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THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN TURKEY: THE INTERSECTION OF  
GENDER, POLITICS, AND RELIGION

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**Abstract:** The current situation of women in general and especially in the Muslim world is representing an array of changes and challenges that will continue to loom large in the foreseeable future, or are already underway, and threaten gains made in the status of women in the Arab world since the beginning of the twentieth century. Especially in Turkey, arguably the most modern of Muslim societies, those gains were very substantial, and concerns about efforts to roll back progress are especially disconcerting. This study attempts to illuminate the problematic situation of women in contemporary Turkey. The demise of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 allowed a series of political and legal reforms to change the status of women. Ongoing changes in social, political, and economic areas have not only increased women's role in society but have also broken gender stereotypes. On the other hand, religious and cultural factors continue to negatively affect the circumstances of Turkish women. This study explains the importance of analyzing intersecting identities to understand gender relations and women's status in contemporary Turkey by reflecting on the current contextual influences on gender, politics, and religion.

**Key words:** Women, Religion, Gender inequality, Gender Roles, Intersectionality, Islam, Politics, Development.

## 1. Introduction

In many regards and many parts of the world, the status of progress in general, and achievements in terms of human rights and right of equal treatment, especially before the law, in education, public life, and the workplace over the course of the twentieth century, appear to be in peril. Given that women make up at least half of the world's population, changes in the status of women are likely to precipitate changes in social, political, and cultural life more generally. In this and many other regards, the status, recognition, and treatment of women deserves to be understood as a miner's canary of sorts for social changes that affect large segments of a given society, and possibly also of the global population overall (Guinier and Torres 2009).

This paper focuses on the changing status of women in Turkey. The demise of *the Ottoman Empire* and the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 allowed a series of political and legal reforms to change the status of women. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk attempted to provide that “the ideals of equality between sexes, equal opportunity for education, and family life not based upon a lifelong tie of one-sided bondage” (Abadan-Unat 1981, 5). As we shall see below, the Republican reforms led to radical changes in the status of women. Despite these radical reforms, today not only is there still gender inequality due to particular social, cultural, and religious factors but various trends in Turkey, as well as the Muslim world more generally, threaten to roll back progress in a number of regards. Before the establishment of the Turkish Republic, In Ottoman Empire, “the tenets of Islam have not remained at the theological level but have also been incorporated into law, the impact of Islam on women has been doubly restrictive, i.e., at both the social and the legal spheres” (Toprak 1981, 284). Thus, the Ottoman Empire was ruled by Islamic laws that promoted unequal roles for women and men (Toprak 1981; Rankin and Aytac 2006). These Islamic laws not only included religious rituals, and rules of conduct, but all aspects of everyday life, including politics, economics, business law, contract law, family structure and hierarchies, sexuality, and social issues. In Islamic law, the primary source is the Koran and “especially the Nisa Surah (IV), which lays down the principles that are to be followed in matters of marriage, divorce, parental rights, and inheritance” (Toprak 1981, 284). Generally speaking, Islamic laws explicitly support and perpetuate the superiority of men over women, and restrain the legal rights and social authority of women. Although Islam does not force Muslim women to be housewives, Islam certainly does shape gender roles in very specific ways (Mir-Hosseini et. al. 2013). For instance, husbands and wives have different tasks that designate men to be breadwinners (Dedeoglu 2004; Timur 1981) and must work outside of

the home to meet the needs of their families. By contrast, Muslim women must care for their children. Islamic laws enforce a rigid gender division of labor and empower men to be the central authority in families and the larger society (Mir-Hosseini, Al-Sharmani and Rumminger 2014; Mir-Hosseini et. al. 2013).

Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), who became president in 1923, founded the Republic of Turkey. In the 1924 constitution, Islam has indicated the religion of the state, but in 1937 constitution was altered to declare Turkey to be secular (Tatari 2006). Secularism was a turning point for the Republic of Turkey because it brought the country closer to Western-style societies, economically, politically, and socially. Ataturk believed that economic development and the liberation of Turkish women were possible through a secularist system, social and economic reforms (Rankin and Aytac 2006). Since the republic of Turkey was founded, women's rights have been recognized in Turkey, at least in law. For instance, in 1926, polygamy was prohibited by the introduction of the Turkish Civil Code, and the law granted women equal rights in matters of divorce, marriage, inheritance, and custody of children. Turkish women gained the right to participate first in local elections in 1930, and then in national elections in 1934 (Rankin and Aytac 2006). The principal goal of these early 20<sup>th</sup>-century reforms was to make Turkish women active and competitive in education, employment, and all aspects of social life.

In addition to the fact that the liberation of Turkish women was possible within a secularist system, women were important to the success of the new secular modernizing ideology, and modern Turkey. Due to different perspectives among members of the first Turkish Grand National Assembly, Ataturk had to postpone most of his reformist policies. Furthermore, in Konya, in his speech of March 21, 1923, Mustafa Kemal announced that "the fact that our women, who are subject to much less encouraging conditions, have been able to march along with men, sometimes even ahead of them, is clear-cut proof of their equality and their outstanding ability" (Abadan-Unat & Kandiyoti 1981, 11). Mustafa Kemal Ataturk attempted to make all Turkish people believe in these radical changes by legislating correct policies and regulations. Although the secularism idea has played an important role in Turkish women's lives, religious requirements and patriarchal family structures still negatively affect women's status. Due to religious obligations and patriarchal family structures and values, the number of women in the workplaces, political and educational institutions in Turkey has remained low compared to men. Since women who work outside their homes and have access to education are seen as a threat to men's authority, so men have more opportunities to access resources, as well as responsibilities, skills, abilities, knowledge, and job opportunities (Haj-Yahia 2005). Men are also expected to be dominant and achieve more than women. Ongoing changes in social, political, and economic areas have increased women's role in

society, on the other hand, religious and cultural factors continue to negatively affect the status of women in almost every aspect of life. In this paper, I endeavor to explain how religious traditions and cultural processes have been affecting women's status in Turkey. The three central questions that will guide me are: (1) Why specifically does gender inequality still exist in Turkey, despite the fact that the government introduced many reforms decades ago to promote gender equality? (2) Do socio-political and economic transformations change gender relations, and if so, how? (3) How do cultural values and belief systems affect women's lives?

## 2. Islam and the Modernity Projects of Turkey

### 2.1. The Situation of Women during the Ottoman Period

During the time of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1922), there were various ethnic groups like the Kurds, Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Greek, Jews, etc. At this time, in the Ottoman Empire, Islamic law named Sharia ruled individuals who had different religious and ethnic identities. Furthermore, religious law shaped minorities' and women's rights and statuses. Women suffered from Islamic rules more than men. In the sixteenth century, in the Ottoman Empire, the women in cities and rural areas had different lifestyles and opportunities (Aygul 2010). The women in rural areas were more active in social and economic lives than women in urban areas because they were generally farmers who were paid for their products. In rural areas, many women were employed in agriculture and they generally worked together with men. However, women in urban areas had to stay at home. In the Ottoman Empire, the women in both rural and urban areas had to obey their fathers, husbands, and Islamic laws, and the women's rights were limited especially in education and law. If the women disobeyed their fathers, husbands, and Islamic laws, they were punished (Aygul 2010).

In Ottoman society, the first idea of modernity and development emerged from the Ottoman elites examining ideas and technology that Western countries had (Gurpinar 2006). Reforms in the late Ottoman Empire had played an important role in the Turkish state's gender regime (Aygul 2010). Many social, economic, and political reforms began during the Tanzimat period (1839- 1876). Furthermore, the Rescript of Gulhane was presented as a formal reform program protecting the rights and property of individuals, and the Rescript of Gulhane "was the beginning of a structural transformation that was couched in modernization and westernization, which only accelerated with the establishment of the secular Turkish Republic in 1923" (Marshall 2013, 39). Even though the

Rescript of Gulhane brought many reforms, it did not impede the decline of the Ottoman Empire.

In Western Europe, technological, economic, social, and cultural developments influenced the decline of the Ottoman Empire. Hence, the Ottoman Empire paid attention “when these historical developments were bringing about the formation of the scientific method, the belief in reason and human faculty, the development of market society, the endorsement of civil and human rights, and the advancement in the military and industrial technology in Western Europe” (Marshall 2013, 39). The ruling elites started to investigate reasons for the decline of the Ottoman and they realized that radical changes were required to close the social, economic, and cultural gaps between the Empire and the Western nations (Marshall 2013).

The classical Ottoman education system was not sufficient to follow the path of modernization and westernization because women only could attend the sibyan mektebs (primary school). The sibyan mektebs (primary school) was the main place of religious education, and there were no gender restrictions in these schools. For the reformist elites in the Ottoman Empire, the status of women was an important part of movements because the elites believed that women played a crucial role in the new generations in the way of modernization and westernization (Marshall 2013, 40). The education of women was not only crucial for the development of the new generation, but also the development of the women, and the progress of society. The reformist elites encouraged the Ottoman state to build new schools for women to increase the educated women for the progress of society. While there was only the sibyan mektebs (primary schools) for girls' education, secondary schools opened for women during the Tanzimat regulations (Aygul 2010, 31).

During the Ottoman Empire, a woman had disadvantaged status in her ability to get married and divorced, which gave the man an emotional advantage in the marriage, so this situation had driven the woman to act toward what her husband and the society want. The gender discriminations and women's exploitations were obvious due to the Islamic structure (Gurpinar 2006, 34). In Ottoman society, a woman did not have the right to choose her husband. In 1917, the Young Turks movements tried to sweep away women's disadvantaged status in family life, but their attempts were not successful to change gender inequalities in law (Marshall 2013, 42). However, the Young Turks led to small changes in family law. For instance, family law did not restrict polygamous marriage due to religious authorities. Therefore, if a man wanted to get married to more than one wife at a time, the law required the first wife's permission (Marshall 2013). Also, the right of inheritance was another important issue because women in the Ottoman Empire had no right to inheritance and only sons had this right. Although this law reorganized inheritance laws in 1858 and gave equal rights for men and women to have

property, most families did not apply this law to their girls and sons in the Ottoman society equally. Some Middle East scholars (Zein 1982; El Saadawi 1982) claim that Islam does not affect negatively women's status and advocate that the religious ideology and rules did not lead essentially to the oppression and exploitation of women in social, political, and economic life (Hidayatullah 2014). However, the misinterpretation of the Quran has caused the oppression and exploitation of women in the Islam World (Hidayatullah 2014; El Saadawi 1982). Although in the Quran, gender segregation does not mean men are superior to women, in the Islamic countries or countries that have Muslim-majority populations, they often consider women to be inferior due to cultural and religious discourses.

## **2.2. The Early Republican Period: Kemalism vis-à-vis Islam**

It would take a revolution to build the modern nation-state of Turkey (Marshall 2013, 43). This revolution was initiated by Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk), who founded the Republic of Turkey and became president in 1923. According to Marshall, “the abolishment of the empire with its central governing posts of sultanate and caliphate combined in one person as a historical mark of a power shift from Islamic Ottoman civilization to secular Western civilization” (Marshall 2013, 43-44). In the early years of the Republic of Turkey, many changes were presented to build the main rule of secular Turkey. The sultanate and caliphate were abolished in 1922 and 1924, respectively (Arat 2010). Furthermore, in 1937, the government declared that Turkey would remain a secular country (Tatari 2006, 25). Secularism was a turning point for the Republic of Turkey because it brought the country closer to the Western-style economically, politically, and socially. Ataturk believed that the modernization and liberation of Turkish women were possible through a secularist system and social and economic reforms (Rankin and Aytac 2006). Before the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the Ottoman Empire was ruled by Islamic law that had unequal rules about women and men (Rankin and Aytac 2006). For instance, in the Ottoman Empire, primary schools, named “sibyan mektebi,” were religious institutions. Moreover, girls did not have the right to attend school apart from primary school (Soylu 2011, 8). Women who work at home have to care for their children and husbands. Ataturk’s reforms attempted to weaken the patriarchal family structure to increase women in the workforce, education, and political participation.

Ataturk believed that women are important to show the success of the new secular and modernizing ideology. Therefore, Ataturk launched many reforms to change the legal status of women and provide rights to women in political, economic, and social life. Marshall states that “in 1926 the Swiss Civil Code replaced the 1917 Ottoman Family Law, secularizing marriage, divorce, and other personal status matters. The royal Italian Penal Code was adopted in 1926. A Labor Law with specific clauses about

women's work status was issued in 1934" (Marshall 2013, 44). Women have been also granted the right to vote and to be elected to Parliament in 1934 (Arat 2010).

Ataturk started to shape a modern and the secular Turkish Republic with educational and social reforms. For example, "the Arabic alphabet was replaced with the Latin alphabet. The Latin alphabet reduced the time to learn to read from two years to three months" (Soylu 2011, 8). Another important educational reform was that "the religion replaced with modern schools where boys and girls are being educated, including new scientific curriculum" (Soylu 2011, 8). Furthermore, he believed that the liberation of Turkish women was possible within a secularist system and education. Ataturk's policies protected the women of the republic from dependent, non-modern life, and he presented them with modern, independent life by giving them the right to education (Tok 2009). Ataturk also tried to change the shape of lifestyles and customs of the society because he realized that religious interpretations and patriarchal cultures might interfere with the egalitarianism promoted at the legislative level. He encouraged people to use European clothing instead of the old Ottoman Empire clothing (Tok 2009). The most famous was the Hat Law, which introduced the use of Western-style hats instead of the fez that is an Ottoman-style hat (Marshall 2013). Some Turks easily adopted new reforms, but some did not due to different intersecting identities such as religiosity, class, and educational level (Tatari 2006, 27). Early in the development of the Republic, Turkey provided free education for all educational levels, which is an adherence to Ataturk's principles of secularity and gender equality (Soylu 2011). Nevertheless, there remains a distinct gender gap in the Turkish education system (Soylu 2011). Many women living in religious and patriarchal families have difficulties accessing education and working outside the home for pay because women who work or study are seen as a threat to the family's honor. If women have a boyfriend, lose their virginity, or get pregnant before marriage, they face an increased risk of violence (Kogacioglu 2004). Although the Turkish government legislates for women's rights as a part of the European Union Adjustment Law, some cultural and social pressures prevent the implementation of these laws (Dedeoglu 2004). Generally, moral laws and customs have crucial impacts on women's rights (Dedeoglu 2004). According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all people are equal and have the same rights, but women do not have the same rights as men in different regions of Turkey due to religious, cultural, economic, social diversity. Because of economic, cultural, religious, and social issues, women do not have the same chance to attend social, political, economic areas as boys, in the eastern region of Turkey.

Although in the early years of the Republic there was no official headscarf ban, women were encouraged to take off their headscarves. Women who live in urban areas easily removed their headscarves because

they had all possibilities to improve themselves, but rural women had difficulties to accommodate these new laws. Moreover, these elite urban citizens were the symbols of modernity. Traditional religious groups criticized some reforms about women's status because they advocated that being uncovered and being modern led to immodesty. However, secular elites believed that "women could be both modern and modest at the same time" (Marshall 2013, 45). Honor and modesty had played an important role in women's statuses in the family and public. Women are not only symbols for the honor of the family, but they are also important symbols for the honor of the new nation-state (p.46). Also, many women who especially lived in rural areas, did not easily adopt the secular reforms but these women were not considered as a problem for the modernization process of the Turkish government and Republicans because they did not appear in public. Therefore, they were not a threat to secularism and the privilege of Republicans in Turkey (Tok 2009).

### 3. Women's Status in Turkey: An Intersectional Perspective

In the *Feminine Mystique*, Friedan (1963) discussed that one of the most important factors for achieving gender equality is women's active participation in education, formal employment, electoral politics, and all other public institutions. The first wave of feminists focused on access and equal opportunities for women and demonstrated women's experiences and problems universally. Therefore, women who were part of marginalized groups felt excluded and rejected the generalization of women's experiences and problems that are described by the first wave feminists. Black American feminists such as Crenshaw and Collins criticize that mainstream feminism analyzes women's experiences and activities as universal by looking only at gender as the most important variable. Black feminist scholars demonstrate that white liberal feminists focus on gender equality and women's suffrage, but they do not promote a spectator's view on the reality of women who belong to marginalized social groups. Feminists working within this perspective grasp gender as socially constructed through interconnecting systems of not just the tripartite inequality of race-class-gender, but also other sources of inequality (Tok 2009). However, the subject of religion and feminism from an intersectional perspective has largely been neglected in the studies. According to Salem (2013), the goal of intersectionality is "to listen to the voices of women and men on their terms, to piece together narratives and unpack experiences that can help in understanding social life" (p.5). Intersectionality arose as a direct response to the feminist statements that women identify a universal category. Intersectionality is an important paradigm to account for the different experiences, realities, and identities between women all around the World. The intersectionality approach has started to add other identities such as religion, sexuality, psychically and



mentally disability, and so on. Due to all of these different aspects of social, economic, racial, sexual, and so on, it is problematic to talk about a “universal feminism” or a “universal woman” (Salem 2013). To understand Turkish women's status today, it is important to analyze their experiences at the intersection of gender, politics, class, culture, and religiosity.

In the 1980s, the renaming of the field as ‘gender and development’ (GAD) mirrored the many theoretical developments that have occurred in women's studies (Beneria and Bisnath 2001). Additionally, ‘gender and development’ has played a crucial role in the emergence of the definition of ‘gender’ that categorize what being of men and women mean, what their roles are, and how their roles represent in a social, economic, and political environment (Beneria and Bisnath 2001, xii). Therefore, feminism argues that development is a fundamental masculinity discourse and set of practices because development is a public sphere discourse and the public sphere is associated with men while the private sphere is associated with women. According to the 2011 Human Development Report, the GDP per capita in Turkey has significantly increased, but women usually have less access than men to development opportunities and human rights. (Acuner 2013, 74). This experience is more common for women who live in less developed areas in Turkey, in patriarchal and religious families. In Turkey, the largest segments of the poor population are women because of the unequal distributions of wealth and opportunities. An important point to note is that development is not simply related to economic growth; it is also linked to political, social, and cultural factors (Jabbara and Jabbara 1992,1). Jabbara and Jabbara ask, “who is to benefit from development?” If economic, political, and social developments benefit only some individuals, they are not deemed as development (Jabbara and Jabbara 1992). The goal of development projects is to provide them equal rights and opportunities for all individuals. However, the development process does not apply to all countries or all men and women equally. Furthermore, examples from around the world demonstrate that women do not benefit equally from development projects.

To better understand the status of women in Turkey, it is crucial to analyze how religion intersects with gender, politics, and culture. Recently, Turkey is grappling with a democratic paradox. While Turkey exercises religious liberties that are promoted by freely elected legislatures, this religious freedom is accompanied by possible or actual challenges to gender equality (Arat 2010). If, as is often argued, Islamic ideals are less accepting of gender equality than those of other societies, then the consequences of this democratic paradox for gender equality need to be discussed as a matter of urgency (Arat 2010). An analysis of how religion as a political power forms the fight for gender equality by demonstrating how 'internal' problems relating to family, sexuality, and fertility have become places of severe public contestation between traditional religious actors wishing to control them, and feminists and

other human rights activists. In recent years, under the leadership of the JDP, a political group with an Islamist history has been visibly entangled between religion and politics in Turkey. In 2001, the Justice and Development Party (JDP) which is a center-right party was founded and religion became an important tool in political discourses. Since 2002, the JDP, which is in government, made many changes that influenced economic and political life and social policy, as well as family life and the country's education system. The JDP has attempted to protect women and increase their welfare, but its policies are not enough to stop violations of the law. For example, although the number of educated and working women has increased gradually during the last fifteen years, it has remained low compared to men. In addition, Turkish society generally believes that women are inferior to men. This mindset unsurprisingly has an influence on the government policies. During the ruling Justice and Development Party (JDP), the bureaucrats have given inferior treatment to women and have undermined gender equality. For instance, in 2014, one of the bureaucrats that “women and men are not equal because their nature is different” (Smith-Spark & Gul 2014). They also said that “birth control is a form of treason and a couple should have more than three children”. He also proposed limits on abortion rights such as birth control pills and caesarian section (Smith-Spark & Gul 2014). Additionally, not only political leaders but also religious leaders (such as a mufti, imam) and theology professors have affected attitudes toward the status and role of women in Turkish society. Many theology professors and Islamic community leaders give ‘their’ fatwa on women and their opinions have caused biases against women’s status in a social, political, economic, and cultural environment. For example, one of the theology professors said that “it’s inappropriate for pregnant women to be seen on streets because it makes people think about how the child was made, basically seeing her makes people imagine her having sex” (“Presence of pregnant women,” 2013). These discourses show how religious interpretations interfere with the egalitarianism promoted at the legislative level. These speeches prompted a flurry of criticism on some news and social media. Even though gender equity is always described as an equitable treatment for women and men and has been a generally recognized political aim, these discourses have caused gender bias and empowered patriarchal cultures in political, economic, and social institutions. The dominant political, religious, and cultural discourses on gender roles have played a crucial role in women's inadequate participation in Turkish Parliament, education, and labor market (Mir-Hosseini, Al-Sharmani and Rumminger 2014). Gender inequalities in the labor market, education, and political arena arise from cultural and religious discourses that discourage women from working outside the home or that accord priority to their domestic roles.

In Turkey, the dominant religion is Islam although Turkey is a secular country. Approximately 61 percent of women wear the headscarf in Turkey (Soylu 2011). But, secularism and the freedom of religion are guaranteed by the Turkish constitution. Secularism has created important differences between Turkey and Middle East countries in terms of the protection of human rights. Nevertheless, secularism did not cause Turkey to become more or less religious because religious and patriarchal rituals have continued to exist in Turkish society. Due to religious and traditional rules, with primary school education, only 22 percent of women are in the labor force. For university-educated women, this number has increased by 71 percent (World Bank 2013). These religious and traditional rules not only affect women's status in the workforce, but these rules also affect women's educational level, political participation, and violence against women in Turkey. During the modernization processes, the Turkish government has been indicating the global struggle to protect human rights and provide equal opportunities for all citizens by regulating the law (Arat 2007). Although Turkey has made efforts to prevent violence against women, there has been still ninety percent of women who experienced violence within the family and society (Benli 2008, 60). In Turkey, patriarchal beliefs, religious rules and norms include different interpretations of hadiths and ayahs that have an impact on the amount of violence against women and women's acceptance of violence. Culturally determined gender ideologies have determined women's status in the family, society, labor market, and in decision-making processes (Hidayatullah 2014; Moghadam 1992, 20). Women's status in Turkey has shown that women do not benefit equally from development projects due to their intersecting identities such as gender, culture, ethnicity, politics, and religiosity.

#### **4. Conclusion: The Situation of Women in the 21st century in Turkey**

Like the planet we live on, societies change. Some might say that the societal and environmental transformations, similar to the technological innovations, humankind has witnessed over the past century, have occurred at an ever-accelerating pace. These changes have occurred within the physical realm of our realities, as well as our societal spheres. Changes in social, political, and cultural life effect the status of women. Women make up at least half of the world's population, changes in the status of women are likely to precipitate changes in social, political, and cultural life more generally. Thus, understanding and describing the status of women has an impact on understanding social changes in the large segments of a given society.

Many studies focus on how the economic, social, legal, and political changes affecting the status of women since the foundation of the Turkish Republic (Abadan-Unat 1981; Kandiyoti 1981; Ozbay 1990; Saktanber 2002). Atatürk's reforms attempted to provide equal rights between sexes in all social, economic, and political circumstances. However, during the last fifty years, providing social, economic, and political rights through law has only had a limited impact on both the status and role of women in Turkey (Abadan-Unat 1981, 5). "Republican reform has not been able to remove essentially wide national disparities" due to religious and cultural factors (Abadan-Unat 1981, 5). However, Turkey, arguably the most modern of Muslim societies, is an interesting case for examining the changing status of women, since Atatürk's reforms attempted to provide equality between sexes and equal opportunities in all educational, political, economic, and social areas, by breaking out restrictive and mind-controlling religious order and cultural practices (Abadan-Unat 1981; Saktanber 2002). "It is not easy to predict whether these conditions will neutralize the inhibiting effects of the obstacles to feminism that exist in Turkish society, i.e. underdeveloped capitalism, women's heavy dependence on the institution of the family, unequal access to education, and inhibiting, political and ideological factors" (Tekeli 1990,157). It is hard to claim that in the last fifty years, revolutionary efforts through the law have eliminated gender inequalities in education, family, cultural and religious rituals.

In Turkey, gender equality has been mainly provided by the law, but women still face gender inequalities in the public and the private sphere (Saktanber 2002, 235). Islam and cultural factors have an impact on Turkey's modernization. Additionally, the status and role of women are not only affected by the modernization process, but also by Islam and other cultural factors. The policies, different ideologies, and different religious attitudes stop Turkish women from working together for their rights although all women in Turkey face gender inequalities in different aspects of economic, political, and social life. To understand a failure of gender equality and inadequate presentation of women in economic, political, and educational areas, it is necessary to analyze women's status and interpretation of gender/gender roles in Turkey at the intersection of politics, Islam, and gender. Also, all women in Turkey should work together to gain and protect their rights.

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