Perceptions of Masculinity
and Choice of Spouse of Turkish University Students

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1. Choosing a spouse is an important and complicated process. At the same time as selecting a spouse, a person is deciding how to pursue his/her life. For this reason, choice of spouse is made at one of the most decisive moments in one's life.

2. In the process of choosing a spouse, individuals experience difficulties in disintegration and differentiation from the family in which they grew up. The problem-solving skills of many families, from budget control to sexuality, develop during this period. Spouses determine the relationships between the family they have established and other systems in this period of transition.[1] In the partner choice process, individuals satisfy their need to love and to be loved, to fulfil biological, social and psychological requirements and motives, to bring new generations into the world, to gain a place in society, to feel protected and safe together, to feel a sense of solidarity, to look to the future with confidence, to feel mutually proud and honoured, and to regulate sexual life in a healthy way.[2]

3. In the process of choosing a spouse, cognitive and mental representations and one's own beliefs are significant. Cognition acts with knowledge structures that are accessible at any moment and guide interpersonal interactions.[3] In some cases one's beliefs can be restrictive. Jeffry Larson has stated that these restrictive beliefs affect choice of spouse.[4]

4. Gender studies suggest that besides the biological side, there are also socio-cultural meanings associated with being male and female.[5] Masculinity studies within the field of gender studies examine the differences between the way masculinity is experienced and the way it is perceived in any given social context, the existence of different masculinity patterns and profiles besides the prevailing understanding, that there cannot be a single sense of masculinity, and many other subjects related to masculinity.[6] While these multiple masculinities form a diverse and dissimilar spectrum, they create an unequal and hierarchical sex architecture.[7] R.W. Connell's definition of masculinity which she calls 'hegemonic masculinity'[8] dominates women and other masculinity definitions.[9]

5. Masculinity studies in Turkey do not have a long history. Masculinity studies, which started in the 1980s, did not show any improvement or increase until the second half of the 1990s. However, it began to be studied more seriously in the 2000s.[10] When these studies are reviewed, it can be seen that the subject of masculinity has been discussed from different angles such as identifying the cultural code of masculinity in the military service,[11] sports[12] and circumcision;[13] and also from the representation of masculinity in cinema and literature,[14] as well as within the sense of honour[15] and fatherhood experiences.[16] These studies investigate how the labels related to men and masculinity, in other words the 'given' characteristics regarding masculinity, have emerged in these areas.

6. Recent masculinity studies have particularly explored constructed masculinity by going a step beyond examining what is 'given'.[17] Despite the fact that there are studies on masculinity and choice of spouse in the literature, there is no study that integrates these two subjects. It is considered that this study will bring significant contributions to the literature in this respect.

7. University students' beliefs about marriage and their sense of masculinity directly affect gender roles, sharing of household roles, choice of spouse, marital expectations and marital satisfaction. The results of this research will provide information about university students' perceptions of masculinity and beliefs about marriage. These results will contribute towards the organisation of training sessions related to family life, education and perceptions of gender and also to enable the presentation of the aforementioned training through manifesting the sense of masculinity and marital beliefs. The main purpose of this study is to examine the choice of spouse strategies and masculinity perceptions of male university students.

Method

Research Design

8. In this study, a mixed methodology and sequential explanatory design which consisted of two separate stages were used in order to understand the research problem in a more holistic way.[18] In the quantitative phase of the study, the answers to the questions about how choice of spouse processes are differentiated according to demographic variables and the respondents' priorities in spousal preferences were sought. In the qualitative stage, which is the second stage, data were collected via semi-structured individual interviews. These data were analysed through a discourse analysis approach. Priority was given to the qualitative stage as it provided an in-depth understanding of the quantitative phase.

The quantitative stage

9. In this study it is aimed to find answers to two questions: 'What are the choice of spouse strategies of male university students? Do male university students' choice of spouse strategies differentiate according to the variables of age, department, educational background of their father and mother? This is a survey model study. Survey models aim to describe a situation in the past or in the present the way it existed or exists.[19]

10. The cohort of the study consisted of male students studying in Marmara University. Participants were selected by a simple random sampling method. They were selected on a voluntary basis and contact details of participants were requested in order to reach those who showed extreme values as a result of the applied scale.

11. A Personal Information Form prepared by the researchers and a Choosing Partner Strategies Inventory developed by Serkan Altuntaş and Abdullah Atlı were used in the study.[20] As a result of the explanatory factor analysis applied to the Choosing Partner Strategies Inventory, the KMO value was .787 and the Barlett Sphericity value was .000. As a result of the analyses being done, the form which originally had 57 items was reduced to 28. In this way a seven-dimensional structure accounted for 62.518 per cent of the total variance. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) method was used to confirm the seven-factor structure of the inventory. As a result of CFA, the ratio of ($X2$ / sd) was calculated as 2.837, and GFI as .86, CFI as .90, TLI as .89 and RMSEA as .06. After collection of the data, invalid response papers were excluded from the evaluation and a statistical analysis of 193 forms was carried out in the SPSS 15.0 program.

The qualitative stage

12. This stage of the study examined the masculinity perceptions of participants with different spouse selection criteria according to the inventory applied in the quantitative stage in terms of the discursive

sources they feed. For this stage, the purposeful criterion sampling method was used. For qualitative interviewing seven participants with a high score from the seven dimensions of the Choosing Partner Strategies Inventory were selected. The data were collected via a semi-structured interview. The analytical framework of critical discourse analysis was followed in the process of analysing the obtained data. This analytical framework provides the 'descriptive repertoires',[21] the 'ideological dilemmas'[22] and the 'subject positions'.[23]

13. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the study, the processes of giving direct quotations, using purposeful sampling, collecting data with similar processes, consistency in coding of data, establishing relations between the data and the results and an external expert's confirmation of the judgments, interpretations and suggestions reached in the study in comparison with the raw data were followed.

Findings

The quantitative stage

14. In the quantitative stage of the study, firstly quantitative data were collected and analysed by using a Choosing Partner Strategies Inventory.

Points	t	sd	SD^1	1. Numerical 2. Equal Weight 3. Verbal			1. Non-literate 2. Primary School 3. Secondary School 4. High School			1. Primary School 2. Secondary School 3. High School 4. University		
	t	sd	SD^1	F	p	SD	F	p	SD	F	p	SD
Family and Trust	.29	191	-----	.03	.968	----	3.30*	.021	1>4; 2>4	3.19*	.025	1>4; 2>4; 3>4
Socio-economic	.26	191	----	2.44	.090	----	1.31	.270	----	1.03	.379	----
Religious and Political	1.32	191	----	3.76*	.025	1>2	1.63	.182	----	.583	.627	----
Physical Characteristics	-.12	191	----	.20	.816	----	.92	.429	----	.459	.711	----
Virginity	2.76***	191	1>2	.42	655	----	2.92*	.035	1>4; 2>4; 3>4	.529	.663	----
Child Care	.61	191	----	.25	775	----	3.69*	.013	1>4; 2>4; 3>4	1.45	.227	----
Love	-.83	191	----	.07	.928	----	.71	.545	----	3.20*	.024	3>4

* Significant difference

Table 1. Results of the Independent Group Test Conducted According to the Age Variable of Choosing Partner Strategies Inventory Sub-Dimension Scores and the One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) According to the Variables of Department, Mother's Education Level and Father's Education Level.

15. As shown in Table 1, as a result of the one-way variance analysis conducted to determine whether sub-dimension point averages of the Choosing Partner Strategies Inventory differed according to the department variable, the difference between the average scores of religious and political similarity was found to be significant ($F = 3.76$, $p<.05$). Following this result, complementary analyses were undertaken

to determine the sources of the differences. For this purpose, the homogeneity of variance was first checked and it was determined to be homogeneous ($L = .517; p>.05$). For this reason the Scheffe test was preferred. As a result of the Scheffe test, it was determined that between the numerical and the verbal group, the difference was at the level of $p<.05$ in favour of the numerical group. The difference between the arithmetic averages of the other groups was not found to be significant ($p>.05$).

16. As a result of the one-way analysis of variance conducted to determine whether the sample group's sub-dimension point averages of the Choosing Partner Strategies Inventory showed a significant difference according to the variable of mother's education level, the difference between the arithmetic averages of the groups on the subjects of trust, virginity and child care was found to be significant ($F = 3.30; p<.05; F = 2.92; p<.05; F = 3.69; p<.05$). After this step, complementary posthoc analyses were made to determine from which groups the differences originated. As a result of the LSD test carried out for this purpose; it was determined that the differences in confidence sub-dimension took place between non-literate and high school in favour of non-literate at $p<.05$ level and between primary school and high school in favour of primary school at $p<.05$ level.

17. In the sub-dimension of virginity, the differences appeared between non-literate and high school in favour of non-literate at $p<.05$ level; between primary school and high school in favour of primary school at $p<.05$ level; and between secondary school and high school in favour of secondary school at $p<.05$ level. In child care sub-dimension, the differences were between non-literate and high school in favour of non-literate at $p<.05$ level; between primary school and high school in favour of primary school at $p<.05$ level; and between secondary school and high school in favour of secondary school at $p<.05$ level. The difference between the arithmetic averages of the other groups was not found statistically significant ($p>.05$).

18. As a result of the one-way analysis of variance conducted to determine whether the averages of the students who are forming the sample group regarding Choosing Partner Strategies Inventory sub-dimension scores showed a significant difference according to the variable of father's education level, the difference between the arithmetic averages of trust and love was found to be significant ($F = 3.199; p<.05; F = 3.208; p<.05$). After this procedure, complementary posthoc analyses were undertaken to determine from which groups the differences originated. As a result of LSD test conducted for this purpose, it was determined that the differences in trust sub-dimension were between primary school and university at $p<.05$ level in favour of primary school; between secondary school and university at $p<,05$ level in favour of secondary school; between high school and university at $p<.05$ level in favour of high school. In the sub-dimension of love, the differences were detected to take place between high school and university at $p<.05$ level in favour of high school. The difference between the arithmetic averages of the other groups was not found statistically significant ($p>.05$).

Graduation	f	%	% val*	% cum**
Family institution and trust	13	6.7	6.7	6.7
Socioeconomic status	44	22.8	22.8	22.8
Religious and political similarity	31	16.1	16.1	16.1
Physical characteristics	29	15.0	15.0	15.0
Virginity	26	13.5	13.5	13.5
Child Care	27	14.0	14.0	14.0
Love	23	11.9	11.9	11.9
Total	193	100.0		

* % val = valid percentage ** % cum = cumulative percentage

Table 2. Frequency and percentage values of the first preferences in choosing partner selection strategies inventory sub-dimensions.

19. As shown in Table 2, 13 (6.7 per cent) of the participants constituting the sample group stated family institution and trust, 44 (22.8 per cent) of them socioeconomic status; 31 (16.1 per cent) of them religious and political similarity; 29 (15.0 per cent) of them physical properties; 26 (13.5 per cent) of them virginity; 27 (16.1 per cent) of them child care; 23 (11.9 per cent) of them love as their first preference.

The qualitative stage

20. The qualitative part, which is the second stage, focused on the results of the statistical data obtained from the first stage. In sequential interpretative mixed design studies, qualitative and quantitative data are typically combined when determining the participants of the qualitative stage. Participants were selected on the basis of the maximum diversity sampling according to the age and the parents' level of education which seemed to predict the choice of spouse in the quantitative part. The interviews lasted an average of forty-five minutes.

21. The data obtained from the interviews with the participants were examined by the discourse analysis method in order for the repertoires used during the construction of masculinity (the discursive sources, namely how discourses construct 'being a man' as a form of speech), the subject positions which the discourses offer to men (in other words, their interpretations regarding who they are) and the ideological dilemmas (namely in which opposite positions and interpretations men stand, within the multiple and inter-conflicting universes of masculinity discourses) to be understood.

Interpretative repertoires

22. Interpretative repertoires are the 'building blocks of speech' in terms of discourse analysis. Thus interpretative repertoires consist of themes demonstrating interpretative repertoire functions such as justification, apology, referencing, persuasion etc. which are constructed by the same persons in speech text, and repeated and recurring among texts.[24]

23. When the participants' speeches were examined, it was observed that they talked about masculinity on two basic interpretative repertoires— as masculinity in social context and masculinity as a process within which there are compulsory stages to pass.

Masculinity as a process with compulsory stages to pass

24. Participants constructed masculinity as something to be obtained and completed by the way of passing through a couple of stages. This process includes having a profession, a successful marriage and having a child.

Interview 1

Participant 1: I mean you should have a job as soon as possible. Generally girls … I have two older sisters. Working was not the kind of thing expected from them.

Researcher: Working. But it's expected from you?

Participant 1. Yes, this is expected from me. They tell me that I absolutely have to study. *Perhaps this is related to the structure of the society rather than my own family*. For women it is said that you do not have to study, you get married. There is such a thought. But *it is expected from men to definitely study and definitely work* (Göztepe Campus, Marmara University, 24 February 2017).

25. The participant here constructs a man as being 'surrounded by obligations', by pointing out that studying and having a job as something expected from males but not expected from females. The participant first explains that his older sisters are not expected to work and in the next line he presents this situation as a societal choice rather than being that of his own family. He seems to make this argument to legitimate the work/study construction expected of men.

Interview 2

Researcher. Well, what are your parents' expectations of you as a son?

Participant 2. Can you repeat the question?

Researcher. What are your parents' expectations of you as a son?

Participant 2. *They don't have many expectations actually*. I must pursue my education life properly.

Researcher. School?

Participant 2. I must complete four years. Start working, if I can *begin working* before I do a master's degree, *get married and have a good family. So, proceed in a routine way*.

Researcher. Can you express those routine things? Study? Get married?

Participant 2. Get married. Hmm there is buying a house for example, you work and buy a house. Hmm then the expectation of grandchild starts. You can barely be at ease when you eventually retire (Göztepe Campus, Marmara University, 23 February 2017).

26. In this interview, the participant constructs a male as somebody who is living a 'routine'. It is noteworthy that the participant expresses the range of expectations such as finishing university, starting work, getting married, having children, retiring with the sentence 'they do not have many expectations actually'. This process has been so normalised by society that it has become a man's routine course of life. At the point at which this process is completed, the second interpretative repertoire in the discourses of the participants emerges. In this repertoire, more precise expectations of masculinity in the family and socially are spoken about. The second repertoire includes tasks, roles and responsibilities while social expectations are discussed in the first repertoire.

Masculinity in a social context (family context)

27. In this repertoire, masculinity was defined through family, being a husband and wife, acting the required roles in social contexts, and fulfilling responsibilities. Through this repertoire, the participants talked about a masculinity that passed the socially expected stages and was 'given' in terms of responsibilities and roles. A man, stronger both physically and spiritually, is the person who takes all the responsibilities of the family and protects the family against external threats.

Interview 3

Researcher. What does it mean to be a man according to you?

Participant 3. A person having a job and a position, being strong, earning a living for his family. Well, there are many responsibilities; looking after the family, working, getting along or not getting along with his wife. These are. Providing for the children to study, enabling them to reach a good level, you know. Roles of men and women. Modesty is very important, understanding is very important. You know I said that. Like dinner being ready when I get home. I mean my wife might be working as well. I would let her work, I mean. It can be discussed, you know. She may not prepare it because of her work. I can prepare it myself too, for instance. Or she may not do the cleaning if she has some other necessary things.

Researcher. In your opinion, being a man means being strong, looking after his family financially and protecting them.

Participant 3. Not just the financial thing, but I think it should be the man first, doing these. I mean, in these kinds of matters, the priority must be in men. A man must take care of his family, his children; a man should do these, too. But women are something different. For example, it's the woman who raises children.

Researcher. Women raise children?

Participant 3. How can I say, a man, for example, cannot wake up at three a.m. at night when a baby cries, but a woman wakes up and feeds him/her if s/he is hungry. If the baby has got gas pain, she deals with breaking it up. She puts up with all these. A man cannot do these

Researcher. Women should look after children and be a little self-sacrificing?

Participant 3. Yes, exactly

Researcher. Men?

Participant 3. Men, as I said at first, you know … I think men should take the responsibility for the things outside the house.

Researcher. What kind?

Participant 3. First of all … Let me not say 'at first', but men should provide the material things first, then how to say it … And I would be pretty jealous, I suppose. Against the people outside. I would ask a lot of questions about where she went, where she would go, in what kind of a place she would be.

Researcher. She has got to tell you about it, you say?

Participant 3. How?

Researcher. She should tell.

Participant 3. She must definitely inform me, not like getting permission but I must consent, too. I can also interfere, depending on the situation, I can say things like 'don't go'.

Researcher. The role of men is to take the responsibility of material things and things outside home.

Participant 3. I mean, but when I say responsibility of the outside, I don't mean him coming home and sitting on the couch with the remote control in his hands. When looked from outside, first it must be felt that the head of the house is him, the man. But inside the home, when you come home, you should behave in a friendly manner, smilingly toward your wife, toward your children likewise, too.

Researcher. By saying likewise?

Participant 3. By saying likewise, he must pay attention to the children, he must know everything about them. There is something like this in the society, you know. You ask a father about his child's school/classes for example, he has no idea about them, but when you ask the mother, she can tell you a lot about it.

Researcher. Uh-huh.

Participant 3. This is a wrong attitude. The father should also be informed about everything. He doesn't just have financial responsibility. Toward people outside, as it is his responsibility for the household, I think it should be of first priority, first of all (Göztepe Campus, Marmara University, 17 February 2017).

28. In this case, man is the 'responsible agent' within the family. And this agency is justified because of the 'weakness' of woman due to her 'emotional' nature. The main duty of woman is not to provide economic support for the family, but to take care of children and to keep the domestic work such as food and cleaning in order. In other words, women are positioned as 'non-responsible and non-agent' against men. In this context, woman's working–which is a demonstration of her own agency– is something to be realised 'when her husband gives permission', not something to be perceived as 'normal/otherwise unthinkable' like the work of a man. Again, man is constructed as 'charged with responsibilities' and 'agent'; as the one who has the 'right' to determine the appropriateness of places she can go to and the fields in which she can work. As a husband he 'empathises' with his wife who failed to fulfil her responsibilities inside the house, her 'natural' responsibility zone, for various reasons.

The ideological dilemmas

29. The only ideological dilemma deduced from the results of the analysis emerges between these two thoughts: men and women are inherently different; men do not have to be different from women but society is making them so. This is actually a real nature-nurture dilemma. While the opinion that women and men are different is based on strength stemming from physical differences, the idea that they should not be different is based on the way society expects women to behave differently. In this dual approach, it appears that there is an uncertainty about how the similarity/difference between men and women will be established. While women and men are already different due to their physical differences, society imposes other differences on them as well.

Interview 4

Researcher. Let's begin then. According to you, what does it mean to be a man?

Participant 4. When we talk about being a man, mostly social roles come to our minds.

Researcher. Uh-huh

Participant 4. Actually I'm not against these social roles very much, for the formation of the personality. Sex has an impact on personality for sure. Hmm I think there must be some social roles. For example, we assign rather protective roles to man—protecting a woman. *This is because a man and a woman are not physically of equal strength*. You know, this is about not being the same, rather than equality. Because *absolutely there are some differences between men and women—biologically and psychologically* I mean. In a sense I think social roles should be assigned according to the differences that are not in our power. *Being a man, in this context, is perhaps stemming from having more physical strength*, some social roles have been assigned to him. For instance when kids are scared, they take shelter behind their mothers, not their fathers. You know. What I mean is, for example, when there is somebody in the house, the person who should be informed is the father. The father is expected to stop that person … You know, when you say 'man', it is the person protecting the woman and those around [we think of], making them feel that he cares about them. In this context, for example, some stereotypes have been established, I do not call them roles actually, for example … men have to be serious-minded and there is a settled stereotype about men not expressing their emotions openly. But there is no need for … this. Communication is *something equal for all*.

Researcher. Uh-huh

Participant 4. I can say that as one of the things that bother me, I don't think that it is related to being man. But for example *there's been times when men could demonstrate successful leadership especially in crisis situations, which is something that women can do as well. But in general terms, psychologically, when that first shock takes place I think that men can undertake a better leadership role owing to their biological and psychological differences* (Göztepe Campus Marmara, University, 16 February 2017).

30. The participant emphasises that women and men are not physically equal due to the fact that their natures are not the same, and therefore he constructs women as weaker compared to men. From this point of view, women play a 'sheltering' role on the grounds of these unchangeable perceived differences and men's role as 'protector' are normalised. However by suggesting that communication is 'equal' for all, the participant speaks of an 'equality' against the 'innate' differences he has just expressed. The participant's 'negotiation' about this dilemma appears more clearly in the rest of the interview (below). The interview clearly points to the participant's indecision regarding the dichotomy of an innate difference and a difference imposed by society and it demonstrates how he finds arguments that simultaneously both support and refute his opinions.

Interview 5

Participant 5. As I said, there are troubles, misunderstandings in society. It is especially important to identify these and to disassociate irrational behaviour from this role. I rather think of this when you say 'man'.

Researcher. According to you, being a man is about protection?

Participant 5. Sure, well, what I say is in terms of male roles. If we are to determine it in actual sense, *protecting, loving, these are common things*. You know when I say man … [I am referring to] roles distinguishing him from woman.

Researcher. To protect means to be a man according to you?

Participant 5. Of course, protection is definitely at stake. [A man needs to provide] good shelter when needed, especially in difficult situations. I mean, of course, [he needs] to be able to love, to show his love towards others, these are *also the characteristics of men; the characteristics of all genders*. I say this in the sense of male roles.

Researcher. That's what I am asking.

Participant 5. I mainly perceive it this way. I mean when we think of a man's role within a family. But there may arise … some classical questions like 'do people need to be protected?' 'Can't people protect themselves?' Of course, this is not something like: 'I protect you, come on, pay tax to me'. I mean generally there is a union, a relationship within a society and within a family, and differences bring about different roles … I have an older sister. You know, while she carries out roles that mostly women undertake, [undecipherable talk] there are things a man can do, like carrying

heavy stuff or bringing things they need. *But this does not mean that these roles cannot change according to circumstances and time* (Göztepe Campus, Marmara University, 10 February 2017).

31. The high point of this interview is that the participant wants to talk about being human, rather than being a man and woman. And at the same time, he believes that men and woman are different by their natures and biologies and justifies this by discussing the roles, behaviours and emotions that these differences have created.

Subject positions

32. Subject positions are identified by constant careful attention to whoever the specific interpretative repertoires are referring.[25]

The one who is more equalitarian about his 'agency' and 'leadership' in the family

33. It was observed that the participants positioned themselves as 'more equalitarian about agency and leadership in the family' in the 'man in the social context' aspects of their interviews. This subject position enables the participants to resist the father's position of authority which is seen 'normal' by society and against mothers remaining in the background. This resistance actually corresponds to current discourse, in which a more equalitarian position opens a way of negotiation for the participants. The participant taking this position chooses is able to utter the sentence, 'I believe that men and women are equal in terms of intra-family roles but …' more easily.

Interview 6

Researcher. As a man, what are your thoughts regarding what kind of a man you are?

Participant 6. Well, I am completely on the side of equality between men and women. There are some things that society has brought along. I do not know whether it has penetrated our DNA, but sometimes it makes me think. I can see that this is a wrong idea.

Researcher. Uh-huh.

Participant 6. There are many ideas about women in society … women are like this and like that. Even though these are reflected in our lives time to time, hmmm, *I notice that this is wrong*. I can stop myself. I can give up that thought … I consider genders equal. It doesn't matter though. I don't know now whether it is a social perception or women have it in their DNAs. It seems to me that women are more organisers, putting things in order, but men, you know, are more reckless or so. But I think that it shouldn't be this way. While a man is indifferent, a woman is like, 'Ah! Let's save our marriage'—things like that. It shouldn't be this way. Both of them should value their marriage. Both should value each other. If need be, the woman should change her tune and be toleratant. The man should do the same, if need be. I mean, for all I know nowadays among girls there is something like 'girls attitudinise, boys run after them' and so forth. This perception is very wrong, I think. I mean they are both equal. They need to manage their relationship together. For this, both of them should make sacrifices when needed. They need to walk on this road hand in hand. They need to support each other when they encounter unpleasant incidents. I can assign the same roles to both women and men. *Rather than being the head of the family, I … if I speak of the structure of our society* … In a family, generally the father is regarded as the head of the family. Mothers are not asked for their opinions much. Let me talk about my own family a little. As my mother does not work, she remains somewhat in the background. However the children's education is left to mothers. When a good thing happens, the father takes pride in that; but when a bad thing happens, it's generally put on the mother. *But in the family model that I design, I think of … I imagine a democratic family system rather than headship*. I rather think things in which the mother and father act together, decide together and plan together on certain issues, hmm … of course there are things that the man needs to do as a man.

Researcher. What are those?

Participant 6. For example, a woman … as a woman … What she can't do is this. I don't make distinctions regarding

34. The man in this subject position is constructed as a person who does not exercise control over his wife, who shares decision-making processes and who is gentle and helpful towards his wife. This is contrary to the general understanding of society in which masculinity is normalised as being 'superior to women and being responsible'. Even when the participants in this study talk about equality, the men are still distinguished as having responsibility in the family and being the 'agent'. Men should be gentle and helpful as women are weak. Men actually show courage by helping women with their 'natural' [house]work. While mentioning co-decision making on one hand, on the other a man is not actually speaking of equality as he sees himself as the one who draws the family together. In other words, while he positions himself within a modern masculinity discourse which places importance on equality, the 'agency' position in the traditional family pattern is maintained.

What completes / or is on the way to completing the construction of masculinity

35. This subject position was pointed out by the first interpretative repertoire of 'masculinity being a process with compulsory stages to pass'. The participants have positioned themselves as being on the way to completing the construction of masculinity. The participants seem to accept that there is a process of masculinity construction, which is 'given' by society. It is imperative for participants to study and hence to have a profession. And this process towards full masculinity must be completed by getting married and starting a family.

Interview 7

Participant 7. I have eight siblings, frankly my parents didn't pay much attention. But their expectations were, well, 'Are they studying, what are they gonna be?' You know they were pleased to see us studying, in the expectation that we might do well. And I studied hard in high school. I mean I pegged away day and night. I worked very hard in high school. And they also saw it. They let me be and I did whatever I wanted. They provided me with opportunities … Their expectations, you know, they expect me to have a profession. They know I can succeed. Well, for example, when I say that there is an exam, they don't say, hmm, 'Will you able to pass?' They say, 'You'll pass'. They're telling me things like, 'You're grown up now'. My older brother got married last summer. They're slowly broaching the subject of marriage [with me], saying things like, 'Your brother got married, now is your turn'. But as I am very ambitious, very stubborn I mean, I don't listen to them, I ignore, how to say it … I turn a deaf ear to them. And also I try very much not to do what they tell me. I am my own man, and they also know that I am, in general. They're passing over the marriage thing lightly. But of course they say, 'You're a man now, look for girls, how do you get along with girls at university?'

Researcher. Uh-huh.

Participant 7. But they, how to say it, don't think that go on a date with someone. I always used to engage in my courses back in high school. There were no girls and such like, there never was, I mean. I used to say that I wouldn't ever marry— [that was] until a couple of months ago. It's a meaningless thing, you know. Well … I'm studying now. Or rather I would like to study forever. I've got a scholarship. Let me get into a second university after I've finished my university degree. I once was in the mood to stop classes, have fun with friends, hang out at clubs and so. But you know, it's in Erikson's stages, too.[26]

Researcher. Uh-huh.

Participant 7. Hmm, he [Erikson] says that between the ages of 30 and 60, he says that there is intimacy vs. isolation or something like that. I've forgotten it right now, out of excitement (laughing). One feels lonely. I don't know. I've got into that kind of stage I guess. You know, everyone really wants to know someone well, I mean someone very close … You know it's a wonderful thing for you that somebody accepts you as the man to marry. You know she must have so embraced me in my every aspect that she is marrying me. I'm shifting towards these kinds of thoughts … I mean I'm

looking at it [marriage] positively. Something good and beneficial.

Researcher. Somebody understanding you to the core?

Participant 7. Uh-huh. And also (thinks for a while) there won't be trouble. For example there will be … after getting married, I mean when you're grown up … you will live by yourself if you're not married. Living with your family becomes very boring. You should move out and the house you've moved into will have needs, as well. You can't manage it all by yourself while working. For example I mean I would like to [there to be] dinners ready when I come home. I mean although it sounds like that kind of judgement … It may also be nice, it'll be. It'll be definitely good. You know, for me, it'll be an advantage of marriage, as well. It's inevitable. Neatness, appearance (Göztepe Campus, Marmara University, 4 February 2017).

36. Studying at a university and having friends seem sufficient for the participant [at the time of the interview]. His future plans involve living apart from his family and working. His statement about dinner being ready when he comes home indicates that he thinks he will be the one who is working in the paid workforce. The participant has been studying (to have a profession) and planning a marriage. That is, he is in the process of gaining a profession, within the stages of becoming a man, and he is simply planning to marry when he has a profession.

Conclusion and discussion

37. In Turkey, emotions and thoughts toward the person to be married, the age difference between them, the educational level of each, their economic independence, religious belief and political opinions all affect choice of spouse decisions. Also significant are the socio-economic level of his/her family, the receipt of approval from both families, as well as physical and personality characteristics.[27] In this study, the preference criteria of the participants were listed as: socio-economic status, religious and political similarities, physical characteristics, child care, virginity, love, family institution and trust. While this study supports previous studies that showed that virginity was low down the order of preferential qualities, it does not support the argument that religion and wealth were also low in the order of preference.[28] Consistent with Alaeddin Kasapkara and Bet�l Kasapkara's findings,[29] the results of this study also show that virginity is a preference that younger students consider important.

38. The interviews were conducted in an attempt to understand whether, in choice of spouse, there is a different construction of masculinity which could be differentiated according to various demographic variables. The research demonstrated that the participants talked within similar discourses and that their constructions of masculinity did not differ from each other. According to the findings of the quantitative stage of this research project, the participants stated that the socio-economic level of their future spouses was the first criterion in choice of spouse. However, participants did not see a problem in their spouses not earning any income if it was linked to masculinist 'headship' in which the father is responsible for the subsistence of the family.

39. Another result of the face-to-face interviews showed that the 'family institution and trust' dimension (that the participants had consigned to last place in spousal preferences), was an important step to 'becoming a man'. The results of the study, in accordance with the literature,[30] pointed out that masculinity was constructed as something that involves 'passing certain stages' and as something to 'be grown into'. For the participants of this study, the steps in the process of becoming a man are: to study, to have a profession, to marry and to be a father. What was accepted as an ideal man is to be: white, middle class, heterosexual, middle aged, reasonably religious, physically strong enough to be successful in at least one sport and to have a full-time job.[31] After completing this construction, men need to maintain it without ever losing their moral and material strength.

40. Findings of this study overlap with other studies that found that masculinity is constructed in accordance

with certain characteristics—such as being strong, providing for the family and bearing responsibility.[32] This finding also has implication for the role of women. In their spousal preferences, participants put the 'child care' dimension (which they had put fourth out of seven), higher in the order. Just as in this study, the study of Hasan Bozgeyikli and Emre Toprak[33] indicates that being good at housework was not considered very important by men in choice of spouse. Bozgeyikli and Toprak have explained that there are indications of men changing their attitudes in relation to the changing roles of women. These findings are similar to the assumptions be brought to our own study. However, the interviews we had with the participants did not demonstrate any attitude changes.

41. Although completing military service is not regarded as a task peculiar to manhood, according to the participants a man definitely must have a profession. A profession does not just mean monetary gain, but it is also a source of status and self-esteem. Participants' thoughts about having a job, which they see as an important part of being a man, are often encountered in the literature, as well. A job not only meets the financial needs but also the psychological needs of masculinity. According to Nebi Sümer, Nevin Solak and Mehmet Harma, in their book *Unemployed Life: Psychosocial Impacts of Unemployment and Job Insecurity*, having a job has a deeper meaning than it seems.[34]

42. Participants' dilemmas and negotiations on their position as the father or husband in the family are ongoing. They have a dilemma regarding the distance they should keep from domestic affairs and children. They are in a dilemma as to whether man and woman are different in nature. A husband who does not have a problem with his 'wife' working (i.e. a man who does not believe in a natural difference related to work) speaks of natural difference when it comes to 'motherhood'. In other words, a woman is more suitable for motherhood by her 'nature'. This point of view is compatible with the discourse of the media.[35] The participants in the study regarded themselves as equalitarian, just and as persons who do not defend the rigid gender roles of previous generations. When the participants' discussions are examined, it can be discerned that equality between the sexes is not in fact detached from gender roles. Rather, a sense of equality is emerging that includes supporting women to fulfil their gender roles, and showing tolerance when there is a failure in the fulfilment of those roles. For example, no participant mentioned the future prospect in which he would leave his employment and look after children while his wife went to work. Instead, one topic they brought up was whether a mother would leave her job, if she works, or whether they would find a babysitter to look after the baby. Another emergent theme was the necessity of supporting a wife with the care of the children and empathising when the wife could not manage the housework (cleaning, cooking). In short, the participants' understanding of equality does not mean abandoning of assigned roles according to gender, but it rather means 'helping' and showing understanding to women who fall short of the male expectations of them. Independent of their attitudes towards working spouses, the model of paternity that the participants agreed on and accepted is where the man accepts the responsibility for the subsistence of the family on his own.[36]

43. As a result, although the characteristics that each participant preferred in relation to choice of spouse differed, their masculinity constructs were similar. b> According to the beautiful analogy of John Macionis, just as seasons affect clothing choices, society influences individuals' choices.[37] Individuals eventually decide who they will marry, but common discourses have shaped how they think about this matter.

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