THE NF/OM MOVEMENT:

GAY MEN'S ENGAGEMENT WITH MASCULINITIES AND FEMININITIES IN TURKEY

CAN ARAS

ISTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY

2016

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Submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts in Cultural Studies

by

CAN ARAS

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Can Aras

113611012

Bülent Somay, Yrd. Doç. Dr. : .....

Hale Bolak Boratav, Prof. Dr.: .....

Hakan Gürvit, Prof. Dr.: .....

Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih: 09.09.2016

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı: 81

Anahtar Kelimeler

1) Masculinities
2) Femininities
3) Gay Social Networks
4) Qualitative Research

Anahtar Kelimeler

1) Erkeklikler
2) Kadınlıklar
3) Gey Sosyal Ağları
4) Nitel Araştırma

Abstract

This thesis aims to investigate the appearance and reappearance of masculinity and femininity as self-description and as precept for partner preference on gay social networks in order to understand meanings attached to masculinities and femininities by gay men who adopt a conciliatory attitude towards masculinity and belligerent attitude towards femininity. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews with 10 gay self-identified men in Istanbul. This thesis implies that gay men's engagement with gender practices reveals the determinism of patriarchy and heteronormativity and contribute sex/gender regime in Turkey that oppress the lives of gay men as well.

Özet

Bu tez, erkeklik kavramına dostça bir tavır, kadınlık kavramına ise nahoş bir tavır edinmiş *gey* erkeklerin bu kavramlara yükledikleri anlamları kavramak adına kendini ve beraber olmak isteyeceği kişileri tanıtmada bir kaide haline gelen erkeklik ve kadınlık kavramlarının *gey* sosyal ağlarında mütemadiyen var olmasını inceliyor. Veriler, kendini *gey* olarak tanımlayan ve İstanbul'da ikamet eden 10 erkekle yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler sayesinde meydana gelmiştir. Bu tez, *gey* erkeklerin toplumsal cinsiyet pratikleri ile olan ilişkisinin, erkek egemenliğin ve kurumsallaşmış heteroseksüelliğin düsturuna bağlı olduğunu ve *gey* erkeklerin de hayatlarına tahakküm eden Türkiye'deki cinsiyet/toplumsal cinsiyet sistemine katkıda bulunduğunu belirtir.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In a conversation about gender and sexualities with an anonymous person in the virtual world, I received a long paragraph as below:

> Guys often try to show that they are macho and forget that such a behaviour is seriously limiting sex pleasure. Guess that a healthy portion of feminism and taking yourself less serious could make life and sex so much better. I am convinced that guys not being able to overcome their macho role think they must play (or its opposite, serving the dominant guy) and are having bad sex. At least they miss some essential parts of it. Which simply is give and receive. Pleasure for your partners and pleasure to you. It makes me speechless when I see how guys with amazing cocks and asses are not able to let themselves go to explore their own pleasure and the one of the others.[1]

Gay social networks through which this anonymous person sent the message above are the online areas where men with same-sex desire and 'curious men' can meet, chat, flirt with a common purpose to find a sex partner or an emotional relationship. Since these networks evolved from magazines to internet sites, from internet sites to smart phone applications, they have become more popular than other areas serving the same purpose for gay men, namely bars and clubs, saunas and bathhouses, cruising parks. As gay social networks offer 'safe' and easily accessible platform with millions of users, there is most probably no middle-class urban gay men who do not have a profile on one of these networks in Turkey.

A profile on these networks generally includes demographical information, pictures and bodily features of the user, and a profile statement part where the user can give more information about himself. In these parts, the users generally tell what they

[1] The message is an exact copy of the original and there has not been any grammatical changes.

are looking for, or describe themselves. In these profile statement parts, more and more men with same-sex desire are employing statements that put an emphasis on masculinity's being desirable and refrain from femininity. The message above from the anonymous person draw the attention particularly on the real world experiences echoing from the profile statements where these attitudes towards masculinity and femininity are generally expressed with "no fem" and "only masc." These expressions are so pervasive on gay social networks that I will call "no feminine and only masculine movement" that henceforth will be referred to as "the NF/OM movement." In this study, I am going to focus upon the understandings of masculinity and femininity of gay self-identified men who take part in the NF/OM movement so as to grasp the movement through their self-perception and desired partner portrayal in the orbit of gay men's engagement with these phenomena in Turkey.

Within traditional perspectives and stereotypical presentations, male homosexuality negates masculinity and it is assumed that there is a woman trapped into a male body, and male homosexuals are considered as, as well as non-normative sexual practices and identities, pervert and/or failed. For it is assumed that there is something *inherently* 'wrong' with these people as there are two sex categories with their *definite* sex roles and with their opposite-sex desires. Social constructionist theory, however, opens up the possibilities for a broader understandings of sexuality which is "far from being 'inevitable', 'biological', or 'natural', is in fact a deeply socially conditioned and dynamic phenomenon that is indeed 'socially constructed' as it does not in itself constitute any kind of separate entity" (Edwards, 1994, p.7). Gender, hereby, has been coined as the term to indicate the socially and historically constructed aspect of biological sexes in relation with social roles depending on sex that refers to reproductive system. In this sense, binary oppositions, such as woman

and men, femininity and masculinity, homosexuality and heterosexuality, are problematised with a deconstructive strategy to show the limitations of and the social control over such categories, and how binary oppositions naturalise the overall ascendency of men over women and children, and heterosexuality over homosexuality, bisexuality and sexual practices in general (Butler, 1990; Sedgwick, 1990).

Men, within social constructionism, is not an intact category that refers to people with XY chromosomes but a social division of gender that refers to people who experience their own way of being males in their own times and cultures in respect to their age, body, class, ethnicity and so on (Hearn, & Collinson, 1994). Hence, this wide range of possibilities of "being" man do not reveal a fixed type of masculinity but multiple masculinities that are historico-social and culturally specific (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985; Connell, 2005). In social theory, masculinities and femininities are "configurations of gender practice" that are historically produced in relation with the dominant gender order of a society which consists of power relations between genders, economic outcomes of this power relation, the gender of sexual and emotional object-choice and symbolic presentations of gender through discourse (Connell, 2000; Connell, 2005). In this sense, the recognition of diverse masculinities can only present one dimension of the multifaceted picture as masculinities are in an interplay with femininities, other forms of masculinities, class and ethnicity, which produce hierarchal relations (Connell, 2005). Hence, one particular form of masculinity; for instance middle-class masculinities, can be dominant at a given time and in a given culture comparing to other forms of masculinity; for instance working-class masculinities. The relation between masculinity and male homosexuality, then,

does not depend on negation but subordination in a culture dominated by heterosexuality.

Since male same-sex desire gained identification under the term of gay in urban areas within middle-class men by the late 1980s in Turkey and a social and political community as well as a commercial gay culture emerged accordingly, more and more gay men has started to seek to confirm their masculinity through commodified masculine ideals, sexualised lifestyles centring around performance-driven anonymous sex and "a symbolic war against the feminine public image of homosexuality" (Özbay, 2015, p. 871). The previous studies has demonstrated that urban and middle-class gay men perceive masculinity as a fundamental component in and femininity as a repudiated link to their identity construction, and masculinity as a significant criterion in their pursuit of a partner in contemporary Turkey (Tapınc, 1992; Bereket, & Adam, 2006). Therefore, as mentioned above, this situation takes NF/OM movement on gay social networks.

In this regard, previous studies, about the emphasis of masculinity and the refrain from femininity among gay men, focus upon the comparison of personal advertisement and partner preferences in a quantitative method (Bailey, Kim, Hills, & Linsenmeier, 1997), marginalisation of effeminacy through hegemonic masculinity ideology and masculinity consciousness (Taywaditep 2002), the analysis of discourse produced on the internet through "straight-acting" (Clarkson, 2006), the performances of masculinity on gay social networks in the orbit of self-categorisation "straight-acting" (Payne, 2007). The previous studies about Turkey, on the other hand, centre on the cultural construction of homosexualities within different models of relationships and the understanding of homosexual behaviours (Tapınc, 1992) and variable identity formations of male same-sex desire within indigenous culture and the

impact of globalisation of sexual identities in Turkey (Bereket, & Adam, 2006). Although both studies employ masculinities and femininities in terms of identity formation within indigenous culture of Turkey, there seems to be a gap in the knowledge about what masculinities and femininities mean for gay men, that is to say, gay men's own perspectives and interpretations of masculinities and femininities not only in the orbit of their identity formation but also in the orbit of their understandings of these phenomena in Turkey. Taken into account the gravity of gay social networks as a determinative element of contemporary gay men's lives, this study seeks to investigate meanings attached to masculinities and femininities within the NF/OM movement. Hence, it, simultaneously, seeks to give voice to the question that asks how gay men, whose relation with masculinity is perceived as a relation of negation in dominant culture and as a relation of subordination under hegemonic form of masculinity in literature, perceive masculinity and femininity, which have turned into 'practice' of daily use in the NF/OM movement, in terms of their self-perception and their desired partner portrayal.

In the pursuit of meanings and understandings attached to masculinities and femininities, I have employed a qualitative research design as this study is "concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted" by individuals (Mason, 2009, p. 3). Qualitative interview constitutes the data generating process in a semi-structured model, and the interviews was conducted through face to face meetings with flexible questions in order to create the space for the participants to express their perceptions. The participants are gay self-identified 10 men who live is Istanbul and whose online profile statement part includes either "no fem" or "only mas," and the recruitment was conducted through gay social networks with convenience sampling.

While seeking to investigate gay men's experiences and practices of masculinities and femininities, this study was delimited to the relation of gender and same-sex sexuality as masculinities and femininities can be investigated in relation with education, violence, health, family, literature and/or media so on, and the lives and experiences of gay men can studied within workplace, family, emotional relationship, boyhood and/or adulthood.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

This chapter consists of two main sections. The first section aims to set the ground by focusing its attention on sex, gender, sexuality, sexual identity and deconstructive strategy, and the agency. In the second section, I will go into masculinities and particularly gay masculinities within theoretical frameworks while also keeping the emergence of gay and commercial gay culture at the forefront, and Turkey's case will constitute one of the focal points throughout the second section.

Setting the Ground

We live under a sex/gender system that favours the domination of male sex, heterosexuality and legalised form of sexual activity. Any question including the query of patriarchy and/or women's oppression, of the monopoly of opposite-sex desire and/or the disavowal of the diversity of sexual object-choice and sexual practice, and fundamentally of human sexuality under power relations needs to grasp this oppressive system in order to be able to give a revelatory answer. So as to grasp the sex/gender system, though, some core questions should be answered first: What is gender or sex? How do we perceive human sexuality?

The very key point of answering those questions is to make the distinction between these terms as it is vital to eschew the slithery nature of the field. Although the distinction is required, the interrelated nature of sex, gender and sexuality requires the same attention. In this section, first, I will set the definitions for conjunctive terms; sex, gender and sexuality in order to lay the foundation for further examinations. After that, I will touch upon the theory of performativity in order to reveal the naturalised and heterosexualised understanding of gender within dominant culture. Then, my

focus point will move to queer theory in respect of deconstructing sexual identities, and gender binary. Lastly, keeping the real life experiences-based nature of this study in mind, I will try to mediate the theory and practice with reflexive self.

Sex, Gender, Sexuality. The discussion over the understanding of human sexuality as essential or as construction seems to be an obsolete one. For to see human sexuality as a construction has made it possible to include human social system in the scholarship of sexuality. We are not born with a coded plate of sexuality with our biological colours, but we are born into a gender/sexual system that tries to mould every single person according to pre-set arrangements. Produced, arranged and time and place oriented perception of sexuality reveals that the gender order, which assumes man's advantageous position and woman's subordination, disregards the plurality of desires to maintain its institutional power, and that sexuality is not natural solid rock, but rather a constitution. In this sense, feminist thought and theory has made a terminological distinction between sex and gender and sexuality to undermine this order, and the queer theory followed the way and contributed the distinction.

The term sex refers to an individual's biology, chromosomes, genital area and/or reproductive system. Sedgwick (1990) in her one of the founding texts of queer theory calls sex as “chromosomal sex.” By contrast with fixed and intrinsic sex, gender refers to changeable, transformative and structural social and cultural attributions given to an individual's sex. Gender, as Sedgwick (1990) puts it, is “far more elaborated, more fully and rigidly dichotomized social production and reproduction of male and female identities and behaviors” and she highlights its inseparable nature from history (p. 27). Gender, hence, is the construction of sexed identities in relation to social and cultural system. This construction begins with marking of sexual organ of a baby according to the sex category which “becomes a

gender status through naming, dress and the uses of other gender markers" (Lorber, 1994, p. 14). It should also be noted that if doctors, parents, or whoever cannot decide the sex category; for example, an intersexual baby's sex category, they *decide* to turn the baby into a sex category sometimes by ignoring or sometimes by operations on genitalia.

Sexuality, on the other hand, seems to be more slippery term as it has common points with both sex and gender. Sexuality might get closer to sex in terms of "genital sensation" but this will not give it a sufficient definition as sexuality will necessarily be touched by gender as the gender of the object-choice is one of the components of one's sexuality. However, if sexuality is solely understood within the gender of object-choice, it will get stuck in the dichotomy of heterosexuality and homosexuality. Hence, Sedgwick (1990) identifies sexuality as follows:

> [S]exuality extends along so many dimensions that aren't well-described in terms of the gender of the object-choice at all. (. . .) Other dimensions of sexuality, however, distinguish object-choice quite differently (e.g. human/animal, adult/child, singular/plural, autoerotic/alloerotic) or are not even about object choice (e.g. orgasmic/nonorgasmic, noncommercial/commercial, using bodies only/using manufactured objects, in private/in public, spontaneous/scripted). (p. 35)

Within this context, though sexuality and gender remains related by some means, they do not display an indispensable connection. An understanding of non-gendered sexuality elucidates a large spectrum of sexual practices and diminishes the binary opposition.

The Theory of Performativity. The aforementioned distinction between sex and gender has been challenged by Butler (1999) who argues the distinction between biology and cultural construction does not bring gender to light with its all dimensions

and introduces the theory of performativity. In her seminal and renowned book *Gender Trouble*, she argues that gender, as a regulatory construction, functions as the legitimation of privilege of heterosexuality. The appearance of sex categories of man and woman, as "prediscursive" and "abiding substances," makes sex itself as a gendered category; furthermore, these categories are regulatory fictions, which reproduce sex and gender within normative relations and naturalise heterosexuality (Butler, 1999, pp. 10-11). In this sense, for Butler, sex is normative and "is a part of regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs" and "an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time" (Butler, 1993, p. 1). If gender is disassociated from sex, then gender comes to be "a free-floating artifice" (Butler, 1999, p.10). Thus, according to Butler, gender *must* indicate "the very apparatus of production" that establishes the sexes, and so neither biology nor cultural constructions becomes destiny. Gender, hereby, becomes a performative effect of reiterative acts and is reconfigured by Butler as: "Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, as a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being" (Butler, 1999, p. 43). Then, gender does not hold a genuine position but rather it becomes an 'illusion' created by the acts that are repeated again and again over time. Butler argues that gender is "open to intervention and resignification" for being a continuous discursive practice, and "the "unity" of gender is the effect of a regulatory practice that seeks to render gender identities uniform through a compulsory heterosexuality" (Butler, 1999, p. 42). Heterosexuality, according to Butler, is a cultural matrix that has been naturalised and normalised, or has become the original, with the performative repetition of normative gender identities, and this naturalisation is revealed by the "repetition" and "replication" of heterosexuality not just within heterosexual cultures but also within

gay culture. Butler asserts that the copying and reproducing of heterosexual construct in non-heterosexual cultures is not the copying of the original so much as the copying of the copy. Hence, gender is to be perceived in relation with race, class, ethnicity, "sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities" (Butler, 1999, p. 6). Moreover, gender constitutes "the identity it is purported to be" and is produced in a performative way "within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance" and so "gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed" (Butler, 1999, p. 33).

Subject's position in the theory of performativity is not an active one. The reiteration of norms and acts "is not performed *fa* a subject" but it "enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition of the subject" (Butler, 1993, p. 95). Within this context, while performance refers to doing and acting, and performativity refers to "a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms." Performativity, hereby, is not equal to performance, but it is a production of the repeated norms that reinforce the *impression* of being a woman or a man. The core point is, beyond the impression, being a man or a woman is not an internal fact; however, it is produced and reproduced. Butler presents the parodic repetition of gender norms in her example of drag in order to demonstrate that gender is not organised in terms of originality. Drag, for Butler (1999), subverts the so-called abiding substance of gender identity as she asserts:

> *In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself–as well as its contingency.* Indeed, part of pleasure, the giddiness of the performance is in the recognition of a radical contingency in the relation between sex and gender in the face of cultural configurations of casual unities that are regularly assumed to be natural and necessary. In the place of the law of heterosexual coherence, we see sex and gender denaturalized by means of a performance which avows their distinctness and dramatizes

> the cultural mechanism of their fabricated unity. (p. 175 italics in original)

Drag's deconstructive effect bases upon the incongruity between the sex of the performer and the gender of the performance, which reveals the assumptions of the 'natural' and 'original' gender norms. In this sense, drag becomes 'an imitation without an original,' and parodic repetition, offered by drag performance, subverts the heterosexual matrix by drawing on the reiterative acts. According to Butler (1999), parody shows illusionary and groundless 'nature' of identity. Gender, then, is insubstantial identity constituted through the reiteration of normalised/naturalised acts. Identity, in this context, like gender norms, becomes a regulatory fiction as it is "performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (Butler, 1999, p. 33).

Deconstructive Strategy. Identity categories, such as gay and lesbian, have been criticised by some activists and theorists in terms that identities are "self-limiting and socially controlling" and one identity inherently requires and simultaneously bars its opposite (Seidman, 1995, p. 127). Beyond gay and lesbian identities, sexual identities, in general, based upon the gender of a person's sexual object-choice although there are "very many dimensions along which the genital activity of one person can be differentiated from that of another," such as preference for a certain object or for certain physical types or acts (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 8). Identity, in this sense, works as a restricted category and takes the presupposition of unitary of a group of individuals who may have one division of their subjectivity in common while annihilating their differences. Thus, the perspective of same-sex desire as a unitary property brings forth "the necessity of a focus on the intersectionality of racial, sexual, gender, and class identities" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 38). Queer, as Jagose (1996) states,

have come into existence as “a product of specific cultural and theoretical pressures which increasingly structured debates (both within and outside academy) about questions of lesbian and gay identity” (p. 76). Moreover, what Jagose elucidates about queer is that identifying differences, instead of identifying a unit of identity, is not specific to queer but has its roots in post-structuralism.

Jagose (1996) argues that queer has emerged in post-structuralist context that is built by the theories of Althusser’s writings on the constituted subject by ideology, Freud’s on the significant impact of unconscious on subject, Lacan’s on learnt subjectivity, Saussure’s on the constituted self through language, and Foucault whose writings positions sexuality as a “cultural category” and “discursive production” (pp. 78-82). Within post-structuralism, identity, as a naturalised category, has been problematized as self is not “existing outside all representational frames.” The notion of self, as a rationally organised, unified and distinctive subject, has been challenged by focusing on the difference between and within subjects (Sullivan, 2003, p. 41). In this regard, subject is not constructed solely and autonomously but in relation with other subjects and representational codes.

In the post-structuralist context, Foucault’s writings have been profoundly significant for the development of lesbian, gay and queer scholarship. Foucault’s (1978) seminal three-volume work *The History of Sexuality* shows the changing nature of the understanding, practice, control and deployment of human sexuality. He manifests how sexuality is discursively regulated under power relations in the history of human kind. Thus, human sexuality is far from being fixed and immanent so much as it is a disposition in relation to power and knowledge, which is an ongoing process of production beneath human activity. The renowned part of his work says:

> Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given

> which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries to gradually uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct. (p. 105)

Power, according to Foucault (1978), is not an institution, structure or mechanism, but rather is "repetitious, inert, and self-producing," and thus it is "a complex strategical situation in a particular society" and productive as well as repressive (pp. 93-94). Foucault (1978) argues that power is not held by a group of individuals or institutions but it is everywhere coming from below as a network of relations "with respect to other types of relationships (economic process, knowledge relationships, sexual relations)." In this sense, "the expanding production of discourses on sex in the field of multiple and mobile power relations" should be surfaced since discourse, "as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable," produces, fortifies, and subverts power (Foucault, 1978, pp. 98-101). In Foucault's analysis, then, discourse is available to be used as an oppositional purpose and resistance. Thus, the emergence of the category of homosexuality shows Foucault's (1978) formulation of discourse as a mode of resistance:

> There is no question that the appearance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, jurisprudence, and literature of a whole series of discourses on the species and subspecies of homosexuality, inversion, pederasty, and "psychic hermaphrodism" made possible a strong advance of social control into this area of "perversity"; but it also made possible formation of a "reverse" discourse: homosexuality began to speak on its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or "naturality" be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified. (p. 101)

Sexual identities, in Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge system, become "the discursive effects of available cultural categories" (Jagose, 1996, p. 82). Queer theory, taking its foundation widely from Foucault, questions and deconstructs the

traditional understanding of sexual identities that depend on oppositions. Sedgwick (1994), after listing possible components of 'sexual identity,' such as one's biological sex, one's preferred partner's gender assignment, one's most eroticised sexual organ and so on, asserts that her list of presumptions is not capable of detecting every single person's sexuality, and so she presents queer as referring to "the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't* be made) to signify monolithically" (p. 8). Then, is it possible to find a ground to place queer within these immense possibilities, gaps and overlaps? Is it possible to set out the characteristics of queer? Is it possible to define queer?

One thing that theorists and activists would agree about queer is its ambiguity, and any effort to reach a holistic definition of queer will end up a definition which is not queer. There are various and even sometimes contradictory ways to arrive the understanding of queer. Jagose (1996) refers to ambiguity of queer and formulates it as: "Queer itself can have neither a fundamental logic, nor a consistent set of characteristics" (p. 96). Halperin (1995) also highlights queer's ambiguity and states that "[*t*]*here is nothing in particular to which it* [queer] *necessarily refers.* It is an identity without an essence" (p. 62 italics in original). Moreover, Halperin (1995) argues that queer is in a 'conflict' with the normal, the dominant and the legitimate and so it becomes a positionality, rather than an identity, that can be embraced by anyone whose sexual practice is marginalised. Queer, hereby, goes beyond gays and lesbians, and can be taken up by the ones who are anti-heterosexist, the ones who want to have public sex, or the ones who are into S/M and so forth. Moreover, the conflict with the normal and the dominant, that Halperin (1995) suggests, covers not only sexual practices but any kind of normalisation order. In the post-structuralist

context, queer theory argues that reputed universal and objective truths are particular forms of knowledge that have been naturalised, or have become normal, in culturally and historically specific ways. Thus, by rejecting the assumption of abiding identities based upon gender as determinants and by undermining the naturalised and normalised truths, queer "comes to be understood as a deconstructive practice that is not undertaken by an already constituted subject, and does not, in turn, furnish the subject with a nameable identity" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 50).

Queer theory, by taking its roots in post-structuralism, draws on deconstruction of reputed abiding essences and oppositions. Binary oppositions, such as homosexual/heterosexual and women/men, create categories of knowledge and enable social hierarchies. Deconstruction, in this sense, "aims to disturb and displace the power of these hierarchies by showing their arbitrary, social and political character" (Seidman, 1995, p. 125). The main deconstructive strategy of queer theory is towards heterosexuality's disguise as natural, original or normal. Deconstructive analysis of heterosexuality shows heterosexuality's instability without homosexuality, which means heterosexuality necessarily includes homosexuality to define itself while simultaneously excluding it. By placing homo/heterosexuality at the opposite sides of the same axis, binary system creates boundaries that induce hierarchy and dominance of one side, and marginalisation and exclusion of the other. Sedgwick's (1990) *Epistemology of the Closet*, one of the founding text of queer theory, starts with elucidating the binary opposition:

> *Epistemology of the Closet* proposes that many of the major nodes of thought and knowledge in twentieth-century Western culture as a whole are structured – indeed, fractured – by a chronic now endemic crisis of homo/heterosexual definition, indicatively male, dating from the end of the nineteenth century. (p. 1)

Queer theory and politics offer denaturalisation of so-called fixed identities and of power relations set up by indispensable hierarchy of oppositions. Moreover, queer makes the domination of gender preference visible in sexual theory and politics since there are many variable elements in the construction of sexuality, such as numerous desire and sexual practices. Seidman (1995) takes queer theory out of the orbit of homosexuality and states that:

> Queer theory is less a matter of explaining the repression or expression of a homosexual minority than an analysis of the hetero/homosexual figure as a power/knowledge regime that shapes the ordering of desires, behaviours, and social institutions, and social relations – in a word the constitution of the self and society. (p. 128)

By contesting against the norms in terms of gender and sexuality, and drawing on deconstruction as the strategy in order to demonstrate the limited and fixed nature of binary oppositions, queer theory, however, tends to fail to notice the connection between gender and sexuality and real world experiences. In this sense, Seidman (1995) asserts that queer theory has been critique of knowledge and discursive binary figures in terms of textualism while reducing social conditions into discourse, and so "an account of social conditions of their [queer theorists'] own critique" has not been provided (p. 139). Sharing the same critical perspective with Seidman, Edwards (2006) states that textually centred theory, suggested by queer, exposes a gap between theory and practice, and "wider aspects and questions, including the issue of social and cultural change, are in no way straightforwardly 'read off' from the use of psycho-analytic, literary or textual analysis" (pp. 84-85). Thus, sexual identity within institutional aspects, and "the shared social roles that sexual actors occupy" within socio-historical forces are needed to be taken into account in an empirical study of gender and sexuality (Green, 2002, p. 522).

Reflexive Self. Relying on the semi-structured interviews, this study makes connections between the real world, or practice, and theory. In this sense, I intend for elucidating “the fundamental ways in which patriarchy and indeed masculinity are reinforced and perpetuated through institutions both formal and informal” (Edwards, 2006, p. 85). While drawing on the deconstructive method of queer theory, this study, hereby, requires to pay regard to subjectivity and socio-historical forces.

In *Masculinities, Performativity, and Subversion*, Brickell (2005) concerns with the theory of performativity in Butler's formulation within the study of masculinities. He argues that the absence of a “doer” in the formulation presents some difficulties in terms of the role of agency, interaction and social structure that are significant elements for theory building of masculinities in a sociological sense. What he suggests is to rethink performativity with Erving Goffman's “reflexive, acting subject” in an anti-essentialist or anti-phallogocentric way in order to “develop an account of masculinities as both (inter)active and performed” (pp. 25-29). In his cross-reading of Butler and Goffman, he, as the first step, highlights the aforementioned absence of agency in performativity, then he offers an active role for subjectivity via Goffman's writings. For, both Butler and Goffman takes an anti-essentialist ground to assert that sex categories are social productions rather being natural differences. However, the former builds up this ground discursively, the latter does this with a reflexive model.

Goffman introduces selves not as ontological substances but as social constructions that “arouse within a symbolic interactionist tradition as an active facility of conceptualizing one’s internal states and external relationship” and “loci of social action” (Brickell, 2005, pp. 29-30). Brickell (2005) represents Goffman's self and self-performance as depending on social interaction, and involving “one’s

management of self-impressions to other participants in the interaction" within "frames" that rule social events, and give meaning to subject's practical knowledge as "principles of organization," and within "facility conditions" that are the common grounds in which customs for speech and interaction are presented. According to Brickell (2005), although self in Goffman's formulation is a relational one since it practices agency in social interaction, the agency seems to be trapped in frames and facility conditions. Brickell (2005), at this point, asserts that agency or action is not an unmediated as self become apparent under possible conditions empowered within culture. Hence, the agency trouble of performativity can be mediated, for Brickell (2005), by introducing of Goffman's self. As Goffman separates "the capacity for action from the self per se," the construction of the self arouses within constant social interactions and reflections, and self and subjectivity becomes "fully social account[s]" and "achievements that result from our interactive, publicly validated performances, undertaken within the organizational frames and felicity conditions provided" (Brickell, 2005, pp. 31-32).

What Brickell (2205) suggests, most importantly, is investigating masculinities within the "social" becomes possible with the reflexive self. In this sense, "performance can construct masculinity rather than merely reflect its preexistence" and so the performance of masculinities, the reception of these performances within social world and interaction, and the conditioning of these performances in society and culture can be analysed and studied (Brickell, 2005, p. 32).

Masculinities

In this section, I will point the gender category of men and masculinities as the first step. Afterwards, masculinities within social theory will be the focal point. Then, I will bring the emergence of gay identities and gay culture within the current economic system into focus in relation to Turkey.

Men, Masculinities, Femininities. As men and masculinities constitute the research interest of this study, revealing their meanings and interrelated associations is significant before any further examinations. Conventional perspectives may see men and masculinity as a unit of signifiers for human beings born with a penis while defining the unit in opposition to women and femininity, and attributing some features, such as rationality, aggressiveness, remoteness and/or violence, to the unit. The very same perspectives created a history of men; they were -and are- talking of men without a critical eye. However, feminist thought has opened the eyes for the critical query in the field of men and masculinities. In this sense, while centring on men and masculinities in this study, I do not consider men in the centre by taking gendered power relations into account (Hearn, & Collinson, 1994). Thus, as a first step, men and masculinities will be *defined* and deconstructed

'Man' is a social division that implies gender and defined by Hearn (1989) as "a gender that exists or is presumed to exist *in most direct relation* to the *generalized male sex*, that being the sex that is not female, or not the sex related to gender of women" (as quoted in Hearn, & Collinson, 1994, p. 101 italics in original). Men become men in a culturally specific way and in relation to other social divisions, such as class, age and ethnicity (Connell, Hearn, & Kimmel, 2005, p. 3). Within this gender class, there is no fixed category but diversity; there are old men, working-class men, transsexual men, pro-feminist men and many others. Although men as a gender class

do not present a unity, all these men are positioned in power over women. Moreover, some of men, indeed who are young, heterosexual and/or middle-class, hold the position of power over other men who are disabled, gay and/or black, and the holders of the position of power, in general, could complicit in patriarchy or simply reject it.

In this regard, masculinities are plural; a unique kind of masculinity could not exist within the aforementioned diversity of men. Like men, masculinities are neither fixed categories nor "the propert[ies], character trait[s] or aspect[s] of identity of individuals" (MacInnes, 1998, p. 2). They emerge in social divisions and formed by social divisions as well (Hearn, & Collinson, 1994). Though it has been a difficult task for social sciences to arrive a definition of masculinities, it seems clear that a portrayal of masculinities should include social construction, production and reproduction, agency, gender and power relations, material and discursive analysis, signification and institutional practices (Hearn, & Collinson, 1994; Connell, Hearn, & Kimmel, 2005). Moreover, it should also be noted that masculinities do vary within a culture, within history and even within a lifetime of an individual. Hearn and Collinson (1994), within this portrayal, offer a profound definition of masculinities as a starting point to investigate more, which is as follows; masculinities are "combinations of actions and signs" that are "performed in reaction and relation to complex material relations" while they also generate "sources of and resources for the development and retention of gender identity" (p. 104).

In addition to aforementioned aspects, construction of masculinities requires femininity as well. Masculinities and femininities are concepts that are in a constant relation. Furthermore, as Sedgwick (1995) puts it, they are *orthogonal*, that is, "instead of being at opposite poles of the same axis, they are actually different, perpendicular dimensions, and therefore are independently variable" (p. 15). For

Sedgwick (1995), to place masculinities and femininities in the binary system will lead the way to look for 'purity;' however, there are accent colours, such as butchness and femmeness. Lastly, before employing masculinities in social and relational structures, it should be also noted that masculinities are not necessarily connected to men while men and masculinities cannot be disconnected completely. In this sense, masculinities are not solely about men and women do masculinities as well.

Masculinities in Social Theory. Connell's (2005) formulation of masculinities, that will be the basic reference points of this subsection, requires an analysis of everyday life construction of masculinity, economic and institutional structures, the acknowledgment of difference among masculinities, and "the contradictory and dynamic character of gender" (p. 35). In order to employ 'masculinity' as an object of knowledge, she asserts that it is to be placed in gender relations "that constitute a coherent object of knowledge for science" (Connell, 2005, p. 44). In this relational regard, masculinities, defined by Connell, are produced and reproduced as "configurations of practice structured by gender relations." Hence, "[i]n speaking masculinities, at all," as Connell (2005) noted, "we 'are doing' gender in culturally specific way," which shows similar standpoint with Butler's formulation of gender as a performative construction (p. 68). Moreover, masculinities and femininities, as gender practices, are historical products within relations of domination and subordination that are represented in four interrelated structures of gender relations by Connell (2000 p. 24-26). The first structure is power relations that implies woman's secondary status under male domination, that is, patriarchy. Production relations follows as the second structure, which elucidates gendered task division from household to professional businesses. That also includes "patriarchal dividend," namely, economic outcomes of gender division of labour (Connell, 2000, p. 25).

Emotional relation, also called cathexis by Connell (2005), refers to the gendered nature of object-choice. Symbolism, the last structure, implies gender practices through language and communication and experience of gender through clothing, makeup, bodily mien and so on. In this sense, masculinities and femininities are situated in relational social structures in which practices are organised.

Connell (2005), furthermore, underlines the significance of the process of configuring gender practices within different historico-cultural context and in relation with social structures since the process reveals the dynamic nature of configuring. Dynamic way of structuring gender practices also "'intersects' – better, interacts – with race and class," and so in Turkey's case for example, we need to recognise Turkish masculinities as well as Arabic masculinities, and in a worldwide sense Black masculinities as well as middle-class masculinities in order to grasp masculinities within social structures (Connell, 2005, p. 75).

The definition of masculinities, as historically configured gender practices within aforementioned other social structures, undermines the earlier definitions of masculinity as an immanent identity. Connell (2005) presents four different approaches that depict a masculine person: essentialist approach defines the core of masculinity via a feature; positivist approach defines masculinity as what men are; normative approach describes masculinity as the way men should; and semiotics offers a definition "through a system of symbolic difference in which masculine and feminine places are contrasted" (Connell, 2005, p. 70). According to Connell (2000; 2005), an attempt to define masculinities should concentrate on the ways and relationships that originate gender in the lives of men and women. Connell (2005) offers a definition as masculinities as below:

'Masculinity', to the extend the term can be briefly defined at

> all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture. (p. 71)

Inverted commas in Connell's definition stands for the aforementioned plurality and diversity of masculinities. As noted in the earlier subsection, it is not possible to speak of one form of masculinity as if there was an abiding form or inherent identity. Masculinities do change from individual to individual, from culture to culture, from time to time as they are performed by different actors in different cultures and times. In Turkey's case, for example, malestream masculinity, as a form, could be gained through being dignified and devoted to manners and customs in the nation-state foundation years, 1920s; however, after ninety years on the same lands this form is more about competitiveness, appearance and ability to make money. Apart from this ideologically dominant form of masculinity, there was, and is, simultaneously different forms of masculinities. The diversity of masculinities does not only elucidate solid form/understanding of masculinity in earlier studies, which depends on middle-aged, middle-class and heterosexual man from dominant ethnicity in a culture (Kimmel, & Messner, 2010, p. xvi), but also the indispensable need to detect power relations between and within masculinities. Moreover, within this diversity, masculinities do not exist in separate lanes, but they interact. According to Connell (2005), there are creative and dynamic relations between and within "the different kinds of masculinity: relations of alliance, dominance and subordination" (p. 37).

Diverse Masculinities. In the previous subsection, it has been made clear that masculinities interact with other masculinities, femininities, and other social structures. This subsection is exclusively about the different forms of masculinity and relations between them: hegemonic, which will be analysed most extensively,

subordination, complicity, and marginalisation (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985; Connell, 2005).

The concept of hegemony, a Gramscian term, is described by Donaldson (1993) as "about the winning and holding of power and the formation (and destruction) of social groups in that process" (p. 645). According to Donaldson (1993), hegemonic group dominates the definitions of situations, the setting of terms, ideals and morality, and it prevails on the rest of the society – the majority – to believe the normalcy of its domination. Depending on the Gramscian term, Connell (2005) coined the term hegemonic masculinity to present the power relations between and within gender practices, and so hegemonic masculinity is described as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and subordination of women" (p. 77). Hegemonic masculinity, furthermore, subordinates other forms of masculinity, and thus hegemonic masculinity does not only generate ascendancy over women but also over other less dominant masculinities. Connell (2005) emphasises that neither hegemonic masculinity nor different forms of masculinity are definite character types, but they are patterns of gender configurations, and hegemonic form holds ascendancy at hand among them (p. 76). Hegemonic form of masculinity is, hence, inherently historical and subject to change or overthrow.

Connell's formulation of hegemonic masculinity has been criticised by Donaldson (1993) due to its unclear position and the difficulty of placing counter-hegemonic. In Donaldson's criticism, hegemonic inhabit "in fantasy figures or models remote from the lives of unheroic majority" (p. 646). In a later writing that reformulates hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) also seems to

share a similar position towards hegemonic masculinity as “hegemony works in part through the production of exemplars of masculinity (e.g., professional sport stars), symbols that have authority despite the fact that most men and boys do not fully live up to them” (p. 846). Moreover, the concept of hegemonic masculinity remains problematic in the sense that it does not indicate the autonomous gender system and so “the crucial difference between hegemonic masculinity and other masculinities is not the control of women, but the control of men and the representation of this as “universal social advancement”” (Donaldson, 1993, p. 655). In the same reformulation, Messerschmidt and Connell (2005) argue that “better ways of understanding gender hierarchy are required” in order to place masculinities and hegemonic masculinity in power relations (p. 847). Another criticism of the concept made by Demetriou (2001) bases upon the binary between hegemonic and non-hegemonic forms of masculinity. As Connell (2005) argues that although hegemonic masculinity holds ‘ideal’ position among different forms in gender order, it may authorise some components of subordinated and/or marginalised masculinities, Demetriou (2001) argues that authorisation between different forms of masculinity needs a broader conceptualisation. In this sense, instead of essentially white, middle-class and heterosexual hegemonic form of masculinity, Donaldson (2001) offers “a hybrid masculine *bloc* that is made up of both straight and gay, both black and white elements and practices” (p. 348 italics in original). Hegemonic bloc (of masculinity), hereby, becomes dynamic and fluid as it includes configurations of gender practices from subordinated and marginalised masculinities, and the most importantly as it recognise “the agency of subordinated groups” (Connell, & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 848).

The hegemony of heterosexual men over gay men creates the form and relation

of *subordination*. Connell (2005) asserts that gay masculinities are "at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men" with material practices, such as exclusion from political and cultural levels, violence and discrimination (p. 78). The relation of *complicity*, on the other hand, displays men who are in a connection with hegemonic project but do not represent hegemonic masculinity. Connell (2005) explains this relation as: "Masculinities constructed in ways that realize the patriarchal dividend, without the tension or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy, are complicit in this sense" (p. 79). Apart from relations in gender order, masculinities are interrelated to class and ethnicity as mentioned above. The last relational aspect *marginalization* implies the interplay of gender practices with other structures, and so it includes masculinities of less dominant class and/or ethnic groups in a culture. Kurdish masculinities, in this sense, can be regarded as marginalised masculinities in Turkey's case. Different forms of masculinity, however, are not separate solid forms but "in a constant interaction, changing the conditions for each others' existence" (Connell, 2005, p. 198).

Gay Masculinities. In this subsection, first, I will deal with the emergence of gay as an identity with the rise of modern capital world system. Then, the emergence of a contemporary commercial gay culture will be the focus under the commodified masculine ideals and hypermasculine images, and the adoption and/or importation of gay culture in Turkey under the impacts of globalisation will follow. Second, I will bring the relation between masculinity and male homosexuality to focus within theoretical frames and will arrive the diversity of gay masculinities.

The emergence of gay and his world. Men who desire men, have sex with men and love men have existed in all communities and societies throughout history; however, gay as a term to identify these men seems relatively recent phenomenon. Gay men have come into existence under specific historical circumstances as a human

product, which is not the case only for gay men but also lesbians and heterosexuality. The emergence of gay, as an identity, dates back to the economic transition from kinship system to the rise of capitalism, and has been mainly affected by the fall of family as a financial institution. The malestream gay culture, on the other hand, seems to occur with commodified masculine ideals and the ongoing masculinisation *project* of gay men, which echoed in contemporary Turkey under the forces of globalisation.

John D'emilio (1993) brings the emergence of gay to light in his *Capitalism and Gay Identity*. He argues that the expansion of capitalism has altered the structure and function of family which used to produce goods and circle its members as a base to survive. While free labour system expanded and took people out of household-family based economy, people were gathering in urban settings to sell their labour with an ideologically different family life. Family's institutional character, hence, transformed from an independent unit of production to emotional satisfaction. The *new* family is the source of happiness and a secure area for personal life. D'emilio (1993) presents the emergence of gay under these circumstances:

> In divesting the household of its economic independence and fostering the separation of sexuality from procreation, capitalism has created conditions that allow some men and women to organize a personal life around their erotic/emotional attraction to their own sex. It has made possible the formation of urban communities of lesbians and gay men and, more recently, of a politics based on a sexual identity. (p. 470)

The core question emerges itself in D'emilio's formative article: how is it that capitalism that offered the material conditions to construct a gay identity seems to remain heterosexist and homophobic? Although, for D'emilio (1993), the answer lies within family and its institutional power as a safe harbour to satisfy emotions and stable human relationships (and hence lesbians and gay men have come to be seen as a threat for social stability under capitalism), Hennessey (2000) offers an answer in

broader sense that connects not only gay and/or lesbian identities but all sexual identities with capitalism, which is as follows:

> Capitalism does not require heteronormative families or even a gendered division of labor. What it does requires is an unequal division of labor. If gay- or queer-identified people are willing to shore up that unequal division – whether that means running corporations or feeding families, raising children or caring for the elderly – capital will accept us (…) (p. 105)

Within this account offered by Hennessey, the connection between the emergence of gay identity and the emergence of a commercial and male-dominated gay culture becomes clear.

Commercial gay culture, depending on two interrelated bases, emerged in urban settings. First, the subject position of men in the material base of society and in discourse has turned into both subject and object position. In kinship system, men and women dominated different spheres while the former was considered as active and the ruler of public sphere, the latter was ascribed to domestic and private sphere. The economic transition from household to capitalism drove women into workforce and public sphere as agents, workers and consumers. Meanwhile, the transition also "produced unprecedented ideological of objectification of males, both in the massive deskilling of their labor and in emerging consumer culture's commodification of male bodies and activities" (Floyd, 1998, p. 173). Dominant perspective of masculinities shifted from landowner's "refined" and "elegant", and farmer's and craftsman's "physical strength" to "wealth, power, status" oriented 'Marketplace Man' as Kimmel (2005) puts it (pp. 28-29). Masculine ideals were, hence, simultaneously expressed in consumer culture, that are, "fashion, novels and movies, commercialized sport and leisure" (Floyd, 1998, p. 174).

Second, gay men, disguised in working-class men with a hyperbolic masculine

appearance, *liberated* their sexualities. Although gay men's subordinated position in the hierarchy of masculinities was not, as might be excepted, a reason not to fall under the influence of the *new* masculine ideals, gay men have added more ideals to the pile, which embodies itself in gay liberation movement. Gay liberation and its outcome clone 'image' may seem unfamiliar at the first glance within the context of this study; however, I think, the ongoing masculinisation *project* of gay men in Turkey and elsewhere has its roots in this movement. Gay liberation itself may be the core of another study and has been well documented with its theoretical and political problems as well as merits elsewhere; my intention is briefly employ it in terms of masculinisation of gay men with the effort to "normalise" homosexuality by opposing the stereotypes and adopting identity-based cultural mainstream (Edwards, 2006; D'emilio, 2002; Seidman, 1995). After Stonewall riots, in 1970s in the US, gay men rejected the stereotypical image of gayness as 'sissy', 'queen', 'limp-wristed' and adopted a hypermasculine image with leather jackets, tight t-shirts, denim trousers and boots with muscular bodies (Edwards, 1994; Edwards, 2006; Kimmel, 2005; Nardi, 2000). Thus, the clone, movement's man image, was born with the image of so-called 'real men.' Dominant gay culture was not only masculine-driven in the image but also adopted a masculine ideal of sexuality with anonymous sex without any emotional attachments. In this sense, D'emilio (2002) states that "anonymous sex" and "the objectification of youth and beauty" are gay men's own version of masculinist sexuality as a result of their socialisation as men (p. 68). Additionally, Edwards (2006) presents that hypermasculinity adopted by dominant gay culture was only "skin deep" and set the ground for body-driven commercial gay culture and performance -driven masculine sexuality (pp. 76-77). Feminist responses to gay culture were not affirmative either; while gay men were seeking for liberating sexuality, lesbians were

seeing the liberation within gender, and while celebrating male and masculine sexuality, dominant gay culture was eliminating femininity and female sexuality (Edwards, 2006, pp. 79-80). Lastly, dominant gay culture as "an ethnic model of identity and politics" was also criticised "as exhibiting a white, middle-class bias" (Seidman, 1993, p. 117).

Consequently, after men were enabled to 'buy' gender-conforming ideals, and gender-confirming image has become the dominant in gay subculture, a contemporary commercial gay world has emerged with social network applications that promote the closest 'profile' by promising an anonymous sex; with bars and clubs with high priced entrance fees; with muscular, hairless and gym-sponsored bodily ideals; with media, pornography, advertising based around commercial masculine ideals, not only in advanced capitalist societies and in major metropolises in the peripheries with the forces of globalisation (Altman, 1996; Duncan, 2007; Edwards, 1994; Edwards, 2006; Forrest 1994). "In virtually," as Forrest (1994) puts it, "all gay erotica and in the advertisements for gay chat-lines, escorts, and bars and clubs, macho posturing, bulging biceps, sculpted pectorals and lashing of torn denim, black leather and sports gear appear to be the *norm* rather than the exception" (p. 97 italics added).

In this regard, aforementioned emergences of gay identity and commercial gay culture have echoed in newly industrialised countries since many young people has captivated by the various possibilities of job opportunities in urban areas with the purpose of building a life on their own while their lives have been undergoing the impact of globalisation. Altman (1996) asserts that 'the global gay' has been born with "the importation of gay style and rhetoric" under the impact of early 1970s gay world in the West as a part of this rapid globalisation (p. 86). 'The global gay' has become the new form of sexual identity construction based on "recent American fashion an

intellectual style: young, upwardly mobile, sexually adventurous, with an in-your-face attitude toward traditional restrictions" from Southeast Asia to Central America, from South America to Eastern Europe (Altman, 1996, p. 77). According to Altman (1996), from Buenos Aires to Budapest, from Johannesburg to Istanbul, metropolitan cities, correspondingly, have founded the urban setting for the emergence a commercial gay world (restaurants, saunas and clubs), as well as social and political ones. Altman (1996) also argues that the emergence of 'the global gay' has not abolished the traditional sexual identities; for instance in Indonesia's case, *banci* (effeminate men) and *waria* (masculine women) coexist, as the traditional forms of homosexuality, with the modern forms (p. 82). However, modern homosexuals, differently from traditional sexual identities, have adopted conventional assumptions about masculinities and femininities in their own societies. Moreover, according to Altman (1996), the development of the commercial gay world with Western interpretations has not been able to protect its purely Western nature within the unique culture and political economy of each society (p. 87). Despite independent variables in particular cultures, Altman concludes his profound analyses from various societies with the remark of a *rupture* between 'the global gay' and traditional homosexual identities.

In Turkey's case, on the other hand, the emergence of gay world dates back to the late 1980s when country entered an ongoing period of neoliberal economy foundation, further westernising policies and globalisation effects (Özbay, 2015). Traditional homosexual identities have given way to gay-identified men who manifested themselves in urban settings with imported masculine ideals from the West (Özbay, 2015; Tapınç, 1992). After twenty years of Altman's aforementioned article, it seems that the process of rupture has become much more visible. Terms, such as *lubunya* for gender non-confirming men who is generally receptive, *digin* for men

who are versatile, *laço* for masculine men who is generally inserter during anal intercourse, and *balamoz* for aged men have started to be forgotten in urban areas and homosexual desire and behaviour is being called as 'gay' (whose meaning, however, remains variable within local frameworks) in today's Turkey which is home to gay bars with imported gay ideals in every major city and two relatively new gay magazines called *Gzone* and *Gmag* with trendy fashion and lifestyle newsletter and with images of people with perfect faces, bodies, clothes and lives.

Gay masculinities in theoretical frameworks. In "Melancholy Gender/Refused Identification," employing gender melancholia in psychoanalytic field, Butler (1995) goes through Freud's masculinity and femininity concepts, and shows the relation between homosexuality and masculinity in the heterosexist culture. For Freud and heterosexist culture, as Butler (1995) argues, gender is "*achieved* and stabilized through the *accomplishment* of heterosexual positioning" (p. 24 italics added). In this sense, if there is a threat to heterosexuality, it inherently becomes a threat to gender as well. Without any threat either toward gender or toward heterosexuality, gender is achieved through a melancholic identification based upon a gendered ego.

Gender melancholy derives from losing a sexual object in the external world, but it simultaneously builds the lost sexual object in ego (Butler, 1995, p. 21-23). Thus, melancholia is "the effect of ungrieved loss" as there is a refusal of the loss and/or putting off suffering from the unrecognised loss though there is no complete loss as the sexual object is transformed from external to internal. In this regard, melancholic identification is controlled and determined by, on one hand, the loss of the sexual object, and on the other, the prohibition of the same object. The process of melancholic identification is elucidated by Butler (1995) as: "[T]he girl becomes a girl

by becoming subject to a prohibition that bars the mother as an object of desire, and installs that barred object as a part of the ego, indeed as a melancholic identification" (p. 25). The obligatory renouncement of homosexual attachment is a part of melancholic identification that is heterosexual.

In this context, masculine and feminine built by melancholic identification are not dispositions but *accomplishments* achieved by the prohibition of homosexuality (Butler, 1995). Within this binary system, masculinity and femininity are accomplished by consistent heterosexuality whereas homosexuality is understood as "unlivable passion" and "ungrievable loss." Melancholic identification, or it can well be named as heterosexual identification, depends upon the achievement of masculinity and/or femininity through rejecting the other. Thus, a man becomes "man", in this logic, with the rejection of femininity and this rejection is "a precondition for the heterosexualization of sexual desire" (Butler, 1995, p. 26). However, Butler (1995) asserts that this accomplished masculinity, or heterosexuality, keeps the loss (of the object of desire) in the melancholic identification: "[s]he [femininity] is at once his [masculinity's] repudiated identification."

Heterosexuality, in this way, naturalises itself with its dependence of rejection of homosexuality, its 'counterpart' other, and so heterosexual identity is "based upon the refusal to avow an attachment, and hence, the refusal to grieve" (Butler, 1995, p. 28). A man, while manifesting his heterosexuality, will propose the argument in terms that "he never loved another man," and so "he never lost another man," which results in a double-disavowal. Butler argues that masculinity and femininity, in this regard, are established and strengthened "through identifications that are composed in part of disavowed grief." According to Butler (1995), in a culture of gender melancholy, masculinity and femininity are marks of "an ungrieved and ungrievable love", and

while keeping in mind aforementioned equation between *achieved* gender and *accomplished* masculinity and femininity, homosexuality panics gender:

> Hence, the fear of homosexual desire in a woman may induce a panic that she is losing her femininity, that she is not a woman, that she is no longer a proper woman, that if she is not quite a man, she is like one, and hence monstrous in some way. Or in a man, the terror over homosexual desire may well lead to a terror over being construed as feminine, femininized, of no longer being properly a man, or of being a "failed" man, or being in some sense a figure of monstrosity or abjection. (p. 24)

Butler shows, on psychological level, how masculinity is understood in relation to homosexuality in a culture where woman/men and homo/heterosexuality are at the opposite sides of the same axis. On social level, moreover, the relationship between masculinity and homosexuality seems to have no different relation from psychological level. In the introduction part of *Between Men*, Sedgwick (1985) elucidates "homosocial" as the social bond between same-sex people, and "male homosocial desire" as a paradox. For social bond between males is distinguished by homophobia and fear of homosexuality, that is to say, social bonds between men who love men and men who promote the interest of men are marked by patriarchy, and "the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual" is distorted (Sedgwick, 1985, pp. 1-2). Within male homosociality, masculinity operates in two ways. First, while male homosociality highly depends on the maintenance of privileges of men in patriarchy, a dynamic relation runs male bonding. Thus, masculinity turns out to be a power relation between men. Men are, or feel that they are, under the continuous gazes of other men, which means that men are always present to watch, rank or test other men's masculinity. In this sense, masculinity is "fraught with danger, with the risk of failure, and with intense relentless competition" (Kimmel, 2005, p. 33). Second, masculinity is procured by the constant rejection of

any possible homosexual desire in relations between men. Homosexuality, hereby, is always present at male homosociality with persistent prohibition. Hence, homosexuality becomes "a primarily invisible mechanism in the maintenance of masculinity" (Edwards, 2006, p. 83).

In a heterosexist culture, then, both on psychological and social levels, it is no surprise that stereotypical images of gay men depicted as effeminate and improper men as they fail to 'accomplish' their gender, and being a man, in the sight of gay man, is in a question. However, as mentioned before, gay men *are doing* masculinities. In order to reach various masculinities that gay men engage with, the first step will be the requisite to leave the presupposition of a *pure* masculinity.

In this sense, Fejes (2000) states, in his article on de-sexualised and de-eroticised masculine gay image in media practices titled with "Making a Gay Masculinity," that gay male sexuality and identity are based on fluidly constructed desire and there is no "normal" way to be gay as imposed through regulatory systems, that are, law, custom, socialisation or medical and psychological knowledge. Fejes (2000) follows Butler's performativity and argues that "gay males draw upon the various texts of heterosexual masculinity as the basis for the construction of their own identities" (p. 114). The outcome is not "a distorted mirror image of heterosexual masculinity" but it is "a deconstruction and recombination of many of its [heterosexual masculinity's] elements." Although his formulation is competent in terms of laying out the diversity of masculinities in gay male sexuality, it remains problematic in two terms. First, some regulatory systems may not impose a "normal" way to be gay, but there are certain enforcements of gay 'scene' that is employed in the previous subsection; for instance, the idealisation of youth and beauty, and the celebration of muscular body image. Some gay men may feel obliged to lie about your

ages and use blocked out pictures on their social network profiles, which regulates how to be gay as a system to a certain degree. Second, Fejes inadvertently employs "heterosexual masculinity" as if it were the original and as if gay men were constructing their masculinities according to it. Does the assumption of "deconstruction" in gay male masculinities have a different standpoint from what early period psychoanalysis defined as "failed"? Or, is it the same logic under the rubric of post-structural terms? Instead of 'drawing upon' heterosexual masculinity, gay men engage with hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 2005, p. 160). Gay men, within the gender class of men, inherently, configure masculinities in respect to hegemonic forms; the process of configuration may try to adopt, may complicit in, or may reject hegemonic forms. Among all other possibilities, there is still an engagement.

Having dealt with the relation between homosexuality and masculinity in terms that 'masculinity' disavows femininity and homosexuality on psychological and social levels, and with the diversity of gay masculinities and their engagement with hegemonic masculinities, I will follow Edward's formulation as a conclusion about gay masculinities. According to Edwards (2006), aforementioned psychological and social sexual/gender order can be challenged by masculinities of gay men who "are neither more nor less 'masculine' or misogynist than straight men, but located in an awkward, and perhaps even dialectical, relation to gender both psychologically and socially" (p. 84).

Voices from Turkey. In Turkey, there are various self-identified men who have sex with men (Tapınç, 1992; Bereket, & Adam, 2006). Although many of them have increasingly started to identify themselves as *gey*, a so-called Turkish word derived from the pronunciation of 'gay' but written in Turkish way, under the impacts of

modern capitalist system, globalisation and the country's long-term Westernisation process, there are men who identify their gender-inscribed same-sex sexual activities according to their bed position. The rise of gay self-identified men, especially in urban areas have not annihilated traditional male to male sexualities that has been briefly employed above; however, the focus, in this subsection, will be on gay self-identified men regarding the research interest of the study.

In terms of traditional homosexual identities, Bereket and Adam (2006) argues that Turkey traditionally shares a similar sex/gender order with Mediterranean, Middle East and Latin America in terms that a gendered division around the schema of penetration rules male to male sexualities and/or sex-role preferences (p. 131). This gender-inscribed sexual activity takes its form around active/masculine and passive/feminine identifications. In this regard, Tapınç (1992) asserts that gender roles remain as an important element due to "the polarized and inflexible gender system" of the country (pp. 42-43). Furthermore, according to Tapınç (1992), strong kinship ties and the division of the private and public spheres according to sexes make homosexuals adopt defined gender roles. As the relations between men who have sex with men highly depends on the schema of penetration, feminine/passive homosexuals, traditionally identified with women, "are assumed to possess the omnipotent sexuality, and, in turn, they are regarded as agents of the sexual threat to the male world" (Tapınç, 1992, p. 45). Masculine/active homosexual, on the other hand, can keep his place in the public male world (coffee houses and pubs) where only men are allowed, while keeping his male to male sexual activity as a secret. Moreover, Bereket and Adam (2006) argues that identifications according to sex-role preferences are common among "older and less-educated" people (p. 134). Their study shows that men who identify themselves as *lubunya* or *laço* are strict in their sex-role preference

and traditional gender roles, and those men have never tried and will never try the other way around. A polarised masculine and feminine/active and passive identifications rule their relations with men and their self-identifications highly based upon 'real men,' 'women' and 'young and hypermasculine men' (Bereket, & Adam, 2006, p. 137-140).

As discussed above, the emergence of gay identities dates back to the 1980s in Turkey (Özbay, 2015). Tapınç (1992) categorises the gay self-identified men as "the masculine gay" and asserts that this 'model' can be found generally among "urban, young, educated, middle-class homosexuals" whose sex-role preferences are not distinctive (p. 46). The introduction of the term gay into Turkey's agenda "suggests a modernizing 'Western connection' in the emergence of gay identity, gay culture, and gay politics in Turkish society." However, meanings attached to gay will not stand still with its introduction to culturally unique settings of any society as Altman (1996) points out. Bereket and Adam (2206), also, argues that the term gay is not only "an external imposition," but more "a vehicle for claiming free space and asserting alternative ways of relationship formations" (p. 133). While the meaning of gay remain variable within a particular culture, gay men in Turkey, according to Bereket and Adam (2006), see themselves as a part of gay culture beyond the national borders. Furthermore, their study reveals a combination of traditional and modern homosexual identity formations, still named as *gey*, in which there is "a capacity for adaption to the 'modern', western precepts, yet also remains true to certain constituents of Turkey's traditional culture" (Bereket, & Adam, 2006, p. 143). However, what remains international about gay men in Turkey is that they are "the agents of masculinization of homosexuality" (Tapınç, 1992, p. 48). No matter how diverse and integrated (between western/imperial and local) gay identities, they still show a

common ground in terms of desiring a masculine-self and/or masculine partner with their worldwide counterparts. “Masculinity appears to be,” as Bereket and Adam (2006) notes, “imbricated with social class insofar as MSM from lower social classes tend to be associated with effeminacy, while men from more middle and higher social classes separate themselves from any kind of linkage with ‘sissiness’ even though they may briefly perform in such ways” (p. 145). The emphasis of masculinity, being a real man, being *adam gibi adam* [an upright man] increasingly echoes in gay subculture and accordingly on gay social networks in Turkey.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Qualitative research methods in terms of generating, analysing, and interpreting data aim to "explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world" and "celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality and complexity" (Mason, 2009, p. 1). Holding an interpretive philosophical position or worldview, qualitative research "assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality" (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). Qualitative research, in this sense, can be regarded as "a means of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Consequently, this type of research research is "concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted" (Mason, 2009, p.3), and researchers "are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam, 2009, p. 5). The focus on the interpretation makes the data generation of qualitative research "flexible and sensitive to social context in which data are produced" (Mason, 2009, p. 3).

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe gay men's engagement with masculinities and femininities in regard to their perception of these phenomena and meanings they ascribe to these phenomena in terms of their selves and desired partners. Qualitative research fits this purpose for several reasons. First, masculinities and femininities are socially constructed complex phenomena. Second, this study, ontologically, aims to explore "people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions" as these are "meaningful properties of

the social reality" (Mason, 2009, p. 63). Third, within this interpretivist approach, data source derives from people and their interpretation as the primary source.

To construct the knowledge, in this sense, interviewing has been employed as the method in this study. Among other types of interviewing, such as highly structured and unstructured, I used semi-structured type of interview, as the method of qualitative inquiry, in a "person-to-person encounter" way. I opted semi-structured interview since "questions are more flexibly worded or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions" in this type of interview. (Merriam, 2009, p. 88-90). Within this logic, interviewing is not an interrogation but "a conversation with a purpose." In favour of ensuring the pliable and sensitive way of generating data and constructing knowledge, semi-structured interview provides mild atmosphere with the absence of "predetermined wording or order." Hence, keeping in mind that this study is about same-sex sexualities in a highly homophobic culture, I was highly concerned with the atmosphere of the interviews and the possible states of emotions of participants. Moreover, I believe "interviewees should be given more freedom in and control of the interview situation than is permitted with 'structured' approaches" (Mason, 2009, p. 66).

Participants

I used purposeful sampling that is "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample form which the most can be learned." (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). As this study is about gay self-identified men, I opted convenience sampling since this type of sampling is "based on time, money, location, availability of sites and respondents" (Merriam, 2009, p. 79). The hinge of the study provided the convenience sampling as it is

concerned with gay self-identified men with an online profile statement including "no fem" or "only masc" on a gay social network. A broad examination of gay social network application was the first step of convenience sampling. I visited profiles of users in order to detect whether the profile statement includes the required expressions or not.

The process of recruitment started in November 2015. I used *Hornet* and *Planetromeo* applications that describe themselves as online platforms for gay men to chat and meet. These applications, basically, work with the creation of a profile, generally including a picture, demographic information, bodily features, and a statement part in which users can write about who they are and what they are looking for. The applications list other profiles/users starting with the ones who are the closest. I have chosen *Hornet* and *Planetromeo* for they are the most popular ones among others and both applications allow you to view other parts of the city, to view other cities, or even countries. In this sense, I was able to reach not only the neighbourhood that I was searching in but also other parts of Istanbul, where the study was conducted. For recruitment, I used a 'real profile' which included my picture and demographic information and bodily features. I detected profile statements including "no fem," "only masc," or their variations[2] and I sent the same message to people with these statements as follows:

> Hello,
>
> I am a student of master degree and writing my thesis about gay men. I am writing this message to you because I need to make interviews for this study. For the interviews, there is no need for identification info, that is, confidentiality is fundamental. Besides, interviews are not like a questionnaire

[2] Although "no feminine" and "only masculine", and shorter versions – "no fem" and "only masc", seem to be the commonest expressions, there are other expressions with the same meaning. Some relatively common ones are "the feminines just stay away", "no woman with a beard", "only manly man", "only real masculine man" and "no sissies."

> or interrogation, but more like a chat with predetermined themes.
>
> Would you like to help me and join an interview?
>
> Thanks.[3]

It was not possible to count how many messages I sent since it was a long process of recruitment; however, it is possible to divide the replies into four categories; an affirmative reply with an intention to meet for the interview, a reply with rejection to meet, a reply including verbal (here, written) violence, such as swearing and humiliating, and no reply.

There were 52 affirmative replies with an intention to meet for the interview that generally followed giving detailed information about the study and the interview and me. 52 affirmative replies can be divided into two categories. First, with 29 users of 52, the interaction remained online, that is, after the affirmative reply, the meeting for the interview did not take place. 17 of 29 did not want to give their telephone numbers or email addresses and wanted to arrange the meeting time and place through the applications. Afterwards, however, they did not reply my messages. 5 of 29 just gave the first affirmative reply and there were no other messages or replies after the first reply. 3 of 29 blocked me; 2 of 29 were never online again; 1 of 29 stated that he gave the affirmative reply out of curiosity and he did not intend to meet for the interview; 1 of 29 stated that he could do the interview only for sex. Second, with 23 users of 52 affirmative replies, the interaction went beyond the virtual world. With 7

[3] The message was sent in Turkish and it was as follows:
Merhaba,
Ben yüksek lisans öğrencisiyim ve tezimi erkek eşcinseller ile ilgili yazıyorum. Sana mesajı yazıyorum çünkü bu çalışma için görüşmeler yapmam gerekiyor. Görüşmeler için herhangi bir kimlik bilgine gerek yok, yani gizlilik esastır. Ayrıca, görüşmeler bir anket ya da sorgulama gibi değil, konuları belli bir sohbet gibi ilerliyor.
Bana yardım etmek ve görüşme yapmak ister misin?
Teşekkürler.

people of 23, the interview could not be performed due to impediments about arranging meeting time and/or place. 2 people of 23 did not show up at the agreed meeting time and place. Consequently, I conducted 14 interviews.

2 of 14 interviews were pilot interviews and therefore they are not included into the study. They were profoundly instructive since they were my very first fieldworks and I was only able to take a life history of the participants. After two pilot interviews, I was able to "ensure an appropriate focus on issues and topics relevant" to my research questions (Mason, 2009, p. 74). However, other 2 of 14 interviews are not included into the study since one interview turned into a therapeutic session (the participant had recently ended his relationship) and, during the other interview, the participant's answers to the core questions, that is, how he perceives masculinity or femininity as stated in his profile, was only "I don't know."

The recruitment process, ultimately, yielded 10 interviews that are used for the generation of data. Participants ages ranged from 24-51 years old (M = 34.1 years). Regarding socioeconomic status, seven participants stated that they currently identify living in "middle class" and three participants stated that they living in "upper-middle class." Regarding religion, four participants stated that they were Muslim but not religious. Three participants identified themselves as atheist. Two participants remarked that they were religious Muslims. One participant identified himself as Alevi. Regarding cultural background, one participant identified himself as Kurdish. One participant identified himself as Arabic-Turkish. Eight participants identified themselves as Turkish.

Interview Instrumentation and Procedures

Interviews took place over a four-month period (December 2015 – March 2016). As it was not possible to conduct interviews "in a wholly unstructured way through a qualitative interview," interview questions were formed before the interviews; however, questions were highly depended on the particular information in respect to research question and were not in solid forms (Mason, 2009, p. 69). In this sense, interview questions were loosely structured and adaptable to the flow of the conversation. In the view of the fact that a congenial atmosphere was a requisite for an interview about sexuality, the interviews started with background questions. Moreover, the congenial atmosphere was also ensured by a sense of 'community,' that is, the conversation, for participants, were taking place with someone (researcher) from the 'scene.' Face-to-face interviews were conducted in Turkish with a colloquial language (Merriam, 2009). Two interviews were audio-taped and eight interviews were recorded by taking notes during the interview and the notes were arranges and transcribed after the interview. Two interviews were conducted in respondent's house; eight interviews were conducted in public cafés. Public cafés were chosen by participants concerning confidentiality. Regarding length of the interviews, it varied between 60-90 minutes.

Data Analysis

Interview transcriptions were gone through with multiple types of readings; literal and interpretive. Although these two ways of reading interview transcriptions are not exclusively separated, each focuses on various features. While making literal reading, I was concerned with "the words and language used, the sequence of interaction, the form and structure of the dialogue" (Mason, 2009, p. 149). The aim of

literal reading was to unravel the transcriptions in terms of what I was dealing with. Interpretive reading, on the other hand, involved the effort to see beyond of the literal transcriptions. While making interpretive reading, the focus was both participants' interpretations of social phenomena and my interpretations of data. In this sense, interpretative reading involved me in the process of constructing "a version of what" I "think the data mean or represent," or what my inference is from data (Mason, 2009, p. 149). However, what I was mostly concerned with was participant's "versions and accounts of how they make sense of social phenomena."

Merriam (2009) offers a step-by-step model of data analysis for qualitative research that is both inductive and comparative. In this model, data are "organized and labelled according to" regulation schemes that allow the researcher to retrieve any piece of data at any time (Merriam, 2009, p. 174). By taking into consideration of step-by-step model offered by Merriam, I initially identified segments and/or units of data – that were sometimes "as small as a word a participant uses to describe a feeling or phenomenon" – in terms of finding an 'answer' to my research questions (Merriam, 2006, p. 176). The identification of units of data was followed by category construction. The process of category construction was conducted manually and was 'interactive' in the sense that while reading interview transcriptions, I wrote down "notes, comments, observations, and queries in the margins" (Merriam, 2009, p. 178). This process can also be called coding, categorizing, indexing and/or assigning nodes (Mason, 2009). While coding, I regarded that the categories were related and responsive to my research questions, inclusive and exclusive in terms that they included all important data that were particularly covered in one category (Merriam, 2009). As category construction began "with detailed bits or segments of data" and the validity of categories had been checked during the reading and rereading of interview

transcriptions, the process was inductive. Furthermore, categories were descriptive, that is to say, it based upon the literal reading of interview transcriptions, and analytical that means it derived from interpretations and inferences from the meaning. However, I paid attention to interrelated nature of the categories and thus categories were "loose and flexible groupings of unfinished resources," which enabled the comparative disposition of the data analysis process (Mason, 2009, p. 158).

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion

This chapter includes two main sections. The first section demonstrates the results with four subsections related to research questions. The second section consists of the discussion part and the conclusion.

Generated Data

This purpose of this study is to understand the NF/OM movement on gay social networks and it addresses research questions as follows:

> What are the meanings and understandings attached to masculinity and femininity within the NF/OM movement in Turkey?
>
> How are these meanings and understandings determine self-conceptualisation and desired partner portrayal?
>
> How can the perceptions of masculinity and femininity be related to gender regime in Turkey?

The analysis depending on aforementioned research questions yielded four major domains and fourteen categories and six subcategories. Data are initially organised by domains. Categories and subcategories, then, have appeared according to domains. Categories and subcategories give voice to the particular elements of participant's experiences, meanings and/or understandings they attach to phenomena, or the interpretation of these particular elements. In each category or subcategory, each participant appears just one time; however, participants can appear more than one time in different categories and subcategories. Direct quotations from interview transcriptions, that I translated from Turkish to English, are used to underscore the

data. Regarding grammatical clarity, the quotes have been edited without loss of meaning, and regarding cultural codes in the language, I have kept some Turkish words or idioms that the participants used in brackets. In order to ensure confidentiality, all participants are presented with pseudonyms.

In the presentation of results, although each domain is interrelated, I will present domains in different subsections with their tables independently for clarity and the tables will include frequency of occurrence. In this study of 10 participants, categories and/or subcategories that occurred for one and/or two participants are labelled *rare*, for three to five are labelled *variant*, for six to eight are labelled *typical*, and for nine and/or ten are labelled *general*.

Regarding the necessity of analysing the qualitative results of this study in relation to the context of the participants' common and distinctive characteristics, I will present the particular characteristics of participants (see Appendix) that have likely affected the data although aspects of participant demographics are brought out in previous chapter. In terms of bed position, three participants identify themselves versatile and three participants identify themselves exclusively penetrator. Two participants identify themselves exclusively penetrator for casual sex, versatile for their relationships. One participant identify himself generally penetrator whilst one participant generally penetratee. Further, regarding marital status, two other participants are married with children though they do not identify themselves as bisexuals. In terms of being out of the closet, one participant is out of the closet while two participants are out to their siblings. Last but not least characteristics in terms of its effectiveness on data is that two participants regard themselves exclusively out of dominant gay culture, which means for these two participants, not going to gay bars or having gay friend circles.

Masculinities. One of the core research interests of the study is to understand the meanings and understandings that participants attach to masculinities within the NF/OM movement. Each participant has reveal his account of masculinities during the interviews, and the data analysis has revealed five distinct categories accordingly (See Table 1). These categories are: 1) Character Traits, 2) Correspondence, 3) Sociality, 4) Essentiality, 5) Extrinsic Form.

Table 1: *Summary Results of Masculinities*

Domain	Category	Number	Frequency
	Character Trait	7	Typical
	Correspondence	7	Typical
Masculinities	Sociality	5	Variant
	Essentiality	4	Variant
	Extrinsic Form	4	Variant

Character Trait – This category involves, as the category name elucidates, character traits that participants attach to masculinities, and it can be regarded as typical for seven out of ten participants associate character traits with masculinities and these properties are variable. One participant states that a masculine person is *reasonable* and able to make *judicious* conversation while for another participant masculinity is about being *down-to-earth* and *result-orientated*. Additionally, two participants state that being *dominant* is masculine while one of them remarks that masculinity is also being *jealous* and *violent*, and the other remarks that a *decision-maker* is a masculine person. One participant states that masculinity equals to being *self-confident*. For another participant, being *veteran* is a trait of masculinity. Lastly, one participant remarks that masculinity equals to being *swagger*, *swearer* and *bully*.

Correspondence – This second category shows typical frequency and can be divided into two parts in terms of whether correspondence is based on opposition or equation. Five of seven participants state that masculinity is *not machismo*, and/or a masculine man is not a macho or bully. On the other hand, two of seven participants, whose accounts of character trait of masculinity are being violent and jealous, and being swagger and swearer, relate masculinity with an *equation of machismo*.

Sociality – In this category, participants attach social definitions to masculinity, that is, masculinity is revealed as a way of being a man within the accepted and normalised social frames. Two participants use the word *normal*, while two others use the word *ordinary* to describe their understanding of masculinity. Additionally, one participant perceives masculinity as a *life-style*, and another one as a *male-style*. One of participants who uses both normal and ordinary describes his account of masculinity as follows:

> I think masculinity is totally different from being a bully. It is not being macho either because machismo is more like being extremely dominant and rude. Masculinity is more about being normal. Masculinity is the physical and emotional definition of an ordinary man without any extreme sides. (Eren)

Essentiality – This fourth category within the domain of masculinities offers an understanding of masculinity based on a biological essence. Three of four participants in this category state that masculinity derives from a *natural way of being*. In this sense, after being asked what he means in his online profile statement that says "only masculine," he tells:

> What I mean there, I like men as men. I like men who behave and look like as real men, as natural men. This is masculinity; being natural. If you are a man, you need to act like one even if you are gay. Actually, you even have more manliness if

> you are gay because you fall in love with men. So a gay man is a man, man. (Cem)

Another participant relates masculinity with his sex and states that: "You just live and behave in the way that your sex anticipates and requires" (Ali).

Extrinsic Form – In this last category, participants offer an account of masculinity in terms of appearance and/or clothing. Regarding appearance, one participant states that a *hairy* and *stalwart* appearance fits into his understanding of masculinity. Additionally, *ordinary clothes* of men wearing are situated in masculinity by two participants; while for one participant remarks that *grey*, *white*, and *black clothes* are the only masculine clothes colours.

Femininities. The second domain relies on the meanings and understandings attached to femininities by the participants in the NF/OM movement. The data analysis has showed that participants' perception of femininities shapes two categories and six subcategories (See Table 2). These categories and subcategories are 1) Illustrative: A) Extrinsic Form, B) Bed Position, C), Essentiality, D) Character Trait; 2) Interpretative: A) Reservation, B) Declaration.

Table 2: *Summary Results of Femininities*

Domain	Category	Subcategory	Number	Frequency
Femininities	Illustrative	Extrinsic Form	7	Typical
		Bed Position	3	Variant
		Essentiality	3	Variant
		Character Trait	2	Rare
	Interpretative	Reservation	4	Variant
		Declaration	4	Variant

Illustrative

This category reveals participants' illustrations of femininities in respect to gay men. The foundation of subcategories depends on the equation of feminine gender practice with woman within different forms of participants' perception of femininities.

Extrinsic Form – Including seven of ten participants, this subcategory shows typical frequency, and touches upon participants' reflections of femininity in terms of appearance and/or clothing. Regarding appearance, one participant states that *slim* and *blond* are signs of femininity whereas another participant remarks that *hairless body* is a sign of femininity. In terms of clothing, *skinny trousers* are considered as feminine by two participants, and *colourful clothes* by another. One participant narrates his account of extrinsic form of femininity as: "Nowadays, feminine gays differ themselves from the rest of the society with their clothes, accessories and so on. This is totally out of my interest. They wear fancy clothes, colourful trousers and scoop neck t-shirts" (Ozan).

Bed Position – This subcategory presents the meanings that participants attach to femininity of gay men with regard to role undertaken by gender non-confirming gay men during sexual intercourse. Three participants state that they consider feminine gay men as the receptive of the intercourse. One participant gives voice his account on the subject as below:

> Feminine men; they are passives in bed, they generally have no hair on their bodies, the way they talk is effeminate [kayık]. There is a great need for hair for manhood. But the passives started to grow beard so I am thinking about shaving mine. The beard was masculine, and now it has lost its meaning. There are a lot of 'woman with beard.' I like having sex with men. The passives let themselves go, they surrender during sex. They are a little bit better than sex dolls. I like being dominant in bed but I don't want a sex doll. (Murathan)

Essentiality – The equation of gay male femininities with woman has an essential standpoint for three participants within this subcategory. One of them remarks that femininity is *hormonal* while another expresses his opinions as: "They are like women. They reject their natural sides and have forgotten their manliness" (Bilge).

Character Trait – This subcategory, as the category of previous domain, reveals the personality characteristics attached to femininities by two participants. One participant state that gender non-confirming gay men have *female character*. The other participant in this subcategory, on the other hand, gives more detail about the character traits he attaches to femininity and states that: "I don't understand feminine gays as I am not in that direction. I am scared of feminine gays. They have irrepressible egos and they are shrewish like women. They behave like women" (Ali).

Interpretative

This second category of femininities domain concerns with participants' own interpretations about femininities in respect to their attitudes towards and their reasoning about gender non-confirming gay men in the NF/OM movement.

Reservation – There are four participants in this subcategory that shows variant frequency. All four participants state that they draw themselves back from gender non-confirming gay men and they do not want to be seen with them in public areas. While one of the participants remarks that he does not want to have sex with a gender non-confirming gay men either, the other three state that they may have sex, but behind closed doors.

Declaration – This subcategory highlights four participants' point of views about feminine gay men's representation of themselves. All four participants consider

femininity as a way to proclaim one's homosexuality. In this sense, one participant gives voice his account as follows:

> Femininity is like being a woman. I don't think it is rational that a man walk in a feminine way [kıvırması]. Feminine gays take their appearance so serious. They wear colourful clothes, skinny trousers. And, I think they exaggerate their behaviours on purpose because they want everyone to know that they are gay. (Zeki)

Another participant whose perception of femininity has the same standpoint expresses his opinions as below:

> I think feminine gays are more like women. I don't find this sexy at all and I don't have sex with feminine gays. They are in an effort to garnish themselves and they like bringing out their gayness with their clothes and speech and behaviours. Plus, they are passives in bed. I don't think that they can be active because it is impossible to have both feminine sensations and masculine traits in bed. (Yaşar)

Self-Perception. This domain deals with how each participant situate his account of self in terms of masculinities and femininities. In this sense, participants were asked to describe themselves related to masculine and feminine. The data analysis has revealed three categories; which are 1) Masculine Self, 2) Intervening Self, 3) Neutral Self (See Table 3).

Table 3: *Summary Results of Self-Perception*

Domain	Category	Number	Frequency
	Masculine Self	5	Variant
Self-Perception	Intervening Self	3	Variant
	Neutral Self	2	Rare

Masculine Self – Having five of ten participants, this category can be regarded as variant. All five participants state that their masculinities derive from their

biological sex. Moreover, for four participants among five, their manhood is 'straight-like.' One of the participants, in this regard, describes his self-perception as below:

> I am as man as straight guys with one difference. They are fool for cunt. I feel like a strong man, a very strong one indeed. I am gay but I am not feminine. There are gay guys like me, people have the image of Zeki Müren and Bülent Ersoy in their minds but this is not the case. I am not trying to hide my gayness; this is my natural way of being. (Bilge)

Intervening Self – In this category, three participants see their selves in between in terms of masculinities and femininities; however, all of them state that they try to hinder and/or obstruct their feminine selves and to expose their masculine self. One of the participants gives his account of self-perception as follows:

> I don't think that I am very masculine and I am not feminine at all. I am more moderate, I have my feminine and masculine sides. I am trying to stand in the middle as much as I can. I am observing myself and impeding my feminine sides. At work, for example, I tell people that I am asexual. (Murathan)

Another participant states that:

> I can be both masculine and feminine when I want to. At work, for example, I have to be masculine otherwise I cannot do this job. Nobody can guess that I am gay at work if I do not tell them. I have my feminine sides, and I want to bring out them as well actually but obligations... (Eren)

Neutral Self – This category showing rare frequency involves two participants whose accounts of masculinities depend on the equation with machismo. In this sense, neither participant ascribe masculinity or femininity to himself, but they regard themselves as *ordinary*. One of them expresses his self-perception as follows:

> I am neither masculine nor feminine. I am not masculine because I don't watch football but I read. I do care about human and animal rights. I used to be slightly feminine until I was 17 or 18 but now I am not. I am just an ordinary person.

> I wear normal clothes and I don't walk in a feminine way [kıvırmıyorum]. (Yaşar)

The other participant gives voice his similar account of self-perception as below:

> I am just an ordinary person. I do not generally take care of my appearance. I behave in the very same way of seventy percent of men sitting here [he refers to the men with whom we shared the same café.] I have no sharp sides. I have no feminine sides at all. (Zeki)

Desired Partner Portrayal. This domain touches upon the perceptions of participants in terms of their desired partner's masculinities, and thus it is highly interrelated with the domain of masculinities as the categories of both domains do not present a conceptual distinctness. The data analysis has disclosed four categories, which are 1) Commonly Men, 2) Inherently Men, 3) Extrinsically Men, 4) Characterial Men (See Table 4).

Table 4: *Summary Results of Desired Partner Portrayal*

Domain	Category	Number	Frequency
Desired Partner Portrayal	Commonly Men	6	Typical
	Extrinsically Men	4	Variant
	Inherently Men	3	Variant
	Characterial Men	3	Variant

Commonly Men – In this category, participants portray their desired partner within the concept of commonality, that is, a man who fits into the stereotype. Four of six participant describe their desired partner with *normal* while two other with *ordinary*. One participant describes his desired partner as follows:

> I am only aroused by masculine men. I like men who fit into the general definition of men. So, he should look and act like a straight. I mean he should be normal. He may even look

> like a 'daddy' but his personality should not be like one. He needs to have a new generation mind. For me, blond or skinny men are not attractive. I think they are not masculine. (Boysan)

Extrinsically Men – Within this category, participants describe their desired partners in terms of appearance and/or clothing. The descriptions of desired masculine men are *tall* and *well-built* with *ordinary clothes* for one participant, *tall with fair-complexion* for another participant, and *stocky* and *muscular* for another one. Among four participants, there is one participant who puts emphasis on solely and exclusively the appearance and/or clothes for his desired partner portrayal. He gives his account as below:

> Clothes are important but not body, because I am lazy and I do not go to gym at all when I check the profiles, I don't look for great bodies. I have no specific types; he can be chubby or tall or whatever. But he must look masculine. He can be wearing a navy-blue V-neck pullover but not an orange one. For the face, I am generally aroused by stern features. A full beard would be great too. (Seyfi)

Inherently Men – The third category reveals the meanings and understandings that participants attach to their desired partner portrayal as masculinity's essentiality within the gender category of men. All three participants, in this category, describe their desired partner with terms, such as *natural men* and *real men*.

Characterial Men – The last category of this domain is related to character traits ascribed to desired masculine partner by participants. While for one participant being *concerned* and *devoted* corresponds to his desired partner portrayal, for another being *smart* corresponds. One of three participants who stresses personality most in his desired partner portrayal states that:

> He earns his own life. He is sensible and able to make smart conversations. Yes, it is very important to be able to make profound [adamakıllı] conversations. He is rational. As I said before, it is equal and rational to have sex man to man. (Murathan)

Interpretative Data

Discussion section is going to proceed with investigating the results in three subsections that are in the orbit of the NF/OM movement, self-perception and the desired partner portrayal, and commercial gay culture, and then with a conclusion part.

Looking through the NF/OM movement. Before I started to investigate masculinities and femininities with interviews within NF/OM movement, I had had the presumption of acquiring homogeneous perspectives about these phenomena from the participants. Though it may seem naïve at the first glance, it has been this presumption enabled me to apply a deconstructive strategy to the movement as the motivation behind the presumption was the discursive effect of the movement itself.

Keeping the virtual character of the NF/OM movement in mind, I argue that masculinity and femininity gain the appearances of 'closed boxes,' predominant essences through the reiterative employment in profile statement parts. To put it in another way, with Butler's (1999) terms, masculinity and femininity appears as "*substance*[s], as metaphysically speaking, (…) self-identical being[s]" and as binary oppositions in the NF/OM movement. (p. 25). It seems to me that these appearances are revealed through the intended use of "only masc" and "no fem." For the employment of masculinity or femininity as abiding substance in online profile statements is thought to work and/or acts as a mechanism of a button to switch on one substance and off the other. When the expressions of "only masc" and "no fem" are present in these statement parts, it is assumed that this mechanism will 'automatically' present a desire for a group of men and an apathy for another group. Hence, the assumption of a shared meaning unity about masculinity or femininity among the practitioners of the NF/OM movement becomes the very reason of the intended use.

Masculinity or femininity, hereby, within this intended use, are thought to offer a common ground for the practitioners who sometimes do not share a common culture on the account of the fact that the NF/OM movement echoes in different cultures (Bailey, Kim, Hills, & Linsenmeier, 1997; Clarkson, 2006; Edwards, 2006; Forrest, 1994; Taywaditep, 2002). Moreover, if masculinity and femininity appear as immutable substances signifying a collective understanding in terms of desire in self-conceptualisation and desired partner portrayal, a masculine gay identity and a feminine gay identity comes into existence at the opposite sides of the same axis under this logic. Consequently, within the NF/OM movement, the former becomes desirable and superior and the latter becomes undesirable and inferior.

I would like to argue the implications of foregoing discussion from two aspects with the help of chapter two. First, masculinities and femininities are variable constructions in relation with age, class and ethnicity, and so there is no one kind of masculinity or femininity that can be generalised for an immense group of men on gay social networks (Connell, Hearn, & Kimmel, 2005; Connell, 2005; Hearn, & Collinson, 1994). Therefore, they neither are aspects of identity of individuals, or they nor act as turn on/off buttons since they gain meaning through practices and performances. Which form of masculinity, then, is desired within the NF/OM movement? Which form of femininities are rejected by the expression of "no fem?" A young, gay university student's engagement with masculinities and femininities will be, and is, different from a middle-aged, white-collar, leather gay man's, and a gay who lives in a homophobic small town will engage with masculinities and femininities differently from a gay who lives in a gay suburb. Furthermore, rather than existing as oppositions, masculinities and femininities are relational. As masculinity "is not always "about men,"" this leads the way to female masculinities (Sedgwick, 1995, p.

12). Then, it is, logically, possible that “only masc” can also refer to women. Second, masculine/feminine gay identities are even more limited categories with their gender-inscribed reference than gay identity, and they are limited as identity categories annihilate differences between and within subjects (Jagose, 1996; Seidman, 1995; Sullivan, 2003). In this sense, if sexuality is defined with the gender of object-choice and the gendered self, “a vast range of desires, acts, and social relations are never made into” sexuality itself (Seidman, 1995, p. 127). Then, what makes a masculine man desirable is the gender of the individual; however, other equally profound components of his sexuality, such as “preferred sexual act[s]” and “sexual fantasies” are not mentioned (Sedgwick, 1994, p. 6-7). If masculinity and femininity were substances interrelated with identities, would not they, then, also reveal sexual fantasies of a masculine/feminine gay person? Moreover, would not they also dictate one type of character and/or understanding of masculinity/femininity?

At this point, it seems to me that the results will be illuminating as it seems like a celebration of difference. Despite the intended use of masculinity and femininity within the NF/OM movement, the results shows that the meanings and understandings attached to masculinities and femininities are highly variable for practitioners of the movement. Regarding masculinities, being macho, bully or swaggerer is associated with masculinity as counterpart, but also masculinity is situated as an opposition to machismo. On the other hand, machismo sometimes, whether as counterpart or opposition, is not determinative concept to reveal the understandings of masculinity. Moreover, masculinity appears as normal or ordinary for three participants whereas as natural for other two. Additionally, in terms of appearance, for one participant *stern face features* and *a full beard* signify masculinity while for another “(…) if one is hairy and bodied, not necessarily muscled but stalwart,” then this person is masculine.

On the other hand, one participant puts more emphasis on character than appearance in his description of masculinity with adjectives, such as *sensible*, *rational*, *self-sustained* and being able to make *judicious* conversation. Regarding the meanings and understandings associated with femininities, although seven participants give their accounts in terms of appearance, their accounts are unlike. For instance, *scoop neck t-shirts*; *torn clothes* and *weird hair styles*; *skinny trousers*; *hairless body*; *slim body* are regarded as feminine gender appearance by different participants; however, there seems to be no consensus. Furthermore, gay men femininities work as a way to declare sexual orientation for two participants whereas gay men femininities imply characters traits associated with woman for another two. What's more, femininity implies a gender-inscribed sex role for three participants as femininity equals to being receptive during sexual intercourse while other seven participants, bed position is not a determinative aspect in their accounts of femininities.

Consequently, the appearances of masculinity and femininity as black and white, as desirable and undesirable, as on and off in the NF/OM movement as if they are immutable substances and immanent components of gay identity go along with neither literature nor the results gained with the data. Though the intended use of masculinity and femininity, within the NF/OM movement, assumes these concepts as separate white and black solid rocks, they constitute a unified colourful handheld folding fan. Lastly, to give an illustration of what I mean, let's imagine two gay self-identified men with "only masc" in their online profile statement decide to meet up for date or casual sex. If masculinities and femininities were only about the look, which is probably available with a picture on their profiles, then "only masc" would stand for the intended use. If masculinities and femininities gained meanings and understandings through texting, which is available before meeting, then again "only

masc" would serve for the intended use or as a determined criteria in a profile statement. However, as masculinities and femininities are "configurations of gender practice" at any given time and place, as we are doing masculinities and femininities (Connell, 2005, p. 72), masculinity or femininity in the NF/OM movement becomes "a free-floating artifice" (Butler, 1999, p. 10).

Looking through 'the masculine gay'. 'The masculine gay' is the term Tapınç uses to describe "urban, young, educated, and middle-class homosexuals" who "regard themselves as 'real men', differentiating themselves from the so-called feminine homosexuals by adopting a male identity" in his analysis of male homosexualities in Turkey (Tapınç, 1992, p. 46). In this regard, the participants of this study can be described as masculine gays in terms of their ages, classes and city lives, and in terms of their emphasis on masculinity in their self-perception or desired partner portrayal. Hence, instead of focusing on differences as in the previous subsection of discussion, I will address to the elements of consistency between and within participants' perceptions of masculinities and femininities through the eyes of 'the masculine gay' while keeping these individual perceptions related to gender regime in Turkey.

I would like to set out with the categories that have the highest frequencies within masculinities and femininities domains. Seven of ten participants describe their understanding of masculinity with character traits. As presented in results section, these traits are *reasonable*, *down-to-earth*, *result-orientated*, *dominant*, *decision-maker*, *jealous*, *violent*, *veteran*, *swagger*, *swearer* and *bully*. With the problematic meaning making of masculinity with a character type in mind (MacInnes, 1998), it is obvious that results reveal a normative definition of masculinity depending on personality within Turkey's context as well as Western cultures (Connell, 2005;

Kimmel, 2005). Having said that, the category with the highest frequency of femininities domain tells a different story. Seven of ten participants describe their perception of femininity with extrinsic properties depending on appearance and/or clothing. These properties, as shown in result section, are *slim*, *blond*, *hairless body*, *skinny trousers*, *colourful clothes*, *scoop neck t-shirts*, *torn clothes*, and *weird hair styles*. No matter how variable these properties are, they construct the meaning and understanding of femininity with looks. Hence, the categories with the highest frequency demonstrate that masculinity suggests intrinsic properties while femininity suggests an extrinsic ones for the most participants of this study. This oppositional meaning making implies the hierarchy between masculine and feminine gender practices, and it seems to me that this character/appearance opposition also can be traced back to other oppositions, such as wise/vain and logic/emotion. Consequently, the results present that the meanings and understanding attached to masculinities and femininities echoes the patriarchal perspectives of gender practices in the perceptions of participants.

Another salient aspect of the results is the appearance and reappearance of *normal* (or *ordinary*) as a description in three domains; masculinities, self-perception, and desired partner portrayal, but not in femininities domain. Apparently, no other way of description appears as pervasive as normal in the results because five of ten participants associate masculinity with normal and/or ordinary; two of ten participant whose perception of masculinity depends on machismo counterpart regard themselves as neither masculine nor feminine but as normal; as three of aforementioned five participants conceptualise themselves as masculine, their self-perception can be regarded as normal as well; lastly, the category with the highest frequency of desired partner portrayal reveals normal man is the most desirable. Then, only if one hundred

centigrade degree accepted as *normal* boiling temperature for water by positive sciences can *change* according to altitude, what is normal? Whose normal is this?

Within this context where normal and gay meets, normal leads the way to two gates; the gate of acceptance and the gate of integration. For Warner, in order not to be seen as abnormal or deviant, gays assume that obtaining "acceptance by the dominant culture" by being normal will help them to overcome stigma and to gain dignity (Warner, 1999, pp. 50-53). Normal is, hereby, dominant culture's normal. For Seidman, being normal makes the integration possible for gays to homophobic society; however, this integration happens without "threatening the normative status of heterosexuality" (Seidman, 2005, p. 40). Normal is, hereby, "a heterosexual norm and ideal" (Seidman, 2005, p. 54). Isn't it 'normal,' though, to desire to be normal in Turkey where dominant culture yields a "polarized and inflexible gender system" (Tapınç, 1992, p. 43)? It could be 'normal' if normal did not gain its meaning through its opposition abnormal/pathological/deviant/inferior in dominant culture and if normal did not hold the power. It could, also, be 'normal' if espousing normal did not throw "shame on those who stand father down the ladder of respectability" (Warner, 1999, p. 60). In this sense, "only normal gays," as Seidman notes, "who conform to dominant social norms deserve respect and integration" (Seidman, 2005, p. 45).

Normalisation echoes not only for subordinated sexualities but for all subordinated or marginalised groups. To give an illustration from Turkey where dominant culture is inundated with uniformity, a fundamental component of all nation-states, meaning one ethnicity (Turkish), one religion (Islam), one gender (Man), let's have look at the normalisation filter that is common for subordinated sexualities (Homosexuality) and ethnicities (Kurdish). There is saying which goes like: she/he does not look like Kurdish. The saying may refer to appearance as well as

behaviour, to character as well as the way of talking. Whatever it refers to, it 'normalises' the Kurdish by attributing Turkish elements to the person. The aforementioned saying is adopted to other signifiers without, in fact, changing its so-called 'curing pathology' purpose, and can go like: she/he does not look like gay. Here, ascribing straight elements to gay becomes the lifter of normalisation. Normal, then, does not actually make anyone normal as the gates of acceptance and integration of normalcy can be opened with one key, within this context, heteronormativity. Hence, the pervasive appearance of normal in the results within perceptions of masculinity, self-perception and desired partner portrayal stands for a heterosexual model, standard and/or morality.

All aforementioned things considered, it seems reasonable to assume that 'the masculine gay' complies with patriarchy and heteronormativity with his perception of masculinities and femininities, his self-perception and desired partner portrayal. Although 'the masculine gay,' even with his gender conventional masculinity, is projected as 'failed man' by dominant patriarchal and heterosexist culture, he does not regard himself so. At this point, the results related to essentialist standpoint of participants about masculinity and femininity will significantly illuminating. According to four of ten participants, masculinity is *natural way of being* and so masculine gay men are *natural men* and *real men*. In terms of self-conceptualisation, for four of five participants who regard themselves as masculine, their masculine selves are *straight-like*. Lastly, three of ten participant describe their desired partner as *natural men* and *real men* as well. Within this perspective, then, masculinity becomes an accomplishment not only with renouncement of femininity but also with disavowal of 'failed men' (Butler, 1995). In this sense, 'the masculine gay' "can keep his place in men's world," by pushing femininity down in the hierarchy and by throwing shame

on femininity with ‘unreal’ and ‘failed’ with a constant reference to patriarchal and heterosexist dominant culture (Tapınç, 1992, p. 46).

If ‘the masculine gay’ is normal, real man, straight-like and desires the same, he does not consider his masculinity, himself as subordinated. Depending on Edward’s (2006) opinion about gay men’s being “located in an awkward, and perhaps even dialectical, relation to gender both psychologically and socially,” I would like to argue that the form of masculinity of ‘the masculine gay,’ through his own eyes, signify hegemonic masculinity (p. 84). The results demonstrate that the meanings and understandings attached to masculinity leads the way to the hegemonic masculinity forms as normal may well stand for “the currently most honored way of being a man” (Connell, & Messerschmidt, 2005 p. 832), and real men may well stand for cultural ideal or hegemonic “fantasy figure” of masculinity (Donaldson, 1993, p. 646). Moreover, literature has revealed that hegemonic bloc (of masculinity) is not essentially heterosexual when the agency of subordinated and marginalised masculinities is taken into consideration (Demetriou, 2001). Then, ‘the masculine gay’ has a dynamic role within hegemonic bloc (of masculinity) and so he complies with the overall ascendency of men over women and has an impact on the production and reproduction of normative understanding of masculinities. For “many elements of the latter [gay masculinities],” as Demetriou (2001) notes, “have become constitutive parts of a hybrid hegemonic bloc” (p. 354).

If ‘the masculine gay’ plays an active and constitutive role within hegemonic bloc with his significant emphasis on masculinity in his self-perception and desired partner portrayal, with his “only masc” and “no fem” motto in his pursuit of a partner, that is to say, with his agency, the hegemonic bloc (of masculinity) underpins his misogyny and accordingly his repulsion of femininity. The available results seems to

provide a good deal of examples. First, as mentioned above, the subcategory with highest frequency in the domain of femininities demonstrate that six of ten participants associate femininity with appearance and/or clothes, which creates a hierarchy when the highest frequencies of masculinities and femininities are compared. Second, three of ten participants conceptualise femininities within the schema of penetration and for these three participants gender non-confirming gay men are exclusively receptive. What does gender role tell about sexuality more than the gender of object-choice? The literature has revealed that "sexuality extend along so many dimensions that aren't well-described in terms of the gender of the object-choice at all" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 35). Third, according to two of ten participants, femininities are associated with a character trait. One of them states that "They have irrepressible egos and they are shrewish like women." What makes significant of this example is that participant chooses two particularly negative connotations that position femininity below on the ladder of respectability to describe gender non-confirming gay men while also describing women. To give the last example to demonstrate misogyny and heteronormativity from the results, let's give voice to one participant:

> I like man who is tall with fair-complexion. He should be concerned and devoted. Of course, he should be with love. But this is the problem. The love relationships between two men aren't sustainable. If two guys live together, it is not clear who will do what at home. Who will clean up? Who will change the bed sheet with semen? So, you see it is clear when it is one man and one woman. The best for two men is to be fuckbuddy or friends with benefits. (Zeki)

Apparently, a shared life between two members of hegemonic bloc seems not possible since each member will lay claim to position gained through the power of being a man in the house and the conflict over it will be the reason for their relationship to come an

end. Moreover, in the quoted statement, the unequal and unpaid domestic labour of women and heteronormativity as a ground to confuse and/or disrupt a same-sex relationship are justified.

Consequently, 'the masculine gay' is "more used to exercise power, and availing [himself] of male privilege and therefore inhabit masculinity as a 'natural right'" and so he does not want any kind of threat his privilege and wants to keep his place in hegemonic bloc (Bereket, & Adam, 2006, p.145). This threat may well come from femininity or any kind of implication of his same-sex desire. As a last reference to the results in this subsection, I would like to emphasis the subcategory of reservation for a better picture of the relationship between power exercise and 'the masculine gay.' Three of four participants in this subcategory states that femininity is desirable as the gender of object-choice behind the closed doors. However, to be seen with a gender non-conforming man becomes a threat to masculinity, the privilege in dominant culture, the place in hegemonic bloc.

Looking through the gay scene. The literature has shown that Turkey facing to the West for more than ninety years has embraced a liberal economy and has enhanced its ties with globalisation since the late 1980s, and thus modern gay identity started to appear in major cities (Özbay, 2015) The globalisation of same-sex sexual identities, or with Altman's (1996) term 'the global gay,' produced the internationalisation of an adopted western style of gay identity, which centres around creating a free space that enables same-sex erotic and emotional desire in a middle-class urban area. (Altman, 1996; Özbay, 2015). Although "one-way determinism in the adoption of sexual identity from the global to the local" does not seem possible within agency and the indigenous culture, there is one aspect that determined modern gay in Turkey from the global (Bereket, & Adam, 2006, p. 133). The literature shows

consensus on masculinisation of gay men in today's Turkey, which means that masculinity increasingly is emphasised on gay men's self and desired partner portrayals (Bereket, & Adam, 2006; Özbay, 2010; Özbay, 2015; Tapınç, 1992). In this part of discussion, I will situate this embodied and imported masculine ideals of gay men within the commercial gay culture through a significant difference revealed by the meanings and understandings attached to masculinities by participants.

The results has demonstrated that two of ten participants associate masculinity with machismo and the very same two participants conceptualise their selves as neutral, meaning neither masculine nor feminine. Despite their repudiation and repulsion of femininities, these two participants show no particular emphasis on masculinity in terms of their desired partner portrayal since masculinity comes with negative connotations in their understandings. For their self and desired partner portrayal centres around being normal and/or ordinary but not being masculine. The significant point is, however, both of them state that they lead a life out of gay subculture. Although it is obvious that they are somehow in gay subculture, if not I was not able to contact them for interviews via gay social networks, they consider themselves out of commercial gay culture as they do not go to gay clubs and they do not have gay friend circles. In short, they do not regard themselves as a part of the community. Theoretically, their gay identity formation may seem problematic due to the lack of sense of community; however, they identify themselves as gay.

The literature, on the other hand, has demonstrated that commercial gay culture highly depend on the objectification of masculinity with commodified male body advertisements, an embodied western style and age/youth-driven masculine bodily ideals (Altman 1996; Duncan, 2007; Edwards, 1994; Edwards, 2006; Forrest, 1994; Özbay, 2015). In this sense, it seems to me that aforementioned two

participants' extramural lives of commercial gay culture raises a symbolic link between the 'desire' of/for masculinity and commercial gay culture. If "hegemony means persuasion, and one of its important sites is likely to be the commercial mass media," masculinity (of hegemonic bloc), within this context, means persuasion through commercial gay culture among other sites (Carrigan, Connell, & Lee, 1985, p. 594). As there are results showing dissenting attachments to masculinity (machismo counterpart), neutral self-perception (neither masculine as masculine is machismo nor feminine) and desired partner portrayal depending on normalcy not masculinity, and the most significantly as these meanings are constructed out of commercial gay culture, there seems to be no persuasion.

What I would like to emphasise here is not the implication of cause and effect relationship between commercial gay culture and the 'glorification' of masculinity, which would fail to notice the relational aspects of gender in terms of agency, historical, cultural and material analysis and other social divisions that interacts with masculinities such race and class, but rather is that commercial gay culture is proved to be, through the results, one of the determinative sites in the meaning construction of masculinity among gay self-identified men in Turkey.

Conclusion. The study was set out to explore the accounts of gay men, who draw on pervasive expressions "only masc" or "no fem" in their profile statement parts on gay social networks in their pursuit of a partner, about masculinities and femininities in Turkey. The study, hereby, sought to know how these gay men construct their selves and what elements they ascribe to their desired partners in terms of masculinities and femininities. In this sense, it aimed at giving voice to gay men whose engagement with masculinities and femininities has been significant unit of analysis in the literature. Relying on the voices of 10 gay self-identified men from

Istanbul, the findings were demonstrated in the result subsection of this chapter. This section will synthesise the findings to the purpose of the study and the research questions.

The interpretation, performance, construction and experience of masculinities and femininities remain variable and even sometimes contradictory within the members of the same culture and urban life, of the shared sexual identities and class-consciousness. The diverse understandings of masculinity and femininity highlights the significance of the agency in the practice and performance of these phenomena whereas masculine and feminine play distinctive roles as one-way determinations within gay community in Turkey. In this sense, this variation of masculinities and femininities is like an elephant in the room for the NF/OM movement through which the desire for 'the' masculine and renunciation for 'the' feminine is expressed. The employment of masculinity and femininity on gay social networks, as if they were mass productions, reveals the strict frame of dominant culture and commercial gay culture in gay men's perspectives about gender roles although dominant culture, which is highly heterosexist, misogynist, and polarized in terms of gender in Turkey, subordinates the desire and sexual practice of gayness.

This strict frame of dominant culture in Turkey, which lays down the predominance of men over women, some other men and children, echoes in the meanings attached to masculinities and femininities by gay men within the NF/OM movement by revealing the power relations in gender regime. Placing masculinity and femininity in the orbit of desirable and undesirable in self-perception and for desired partner portrayal do not only derive from these gay men's sense of erotics but also from the power gained through being men or masculine in the hierarchy of gender regime in Turkey. This power relation is precisely linked to patriarchy and the

institutionalised and naturalised heterosexuality, which marginalise femininity and gender non-confirming appearance, behaviour, clothing and representation of self in gay community in Turkey. Hence, relying on the ideals of dominant culture in terms of gender practice and performance, but at the same time rejecting the stereotypical image of gayness, gay men within the NF/OM movement construct their own hegemony of being gay, who is cohesive to heterosexist culture, under the bombarding of testosterone of commercial gay culture. In this sense, there is a contribution to a system that is constantly attempting to restrain a majority of people to the hegemony of men and heterosexuality, namely sex/gender regime in Turkey.

The scale of this discussion is voluminous and multifaceted. In order to generate a broader understanding in terms of the relation between gay men and masculinities and femininities, there is a need for more studies focusing upon the relation between commercial gay culture and gay men's engagement with masculinities and femininities, content analysis studies centring on the relation between the profiles with "no fem" or "only masc" in their profile statement parts and the images used as profile pictures and the discourse employed in those profiles, and studies giving voice to gay men who are marginalised within gay community itself.

The study has provided an evaluative prospect on gender and same-sex sexualities in Turkey, and was conducted in a busy urban environment through convenience sampling. As consequences of this methodology, the study engaged with a number of limitations that need to be taken into consideration. First, the recruitment process was conducted through gay social networks which was highly time consuming and unusual environment for recruitment in terms of the intended use of these networks, which consequently affected the number of participants. Second, eight of ten interviews was not audio-taped as the participants did not consent, and so these

eight interviews were noted down, which resulted into a difficult work of noting down from sixty to ninety minutes and the impossibility of writing every detail. Despite these limitation, the data have been capable of demonstrating important empirical results and serving the purpose of the study.

Providing with the delimitations of the study, and limitations of the method used to generate the data, the results develops the claim that gay men who are hegemonised by heteronormative society and subordinated in the gender class of men fail to challenge the systems of oppression in order to integrate themselves to the dominant culture in Turkey. In this sense, they comply with the ascendency of men over women, other men, children, and of hetero over homo, bi, trans, a, and they simultaneously become oppressors of their own sexualities by having sex only with gender.

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Appendix: Participant Characteristics with Summarised Data

Pseudonym	Age	Marital Status	Job	Gay Culture Relations	Perception of Femininity	Perception of Masculinity	Perception of Self	Desired Partner Portrayal
Murathan	40	Single	Art director	Gay bars, gym	Extrinsic Form, Bed Position, Reservation	Character Trait, Correspondence,	Intervening	Characterial Men
Zeki	32	Single	Civil Engineer	No	Extrinsic Form, Reservation, Declaration	Character Trait, Correspondence	Neutral	Commonly, Characterial, Extrinsically, Men
Bilge	51	Married	Self-employed	Gay bars, gay friend circles	Essentiality, Reservation	Sociality, Essentiality, Extrinsic	Masculine	Commonly, Extrinsically, Inherently Men
Ali	30	Single	Tourism Employee	Gay bars, gym	Bed Position, Character Trait	Character Trait, Correspondence, Sociality, Essentiality	Masculine	Inherently Men
Seyfi	41	Single	Sales Director	Gay bars, gay friend circles	Character Trait, Declaration	Character Trait, Sociality, Extrinsic	Masculine	Extrinsically Men
Boysan	37	Single	Engineer	Gay bars, gym	Extrinsic Form, Essentiality	Character Trait, Correspondence, Essentiality, Extrinsic	Masculine	Commonly Men
Yaşar	24	Single	Student	No	Extrinsic Form, Declaration	Character Trait, Correspondence	Neutral	Commonly, Characterial Men
Cem	32	Married	Self-employed	Gay bars, gay friend circles	Extrinsic Form, Reservation	Essentiality	Masculine	Inherently Men
Ozan	28	Single	Medical Specialist	Gay bars, gay friend circles, gym	Extrinsic Form, Bed Position	Character Trait, Correspondence, Sociality, Extrinsic	Intervening	Commonly, Extrinsically Men
Eren	26	Single	Sales Representative	Gay bars, gay friend circles, gym	Extrinsic Form, Essentiality, Declaration	Correspondence, Sociality	Intervening	Commonly Men