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A SOCIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT ON GENDER EQUALITY FROM A MALE'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Research on gender is increasingly significant. Both foreign and domestic researches reveal that there is a multifaceted relationship between gender equality and social development. Gender equality impacts both micro- and macro-level factors, including the increase in the education system and the level of social and economic development. It is obvious that there are some precautions taken for gender equality in the social and economic development plans of countries. In this respect, it is necessary to carry out studies on the subject. From this point of view, it is aimed to reveal gender equality from a male perspective in this paper. Within the scope of the research designed with the qualitative research method, in-depth interviews were conducted with 21 men and the obtained data were analyzed with the computer program Maxqda. The study was carried out in Şişli district of Istanbul. When the findings of the research are evaluated, it has been determined that there is an awareness of gender and a positive approach towards gender equality in Şişli, the most developed district of Istanbul. However, despite this, the study concludes that the education level of the individual and his hometown are quite determinative on the perception of gender equality. It has been determined that men who are elementary and high school graduates and whose hometown is located in Southeastern Anatolia and the Black Sea region adopt traditional role patterns more.

Keywords: Gender, Male, Inequality, Empowerment

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Erkek Bakış Açısıyla Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliğine Yönelik Sosyolojik Bir Değerlendirme

Öz

Günümüzde toplumsal cinsiyete yönelik çalışmaların önemi gittikçe artmaktadır. Gerek uluslararası gerekse ulusal düzeyde yapılan araştırmalar toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği ve toplumsal gelişme arasında çok yönlü bir ilişkinin olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği beraberinde eğitim düzenin yükselmesi, toplumsal ve ekonomik gelişmişlik seviyesinin artması gibi pek çok mikro ve makro etkiyi içinde barındırmaktadır. Ülkelerin sosyal ve ekonomik kalkınma planları arasında cinsiyet eşitliğine yönelik alınması gereken tedbirlerin olduğu ortadadır. Bu yönüyle konuyla ilgili çalışmaların yapılması gereklilik olarak karşımızda durmaktadır. Buradan hareketle yapılan çalışma toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini erkek bakış açısıyla ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Nitel araştırma yöntemi ile tasarlanan araştırma kapsamında 21 erkek ile derinlemesine mülakat gerçekleştirilmiş ve elde edilen veriler Maxqda bilgisayar programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışma İstanbul'un Şişli ilçesinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yapılan çalışmanın bulguları değerlendirildiğinde İstanbul'un en gelişmiş ilçesi olan Şişli'de toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğine yönelik olumlu bir yaklaşımın olduğu saptanmıştır. Ancak buna rağmen bireyin sahip olduğu eğitim düzeyinin ve memleketinin cinsiyet eşitliğine yönelik algı üzerinde oldukça belirleyici olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Özellikle ilköğretim ve ortaöğretim mezunu ve memleketi Güneydoğu Anadolu ve Karadeniz bölgesinde yer alan erkeklerin geleneksel rol kalıplarını daha fazla benimsedikleri saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Erkeklik, Eşitsizlik, Kalkınma

Introduction

Various social elements shape perceptions of women and gender equality, which varies depending on country characteristics. The economic situation, education level, religious and political characteristics of the countries significantly affect the position of women (McDermott, 2020, p.1). Particularly in underdeveloped countries, women are predominantly responsible for domestic work and care services, causing them to take limited or no place in public sphere (Lerner, 1969, p.6). In other words, the social structure shaped by the patriarchal understanding based on gender inequality place women in positions of unequal power (Ince Yenilmez, 2015, pp.144-145; Kashdarma, 2018, pp.2451-2452). In recent years, it has been observed that the steps taken towards gender equality are not sufficient even in the examples of developed countries. In Klasen's (2020, p.9) study titled "From 'MeToo' to Boko Haram: A survey of levels and trends of gender

inequality in the world", it is stated that movements made to increase the presence of women in the public sphere are stable in many developing and developed countries. In this respect, gender equality appears at a point that should be supported in developed countries and particularly in underdeveloped countries.

International and national studies on gender equality emphasize the concept of equality in the context of both global health (Basar, 2017, pp.132-133; Yasar Dincer & Yirmibesoglu, 2020, p.782; Shanon et al., 2019, p.567) and development (Coe et al., 2019, p.592; Vepa, 2007, p.328) and social justice (Casad et al., 2022, pp.10-11; Herdman & Badir, 2008, p.162; Mshweshwe, 2020, p.4; Ors & Kaya, 2021, p.1713). In this context, problem areas and high-risk elements should be identified and at the same time, they should be dealt with more effectively and competently. In this respect, it is thought that the findings made in various country samples will contribute to studies carried out on a global scale. In the study, firstly, the discussion on gender equality in Türkiye was put forward, and then the data obtained on gender equality from the male perspective was evaluated in the context of cultural patterns in Türkiye. In the conclusion and suggestions part, a general evaluation of the subject was made and various suggestions were brought forward in a sociological context.

Gender Equality in Türkiye

Contrary to the concept of gender, which is shaped according to physiological characteristics, the concept of gender, which is shaped in the context of society's perceptions and expectations, brings many limitations for women. Gender perception constitutes an important area of struggle that affects women's existence and freedom in social life (Allen, 1996). Many countries create important strategies to fight for equality between men and women and prioritize equality efforts in this field. When evaluated specifically in Türkiye, the current situation regarding gender equality is quite thought-provoking. According to the World Economic Forum's 2022 Global Gender Gap Index, Türkiye ranks 124th out of 146 countries (WEF, 2022, p. 10). The Global Gender Inequality Index has been published since

2006 to reveal the gender inequality situation of countries. Türkiye's position in measurements made taking into account areas including healthy living and educational achievements reveals that there is a need for gender equality studies in the country (Bardakci & Oglak, 2022, p.72).

The origins of the social approach towards gender inequality in Türkiye are largely based on cultural codes. Social structure in Türkiye is diverse culturally, which means there are differences between all the seven regions. In the most general sense Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean Regions are economically and educationally more developed when compared to other regions Black Sea, Eastern Anatolia, South-eastern Anatolia and Central Anatolia Region (Bilgili & Vural, 2011, p.70; Bozok, 2018, p.36; Okten, 2009, p.304; Yavuz & Yucesahin, 2012, pp.106-107). Especially cultural differences become more apparent between regions. And these differing cultural patterns shape the perception of women in Türkiye. Various studies are being conducted on a global scale to show that cultural patterns affect the position of women (UNICEF, 2023). For example, Psaki (2016, pp.125-126) examined gender equality in education on the examples of Bangladesh, Guatemala, Ethiopia and Kenya in her study titled "Addressing Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancy as Barriers to Gender Parity and Equality in Education". She concluded that the policies of these countries contain cultural and political elements that cause girls to drop out of their education.

The fact that the traditional structure of societies supports the secondary position of women makes the struggle for gender equality difficult. The patriarchal structure, supported by rigid cultural codes, constitutes one of the biggest obstacles to egalitarian practices. The most important step in replacing negative traditional extensions with positive and egalitarian approaches is the acceptance of the laws in social perception and their penetration into cultural extensions (Kilic & Ozturk, 2014, p.127). Artar and Tekdal Fildis (2012, p.13) examined the laws and legislation regarding gender equality in Iceland, Norway, Finland and Sweden and compared them with the practices in Türkiye. As a result, they revealed that the legislation

adopted in Türkiye could not find sufficient equivalents in practice. In other words, legal measures alone are not sufficient. They also emphasized that the reflections in the social structure should be examined and supported by social policy practices. Social policy practices constitute one of the most effective areas for gender equality. The policies adopted by states and the practices put forward within the framework of these policies affect the social perspective on women's issues (Hayward & Karim, 2019, pp.17-18). At this point, it is very important to implement egalitarian approaches and practices, especially in countries where the position of women is shaped by a patriarchal perspective, despite negative situations such as the continuity of the family institution being the sole responsibility of women and the traditional roles of women preventing them from entering the labor market (Dedeoglu, 2009, p.53; Haas, 1990, p.401).

In order for gender equality to be accepted in social perception, it is very important that the structure of state institutions is formed with equality awareness and written and visual media support publications sensitive to gender equality (Celebi, 2022, pp.827-828) and sanctions are created with sensitivity in this direction. At this point, one of the most effective international initiatives towards gender equality in Türkiye is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). CEDAW appears as a contract that addresses women's rights in an egalitarian manner within the scope of human rights and foresees progressive steps to be taken at this point (Icli, 2018, p.135). It was approved by Türkiye in 1985 with the aim of combating all kinds of inequality factors both in the public and private spheres (Dirimese, 2022, p.2).

Another important step taken in 2011 regarding women's rights is the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence), of which Türkiye was one of the first signatories. With the signing of the agreement, some egalitarian changes were made in domestic law (Gokdemir et al., 2022, p. 453; Moroglu, 2012, p.367). Following the Istanbul Convention, the "Law No. 6284 on the Protection of the

Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women" was made in 2012. With these developments, women's rights in Türkiye were intended to be protected by the Turkish Civil Code and international agreements. However, with the decision published in the Official Gazette in 2021, Türkiye approved the decision to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention (Leye et al., 2021, p.3).

Methodology

Purpose and Importance of the Research

Individuals, especially in patriarchal societies, have roles and responsibilities that belong to their gender simply because they are men and women (Senol & Calar, 2018, p.2; Citizen, 2007, pp.30-31). According to Giddens (2000, p.102), socialization in the context of gender has such a very strong structure that opposing it can lead to unrest. Moreover, once gender is assigned to an individual, society expects that individual to act in accordance with the behaviors designated as "female" and "male". These expectations are fulfilled and reproduced within the practices of daily life. Perception towards gender varies according to the characteristics of countries. It is noteworthy that, especially in underdeveloped and developing countries, women are valued less in the context of gender role stereotypes and they are more exposed to inequality and discrimination (Say, 1998, p.27). The researches carried out at this point are very important as they both determine the perspective on the position of women and contribute to the social policies to be created. In this respect, the aim of this research conducted in Istanbul, which is the city that receives the most immigration in terms of Türkiye's cultural structure and reflects Türkiye most socio-culturally, is to determine the perception of women in social life from the male perspective. From this point forth, the fundamental problem statements to achieve this goal can be sorted as follows:

- What do men think about the distribution of roles and responsibilities between genders in public and private (domestic) spaces?
- Does the individual's cultural background have an impact on his perspective on gender?

Participants

The study was conducted in Istanbul, located in Marmara Region, which is the most developed region of Türkiye in terms of both economic and educational level. Istanbul is a metropolitan city that receives immigrants from every region of Türkiye in terms of the job opportunities it provides and therefore all the cultural patterns of Türkiye can be observed. Istanbul is divided into 39 districts. The study was carried out in Şişli district of Istanbul. The determination of the district was based on "Socio-Economic Development Ranking of Districts Research" (2022, p.104), conducted by the Ministry of Technology and Industry of the Republic of Türkiye. According to the results of the research conducted by the Ministry, Şişli is the most developed district of Istanbul. The sample group in the study consists of men who go to coffeehouses. In Türkiye, coffeehouses appear as patriarchal places where only men from all socio-economic backgrounds can go. Women's entry into these places is not culturally welcomed and they are accepted by society as places where only men socialize. During the interviews, it was seen that men felt more confident in these places and were more willing and able to talk. In this context, the participants were assigned based on the criteria of being male and going to coffeehouses operating in the Şişli district of Istanbul, and the research was conducted with 21 male participants

Data Collection

In this paper, the problem of equality in Türkiye was discussed from the perspective of men and evaluated sociologically. Qualitative research method was used in the study. The research problem was explored as a process with techniques in-depth interviews, observations, etc. in qualitative research. It is aimed to reveal events or people's perspectives in a realistic and holistic way. At this point, the individual's subjective view was researched within the scope of the study and interpreted using qualitative techniques in the context of daily life (Creswell & Poth, 2018, pp.59-60; Karatas, 2015, p.63). The data was obtained using the in-depth interview technique and a semi-structured interview form. Participants were

assigned by the purposeful sampling technique, one of the non-random sampling methods. Purposeful sampling is a type of sampling that is frequently preferred in qualitative research to explain the subject of the research (Merriam, 2014, p.83; Yildirim & Simsek, 2000, p.109). Interviews lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Due to ethical requirements of scientific research, the ethics committee approval was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Bursa Technical University, with the decision dated 07.04.2023 and numbered E-69707128-050.02.04-103312 during the data collection process.

Data Analysis

During the interviews, questions prepared around certain themes were asked to the participants. During the data analysis process, the names of the participants were not given in accordance with the principle of confidentiality. In this respect, such abbreviations as IP1 (Interviewed Participant 1), IP2 (Interviewed Participant 2) etc. were used instead of the interviewed participants' real names. The data obtained from the interviews were coded and categorized at this stage. Maxqda computer-based program was used to analyze the data. In the program, data was coded in open, axial and selective coding stages. In open coding, the data were read one by one and grouped according to their similarities and differences. These data, which were grouped according to their similarities and differences in axial coding, were associated with each other in the context of the research problem. In the last stage of selective coding, the main question sentences of the research were associated with the axis codes in the previous stage. As a result, the themes of the research were created based on the relationship between selective codes and the obtained data were presented in a descriptive manner.

Findings

Understanding the male-dominated approaches and the nurturing elements underlying these approaches, which are the main issue of the patriarchal structure is crucial in the fight against gender inequality. From this point of view, the fieldwork part of the study is discussed under three main headings. In the first heading, the

socio-demographic characteristics of the men who participated in the research were given, in the second heading, general attitudes towards women's roles in the social structure were analyzed and in the third heading, the perspective on the concept of gender equality was analyzed, and finally, the participants' suggestions regarding gender equality were given. Maxqda computer program was used in the analysis of the data. In the program, data was coded in open, axial and selective coding stages. In open coding, the data were read one by one and grouped according to their similarities and differences. Ethics committee approval required by the ethical conditions of scientific research was obtained with the approval decision of Bursa Technical University Science, Engineering and Social Sciences Research ethics committee dated 07.04.2023 and 2023-8.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants

The formation of gender perception is greatly affected by the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals. When the ages of the participants were examined, there were 12 male participants in the 18-30 age range, 6 male participants in the 31-40 age range, 1 male participant in the 41-50 age range and 2 male participants in the 51-60 age range. Another feature considered among socio-demographic characteristics was place of birth. Since the data was very diverse, the birthplaces of the participants were categorized according to the regions. In this context, the birthplace of 5 people was in the South-eastern Anatolia Region, the birthplace of 3 people was in the Eastern Anatolia Region, the birthplace of 3 people was in the Black Sea Region, and the birthplace of 1 person was in the Central Anatolia Region. The birthplace of 9 people was in Marmara Region. When marital status was analyzed, it was seen that all participants were married.

In Türkiye, one of the prominent problem areas in gender equality is the low employment rates of women. In this aspect employment status of the spouses was questioned and it was seen that the spouses of 15 participants had a job and the remainder, 6 participants' spouses were unemployed. When the number of the children the participants had were questioned, 10 participants did not have children;

among the other participants, 5 people had 1 child and 6 people had 2 or more children. Another category that was predicted to play a role in the gender equality approach was educational status. At this point, the majority of the participants (13 people) were university graduates while 4 people were primary school graduates and 4 people were high school graduates. Finally, as for the professions of the participants, 10 people worked in the private sector, 8 people were tradesmen and 3 people were civil servants.

General Attitudes Towards Femininity Roles

Roles and expectations related to gender are created within the social structure. Many factors such as family, peer group, education, media, religion and politics are effective in this process. Due to these factors, the individual learns and interiorizes gender roles and responsibilities in the first years of her/ his life and shapes her/ his entire life and future accordingly (Collins & Russell, 1991, p.101; Eccells, 1994, p.589; Kaya & Yasar, 2021, p.4). The masculine culture emerges as a very important determinant here. In this process, women are primarily assigned the role of motherhood and are held more responsible for household chores. On the other hand, men are given roles such as master of the house and fatherhood, and they are expected to rule all living areas of the family (Dinc Kahraman, 2010, p.30; Mensah, 2023, p.51; Ullah & Naz, 2017, pp.33-34). In order to determine the views on gender equality from the male perspective, the participants were asked what the duties of women were in social life. 6 of the participants emphasized the patriarchal perspective on women's duties:

IP1, (Primary Education, Eastern Anatolia): In my opinion, housework should be given entirely to women. Of course, it should be based on gender, so women do and manage the housework.

IP2, (Primary Education, Black Sea): I think I am responsible for external affairs and consultation. I think my wife is responsible for internal affairs, too. I think that men are in the economic sense of working, but women are in home life.

IP3, (Primary Education, South-eastern Anatolia): Women's social duty, that is, to be a good wife. Devoting time for yourself and your spouse. Apart from that, there is a lot more. I can't think of much right now, in general she must be a good wife and mother. A good mother, a good friend. Anyway, one's best friend is one's wife.

IP14, (Primary Education, South-eastern Anatolia): Male works. For me, the most important duty of a woman is motherhood. I think we should have a life based on being a mother, and her job being a mother, rather than working anywhere.

Another finding obtained within the scope of the study is that women's having a job in the public sphere is considered important for men and their presence in the public sphere is an egalitarian reflection of the situation on the sharing of domestic responsibilities. However, at this point, it is determined that men who advocate an egalitarian approach also prioritize the workload of women working outside the home. Men who expressed their opinions with both the traditional approach and the egalitarian approach did not emphasize the domestic workload. In other words, domestic workload is perceived as a "women's responsibility" by men:

IP5, (Primary Education, Eastern Anatolia): In my opinion, housework should be given entirely to women. Of course, it should be based on gender, so women do and manage the housework.

IP8, (Bachelor, Marmara): When we look at the sharing of responsibility, it actually varies a lot depending on my or my spouse's working status.

IP18, (Bachelor, Marmara): In fact, this is done according to working conditions and is decided upon according to the work situation. The situation changes if the woman has a working life outside the home.

The answers given by the participants were categorized under two headings: traditional roles and dissociation of traditional roles. Based on these data, the "Code Map on Gender Roles" (Figure 1) was created. In the figure, the thickness of the lines between the categories indicates the high frequency, in other words, the

strength of the relationship. The thinness of the line indicates that the frequency is low, that is, the relationship is not strong. With the code map created the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and perspectives on traditional roles was questioned.

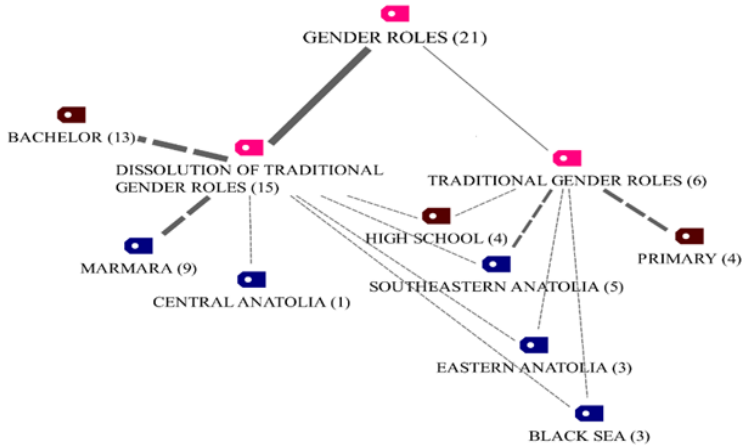


Figure 1. Code Map on Gender Roles

In accordance with the associations made in subcategories of "dissolution in traditional roles" and "traditional roles", it was revealed that the participants' place of birth and educational background played an important role in shaping their views on sharing roles and responsibilities. While the majority of the men under the category of dissolution of traditional roles and expressing egalitarian views, are participants who are bachelor graduates and whose place of birth is in Marmara Region, the men who adopt traditional roles and responsibilities are primary and high school graduates and participants whose birthplace is in the Southeastern Anatolia and Black Sea regions. In Figure 1, it is also noticeable that the opinions of some participants whose birthplaces are in Central Anatolia, Southeastern Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia and Black Sea regions, about gender roles are in the "dissolution of traditional roles" category. When the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants were analyzed more in detail, it was seen that these participants were higher education graduates. Similarly, it is seen that the views of some high school graduate participants about gender roles are again in the "dissolution of traditional

roles" category. When the socio-demographic characteristics of these participants were analyzed, it was found out that their birthplace was in Marmara Region. In other words, sometimes the level of education has dominated the cultural characteristics of the city where the individual was born, and sometimes the development level of the city where the individual was born has affected the individual's perspective in an egalitarian direction. The also study concludes that other socio-demographic categories, namely marital status, whether the spouse works or not, number of children and occupation information, did not show a significant difference.

Overview of the Concept of Gender Equality

In Eastern societies, the issue of gender equality is fundamentally perceived as a "women's issue" and most of the time, men's roles in ensuring gender equality are not taken into consideration. However, the contributions of men as a driving force for the elimination of inequality are undeniable (Scambor et al., 2014, p.553). At this point, the issue of how men perceive gender equality comes to the fore. Based on this idea, the question "What do you understand by the concept of gender equality?" was asked to the participants

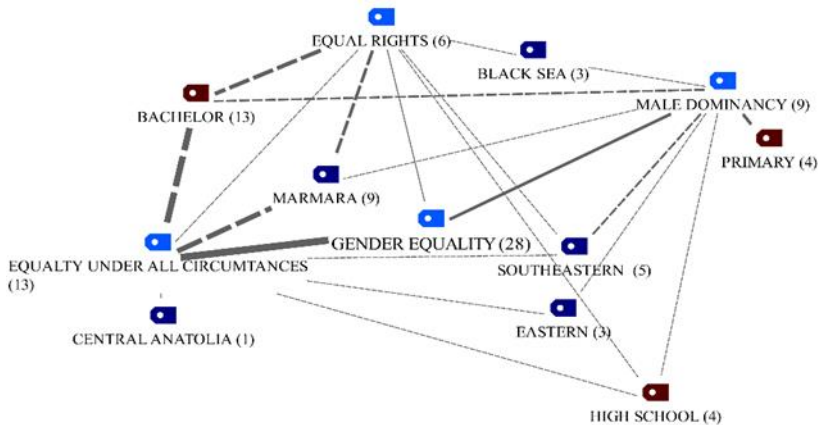


Figure 2. Code Map on Gender Equality

The answers given by the participants were associated with the "Code Map on Gender Equality" (Figure 2), which was created to reveal the perception of

gender. At this point, 9 participants stated that men are superior or privileged in social life; 6 participants stated that gender equality means that women and men have equal rights, and 13 participants stated that women and men are equal under all circumstances. It is noteworthy that the number of participants here is more than 21. This is due to the fact that some of the participants expressed their views on both rights and equality under all circumstances:

IP1 (Primary, Eastern Anatolia): Gender equality means nothing to me. I am also against rights. There is no such thing as equality. Impossible. I am against this.

IP2 (Primary, Black Sea): So, women will always know their femininity. Male his masculinity. Everyone will know their responsibility. So, in my opinion, there is no such thing as equality. So, there can be no equality. This cannot be from Allah. People are not equal in the presence of Allah what would happen if they were equal in my sight. So, they are not equal.

IP16 (High school, Southeastern Anatolia): On the one hand, it is better for the man to be a little superior. If the man protects the woman, figuratively takes her under his wing, that is, if he values her, I think the woman should also value him... This is not always happening. For example, women don't like men no matter how supportive they are. Or when there is even a small problem, she says she wants a divorce. As she is on a salary, she thinks she can make both hand meet. It happens most of the time.

In traditional societies, such situations as women's clothing or economic empowerment and their ability to make free decisions are seen as social threats for men (Archer, 2006, pp.149-150). At this point, improving women's rights both legally and socially is very important in fighting against these areas of inequality. As a matter of fact, the study concludes that participants who adopt an egalitarian approach generally emphasize gender through constitutional rights. This situation has been evaluated as a reflection of the progress of women's problems in Türkiye today through the struggle for equal rights

IP4 (Bachelor, Marmara): Here again, I think being a male or female is not important. What is important here is that being a human being. In this aspect the rights of women and men should also be equal.

IP5 (Bachelor, Marmara): I think men and women are separate individuals and that they are equal.

IP10 (High School, Marmara): Gender equality means that there is no difference between men and women both socially and in business life, and both should have equal rights.

IP15 (Bachelor, Black Sea): I think that both genders have equal rights in terms of male and female roles in society.

IP17 (Bachelor, Southeastern Anatolia): I think that the concept of gender equality means having no superiority over the other in terms of constitutional equal rights as well as the roles of men and women.

IP8 (Bachelor, Marmara): According to the laws of our country, equality before the law...

IP4 (Bachelor, Marmara): What I understand from the concept of gender equality is that women can do whatever men do in every environment and under all conditions.

Although today the codes of the traditional system are rooted from patriarchal structure (Giuliano, 2020, pp.956-957), modernism, globalization and various macro effects have caused significant social changes in most countries (Vandello & Cohen, 2008, p.663). In this respect, Türkiye has also been affected by these global changes. Especially with the influence of education and the development level of the city where the individual was born, the strict division of labor in the patriarchal family system has been bent, and thus egalitarian changes have begun to be seen in the roles and responsibilities of women (Unuvar & Tagay, 2015, p.24). Despite all these developments, the findings of the study reveal that it is still necessary to fight against the patriarchal view today.

Suggestions for Gender Equality

It is very important to create the political and legal basis on which these practices can be carried out taking the differentiation of social characteristics into account. For this purpose, in addition to the problem, the areas to be combated must be identified in a rational manner. In this context, the participants were asked the question: "How do you think it would be possible to have a social structure in your country where men and women have equal rights and share an equal life?" The figure named "Code Map on Whether Gender Equality is Possible" was created in accordance with the answers given by the participants. As can be seen in the code map, 16 participants express a positive opinion that gender equality can be achieved. On the other hand, according to 5 participants, it is not possible to achieve gender equality between women and men.

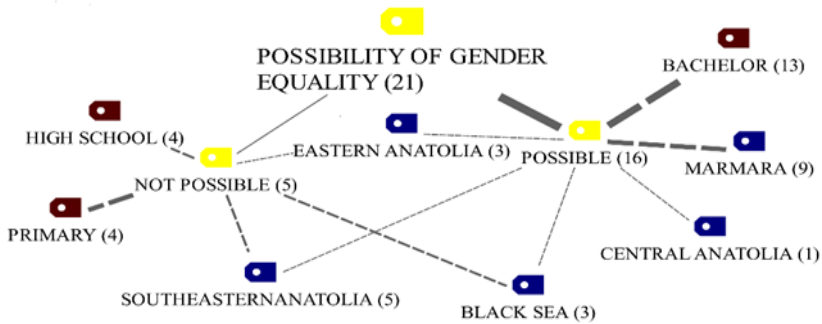


Figure 3. Code Map on the Possibility of Gender Equality

The participants, who argued that gender equality was possible, brought forward some suggestions for various problem areas. The main emphasis here is that equality is possible by changing the patriarchal mentality that dominates society and relegates women to a secondary class. In addition to the participants who think that a radical change in consciousness is necessary for this change, there are also participants who think that this change can be achieved through education. At this point, education is one of the concepts frequently emphasized regarding gender equality (O'Connor, 2020, p.221).

IP11 (Bachelor, Marmara): I think it is necessary for everyone to collaborate and come to the same line in terms of gender equality. I think education is preeminent here.

IP20 (Bachelor, Marmara): It may happen with a big change in mentalities. I think that anyone who can put their own egalitarian ideas forward will live happier.

In addition, some participants particularly emphasize family education. For example, according to participant IP18 (Bachelor, Marmara), with the education given in the family, children's mental infrastructure for gender equality will be prepared and can be transferred to other generations:

As we talked about at the beginning, when it comes to primary education, it is not just about university education. Parents need to take some part in this. People need to be able to change it... First of all, education is the focus. Because television and TV series change things a lot. It's a good education for him too. An education that starts in the family. Equal treatment in schools. "No sexist behavior!"

In addition to education, the targeted issues on both a global and local scale is women's gaining economic freedom (UN, 2023). In this respect, participant IP6 (Bachelor, Central Anatolia) said, "I think equality will be achieved when more women are employed and gain economic freedom. That's why women should complete their education as much as possible and earn more of their own income."

In the patriarchal systems, while the continuity of society is ensured through the different roles and responsibilities assigned to men and women, this situation also causes the inequality between genders to be reproduced within the family structure (Yesil & Yildirim, 2019, p.232). Since the family is seen as the keystone of regular functioning in patriarchal societies, there is a strict division of labor between women and men (Sahin & Bayhan, 2020, p.72; Jalovaara, 2003). For this reason, raising awareness and empowering individuals in the context of relationships is among the important steps to be taken to initiate the behavioral spiral in which

egalitarian relationships are produced. In this context, the basic dynamics of the social system such as education, economic situation, mentality change and family structure were criticized by the participants. At this point, the study also concludes that men have knowledge about the main problem areas for women.

Conclusion

The study, on the perception of gender equality from a male perspective, was conducted in Şişli district of Istanbul, which allows immigrants from all regions of Türkiye, has a high cultural diversity and is a city of regional importance. In the study, in-depth interviews were conducted with 21 men. Approaches to gender are imposed on the individual by various factors, especially during socialization processes (Hossen, 2020, pp.55-56). Socio-demographic variables emerge as an important element in this process. As for the socio-demographic features of the participants, it was seen that 12 people were between the ages of 20-30 and 9 people were born in the Marmara Region. The spouses of 15 participants were housewives and all of the participants were married according to their marital status. The education level of 13 people was bachelor's degree. And the majority of the participants (10 people) stated that they worked in the private sector.

Within the scope of the study, views on gender were analyzed and a code map regarding gender roles was created. The participants' opinions were categorized under two headings: traditional roles (patriarchal approach) and dissolution of traditional roles (egalitarian approach). At this point, the relationship between gender equality awareness and socio-demographic characteristics was analyzed. And it was found out that there was a relationship between the participants' place of birth information and their educational status and their opinions. To put a finer point, men who adopt traditional roles were mostly primary and high school graduates and their place of birth was in the Southeastern Anatolia and Black Sea regions. Participants whose birthplace was in the Marmara Region and who are bachelor graduates adopted a more egalitarian approach to the distribution of roles and responsibilities between genders. At this point, the study concludes that the culture and environment

in which individuals grow up are as effective as the education they have on gender equality awareness.

In this study participants were also asked what they thought about the distribution of roles and responsibilities. At this point, it was observed that 6 participants defined the most basic duty of women in terms of being a mother and a good wife. In addition, in evaluations made from a traditional perspective, it was seen that women's economic empowerment was emphasized as a factor that enabled them to be more involved in family decision-making processes. Similarly, Erzeybek and Gokceraslan Ciftci (2019, pp.71-72) discussed the issue of whether women participate in family decision-making processes in their research titled "Gender roles and marital adjustment of academic women". Researchers have emphasized that women who have a dominant character or who work in managerial positions are more directive in decisions to be made within the family. In this study, it is also thought that the appearance of women in the public sphere is one of the important factors affecting the decision-making processes within the family. At this point, rational steps are needed to make women more visible in the public sphere, especially in local practices.

Moreover, the participants defined gender mostly in terms of rights and equality. Based on this, the last section of the paper includes the participants' suggestions on how gender equality can be possible in Türkiye. In the code map created regarding whether gender equality is possible, it was seen that participants who adopted traditional roles put forward religious, political and economic patriarchal reasons about why gender equality would not be possible. The primary suggestions of the participants who said that gender equality would be possible in their country were about changing the social mentality. In addition, the idea that women gaining economic freedom, increasing the importance given to education and science, and raising family awareness will contribute to the process has been frequently put forward. In Türkiye, women's issues have recently been progressing through rights discussions, especially with the decision to withdraw from the

Istanbul Convention. In this respect, there is a need for radical gender equality approaches that are reflected in institutional and legal functioning at the local scale. In the light of this information, it is thought that the implementation of equality policies that differ according to regional and cultural characteristics, not only in Türkiye but also in different countries, will have positive effects, thus the developed gender equality strategies will produce more effective results in the social structure.

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