life Span Family Life Education*, published by NCFR in 1987, is a significant source that expanded the definition and set the criteria and guidelines for program development in FLE. After its release, the framework was revised in 1997 and 2011 (Bredehoft & Walcheski, 2011). The latest version of the framework includes 10 content areas for the age groups of children, adolescents, adults, and older adults:

- Families and individuals in societal contexts
- Internal dynamics of families
- Human growth and development across the lifespan
- Human sexuality
- Interpersonal relationships
- Family resource management
- Parent education and guidance
- Family law and public policy
- Professional ethics and practice
- FLE methodology (NCFR, 2014)

In addition to discussions on the meaning of FLE, important advances have been made with respect to the design and assessment of FLE programs. Many scholars in family sciences have proposed valuable guidelines aimed to improve the content and the implementation of training programs (Allen & Baber, 1992; Ballard, 2020; Ballard & Taylor, 2012; Darling & Cassidy, 2014; Duncan & Goddard, 2011; Hughes, 1994; Small, 1990; Thomas & Arcus, 1992). In a broadly defined framework, Hughes (1994) highlights the four domains of content, instructional process, implementation, and evaluation. He further outlines methodological issues in developing FLE programs, arguing that FLE should be rooted in research-based programs (Hughes, 1994). In their book entitled *Family Life Education with Diverse Populations*, Ballard and Taylor (2012) offer a framework for best FLE practices for diverse populations.

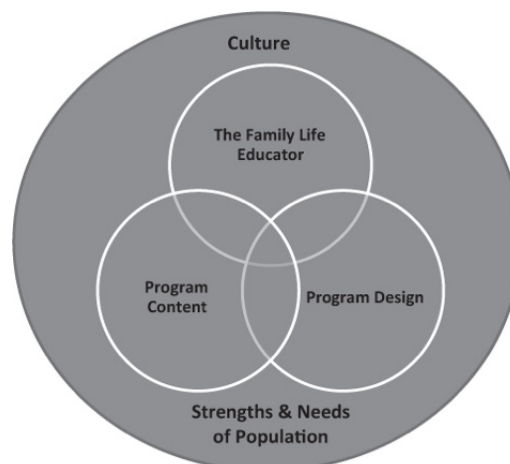


Figure 1. Framework for best practices in FLE (Ballard & Taylor, 2012, p. 5)

As seen in Figure 1, the three components of their framework are (1) program content, (2) program design, and (3) the family life educator. These are located in the context of “culture” and “strengths and needs of the population.” Ballard and Taylor propose that these three components are key to meeting the needs of a diverse audience; thus, these components are deserving of special attention, with the recognition that they are all interrelated and interdependent in high-quality FLE programs.

Duncan and Goddard (2011) suggest a comprehensive framework for designing FLE programs. The framework, shown in Table 3, involves five stages. The framework guides family life educators on the path to developing effective FLE programs.

Table 3. A Framework for Designing Family Life Prevention Programs

Stages	Key Elements
Stage 1: Problem Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Identify problem and establish overall program goal(s)</li> <li>⇒ Consult the scholarly literature</li> <li>⇒ Form a coalition of stakeholders who work together to address the problem</li> </ul>
Stage 2: Program Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Consult target group and assess their needs</li> <li>⇒ Select change (learning) objectives</li> <li>⇒ Select evaluation tools</li> <li>⇒ Select change methods and learning activities</li> <li>⇒ Decide program extensiveness</li> <li>⇒ Design recruitment/retention strategy</li> <li>⇒ Tailor program content and delivery</li> </ul>
Stage 3: Pilot Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Implement program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Recruitment and retention evaluation</li> <li>○ Process evaluation</li> <li>○ Formative evaluation</li> <li>○ Program revision</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Stage 4: Advanced Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Select experimental design</li> <li>⇒ Implement program</li> <li>⇒ Summative evaluation</li> <li>⇒ Analyze data</li> <li>⇒ Refine program</li> </ul>
Stage 5: Dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Widespread adoption of program</li> </ul>

Source: *Family life education: Principles and practices for effective outreach* (Duncan & Goddard, 2011, pp. 48-49)

In their article on the practice of FLE, Darling, Cassidy, and Rehm (2017) identify four foundational principles of FLE: education, prevention, a strengths-based approach, and a foundation in research and theory (p. 742). Educational strategies and approaches are important to teach awareness and develop skills in families. The prevention principle involves attempts to reduce threats and concerns in order to avoid more damage to families. A strengths-based approach acknowledges the skills of individuals and underlines the contributions of learners' inherent knowledge and motivation. Finally, a science and theory basis essentializes the integration of science-based knowledge into the design and delivery of FLE programs. In addition to these four principles, they pinpoint four key components: culture, context, content, and practice. In order to better understand the characteristics and needs of learners and teachers, these components are important, as well as to consider the social and physical conditions surrounding teaching practices. The same authors present a visual conceptualization of their framework (see Figure 2), the “foundations of family life education model” (Darling, Cassidy, & Rehm, 2019).

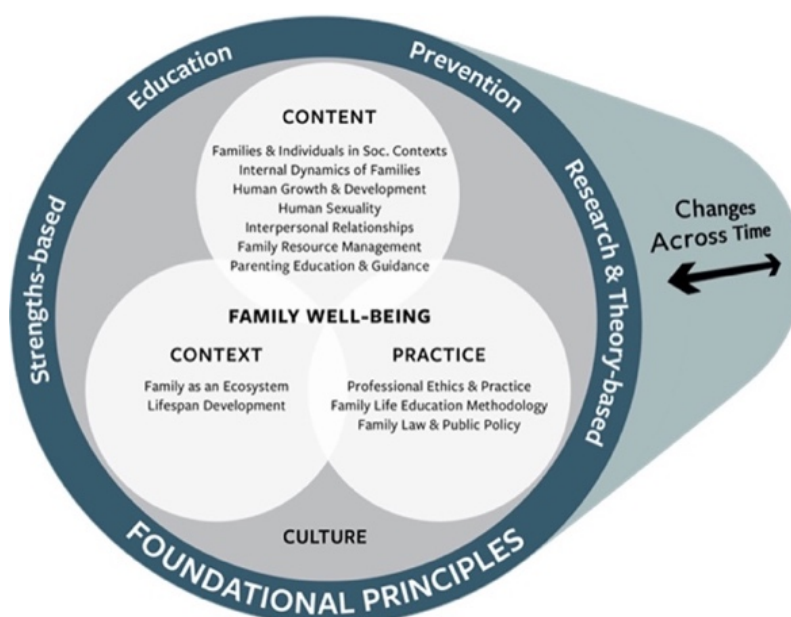


Figure 2. Foundations of family life education model (Darling et al., 2019, p. 2)

Ballard (2020) introduces an FLE framework that particularly highlights the implementation and the delivery practices of programs. The FLE Implementation Framework stresses four components of the program environment: program participants, program design and delivery, and program facilitator (See Figure 3).



Figure 3. Family life education implementation framework (Ballard, 2020, p. 3)

Lastly, one of the area of concerns for scholars who provide frameworks for best practices is the crucial role of FLE educators in effectively meeting the needs of families. FLE educators are required to have relevant skills, knowledge, and experiences (Arcus et al., 1993, Ballard & Taylor, 2012; Duncan & Goddard, 2012; Powell & Cassidy, 2007). Accordingly, a code of ethical principles and guidelines was established by NCFR for FLE educators. Some of the main principles involved are having an awareness of how power dynamics affect parents and family relations; respecting cultural beliefs, backgrounds, and differences; acknowledging the complex dynamics of individuals and families; being respectful, open, and clear with all family members; supporting diverse family values; and providing a safe and nurturing environment for families (NCFR, 2016). Similarly, Allen and Blaisure (2009) propose important concepts for FLE educators, one of which is the use of a

“diversity lens” that encourages educators to be aware of their participants’ needs.

They also recommend that educators develop a personal understanding of their own views and that be aware of their influence on others. Lastly, as mentioned by Ballard and Taylor (2012), “the role of the family life educator is central; yet, if there is not appropriate content or effective delivery methods, then the program will not be successful” (p. 299). Therefore, any discussion regarding the criticism or evaluation of FLE programs should consider the three program components of content, methodology, and role of educators.

### 3.2 Examples of FLE programs

Several programs targeted at families and children have been employed worldwide. Some of these programs are commonly known as FLE services, while others use parent training, parenting intervention, or parenting education terms. FLE has a varied nature, as highlighted by Ballard (2020), as it can be utilized in diverse settings and with varying kinds of programs. Ballard, Cassidy, Taylor, and Robila (2018) provide a list of family-centered programs offering trainings for families in the United States. As they describe, in the United States FLE is considerably advanced, due to its more extensive history, with a great number of programs available to serve the needs of settings ranging from workplaces to religious and military institutions. Lifebalance Solutions is an example of a program geared specifically to employees. Dads at a Distance and Long-Distance Couples are two examples of programs designed for families in long-distance relationships. There are also programs focusing on parenting education. Family Foundations targets expectant couples, while Parenting a Second Time Around is a training program for grandparents who are responsible for childcare. There are programs addressing

same-sex couples and their unique needs. The Family Acceptance Project, for instance, provides information to families with LGBTQ children. *Gay Parent Magazine* is an example of a parent support resource for same-sex couples. Programs focusing on parents and children at risks include Parenting Piece by Piece and Children in Between. The Head Start Programs are examples of broad-in-scope programs administered by government agencies. The Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program targets pregnant women and families at risk (Ballard et al., 2018).

Furthermore, many programs initially developed in the United States can be adopted in different countries and vice versa. To cite an example, the Strengthening Families Program is currently being implemented in over 35 countries. It is a training program designed for families at risks. The Triple P Positive Parenting Program, first designed in Australia, has long been used in the United States. One of the oldest evidence-based parenting programs in the world, Triple P provides practical strategies to foster healthy relationships in families. The program is currently in use in more than 25 countries (Ballard et al., 2018).

As Thomas and Lein (2009) state, FLE can be found worldwide, carried out by different educational institutions, community organizations, or governments. Although programs from the United States dominate the literature, due to the extent of its scholarly history, a wide variety of examples can be given from other countries. For instance, Taiwan was one of the first countries to pass legislation regarding family education (Hwang, 2018). The Ministry of Education in Taiwan sponsors a number of websites that deliver FLE, such as Family Education, My Family, Parenting, and Dating and Marriage. There are also university-based family education and research centers as well as various non-governmental organizations



that provide education for families in Taiwan (Hwang, 2018). Saudi Arabia is another example of a country that has enacted a law on family education. Taheel, for instance, is a premarital education program designed by the government in 2015. The program targets newlyweds or engaged couples in Saudi Arabia (Almalki & Ganong, 2018). In South Korea, Seoul Family School provides trainings for couples (Lee & Son, 2018). Israel also showcases government-initiated family training programs. The Drop of Milk stations provide health services for families with young children. There are many additional programs for adoptive families or families at risk that provide mentoring services (Ritblatt & Rosental, 2018). Lastly, one pioneering example that adopts feminist principles is provided by the Daddy Institute (*Instituto Papai*) from Brazil. The Institute runs projects in the areas of sexuality, health, and reproductive rights (Bastos, Reis, Calvalho, & Moreira, 2018).

One important subject area of FLE is marriage and relationship education (MRE). In the last two decades, researchers studying on marriage preparation or enrichment programs in the United States have reported a substantial rise in MRE government funding (Randles, 2013; Randles & Avishai, 2018). As reported by Randles (2012), government support for MREs was first initiated after the 1996 welfare reform. In 2002, the Healthy Marriage Initiative (HMI) was held (Dion, 2005). HMI is responsible for administering grants to projects supported by the government (Randles, 2012). In particular, these government-supported programs aim at teaching couples from low-income families. These programs take several forms, target diverse audiences and use varied methods and curricula. Programs range from grassroots coalitions to promote marriage, teaching “healthy marriages” to high school or college students or marital counseling services and web-based resources (Dion, 2005). The Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood

Initiative, National Parenting Education Network, Fatherhood Research and Practice Network, and Family Life Coaching Association are some prominent providers of MREs in this regard (Ballard, 2020; Ballard et al., 2018).

In addition, there are numerous examples of faith-based initiatives and religious communities that encourage “traditional” family models and heterosexual marriages through education programs. Marriage Encounter is one of the oldest examples of a marriage-enrichment project (Dion, 2005). Two more recent examples of faith-based intervention programs aiming to eliminate divorce rates and strengthen marriages are Marriage Savers and Promise Keepers (Brotherson & Duncan, 2004; Heath, Randles, & Avishai, 2016).

The widespread use of information technologies enables families to find family-related information at any given time. Online sources and applications have enhanced the spectrum of face-to-face learning venues for adults regarding family-related issues. Websites disseminating FLE information are widely available. In their study Morris, Dollahite, and Hawkins (1999) analyzed websites that have provided FLE for fathers. The Wonder Wise Parent, the National Center for Fathering, Parents’ Place, the Full Time Dads, Fathers’ Resource Center, and Family Planet are some of the FLE websites that they examined. Whithear (1999) also gives examples of online FLE resources in the Australian context. For instance, Relate is a site that aims to foster relationship skills of couples. The Family Relationships Institute is an organization providing courses and workshops for families, and Family Track: Family and Marriage Education Links is a collection of websites that offer family and marriage enrichment education. Websites such as Manhood Online, Marriage Support, National Forum on Men and Family Relationships provide marital information and support. Child and Youth Health, Network for Family Resiliency,

National Parent Information Network, and Parenting Tips are additional sources for parenting information. Fatherwork and About Dads Radio provide blogs and podcasts for fathers. Parenting 24/7 and text4baby offer FLE content via app and website. There are also websites for parents with specific needs. Parent-to-Parent, for instance, is managed by a nationwide organization in New Zealand that helps families with disabilities by informing, educating, and supporting them. Some FLE websites such as Forever Families provide faith-based information for families.

### 3.3 Contributions of feminist scholarship on FLE

This section concentrates on feminist perspectives on family studies, particularly examining studies that take a critical eye to FLE. As Arcus (1995) states, feminist ideas and theories are well-suited to family sciences by both contributing to the development of the discipline and challenging the prevailing conceptions regarding families and individuals. Baca Zinn and Dillaway (2005) acknowledge family sociologists' contributions of feminist thinking to the family studies field. As they argue, the contributions of feminist ideas and strategies have produced new directions in the field of family studies and have thus had a profound impact on understandings of family experiences, forms, and processes. Similarly, Allen and Jaramillo-Sierra (2015) define four basic elements of feminist approaches in family scholarship as the distinctive features of feminist thoughts in the field. The first is the acknowledgment of gender as the center of analysis. Culturally constructed gender inequality is the second element. The third is the recognition of gender inequality as unjust and detrimental. Lastly, the fourth element is the efforts of feminist scholars to challenge gender inequality (Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2015, p. 94).

Considering diversity and complexity as their focal points in family studies and focusing on power dynamics in relationships (Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2015), feminist scholars have contributed to the study of gender and families, informing both research and practice in the field of FLE. As the following review presents, feminist scholars have raised concerns about the content and teaching methods of FLE programs and questioned the extent to which these programs were gender-inclusive and appropriate for diverse populations (Allen & Baber, 1992; Thompson & Walker, 1995).

In an early critique of family research, Walker and Thompson (1984) discussed the advancement of feminist ideology in family studies and outlined 10 feminist principles as a feminist approach to family studies research. The first one is that the researchers must be honest with the readers and make explicit their bias. They also highlight a recognition of the broader sociohistorical context of marriage and family relations. Acknowledging family as not a harmonious, private institution, but socially constructed and historically changing structure is another argument that they highlight in this regard. Gender, an important variable in understanding families, is addressed as a significant principle. What they highlight is that we are not living in a gender-neutral society, and gender affects interactions, hence becomes a relevant principle. Emphasis on intragroup heterogeneity and reflecting the diversity of individuals' lives, recognition of complexities of research processes are among the issues that they raise. Shortly, they put emphasis on the importance of research intended to improve the lives of women, with special attention to pluralism in order to prevent bias and avoid ageism, classism, sexism, and racism. Finally, they focus on the equality of all those involved in the research process and thus stress the rejection of hierarchy in the research process. In light of these principles, they

analyzed articles published in family journals over a period of 20 years (from 1963 to 1983). They indicated that feminist knowledge did not constitute an important part of family scholarship, either in theory or practice. Their study concluded with a call for the establishment of a special branch on feminism and family studies in NCFR as a means of integrating feminist standards into its structure (Walker & Thompson, 1984, p. 566).

A decade later, Thompson & Walker (1995) replicated their study of examining the role of feminism in family scholarship. They analyzed articles published between 1984 and 1993 in three academic journals. They acknowledged a transformation in the field over 10 years and reported that feminism had a recognized place in family studies but not occupied a central place (Thompson & Walker, 1995, p. 861).

Allen (1988) also contributed to the development of feminist thinking in the discipline of FLE by introducing a feminist framework for family studies courses. In the article, she highlights the importance of feminist pedagogy and offers strategies that incorporate a feminist approach. The three qualities of feminist teaching recommended for family studies are recognizing and respecting diversity, facilitating a cooperative and interactive teaching and learning environment, and consciously creating an atmosphere of equality. As well, the three strategies highlighted for integrating these qualities are the use of self-disclosure, utilizing diverse assignments that value personal experience, and assigning readings and resources in order to incorporate missing voices. These are proposed as essentials for teachers in order to adopt a feminist orientation into the classroom.

Parallel to the discussions on the inclusion of feminist principles in family studies, various studies have concentrated on the White, middle-class, heterosexual

dominance of FLE content and put forth feminist pedagogies for effective teaching. Walker (1993), for instance, discusses some of these inequalities and proposes feminist principles for those who teach family science in universities or other professional settings in order to ensure inclusivity and recognize the realities of family life. Some of her suggested principles for an inclusive teaching practice include endorsing a critical perspective towards the sources of knowledge, highlighting structural processes and nullifying stereotypes and misinformation, concentrating on differences within groups, and avoiding from comparing underrepresented groups to a mainstream standard, highlighting the intersection of race, gender, and class, and addressing the white race and racial supremacy, and facilitating the work of those who are oppressed or being underrepresented within the program content, hence attending to new concepts and themes to envision the syllabus (Walker, 1993, p. 343). The overarching goal what Walker (1993) discusses is to make a change both in the curriculum and every teaching practice that is to be inclusive of diversity.

Allen and Baber (1992) discuss the issue of integrating a feminist perspective into conceiving, teaching, and practicing FLE. They highlight five feminist concerns that family life educators should bear in mind. The first one is considering family diversity as a new paradigm. As they describe, “the ‘traditional family’ remains the standard bearer in family studies despite its demographic obsolescence” (Allen & Baber, 1992, p. 379). Considering diversity as a key issue in FLE, in this respect, can enable the accommodation of broader forms of families by not privileging or giving priority to one form only. The second concern for examination regards the decline in lifelong marriages and the restructuring of relationships. In their words, “contrary to public concern, it is not the family that is in decline; it is traditional marriage” (Allen

& Baber, 1992, p. 380). Third is the recognition of a backlash against gender equality. As they highlight, the feminist movement has long been blamed for causing social problems that threaten families. Conscious of this conflict, FLE educators might play a role in facilitating a movement towards gender equality. Their fourth concern is the inequalities that women face in paid and unpaid labor. Lastly, the fifth addresses regulations of reproductive rights as a threat to women's rights. Continual attacks on abortion rights, narrowing options for effective contraception, opposition to comprehensive sexuality education, and reducing funding for reproductive health research are some of the threats to women's control over their reproductive rights. They argue that FLE must acknowledge and be responsive to these changing situations and contested issues in society, and by adopting a feminist perspective, family life educators can facilitate changes for families in a more egalitarian direction (Allen & Baber, 1992).

Similarly, MacDermid, Jurich, Myers-Walls, and Pelo (1992) offer the inclusion of feminist perspectives as a conceptual framework for effective FLE. They assert that "teaching about families from a feminist perspective is innovative because it assumes intrinsic connections among content, process, and participants of education" (MacDermid et al., 1992, p. 31). To this end, they discuss the importance of the content, the methods, and the participants.

After reviewing the literature on feminist principles and guidelines for FLE and its practice, Paton (1998) developed a framework that provides a useful set of criteria for a feminist critical analysis of an education curriculum. The following seven principles proposed as a framework for analysis of FLE programs by Paton (1998) are inspirational and set an example of a useful guideline for the present analysis:

- Recognizing the influence of gender on work; acknowledging unequal treatment of women in the paid and unpaid work arenas.
- Recognizing the influence of gender on roles/position in families.
- Incorporating both male and female experience into FLE.
- Emphasizing within group differences.
- Recognizing the sociohistorical context.
- Recognizing family diversity.
- Providing practical and relevant information. (pp. 26–29)

Baca Zinn (2000) queried the role of feminism on family studies over the past three decades. She acknowledges the contribution of feminist thinking to the discipline and highlights that with the development of academic feminism on family scholarship, new understandings of relationships with respect to class, race, gender, and sexuality have been gained.

Further discussions on the incorporation of feminist principles in teaching practices have particularly contributed to the development of alternative FLE frameworks. Humble and Morgaine (2002), for instance, analyzed articles published in an academic journal on feminist pedagogy in FLE. They emphasized the need for an explicit conceptual framework for feminist family science, so as to define knowledge and action according to feminist principles.

Additionally, to overcome the diversity issue for more inclusive FLE programs, Maurer (2012) addresses the inclusion of LGBT individuals into FLE curriculum and practice. Some of her guideline suggestions for LGBT-inclusive FLE programming involve raising awareness of general definitions and terminology regarding the LGBT community; establishing supportive, confidential, knowledgeable, and safe environments for LGBT families; avoiding prevailing assumptions on gender identities; involving LGBT people at all levels of program development; and responding to bias and misinformation among participants and colleagues (Maurer, 2012, pp. 276-277).



To conclude, as argued by Allen and Baber (1992), a feminist approach to FLE “provides a vital framework for investigating the structure and process of contemporary family life” (p. 378). Feminist scholarship has contributed to the field by challenging the traditional gender-based allocation of social tasks, power, and prestige, as well as questioning the traditional models of male and female behavioral roles. Feminists scholars have also questioned the belief in the “ideal family” and stress the diverse structures that families embody (Arcus, 1995). They have proposed feminist pedagogies and principles to guide family life educators and thus expand the scholarship of teaching and practicing.

#### 3.4 Studies on critical analysis of texts addressing families

In one of the earliest studies of critical inquiry on family related texts, De Frain (1977) examined 53 popular parenting books, focusing on how the authors approached the issue of parental roles and childrearing. The findings indicated that the majority of authors endorsed (implicitly or explicitly) the traditional gender roles for parents: the breadwinner father and caretaker mother. De Frain concluded that the failure to discuss any alternatives was evidence of sexist bias in the books addressing parents. Similarly, in an article on childrearing publications and parent education programs, Scott-Jones and Peebles-Wilkins (1986) indicated that most publications and structured programs addressing parents did not give adequate attention to equality. They also argued that parenting programs focused on a traditional middle-class model that prioritized mothering and did not include any content on non-traditional models.

In addition to the discussions on traditional roles in families, issues of race and discrimination were among the topics examined in those early studies. Studies

on the inclusion/exclusion of Black families in marriage and family textbooks (Bryant & Coleman, 1988) and issues of racial bias in sexuality textbooks (Whatley, 1988) are exemplary in this regard. Likewise, Nolan, Coleman, and Ganong (1984) discussed the representation of diverse families in marriage and family textbooks. They particularly focused on the extent to which stepfamilies were presented. They concluded that the textbooks focused on the traditional nuclear family and gave little or no attention to stepfamilies, and thus they were biased in their presentation of families.

Following these early inquiries discussing the underpinnings of gendered inequalities and discrimination regarding race and class, the body of academic literature has proliferated in the following years, and much has been discussed regarding gendered roles and stereotypes in parents' and children's books, manuals, media campaigns, television series, and training programs.

In their feminist analysis of child development textbooks written for students of developmental psychology, Woollett and Phoenix (1996), concentrated on how mothering was constructed in those texts. They argued that, despite choosing the ambiguous term "parent" in the texts, those developmental psychology texts were still actually directed to mothers. They also claimed that by providing limited accounts of motherhood and mothers' pedagogical responsibilities, "developmental psychology serves to maintain the status quo with regard to gender relations, social class, 'race,' and ethnicity and is thus antithetical to feminist aims of changing existing power relations" (Woollett & Phoenix, 1996, p. 100).

In a study on fatherhood in popular media—including television programming, popular films, newspaper reports, biographical accounts of famous fathers, autobiographical accounts, and parenting books and magazines in the

Australian context—Lupton and Barclay (1997) remarked upon a rise in articles focusing on fathers in parenting magazines in the late 1980s; however, they argued that fathers were portrayed as non-essential parents and those articles and also most images in the texts focused exclusively on mothers and children. They also discussed that the choice of the gender-neutral term “parent” in the titles of magazines was misleading, as the actual content of such publications indicates the dominant role of mothers in parenting. In this regard, they claimed that using “parent” rather than the gender-specific labelling of “mother” and “father” concealed the different experiences of individuals in the context of parenthood (Lupton & Barclay, 1997, p. 91).

Sunderland (2000, 2006) and Lazar (2000) provide prominent examples of critical discourse analysis on gendered ideologies and representations of parenting. In her study on parentcraft texts, Sunderland (2000) particularly focused on discursive constructions of fatherhood. One significant finding of her study was the discourse of “the part-time father/mother as main parent” (Sunderland, 2000, p. 302). She described how fathers were framed as absent and secondary, whereas mothers were described as the main parents in these texts addressing parents. In addition, Sunderland found that the most prevalent reference in parentcraft texts to fathers was the “father-as-baby-entertainer” discourse (Sunderland, 2000, p. 308). This refers to involvement of fathers with words like “fun,” “enjoy,” or by “spending time,” “participating,” or “having opportunities.” In her follow-up study based on the analysis of three childcare magazines Sunderland (2006), once again, concluded that fathers in heterosexual partnerships were not fully represented and included, and it was still mothers who predominately occupied the space in those magazines. A study conducted by Lazar (2000) on a government advertising campaign in Singapore

constitutes another example of critical scrutiny on parenting. She particularly examined the construction of gender and sexuality in an advertising campaign on family life. One particular concern of her discussion is the coexistence of two potentially antithetical discourses on egalitarianism and conservatism in terms of gender relations in the same advertising campaign. Lazar defines three kinds of representation about the discourse on egalitarianism in the advertising campaign. These are the representation of symmetrical parenthood for women and men, the portrayal of men in the domestic sphere as caring fathers, and the portrayal of women as mothers as well as successful careerists. The symmetrical portrayal of parents views parenthood as similar for men and women while denying differential positions of “father” and “mother.” Another aspect of the egalitarian discourse is the portrayal of men as a caring father. The findings of the study indicated that men with close contact with their newborn babies and were actively involved in the family life. On the other hand, women were seen not only as partners in family life, but also depicted in the workplace. The study, on the other hand, also showed that the same advertisements supported asymmetrical gender roles in the construction of parenthood, which Lazar defines as discourse on conservatism. In the conservative discourse, men appeared often in executive positions in the domestic sphere, such as running camera equipment, capturing photos of sleeping babies. Also, fathers were often represented with sons, explaining the mechanics of operating a toy train or showing them how to ride a bike. Besides, the portrayal of the father in the family depicts him as the family’s bearer; portraying him as the powerful figure in the family. Moreover, no major conflict observed between work and family life for men, instead they were depicted as coexisting well. However, a different image emerged for the portrayal of women as mothers in the conservative discourse. Their

motherhood experience was defined with the concerns of their husbands and children, and they performed gender-differentiated tasks. Careers were often depicted as creating stress, and women were encouraged to maintain a career and their families. What Lazar (2000) ultimately argued is that while in the campaign certain egalitarian values were introduced, they were largely overshadowed by a conservative discourse, which culminated in the egalitarian discourse being made and thus displaced.

Studies taking a critical eye to children's books have revealed similar findings. To cite one, examining parental roles presented in picture books for children, Anderson and Hamilton (2005) indicated crucial differences in the depictions of mothers and fathers. While mothers were presented more often as care providers and the main nurturers, fathers were given limited spaces and took little part in the lives of their children. Adams, Walker, and O'Connell (2011) followed a similar path and questioned the gendered stereotypes of parents. Concentrating on children's books published in the United Kingdom, the results of their study demonstrated an imbalance, in which fathers remained "invisible." Filipović (2018) also explored the gendered representations in children's books used in school settings in Dublin. Findings of the research revealed that traditional gender patterns still prevailed in the books addressing children.

Furthermore, studies have long shown these texts typically depict a certain family model of White, middle or upper class, nuclear, heterosexual, married, able-bodied, non-immigrant, and gender-stereotyped (Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra 2015; Taylor, 2003; Koss, 2015). In her ground-breaking book entitled *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*, Burman (2017) provides a critical evaluation of the role and contribution of developmental psychology within social practices, highlighting

how developmental psychology has reproduced the ideal form of family. She criticizes developmental psychology as both contributing to and reflecting dominant familial assumptions and debates.

In addition to studies on the gendered representations of individuals in family-related materials, critical analysis considered the manner in which issues of social class were addressed. For Hughes and Perry-Jenkins (1996), although FLE literature has given limited attention to gender and ethnicity issues, social class remained a neglected issue in the discipline. Thus, they urge family scholars and FLE practitioners to keep in mind the spectrum of social class for effective, inclusive programing.

### 3.5 Family education in Turkey

In this section, an overview of the development of FLE practices in Turkey will be featured. Family education has strong legal grounds, as guaranteed by various laws and conventions in Turkey—primarily the Constitution, followed by other national and international legislation regarding services to be provided for families.

Programs for families in the country may follow different paths in terms of the form of family education and counseling, but they fundamentally serve similar purposes. The target groups of these programs are mainly parents with children, newlyweds, engaged couples, and single parents. In most of the education programs, disadvantaged families and those with lower socio-economic backgrounds are defined as the target groups. The common objectives of these programs are to help families gain necessary knowledge and skills of child development and rearing, strengthen family ties, and support children's well-being (Copur & Taylor, 2018; Hamamcı & Sevim, 2004; Öztop & Yılmaz, 2015). Yet another objective is to

support the emotional and cognitive development of children who may be underdeveloped due to experiencing adverse environmental conditions at an early age. In this vein, family education programs can also be regarded as early intervention programs (Atmaca Koçak & Bekman, 2010).

Family education practices in Turkey are mainly implemented through institutional or home-based programs. Additionally, there are prominent examples of school and parent involvement programs, distance education facilities, and mobile applications serving families. As the following review illustrates, a wide scope of educational programs for families in Turkey has been carried out in both formal and non-formal settings for many years. However, a lack of coordination between these institutions is a distinctive feature of the educational practices addressing families. This is to say that, although educational practices for families in Turkey have long been established, as a discipline FLE is not well-developed and still lacks conceptual frameworks, definition of methodologies, and forms of assessments (Copur & Taylor, 2018).

### 3.5.1 FLE programs in Turkey

Family education has a long history in Turkey. Public courses, seminars, and literacy studies organized for adults in the early Republican era can be considered the first examples of FLE in Turkey. However, more organized FLE practices emerged in the 1960s. In the 1962–1963, Prof. İhsan Şükrü Aksel developed one of the early family-oriented educational programs. He initiated a program called “Weekly Meetings with Mothers and Fathers” in the Medico-Social and Military Medical School in Istanbul. In these meetings, the definition of a “good” family, relations between spouses,

behavioral characteristics, and health problems were addressed (Copur & Taylor, 2018; Hamamcı & Sevim, 2004).

Although many educational activities were facilitated for parents in the ensuing years, it was not until the 1980s that more systematic education programs were put into practice. In the following section, some prominent examples of programs implemented in Turkey will be introduced. These programs have higher participant rates, and they are the most inclusive and enduring, as evident in the considerable influence they have had on the development of the FLE field in Turkey.

#### 3.5.1.1 Parent school

Parent School was an educational program first implemented in 1989 at Istanbul University. The overall objective of the program was to explain to parents how they could communicate well with their children (Copur & Taylor, 2018; Hamamcı & Sevim, 2004). The program involved 33 hours of training and included a wide range of subjects such as the infant period (ages 0–2), the pre-school period (ages 3–6), the role of family in the acquisition of basic needs, the later childhood period (ages 6–12), adolescence, sexual education of the child, parental attitudes, ways to communicate well with children, behavior disorders, the role of family in raising healthy and happy children, ways to increase school achievement, problem-solving skills, working mothers, and the father-child relationship (Hamamcı & Sevim, 2004).

The program initially targeted low-income families; however, in time increasing numbers of middle-income families participated. Further, though the program was aimed at both parents, it was mostly women who attended the trainings (Özel, 1996). The total number of participants, from the beginning of the program in 1989 to the end in 1994, was stated as 3,000 (Hamamcı & Sevim, 2004; Özel, 1996).



Since its first implementation, Parent School was successfully replicated many times. This project sets an important example with respect to its longevity. Additionally, because of the books on child development and parent education written by founder Haluk Yavuzer, the program still reaches a wide audience (Yavuzer, 2010).

#### 3.5.1.2 Mother-child education foundation and trainings for parents

Established in 1993, the Mother-Child Education Foundation (*Anne Çocuk Eğitim Vakfı*, hereafter AÇEV) implements programs in the fields of parent and early childhood education in Turkey. The Mother-Child Education Program (MOCEP) of the foundation is one of the earliest examples of a family education program. Additionally, the Father Support Program, Family Letters Project, Graduate Mothers Project, and Preschool Parent Child Education Program are some other examples of educational activities provided by AÇEV.

In addition to these programs, AÇEV delivers distance learning via mobile apps. *First 6 Years* app has been providing practical and up-to-date information on child development since 2014. The app seeks to reach a broader audience and provides equal opportunities for access to information by enhancing the spectrum of learning through the use of communication technologies.

##### 3.5.1.2.1 Mother-child education program (MOCEP)

Rooted in the Turkish Early Enrichment Project, MOCEP is an education program implemented nationwide (Kağıtçıbaşı, Sunar, & Bekman, 1991). MOCEP lasts 25 weeks and includes three units: the Mother Support Program, Reproduction Health and Family Planning Program, and Mental Training Program. In the Mother Support

Program, mothers receive information about mental, social, and physical development. Reproductive Health and Family Planning provides information on women's reproductive system and methods of family planning. Finally, the Mental Training Program gives information on children's mental development and school readiness. One of the first early childhood development program attempts, MOCEP targets both children and mothers and thus constitutes an example of a combined adult and preschool education program (Bekman, 1998).

Various studies have been conducted to evaluate both the short- and long-term effects of MOCEP (Atmaca Koçak & Bekman, 2010; Bekman, 1998; Kağıtçıbaşı, Sunar, Bekman, & Cemalcılar, 2005). These studies have shown that children of participants achieved higher scores in intelligence and general ability exams, completed higher levels of education, developed a more positive sense of self, gained a higher status in adult life, and received higher wages. In addition, mothers who participated in the trainings strengthened their communication and parenting skills (Kartal, 2013).

#### 3.5.1.2.2 Father support program (FSP)

First piloted in 1996, FSP is an example of a father support program. Since 1999 it has been implemented on a larger scale. In the 2002–2003 academic year, the program was revised and began to be implemented as a 13-week training (Atmaca Koçak, 2004; Kılıç, 2010). The main objectives of the program are to encourage and support fathers to take active roles in their child's development; to increase knowledge of child upbringing, child development, and parenting; and to support happier family life (Atmaca Koçak, 2004; Kılıç, 2010).

FSP is implemented through group trainings. Literate fathers with children ages 2–10 can participate in the program. Weekly meetings last approximately three hours. Participants share their problems and experiences within the framework of a group dynamics approach (Atmaca Koçak, 2004). Findings of the evaluation of the program revealed that there were changes in attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of fathers that could be attributed to the program (Atmaca Koçak, 2004). Exemplary of family education programs addressing fathers in the country, FSP is still actively being implemented nationwide.

#### 3.5.1.3 Mother-child education program for ages 0–4

Following research conducted in 1988, a program was developed at Gazi University and was then implemented in public education centers in the 1993–1994 academic year. This program consisted of the same core principles as MoNE’s Family Education Program (FEP), which will be elaborated later.

The 25-week program consisted of two parts of the Mother-Child Education Program (MCEP) and the Developmental Education Program (DEP). MCEP addressed child development, nutrition, and first-aid. On the other hand, DEP consisted of games. With the implementation of these games, it was aimed to enrich the home environment of the child (Hamamcı & Sevim, 2004). Additionally, DEP was targeted to both mothers and fathers. In addition to the games, leaflets for providing information on health, nutrition, vaccines, and protection from accidents and illnesses were given to parents. Studies on the impact of the program revealed that participants established positive communication and increased interests in their children’s development (Ömeroğlu, Aksoy, & Turla, 1997).

The above-mentioned programs constitute prominent examples of FLE practices in the country. As stated in the *Country Report on Family Education Practices* (Directorate General of Lifelong Learning, 2013) a total of 15,843 courses were completed, reaching 951,960 trainees in 73 cities between 1993 and 2010 (p. 15). Table 4 depicts the family education programs implemented in those early years.

Table 4. Family Education Programs Implemented, 1993–2010

Years	Program Name and Partner Institution
1993–2004	Mother and Child Education Program for Ages 0–4 (MoNE-UNICEF-Gazi University)
2003–2005	Family and Child Education Program for Ages 0–6 (MoNE and UNICEF)
2005–2010	My Family Education for Ages 0–6 (MoNE and UNICEF)
1993–2010	Mother and Child Education Program for Ages 5–6 (MoNE and AÇEV)
2007–2010	Basic Education Program for Families (MoNE and UNICEF)
2003–2010	Father Support Program (FSP) (MoNE and AÇEV)

Source: *Country Report on Family Education Practices* (Directorate General of Lifelong Learning, 2013, p. 8)

#### 3.5.1.4 Family education program (ages 0–18)

In 2010, the initial parent education programs were discontinued and the Family Education Program (FEP) began to be implemented nationwide by the Directorate General of Lifelong Learning of MoNE. FEP covers the entire childhood period of ages 0–18, intended to address any problems that family members might face in this time. The program involves eight modules. The goal of each module, divided by age, is to increase the awareness and skills of those responsible for childcare.

FEP was carried out nationwide. The 2017 Annual Report documented that FEP reached a total of 70,840 participants as of June 2017 (Directorate General of Lifelong Learning, 2017, p. 28). However, it was stated in the 2018 Annual Report that the review of the program, started in 2016, was still in progress and that courses have not been administered since March 2017 (Directorate General of Lifelong Learning, 2018).

In 2012, a comprehensive evaluation and assessment study of FEP was conducted, with a report published in 2013 by the Directorate General of Lifelong Learning. The study revealed that modules were effective in terms of increasing interest and improving parenting skills. Participants evaluated the programs positively, indicating that they had acquired significant knowledge and skills from the trainings. Trainers also concluded that participants achieved the objectives of FEP, obtained useful information on family education, improved childcare skills, and increased their interest in family education. The only negative evaluation was in regards to the physical facilities of the service providers, as both participants and trainers commented that they had difficulties in finding proper facilities, with a lack of materials within the classrooms also noted. Furthermore, participants suggested expanding subjects covered in the program to include communication and body language, family planning, children's psychology, women's rights, women's health, and sexuality education for children (Directorate General of Lifelong Learning, 2013).

In studies conducted by Günaydın (2011) and Sırmabıyıklı (2017), the content of FEPs were analyzed with respect to gender relations. In her masters study, Günaydın (2011) examined the program materials, including family letters, information leaflets, and child activity books, concluding that the overall program content disseminated traditional ideologies related to the gendered division of roles and motherhood. Sırmabıyıklı (2017) came to similar conclusions in a later study.

In addition to the education programs mentioned above, other projects have been developed by universities, foundations, and private and public associations. An example of this is the Mother-Father-Child Education Project, which was launched by girls' technical education schools across the country in the 1997–1998 academic

year. In 2004, for a general evaluation of the project, a study was conducted. The findings revealed that the number of teachers assigned for the implementation of the project was insufficient and the physical environments of the programs were inadequate. However, the program was found satisfactory in terms of content (MoNE, 2004).

### 3.5.2 Studies on FLE in Turkey

In order to present current studies in the field of FLE and determine the deficiencies, Saçan (2015) analyzed academic studies related to family education in Turkey. For the study, 83 theses from 1990 to 2014 were examined. The findings revealed that the most research on family education was conducted by the Department of Special Education, followed by that of Child Development and Education. In the departments of Guidance and Psychological Counseling and Adult Education, it was revealed that few studies on family education had been conducted. The most studied topic was families with disabled children, followed by trainings for families with children ages 0–6 and children attending primary and secondary education. It was concluded that further studies on family education, particularly for disadvantaged families, were needed in the field.

Studies reviewing family education share the common purpose of revealing the impacts of programs on participants. The following section primarily focuses on studies on the educational needs of families and those investigating the effectiveness of the programs.

### 3.5.2.1 Studies on educational needs of families

In one of the earliest studies assessing the educational needs of parents, Bergman (1990) collected initial data to be used in the development of parent education programs. The study revealed that most parents perceived a need for parent education in the areas of discipline and guiding children's behavior, general personality development, cognitive development, and communication within the family. In another study, Aktaş (1997) conducted a survey to determine the problems faced by mothers working in the public sector and their children in terms of childcare. Additionally, Canpolat (2001) analyzed teacher-family cooperation and the level of education needs of families with children in primary schools. Güzel (2006) conducted an additional study on educational needs of parents. However, each of these studies were at the micro level. Recognizing this deficiency, in the fifth family council held by MoFSP, a need for in-depth analysis in the field of family education was highlighted (ASAGEM, 2008). Three years later, in 2011, a comprehensive study was conducted to determine the educational needs of families. One significant finding was that families from lower socio-economic backgrounds had lower levels of interest in trainings. Based on these findings, it was suggested that, as one of the main tools through which families received information, television could be an efficient facilitator in terms of family education. Another finding was that most participants considered the educational activities for families too abstract or useless. Consequently, it was suggested that education topics addressing families should be based on practical information (ASAGEM, 2011).

### 3.5.2.2 Studies on the impacts of programs

In the literature, there are several studies exploring the effects and the efficacy of family education programs. The impact of the training on the participants and their near environment, and those who deliver the programs, are examined in several of these studies. In a dissertation study, Kılıç (2012) evaluated the compatibility of the program entitled My Family with respect to program development in adult education. Research findings showed that the program was designed properly and considered successful both by attendees and trainers. However, it was also revealed that during the needs analysis phase of the program development, attendees were not involved in the process. Yeşiltepe (2001) investigated both the structure and the content of parent education programs applied in Istanbul. The study revealed that women participating in the programs felt more self-confident and happier. In another study, Ay (2015) examined family education programs in terms of parents' attitudes. Results indicated that participants found family education trainings necessary but insufficient.

A review of the literature demonstrates that most studies on the impacts of FLE programs have been conducted by utilizing experimental designs. In one of the earliest examples of these studies, Çörüş (1996) focused on mother training programs. The study aimed to uncover longitudinal effects of programs on mothers. It was concluded that these kinds of support programs could be effective only when the negative living conditions of participants were counteracted and programs were supported by informal activities such as television programs and mass-media instruments. Kurtulmuş (2003) also examined the impacts of a mother training program. The findings demonstrated that participants experienced significant improvements in their views regarding family relations.



A number of studies enumerate the impacts of family education programs on children. In one example of this, Sarı (2010) focused on parents and their children from the police department. In another study, Pirpir (2011) examined the effects of a mother training program with respect to basic education of disadvantaged groups. Kahraman (2011) reviewed the impact of a family education program on marital adjustment. Bolat (2011) also pursued the effects of a training program on parents.

Kılınç (2011), in an experimental study, concentrated on mother training programs. Results of the study indicated that the mother training program under inquiry positively influenced children's cognitive skills. On the other hand, the study revealed that the program did not provide the expected positive change in the mothers' attitudes towards childrearing. For more effective results, it was suggested to prepare the content, duration, and methods with the active participation of families. Additionally, it was mentioned that these programs should be designed for appropriate times in which mothers could easily participate. In another experimental study, Bağatarhan (2012) investigated the impact of a training program on mothers' parental self-efficacy for effective parenting. In a dissertation study, Şirin Deveci (2013) investigated the effect of FEP's two modules on women's burnout-levels.

Beyazıt (2017) studied the effectiveness of a mother education program for the prevention of child abuse. Results obtained in the study showed that the program increased the knowledge and awareness of mothers and positively influenced childrearing behaviors and attitudes. Lastly, in a study conducted by Er (2018), family education activities were investigated with respect to their impact on pre-school education. This study is a rare example of research utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods in the field. Family education activities were found to increase the rate of school enrollment and attendance. These activities were deemed

necessary, as they changed the opinions and attitudes of the parents, strengthened their knowledge and skills, and enabled them to better reflect on their daily life.

In the literature, there exist studies on the effects of trainings for parents with disabled children or children with special needs (Bedel, 2017; Boyraz, 2015; Sönmez, 2008; Şeker, 2013). Results of these studies showed that programs designed for disabled and special needs children yielded significant effects.

Although educational programs for families in Turkey are generally labelled as parent education programs, it is mostly mothers who participate in such programs. In a study conducted by Hamamcı and Köksal Akyol (2004), the rate of fathers who had participated in parent education programs or who were planning to participate in future programs was found to be lower than the rate of mothers. As mentioned earlier, FSP is the most comprehensive father training program applied in Turkey. According to Atmaca Koçak (2004), FSP had a positive influence on the participating fathers. It also contributed to creating a positive home environment for families. Similarly, in a study conducted by Alibeyoğlu (2009), FSP was found effective for the participant fathers. In addition to studies on FSP, studies conducted by Aydın (2003), Kocayörük (2007), Şahin (1998), Taşkın (2005), and Ünüvar (2008) demonstrated significant results in terms of the contribution of father education programs. In more recent studies conducted by Ersan (2013) and Özgündüz (2015), the importance of father involvement programs and their positive effects on child development was also revealed.

The body of literature focusing on FLE programs reveals that studies that bring a critical eye to family education practices and policies in Turkey are rare and that few have utilized qualitative methods. The review also demonstrates that there is a need in the literature to delve deeper into the social contexts of FLE policies and

their reflection in education practices. In the following section, the discursive context of family education policies and practices in the country will be discussed.

### 3.6 Discursive context of family education policies in Turkey

In this final section, a discussion of the discursive context of family education will be provided, as an indicator of social practices from the 1990s until present, covering the period in which FEP was first drafted, developed, and implemented. To explore the discursive context during this period, I draw on secondary sources of governmental and non-governmental documents addressing family education policies in Turkey.

In this section, I aim to provide background on the family education policies and discourses in the relevant time period. In doing so, first I analyzed the documents of family councils and traced the discursive practices of family education in the councils' reports. In line with these reports, I detailed legal developments and family-oriented social policies and practices. Second, I examined the development plans and identified the family education objectives mentioned in those policy documents. I also elaborated on a parliamentary report on family matters. Along with these official documents, in order to uncover the discursive practices of the relevant period, I highlighted the proceedings of pro-family conferences supported or co-organized by MoFSP, making reference to noteworthy speeches given by state representatives on issues related to women and family.

#### 3.6.1 A brief history of family policy in Turkey

Family has always attracted the attention of politics, and thus it became the center of interest in Turkey. Sancar's (2012) comprehensive study on gender in the process of

Turkish modernization shows that there are various phases of family-centered modernization which function as a government strategy aimed to reorder society. As she contends, the modernization project is focused on the premise that men would make the modern nation-state, whereas women would be assigned the responsibility to be homemakers. In the Republican era, the nuclear family—contrary to the traditional extended family of past—was made essential. Perceived as the foundation of the nation, the nuclear family needed to be strong and modern. As such, the new Republican woman would be modern-looking and well-educated. In doing so, children were to be brought up “scientifically” by educated mothers (White, 2003, p. 146). As Gök (2007) articulately puts forward, during those times of transformation, education had a crucial role. She specifically addresses three kinds of educational policies as a part of modernization ideology. The first of these is the encouragement of urban women to take part in every level of the educational system to become successful professionals. The second is urging rural women to attend primary schools and raise more children. The third is a special line of schools designed to ensure the “proper” type of woman: a role model for the state’s secular self-image. As Gök (2007) details, these special schools, namely the Girls Institutes, aimed to equip women to become “the true mothers of the nation,” thus having significant implications both in framing women’s new identity and legitimizing state power (p. 96).

The transformation of the traditional extended family into a modern nuclear one was enacted through various reforms. The early attempts of the 1917 Family Law<sup>14</sup> and the 1926 Civil Code<sup>15</sup> were two notable examples of these legal reforms.

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<sup>14</sup> The 1917 Family Law constituted a first attempt to codify the realms of marriage and divorce (Kandiyoti, 1991).

<sup>15</sup> With the 1926 Civil Code, polygamy was outlawed, civil marriage was made a state requirement, and marriage partners were given equal rights to divorce and child custody (White, 2003).

Government programs from the 1980s onwards have placed special emphasis on family as a privileged unity in society (Nişancı, 2016). In 1989, an important step was taken by establishing the Family Research Institute under the prime ministry. The institution was tasked with conducting surveys on families and to designing a family policy for the country. The importance of family in government programs has always drawn distinct attention. However, after the AKP came to power in 2002, “the family” has been stressed even more, and the prioritization of family-centered public policies has increased (Akkan, 2018; Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011; Kaya, 2014; Yazıcı, 2012; Yılmaz, 2015).

### 3.6.2 Reading family councils as a road map of family education policies

The Family Research Institute is responsible for organizing family councils. Multiple policy recommendations in family-related areas have been developed in these councils throughout the years. Since the first council in 1990, seven councils of family issues have been organized to date.

The first council was held December 17–20, 1990. The report of this first family council included decisions of seven commissions: (1) Social Structure, (2) Socio-Cultural Change and Improvement, (3) Family Research and Publications on Families, (4) Strengthening Family and Policies of Social Security, (5) Family Education, (6) Family and Law, and (7) Family Health and Social Services.

It is significant that issues regarding the education of families were addressed under a specific commission of family education in this first national family council. In the family education commission, the emphasis was on the need for scientific and secular knowledge to design educational policies and programs for families. Family was defined as “the smallest social institution settled in the same space, based on the

legal basis of marriage and kin relations among relatives (mother, father, children, grandparents, and close relatives)” (ASAGEM, 1990, p. 37). What is of interest in this definition is the inclusion of grandparents in the nuclear family model.

Additionally, the commission defined family education as a process for raising responsible citizens by stating, “family education is the education process of all types and levels to provide the persistence of the family as an institution; to ensure the healthy development of individuals, to be responsible members of society” (ASAGEM, 1990, p. 38).

In the report, under the heading of “Current situation and problems in family education,” the commission members emphasized the strength of the family in the country, writing “despite rapid social change, the Turkish family still maintains its healthy body today owing to the cultural values it holds” (ASAGEM, 1990, p. 38). Nevertheless, the report stated that there was an insufficient number of institutions to address family problems, a problem exacerbated by the lack of cooperation among these institutions. Taken together, the following principles were recommended as a guideline to develop educational programs for families. Family education should:

- Maintain family unity,
- Ensure the healthy development of family members,
- Contribute to creating a sense of responsibility towards society in which the family lives,
- Be delivered in strategies that do not conflict with cultural elements, and by cooperating with each institution of society, it should develop a dynamic personality structure in line with developing and changing world conditions,
- Cover all relevant information for family members on child development, education, physical, and mental health,
- All these points should be analyzed based on the results of scientific research. (ASAGEM, 1990, p. 41)

As these points suggest, family education was considered vital in ensuring family unity and welfare by supporting the healthy development of individuals.

Furthermore, the commission members highlighted the significance of scientific

knowledge and secular principles in the preparation of programs. Recommendations in the report included determining scientific, rational, and realistic state policies in family education, adopting an approach that recognized cultural values while respecting the principles of secular society, establishing institutions for family counseling and guidance, ensuring school-family cooperation, including issues of family and human relations into the curriculum starting from secondary education, preparing supportive training programs for families, taking measures to provide for the education of women, and finally, establishing a family ministry with the executive power and authority to carry out the aforementioned proposals.

The United Nations General Assembly recognized and declared 1994 as the International Year of Family. Countries were suggested to organize activities that focused on the strength of family, and it was advised that family be given the widest possible protection and assistance (“International Year of Family,” 1994).

Following the United Nations’ declaration, the second family council was held November 16–18, 1994, titled “Family in the Process of Change: Social Participation and Democratic Values.” The key concerns of this second council were democracy, participation, social change, and its effects on families. In the opening speech, Cemil Çiçek, the former Minister of State responsible for family, directed attention to the United Nations’ declaration and the reasons why family was of key concern. Çiçek particularly emphasized the rapid social change occurring with the closing of the millennium. Using the family-decline rhetoric of the West (Yazıcı, 2012), he argued that by explicitly calling for a return to the concept of family, Western countries were essentially admitting to having made a mistake:

The atheist, positivist and some other derivative stream of thoughts developed in parallel with industrialization have transformed the change into a social earthquake and even a corruption. On one hand, the actual and intellectual developments have functioned to regard the family as a Nazi

concentration camp and the marriage contract as a chain of bondage. Relationships out-of-family and common-law marriages have started to be defended as an alternative lifestyle. As a result, children born out of wedlock, child pregnancies, single parent children, same-sex relationships and children in the midst of these relationships, the rapid increase in divorce numbers, alcohol and drug addicts, numerous problems of women and elderly reveal the danger of social disintegration-disorganization that a society faces as result of neglecting the family. The declaration of 1994 as the Year of the Family is the consequences of these necessities. (ASAGEM, 1994, p. 12)

Çiçek primarily stresses the family crisis of the West and its catastrophic consequences for societies. The view of describing family as “in crisis” in the rapidly changing world is not unique to him; on the contrary, it is shared by most conservatives and would be apparent henceforward in various documents and officials’ accounts calling for the preservation of traditional family values.

As in the first council, in this second council, family in Turkey was regarded as an integral and strong unit compared to that of the West. In Çiçek’s words, “despite the problems inside and outside of us, our family is the strongest side of us” (ASAGEM, 1994, p. 11). However, Çiçek also stressed the deficiencies of family education practices in the country by saying, “family institution is the basis and also the solution of many social wounds we complain about today... and the deficiencies in family education are the underlying reasons of many problems” (ASAGEM, 1994, p. 12). Yılmaz (2018) argues that the crisis discourse provides an opportunity to penetrate through reforms and services with preventive, educative, or consulting functions. Therefore, Çiçek’s prioritization of education to heal many social, economic, and political problems is not coincidental. In this regard, Çiçek emphasized the role of family education to improve the family and society. Nevertheless, he concluded his speech by underlining the definition of family, declaring, “let us not forget that the family based on marriage is the only and indispensable condition of our happiness.” By doing so, he frames the boundaries of



the family and thus sets specific limits on who could benefit from those family-oriented services.

Beyond this speech, the commissions in this second council focused mostly on family in the process of change. Issues of family violence, the importance of democratic values in families, and practices of family counseling and support were among the topics covered. Unlike the first council, the concept of family education was not granted special attention. Only under the section on services provided for families was there a short notification included regarding home-centered family education practices.

In the third family council, held May 25–27, 1998, “family education” was associated with “family health,” which was organized in terms of family well-being and the maintenance of physical and mental health development:

Family education is a process and a service that enables all members of family to develop their physical and mental well-being, to promote, improve, and maintain family relations and interactions. This service is largely supported by the state. In addition to the state, we believe that these services should be carried out in cooperation with non-governmental and voluntary organizations and this view should be adapted as a state policy. (ASAGEM, 1998, p. 12)

In the report of the third council, it was argued that the scope of education and primary health care institutions (such as multi-purpose community centers on family education and health) should be expanded. Additionally, unlike the first two councils, the report of the third council emphasizes gender equality, advising that “family is a whole, all members must share their family responsibilities in a balanced way. Childrearing attitudes that adopt gender-based role discrimination of woman and man should be replaced by contemporary and sharing attitudes in family relations” (ASAGEM, 1998, article 12). Furthermore, the provision of compulsory education on health and sexual education starting from pre-school was

recommended, as well as the provision of necessary social support and education services to single parent families, particularly for those in the process of divorce. The council concluded with a call to establish a Ministry of Family in order to implement and maintain the aforementioned suggestions.

Following the 2001 economic crisis, AKP formed a single-party government in 2002, leaning on a discourse of strengthening the family (Acar & Altunok, 2013; Yazıcı, 2012; Yılmaz, 2015). Ample literature criticizes AKP and its policies in regards to gender, neoliberalism, religion, and conservatism (Acar & Altunok, 2013; Akkan, 2018; Altunok, 2016; Arat, 2010; Cindoğlu & Ünal, 2017; Güneş-Ayata & Doğangün, 2017; Kandiyoti, 2016; Kaya, 2014; Yazıcı, 2012). The common claim is that the conservative family-centered social policies perspective of the party plays different roles in the cultural, social, economic, and structural transformations. More specifically, it is argued that the government—by placing the family at the center of its social policies and presenting it as the ideal site for providing care for elderly, the disabled, and children—is delegating its responsibility of social protection and care to the family.

The shift towards authoritarianism (Yılmaz, 2018) and Islamist conservatism (Kaya, 2014; Nas, 2016) was a drawn-out process composed of distinct phases. In this vein, the first AKP government period (2002–2007) witnessed legal and structural reforms with the EU membership accession process. Nevertheless, as argued by Dedeoğlu (2013), “the legislative structure moved towards Europeanisation while promising greater gender equality; the active policy, on the other hand, is directed towards keeping women's traditional roles intact” (pp. 1–2). For that reason, she proposes the term “veiled Europeanization” to signify the dualistic character of the progressive reforms at the early 2000s.

An important legal and institutional amendment from this period was the 2003 establishment of family courts, created to address problems related to family and domestic violence. For Çarkoğlu, Kafescioglu, and Mitrani (2012), the family courts reflect a transition in the government’s family policy. As they argue, “families are conceptualized as systems with particular needs within the legal system” (Çarkoğlu et al., 2012, p. 48).

First established in six pilot cities (Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Adana, Samsun, and Elazığ) under Diyanet in 2003, the Family and Religious Guidance Offices also bear mentioning. These offices serve as religious counseling and guidance units for families. In addition to providing face-to-face or phone counseling services, they organize talks on issues of marriage, divorce, childcare, and motherhood.<sup>16</sup>

The early 2000s saw significant challenges stemming from the 2001 economic crisis. The rise in urban poverty (particularly following rural to urban migration), unemployment rates, poor living conditions, and lack of social protection brought about new concerns regarding families. Within this context, the call for restoring the role of the family and “protecting” it from changing economic and social conditions gained momentum.

In this context, the fourth family council was held May 18–20, 2004. The main theme of this council was poverty and family. Issues were handled under six commissions: (1) Poverty in the 2000s and Studies on Poverty, (2) Economic, Cultural and Psycho-Social Aspects of Poverty, (3) Social Security System, Poverty and Family, (4) Poverty Alleviation Strategies and Support Programs, (5) Urban Poverty and Family, and (6) Social and Cultural Aspects of Turkey’s European

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<sup>16</sup> As of 2017, there were 81 provincial and 293 district branches of Family and Religious Guidance Offices. A total of 2,178 personnel are employed in the offices, 1,457 of which are women and 721 of which are men. Retrieved from [www.diyamet.gov.tr](http://www.diyamet.gov.tr)

Union Membership. In these commissions, the need for scientific studies on families and poverty was underlined. However, although recommendations were made concerning education programs to combat poverty, family education was not specifically addressed by any commission.

On May 7, 2004, Article 10 of the Constitution was amended to include the following text: “women and men have equal rights. The State is obliged to ensure the implementation of this equality exists in practice.” This amounted to a declaration that the state would become the guarantor of gender equality. Another significant change in 2004 was the transformation of the Family Research Institute into ASAGEM. With this restructuring, the scope of institutional services was broadened, making it more apparent that policies concerning families would be applied in line with social policies.

After the restructuring, new alliances with conservative organizations began to take shape. For example, from December 2–4, 2005, ASAGEM and the Foundation for Research in Islamic Sciences organized the International Family Symposium in Istanbul. Issues covered in this symposium were the process of change in family structure both in Turkey and globally; official policies and legal issues regarding family, street children, and children in need of care; family in Islamic thought and law; Ottoman family structure; family and family policies in Islamic countries; fragmented families and their problems; poverty and family; elderly and the issues of care; family in the European Union; family and family policies in the Turkish Republics; female identity and family; and media and family.

Despite a number of progressive legal regulations regarding gender equality and domestic violence, as Güneş-Ayata and Doğangün (2017) described, “a religio-conservative” atmosphere has been prevailing in the country, especially since 2007

(p. 6). They use “gender climate” term to signify the official gender policy of the government and claim that discourses on “sacred motherhood” and “family nest” constitute the basic elements of this conservative climate.

The fifth family council, held November 5–7, 2008, was titled “Family Support Services,” addressing services and benefits provided for families and the need for coordination in family-oriented practices. The six commissions were: (1) Counseling and Therapy Services for Families, (2) Family Education, (3) Social Benefits, (4) Caring for Children, Elderly, and Disabled, (5) New Approaches to Communication Technologies, and (6) Legal Issues. This council was the first council held after the reorganization of ASAGEM, and it pinpointed major family-oriented policies of the government moving forward. In his opening speech, Erdoğan stressed the importance of the family institution in solving many social problems, including poverty, education, and health. He said:

I believe that the strength of our family structure will contribute to the solution of many of our problems ... Family has an extraordinary function in preventing gender discrimination, ensuring equal opportunities among individuals, solving problems of children and youth, and caring for the disabled and dependent population. (ASAGEM, 2008, p. 4)

He also referred to women’s role in family and recognized mothers as the backbone of family. One important topic covered in the council was family education services. The current state of family education practices, target groups, program and material development processes was addressed under a specific commission on family education. As was the case in the first council, the lack of coordination between institutions and organizations providing family education services was among the highlighted issues. The demand for conducting in-depth analysis to define the educational needs of families and the need to improve outreach to diverse populations were noted. The reluctance of men to participate in such programs and

steps to be taken to encourage men to attend were among the discussions. It was recommended to establish independent units in higher education institutions in order to train educators/facilitators who would take part in FLE programs. Lastly, the need for the establishment of an independent Ministry of Family was repeated in the commission.

In 2008, Erdoğan announced his call for families to bear three children for the nation. By urging this population growth, a direct relationship between reproduction and family policies was revealed. Still today, in numerous public statements, this demand is being reiterated.

Following the fifth family council in 2009, FEP was added to the agenda. The training program was proposed as a wide-scale family education program claiming to increase the well-being of families. One significant point to mention is the contribution of Diyanet as the main sponsor of the program. As noted initially in Chapter 2, Diyanet undertook the duty to reproduce and distribute educational materials to the relevant organizations and trainees. Additionally, Diyanet's staff could be trainers after receiving the necessary certificate.

The significant role of Diyanet related to FEP supports the aforementioned “religio-conservative gender climate” claim of Güneş-Ayata and Dogangün (2017). As well, in 2019, Diyanet initiated a new family education program which served to provide the essentials of a moral education on family as espoused by the Quran and the Sunnah. This action illustrates how, as the notable religious authority in the country, Diyanet has the ability to reframe social relations, including families.<sup>17</sup> In this regard, in his article addressing the recent transformation of Diyanet under the

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<sup>17</sup> The education project is aimed to be implemented in 81 provinces; the first stage of the program targets the teachers of Quran courses, and the second stage is the participants of the non-formal religious education courses. Both groups involve women only. Retrieved from [www.diyamet.gov.tr](http://www.diyamet.gov.tr)

ruling party, Öztürk (2016) discusses the ideological function of Diyanet as a state apparatus. Its significant role and services in the field of family education strengthens this claim.

The religio-conservative gender climate which promotes a conservative family prototype is also evident in another summit hosted by the Foundation of Journalists and Writers in 2010.<sup>18</sup> The opening speech of the conference, “Family as a Value in the Context of Religion, Tradition, and Modernity,” was given by the Minister of State Responsible for Women and Family Affairs. The final declaration of this conference deserves attention, as it reveals disputable arguments concerning family and women’s identity. The supported family model was defined as “a natural family based on the marriage of women and men,” and the institutionalization of marriage through religion, custom, and law was strongly advocated. Moreover, the conference attendees attributed great importance to religious motivations in the protection of families and criticized the undervaluing of religious-based marriages. The extended family model (involving grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins) was highlighted, and the state was urged to take necessary measures to provide communication and connection among extended members of families. They also declared that they would support policies to increase birth rates and prevent abortion. In addition, measures were asked to be taken against homosexuality and adultery, which were seen as threats to society. As indicated, great importance was attributed to the role of education; accordingly, family and pre-marital education programs were requested to be incorporated by the state into the formal education system. For them, restructuring of the family, defined as a healthy natural model, would play a

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<sup>18</sup> The foundation was established in 1994 and abolished in 2016 on the grounds that it supported the 15th July coup attempt in 2016. The conference was a joint organization of the Intercultural Dialogue Platform, Women's Platform, and Dialogue Eurasia Platform, which were included in the Journalists and Writers Foundation.

major role in solving problems of nations such as poverty, conflict, and lack of education.

Kerestecioğlu (2013) argues that the final declaration of this conference constitutes the main guide for the subsequent government policies. Indeed, examples of such conferences can be found in the following years. To cite one, in 2015, the Union of Non-Governmental Organizations of the Islamic World (UNIW) held an international conference on families in cooperation with ASAGEM, in which it proffered similar arguments in the closing remarks.<sup>19</sup> The title of this conference was “Family as an Interactive Network Between Individuals in a Changing World: Mercy, Grace, Courtesy, and Sharing” (“2nd International Family Conference,” 2015). In its declaration, family was stated as the most important institution, with no alternative. To both eliminate the problems that threaten the family as well as to strengthen it, they recommended the implementation of social policies enabled by a “Quranic and Sunnah-based family model.” They also demanded that policies concerning women’s role in social life be regulated, so as not to interfere with women’s basic duties in the family, particularly regarding their relationship to their spouses and children. Joint programs among Islamic countries to promote and facilitate marriage, and to educate family members before and after marriage were among the recommendations. With the final declaration, it was proposed and decided to establish an International Family Institution in order to gather organizations and experts working on family issues to collaborate for future studies.

From 2011 to 2015—the period of the third AKP government—and the following years after 2015, the Islamic emphasis on family policies became dominant, evidenced in the values and approaches of groups and individuals who

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<sup>19</sup> UNIW was established in 2005. The organization currently has 354 members from 66 countries. Retrieved from [www.idsb.org](http://www.idsb.org)



played important roles in creating a road map for policies regarding family and education. In the ensuing period, discussions on reproductive rights of women and the abortion ban, debates on mixed-gender student houses, expansion of family guidance and counseling services, granting authority to religious officials to perform marriage ceremonies, and widescale implementation of family and pre-marital education programs indicate that the final declarations of the above-mentioned conferences were heeded and concrete steps were being taken to transform these proposals into action. However, women's organizations that work for women's rights and violence expressed their concerns, criticizing the government for turning for consultation primarily to the pro-family organizations approaching the issues of rights from religious perspectives, rather than independent women's organization that had been working on combating violence against women for years (Civil Society Alternative Report, 2019).

Of this period, 2011 marked a significant transition for MoFSP. With this amendment, family was placed at the center of social policies related to women, children, and the elderly. The insistence on increasing restrictions on abortion was a central focus of the government's family mainstreaming in its quest to enshrine the strength of the institution of family. In 2012, abortion was equated with murder by the prime minister himself in an international conference on population policies. In addition to abortion, even cesarean sections were criticized by the government.

Beginning with a pilot training in 2012 and first implemented across the country in 2013, the Pre-Marital Education Program is another point worth mentioning. Prepared from the contents of FEP, this program targets couples and aims to prepare them for marriage. Like FEP, the pre-marital program has been extensively implemented. According to the 2020 Annual Report, from 2013 to the

end of October 2019, a total of 1,116,505 participants attended pre-marital education programs (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 2019b, p. 284).

The rise of pro-government women's organizations is another distinctive feature of this period. The Women and Democracy Foundation (*Kadın ve Demokrasi Derneği*; hereafter KADEM), founded in 2013, is exemplary in this respect.

KADEM has a leading role in framing government policies regarding women's issues. The vision statement on its website details activities, engaging in academic studies to develop new discourses with respect to women's studies and raising "a social consciousness that the sharing of roles between men and women can only be realized by considering the balance between rights and responsibilities."<sup>20</sup> In this respect, KADEM introduced the definition of "gender justice" in place of "gender equality" (Ayhan, 2019). More precisely, KADEM criticizes "gender equality" as a product of modernity. According to founding president Aydın Yılmaz (2015), "the concept of gender justice denotes a just and fair sharing of social gender roles between men and women and a distribution of responsibilities considering the living conditions of today" (p. 114). KADEM's proposal to introduce "justice" in favor of "equality" is reflective of government policy and position. Since its inception, KADEM has organized a gender justice congress each year, hosting government officials and making contributions to the policy-making process concerning women and families. However, its efforts and impact on women's and family issues are controversial. Ayhan (2019), for instance, criticizes KADEM and its gender justice proposal as a form of "anti-genderism." She argues that gender ideology functions to essentialize women and men by ignoring social construction. Likewise, as argued by

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<sup>20</sup> Retrieved from [www.kadem.org.tr](http://www.kadem.org.tr)

Diner (2018), gender justice proposal works to legitimise the gendered division of labor in families.

On January 2–3, 2013, the International Family and Social Policies Summit was hosted in Ankara by MoFSP. At this summit, issues of social change and family, education and support services for families, effects of the internet on family and society, family problems and juridical regulations, standards in family counselling and guidance services, and services for divorced and single parent families were discussed (Çayboylu, 2013). In his opening speech, Erdoğan reiterated the state policy of protecting family through education and social services: “We managed to strengthen the family by education, health, social policy, and the economy, and we made the politics the servant of the family ... . We will continue in the same way” (Çaybolu, 2013, p. 58). A year after this summit, the sixth family council took place on May 14–16, 2014. The theme of “Family-Centered Preventive and Social Services” was discussed under the six commissions of (1) Elderly, Disability, and Persistent Diseases, (2) Child, Adolescent, and Youth, (3) Combating Violence, Abuse, and Addiction, (4) Family and Marriage Counselling, and Family Education, (5) Social Allowances Programs towards Families and Family Insurance, and (6) Social Impacts of the Internet and Communication Technologies. In the Family and Marriage Counselling, and Family Education commission, issues of planning coordination among different institutions and the conducting of in-depth analysis to define the impacts of programs were addressed. The roles and responsibilities of trainers and facilitators, the development of new modules for diverse groups, and the revision of content according to the changing needs of family and society were among the discussion topics.

On April 29–30, 2019, the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey, a public institution, organized a symposium on family and human rights. The final declaration of the symposium presented arguments similar to those of the aforementioned conferences regarding the role of family and women in society. Protection of the family institution was demanded to be recognized as a human rights issue. However, discriminatory statements against LGBTQ rights were also included in the declaration (“Symposium Announcement on Declaration”, 2019).

The most recent family council was held May 2–3, 2019. In this seventh council, the included commissions were (1) Prevention of Family Union, (2) Child Perception in Society and Preparing the Child for Life, (3) Women and Family, (4) Being a Large Family with Elderly and Disabled Members, and (5) Socio-Economic Support Mechanisms towards the Family. The photo on the opening page of the website shows President Erdoğan at the center and a family with three children and grandparents around him. The council slogan declares “We value family, we value Turkey,” which is presented on the website over a background image of a bridge and an extended family with three children in the foreground. The president’s opening speech of the council is worth noting. Like Çiçek’s speech in the opening of the first family council, the president begins his speech by describing family as being in a state of crisis. He then draws clear links between family and nation, strongly emphasizing the critical role of family in protecting the state. He also acknowledges the role of family councils in shaping and realizing family policies:

We are face to face with a painful process in which the marriage contract is devalued, relations outside marriage are considered normal, and divorce is almost encouraged. Unfortunately, this immoral lifestyle—in which a hedonist and egoist type of human being is constantly in pursuit of pleasure—is glorified, and its effects are seen increasingly in our country year by year. ... As a nation, the greatest opportunity we have against the diseases of the era is our family institution, which maintains its existence despite all attacks. In this respect, it is extremely important that the sacred quarry, which we call

family, is kept alive and protected against threats. If the family is dissolved, it is inevitable that our existence as a nation will be in danger. The way to preserve the next generation is to protect the family institution. This is a must. Likewise, protecting the state is only possible by protecting the family. (7th Family Council, opening speech, May 2019)

Overall, the family has always at the center of government policies. As in the era of the nation-building process, in the past two decades of the country, family has been delegated the role of creating a strong society. In this regard, it is frequently stated that services will be expanded to provide the necessary consultancy and training facilities to equip the family with the knowledge and skills to take care of the young, elderly, and disabled. Another striking point relating to the mentioned period is the increasing state cooperation with institutions based on Islamic values in the family policy-making process. As Kocamaner (2017) puts it, the Turkish political establishment has always aimed to reform the family through juridical and legislative interventions. However, what makes this latest era under AKP rule distinct is that Islamic doctrines now have crucial roles in the conceptualization and implementation of family-related projects.

This section briefly presented issues raised in family councils in light of legal amendments and policy practices. The next section focuses on the development plans and identifies discourses concerning family and education in these strategy documents.

### 3.6.3 Tracing family education policies in policy documents

Founded in 1960, the State Planning Organization (SPO) was an important governmental organization that designed five-year development plans, publishing the first in 1963.<sup>21</sup> Until today, 11 development plans have been issued. These are

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<sup>21</sup> SPO was abolished by establishing of the Ministry of Development in 2011.

official guiding documents in setting the economic, social, and cultural policies and objectives of the governments (Yumuş, 2011).

In the first five development plans, women's role in development and their place in labor were not addressed at length. In those plans (spanning the years of 1963–1989), emphasis was mainly placed on women's domestic roles (Yantur, 2019). In addition, the first four plans did not include the topic of FLE; rather, the importance of education was discussed in the context of family planning and employment. In the fifth development plan (1985–1989), however, under the fourth section on social objectives and policies, the significance of family education as an important task of the education system was mentioned for the first time:

Article 536. The family training system, which is the most effective tool in the upbringing of children, will be made more effective by informing and raising awareness of the family on child responsibilities. In this respect, education of the family is the most important task of society and the education system. (SPO, 1984, p. 141)

It was not until the sixth development plan (1990–1994) that, for the first time, issues of women were addressed, under the heading of “Women-Family-Children” (Yantur, 2019). In the first section of the sixth plan, the importance of supporting and strengthening family was included among the main objectives and policies. The document was especially concerned with protecting and educating women and children, stating, “Supporting and strengthening family, seen as the cornerstone of Turkish society, in economic, social, and cultural fields and giving priority to the protection and education of women and children” as a point of emphasis (SPO, 1989, p. 343).

In the seventh development plan (1996–2000), the importance of women's rights and education was stressed. In the third section under the population and family planning, while protecting and supporting family was stated as the basic

principle, a surprising mention was made of equality of women and men, decrying that “in policies to be implemented in order to protect and support family, attention will be taken to strengthen the equality of women and men” (SPO, 1995, p. 38).

Furthermore, the plan encompassed a widened definition of family education, involving raising awareness on practices of child rearing as well as caring for the elderly and disabled:

Arrangements will be made to strengthen the family's income stability, by meeting their health care and social security needs, and to develop a system that meets the requirements of crisis situations; the family will be educated and supported on childrearing and care of the elderly, and disabled members. (SPO, 1995, p. 38)

In the eighth development plan (2001–2005), the importance of social services and assistance was highlighted. As in the previous plan, family education included educating families on childrearing and caring for the older adults and disabled:

“Support shall be given to families by training on the subjects of child, older adults, and disabled care, and coordination shall be provided among related institutions.”

(SPO, 2000, p. 94). In the eight section, under the title of “Objectives, principles, and policies” in the family subsection, the importance of national and spiritual values was featured:

- Article 821. In the protection and development of national and moral values, in reinforcing national unity and integrity, strengthening the family institution is essential.
- Article 822. Measures to help the family adjust to social and economic changes shall be taken and policies to strengthen ties and devotion among members of the family shall be given emphasis. (SPO, 2000, p. 94)

In the ninth development plan (2007–2013), the process of rapid social change and its negative impacts on families, culture, and social relations were strongly underlined:

Article 272. The accelerating transformation process has also negatively affected the cultural and social relations within family and society. Diversification in mass communication, inability to go beyond the traditional

methods in family communication, and insurmountable problems of the education system have increased the problems young people face such as breaking away from their families, becoming insensitive to social problems, hopelessness, and lack of self-confidence, and, consequently, increased the crime proneness among young people (...). (SPO, 2006, p. 45)

The tenth development plan (2014–2018) addresses the development of comprehensive, standard, effective, and widespread family counselling and education services; dissemination of pre-marital education programs; and family-based provision of social assistance and services. In this plan period, the Family and Dynamic Population Structure Conservation Program, prepared under the coordination of MoFSP, was introduced. The scope of the program was intended to protect family welfare, enable pre-marital education and family counselling services, and provide social assistance and family-based support services. To achieve these aims, the existing formal and non-formal education programs would be reviewed based on family values and new materials would be prepared. Gender equality in terms of fair participation of women in social and economic life is also among the issues discussed in the second chapter on the objectives and policies of the plan:

Article 249. In the context of gender equality, the main objectives are to empower women in all aspects of social, economic and cultural life, to improve the status of family while preserving the institution and to strengthen social integration. (Ministry of Development, 2014, p. 40)

Lastly, the eleventh development plan was published in 2019, running through 2023. The plan is the first development report produced under the presidential government system in the country. It states that “policies aimed at strengthening families are among the most effective and important public policies of social integration and reducing social risks” (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 2019a, p. 134), noting that necessary precautions would be taken to increase the impact of family services. Additionally, the report addresses the expansion of family education and counselling



services, requirements for revisions in the publication materials, and the need for more facilitators and trainers (Presidency of Strategy and Budget, 2019a).

Of note, as the Women's Labor and Employment Initiative Platform (KEIG, 2019) pointed out, while present in the previous report, the notion of gender equality was not included in this latest report. The strategy document, therefore remains silent on topics such as gender equality in families and women's equal participation in social, economic, and cultural life.

#### 3.6.4 Divorce as a threat to family unity

The final document reviewed in this section is the *Report of the Parliamentary Research Commission Investigating Divorce Incidents with Adverse Factors Affecting Family Integrity and the Measures to Be Taken for Strengthening the Family Institution*. This report, published on May 14, 2016, is significant in that it draws attention to the recent family-oriented policies addressed by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*; hereafter TBMM).

The report was prepared by a commission composed of representatives of political parties to identify the factors that adversely affect family integrity, to investigate the causes of divorce, and to support the family institution. As stated by the chairman, Ayşe Keşir, in the preface, the report is dedicated to reinforcing and strengthening the family:

I hope that the report will be conducive to the generation and implementation of holistic policies that take “ancient truths and new realities” into consideration and perceive family “as a center of the solution, not the problem,” and aim to maintain the family's existence as “strong and healthy.” (TBMM, 2016, p.xix)

By referring to the family crisis discourse, the report emphasizes family integrity, and the loss of this unity, particularly through divorce, is considered as a factor responsible for many social and economic consequences:

New lifestyles and values imposed by rapid urbanization, immigration and industrial revolution have led the family institution to the process of fragmentation and disintegration and caused the family to weaken to the extent that it cannot fulfil its basic functions. As a result, the family breakups, fragmentation, the increase of single-parent families, the increase of divorce rates, the proliferation of non-marriages, the increase of out-of-wedlock children, the sharp changes in cultural and moral values, alienation, increase in crime rates, drug use, prevalence of individual and social violence, identity crisis, mental disorders, dissatisfaction problems that affect individuals and thus society have emerged. (TBMM, 2016, p. 169)

Although one of the aims of the commission is to raise gender awareness and highlight the problems women face in family and society, the report reinforces traditional and conservative family values and roles. To cite an example, in the first section of the report on “Family Structure in Turkey,” the changes in life and relationships of family members after the birth of a baby are described, and the importance of the balance between childcare and social life is emphasized. In this section, it is said that “during the childcare process, spouses have to re-establish a balance on how to use their time and energy. New fathers may be confused about what to do because today's society has contradictory expectations about fathers” (TBMM, 2016, p. 90). This statement on fathers’ confusion triggers traditional ideas on fatherhood and takes for granted that women are born as natural caretakers. Mothers’ primary role in care is also reiterated in the text by stating, “in cases where both parents with preschool children work, this situation may be difficult especially for mothers to cope with since mothers are the ones who take the primary role in childcare” (TBMM, 2016, p. 90).

The section on “Factors Affecting Family Integrity and Solution Offers” (TBMM, 2016, p. 68) is also worth mentioning. A lifelong learning education

approach is emphasized to ensure existence of the family. In fact, lifelong education is proposed as the most effective tool in solving problems encountered in families. In all policies targeting families, the “human-centered, protective, and preventive approach” is advised to be adopted. Furthermore, values education is recommended to be integrated into all years of schooling. To prevent the violation of the rights of women, children and the elderly in the family, it is suggested to develop feelings of justice and fairness in the family. Another recommendation is to make the pre-marital education programs compulsory, so as to provide couples an enhanced opportunity to begin to build their marriage on a solid foundation. Additionally, to strengthen the problem-solving capacities of families, it is recommended that the scope of FEP be extended. These recommendations include the expansion of family counselling services and revision of their standards, establishment of a Family Information System, balancing work and family life, offering financial support and housing opportunities to prevent deferred marriages due to economic or career concerns, providing solutions for the problems faced by disabled individuals including pre- and post-marriage counselling and support, implementation of family-friendly housing policies, day care model, and home care health services for the elderly.

In the final part of this review, I aimed to uncover the discursive practices of family and education policies in Turkey. As seen in the family council reports, development plans, conference proceedings, and speeches of state representatives, family has always been a top-priority policy area, although the specific points of emphasis have changed in different periods. As noted by Özbay (2015), in Turkey, “conservative or liberal, whatever their political ideology, the governments always gave importance to the family” (p. 18). However, recent years have witnessed an

increase in the crisis discourse related to family, in line with the implementation of neoliberal and neoconservative policies (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu, 2011). A comparison with Western societies and the changing social structures as a threat to family values and integrity were among the discourses disseminated to design, reform, and circulate family policies in the country.

The review indicates that the definition of the term “family education” in the official documents has shifted from the acquisition of the necessary skills and scientific knowledge for raising children in a developing world to an emphasis on providing family members with the necessary knowledge on multifarious issues such as family relations, communication, law, media, economy, and health. As such, policies regarding education for families increasingly serve to provide families with the necessary skills to care not only for children but also the disabled and elderly.

Furthermore, a recommendation for the establishment of a Ministry of Family, initially called for at the first family council in 1990 and reiterated in the following councils, was finally realized in 2011. This was a turning point in state policies that put the family explicitly at the center of social policies.

As depicted in various official reports, the AKP governments placed great importance on the education of families by providing comprehensive, extended programs free of charge. Reaching families through education services is one of the aims of social policies. In this vein, MoFSP’s 2018–2022 Strategic Plan states that by the end of 2019, FEP is aimed to reach 2.5 million people around the country (MoFSP, 2017). The official documents and the utterances of state representatives also reveal that the state assumes the responsibility of education of families, so as to “strengthen” the family unity in society. However, as evidenced by the organization of national and international family conferences, the role of Diyanet in the family

education services, and the alliances set up with pro-Islamic institutions and organizations, it is apparent that conservative family-centered policies have become more explicit over the course of time. Therefore, as argued by Yılmaz (2015), “the actual agenda revolves around the transformation rather than just the preservation of family” (p. 372). Regulation of family life through educational practices, in this regard, seems the most convenient instrument to reorder society in line with neoliberal and neoconservative projects.

### 3.7 Summary of chapter three

This chapter began with the review of the scholarly literature in the field of FLE. It was divided into two sections. First, it began with an overview of the FLE concept and its definition. The contribution of feminist thinking in FLE was also addressed in this first section. Examples of broadly applied FLE programs and reviews of studies that critically analyze textual materials geared towards families were given. The focus of the second section was family education practices and family-centered policies in Turkey. This part commenced with the scope and historical development of FLE in Turkey. Following, the discursive context of social and educational policies targeting families in the country was addressed. Through the analysis of secondary documents of family councils reports and strategy papers, the review traced the direction of adult education policies addressing families in the country. What follows will be the introduction of the data and the research design.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design for this qualitative study. It begins by briefly revisiting the purpose and questions of the research and then offers a rationale for the study design. Furthermore, information are included about data source, sample data and analysis, and the researcher's stance. The chapter will conclude with issues of ethics and a summary.

#### 4.1 Purpose of the study

To better understand adult education policies for families, I aim to analyze discourses that construct images of family in a comprehensive adult education program. What is of particular interest is to examine how gender is embodied and how family is constructed in the language of FEP developed and disseminated by Turkey's former MoFSP.

#### 4.2 Research questions

Through this investigation, I address the following questions:

1. What textual devices and discursive practices are used to construct family in FEP?
2. What gender messages (manifest and/or latent) are presented in the FEP texts?
3. How are gender roles portrayed in the visuals of the program materials?
4. How is the discursive context of time concerning gender and family reflected in the program materials?

5. How do the texts reinforce or challenge prevailing conceptions of family in society?

### 4.3 Research design

I include an overview of my research design in this section. This study follows the basic characteristics of a qualitative research. To Bogdan and Biklen (2007), there are five important features of qualitative research in education. First of all, a qualitative analysis is naturalistic by using the real environment as the data source, and the researcher as the main instrument. Secondly, a qualitative analysis is descriptive, because rather than statistics, the data obtained take the form of words or pictures. Thirdly, rather than outcomes, qualitative researchers are concerned with processes, questioning how individuals express meaning and how other words and labels are perceived as meaning. As the fourth characteristic, qualitative researchers tend to inductively interpret their results. They do not look for data or facts to prove or disprove theories previously held. Finally, context is crucial to the qualitative approach, because researchers are interested in how people make their lives meaningful (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Creswell and Poth (2017) outline specific characteristics of qualitative approach. Qualitative researchers usually collect various data sources. They aim to make sense of their data, organizing it into categories or topics. The qualitative research is based on context, because the study is within the framework of a particular environment and participants. The study process is evolving for qualitative studies, suggesting that the initial research approach cannot be prescribed so tightly. Researchers often “place themselves” in a qualitative study, which is to say that researchers express their context, how it influences their analysis, and what they hope to learn from the study (Creswell & Poth, 2017, pp. 136-137). Taken together,

this study follows the basic characteristics of a qualitative research by focusing on meaning with a holistic approach.

This basic qualitative research uses both theoretical and analytical framework for the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In addition, visual analysis is based largely on van Leeuwen's (2008) framework for the visual representations. In the study of images, van Leeuwen (2008) raises two important questions of how people are portrayed and how people portrayed are connected to the viewer (p. 137). He emphasizes three dimensions for the latter issue, which he categorizes as the social distance, the social connection, and the social interaction. He discusses the symbolic, imaginary relation of all three cases in order to highlight the extent to which people are depicted as near or from a distance, whether they are strangers or friends, above or below the viewer, and whether or not they are interacting (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 138). As for the first issue, he then mentions two aspects that co-present of how people are represented and how the interaction between the viewer and the people is portrayed (van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 142). He sets out five elements of "exclusion," "roles," "specific or generic depiction," "depicted as individuals or groups," and "categorization" as an analytical framework. Exclusion is the possibility of not acknowledging the presense of people among others. Roles are the acts or enacts of the depicted people. Whether the depiction is specific or generic implies the stereotypes that are offered. Whether people are depicted as groups or individuals has further implications regarding stereotypes attributed to them. Lastly, the element of categorization concerns how people are depicted in relation to certain attributions of social or biological characteristics. A systematic analysis of visual components, what Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) called "the grammar of visual design," leads to definitions of social interaction and social forms (p. 2). What is conveyed in



language by lexical choices, word forms, and grammar structures, as they demonstrate, may also be conveyed by the choice of color or composition in visual communication. So, they argue that “the grammar of visual design” has an influence on meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

This study is not just a textual and visual analysis of the educational materials themselves. I believe that not only by analyzing the FEP texts but also by attempting to understand the wider social context in which the program was created, I can better examine the complex relations that constitute family and social life. In fact, as a “manifesto” for CDA, Fairclough outlines CDA’s potential for transforming social structures and social life to promote human wellbeing. He states that “in this time of crisis the priority for critical research including CDA should shift from critique of structures to critique of *strategies*—of attempts, in the context of the failure of existing structures, to transform them in particular directions” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 39). To this end, by examining the discursive ideology of family in the FEP materials, I do not intend only to make a descriptive analysis of the emerging discourses; instead, my purpose is to make a positive critique which seeks possibilities for transformations in the understandings of policy-makers, program designers, administrators, practitioners, and participants, helping to raise awareness of more democratic and gender-sensitive adult education opportunities for families.

#### 4.4 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

CDA’s origins can be traced from the Frankfurt School’s critical theory to Hallidayan systemic-functional linguistics. Linguistic studies at first, centered primarily on formal aspects of language, with only little exposure to social hierarchies. With the increasing interest in texts, their interpretation, and their

relation to societal structures, the principles of critical linguistics were then established (Wodak, 2002). By the 1990s, CDA became the favored terminology for linguistic analysis (Wodak, 2002). With the significant contributions of Teun Adrianus van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Theo van Leeuwen, Gunther Kress, and Ruth Wodak, CDA theories and methods have continued to be developed (Wodak, 2002). Debate regarding the strengths and limitations of CDA in the literature was also held. Two significant contributors to the field, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) described CDA's key principles among these discussions:

- CDA addresses social problems.
- Power relations are discursive.
- Discourse constitutes society and culture.
- Discourse does ideological work.
- Discourse is historical.
- The link between text and society is mediated.
- Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
- Discourse is a form of social action. (pp. 271-280)

As van Dijk (1993) argues, CDA is “primarily interested and motivated by pressing social issues, which it hopes to better understand through discourse analysis” (p. 252). Wodak (2002) articulates this as:

CDA [is] fundamentally concerned with analyzing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, and legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse). (p. 2)

Critical methodology has been widely preferred in the field of education in areas such as literacy, higher education, adult education, and educational policy research (Rogers, 2011; Rogers et al., 2016). Additionally, CDA's contribution to educational research is twofold. First, a critical approach enables the analyst to more complexly understand the learning processes. Second, the researchers and/or participants influence in the process of conducting CDA, thereby providing incentives for critical as well as social change that emerges from criticism (Rogers, 2004, p. 12).

In this light, CDA is proposed for this study as a useful tool for identifying the ideologies that underpin the ways in which family is construed in the texts. I aim to analyze how discursive practices embedded and circulated in the FEP publications take part in the shaping of new forms of family within society. Therefore, I argue that a critical analysis is relevant and useful way to read the materials of FEP.

A range of potential framing methodologies were considered in the early stages of this research before settling on CDA. As Rogers (2011) explains, educational practices are communicative events where texts, talks, and other experiences which comprise learning are built through time and contexts. Fairclough (2010) discusses the function of language and power in education, taking interest in how educational texts construct and transmit meanings. To emphasize the pivotal role that education plays in socialization, he states:

Educational practices themselves constitute a core domain of linguistic and discursive power and of the engineering of social practices. Much training in education is oriented to a significant degree towards the use and inculcation of particular discursive practices in educational organizations, more or less explicitly interpreted as an important facet of the inculcation of particular meanings and values, social relationships and identities, and pedagogies. (Fairclough, 2010, p. 865)

For the present study, CDA was chosen for the analysis of the social practices, processes, and products of an educational program.

#### 4.5 Data source

For this study, I identified and analyzed texts of FEP. All FEP materials published at the time of this study were utilized as the source of data. The education program includes 28 modules in five different fields of family education and communication, law, finance, media, and health. It is a longitudinal, broadly aimed adult education program, which has been in practice around the country since 2013. One of MoFSP's

crowning social support policy projects, FEP is presented as the most comprehensive adult education program serving diverse families from a holistic perspective (MoFSP, 2013). Table 5 depicts the total number of publications currently available in FEP.

Table 5. Number of Publications in FEP

Field of Education	Number of Publications
Family education and communication	7
Law	5
Finance	5
Media	4
Health	7
Parenting school	1
Education package for young people	3
Textbooks in Arabic	9
Total	41

Source: [www.aep.gov.tr](http://www.aep.gov.tr)

#### 4.6 Sampling

To minimize the body of data to a manageable amount, I reviewed the data multiple times, examining each text that applied to the present study's primary research questions before determining if it was relevant enough for the analysis.

After a careful review of the publications of the complete program, the first field of family education and communication was selected purposefully as the sample of the study, as this field primarily focuses on family members and their lifelong changing roles.

To minimize the potentially huge document sample to a manageable scale, after determining the documents most relevant to the exploration of the research questions, seven textbooks along with their handouts prepared for participants were selected as the corpus of the study with a purposeful sampling strategy.

The data were publicly available and were collected from the official website. I downloaded and electronically stored the documents on a personal computer. They

were all in PDF format, which was convenient for copying, highlighting, and taking notes on texts.

The first four modules of the family education and communication field were published at the beginning of the program development in 2012, with the prefaces written by Fatma Şahin, the minister of family of that period. The fifth module was published and incorporated into the program one year later in 2013, with the preface written by Ayşenur İslam, the new minister of family. The final two textbooks were published in 2017 and 2018, with prefaces from ministers of family Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya and Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk, respectively. Each minister provided a different preface for the textbooks; therefore, the four different prefaces within the selected textbooks were mentioned in the analysis.

In addition to the textbooks prepared for and delivered to the participants, two booklets published for practitioners/trainers were included in the study. The first of these was the *Handbook for Practitioners*, written by Yusuf Alpaydın and published in 2012, with six chapters totaling 82 pages. The second was the *Material Guide for Family Education and Communication*, written by Yusuf Alpaydın and published in 2012, composed of four chapters totaling 66 pages. These two booklets were referred as they provide knowledge about the vision and the scope of the family education and communication field, as well as guidance and notes for the practitioners about how to carry out the trainings. Table 6 details the data source of the study.

Table 6. Publications in the Family Education and Communication Field

Name of Module	Author	Publication Year	Pages	Access Date
First Quarter of Life (Hayatın İlk Çeyreği)	Ayşe Esra İşmen Gazioğlu	2012	142	1 December 2017
Marriage and Family Life (Evlilik ve Aile Hayatı)	Azize Nilgün Canel	2012	178	1 December 2017
Family Life Skills (Aile Yaşam Becerileri)	Azize Nilgün Canel	2012	106	1 December 2017
School and Family (Okul ve Aile)	Ayşe Esra İşmen Gazioğlu	2012	62	1 December 2017
Gifted Children and their Families (Üstün Yetenekli Çocuklar ve Aileleri)	Yaşar Özbay	2013	135	1 December 2017
The Role of Family in the Acquisition of Values (Değerlerin Edinilmesinde Ailenin Rolü)	Kürşad Demirutku	2017	89	1 December 2017
Single Parent Families (Tek Ebeveynli Aileler)	Hülya Öztop, Müdriye Bıçakçı, Nusret Soylu, Semin Güler Oğurtan, Ural Nadir, Emine Taşoluk, Rahime Beder Şen, Serpil Penez Şahin, Aynur Göncü, Binay Bilge Anmak, Evren Hoşrik, Hava Ömeroğlu, Hülya Yiğit Özüdoğru, Sevinç Tok	2018	152	25 March 2019
Handbook for Practitioners (Eğitici El Kitabı)	Yusuf Alpaydın	2012	82	1 December 2017
Material Guide for Family Education and Communication (Aile Eğitimi ve İletişimi Eğitici Materyal Kılavuzu)	Yusuf Alpaydın	2012	66	1 December 2017

#### 4.7 Data analysis

Fairclough's CDA framework is appropriate for this study as it puts a heavy focus on "societal, institutional, and situational" power relations. In Fairclough's words, "linguistic phenomena are social in the sense that whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects" (2001, p. 19). Since I have investigated the construction of family in the FEP publications and problematized the discursive practices of family in society and its reflection in the program materials, Fairclough's CDA framework is well suited to the present study.

Fairclough (2001) provides a clear framework for CDA. As seen in Figure 4, he specifically defines the three stages for analytical framework as description, interpretation, and explanation. He gives main and sub-questions for each stage, constituting an analytical framework. He also reminds researchers that analysis of discourse includes consideration of features that are present in a text, as well as features absent from it.

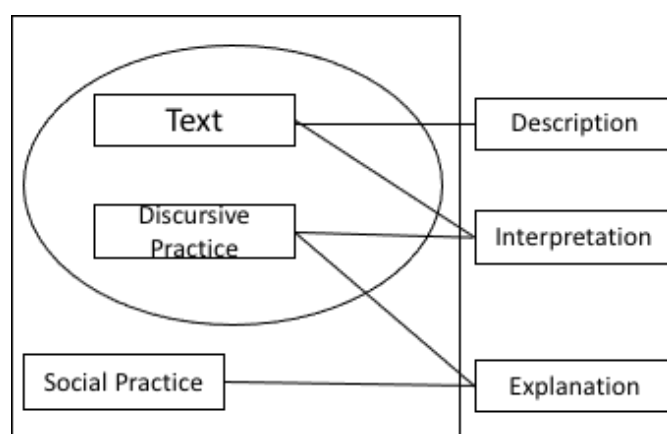


Figure 4. Fairclough's CDA model

In the descriptive level, an examination includes analyzing the structural features of a text. In the interpretative level, the analysis focuses on discursive practices. Namely, relations between text and social practices are investigated. Here, through the study, the meaning of a text, the actors involved, their connections and positions are examined.

Fairclough (2001) describes the purpose of the third stage as “to portray a discourse as part of a social process, as a social practice, showing how it is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them” (p. 135). This final stage implies a text's socio-cultural context.

Fairclough offers a series of questions for each level that can be used as a guide for analysis. These questions provided in Appendix A served as a useful analytical framework for the present study.

As mentioned by Fairclough (1992), the three stages of analysis will inevitably overlap in practice; nonetheless, this progress is still a useful one for ordering the outcome of the researchers' engagement with a sample. He explains that the order of stages will depend on the purposes of the analysis. In the present study, I began the analysis at the descriptive level and concentrated first on the description of the visual and textual patterns and then enhanced my analysis through interpretation and explanation of social practices. However, as these three levels are closely interrelated and are more easily described and interpreted in relation to one another, I present the findings as intertwined in Chapter 5.

#### 4.8 Coding

As defined by Howitt and Cramer (2011), coding is the first stage of the process by which the data are given structure. Once I obtained the materials, I read the textbooks from cover to cover, paying attention to theme, style, and content. During this first reading of the texts, I made notes on PDF copies throughout regarding my initial impressions, reactions, and general observations. Throughout the initial coding process, I created codes for each idea that I encountered within the texts. Codes typically included a word or phrase that represented a phenomenon that I saw within the data.

During this phase, I sought to identify concepts within the data, representing my first step in developing theories from the data set (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). With the intention to identify patterns, which were then to be critically and



analytically evaluated, I coded each chapter in each module using the following key words to represent how the text was related to the research questions: *being a family, strengthening the family, healthy marriages, divorcing, parenting, reproduction, abortion, sexuality, motherhood, working women, working mothers, fatherhood, roles and responsibilities, care work, violence, chastity, morality, values, religion, diversity, and equality*. I recorded these codes in a Coding Frame with their definitions, available in Appendix B.

Upon completion of the initial coding of the data, I engaged in a focused coding phase, which helped me to articulate and develop the emerging categories and themes. In this phase, I coded the codes. More specifically, I explored the codes and decided which best captured the data, selecting the most theoretically significant and/or common codes from the initial coding phase (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

To do so, I re-read the texts with extra attention to specific words and phrases that indicated “family.” Then I defined my categories as “the discursive context of family,” “the politics of reproduction,” and “gendered division of labor.” These categories formed the basis of the themes of the findings and discussion that will be introduced in the following chapters.

In the process of the initial reading, followed by the coding and identifying of categories and themes, a circular and repetitive process of analysis was employed, wherein each text analyzed widened the framing context through which the other texts were viewed. This necessitated a continual re-reading of texts and re-visiting of the codes already analyzed. I continued analysis by re-reading the texts entirely several times, taking notes while doing so. This helped track development of ideas through the initial process of exploring the data.

Lastly, I used NVivo 12 qualitative data analysis program from QSR International to help organize the data. I uploaded the materials into NVivo 12, and coded texts and visuals line-by-line. The software helped me to work more attentively and objectively on a particular collection of data, and in this regard, NVivo's recording, sorting, matching, and linking functionality enabled me to handle the data efficiently.

#### 4.9 Issues of ethics

The data used for this study were publicly and legally available. So confidentiality was not an issue. Additionally, no human participated in this research, thus issues of informed consent or data storage for ethical considerations were not applicable for this study.

#### 4.10 The researcher's role

I collected and analyzed data for this study as a principal investigator. It is also my sole responsibility to disseminate the findings of the study.

As a researcher I approach this topic with some background knowledge, prior experiences, and biases. First, educational practices geared towards families became an area of interest for me while I was earning a master's degree in adult education. My thesis was an examination of the Family Education Program of MoNE, an adult education program intended for families with children aged 0-18. This was a comprehensive government-funded education program implemented mostly in public education centers. Through the course of conducting the study, I became familiarized with the adult education practices and policies designed with respect to families' needs. By utilizing a content analysis method, I questioned the position of women

and the construction of motherhood in the program materials. However, this program was limited to families with children, implemented only in public education centers, and mostly engaged with by women. When I first learned of FEP, initiated by the former MoFSP, with a broader scope of areas and targeted to diverse populations, I saw it as a unique opportunity to further investigate the topic of family education. In reviewing the publicly available materials, I noticed sharp contrasts in the content, approaches, methods of delivery, and scope of this new program in comparison to the previous Family Education Program, which made me question the underlying implications for families across the country.

More personally, I have been part of a feminist collective since my undergraduate years. I was introduced to feminist literature, participated in feminist reading groups, and organized seminars and panels discussing gender and women's issues. Following my graduation, I have been working with a feminist academic journal that analyzes social hierarchies from feminist perspectives with the aim of contributing to feminist knowledge production and dissemination.

I confess to taking those prejudices into this analysis because of my personal values and practices. While I made effort to maintain objectivity, these biases do form the way I perceive and interpret this study's data. Eventually, all the stages of the process, sampling, coding, and analysis were recorded in detail to improve the study's confirmability.

#### 4.11 Summary of chapter four

This chapter outlined the research design of the present study. First, I revisited the purpose of the study and the research questions. Then, I explained CDA as theory and method, and introduced the analytical framework of the present study. The

chapter concluded with the data sample and the stages of analysis, issues of ethics and the researcher's role. What follows will be presentation of the findings and discussion of the research.

## CHAPTER 5

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the construction of family in an FLE program developed and disseminated by the former MoFSP in Turkey. Implicit and explicit assumptions found in the texts and images were analyzed. More specifically, this study examined how gender was embodied and how family was conceptualized in the language of an adult education program.

In this chapter, I present the findings and the discussion drawn from the critical analysis of the education program. The chapter organization is as follows. First, it begins with the analysis of pictorial depictions. Then, the textual analysis is provided at the text and discourse practice levels. I focus on both levels together, as they are closely interrelated and are more easily described and interpreted in relation to one another. I present the findings in separate data sets and draw links between similar and distinctive features and broader social practices discussed earlier in Chapter 3.

#### 5.1 Pictorial depiction

The pictorial analysis of the study questioned how gender roles were portrayed in the visuals of FEP. Seven textbooks in the field of family education and communication, along with their handouts, were examined. The findings of the visual analysis presented both manifest and latent gender messages regarding family, as represented in the program. Discussions regarding these messages were categorized by four main themes of family portrayals, division of labor in family, images of children, and use of religious and national images.

### 5.1.1 Family portrayals

Family portrayals involve three subthemes of socio-cultural context of family, sexual orientation and gendered expressions, and family sizes and types. These themes provide a basis for discussions on how individuals, families, and their immediate environment are visually presented in relation to issues of gendered roles, sexual orientations, and social, economic, and cultural differences.

#### 5.1.1.1 Socio-cultural context of family

A total of 226 male and 232 female adults (alone and/or together) were identified in the visuals of the program materials under inquiry. These visuals, including both photographs and drawings, depicted couples, partners, lovers, parents, and grandparents. In most of the visuals, people (parents, grandparents, and children) were presented as “Western-looking,” well dressed in modern clothing, clean, and tidy. There were no images depicting people in traditional, local, or regional clothing. There were no manifest signs of ethnic or religious styles of dress. Only nine depictions of women (out of 232) showed them wearing a headscarf.

In most of the visuals, parents were shown as urban, young, or middle-aged. There was no evidence of implied age difference within couples. Women and men in photographs were conventionally attractive. Additionally, bodies were of average height and weight. With one exception—a woman in a wheelchair—people in the seven textbooks and their handouts were depicted as able-bodied.

The elderly were mostly embedded in extended family photographs involving mother, father, grandchildren, and grandparents. When they were shown alone (without children/grandchildren), they were generally depicted as loving couples. In

most of the photographs, they were actively engaging with grandchildren, smiling, shown as hale and hearty.

The proportion of couples arguing was not high in the texts. There were only 12 (out of 55) examples of couples that showed them in the midst of a quarrel or being resentful. The dominant images of couples (with or without children) presented them as cheerful, stress-free, adoring, and healthy.

The material items such as the houses and neighborhoods of families were presented with middle and/or upper-middle class qualities. Houses were large, bright, and well furnished. Living rooms contained bookcases, and kitchens had modern designs and were fully equipped. Dining tables were large and offered ample food in the photographs showing families sharing breakfast, lunch, or dinner (See Appendix C, Figures C1 and C2). Outdoor photographs depicted families in fresh, clean areas of communal parks or by the seaside. They were sitting on benches, riding bikes, walking by the seaside, lying or playing on the grass.

#### 5.1.1.2 Sexual orientation and gendered expressions

In the study, the diversity of family members regarding sexual orientation was traced. There was no image that claimed or appeared to portray non-heterosexual couples. There were, however, portrayals of male-female couples holding hands, embracing, and kissing in each textbook. In addition, through such items as clothing choice, accessories, hairstyles, and behaviors, the way people look and communicate through depictions show feminine and masculine gender markers. Women often wear dresses in images, have make-up, and are portrayed in high-heels, while men are seen with short-hair and in conventional men's wear. The complete absence of

diverse sexual orientations and gendered expressions is a reminder that reproductive heterosexual relationship is the norm.

In the Constitution of Turkey, sexual orientations are not referred to explicitly, and LGBTQ+ persons do not have rights to marry or adopt a child. Similarly, reproductive technology is only available for married heterosexual couples (Baba, 2011; Engin, 2015). Given this context, it seems that the total neglect and invisibility of LGBTQ+ persons in an FLE program developed by a state ministry of family which claims to target “all people in society” was a fully intentional act of erasure (MoFSP, 2013, p. 24).

#### 5.1.1.3 Family sizes and types

The frequency of number of children depicted in portraits of families with children in the seven textbooks and their handouts is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Frequencies of Child Numbers Depicted in Each Family Portrait

Family Portrait	Frequency
Parents with one child	30
Parents with two children	28
Parents with three children	7
Total	65

Parents with three children are the least represented (7), in comparison to families with one child or two children. There is a relatively minor difference between the frequency of pictures depicting families with one child (30) or two children (28). The pictorial analysis of the number of children in families indicates that pictures depicting families with one or two children are most prevalent.<sup>22</sup>

Although the lowest in frequency, a family portrait with three children (See Appendix C, Figure C3) deserves particular attention, as it also represents a disputed

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<sup>22</sup> Pictures showing couples only were also coded but were not included in the table, as these pictures do not signify that those couples are childless.



reproductive policy and public discourse on family intervention strategies in the country. The image of a drawing that shows a family with three children appears three times in the seven textbooks. In this picture, women are depicted wearing headscarves, and the family is embracing the elders (grandparents). They seem to be a cozy family under the roof of a house with a smoking chimney, with a crescent half moon and stars (symbolic of the Turkish flag) above. The significance of the picture is twofold. It not only reflects the continued public speeches of state representatives urging women to have at least three children, but it also points to a recent ideal Turkish family discourse of three generations under the same roof. YAZICI (2012) argues that “the AKP government’s conservative family rhetoric invokes not the nuclear unit, but a three-generational extended family, construed as the foundation upon which the nation’s genuine cultural values rest” (p. 112). In her article analyzing gender and family policies with regard to the social work policy of the state, she contends that the nurturing three-generational extended family discourse, assigned the slogan of “strong family, strong society,” is subject to critical examination, as it implies the attempts of the government to transfer social care from the state’s responsibility to that of families by situating women as the provider of basic care (YAZICI, 2012, p. 115). Although the frequency of images of family with three children is not high in the textbooks, the above-mentioned drawn picture depicting a “symbolic” three generational Turkish family indicates that FEP reflects recent reproductive policies and discursive practices targeting families in the country.

### 5.1.2 Division of labor in families

In visuals showing housework, males outnumber females. Eight photos depicted males while cooking, ironing, and making cake. In two of these, males were in the kitchen with their daughters, joyfully making cake (see Appendix C, Figures C4, C5, and C6). There were only two visuals showing women doing house chores. What is important to note here is that depicting males while doing housework contributes to the egalitarian arguments supporting equal division of roles and sharing of household responsibilities. However, the accompanying texts of housework images do not use the word “equal” with respect to the division of roles. On the contrary, the images with accompanying texts advocated discourses of “just and fair sharing” and “support” in the family. I will return to this later in the textual analysis. Hereby, I will give an example of the issue. In the textbook *Marriage and Family Life* (Canel, 2012a), under the unit of “Division of roles in the family,” the text accompanying a photo of a man ironing discusses the characteristics of relationships. The caption of this section poses the question of “Is your marriage traditional or egalitarian?,” and the text includes the statement that “what matters is not what type of a relationship is better, but what spouses expect” (Canel, 2012a, p. 97), continuing:

If there is a conflict in sharing of household chores, one of the below scenes usually appears:

- One of the family members feels extremely tired and even exhausted.
- The house is not tidy enough.
- The house is not clean enough.
- Even though all family members are together at home, they cannot find time to do anything together.
- The family member who undertakes the tasks more often uses sentences such as “I am very tired,” “I am exhausted,” and “I cannot cope.”
- The person undertaking the tasks has physical complaints such as back, low back, and leg pain.

These complaints of a family member may indicate that the person needs support in sharing the household chores. *A portrait of family members that can provide a fairer and more proper distribution of household chores will reduce the stress of the family.* (Canel, 2012a, p. 98, emphasis added)

#### 5.1.2.1 Parenting roles of fathers and mothers

This study also quantified the frequencies of men to women pictured with children in the texts. Depictions of children with women and men occurred with nearly equal frequency. The number of men engaging with children was 57, while the number of women engaging with children was 56. However, the unequal distribution of images showing men and women with infants was evident. There were only 10 images of men depicted with infants, while there were 18 images of women. What is particularly of note here is that when fathers were included in the images, they were generally actively interacting with children. In the visuals depicting men with children, men (fathers or grandfathers) were talking to children joyfully, reading them books, helping them with homework, playing computer games, repairing a bicycle, walking by the sea, or spending time together fishing. However, no images were detected depicting a man providing for the basic needs of children (such as feeding infants, diaper changing, or dressing).

The *First Quarter of Life* (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a) textbook is worth mentioning here. In the unit “Welcome baby: 0–2-year-olds,” in the pages on children’s developmental stages, there were only two pictures showing a mother and a baby, in addition to nine baby-alone pictures. Of particular interest here is the interaction between text and visuals. For example, the author uses seemingly impartial language, such as “How can mothers and fathers help?” However, the adjacent pages provided no image of fathers. The photos of fathers only appeared in the unit called “Last years of childhood: 6–11-year-olds.” Thus, in the early stages of child development only the women were present, which supports the traditional mainstream ideology as mothers being the primary care providers (Allen & Baber, 1992; Sunderland, 2000, 2006; Lazar, 2000).

In addition to this, analysis of visuals depicting fathers' interactions with children showed that activities were more varied in range and more "playful" compared with mothers' "caretaking" interactions, which indicates the "supporter" role of fathers (Sunderland, 2000). In the textbooks, women were depicted with children while feeding them, cuddling their infants protectively, kissing them, reading them books, talking or listening to children, helping them with their studies, taking them shopping, or hanging laundry with them. On the other hand, men were depicted while playing joyfully, making cake, playing computer games, fishing, biking, arm wrestling, walking by the sea, reading books, and studying with the children. This finding stressing the secondary role of fathers as "helpers" and "players" is supported by ample documentation in the literature (Allen & Baber, 1992; Anderson & Hamilton, 2005; Lazar, 2000; Sunderland, 2000, 2006).

#### 5.1.2.2 Participation in the labor force

There were depictions of women in office-like settings with accompanying texts mentioning their paid-work responsibilities. These visuals have particular explicit and implicit gendered messages. Women were wearing suits in some of these photos, carrying a baby on one arm and a computer or a suitcase with the other hand. For example, in one of these, a woman is at her office desk, talking on the phone. Before her there is a computer and a baby lying on the desk next to the screen. In another, a woman with two children in the kitchen is depicted with a computer (See Appendix C, Figures C7, C8, C9, and C10). Additionally, several captions described women specifically in the context of employment. In one of these, "Being a working woman" (Canel, 2012a, p. 66), advice was given to working women on how to consolidate work and family life. The caption "If husband and wife are working"

(Canel, 2012a, p. 98) seems to be gender-neutral; however, the accompanying photo of a woman holding a baby indicates “evidence of slippage” (Sunderland, 2006), as it is a woman who is working. Further, adjacent to the caption “Issues to consider for working mothers before having a baby” (Canel, 2012a, p. 125), there is a photo of a pregnant woman talking on the phone while standing in front of a computer. Under this last caption, “mums-to-be” were asked to solve a number of issues before the baby was born, such as whether the mother would continue working after the baby was born or who would look after the baby if she decided to continue working.

Further to this, the following excerpt from the caption “Being a working woman,” for instance, emphasizes the burden of work-family balance on women and their marriages by saying: “Today, more and more women are entering the work life. Women may feel more stressed when they take the responsibility of their household and work together. Thus, this stress reflects negatively on their marital relationships” (Canel, 2012a, p. 66). The text continues by giving advice to working women, such as “trying to make an efficient time plan” and “decide which tasks to do on which days,” suggesting “for example, laundry on Monday night, preparing dinner on Sunday evening” (Canel, 2012a, p. 66).

On the other hand, while there are some phrases as “working women” and “working mothers,” there is no phrase clearly describing “working men,” and there are rare images of men in work settings. In this regard, the actual message that is relayed seems clear: Women who enter paid employment and take “extra responsibilities” are reminded that they may have difficulties in their marital relationships or experience deficiencies in their household roles. With an absence of visuals of men at work, the program contributes to the traditional division of labor

that perceives men as the taken-for-granted breadwinners and women as “stay-at-home-mothers” or “housewives.”

The Understanding Fatherhood in Turkey Series is a project launched by AÇEV. The project aims to achieve a deeper understanding of fatherhood and masculinity, benefitting from multiple studies and reviews published in 2017 and 2018. *Fatherhood in Turkey: In the Midst of Parenthood, Masculinity and Work* (Bozok, 2018), the second report of this project, presents findings indicating that paid work is generally related to fathers, and even in the situations where mothers work, this is not highlighted but is a secondary priority. The report also identifies that the greatest stress for fathers in Turkey results from managing work life, financial issues, and concerns regarding earning a livelihood (Bozok, 2018). By omitting any concerns about the responsibility of fathers to “maintain a family,” the FEP materials ignore the experiences of men, thus missing the opportunity to address work-family interface with regard to an egalitarian and “shared parenting” discourse (Sunderland, 2006), failing to account for the changing real-world social practices of individuals within a family.

### 5.1.3 Images of children

In the study, visuals of children were categorized with respect to the settings in which they were shown and the tools with which they were depicted.

#### 5.1.3.1 Settings

The findings indicated that the representations of boys engaged in high-intensity activities and in scholarly settings exceeded those of the girls. In these visuals, more boys than girls were shown in educational settings or engaging with learning

activities. Thirty-two (of 81) boys-only photos depicted boys in classrooms, science, or computer laboratories, having learning supplies such as books, abacus, pencil, and chalk. On the other hand, there were only 13 (of 50) girls-only photos that were presented in a learning environment or with learning supplies.

The activities that girls and boys engaged in also varied. There were more photos of boys playing chess, using electronic equipment, reading books, playing musical instruments, biking, fishing, playing with toys, or using sporting equipment.

Table 8. Frequencies of Boys and Girls in Visuals

Children in Visuals	Frequency
Boys only	81
Girls only	50
Girls and boys together	30
Gender neutral (Unidentifiable from clothes, hair, or silhouette)	26
Total	187

The numerical inequality between boys and girls engaging in different activities and settings strengthens traditional stereotypes in education. The fact that very few girls were presented in learning settings gives the impression that there is no need in the program's curriculum to address the current gender inequality in education. These findings align with the assertions of previous studies analyzing gender and sexism in textbooks in Turkey (Aratemur Çimen & Bayhan, 2018; Esen & Bağlı 2002; Gümüsoğlu, 2016; Sayılan, 2012; Tan, 2005; Tanrıöver, 2003).

#### 5.1.3.2 Types of tools

There was a difference between the types of play tools that boys and girls were depicted with. More boys than girls were portrayed while playing with cars, construction toys, or computer games. Boys were also presented playing chess, conducting experiments, fishing, cycling, or playing sports. On the other hand, girls' activities and play tools were quite limited. Girls were only depicted while painting,

playing hopscotch, or having made a mess while making a cake (See Appendix C, Figures C11, C12, C13, and C14).

Examples of gendered tools for the play and the learning were found in the visuals at hand, thereby reinforcing gender roles and gender divisions among children. This result overlaps with the findings of an ethnographic study of the school. In *Gender Play* (1993), by studying their everyday life at school, Barrie Thorne explores how children construct and experience gender. She analyses gender as a dimension of social relations and social organization. In this regard, she traces the role of institutions in the construction of gender segregation. Thorne concludes her study with several realistic recommendations to alter the institutions to provide equal opportunities for diverse groups. Finding new ways of grouping students by using criteria other than gender or race (“class” or “students” rather than “boys or girls”), improving the values of collaboration among all children, coordinating heterogeneous group work, promoting children’s access to all kinds of activities regardless of their gender, and intervening to challenge the dynamics of stereotyping and power are some of the ways for encouraging social change at school settings (Thorne, 1993).

#### 5.1.4 Use of religious and national images

One important representation of religious and national images is the previously mentioned picture depicting an extended family with three children under a roof, with a crescent moon and a star above the house (Appendix C, Figure C3). This family portrait symbolizes the ideal Turkish family, which has three children and also cares for the elders. Other than this, explicit images of religious objects and identities were limited in the textbooks. Few manifest religious symbols were



identified in the program materials. A photo of the Qur'an and a prayer beads on it was used under the subtitle "Religious-spiritual values" in the textbook *The Role of Family in the Acquisition of Values* (Demirutku, 2017, p. 21). In the adjacent paragraph explaining religious values, only Islam was listed as an example of religion with respect to "Turkish culture."

Additionally, the Turkish flag appears only twice in *The Role of Family in the Acquisition of Values* (Demirutku, 2017). In the first appearance, a national sportswoman, Nur Tatar, carries the Turkish flag in 2016 Rio Olympics. The second appearance comes as a background image under the title of "National values." Imposed over the flag are photos of police officer Fethi Sekin, who died in an attack at the Izmir Courthouse in 2017, Ömer Halisdemir, who died during the 15<sup>th</sup> July coup attempt in 2016, and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The terms chosen as examples of national values in the text accompanying these images were "love of flag," "patriotism," "love of nation," "respect for historical figures," "unit and solidarity," "courage," and "bravery" (Demirutku, 2017, p. 22).

The introduction of current political symbols and issues in this newly introduced textbook coincides with the findings of a recent report on changes in Turkish school textbooks. Aratemur Çimen and Bayhan (2018) identified significant changes in the textbooks in Turkey in the context of secularism and gender. In their study, they found that the 15<sup>th</sup> July coup attempt narrative was used in the updated fifth grade Turkish and ninth grade History textbooks as a means of constructing new discourses on nation and national identity.

#### 5.1.5 Summary of pictorial depictions

The pictorial analysis of the study aimed to reveal gendered roles and expressions portrayed in the FEP materials under inquiry. However, as Butler (1990) argued, gender is “performative,” and thus “true” gender cannot be deduced from appearance. Bearing this in mind, the individuals in the pictures were still coded by using markers such as hair, clothes, and silhouette. Each distinguishable person in each picture was coded. Repeated images were also coded at every instance because repetition could highlight a content-related significance.

The overall analysis of the pictorial depiction indicated that families portrayed in the textbooks were to be considered ideal in terms of age, appearance, and well-being. In view of their immediate environment, they were shown as well-off families, thus representing class-based conventions. Further, there was no hint of anything other than heterosexual relations. In terms of family types, pictures of nuclear families outnumbered the others. However, while the majority of pictures depicted families with two children or only one child, the “three children with three generations” discourse—an explicit example of the controversial reproductive public policy—appeared in the materials. In addition, pictures varied with respect to gendered roles in families. Although the frequency of visuals depicting women and men with children was balanced, they were not equal in displaying women and men with regard to care. Furthermore, there were more women with infants depicted than men with infants. Also, pictures of men with children showed them as being more “fun” as opposed to women. Pictures of children also differed in numbers with respect to gender. Boys outnumbered girls, and more boys were depicted engaging with social and learning activities. Finally, the burden of work-family balance on

women was highlighted in texts accompanying visuals depicting “working women.” In addition, references were rare regarding men’s work experiences.

In this section, I aimed to elaborate the findings and discussion drawn from the visual inquiry of FEP. The following section presents the findings of textual analysis.

## 5.2 Textual analysis

Textual analysis of the study focused on the descriptive and interpretive features of texts. This section begins with a description of the prevalent characteristics of textual features, then the analysis of text and discourse practices is presented. Data are presented as separate sets to illustrate each module’s specific variations, contents and themes.

### 5.2.1 An overview of genre types

Analysis at the text level indicated several genre types used in combination. There were several identifiable forms of texts that represented discourses such as descriptive, instructional, advertisement, experiential, self-assessment, and scientific genres. The dominant genre type in this study was descriptive. The descriptive genre is characterized by the explanation of certain phenomena as an exchange of knowledge. Heavy use of factual and predictive statements, as well as describing features in order of importance are particular aspects of this type. Most texts included in this study were comprised of a combination of descriptive and instructional genres. A series of directives and bulleted lists are the features of the instructional genre. There were also elements of advertising or promotional genres, evident in the

features of “catchy” headlines and personalization by addressing the reader with “you” language.

A closer analysis of the texts indicated that they heavily drew on the experiential and self-assessment genres. The experiential genre was identified in texts that included family experiences. Most particularly, the voices of families were included in the follow-up activities and the discussion sections in the examples of case narratives. Additionally, families were asked to self-evaluate their own behaviors. The following excerpts state the characteristics of these genres:

- By answering the following questions, you can have a chance to assess if there is a problem in your marriage because of your sexual relationship. Read the questions carefully and choose the choice that suits you best. (Canel, 2012a, p. 79)
- Rate your problems with the relatives of your spouse from 1 to 10. For example, if you have more than one sister-in-law, consider each of them and give them separate points. Sort the people on the list from having the most problems to the least. (Canel, 2012a, p. 118)
- Divorce or no divorce! List the positive and good parts of your life. Which of these will you lose with divorce? List what a divorce can gain to you. List what divorce can gain your children. List what a divorce can cost you. List what divorce can cost your children. Review the list thoroughly. Which ones are more, pluses or minuses? In light of this assessment, consider whether it is appropriate to face divorce. Write your comments below. (Canel, 2012b, p. 55)

These activities require a level of self-disclosure in which people are urged to reveal information about themselves. This information can be descriptive or evaluative, and it can include thoughts, feelings, failures, and fears, as well as likes and dislikes.

More accurately, in the follow-up sections, participants are encouraged to formulate ideas and discuss with their partners on the matters of intimate relationships, sexual intercourse, relations with relatives, partnership and parenting practices, and so on.

In some examples, they are also required to note their reflections on topics. Thus, through self-assessment and disclosure participants are invited to reveal their thoughts, feelings, and practices on various subjects. By doing so, the classroom

environment turns into a “confessional practice” (Foucault, 1998) in which participants are invited to verbalize and show their “true” inner self to others. The confession or the “verbalization of the self” emerged as a key technique for Foucault (1998), in which people make themselves transparent to themselves and to the others and through the practices of human sciences it became even more important as a way of governing people to produce certain desirable subjectivity (Fejes & Nicoll, 2015). In their book based on Foucault’s work on confession, Fejes and Dahlstedt (2013) discuss the use of confessional practices in lifelong learning settings. They argue that the practice of confession serves as an effective method for promoting desirable citizens. As they claim, confession acts as a form of discrimination, as it exposes what is assumed to be good or evil, adequate or insufficient, and etc. In this sense, the repeated use of self-assessment and disclosure exercises in the FEP materials instructs the participants how to behave and think in certain frames, thereby serving as modes of governing citizens.

### 5.2.2 Elements of intertextuality

Fairclough (2004) defines intertextuality as “for any particular text or type of text, there is a set of other texts and a set of voices which are potentially relevant, and potentially incorporated into the text” (p. 47). The key questions surrounding an intertextual analysis are in determining what is included and what is excluded, and what these absences imply (Fairclough, 2004). A closer examination of the textbooks showed that many relied heavily on intertextual elements drawn from academic fields, mostly developmental psychology and behavioral sciences. These elements, however, were typically introduced without reference to the context from which they were derived. Failure to situate ideas within a given context presumes a consensus on

the concept and works to legitimize the prevailing assumptions. In addition, a single voice—that of the author—dominates the text. The texts also make direct references to external elements of scientific studies, as seen in the examples below:

- Studies show that the first years of marriage are important enough to determine the marriage’s future. (Canel, 2012a, p. 28)
- Studies show that couples who spend adequate and quality time together have less disagreements in their marital relationships, have a stronger bond of love, and their relationships have lower stress rates. (Canel, 2012a, p. 85)
- Studies on divorced couples show that divorce does not mean the issues end. After divorce, it is seen that individuals have more psychological problems, more symptoms of unhappiness, increased health conditions and mortality rates, socially isolated lives, lower living standards, and most importantly, more childrearing issues than married ones. (Canel, 2012b, p. 44)

The use of the scientific genre, as in the example of “studies show that,” serves to communicate that these claims are drawn from a basis of evidence in the texts.

However, these statements are not attributed to any specific sources and are often highly generalized, as can be seen in the above excerpts. By doing so, such texts prevent dialogue with the sources, which leads to veiling the alternate interpretations and functions by oversimplifying and overgeneralizing to misuse or even exploit scientific evidence (Coltrane, 2001).

Thus far I have provided an overview of two textual features: genre and intertextuality. What follows is the presentation of discursive and thematic elements in each textbook. Such elements have been identified as separate data sets to reflect the primary features and themes underpinned in each text. I have also drawn parallels between similar and distinctive features and wider social practices that I addressed earlier in Chapter 3.

### 5.3 Data set 1: First quarter of life

The first textbook analyzed is *First Quarter of Life*, which is hardcover, written by Ayşe Esra İşmen Gazioğlu and published in 2012. The text of 142 pages is composed of seven chapters:

- Unit 1: Being mother and father and basic concepts in development
- Unit 2: Welcome baby: 0–2-year-olds
- Unit 3: From infancy to childhood: 2–6-year-olds
- Unit 4: Last years of childhood: 6–11-year-olds
- Unit 5: Current issues in child raising
- Unit 6: First steps to youth: 12–18-year-olds
- Unit 7: Behavior disorders and ways of coping with them

Parents are expected to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes based on children's emotional, social, linguistic, and mental development in this textbook. The textbook also aims to create awareness on the expected course of child development and provides parents with certain approaches that are deemed appropriate to help deal with behavioral problems.

To begin, the first unit initiates a discussion of individual and social meanings of being mothers and fathers, and the reasons for having children. Then, the core steps of child development are presented. This unit includes the developmental milestones and factors involved. Although the unit is largely about the principles of development, it ends with an activity which asks, “Why did I want to have a child?” (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 18). In this task, participants are asked to pick five main reasons from a list of choices for having children and discuss their reasons with their partners. Some of the motivations included are as follows:

- Children bring happiness to family.
- Children take care of their mothers and fathers when they grow old.
- My family and friends have pressured me to have children.
- Children make economic contributions to family when adults.
- I wanted to have a child, so I wouldn't be alone when I get older.
- All people want to have children when it is time.
- A child is an important element that completes the family.
- Having children adds meaning to life (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 18)

In the *Material Guide for Family Education and Communication* (Alpaydın, 2012b), this activity is suggested as a warm-up to introduce the topic at the beginning of the session. Hence, what is inferred from the guide is that the session on basic principles of development will commence with a discussion of reasons for having children. Accordingly, there is a caption at the start of the first unit: “Why do we want to be mothers and fathers?” (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 8). Here the pronoun “we” seems to mean “everybody.” On the other hand, by using an inclusive “we,” the question assumes that “we,” as “all human beings,” want children, and it implies the heterosexuality of this relationship by stressing “mother and father.” In other words, “we” excludes partnerships other than heterosexuality and those who opt for childless relationships in this matter. Besides, by using present tense (implying the repetition, habit or the generalization of the event), the question of “Why do we want to be mothers and fathers?” takes for granted that having children is a norm and a generalizable given.

Another highly significant theme is the fact that the textbook drew heavily on developmental psychology for intertextual elements. Some frequently used terms borrowed from other texts include “growth,” “development,” “being mature,” “learning,” “readiness,” “critical stage,” “genetic,” and “milestones.” However, without properly and transparently attributing sources, it appears that “expert-based knowledge” is favored and thus presented as common knowledge. A notable example is:



A study revealed that males who reach adolescence early have better relationships with their peers than males who reach adolescence late. Students who are successful at school tend to be more popular than those who are less successful. Popularity, as can be seen, depends not just on social skills but also on physical and cognitive development. (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 14)

It notes in the References section that it was intended as a simple and plain text as it was prepared as a “textbook” and efforts were made to avoid all distractions (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 135). In this regard, not providing in-text citations can be seen as an attempt to make the textbook reader-friendly. Nevertheless, as seen in the above example, failure to clearly identify the studies referenced in the texts encourages the reader to unquestionably accept the presented information without the exact socio-cultural context of the studies undertaken.

### 5.3.1 Construction of gender identity before and after birth

Within the second unit, “Welcome baby: 0–2-year-olds,” focus is placed on the growth of babies and the unique circumstances that parents may encounter. Parents are informed on how to address the needs and expectations of this age group. In addition to child development, among the topics discussed are women’s motherhood experiences (such as postpartum depression) and caregivers support. One interesting concern here is how the text addresses the topic of “gender.” Under the caption “Is it a girl or a boy?” it is stated that “in the prenatal period, babies do not have a lot of gender differences” (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 23). According to this definition, children’s gender differences are described as follows. Before childbirth:

- Baby boys move more than baby girls.
- Baby girls react more to external impacts than baby boys.
- Girls grow faster. Yet boys become taller and heavier at the time of birth. But girls’ bone structure grows more when born.
- Baby boys have higher rates of miscarriage.
- Congenital disorders or birth injuries are more common in baby boys. (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 23)

The quotation on the right illustrates the gender-oriented differences: “Baby boys are more sensitive than baby girls both before and after birth” (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 23). These statements are given as highly generalized facts without specifying how they are compiled, from which sources, and in which contexts.

### 5.3.2 Mother as sole caretaker and part-time father discourse

It is only the unit on developmental stages in which pictures of babies and women were more prevalent. Although the text uses the indirect “mother and father” subject, which makes the reference gender-inclusive, it seems, however, that in some instances it is the mothers in particular who are being addressed. For example, the question of “What can mothers and fathers do?” is repeatedly posed when describing the main stages of development, but no father figure appears in the images in this section covering the early years of development. In addition, to answer “What can a newborn baby (0–1-month-old) do?” it is said that the baby “follows the mother with its eyes” (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 24).

In this vein, the text includes several gendered messages directed at women. The following segment on postpartum depression lists guidelines to prevent mothers from suffering depression. However, the following statements in the bulleted lists specifically suggest that women (mothers) are held primarily responsible for the basic care:

- If the mother has questions about how to care for the baby, the father should take care of the baby as much as possible, by giving the mother the assurance that they will share this responsibility.
- The father should help if possible when the mother feels exhausted and unhappy; if the working arrangements of the father do not allow, some family members or friends with whom the mother may feel comfortable and peaceful around should be found to provide support. (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 32)

Here, in the first bullet point, the assertions of “father should ensure that they will share responsibility” and “he will take care of the baby as much as possible”—especially the conditional language of “if possible” in the latter—reinforce the traditional discourse of the division of labor in families (Allen & Baber, 1992). The implication of working conditions of the father implies that fathers’ position as breadwinners is taken for granted. Thus, men are offered to act as “part-time fathers” (Sunderland, 2006), encouraging them to push their limits, using the lexis “if possible” and statement of “giving assurance that they will share the responsibility.” In this regard, the “if possible” and “as much as possible” phrasings in these statements reinforce the perception that women are responsible for childcare and parenting is not expected to be an equally shared responsibility.

In the *Material Guide for Family Education and Communication* (Alpaydın, 2012b), a hint of “part-time father” discourse can also be traced as well. Of a total of 108 achievements listed for the participants in the field of family education and communication, numbers 24, 25, and 26 emphasize the “balanced distribution of different duties and responsibilities” and “sharing the responsibility of childcare” in family life. However, achievement 43 emphasizes the concept of “supporting the partner in sharing the household chores” (pp. 22-23). This demonstrates that roles and responsibilities are not equally distributed, in that one partner is providing “support” to the other, who is fulfilling the bulk of responsibilities, thereby interrupting the discourse of “sharing the family work.” This finding overlaps with studies questioning fatherhood in Turkey. In the report *Involved Fatherhood and Its Determinants in Turkey* (Akçınar, 2017), a high percentage of fathers (91%) assigned their spouses as the primary provider of childcare. Additionally, the same report proposes the notion of “involved fatherhood,” in which fathers take greater

responsibility in childcare, framing it as a more participatory and democratic approach when compared to traditional fatherhood behaviors. The report concludes with substantial recommendations and policy suggestions. Among these, highlighting fathers' participation in young children's physical care in training programs is also listed (Akçınar, 2017, p. 39). That being said, the FEP materials miss the opportunity to present more participatory approaches in terms of men's changing responsibilities and expectations in society.

### 5.3.3 Absence of men's experience and positioning care work as a family matter

Another highlighted theme which emerged from the analysis is that the text does not include men's parenting experience. Possible distress issues resulting from the maternal experience of women (e.g., postpartum depression) are presented, and a need to reassure the mother that she is a "good enough mother" is discussed in the text (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 32). Nevertheless, men and their questions regarding their role as a father or husband are not addressed. Additionally, while there are prominent examples illustrating the attachment of children to their mothers, the text is fully devoid of mention of the father's presence, particularly in the early years:

- Babies that are securely attached to their mothers develop a belief that they and the world are "good."
- 7–9 months: develop a special attachment to the primary person who looks after them. This person is usually the mother. (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 33)

Likewise, in the first paragraph under the caption "Receiving caregiver support," it is said that "if mother, father, or other family elders cannot care for the baby, these factors should be considered in the selection of caregivers" (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 35). This statement suggests that the care work is predominantly a family matter and the only alternative provided is to employ a caregiver if one of the members is

unable to take responsibility for care. No further references are made in this section regarding the role of the state or private institutions in the early years of care and education. Furthermore, only the woman caregiver, the baby, and the mother are depicted in the two images adjacent to those pages. The mother (who left the baby to the caregiver) comes out of the house with a handbag, dressed in a suit (implying she is going to work) in the first of these images (See Appendix C, Figure C15). Her positioning—away from the baby and caregiver and closer to the viewer—establishes a certain interaction with the viewer. Her closeness allows the viewer to concentrate on her expression. The visual presentation implies she is quite upset about her decision to leave her baby to the caregiver and choose work. The same mother is depicted in the second image, giving the caregiver instructions. No father figure appears in the related section. In this way, the role of fathers in caregiver selection and supplying a caregiver with the necessary details becomes invisible.

For many years, the scholarly literature in Turkey has indicated the limited care opportunities and facilities available, especially at the early ages (AÇEV, 2016; Bekman, 2005; Ecevit, 2010). In a study on childcare and participation in education, Madra (2017) illustrates how the care issue is viewed as a woman's issue in Turkey. According to the findings 72% of mothers participating in the study performed child-related activities at home independently, while 20% performed certain activities with their spouses (Madra, 2017, p. 10). In addition, the 2016 Family Structure Research conducted by TurkStat in collaboration with MoFSP shows that mothers (86%) take primary responsibility for daycare of children aged 0–5, followed by grandmothers (7.4%). While the rate of providing care in nursery or kindergarten was 2.8%; the rate of providing care by the caregiver was 1.5% (TurkStat, 2016). Besides, the low level of schooling ratio is made apparent in recent MoNE figures for early care

education. According to statistics, the schooling rates by age groups for the 2018–2019 academic year is 75% for 5-year-olds, 38% for 4-year-olds and 12.4% for 3-year-olds (MoNE, 2018). The World Bank Report (2015) on childcare in Turkey also highlights the country’s low availability of institutionalized care services. The report discusses affordable and quality early care as a key element in supporting female employment and early childhood development. In this way, the text under inquiry appears to confirm the current challenge faced by women and children with respect to the absence of affordable, accessible, and high-quality early care facilities.

#### 5.3.4 Addressing whom: “mothers and fathers” or “mothers?”

As mentioned earlier, the lexical choice of “mother and father,” at first glance, implies equal participation or “co-addressing” as a supportive aspect of a shared parenting discourse. Nevertheless, a closer analysis of discursive patterns and features indicates that most of the information is directed at mothers and a significant proportion of parenting practices are geared towards women; thus, the words “parent” or phrases like “mother and father” continue to mean “mother.” To cite an example, the captions always address “mother and father” when presenting the developmental milestones, but the question “What can a newborn baby do (0–1-month-old)?” is replied with “They watch the mother through their eyes” (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 24). On the other hand, there are still signs of the shared parenting discourse. For example, the question of “How can the mother and father help?” is answered, “It should be remembered that a crying baby tries to communicate with its mother and father” (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 24). However, this shared parenting discourse is consistently interrupted throughout the text. As in the following quote, the question of “How can mothers and fathers support a 6-

month-old baby?” addresses both parents in the caption, but only the mother is referred to in the explanation:

The baby can be carried in a kangaroo pouch when going out or shopping. Babies may learn to respond to the mother’s body movements in this way. They can also adjust the breathing according to the mother. (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012a, p. 26)

In their influential study, Woollett and Phoenix (1997) discuss how the terms “parent” and “mother” and the images accompanying texts are used interchangeably in textbooks on child development. They found that, despite choosing the ambiguous term of “parent,” it is still the “mother” that is addressed in these texts. Similarly, the questions are formulated in the texts under inquiry using the words “mothers” and “fathers” and thus have some features of shared parenting discourse, but the accompanying image or the advice given addresses a mother, suggesting that the text is directed towards mothers.

To summarize so far, the first textbook the *First Quarter of Life*, covering the basic developmental stages and parenting responsibilities of those early years, emphasizes women as the main care provider in the family. While the text addresses topics on women’s motherhood experiences, it deeply ignores the corresponding fatherhood experience of men. Additionally, the narrative frequently addresses “mother and father,” as an indicator of co-addressing. However, in certain places it is understood that the target audience is “woman/mother,” which highlights the intention of the text in acknowledging women as the key figures in childcare.

#### 5.4 Data set 2: Marriage and family life

The second textbook, *Marriage and Family Life*, was written by Azize Nilgün Canel and published in hardcover in 2012. The 178-page textbook includes 13 units.

- Unit 1: On love and romance
- Unit 2: How can I choose my life partner?
- Unit 3: First years of marriage
- Unit 4: For a healthy marriage
- Unit 5: Factors causing conflict in marriage and solutions
- Unit 6: Female and male
- Unit 7: Just both of us
- Unit 8: Division of roles in the family
- Unit 9: Kin, relatives, and our marriage
- Unit 10: Being mother and father
- Unit 11: Healthy family - unhealthy family
- Unit 12: Opportunities and strengths provided by the family
- Unit 13: As a family, together...

Participants in this module are intended to gain awareness on issues such as intimate relations before marriage, spousal selection, and parenting. Additionally, the module aims to provide skills required for a long-lived, healthy marriage relationship, as well as abilities to strengthen family ties.

The module starts with a unit on romance and love. This unit deals with the nature of relations, their formation and development, and the special feelings that hold two people together. The heavy use of metaphors in this unit is evident. The terms of “marriage,” “partnership,” and “being a healthy family” are described by use of metaphors. In Fairclough’s terms, “the metaphor is a means of representing one aspect of experience in terms of another” (2001, p. 99). In this text, the metaphorical representation of family as “team players” or the use of flowers to describe the fragility of a marriage, and the description of a well-based building



which is resistant to earthquake in order to emphasize a strong marriage carry certain ideological significance within its context. Prominent examples of metaphors are listed as follows:

- You know you should look for it, take care of it, devote time to it when you bring a precious flower to your house and want it to be as beautiful as it is the first day and remain fragrant. If not, even the most beautiful flower in the world will fade in time. (Canel, 2012a, p. 8)
- Most married couples spend less time, day after day, with each other. And the marriage relationship is like growing a flower. If you don't give it time and care enough, it dries, and ultimately dies. Couples interested in strengthening their marriage should pay attention to spend time together. (Canel, 2012a, p. 84)
- Marriage is a team game. You decided not to go on living alone but with your partner. You are not alone in the face of life, but with your partner. Your goal of choosing your partner for a life partnership and your determination to fulfill your marriage's expectations render you a team. The team victory is made possible by the players' efforts and by learning to work together. (Canel, 2012a, p. 42)
- Marriage is a team game and the moment when spouses feel most like a team is when the baby joins the family. (Canel, 2012a, p. 129)

In terms of structure, one notable metaphorical phrase is “the architect of the family is the husband and wife” (Canel, 2012a, p. 40), which implies the heterosexual composition of a family. The metaphors in such statements as “being newly married is like learning a new language. Some exercise and a great deal of commitment are important to mastery” (Canel, 2012a, p. 29) position marriage as a skill to be practiced and perfected, whereas “making family members spend their spare time together, having fun, and laughing together seems like filling the fuel tank of the vehicle” (Canel, 2012a, p. 161) create a link to consumerism. Such metaphors help to reinforce the concept that maintaining a “healthy,” “successful” marriage is not simple, but it requires dedicating time and effort, and demonstrating personal responsibility and emotional commitment in order to reap the rewards.

Further to this, the use of the instructional and management genres throughout the text supports the idea that managing a successful marriage requires

much effort. What these statements ignore is the broader socio-cultural and economic factors that affect human behaviors. Rather, personal obligation and investment in intimate relationships are presented as the prerequisites of long-lasting marriage and satisfaction. A noteworthy example of the management and instructional genre is:

Invest in your marriage! Imagine getting a private account for your marriage. How much do you invest for each day or each week? Are you one of the ones who just withdraws from the account? If so, your account will soon be empty. All you need to do is to invest money to use it when necessary. You can select your marriage investments from the list below. Ensure you do at least one item from this list every day. Do not forget! You are the architect of your relationship. How well you lay the bricks will determine the building you will get. (Canel, 2012a, p. 45)

In addition to emphasizing that marriage is a demanding and ongoing process, this module highlights the importance of selecting spouses in marriage and making this “a conscious choice.” Stressing the notion that partner choice is “a preference for an ideal mother and father” (Canel, 2012a, p. 18) demonstrates how marriage is framed as a matter of reproduction, firstly. It is also noteworthy that there is no elaboration on the possibility of attracting people of the same sex. In other words, family problems, sexuality, choice of partner, transition to parenthood, and roles and responsibilities in life are all treated as heterosexual concerns.

To elaborate, in the second unit, under the title of “Ask these to yourself while choosing your partner!” a question appears: “Do you think that your future spouse and you have the potential to be parents?” (Canel, 2012a, p. 19). Herein, it is emphasized that one of the ultimate aims of couples’ being married is to have children. Thus, choosing a partner is presented as a matter of selecting a “mother” and a “father” of a future child. Further to this, while mentioning the aims of marriage, “bringing new generations to the world” (Canel, 2012a, p. 20) is listed among the intentions:

Deciding to get married and choosing a spouse is one of the most important decisions in a person's life. Selection of a spouse is not a random process. The decision to get married determines:

- with whom and how to spend the life thereafter
- the new responsibilities awaiting the person
- who will be the mother or the father of the children and what kind of a life that the family will have. (Canel, 2012a, p. 19)

Similarly, the follow-up activity entitled “Having a child is a serious matter” (Canel 2012a, p. 34) builds on the given acceptance of couples having children. Participants are asked the following questions: “Did you decide on when you will have children with your partner?”, “Do you have a plan for this?”, and “Do you feel ready for parenting?” This activity, as argued earlier, is premised on the notion that couples can only have a conversation regarding the timing of having children—the question of whether to have children or not is never presented as a potential topic of discussion. The textbook thus ignores the wishes of partners who choose not to have children and views marriage as a matter of reproduction.

Accordingly, the two most important tasks a couple must accomplish are described in the following unit as “to learn to live together” and “to be prepared to be a mother and father” (Canel, 2012a, p. 28). Reproduction is therefore perceived as the primary goal of a marriage. In addition, the text allots the highest priority to the marriage institution within society as an onset of an acceptable family formation by saying, “the marriage institution is the starting unit of the family, which is the main pillar of society” (Canel, 2012a, p. 17).

The text also highlights the conscious and voluntary realization of a marriage in which partners know each other well. This is emphasized by scientific evidence, as illustrated in the following extract.

Research findings show that couples who married willingly, maintained a romantic relationship, and had positive messages in their communication with each other did not lose the intimate coupling and succeeded in turning it into a strong unity. (Canel, 2012a, p. 10)

As a matter of fact, in the follow-up section, the narrative sets out a tale of a young man who is asked to marry someone he has never seen before, leading him to consult an old wise man in the village (Canel, 2012a, p. 15). The young man told the wise man in the narrative that people wanted him to marry a girl whom he had never seen before and whose character he did not know, and asked the wise man if this marriage would be a good one. The wise man advised the men in his answer about the importance of love and respect in marriage. The plot presents an arranged marriage tale where partners do not know each other, contrary to the main text where the emphasis is on the importance of a desire and consciousness in choosing a partner to marry.

#### 5.4.1 Dichotomies of egalitarian and traditional family forms

Like the first module, through the discourses of “sharing” and “support,” the text in this module addresses the topic of division of labor in family. Unlike the first module, however, this text introduces the words “egalitarian” and “traditional” family forms in regards to the division of labor. In several cases, as seen in the excerpts below, the text establishes a false dichotomy between these two words by portraying them as certain opposing aspects of two different family types. It also highlights the value of “consent” or “agreement” at this stage, though not “equality” in the division of labor. In other words, the text argues that whether a family is defined as “equal” or “traditional” does not matter, but instead it is claimed that what allows a family to maintain its happiness and longevity is the commitment that each member is willing to perform specified roles within that family. One prominent example follows:

Rather than questioning if the man or the woman is the head of the house, or whether the spouses should have equal control, it is more important that the spouses think the same way on this matter. In problematic relations, it is seen that couples are unable to find a consensus on control. (Canel, 2012a, p. 31)

Another example of the consent discourse is the following excerpt, which stresses the roles of “satisfaction” and “being of one mind” as the keys to conflict resolution in a marital relationship. In this sense, spouses are encouraged to be supportive and flexible in taking responsibility for the other person, but only in times of crisis or necessities:

There are various roles and responsibilities within the marital relationship that must be fulfilled. Although it differs from marriage to marriage, issues like who is going to do the household chores, who is going to take care of the children, who is going to be responsible for bringing money home may cause problems between spouses. Roles are apparent in some marriages, and it is obvious who is responsible for making money outside, who is in charge of household chores, and there is a clear distinction between spouses. Couples, however, tend to divide roles equally in some marriages. What is crucial is that both spouses are satisfied with their roles and agree on them. The reasons for not having difficulty in sharing roles are that they have supportive attitudes towards each other's roles, they can behave cooperatively, and they can display flexibility in their roles (such as illness and confinement) when appropriate. (Canel, 2012a, p. 43)

What is also interesting is to consider at how the text describes a healthy marriage as “being pleased with the defined roles” and “being in an agreement.” In doing so, the text makes the egalitarian claims of equal division of roles in families less significant, particularly in cases where the household tasks are not equally divided:

What defines people's satisfaction in sharing roles within the family is that each has decided on their roles and is happy with their roles. In healthy families, family members act in accordance with each other's expectations of roles. (Canel, 2012a, p. 96)

Even more striking is the following excerpt that legitimizes the traditional division of roles, in which care and household duties are assigned to women in a metaphorical definition of “teamwork.” Through emphasizing “flexibility” in shifting roles—only when deemed appropriate—it pressures women to assume the role of becoming a mother and caretaker:

It is crucial at this point to fulfill marriage that spouses can work together and cooperate, support each other and act flexibly when appropriate. For example, for a man who does not do housework at certain times, it is the flexibility to help his wife who has just given birth, then cook and wash dishes. In fact, marriage that can be considered as teamwork depends on the ability of the team members to fulfill each other's roles in the best possible way. (Canel, 2012a, p. 97)

Similarly, the activity called "Do you agree?" highlights the significance of "being of same mind" and advises couples to reach a compromise for satisfaction:

Would you like to know if you and your partner agree on sharing roles in your marriage? Read the list below. Mark your opinion about the items in the next column. Compare your answers with the responses provided by your partner. There is no right or wrong answer here. The important thing is whether your ideas match with your partner's ideas or not. Therefore, if your partner says "no" to an item that you have marked "yes," this will indicate where you have problems in your marriage. Listen to your partner's opinions on these items and try to meet at a common point. (Canel, 2012a, p. 101)

Some of the items listed in the same activity are as follows:

1. The most important task for a woman is to be a good wife.
2. The most important task for a woman is to be a good mother.
3. The main duty of a woman is the care of the house.
4. Things like daily housework and childcare are essentially a woman's duty.
5. In serious matters concerning family, the man should have the final word.
6. A mother with young children should work only if her family needs money.
7. Maintaining the family is primarily the duty of a man.
8. The head of the family is the man. (Canel, 2012a, p. 101)

This activity includes a declaration that "there is no right or wrong answer here" and couples are encouraged to come to an understanding on the highly controversial and contested items without evaluating them as "right" or "wrong." In this way, the text functions to reduce or disregard the impact of gender ideologies on the division of roles in families by posing these things as problems of interpersonal conflict.

Additionally, the discussion activity at the end of the unit poses the question "Who is the head of this house? (Canel, 2012a, p. 33). The activity allows participants to comment on topics such as who makes those decisions in their

relationship, who should earn money, who should take care of children, who should do housework, who should make the important decisions, who should decide where to go on holiday, who should determine the neighborhood/city/country where the family should live, and who should have the last word. In the accompanying image, a young woman is pictured removing a man's tie. The message reflects the common misconception that a woman in a relationship is the one who dominates.

Using such a picture is telling, bearing in mind the country's dominant traditional family structure. Studies have long addressed the maintenance of the patriarchal structure in the family in Turkey (Arat, 2000; Kandiyoti, 1990, 2016; Sirman, 2005). In her article, based on MoFSP's 2006 and 2011 studies on family structure in Turkey, Beşpınar (2013) mentions that matters such as division of labor, decisions made, the woman's work status, views on women working outside the home, and property ownership are all arranged in accordance with the traditional gender roles. Results of the 2016 Family Structure Research reinforce similar findings (TurkStat, 2016).

In addition, national and international policy papers have long recognized the secondary role of women within the family. In the ninth and tenth national development plans, for instance, increasing women's social status and improving women's education, health, and employment are strongly recommended. Nevertheless, as can be seen below, the construction of "egalitarian" and "traditional" dichotomies with overly generalized terms leads to the decontextualization of the diverse patriarchal family forms already existing in society. Furthermore, addressing "consent" and "acceptance" in terms of unquestioned division of roles functions to preserve the essence of the gendered division of roles:

In some marriages, the relationship patterns are purely egalitarian while traditional in others. In egalitarian relationships, both men and women can work out and play equal or supportive roles in housework or childcare. On the other hand, in traditional relationships, it is clear who is responsible for the childcare, who will make food, who will earn money, and even who will make decisions on family matters. It is not what kind of relationship is best that counts, but what the spouses expect. When both partners are mutually satisfied with their roles in marital relations, then this means that there is no issue in this matter. However, if one partner assumes an egalitarian form of relationship while the other wishes to act traditionally, then this may be a problem. Studies conducted with families who have successful relationships show that healthy couples can use both forms of relationships when necessary. (Canel, 2012a, p. 97)

#### 5.4.2 Healthy versus unhealthy marriages

In the textbook, marriages are described as “healthy” and “unhealthy,” and it is in this regard a contrast between married and unwed couples is highlighted. The following excerpts explain “healthy marriage:”

- A healthy marriage begins with a healthy decision of whether couples are eligible to marry. (Canel, 2012a, p. 21)
- Healthy family is the basis of a healthy society. A healthy family derives its strength from a healthy connection between husband and wife. A healthy marital relationship has the ability to bring about positive impacts on individuals’ mental and physical health. Children who grow up in such a family environment develop good mental wellbeing. (Canel, 2012a, p. 37)

In what follows under the caption of “What are the benefits and gains a healthy marriage can have?” the text argues that a good marriage could result in a healthier body and higher income for married couples compared to unmarried couples. The text notes:

Studies have shown that the physical and mental health of individuals who have a healthy marriage is higher than those who do not get married. Death levels from heart attack, liver cirrhosis and attempted suicide are lower for married persons than for unmarried persons. The average life expectancy of married people is higher than that of unmarried people. Married people have higher incomes than unmarried people. (Canel, 2012a, p. 40)



The excerpt goes on to say that marriage is a crucial institution in providing this supremacy and therefore refuses all other types of relationships or diverse forms of relationships that are not based on marriage contracts:

The same findings are not true for unmarried couples who live together. Furthermore, in unhealthy marriages where partners show negative and aggressive attitudes towards one another, it is noticed that individuals have weaker immune systems and appear to get sicker, have more depression, have more illnesses and less harmony than those in healthy marriages. (Canel, 2012a, p. 40)

In these excerpts the text establishes a distinction between married couples and unmarried couples. This is significant in two respects. One is that by referring to uncited studies, it formulates this distinction and reflects on the use of research in that context as an authority. The lack of citations indicates that it is not important for the text author to identify the studies or which scholars support those ideas. The absence of the context of these studies tends to rationalize all actions, beliefs, and ideas as “reality.” Therefore, by relying on “science” as evidence, it helps to justify the author’s claims. Second, attention needs to be paid to the contrast between married and unwed couples. The language clearly favors married couples over other forms. In fact, Turkey still retains its traditional structure and values marriage in society (See Researches on Family Structure 2006, 2011, and 2016). While marriage rates have declined in the last few years, the number of marriages in 2018 was 553,202, with a crude rate of 6.80 (TurkStat, 2018), which is quite high in comparison to most European countries such as France, Germany, Italy, and Spain (Eurostat, 2019). Marriage has been promoted with accompanying privileges in society through certain opportunities such as state-sponsored marriage loans, college scholarships and loan pardons, and family and pre-marital education programs, which can be evidenced in the high rates of marriage in society, particularly in the

last decade. The comparison between wed and unwed couples, and the emphasis on the benefits of a good marriage in this sense reflect these policies.

In addition to being wed or unwed, sexuality in long-lasting marital relations is also compared to short-term relations. Once again, the text perceives marriage as a key institution for organizing order in society through the authority granted to unattributed studies:

Studies show that spouses' sexual lives or partners are more rewarding and couples feel more comfortable in long-term, monogamous relationships. This condition is due to the fact that couples know each other very well and express their desires and aspirations in longer-term relationships more easily and without hesitation compared to short and temporary relationships. (Canel, 2012a, p. 77)

#### 5.4.3 Discourse on working mothers

Daily responsibilities of working mothers are detailed in the text, emphasizing their multitasking ability. As seen in the example below, women are expected to balance several tasks simultaneously. Advice on “being organized” and “keeping it straightforward”—indicators of multitasking discourse—works to underline the role of the woman in the home as caregiver. Under the title of “Being a working woman,” the text advises women on how to manage work and family life while carrying out care duties. By doing so, the text clearly stresses that women are the key responsible parties for household chores and that men in this realm can only be “helpful:”

If you are a working woman:

- Try to build yourself an effective time-management plan. Determine which tasks are to be done on what days. For example, laundry on Monday night, dinner on Sunday evening.
- Set the time and length of a day's work that you need to do. Try to follow a plan. For example, the food is prepared between 18:00–19:00.
- Talk to your partner about the stress that you are feeling. Ask him to state specifically what kind of support he can do in sharing parenting and household chores, and focus on making efforts in this regard. You both concentrate on making your marriage happy and increasing the amount of time you spend with each other. (Canel, 2012a, p. 66)

Accordingly, the problems of two-income households are discussed under the heading “If the husband and wife work.” Though both partners are discussed in this section, a woman in a suit is holding a baby in the photo accompanying the heading. In the narrative alongside this photo, it is suggested that if both partners are employed, the advice given below can be followed to prevent couples from relying on one person only. Unlike the previous one, this excerpt does not address the audience explicitly, but the photo of the woman adjacent to this text suggests that it is still a working woman to whom the text speaks:

- Plan the night ahead to avoid stressful situations like morning catch-up, preparing children for school, and having breakfast. For example, select clothes and prepare the breakfast table the night before.
- Plan your next supper a night in advance.
- Try to build opportunities for you and your partner to share, where you can relax and listen to yourselves.
- Prepare your weekly schedule and hang your list where you can check items off.
- Try to avoid poor sleep because insomnia increases stress.
- In very busy working days, and in sickness, and confinement, spouses may find it difficult to play their usual roles. Please be flexible in taking supporting positions for one another. In these temporary circumstances, be confident also in transferring your role to your partner. Spouses are able to establish solutions in these crisis situations, in which they show creativity. (Canel, 2012a, pp. 98–99)

This module has an approach to the topic of working mothers similar to that of the previous module, going so far as to highlight the negative aspects of becoming a working woman or mother. In the “Being a parent” unit, for example, there is a section called “Things to consider before getting a baby for working moms,” with the text advising mothers-to-be to balance family and work life by carefully taking the following into consideration:

- Will the mother carry on working after the baby is born?
- If the mother continues to work, how soon will she return to work after the baby is born?
- Who will take care of the baby after the mother returns to work?

- When someone other than the mother is taking care of the baby (grandmother, friends, neighbor, etc.), is there a plan? Have you talked to the person who will care for the child and made an arrangement?
- Will a nursery be used if the mother continues to work? Do the spouses agree?
- What are all the advantages and drawbacks?
- If the mother continues working after the baby is born, who will stay home and take care of the baby when the baby is ill? (Canel, 2012a, p. 125)

In TurkStat's November 2019 statistics, the rate of women above the age of 15 participating in the labor force was 33.9%, while this figure was 71.6% for men. In addition, in the April–June 2018 figures (Work Family Balance), those in the 18–64 age group with care responsibilities was 42.9%. Among men this figure was 41.2%, and for women it was 44.6%. On the other hand, 38.7% of those who are not in the labor force had care responsibilities, consisting of 14.8% for men and 45.9% for women (TurkStat, 2019). *Economic Surveys on Turkey* (OECD, 2018) recognizes the country's gender gap and the inequalities in labor force participation as among the factors influencing gender equality. In regards to these, the above-mentioned excerpts claiming the importance of agreement rather than being egalitarian in terms of the division of roles and the advice directed towards working women to remind them of their household responsibilities are the gendered ideologies that constrain women's freedom and the equality of individuals within the family. Instead of addressing the issues of lack of institutional care facilities and women's low employment levels, the education program in question essentializes the maintenance of families, particularly women, to assume duty of care and household work.

#### 5.4.4 Discourse on sexuality, reproduction, and abortion

Sexual life is defined in this module as “one of the basic skills which married couples must learn” (Canel, 2012a, p. 29). Other stated skills listed include

communication skills, problem solving skills, role sharing in marriage, parenting skills, and budget management.

Sexuality is one of the most important issues impacting satisfaction and happiness in couples. To secure marriages and improve marital relationships, couples must learn to speak to each other about their feelings, thoughts, desires, and needs on this topic. (Canel, 2012a, p. 75)

Sexuality has a critical and binding force in a marital partnership. Healthy sexuality establishes a special and exclusive connection between couples. A healthy sex life increases the couple's intimacy and reduces the tension between them, and creates feelings of comfort, affection, safety, and security. A healthy sexuality is directly linked to the reciprocal respect for the feelings, thoughts, and expectations of each other, so that they can express themselves and their expectations comfortably in relation to the time, place, frequency, duration, technique, and behaviors of their intercourse (Canel, 2012a, p. 76).

In addition, under the caption "Surprise guest," the only course of action for unintended pregnancies is stated as:

If the couple doesn't have a pregnancy in their plans, it's normal that this huge surprise that comes across them all of a sudden would cause excitement and stress. The change in life that the newborn baby will bring can lead to the view of the surprise pregnancy as a troubling process. But it is important for the baby's health that the mother-to-be undergoes this process quickly with the father's support and *makes efforts to accept the baby*" (Canel, 2012a, p. 126, emphasis added).

Furthermore, several suggestions to brace the mother in this situation are described under the heading "Advice to the mother of a surprise baby." One of the tactics used by text producers is to avoid upholding the expressive values of words, as Fairclough (2001) suggests, is using substitutional words, which is called *euphemism* (p. 97). In the text at hand, unintended or accidental pregnancies are pronounced as "surprise baby" or "surprise guest" to substitute for a "negative word or value," leaving out the negative consequences of the abortion practice.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, in 2012 the government sought to limit access to abortion and even described it as "murder," placing abortion in the middle of the political debate on reproductive rights and health. However, the abortion prohibition law was never put into effect. MacFarlane et al. (2016) concluded in their

study on abortion and reproductive health services in Istanbul that while abortion remained legal, the government created an environment that impeded access to abortion and stigmatized the practice. The most tangible and negative effect of this dispute, as they claim, is the limitation on access to abortion, notwithstanding its legal status.

Having said that, the text contains few details in terms of reproductive choices, rights, and methods. The text only offers to increase women's awareness of birth control by suggesting, "to prevent an unwanted pregnancy, you can increase your knowledge of methods for birth control" (Canel, 2012a, p. 127). Abortion has not been listed in any of these texts, and the absence of reproductive options and rights demonstrates that the text does not respond to women's claims to reproductive rights but, as shown in the example below, only forces them to acknowledge the situation in which they find themselves:

Do not refrain from displaying your inner reactions (such as crying, shouting). Let them drain and run out as soon as possible. Try to understand that feeling frustrated, confused, anxious, impatient, or excited is natural for you. After you let go of your negative emotions, you can try to communicate with the baby in your womb. Try to feel it by touching your womb. Try to say "welcome" and celebrate its presence. You'll find that you are feeling better. (Canel, 2012a, p. 127)

Finally, like the previous module, fathers' experience of parenting is not included in this module. Under the caption of "My wife is pregnant" (Canel, 2012a, p. 127), it describes the particular care and interest that a man should give to his pregnant wife. The emotional well-being of men, their stress, or the anxious anticipation that they may feel in a situation such as their wife's pregnancy is completely overlooked in the text.

In short, the second module shows that the *Marriage and Family Life* textbook highlights marriage as a privileged institution in which couples are eligible

for higher benefits compared with other forms of relationships. Secondly, as in the first module, the ultimate purpose of marriage is defined in this textbook as reproduction and the control of sexuality within society. Equally, all issues concerning marriage are attributed to heterosexual matters. Finally, as is the case in the first module, this text emphasizes the difficulties of work and family balance, thus regenerating discourses on women as mothers who are the key providers of care.

### 5.5 Data set 3: Family life skills

The third textbook, *Family Life Skills*, was written by Azize Nilgün Canel. The 106-page text, published in 2012, contains five units:

- Unit 1: Basic elements of communication in family
- Unit 2: Gaining problem-solving skills by utilizing natural resources of family
- Unit 3: Divorce as a crisis phenomenon
- Unit 4: Effective and competent parenting
- Unit 5: Adapting to changing roles through life

The first unit starts with the importance of family interaction being stressed. At the beginning of the unit, where the fundamental characteristics of healthy communication are discussed, a picture shows a woman aggressively shouting at a man (Canel, 2012b, p. 11). Active listening is explained in the following narrative.

The second unit, which deals with stressful family circumstances and how the family can cope with stress, discusses the effect of stress on marital life and mentions that children are also affected negatively, in that when “the mental and physical health of spouses in a stressful marital life is at risk ... even children bear the same risk” (Canel, 2012b, p. 29). In response, recommendations for mitigating tension in

family life include statements such as “Your life should not be just about merely working, create[e] opportunities for yourself to have fun and relax” and “appreciate[e] the importance of your family” (Canel, 2012b, pp. 31–32). Such comments do not discuss the social, cultural, economic, and political underpinnings of stress that impact one’s life, but they instead present stress as an individual deficiency arising from a lack of balance between family and work.

#### 5.5.1 Divorce as a crisis and violence against women

The third unit title is “Divorce as a crisis phenomenon” (Canel, 2012b, p. 39). The use of divorce in this unit header with the word “crisis” suggests that the negative aspect of the problem is given priority. Worth noting in this section is “overwording,” an excessive use of many words with similar meanings. Fairclough puts it in this way: “Overwording shows preoccupation with some aspect of reality - which may indicate that it is a focus of ideological struggle” (2001, p. 96). The collection of terms such as “risk,” “phenomenon,” and “crisis” along with collocations such as “the idea of divorce,” “the phenomenon of divorce,” “coming to the point of divorce,” and “the decision to divorce” populate the text to highlight the negative side of the matter. In addition, couples are encouraged to reconsider again and again in the text and to ensure they explored all options for repairing the marriage, as described in the sentence, “It is important for the couple to believe that they have done everything they can before they make the decision to divorce” (Canel, 2012b, p. 40).

In addition, as illustrated in the following excerpt, circumstances that lead couples to divorce are conveyed by words that relate to stereotypical and sexist



underpinnings and gendered communication differences. Such arguments are further endorsed without referring to the context of the studies attributed:

Some actions exhibited during the debates might, however, bring couples to the point of divorce. For instance:

- Constantly complaining (Studies show that women display this attitude more than men).
- Oversensitive, reactive, and defensive reactions to criticism and complaints from partners (Studies indicate that men display this attitude more than women). (Canel, 2012b, p. 41)

When giving reasons for divorce, “violence against your partner” appears near the end of the list of behavior disorders, demonstrating that it is considered of quite low priority. In fact, violence in the family is a matter that is dealt with only in a short paragraph which merely defines the term. The text advises those affected to seek aid in the event of violence, but no information is provided regarding how to find domestic violence shelters, nor are any contact numbers included for legal authorities in case of a situation of abuse. However, multiple studies underline that violence against women is one of Turkey’s most important and widespread causes for divorce. For instance, the *Research on Reasons for Divorce in Turkey* (MoFSP, 2015) provides extensive information on reasons for divorce in the country. When participants were questioned about their personal reasons for divorce, the five top common causes were listed as the intervention of the inner circle/close relatives in marriage (40%), emotional relationship (38%), adultery (35%), financial problems (34%), and violence (34%). Then the list continues with the habits of spouses (31%), lifestyle (25%), values (20%), failure to fulfill domestic duties and responsibilities (29%), and insufficient interest for childcare (18%). This means violence is among the top five causes of divorce. The research also shows that violence is the most reported reason for divorce for women, while men mainly reported the inner circle as

the reason. Similarly, violence is the leading problem in marriage (56.6%), according to the same research (MoFSP, 2015).

In addition, a report on the prevalence of violence in Turkey (Sakallı, Doğan, Günel, & Güreli, 2017) was released by the Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation. The report provides detailed information about the number of people who applied for protection and help from the foundation. The report states that women have encountered inhospitable attitudes in institutions such as law enforcement agencies, violence prevention and monitoring centers, legal aid services, provincial directorates of MoFSP, local authorities, family courts, and health institutions. The report also addresses the lack of awareness among women regarding protective measures against violence. In this vein, the text under inquiry fails to raise awareness in an education program addressing families by not prioritizing the issue of violence against women in the limited space it has.

#### 5.5.2 Will problems come to an end after divorce?

In the textbook, the issues of couples that end with divorce are also mentioned. Fairclough (2001) sees language “as a form of action” (p. 7), which means that whether it is spoken or written, expressions constitutes “speech acts” such as questioning, ordering, promising, warning, threatening, or suggesting meaning that are not openly uttered (Fairclough, 2001, p. 7). Under the subtitle “Will problems come to an end after divorce?”, for example, while the title is only in a query form, the text underlines that divorce does not fix problems, and that compared to married couples, divorced couples would be unhappier:

Studies on divorced couples show that divorce does not mean an end to the problems. Upon divorce, individuals have more psychological issues, more unhappiness, higher health conditions and death rates, have socially lonely lives, lower living standards and, most notably, have more childrearing issues

than married couples. Individuals should consult a specialist if they find it hard to recover after a divorce, show signs of depression, feel angrier and more intolerant than ever, experience despair and helplessness, and find it hard to adapt to work or a new life. (Canel, 2012b, p. 44)

In addition, participants were asked to state their views about divorce in the follow-up activities (Canel, 2012b, p. 55–57). The activities titled “Should I divorce?,” “Are you sure about your divorce decision?,” and “What would you recommend if you were in my shoes?” are designed in such a way as to allow participants to express their feelings as a kind of self-assessment in this matter. Participants are specifically told to evaluate themselves and their relationships before making the decision to divorce. By writing, “reconsider if it is appropriate to face divorce in light of your self-assessment” (Canel, 2012b, p. 55), the text highlights the daunting nature of divorce, functioning to discourage the reader from choosing to do so.

### 5.5.3 Fathers’ absence

The emphasis on the role of the father appears under the unit “Effective and competent parenthood” (Canel, 2012b, p. 58). This is the first instance that the text deals explicitly with the position of fathers, with a caption calling, “Attention to Fathers!” (Canel, 2012b, p. 69). A photo of a man with a boy (a father and son) while fishing is adjacent to the caption. As the following extract suggests, fathers are treated as the most important and critical influencers in the development of children’s character and future aspirations. A typical father is portrayed as an ideal one, someone who is responsible and self-disciplined, someone as a masculine role model. Such features are noted as being transferable from father to child:

Fathers are the examples to the children for how to fight life. Children witness their fathers’ struggles with life, their ways of handling other people and problems. Values such as being able to behave responsibly, and diligence and discipline at school and at work are usually passed from father to child. (Canel, 2012b, p. 69)

In addition to presenting fathers as role models in the life of their children, the text alerts readers of potential adverse effects for a child in the event of a father's absence:

When there is not enough healthy father-child contact, the child can have the following problems:

- Drop out of school
- Tendency to use drugs and alcohol
- Having children at an early age
- Tendency to commit crime
- Aggressive attitude towards men
- Poverty (Canel, 2012b, p. 69)

As seen from the above excerpt, the father's shortcomings in connection with children are identified as the triggers of catastrophic social problems in the safe development of children. The excerpt continues, "naturally, it cannot be assumed that the child of any uninterested father would have those problems. However, studies show that in children with absent fathers, the risk of such problems is high" (Canel, 2012b, p. 69). Here, lacking specificity of the referred study and by assuming an authoritative tone, the text again makes the argument difficult to question.

Additionally, emphasis is placed on encouraging the active participation of fathers in family life, something desirable both for children and men.

Recommendations regarding what a father should do with his child, however, have little focus on basic care, but emphasize supportive roles for fathers:

Here are some of the things a father can do for his children:

- Spend time together
  - Express his affection to them in every way
  - Converse frequently with his children
  - Show supportive body language to children
  - Be understanding, tolerant, and friendly
  - Make his children feel special because they have a father like him.
- (Canel, 2012b, p. 69)

While this excerpt puts forth that fathers should take an active role in the rearing of their children, the notion of the mother as primarily responsible for the children

remains popular. Stressing fathers' nurturing responsibility is worthy and it challenges the gendered assumptions of care work. However, in cases when the role of the father is stressed, this is particularly for the later development of children's character, not for the basic care needed in their early years.

To summarize, the *Family Life Skills* textbook focuses on communication barriers in families, with a heavy emphasis on the negative side of divorce. The text views divorce as an unwelcome condition and thus highlights its negative implications in the lives of parents as well as children. In addition, unlike the first two modules, this module discussed for the first time explicitly men's experience of fatherhood, presenting their responsibilities to serve as role-models for the growth of their children. In this way, their absence is viewed as a cause of personal shortcomings in the education of children and later in their professional life.

#### 5.6 Data set 4: School and family

The *School and Family* textbook was written by Esra İşmen Gazioğlu and published in 2012. The 62-page textbook consists of five units:

- Unit 1: Family and school relations
- Unit 2: Learning at home
- Unit 3: Reading at home
- Unit 4: School problems
- Unit 5: Learning through daily activities

The first image of the first unit, which focuses on issues of school and family partnership, selection of schools and teachers, and school adaptation, depicts a man's arm (a teacher figure) leading a group of male figures (students) by ropes (see

Appendix C, Figure C16). The image puts special focus on education in which girls are neglected.

The visuals in this textbook show male-dominated pictures of children. While pictures of parents with children (mother with a child or father with a child) are divided equally, pictures showing only boys are higher than those of girls. More precisely, there are 17 pictures showing boys only or with their parents while there are only 10 pictures showing girls only or with their parents. The number of pictures showing girls and boys together is four.

In Turkey, in recent years, there has been growth in the number of students attaining all levels of education. However, in the compulsory education level in Turkey, a hundred percent schooling has not still been achieved (ERG, 2019). Besides, the schooling ratio of girls and boys still show significant differences especially at regional levels. In addition, the school types and the educational fields where female students are populated and drop-out levels from school remain important gendered issues in education. Gender inequalities in education stemming from the curriculum and textbooks have been researched for so long and a growing body of literature illustrates gendered stereotypes and sexist discrimination in textbooks in Turkey (Çayır, 2014; Gümüšoğlu, 2008; Tanrıöver, 2003). Taking these into consideration, as Durakbaşa and Karapehlivan (2018) rightfully declared, “the issues as current problems of gender asymmetry in education cannot be fully addressed only in terms of gender inclusivity of the system, as inclusivity does not guarantee equality” (p. 84). Bearing this in mind, the absence of girls in the visuals of a textbook on school and family can still be argued as a form of perpetuating ongoing gender disparity in the education system.

Importantly, this textbook includes family portrayals of middle-class, well-off parents who are literate and enjoy reading. Parents are seen supporting the children with their homework, or they are shown reading a book. In fact, in addition to suggestions for parents to assist their children with homework, the text emphasizes the importance of parents reading to their children. For example, parents are encouraged to read books or magazines alongside their children in order to “build a positive learning atmosphere at home” (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012b, p. 11). The excerpts below provide examples of this message:

- The child should watch parents while reading, calculating, and researching on the internet. (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012b, p. 19)
- Mothers and fathers are a child’s first teachers. Reading and enjoying reading is a learning outcome which benefits a child throughout life. In this regard, reading together from an early age and developing a culture of reading in the child is one of the most precious gifts they can receive. (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012b, p. 27)
- Parents should let their children see them reading books, newspapers, magazines, and so on. (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012b, p. 30)

What is lacking in these excerpts is the recognition of the factors influencing the ability of parents to read or use electronic devices. Parents with economic difficulties may have poor literacy skills (and vice versa) or have limited access to reading materials or technological devices. In this regard, these excerpts that highlight literate parents only do not recognize the effect of family background and ignores the necessities of certain disadvantaged groups in terms of educational equality. In that context, the text does not recognize gaps in access to services and overlooks families’ social, cultural, and economic conditions.

Further, the role of school and teachers in students’ lives is addressed at the beginning of the unit. It is reported that the “school-parent partnership makes important contributions to the adaption and progress of the children in school” (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012b, p. 7). The text continues with guidance regarding school

selection. Parents are informed of school application guides and how to receive accurate information about their local primary schools. An important point to note, however, is that after explaining local public schools and how to apply for them, the text tells families that they have a wider selection of choices, like private schools, if they are in a financial position to do so, particularly if they are not happy with public schools. In that context, the following statement supports an option for private schooling:

However, if the family is not satisfied with the responses they receive, and their economic circumstances are strong enough, they will submit applications to a broader variety of private schools. If your economic conditions are not sufficient, contact private schools for scholarship opportunities and ask for information about exams for scholarships. (İşmen Gazioğlu, 2012b, p. 10)

The use of “not being satisfied” in state-sponsored education program calls for special consideration. Education is a public service in Turkey. The 2018-2019 MoNE report, however, shows a substantial rise in the number of private schools over the last few years. In addition, with the rise in state funding for private institutions, the number of students in these institutions has also increased.<sup>23</sup> Thus, it is noteworthy here that a state-sponsored education program textbook suggests that parents who are unsatisfied with state-sponsored schools can select private institutions for a higher-quality education for their children.

The deteriorating standard of state education in Turkey is far from new. As Gök (2002) puts forward, the provision of education began to be debated with the structural reform policies of the 1980s, and spending on health and education in particular was declared a burden to the public budget (p. 98). In this vein, parallel to the weakening of public education, the privatization of education started to flourish

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<sup>23</sup> In the 2018–2019 academic year report of MoNE, the number of public schools in formal education is 54,036, while the number of private institutions is 12,809; the number of students in private schools is 1,440,57. Retrieved from [www.meb.gov.tr](http://www.meb.gov.tr)



after the 1980s. For years, the number of private schools has increased along with public funding for private institutions. In this sense, as Gök (2002) states, “the privatization of education is highly associated with the decreasing quality of education” (p. 99). Further to this, the privatization of schools and declining public education standards mainly impacted the low-income communities, widening established educational gaps (Sayılan, 2006). Families’ preferences for private institutions further exacerbate such inequalities. In other words, by selecting private schools with the promise of better education, wealthy families demonstrate their agency and invest large amounts of money on schooling for their children. In a government-funded education program, given the situation in the country, providing private schools as a better option for those who can afford resonates with these neoliberal state policies on education.

To conclude, the *School and Family* textbook clearly displays in its visuals and texts certain neoliberal and conservative school-related policies. Firstly, the textbook’s visuals address a significant gender asymmetry of students, which is argued to be an example of conservative policies fostering inequality in education. The limited representation of girls in images serves to perpetuate the pervasive gender disparity in education. Secondly, promoting the practice of reading as a key activity for parents’ involvement in education excludes the circumstances of families suffering from deprivation or illiteracy (as a result of socio-cultural, economic and political influences), thereby presenting a certain middle and/or upper-class family—literate, well-educated, and able—as desirable. Finally, the neoliberal mindset is visible in the text regarding the school selection process. Here, if they are not satisfied with state schools, families are encouraged to opt for private institutions. Failing to address the root causes which have weakened state schools to the current

extent, offering private institutions for well-off families serves to deepen the existing economic and social disparities among families benefiting from education.

### 5.7 Data set 5: Gifted children and their families

The fifth textbook, *Gifted Children and their Families*, was written by Yaşar Özbay and published in 2013. The 135-page textbook includes 10 units:

- Unit 1: What is superior intelligence and talent?
- Unit 2: Would you like to have a gifted child or a child with superior intelligence?
- Unit 3: What are the distinguishing characteristics of gifted children?
- Unit 4: Gifted children in preschool age
- Unit 5: General characteristics of gifted children
- Unit 6: How can I deal with my gifted child?
- Unit 7: Challenges in dealing with gifted people
- Unit 8: Educational evaluation/diagnostic and placement process of gifted children in Turkey
- Unit 9: Practices in our country
- Unit 10: Families of gifted children

Education policies targeting children with special needs or for exceptionally talented children in Turkey generated minimal interest before the 2000s (Mammadov, 2015).

Over the last few years, however, there has been rising concern and tangible efforts to address these groups on opposite ends of the education achievement spectrum.

The *2013–2017 Strategy and Implementation Plan for Highly Talented Individuals* (MoNE, 2013a) is an important document of note in this regard. The plan addresses specific concerns relating to educational facilities for especially talented children. As

Mammadov (2015) states, this policy document discusses the political, scientific, sociological, and psychological importance of giftedness. However, as he argues, the focus is placed on “the nation’s future” but not on the particular needs of children. In light of this, the incorporation of a textbook on gifted children into an FLE curriculum is drawing attention. The textbook covers a range of topics, from the definition of intelligence to the prevalent attitudes towards giftedness and the country’s existing educational practices.

The text frequently refers to individuals as “having exceptional analytical, artistic, and leadership abilities” (Özbay, 2013, p. 8). Their “extraordinary” skills are described as unique characteristic of them:

At the same time, it can be said that these people are skilled in various fields such as high academic achievement, discovery and creativity capacity, innovative behavior capacity, leadership ability, success of individual and interpersonal relationships, and visual and performance-based art skills. For example, given examples from history, Picasso presented important inventions and works to humankind in painting, Mozart in music, Einstein in physics, and Edison in electricity. (Özbay, 2013, p. 9)

The following passages from the text emphasize giftedness as a valuable resource for society, stating:

- Despite their significance, inadequate steps have been taken in relation to few people with special needs of giftedness who have exceptional characteristics of developing the world and moving it forward. (Özbay, 2013, p. 35)
- To educate and to train gifted/talented children in the fields of science and art, and to promote their contributions to the civilization, that is, to ensure their survival, sufficient attention and effort should be paid to. Because these children are the ideologists and scientists, leaders and artists of the future. And they can make major contributions to humankind. (Özbay, 2013, p. 35)
- Searching for and identifying gifted children at an early age is important. Unless these children are noticed, they will vanish into large masses. This means great losses in the name of countries and the development of humanity. Through this way families have a great responsibility. It is very important that they track and monitor their children well and discuss with the teachers, professionals (psychologist, child developmentalist, clinical counselor, social worker) even the slightest variations in their children’s development where possible. (Özbay, 2013, p. 35)

Although the textbook addresses a number of issues relating to gifted children and their educational needs and practices in the country, the weaknesses previously stated in the report of *2013–2017 Strategy and Implementation Plan for Highly Talented Individuals* (MoNE, 2013a) are not expressed in this textbook in great detail. For example, the following statement acknowledges the lack of effective evaluation facilities, asking the families to assist in the process:

In Turkey, the physical environments of GRCs (Guidance Research Centers) may not be enough to grasp the children's everyday life and self-care skills. For these situations, the child and their relatives can be asked for information about the child's competencies. For proper evaluation of their children, it would be helpful for families to share reliable and explicit details. (Özbay, 2013, p. 74)

As in the previous mentioned textbook on school and family, male-dominated images are used in the visuals of this textbook, continuing the unequal representation of genders. In addition, examples of famous talented/gifted people from history put forward only male figures such as Picasso, Mozart, and Edison.

The book also neglects children with disabilities and their educational rights. As mentioned earlier in pictorial depictions, the materials under inquiry do not include diverse characteristics of individuals and families. The visuals and texts are dominated by urban, class-based, well-educated, heterosexual, and able family portraits. The textbook makes important contributions to raising awareness of the needs of gifted/talented children among families and society. Although families are informed of the unique characteristics of gifted children and are encouraged to identify children with these characteristics as soon as possible, the lack of children with physical or learning disabilities in this textbook and others under scrutiny implies that such groups are not privileged or prioritized as desirable of subjects as the gifted/talented children. In this way, while the inclusion of the topic of gifted

children in FEP is gaining significance, their less-gifted counterparts are not receiving the attention they deserve.

To summarize, the *Gifted Children and their Families* textbook offers useful information on the particular circumstances and expectations of gifted children and helps raise awareness for the early identification of these children. Although the text examines various aspects of the giftedness in education, it does not spare ample room for institutional conditions and limitations. Ultimately, like the previous textbook on education, this textbook portrays male-dominated children's images and in this way reinforces the prevailing gender inequality in education.

#### 5.8 Data set 6: The role of family in the acquisition of values

The sixth textbook, *The Role of Family in the Acquisition of Values*, was written by Kürşad Demirutku and published in 2017. The 89-page textbook includes eight units:

- Unit 1: What are the values?
- Unit 2: How are values being grouped?
- Unit 3: What and how do values guide?
- Unit 4: What is parenthood?
- Unit 5: How do parenting styles differ?
- Unit 6: What is socialization?
- Unit 7: How are values transferred?
- Unit 8: List of values

*The Role of Family in the Acquisition of Values* textbook addresses the issue of values. The textbook offers basic details on the meaning and grouping of values and the role of family and society in acquiring and transmitting values. Parental roles in the transmission of values are also issued in the textbook.

One of the latest publications introduced to the curriculum, the textbook includes portrayals of significant symbols. For instance, a photograph of national taekwondo athlete Nur Tatar, who won a bronze medal at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games was used while addressing the value of success, and the photographs of police officer Fethi Sekin, who died in the 2017 attack in the İzmir Courthouse, Ömer Halisdemir, who died in the 15<sup>th</sup> July coup attempt in 2016, and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk were used while addressing the national values. Besides, for the first time in the textbook series, certain national and religious symbols (the national flag, the Turkish Red Crescent, and the Qur'an) were depicted in this textbook.

In the narratives, the descriptive genre is notable. In addition, in-text citations were used to reference sources in this textbook, as opposed to the others in the series. The reader was thus informed of the original sources referenced by the author. This text is also distinctive in addressing both parents (mother and father) while pointing out the parental roles and actions in the transmission of values. However, when images showing children with adult males or females are studied, it seems that all but three represent children with an adult female in nine images.

## 5.9 Data set 7: Single parent families

*Single Parent Families* is the seventh textbook analyzed. This textbook was incorporated into the training program in 2018. Unlike the preceding textbooks, a number of writers contributed to the project in this textbook.<sup>24</sup> The 152-page textbook includes five units:

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<sup>24</sup> The textbook was written by Hülya Öztop, Müdriye Bıçakçı, Nusret Soylu, Semin Güler Oğurtan, Ural Nadir, Emine Taşoluk, Rahime Beder Şen, Serpil Penez Şahin, Aynur Göncü, Binay Bilge Anmak, Evren Hoşrik, Hava Ömeroğlu, Hülya Yiğit Özudoğlu, and Sevinç Tok.

- Unit 1: Being a family
- Unit 2: Single parent families
- Unit 3: Problems that single parent families encounter and solutions offered
- Unit 4: Developmental characteristics of children and single parenting
- Unit 5: The effect of being a single parent family on children

The textbook begins with the categorization of different family types. The definition of family given in the first unit is the traditional definition based on ancestry and blood connection:

Family is a social network and a social institution founded on close blood, ancestry, marriage/legal union, or adoption links that are linked with each other for generations to continue. In other words, family is a network of people who have blood ties and the same ancestors who go back for generations. (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 10)

However, as in the previous texts, a strong link between healthy family and healthy society is stressed:

Family is a small representation of basic institutions like economy, politics, education, and culture. The family which bears the characteristics of the society in which it is situated reveals knowledge about the nature of the society to which it belongs. In other words, a healthy community life is closely related to the healthy family relationships within that society. (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 11)

In the same way, the text illustrates the “fair” distribution of roles and the importance of consensus on the division of roles:

- Healthy family is a family structure where the balance of rights and responsibilities is established and there is a fair reward and sanction mechanism. (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 15)
- The health of the family does not mean that the family roles are linked to a defined pattern. What is important is the fair distribution of roles within the family between spouses and children according to the lifestyle of the family and the preferred role definition of the family. (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 15)

Unlike the previous texts, a wider range of family definitions is provided in this textbook regarding its form, role distribution, and relationship styles. Moreover, it is accepted that “family arrangements rely on time and circumstances differ from society to society. Thus, a universal or prototype family type cannot be spoken of” (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 11). The categorization of traditional extended families, nuclear families, and fractured families is then delineated. One interesting point among many in the following excerpt is the contrast of nuclear family types with the West:

It is seen that with the urbanization process in our country, the model of extended family is slowly declining, and the model of nuclear family is becoming widespread. Yet, the composition of the nuclear family [in Turkey] varies from that of the atomized (isolated) nuclear family in the West. The distinctive characteristic of this family structure, which is called the nuclear family network by Dikeçligil, is that it is not as isolated as the modern nuclear family in the West. (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 13)

Families are also grouped in the text with respect to the division of labor as matriarchal, patriarchal, egalitarian, and healthy. While in the text a matriarchal family is described as when the woman who holds the authority, in a patriarchal family the man is the authority figure. The egalitarian family is characterized as a structure in which roles are distributed equally: “In the egalitarian family, it is envisioned that there is an equal distribution of roles and responsibilities regardless of gender” (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 14). Healthy families are described as “a family arrangement where there is a balance of rights and responsibilities, and a fair reward and sanction mechanism” (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 15). The inclusion of “healthy families” as the fourth category here is significant. It means that according to the division of labor, there is a dichotomy stipulating that a family can be either egalitarian, patriarchal, matriarchal, or healthy. And that the “healthy family” is codified as the desirable model as it has “balanced rights and responsibilities.” This



categorization makes it difficult to realize egalitarian aspirations in families where partners are committed to share paid work and unpaid family labor.

It is also remarkable to note the visuals of the textbook. Images of women with children (27) outnumber images of men with children (17) in the textbook. In addition, the textbook pays more attention to the economic problems faced by single mothers. The “Single-parent families” unit cover page portrays a picture of a woman and daughter. The text offers extensive explanations as to why women as opposed to men face more difficulties in single-parent families, highlighting the social and economic problems women encounter. Among the concerns listed are the challenges women face in the labor market, social pressures, the extent to which the family provides support, and inadequate childcare. The following comments exemplify the difficult circumstances in which single mothers find themselves in work:

- Where childcare facilities are insufficient or costly, nursing women cannot find an institution to leave their children, which prevents them from taking part in working life. (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 29)
- Because of gender inequality against women in the labor market (women often receive lower salaries than men for the same job and have to work in precarious and flexible jobs) and because of a lack of financial support from the ex-spouse, women suffer financially. (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 29)
- If a single mother has health and disability issues, she finds it difficult to work in a paid job and can thus be removed from the labor market. (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 30)

Another point to mention is the attention paid to the problems of single-parent families. The text details four types of single-parent families, as mentioned below:

- A single-parent family caused by divorce.
- A single-parent family caused by the loss of one spouse.
- A single-parent family caused by the separate living of spouses.
- A single-parent family with children out-of-wedlock. (Öztop et al., 2018, pp. 21-22)

Firstly, the single-parent family categories caused by divorce and loss of a spouse are presented, and issues faced by these families are discussed, with solutions provided.

Then, the form of single-parent family resulting from separate spousal living is

stated, and the reasons for separate living are discussed. Finally, the type of single-parent family that arises as a result of having children out-of-wedlock is described by a brief definition only. No mention is made of their problems or proposals for solutions. The prevailing narrative is thus of single-parent families arising from divorce or a spouse's death because they are the "appropriate" types of families. As such, there appears to be a reluctance to denote different (i.e., less acceptable) family forms and thus the text provides only a limited range of single-parent families.

#### 5.9.1 Supporting fathers in child care

Unlike the previous texts, this text gives several examples of single fathers' experiences. In addition to the case narratives of fathers abandoned by their wives or who obtain the custody of their children, the text discusses how the lives of fathers are influenced by becoming a lone parent:

- Fathers, as well as mothers, restrict their social lives so that they can take care of their children more often and see their friends less than they had seen them before.
- One of the biggest challenges for single fathers is ensuring adequate childcare, particularly if they have young children. Given that negligence in care and supervision of the child in need of primary care will have significant consequences later on in life for the child, it is again seen that the father's role as care provider is critical.
- Single fathers have trouble in managing household duties such as cooking, laundry, cleaning, etc., and problems can be seen regarding the daily operation of the house. This also has a negative impact on the day-to-day life of the child. (Öztop et al., 2018, pp. 43–44)

Although these examples enumerate the role of fathers in care, they also highlight the difficulty of care and housework. According to the text, this is especially so for fathers who have to undertake this burden alone, and thus, unable to cope on their own, men must find support in these matters.

### 5.9.2 Divorce: Conflict or resolution?

As in the preceding texts, the word divorce is defined in this text as a “social phenomenon,” stating that, “if family unity cannot be maintained for different reasons, we are faced with an important social phenomenon in terms of individuals, society, and law: divorce” (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 22). The post-divorce cycle of emotions is compared to the process of grieving felt after losing a beloved one:

Such grieving periods are the signs of the loss of a loved one, which correlate with the signs felt before and after divorce. In the process of divorce, the stages of refusing to accept the end of a marriage, feeling loneliness and rage, accepting the situation after a period, and reorganizing life are like the stages of grieving. (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 53)

However, one remarkable difference from the previous textbooks is the inclusion of a broader variety of viewpoints on divorced people’s experiences. Besides the difficulties families face after divorce, which have been discussed in previous textbooks, this text is distinct in that it also addresses a kind of relief that comes after divorce. In other words, divorce is approached from a more open perspective, encompassing both the benefits and the negatives. As seen in the excerpt below, one subject of a case narrative is the peaceful situation following the divorce:

Now I'm more comfortable when going home after work. My house is my palace. I had always been thinking about going home. I was concerned about what he'd obsessed over today, what things he'd fight about. Now I can imagine what I'm going to do when I get home. My child will be at home. First, we will have a little chat about the day and have dinner afterwards. I'm going to drop by to see the neighbor while my child is studying and have some coffee and talk. I shall sleep in peace at night. (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 56)

Another notable excerpt in this textbook describes the legal process of divorce and alimony rights. The text notes:

In Article 175 of the Turkish Civil Code No. 4721: “The spouse who falls into poverty due to divorce may ask for spousal support indefinitely for living costs in proportion to the financial power of the other spouse, provided that the fault of the spouse who is in need after divorce is not greater than the other spouse’s fault.” (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 72)

The word “indefinitely” was outlined in bold in the text and then included the sentence “in fact there are some difficulties in enforcing poverty alimony” (Öztop et al., 2018, p. 73). The preservation of the right to alimony is important, considering the economic inequalities faced by women. However, the text fails to note the value of alimony for women following divorce. Alternatively, it tends to stress the term “indefinite” and the problems of the law enforcement.

The right to alimony is one of the heated conflicts in Turkey, and several groups against women’s alimony have been gaining momentum in the last few years. Under the banner of “divorced fathers platform” or “victims of unlimited alimony,” these groups or initiatives are asking the government to amend for a set period in time in the law imposing spousal alimony. Making a change in the existing alimony law was also offered in the forenamed *Report of Parliamentary Research Commission* (TBMM, 2016) on investigating factors affecting family integrity and divorce incidents in the country. In this context, the rare emphasis is significant in the textbook on the importance of alimony rights, particularly for women.

To conclude, the *Single Parent Families* textbook lays out the problems faced by single parent families in the country. While the text provides a broader definition of family forms as well as division of roles and relationships, reaffirmation of the concepts of “egalitarian” and “healthy” as opposite dichotomies tends to be the outcome. Moreover, by focusing on single-parent families as the result of divorce or loss of a family member, the text pays less attention to the varied forms of the single-parent family. Lastly, this textbook differs from the previous textbooks in terms of greater openness in discussing the topic of divorce by describing both its positive and negative aspects, emphasizing women’s and men’s perspectives of becoming single

parents, and the social, cultural and economic difficulties that these families face in society.

#### 5.10 A closer look at prefaces

As noted earlier, the modular structure of FEP allows for improvements by adding new modules. Following the release of its first materials in 2012, MoFSP published new publications in 2013, 2017, and 2018. A notable feature in the updated materials is that they each have a new preface written by the minister of family at the time. The prefaces of new publications have been written by Ayşenur İslam (2013–2015), Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya (2016–2018), and Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk (2018–present) after the first publications were written in 2012 by Fatma Şahin (2011–2013). While these prefaces naturally have similar features, as they all serve to introduce the program, they do exhibit distinctive features in how they describe the family as a concept and the program’s objectives.

##### 5.10.1 Highlights from the preface by Fatma Şahin

The same preface, written by Fatma Şahin, was used in the program’s first four textbooks released in 2012. This preface starts with a description of family and its social importance. The family is described in the first paragraph as an “institutional mechanism,” a “structure,” and a “a solution unit that should be dealt with closely.” There is an emphasis on rights and responsibilities, saying, “we have a rich cultural heritage in terms of mutual rights and responsibilities that we seek to build in the family” (para 1). This discourse on “mutual rights and responsibilities” is one of the prominent features of the texts under inquiry. As mentioned earlier, the gendered role division in the family is instituted in the sense of “fairness” and “rights and

responsibilities,” as opposed to the universal claim of “equality.” In other words, the text poses “fair” or “balanced” division of family roles as a counterpart to universal demands for equal rights.

In addition, the inclusive “we” pronoun is a prominent feature of this preface. To provide but a few examples: “The fact that the family, which we find to be the smallest living entity in society, is unable to fulfill its functions is a harbinger of serious problems in our country” (para. 2), “Behind the serious problems we are facing today is the fact that the family is losing its capacity to solve problems.” (para. 2). These statements reflect the “we are a big family” rhetoric of the government that tackles social policies through familial interventions (Akkan, 2018; Yazıcı, 2012). Additionally, the latter is worth noting because it places the blame directly on families for these serious problems.

It is also remarkable to examine how families’ roles and responsibilities are described. The statement below illustrates the care duty of a family that includes members of the vulnerable groups of children, young people, women, people with disabilities, and the elderly:

A strong and healthy family means increasing the number of children and raising future generations that we are proud of in peace and security. The family that maintains its functions is a family that provides a healthy environment for children, youth, women, disabled, and the elderly. (para. 2)

The preface also comments on FEP’s purpose and content. Improving the quality of life for families is stressed as the program’s ultimate objective. The uses of “information age” and “scientific knowledge” in the following excerpts are illustrative:

FEP is an important step towards increasing the quality of family life according to the requirements of the information age, based on the notion that education begins in the family. (para 3)

FEP, which has become increasingly relevant as a protective and preventive social policy tool, should be viewed as a service aimed at increasing family happiness with the support of scientific knowledge. (para 3)

The emphasis on information age and scientific knowledge will be repeated in the following prefaces written by different ministers (except the last one published in 2018), and in the last one, the aim to increase happiness in families will be omitted and replaced with the increase of family “peace and welfare.”

In all prefaces, however, the role of scholars, specialists, governmental and non-governmental institutions, as well as members of private and civil society is acknowledged, with redundant descriptors, as in the example of “scholars who are expert and competent in the field,” strongly emphasizing the expert knowledge.

Lastly, the ministers end their prefaces with messages of gratitude in the last paragraphs of each preface. In Fatma Şahin’s preface, the text ends with a thank you to the scholars, specialists, and educators who oversaw the planning and dissemination of the program.

#### 5.10.2 Highlights from the preface by Ayşenur İslam

The preface was written by Ayşenur İslam in the *Gifted Children and their Families* textbook, published in 2013. Within this preface, however, the concept of the family as an “institution” is replicated in which family is stressed as an institution with “no alternatives” (para 1). Furthermore, the text specifically emphasizes the family’s responsibility for the protection and dissemination of cultural identities and values:

The family institution is a fundamental bridge between the individual and society, with its basic functions such as caring for and raising children, providing new generations with cultural identity and values, and transmitting historical and social consciousness. (para 1)

Similar to the first preface, the goals of the program are described as “acquiring new information,” “improving families’ perspectives,” and “increasing problem-solving

skills” through an education program. Unlike the previous one, however, it is also noted that the government emphasizes the importance of family in the Constitution, as well as in government programs and development plans, thus underlining the attention given by the government to the family education.

It is stressed in the text that this education program differs from other adult training programs in that it has a wider curriculum and is designed as a family-oriented education program. It is also mentioned that this program is drawn up according to the country’s specific circumstances and conditions. Finally, in the acknowledgements section, Ayşenur İslam chooses in her final remarks to thank not only the program developers but also the participants.

#### 5.10.3 Highlights from the preface by Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya

The preface was written by Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya in *The Role of Family in the Acquisition of Values* textbook, published in 2017. What varies in Kaya’s explanation of the family is that she favors an interpretation with emphasis on preservation and continuity of nations by stating that “the family institution is the most fundamental institution that provides continuity, as the carrier of cultural identity and protector of human values” (para 1). Indeed, the focus on “nation” is this preface’s most prominent feature. The text emphasizes the role of family in the rise and fall of nations and the survival of societies, as exemplified in the assertion that “it is a well-known fact that societies with a strong family structure will survive for long” (para 1).

The value of scientific knowledge, the information age, and the emphasis on increasing problem-solving abilities of families are echoed in this text as aims of the program, but one distinctive feature in this text is the presentation of the program’s



objective of strengthening the institution of the family: “The institution of the family needs to be strengthened by means of interventions in the process of establishing and becoming a family, before problems arise” (para 2).

The assertion that the curriculum is prepared according to the country’s specific circumstances is stressed in this preface, as in the other prefaces. In addition, it highlights the program’s distinction from other adult education programs in terms of its comprehensiveness.

In the last part of the preface, the focus on nation and the priority given to the family to maintain future values and investments are again reiterated:

Our nation is recognized all throughout history for the importance given to family values. Therefore, we believe that our nation will preserve its cultural heritage and will maintain its existence with the power coming from the family. Thanks to the importance we give to the family, Turkey should take more firm steps into the future. (para 6)

Like Fatma Şahin, Fatma Betül Sayan Kaya ends the preface by thanking all who prepared and disseminated the program.

#### 5.10.4 Highlights from the preface by Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk

The most recent textbook is *Single Parent Families*, published in 2018, and the preface was written by the new family minister Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk. In this preface, family is again described as “an institution without alternatives” (para 1). It also repeats its role on the acquisition of values and care responsibilities. The most important difference in this preface from the others is that although the program’s purpose is clarified, the terms “scientific knowledge” and “requirements of the information age” have been omitted entirely.

Similar to previous prefaces, the focus is again on the distinctive aspect of this program among other adult education programs in terms of its broader content and its preparation in the context of the country's specific needs.

Once again, it is stated at the end of the preface that the contributions of experts and scholars, public and non-governmental organizations, and members of the private sector were included in the program creation. The preface ends by thanking those who participated into the program.

#### 5.11 Summary of chapter five

This chapter depicted the findings and discussion of the study. This study utilized the three-dimensional CDA method pioneered by Norman Fairclough. The analysis involved seven textbooks from the field of family education and communication, as well as their handouts. The chapter started with the introduction of the pictorial depictions. The analysis was then taken to the textual level. The findings indicate implicit and explicit gendered norms and roles with respect to family as portrayed in the program. These findings will be summarized in the final chapter.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This final chapter is an overview of the findings and discussion pointed out in the previous chapter. The chapter ends by acknowledging the strengths and limitations and by proposing suggestions for further studies.

The central question of the study was to understand how family was constructed in an FLE program. It also sought to identify what textual devices and discursive practices were used to construe family and what gender messages (manifest and/or latent) were presented in the texts and visuals of the program materials. Additionally, a reflection on discursive context of time and how the texts reinforced or challenged prevailing conceptions of family in society were brought into the discussion.

Seven textbooks along with their handouts were chosen as the corpus of the data. This study utilized Norman Fairclough's CDA method. CDA was proposed as a suitable approach to examine rhetoric used by institutions, with MoFSP as the case in point. CDA offered a process that could illuminate representations within the texts. It also enabled to make an analysis of the discursive context of the period in which the program emerged as indicative of the broader social and political conditions of discourses.

In the ensuing section I provided a summary of the interrelated discursive themes established from the findings and discussion of the program under inquiry. I grouped them under three larger analytical categories of "discursive context of family," "politics of reproduction," and "gendered division of labor."

## 6.1 Discursive context of family

Discourse of the nuclear family as comprised of a man, a woman, and children is overt in the program. However, a nuclear family that embedded with traditional extended family is also salient in the program. This is discussed in light of the literature critical of the government's attempts at transferring social care from the responsibility of the state to that of familial sources (Akkan, 2018; Kaya, 2014; Yazıcı, 2012).

Discourse on the nuclear family as the essence of society is too of salience in the program. The construction of this family model as a privileged institution in society is one of the distinctive features of the texts. Marriage, in this sense, is regarded as the prerequisite of forming the family institution. Of particular note here is the comparison between marital and nonmarital relations that favors the former as providing benefits of higher life expectancy, fewer health problems, and higher income levels. This is demonstrative of how the text reinforces the prevailing conceptions of what is a "healthy family" in society (Allen & Baber, 1992; Thompson & Walker, 1995).

Issues of violence, abuse, and oppression of women and children are given a limited space in the texts at hand. In neglecting to dedicate proper attention to the topics, it is argued that the program misses the opportunity to combat violence against women and children. Similarly, the texts clearly avoid any implications of sexual orientation and gender expressions in regards to forming alternative family structures. I argued that by ensuring that the reproductive heterosexual family structure continues to serve as the norm, possibilities for thinking creatively about diverse families and forms of solidarities that individuals provide one another are hampered.

In line with the discourse on strengthening families that are regarded under threat in the rapidly changing and developing world, the texts predominantly portray divorce as a social phenomenon and a crisis that yields negative consequences for families. To this end, state policies on protecting the family unity and institutional investments on reducing divorce rates have reflections in the program materials (Cindoğlu & Ünal, 2017; Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011; Çarkoğlu et al., 2012).

The pictorial and textual level analysis of the materials indicated both implicit and explicit gendered messages concerning families. Persons in pictures were depicted as well-off, healthy, and attractive. Social, cultural, and class disparities were absent in the texts. Overall, it is argued that the texts portray a certain model family—middle and/or upper class, literate, well-educated, and able—as desirable. This point overlaps with the relevant literature that discusses neoliberal, class-based, and idealistic aspects of FLE programs (Allen & Baber, 1992; Allen & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2015; Randles & Woodward, 2018; Walker, 1993).

The representation of children also contains gendered messages. There was an inequality in numbers by gender with respect to the settings in which children were depicted. More precisely, the findings revealed that representations of boys engaged in high-intensity activities and in scholarly settings exceeded those of girls. The numerical inequality between boys and girls is another point that reinforces the literature focusing on the gender inequality and stereotypes in education in Turkey (Esen & Bağlı, 2002; Gümüšoğlu, 2016; Sayılan, 2012; Tan, 2005; Tanrıöver, 2003).

Discourse on individual commitment in partnership and the heavy use of metaphors, as in the case of “team players,” were evident in the texts. Noteworthy here is the statement of personal obligation and investment in intimate relationships for ensuring long-lasting satisfaction in relationships. This resonates with neoliberal

views that condemn individualism as the primary cause of relationship problems and thus breakdowns in families (Randles, 2013; Randles & Avishai, 2018; Randles & Woodward, 2018).

The neoliberal mentality is further evident in texts where education, giftedness, and parental involvement are addressed. In the excerpts relating to the process of school selection, families were directed to opt for private institutions if they were not satisfied with state schools. In light of the absence of arguments causing “dissatisfaction,” offering private institutions for well-off families was discussed as a form of deepening the existing economic and social disparities among families benefiting from education.

## 6.2 Politics of reproduction

Marriage is treated as a reproductive matter in the program. Reproduction is stated as being the utmost aim of marriage, and partner choice, in this vein, is described as the selection of an ideal mother and father. Having children in this sense is not an option but a taken-for-granted necessity. At this point, it becomes overt that the texts essentialize marriage and bearing children and thus presents one form of family (married with children) as legitimate.

Sexuality is another privilege of married persons. It was described as a basic skill that only married couples can practice and “learn” and, as in the case of the discourse of “healthy marriages,” a comparison is highlighted between wed and unwed relations to favor the “healthiness” of sexuality in marriage.

The topic of unwanted or unintended pregnancy is included in the program, described carefully by using conscious textual elements to avoid any misreading of abortion (e.g., “surprise baby” or “surprise guest”). In so doing, the individual

decision to give birth is undermined, as women are advised only to “accept” their situation with the support of the fathers-to-be. This is indicative of prevailing social practices rooted in religion that are embedded in the text, disregarding women’s body politics and reproductive rights and enforcing motherhood under any circumstances (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu, 2011; Cindoğlu & Ünal, 2017; Güneş-Ayata & Doğangün, 2017).

### 6.3 Gendered division of labor

The gendered aspect of the division of labor is discussed in threefold: Parenthood (responsibility of care), family work (sharing household tasks), and participation in the labor market.

#### 6.3.1 Parenthood (responsibility of care)

The pictorial analysis revealed a nearly equal representation of women and men depicted with children. Yet, this is not to say that parenthood is equally represented in the program. There are more women than men depicted with young children. This unequal distribution of pictures showing men and women with young children is argued as evidence that care tasks at early ages are not divided equally (Sunderland, 2000; Lazar, 2000; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Woollett & Phoenix, 1996).

Differences in parents’ interaction with children were also present in the visuals. When fathers were included in the visuals, they were generally actively interacting with children. They (fathers or grandfathers) were depicted as talking to children joyfully, reading books, helping them with their homework, playing computer games together, repairing a bicycle, walking by the sea, or enjoying their time fishing. However, no pictures were found depicting a man providing for the

basic needs of children (e.g., feeding, bathing, putting to bed). This finding on the secondary role of fathers adds to the literature on the critical analysis of texts addressing parenthood (Anderson & Hamilton, 2005; Lupton & Barclay, 1997; Sunderland, 2000; 2006).

Additionally, the gender-neutral audience assumed in the texts is considered misleading, with a closer analysis of discursive patterns indicating that it is actually women (mothers) who are discussed and addressed. This argument is supported with the limited portion spared for father's voices and experiences in the texts. Even in the examples where fathers were regarded as essential, this was primarily in the context of children's development and success in their later life. This again reveals the intention of the texts in acknowledging mothers as the essential figures in their children's development and early care.

### 6.3.2 Family work (sharing the housework)

As the findings of visual analysis indicate in pictures showing housework, males outnumber females. However, the housework pictures coded in the textbooks and the accompanying texts do not emphasize the "equal" division of roles; instead, the images with adjacent texts advocate discourses of "just" and "fair" sharing in the family. This is argued to be representative of social practices that replace the norm of "gender equality" with "gender justice" (Ayhan, 2019; Diner, 2018). As well, the constructed dichotomies of "egalitarian" and "traditional" family forms as opposite entities is a means of decontextualizing the diverse patriarchal family forms already present in society. In this regard, the dominant discourse in the texts on the importance of consent or agreement of spouses in terms of division of roles functions



to delegitimize the norm of gender equality and instead adopt a notion of “fairness” in the division of family roles and responsibilities.

### 6.3.3 Participation in the labor market

Women (particularly mothers) who enter the workforce and assume extra responsibilities outside the home are reminded in various instances that they may encounter difficulties in their marital relationships, or they might experience difficulties in their household roles. In this regard, there were examples in the program that advise women to balance paid work and household responsibilities. Women were also directly addressed as “working mothers” or “working women,” while there is no mention of men in work-related wordings. To this end, it is argued that the texts are pushing women to embrace the traditional role of mother as the provider of care. In this regard, in a country with low female labor force participation and restricted public provision of childcare, the program is criticized as discouraging rather than encouraging women to enter the labor force and gain their economic independence.

As mentioned before, CDA was elected as an appropriate approach, as it enabled the researcher discern connections between the text and the broader social practices. At this point, investigating the commission reports of family councils, government strategy papers, and declarations of national and international pro-family conferences regarding education practices addressing families shed light to pinpoint intertwined discourses and their reflections in FEP on gender politics and family matters.

#### 6.4 Concluding remarks

FEP posits the claim for “strengthening and protecting” the family and improving its wellbeing through education. In this study, I have demonstrated that the authors drew on a range of textual devices to normalize the nuclear family as a privileged institution. A heteronormative discourse with a focus on reproductivity is consistently reinforced throughout the texts. Furthermore, it is apparent that no attention is paid to diverse families with different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. I have also demonstrated that women are presented as the main care providers and motherhood is presented as their only identity in the texts.

These findings have led me to conclude that the way family is constructed in the program is not compatible with the intention of FLE programs, to enrich and improve the well-being of families (Arcus et al.,1992). In this regard, I argue that a lack of progressive or critical approaches to the conceptualization of family produces limited alternatives for a broader understanding of families and constrains understandings of needs and educational practices available in this manner. I conclude that by understanding multiplicity, complexity, and diversity of families it becomes possible to envision new opportunities for support and education.

#### 6.5 Limitations of the study and suggestions for future studies

This study focused on a specific body of data. The training materials from the fields of finance, health, media, and legal issues were not included in the corpus of this inquiry. A future study would benefit from the utilization of these publications and provide a complete material analysis of FEP. Additionally, this study explored the likely messages that the texts produce. Standing alone, textual analysis is limited. To

overcome this limitation, I followed the path Fairclough (2001) drew and looked through the intervention of textual and social relations of discourses.

To describe the rich forms of discourses taking place during the implementation of the program, further research could collect data both from practitioners and participants regarding their interpretations of the program materials. Thus, it could be possible to emphasize how these texts are being reproduced, reconstructed, and mediated by individuals in the immediate learning environment.

The application of critical discourse analysis to online materials, websites, blogs, and mobile apps targeting families is an additional area for inquiry. With the inclusion of analysis of distance education facilities, an examination of online education materials could offer insight to better understand the broader scope of family education practices in the country.

## APPENDIX A

### FAIRCLOUGH'S ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR CDA

Stage 1: Description	Stage 2: Interpretation	Stage 3: Explanation
Vocabulary	Context	Social determinants
1. What experiential values do words have? What classification schemes are drawn upon? Are there words which are ideologically contested? Is there rewording or over wording? What ideologically significant meaning relations (synonymy, hyponymy, antonymy) are there between words? 2. What relational values do words have? Are there euphemistic expressions? Are there markedly formal or informal words? 3. What expressive values do words have? 4. What metaphors are used?	1. What interpretation(s) are participants giving to the situational and intertextual contexts?	1. What power relations at the situational, institutional and societal levels help shape this discourse?
Grammar	Discourse type(s)	Ideologies
5. What experiential values do grammatical features have? What types of process and participant predominate? Is agency unclear? Are processes what they seem? Are nominalizations used? Are sentences active or passive? Are sentences positive or negative? 6. What relational values do grammatical features have? What modes (declarative, grammatical question, imperative) are used? Are there important features of relational modality? Are the pronouns we and you used, and if so, how? 7. What expressive values do grammatical features have? Are there important features of expressive modality? 8. How are (simple) sentences linked together? What logical connectors are used? Are complex sentences characterized by coordination or subordination? What means are used for referring inside and outside the text?	1. What discourse type(s) are being drawn upon in the text? What rules, systems or principles of phonology, grammar, sentence cohesion, vocabulary, semantics and pragmatics; and what schemata, frames and scripts are being drawn upon?	1. What elements of members' resources (MR) which are drawn upon have an ideological character?
		Effects
		1. How is the discourse positioned in relation to struggles at the situational, institutional and societal levels? Are there struggles overt or covert? Is this discourse normative with respect to MR or creative? Does it contribute to sustaining existing power relations or transforming them?
Fairclough, 2001, pp. 92-93	p. 134	p. 138

## APPENDIX B

### CODING FRAME

Code	Code Definition
being a family	Discussions on being a family; in terms of having a legal basis, rules of social order and having children.
strengthening the family	Meanings and metaphors of strong families.
healthy marriages	Descriptions of marriages, comparisons on healthiness and unhealthiness.
divorcing	Legal basis of divorce, and its effects.
parenting	Discussions on doing parenting, parent styles and characteristics.
reproduction	Biopolitics of reproduction and rights.
abortion	Types of intervention and rights.
sexuality	Feelings, thoughts, attractions and behaviors of family members.
motherhood	Roles and responsibilities of women as mothers.
working women	Women's participation to labor force and its effects.
working mothers	Mothers' participation to labor force and its effects.
fatherhood	Roles and responsibilities of men as fathers.
roles and responsibilities	Discussions of each individual within the family, their attributed roles and responsibilities.
care work	All tasks done in the service of other family members
violence	Including physical and emotional attacks towards a family member
chastity	Moral standards and guidelines of culture and a specific religion.
morality	Code of conducts.
values	Principles and standards of behavior of family members, effects on their lives.
diversity	The range of different family types and forms.
religion	A particular system of faith and beliefs.
equality	The division of roles in the family, equal participation in work and social life.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLES OF VISUALS



Figure C1. A dinner table  
(Marriage and Family Life, p. 164)



Figure C2. Family members reading books  
(School and Family, p. 20)



Figure C3. A family with three children portrait  
(Marriage and Family Life, p. 158, The Role of Family in the Acquisition of Values, p. 68, and Single Parent Families, p.14)

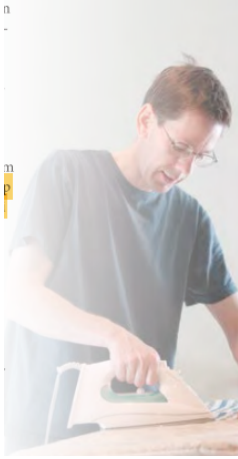


Figure C4. A man doing ironing  
(Marriage and Family Life, p. 97)



Figure C5. A man cooking and ironing  
(Marriage and Family Life, p.140)



Figure C6. A man and a girl making cake  
(Single Parent Families, p. 46)



Figure C7. A woman in suit holding a baby  
(Marriage and Family Life, p. 98)



Figure C8. A woman at an office with a baby  
(Single Parent Families, p. 32)



Figure C9. A woman in suit with a computer and a baby  
(Single Parent Families, p. 75)



Figure C10. A woman with children and a computer  
(Single Parent Families, p. 46)





Figure C11. A boy with a pencil and notebook  
(Gifted Children and their Families, p. 27)



Figure C12. A boy depicted as handyman  
(Gifted Children and their Families, p. 42)



Figure C13. A boy playing chess  
(Gifted Children and their Families, p. 114)



Figure C14. A girl painting  
(Gifted Children and their Families, p. 18)



Figure C15. A woman and a caregiver  
(First Quarter of Life, p. 35)



Figure C16. A group of boys and a man's hand  
(School and Family, p. 6)

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