

# MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN TURKEY: PERCEPTIONS OF MALE STUDENTS AT ORDU UNIVERSITY

## TÜRKİYE'DE ERKEK(LİK)LER: ORDU ÜNİVERSİTESİ'NDE ERKEK ÖĞRENCİLERİN ALGILARI

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### ÖZ

Bu çalışmada, cinsiyetçi iktidar ve güç ilişkileri bağlamında tarihsel ve toplumsal olarak şekillenen Anadolu erkekliklerinin hegemonik söylemi üniversite öğrencilerinin algıları üzerinden incelenmektedir. Alan çalışmasında ise Ordu Üniversitesi'nin çeşitli fakültelerinde öğrenim gören 537 erkek öğrenci ile bir anket çalışması yapılmış ve ayrıca 44 erkek öğrenci ile derinlemesine görüşmeler düzenlenmiştir. Ataerkil kapitalizmin güncel sonuçlarını temsil eden neoliberal politikalar bağlamında Anadolu'da sayısı hızla artan ve üniversite mezunu olan bir erkek çalışan-yoksullar nüfusuna dikkati çekmek mümkündür. Ailelerinden maddi destek almamak ve böylece erkekliklerini kanıtlamak için küçük yaşlardan itibaren hizmetler ve tarım sektöründe çalışan bu erkek öğrenciler yoğun işgücü sömürüne maruz kalmaktadırlar. Ayrıca bu öğrencilerin Anadolu'nun özgül eşitsiz cinsiyet rejimi içerisinde evi-geçindiren (evin-reisi) erkeklik rollerini benimsediği tespit edilmiştir. Tarihsel olarak Anadolu'ya özgü, geleneksel hegemonik erkeklik söyleminin öğrencilerin erkeklik algılarını dört alanda etkilediği belirlenmiştir: Üniversiteyi bitirmek ve iyi bir iş sahibi olmak, zorunlu askerlik hizmetini yerine getirmek, evlenmek ve çocuk sahibi olmak, ataerkil cinsel politika bağlamında kadının namusu ve anneliğin kutsallığına ilişkin söylem ve algılar. Bu ataerkil/eril değerlerin biçimlenme süreci ise Anadolu'nun tarihsel ve toplumsal özgül gelişme dinamikleri ile oluşmuştur. Bu dinamikler arasında Anadolu'da var olmuş eski toplumların kültürel değerleri, Batı'ya karşı verilen anti-emperyalist mücadele, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ulus-devletine ait asker-millet söylemi ve İslami değerler bulunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Eleştirel Erkeklikler, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Ataerkil Kültür, Neoliberalizm, Göç, Duygular, Cinsel Politika

### ABSTRACT

In this research, the hegemonic discourse of Anatolian masculinities, which have been changed historically and socially in the context of gendered power relations, is examined through the perceptions of university students. In the field research, 537 male students were surveyed, and in-depth interviews were conducted with 44 male students. Within the framework of neoliberal policies that represent the current outcomes of patriarchal capitalism, it is possible to draw attention to the rapidly increasing population of male working-poor in Anatolia who are mostly university graduates. They are exposed to intense labor exploitation in order not to receive financial support from their families and thus to prove their masculinity. The traditional hegemonic masculinity discourse, which is unique to Anatolia historically, affects students' perceptions of masculinity in four areas: graduating from university and having a good job, fulfilling compulsory military-service, getting married and having children, and as the patriarchal sexual policy, women's honor and holy-motherhood discourse and perceptions. The formation of these patriarchal masculine values was constituted by the following historical and social dynamics of Anatolia: the cultural values of ancient Anatolian societies, the anti-imperialist struggle against the West, the military-nation discourse of the nation-state of the Republic of Turkey, and Islamic values.

**Keywords:** Critical Masculinities, Gender, Patriarchy, Neoliberalism, Migration, Emotions, Sexual Politics

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Masculinities and femininities in relation to gender practices are not pure biological entities fixed in time and space. In this context, the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity’, first introduced by Raewyn Connell (1987), points to the dynamism of historical, cultural, and social relations in time and space. The historical and social diversity of masculine and feminine roles and the dynamism of change cause gender relations to constantly involve conflict and reconciliation-laden processes (Connell 1995; Kimmel 1993).

Beyond idealization, the important point in real life is the relations established with non-hegemonic masculinities (subordinated and marginalized) in the construction and reproduction of hegemonic patterns of masculinities. Demetrakis Demetriou (2001) emphasizes the formation of a hybrid bloc in this process, not polarization between two groups. Thanks to this hybrid formation, various masculinity practices will participate in the reconstruction of the hegemonic masculinity pattern and the best possible solution will be found to the legitimacy crisis of the patriarchal gender regime (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

Today, in the age of neoliberalism, as Raewyn Connell (2005) states, in order to analyze local hegemonic masculinity patterns, masculinity discourses and practices, the interrelation between the local and the global gender orders should be taken into account. She also emphasizes that in this global era of patriarchal capitalism flexible, calculating,

self-centered and even communicative, team-player (as considered feminine) characteristics of men who are managers of transnational companies define the global hegemonic masculinity.

On the other hand, as Cenk Özbay (2010:123) points out, the overemphasis on global managerial masculinities reduces the interest especially in local marginalized masculinities that form a part of the hybrid hegemonic bloc. Cenk Özbay examines a group of men in Istanbul, in the current period of political power of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). These young men are generally high school graduates or graduated from Anatolian universities and working in stores, in shopping centers and fast-food restaurants.

Based on the experiences of these men, the concept of ‘the working poor’ comes into our lives intensely with the neoliberal transformation of the state and the flexibility in labor markets (Harvey 2007; Marx 2020; Feldman 2020). In addition to these working conditions, to be ‘a successful and strong man’ in Turkey, it is of great importance for an individual to have a job where he can earn enough to support his family. Moreover, these men must complete their compulsory military service, get married and have children. At this point, Cenk Özbay (2010) asks important questions such as: How do these young men, the working poor, who work in precarious and low paid jobs, realize their masculinity when they do not have the financial means to support their families? In addition to the persistent development of the feminist movement in

the world and in Turkey, could the negative working conditions that emerged in the neoliberal period have a fundamental effect on ‘the masculinity crisis’ in Turkey?

In order to find clues about the answers to these and similar questions, this academic research is conducted on the masculinity perceptions of male-students studying in Ordu University. This university is one of the state universities established in almost every city of Anatolia during the AKP period. The field research that will be presented in this article consists of an in-depth interview with 44 male students, as well as a survey of 537 male students studying at different faculties of Ordu University<sup>1</sup>.

Ordu University was established by the AKP government as a state university in 2006 in Ordu, located in the Eastern Black Sea Region. The survey and in-depth interviews were conducted in 2019, 2021 and 2022. The Ethics committee approval was received from Ordu University in 2019. Pseudonyms and numbers were used to de-identify participants. The data obtained from the field research were evaluated using qualitative research techniques. The discourses, comments, and expressions of the students were transformed into texts, content analysis was made on these texts and finally the research themes were reached cautiously.

In the article, primarily male students are analyzed in the context of their class and gender affiliation. In this framework, the concepts of ‘working poor’ and ‘breadwinner-masculinities’ and the phenomenon of ‘migration’ are considered

largely. Moreover, ‘hegemonic masculinity values’ in the private and public spheres are examined in detail. In addition, in the context of patriarchal masculine values, ‘the pressure of men on women's body and sexuality’ is discussed through discourses. It will be debated that the individual-self created by patriarchal masculinity roles excludes women and other men, and instrumentalizes the female body and sexuality as an object of power. In this regard, it will be emphasized that sexuality is a political field that includes all institutions in society. Finally, the feeling of isolation and loneliness created by the competition between men and the emotional immaturity of the male-individual will be pointed out.

## 2. MIGRATION AND MALE WORKING POOR AS BREADWINNER

Throughout the history of the Republic of Turkey, poverty and migration have followed an increasing trend in Anatolia. In various parts of Anatolia, dispossessions in agriculture, which led to the migration of men at first and then women, took a new form with the neoliberal policies that have been widely applied since the 1980s.

Migration to the city has not helped the poor get out of poverty. The reasons for this outcome include the absence of an Industrial Revolution similar to the one in the West, the violent suppression of the working-class movement in 1980, and the deregulation of labor markets with economic policies based on neoliberal ideology. Instead, urban migrations lead to low-paid, insecure, and irregular jobs in informal labor markets where services are

concentrated, and therefore, a secure and decent living and working conditions could not be offered to working people. They have become the 'working poor' from generation to generation (Boratav 2018; Bakırtaş 2009; Buğra 2008).

In this context, two phenomena were identified in this section: First, the hometowns of the students and the places where the families of the students live differ significantly. This situation indicates the continuous migration between the cities in the East and West of Anatolia. Secondly, the students mostly defined their father's occupation as 'worker'. In connection with this definition, male students emphasized that they had intense labor experiences in the agriculture and services sector from a very young age. In line with this information, it can be stated that the migration from generation to generation continues in terms of male university students in Anatolia and these students can be defined as the 'working poor'.

In this research, the male students participating in the survey are between the ages of 18 and 24. When the distribution of the hometowns of the 537 students participating in the survey is examined, a total of 57 Anatolian cities are noticed evidently. The prominent provinces are generally the Eastern and Central Black Sea provinces. In general, the major provinces are as follows: 25% Ordu, 17% Samsun, 7% Trabzon, 4.4% Giresun, 2.4% Rize, 2.4% Çorum, 2.2% Yozgat, 2% Artvin, 2% Tokat, 2% Erzurum, 1.3% Antalya, 1.3% Gaziantep, 1.1% Gümüşhane, 1.1% Mersin, 1.1% Amasya, 1.5% Adana, 1.1% Şanlıurfa. In this

ranking, the total proportion of Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara is 6.6%.

Moreover, considering the provinces where the families of the students currently live, a total of 52 Anatolian provinces are seen apparently. Again, among these provinces, the Eastern and Central Black Sea provinces stand out clearly. While the settlement rates shift slightly towards the provinces in the West, the total proportion of the provinces of Istanbul (11.8 %), Izmir (1.3 %), Ankara (4.1%) and Kocaeli (1.3%) increases significantly to 18.5%. Other prominent provinces are: 22.2 % Ordu, 18.5% Samsun, 4.6 % Trabzon, 3.7 % Giresun, 2.2% Rize, 1.5 % Artvin, 2% Çorum, 1.7 % Mersin, 2 % Tokat, 1.3 % Adana, 1.3 % Erzurum, 1.3 % Gaziantep, 1.1 % Manisa, 1.3 % Antalya. The differentiation between the students' Hometowns and the places where their families currently live give us clues about the above-mentioned migration from East to West within Anatolia.

When the occupation status of the students' parents is examined, 6.5% of the fathers are unemployed, 11.3% are civil servants, 26.4% are workers, 7.2% are small farmers, 12.4% are small traders, and 21.6% are retired. On the other hand, 6.5% of the students marked the option 'My father has a job'. Also, data were not available for 6.5% of the survey papers.

When asked about students' work experience, 70.5% of the students answered, 'yes' and 27.2% answered 'no'. Also, data were not available for 2.3 % of the survey papers. The fields of work cover

various areas of agriculture, services, and small industry sectors. Specifically, unpaid/paid labor in agriculture and animal husbandry, waitress, repairman, store salesperson in shopping malls, construction workers, junior accounting personnel, call center customer representatives, plumbers, paid surveyors, busboys at hotels, internships in government institutions, paid tutoring, public transport drivers, workers in textile workshops, sports coaching at the gym, small-scale traders, cashiers in the supermarket, etc. Students might work irregularly within a year, or they might continue to work in a particular business for a few years. Most students have insurance records, but insurance premiums are not paid regularly. In addition, the wages they receive are generally below the minimum wage. Agricultural activities in Anatolia and especially hazelnut and tea farming in the Eastern Black Sea Region continue, despite neoliberal agricultural policies. Many students start working as unpaid/paid workers in these agricultural activities from the age of 7.

P.35. (22 years old. Economics. Artvin): I started collecting tea and hazelnuts when I was 7 years old. I studied at a boarding school for 6 years. I worked as a worker in a bakery, restaurant, and call center. After completing my high school education, I took a break from education for one year. Together with my father, we worked as construction workers and paid off our house...

Q.441. (20 years old. the Cinema and Television. From Gümüşhane to Bursa): I worked as a

construction worker from the age of 14 until I started my university education.

P.36. (24 years old. Economics. From Erzurum to Tekirdağ): My father worked as a construction worker in Germany and Istanbul for a long time... He was a tough man. I got beat up a lot by him... He once threw an ashtray on my head and the ashtray broke... My father died at the age of 46... We are 10 siblings. Since I was 7 years old, I have worked in many jobs in the service industry, such as a waiter in cafes, a salesperson in stores, an employee in carpet cleaning and coal transportation companies... I feel a huge responsibility for my family...

On the other hand, the answers given to the question of 'what is your mother's occupation' are as follows: 35.7% of the answers are housewife/unemployed, 4.8% are civil servants, 7.6% are workers, and 3.5% are retired. Also, data were not available for 46.4 % of the survey papers. At this point, the question may not have been properly understood by the students. In other words, if it is thought that the mother does not have an occupation and stays at home all day, this will increase the rate of unemployed women to more than 80% in total.

As can be seen from the research data, in accordance with the classical patriarchal culture and the discourse of breadwinner masculinity in Anatolia, fathers and sons are active workers in the public sphere and start earning money from an early age, and women become housewives and mothers.

(Kandiyoti 2013; Sancar 2008; Boratav ve Fişek and Ziya 2018).

### 3. MASCULINITY AS POWER: POWER STRUGGLES IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES

Hegemonic masculinities legitimized in patriarchal gender regimes are the powerful elements that enable men to dominate other men and women through violence and/or persuasion. The dominance-based relations of men with other men and women constitute the patriarchal gender structure, and at the same time, such an authoritarian gender structure create a pattern of limitation on current gender practices (Connell 1987; Segal 2007; Tezcek 2021).

In this framework, masculinities used as a power by men in patriarchal gender regimes can lead to inequality in the distribution of resources, gaining advantage or making concessions in social institutions where gender practices are experienced. All social institutions such as family and kinship, school, army, company, state are areas where gender relations are realized, and gender practices are applied.

In this direction, with the first two questions below and the answers given to these questions, it was tried to determine to what extent the absolute male power, which is specific to the classical patriarchal gender regime in Anatolia, provides legitimacy in family and kinship relations. According to the results, even if the perception of absolute male power does not constitute the majority, it can be stated that this perception still has an average validity

in Anatolia, where families of workers, farmers and small shopkeepers are densely concentrated.

The approaches to the proposition "My family is proud of me because I am a man" are as follows: 20.7% completely agree, 20.7% agree, 19.6% neither agree nor disagree, 21.1% disagree, 16.8% strongly disagree. Relevant data were not available for 1.1% of the survey papers.

The approaches to the proposition "When I go out, I come home late in the evening and my father and mother don't mind it" are as follows: 27.7% completely agree, 32% agree, 12.6% neither agree nor disagree, 15.7% disagree, 9.4% strongly disagree. Relevant data were not available for 2.6% of the survey papers.

The following six propositions are intended to measure male power and the perception of legitimate masculinities in Anatolia on the following basis: First, to what extent is male power associated with having a good job and financial power in the public sphere? Second, to what extent are legitimate masculinities defined by having micropower in the family over women and children? Third, to what extent is male power defined by a training process based on rigid hierarchy, physical strength, and violence? The positive response rate to the six propositions was quite high. According to these results, as discussed in the relevant national literature, hegemonic masculinity traits and male power in Anatolia are based on university education, having a good job, doing military service, and getting married (Sancar

2008; Boratav ve Fişek ve Ziya 2018; Selek 2014; Özbay 2013)

The approaches to the proposition "I am the eldest brother and I need to protect my siblings" are as follows: 43.4% completely agree, 19.8% agree, 5.2% neither agree nor disagree, 3.7% disagree, 11.1% strongly disagree. Relevant data were not available for 16.8% of the survey papers.

The approaches to the proposition "I am studying at the university because I want to have a good job" are as follows: 52.1% completely agree, 29% agree, 8.1% neither agree nor disagree, 4.6% disagree, 4.4% strongly disagree. Relevant data were not available for 2% of the survey papers.

The approaches to the proposition "Men should do their military service" are as follows: 36.6% completely agree, 26.4% agree, 15.3% neither agree nor disagree, 9.2% disagree, 10.9% strongly disagree. Relevant data were not available for 1.7% of the survey papers.

As can be seen, military service is important for students. In the historical and cultural context, there is an institutional strengthening of the patriarchal and militarized masculinity perception and practice. The two historical and social reasons are the realization of the conquests needed during the Ottoman Empire and the formation of anti-imperialist and nationalist reflexes against the imperialism of the West during the establishment of the Turkish Republic (Gerami 2005). In this historical process, the right-wing politics, which includes the ideologies of Islamism, nationalism, and conservatism, has been on the rise

again in Turkey, especially since the late 1990s, in relation to the world political conjuncture (Bozok 2013). At the current stage of Turkish capitalism, since the early 2000s, neo-colonial activities have developed in Africa and the Middle East with the military interventions under the control of the AKP government. This process has been culturally legitimized by the discourse on the sanctity of compulsory conscription, especially in the mass-media (Sancar 2008; Selek 2014; Helvacioğlu 2006; Altınay 200; Hoffmann 2019; Segell 2019).

The approaches to the suggestion that "My father wants me to graduate from university and have a good job" are as follows: 70.6% completely agree, 18.1% agree, 3.1% neither accept nor accept, 1.1% disagree, 4.1% strongly disagree. Relevant data were not available for 3.1 % of the survey papers.

The approaches to the statement "I want to do my military service, have a good job and get married" are as follows: 38.8% completely agree, 25.9% agree, 15.3% neither agree nor disagree, 8.7% disagree, 9.4% strongly disagree. Data were not available for 2% of the survey papers.

The approaches to the proposition "The issue of finding a job stresses me out!" are as follows: 43.6% completely agree, 24.2% agree, 15.5% neither agree nor disagree, 8.3% disagree, 7.4% strongly disagree. Data were not available for 1.1% of the survey papers.

On the other hand, according to the general in-depth interview results briefly pointed out by the five examples below, families with a background of working class, small farmer and artisan sections still

have a high tendency to be extended-family and strong kinship ties in Anatolia. The violent power of the grandfather, the elderly family members, and the father, respectively, in the family cannot be questioned by younger men and women. The absolute obedience is expected. Due to this strict masculine authority, conflict and reconciliation-laden gender relations occur between younger and older generations (Boratav ve Fişek ve Ziya 2018; Kandiyoti 2013).

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize the direct interaction between gender norms and the political climate that has developed in Turkey since the early 2000s. As Deniz Kandiyoti (2016) points out, the political climate under AKP rule since 2006 has shown authoritarian tendencies as well as neoliberal conservatism, which has affected the family structure in Turkey. In this process, a "masculinity crisis" has appeared for the following reasons: the increase in male unemployment due to neoliberal economic policies and economic crises, the persistent rise of the feminist movement. All these developments have led to the normalization of violence in daily life and created a negative impact on family structure in Turkey.

P.32. (19 years old. Economics. From Ordu to Samsun): "My family is very close to our relatives... Our relatives suggested that I study finance or economics. I chose the department of economics at university. I want a job where I will specialize in financial affairs when I graduate from university..."

P.5. (19 years old. Economics. From Ordu to Istanbul): My father wants me to break up with my girlfriend and marry my aunt's daughter when I graduate from the university...

P.6. (23 years old. Economics. From Ordu to Istanbul): My family is very close to our relatives... Our relatives influence our family decisions... We live in the same apartment and street with the families of my uncles and aunts... My mother is a worker in a car factory, and she gives all the money she receives as a wage to my father....

P.14. (21 years old. Economics. From Ordu to Istanbul): Our relations with our relatives are very close. We have real estate investment in partnership with our relatives... I trust my cousins and when I have troubles, I share them with my cousins... It would be better if the man in the family is the breadwinner, and the woman is the housewife... I am seriously worried about finding a job after graduating from university. My father and my uncle say they have already planned my future, but I'm not so sure...

P.15. (22 years old. Economics. Samsun): What will I do when I graduate from university? I am very troubled about this. Should I do my military service? Should I try to find a job in the private sector? Or should I apply for the police or military profession?

P.19. (24 years old. Economics. From Çorum to Ankara): My relatives and family are constantly putting pressure on me to graduate from university, get a job, get married and do my military service. I'm worried...



#### 4. MEN'S CONTROL OF WOMEN'S SEXUALITY: HONOUR/'NAMUS' AND 'HOLY MOTHERHOOD'

Historically and socially, in patriarchal culture, women's bodies and sexuality are oppressed and controlled by men through violence. In this regard, just as the body is not a purely biological entity, sexuality is not a purely biological process. The body and sexuality are socially constructed and performed in daily life (Millett 2016; MacKinnon 1982). Especially in penis-centered heterosexual relationships, men tend to exert power over women. Ken Plummer (2005, p.179) emphasizes that male sexuality is prone to weakness and vulnerability. Fear and insecurity of men come to the fore in many public posts about male sexuality. It is very problematic to attribute such a great socio-cultural and sexual power to a penis as an ordinary, sensitive body organ, and to put pressure on male individuals for this organ to function as desired.

Traditionally, two of the ways men control women's bodies and sexuality have been shaped around the practices of honor and holy motherhood. According to Germaine Tillion (2006), patrilineal kinship relations, which have historically developed with property and land ownership, especially in Mediterranean societies, keep women's body and sexuality under control through the practice of honor.

On the other hand, according to Fatima Mernissi (2018), Islamic belief argues that female sexuality is active and male sexuality is passive. Therefore, men must be guarded against the destructive female

attraction. The active sexuality of women should be controlled through the practices of honor killings, virginity control, veiling, etc. for the continuity of the Muslim social order. In addition, Ayesha M. Imam (2018) argues that different Muslim communities trying to practice the religion of Islam have different practices. Especially right-wing religious groups have serious concerns about female sexuality, and they approach female sexuality as immoral. For this reason, practices such as covering women's bodies and honor killings stand out among these groups.

With the establishment of nation-states in the historical and social change processes, the effects of power relations pertaining to kinship, tribe, clan affiliation have decreased in some regions and/or national affiliations have begun to gain importance as well as kinship affiliations. According to Diane E. King (2008), honor killings ensure the reproduction of sovereignty of a larger patrilineal institutional entity, namely the state.

Similarly, the nation-state, which was established after the anti-imperialist struggles in Turkey in the early 1900s, preserved the patriarchal power relations from the past by transforming them. While power relations based on kinship continue to have an impact in the local areas of Anatolia, the nationality and patriotism gain importance through the nuclear family, which legitimizes the state power, through the new gender roles of men and women. For the protection, glorification and progress of the homeland and nation, it is ensured that each man adopts the ideology of compulsory military service, and each woman internalizes the ideology of

motherhood. While the body and sexuality of women in each nuclear family represent the homeland that must be protected, each man is in the role of a soldier who must protect the honour of the homeland/woman (Sirman 2006, Kalav 2012, Sancar 2022, Altınay 2004).

In this regard, as Ferhunde Özbay (1992) stated, in Turkey, historically, the status of women in the context of gender relations is determined by fertility practices or, in conservative and nationalist ideological terms, maternal capacity. In addition to these unique historical perceptions in Turkey, since the early 1980s, in parallel with the rise of conservative and right-wing ideological movements in the world, power relations in the public and private spheres have also been reshaped in Turkey. Islamist and right-wing ideological views that adapt to neoliberalism have gained hegemonic power in these spheres. These Islamist and right-wing ideologies emphasize that the duty of women is basically motherhood, and motherhood is sacred (Öztañ 2015; Gezer 2018; Başterzi 2008).

As a result, religious and right-wing ideological hegemony and neoliberal labor markets have a more negative impact on women's employment in Turkey than in the West. According to the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute, the employment rate of women was 26.3% in 2021. In 2020, the employment rate of women in the 25-49 age group with children under the age of 3 in their household was 25.2%, while the employment rate of men was 85.5% (TUİK 2021).

Considering the above-mentioned views, male students have similar views on both honor and holy motherhood, as can be seen below.

The approaches to the proposition that 'Men should protect Women's honor/namus' are as follows: 49.7% totally agree, 27% agree, 8.3% neither agree nor disagree, 6.1% not agree, 7.6% strongly disagree. Also, data were not available for 1.3 % of the survey papers.

The approaches to the statement that 'Heaven Lie Beneath the Feet of Our Mothers' are as follows: 78.4% totally agree, 12.2% agree, 3.1% neither agree nor disagree, 1.5% not agree, 2.8% strongly disagree. Data were not available for 2 % of the survey papers.

The approaches to the statement that 'I do not Want My Sister to have a Boyfriend' are as follows: 9.6% totally agree, 11.3% agree, 26.1% neither agree nor disagree, 19.6 not agree, 15% strongly disagree. Interestingly, data were not available for 18.3% of the survey papers. This rate is well above the survey average and in general, the percentages of intra-scale judgment distributions are close to each other. It is thought that this situation reflects the cultural conflict/confusion that male students experience about honor.

Similarly, the approaches to the proposition that 'when she goes out, My Sister must come Home before Night Fall' are as follows: 15% totally agree, 17.2% agree, 16.8% neither agree nor disagree, 18.5% not agree, 11.3% strongly disagree. Again, strikingly, data were not available for 21.1% of the survey papers. This rate is well above the survey

average and in general, the percentages of intra-scale judgment distributions are close to each other.

Moreover, the approaches to the proposition that ‘I should marry the woman with whom I will have my first romantic relationship’ are as follows: 20.7% totally agree, 18.3% agree, 29.2% neither agree nor disagree, 13.3% not agree, 14.8% strongly disagree. The relevant data were not available for 3.5% of the survey papers. Again, as can be seen, the percentages of intra-scale judgment distributions are generally close to each other.

P.5. (19 years old. Economics. From Ordu to Istanbul): My older sister preferred to wear trousers rather than skirts, so my father got very angry and did not send her to high school. My sister did not give up and later graduated from open high school...

P.10. (23 years old. Economics. From Artvin to Samsun): ...One day, I will have a romantic relationship with a woman for the first time and I will marry that woman. Because the man should protect the honor of the woman...

P.12. (24 years old. Business Administration. Çorum): I want to be a police officer. Because the profession of policing is both a secure public job and a sacred profession... I would like to marry the woman with whom I will have a romantic relationship for the first time one day. I don't want the woman I will marry to have a job...

## 5. THE MASCULINE SELF AND OTHERS: WOMEN, MEN'S EMOTIONAL IMMATURITY, SEXUALITY

In early psychological models, it is argued that the psychological distance between the mother and the boy during the early development period enables the man to develop independent, rational (non-emotional) and autonomous character traits. Such arguments indicate that many early psychoanalysts, including S. Freud, justified the patriarchal/unequal sexual division of labor in general. On the other hand, Nancy Chodorow emphasizes the interplay of the psychological development of girls and boys with the cultural codes and norms that shape institutional and individual relations in patriarchal capitalist societies (Chodorow 1978).

According to Victor Seidler, the patriarchal hegemonic masculinity pattern is constructed over the roles of femininity and masculinity, which are created in an opposite and hierarchical manner under the influence of the Western Cartesian tradition of thought (Seidler 2007, p. 9). This hegemonic ideology and discourse of masculinity, which establishes power over women, children, and other men within the patriarchal cultural system, excludes and marginalizes all imaginary features of femininity with an essentialist perspective, creates significant inequalities and violence for both women and men in daily life. On the one hand, all men have power over women and enjoy this patriarchal privilege throughout their lives, in other words, control over women's bodies, sexuality and labor. On the other

hand, this hierarchical and violent power play harms men themselves. While men dominate women through this power, men also dominate each other through class, gender, ethnicity, race, age categories.

Michael Kaufman argues in *Cracking the Armor* that masculinity is ‘a collective hallucination’ (Kaufman 2002, p. 22). This means that although it is not possible to apply a certain idealized masculinity model to the daily lives of ordinary male individuals, the glorification, blessing and realization-effort of male individuals to this hegemonic model causes a collective hallucination. While men pursue this ideal masculinity through their lives, they harm not only women but also other men and themselves.

The competition for dominance among males leads to individual fear and anxiety of failure. Despite these fears and concerns, men must appear strong in the struggle for dominance in the public and private spheres. They have already learned to ignore and suppress their emotions from an early age. Men are aware that expressing their emotions will leave them vulnerable and this is associated with the weakness attributed to women. In order not to be accused of being weak, a sissy, and feminine, men do not tend to share their emotional experiences and feelings with anyone and therefore feel alienation, isolation, and loneliness.

In many patriarchal societies, such as Mediterranean and Muslim societies, male individuals are brought up with the perception that women are weak and that dominating them is proof

of their masculinity. It is not possible for these male individuals, who are raised to be self-centred, to establish a healthy relationship with women based on interdependency and equality. Instead, women are used by men as tools for bodily pleasures, reproduction to perpetuate their lineage, and providing safe environments for men's emotional immaturity. Characteristics of the poor emotional development, which also lead to violence against women, are: avoiding taking responsibility for their own actions, lack of empathy, cognitive distortions associated with the values of the patriarchal system, a troubled view of the world and relationships with others, and emotional constriction (Verdú and Mañas 2017: 183).

On the other hand, in the patriarchal capitalist gender regime, sexuality (cathexis) is an important site of politics. According to Raewyn Connell (1997, p. 69), sexual practice is a body-reflexive cultural practice. Therefore, sexual practices take place within certain structures and institutions historically. The sexual practices learned in these institutions in connection with the interests of certain class, race, religion, and gender groups are also the conflicting/reconciled area of power relations created by these interest groups. In other words, sexuality is a political field. The struggle for dominance, oppression, subordination, and violence in sexual practices are issues of sexual policy. Marital rape, pregnancy pressures, birth control, child marriage, incest, homosexual and lesbian sexual intercourse etc. are the topics of discussion of sexual policy. The state

also actively intervenes in sexual policy through public health and population policies.

In Mediterranean and Muslim societies where patriarchal gender relations are dominant, masculine sexual practices are at the centre of sexual politics. In these societies where the female body has become a sexual object, boys learn to establish sexual dominance over women through their penises from an early age. Fatima Mernissi (2018, p. 104-107) emphasizes that there is a 'schizophrenic situation' in these societies where the female body and sexuality are controlled by men through the tradition of "honour". When men have sexual relations with women, on the one hand, they cause women to lose their honour in the eyes of the society, which leads to their humiliation, insults and even murder. On the other hand, men prove their dominance over women and are exalted in the eyes of society thanks to this sexual relationship.

Within this framework, the outcomes of our field research are in close interaction with these theoretical and historical explanations.

The approaches to the proposition "*Sometimes I don't understand women, they are very strange creatures!*" are as follows: 35.5% totally agree, 20.5% agree, 18.3% neither agree nor disagree, 13.1% not agree, 10.2% strongly disagree. The relevant data were not available for 2.4% of the survey papers.

The approaches to the proposition "*My girlfriend is a nice girl but sometimes I don't understand her!*" are as follows: 16.8% totally agree, 29.6% agree,

19.8% neither agree nor disagree, 8.5% not disagree, 10.2% strongly disagree. Interestingly, data were not available for 15% of the survey papers. This rate is well above the survey average and in general, the percentages of intra-scale judgment distributions are close to each other. For this reason, it is noteworthy that these data reflect the cognitive/cultural conflict/confusion that male students experience about their emotional relationships with women and emotions in general.

The approaches to the proposition "*Sexuality is problematic in our society*" are as follows: 53.2% totally agree, 24.4% agree, 12.6% neither agree nor disagree, 3.3% not agree, 5.4% strongly disagree. The relevant data were not available for 1.1% of the survey papers.

P.5. (19 years old. Economics. From Ordu to Istanbul): I learned about sexuality in secondary and high school in the dormitory... I have a girlfriend, but I don't know women very well.

P.6. (23 years old. Economics. From Ordu to Gebze): I learned about sexuality from the older brothers on the street where our house is located. I have a girlfriend I met online. We've been dating online for a year. We've never met each other face to face, but I really like her, and I want to marry her...

P.9. (22 years old. Economics. Ankara): I learned about sexuality in a friendly environment from older brothers. I had my first sexual experience when I was 15...Women are such strange creatures! I don't understand them at all. They think very detailed...

P.11. (19 years old. Economics. From Bitlis to Istanbul): I learned about sexuality from the older brothers in my social circle and from the social environment in the internet cafe...

P.13. (23 years old. Department of Business Administration. From Erzurum to Istanbul): It's hard to understand women, they don't forget anything!

P.26. (20 years old. Department of Labor Economics and Industrial Relations. Ankara): ...Women are weird! They're liars!... I've dated different women five times...Women are not clear on anything, and they change their minds all the time!

Finally, the approaches to the proposition "Sometimes I think nobody understands me" are as follows: 28.8% totally agree, 22.4% agree, 30.9% neither agree nor disagree, 12% not agree, 4.6% strongly disagree. The relevant data were not available for 1.3% of the survey papers.

P.25. (20 years old. Economics. Ankara): I've been working since I was nine years old; I earn my own money... I'm not close with my father... I think very deeply but people don't understand me... I want to have a good job when I graduate from university... I'm having trouble with this. ... I do not share my troubles with anyone ... I prefer to be alone...

P.28. (19 years old. Economics. Ordu): I live in a village...I couldn't be a child because I always worked like an adult in the village...I'm worried about finding a good job after graduating from university...I'm usually alone when I'm worried or

sad, I listen to music, I take a walk in the village, I play with my dog ...

P.44. (24 years old. Economics. From Ordu to Samsun): My father is a police officer, and he is a very tough, authoritative, nervous man... I think my father have no feelings... I used drugs when I first started university... I was alone and not happy. ...I don't trust people...

Along with the above information, male students tend to view their sisters, mothers, and girlfriends as objects rather than individuals. Also, due to their Islamic faith, many male students want to marry with a virgin girl. Students position these objects outside and against their masculine-self. According to the students, these objects should be protected, that is, their bodies and sexuality should be kept under control. In this regard, most of the male students stated that they do not understand women and that women are strange creatures.

All male students stated that they learned about pornographic sexuality from the internet or from their older friends at a young age. When students' efforts to prove their masculine sexual power are combined with the discourse of protecting women's honor and the practices of instrumentalizing women's bodies, complex situations arise, and problematic and unsatisfactory situations arise for male students.

In addition, most male students who adopt the traditional patriarchal masculinity discourse avoid establishing an emotional bond with their own human-self, women, or other men. This situation

leads to the isolation of male students and even violent behavior patterns.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

In this research, Anatolian masculinities were examined through male university students. The framework of the research was formed on the basis of the concept of hegemonic masculinities introduced by Raewyn Connell. It is problematic to overgeneralize the hegemonic masculinity discourse and to express it as an absolute and universal pattern of behaviors in the lives of individuals. To prevent this problem, students' gender perceptions were discussed in interaction with historical, social and class categories and structures. However, examining the behaviors and daily life practices of male individuals outside the hegemonic discourse may be the subject of another research.

Having considered the historical and social context, the current conditions of patriarchal capitalism have led to an increase in the number of male poor with university degrees in Anatolia. Moreover, due to the unique development of patriarchal culture and unequal gender relations in Anatolia, these young men seem to embrace the breadwinner masculinity discourse similar to their fathers. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the tradition of the extended-family and kinship-relations played an important role in the performance of gender roles in the context of patriarchal culture in Anatolia. Through these gender-laden institutions, gender roles and relations are transmitted from

generation to generation through conflicting/consensual processes.

Male students are under pressure to graduate from the university and find a good job, which is the major requirements of the hegemonic patriarchal masculinity discourse. Compulsory military service has historically been in line with specific national and Islamic social and cultural values.

Moreover, the idea of male oppression and control over women's body and sexuality, which belongs to the patriarchal masculinity discourse, is adopted by many male students. Also, as Fatima Mernissi points out, male students make problematic and unsatisfactory attempts to prove their masculine sexual power within a schizophrenic historical, gender construct that includes both honor of women and pornography at the same time. Finally, male students have difficulty in describing the emotional pressures of daily life on them and sharing it with women and other men. This situation causes a feeling of loneliness and sometimes violent behavior.

## ENDNOTES

İ Academic departments with 20 in total and with different participation percentages are as follows: Economics 24.2%, Physical education college 1.7%, Art department 1.7%, Preschool teaching 1.3%, Psychological counselling and guidance 2.8%, Mathematics 1.7%, Classroom teaching 1.1%, Turkish teaching 2.6%, Primary school teaching 2.6%, Dentistry 13.2%, Labor Economics and Industrial Relations 5.3%, Science teaching 0.4%, Sociology 0.4%, History 0.9%, Business Administration 4.2%, Politics and Public Administration

10.8%, Theology 10.8%, Television and Cinema 6.6%, Nursing 7.9%, Faculty of Agriculture 3.6% and missing data 0.4%.

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