

**Global identification predicts gay-male identity integration and wellbeing among  
Turkish gay men**

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### **Abstract**

In most parts of the world, hegemonic masculinity requires men to endorse traditional masculine ideals, one of which is rejection of homosexuality. Wherever hegemonic masculinity favours heterosexuality over homosexuality, gay males may feel under pressure to negotiate their conflicting male gender and gay sexual identities to maintain positive self-perceptions. However, globalisation, as a source of intercultural interaction, might provide a beneficial context for people wishing to create alternative masculinities in the face of hegemonic masculinity. Hence, we tested if global identification would predict higher levels of gay-male identity integration, and indirectly subjective wellbeing, via alternative masculinity representations for gay and male identities. A community sample of 219 gay and bisexual men from Turkey completed the study. Structural equation modelling revealed that global identification positively predicted gay-male identity integration, and indirectly subjective wellbeing; however, alternative masculinity representations did not mediate this relationship. Our findings illustrate how identity categories in different domains can intersect and affect each other in complex ways. Moreover, we discuss mental health and wellbeing implications for gay men living in cultures where they experience high levels of prejudice and stigma.

*Key words:* global identification; gay-male identity integration; alternative masculinities; sexual identity; gender identity; intersectionality

### **Global identification predicts gay-male identity integration and wellbeing among Turkish gay men**

Today, the notion of multiple identities is all pervasive. People have multiple identities as a combination of nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, gender, and social status, to name just a few. So far, social psychologists have often theorised and researched as if those identities might be kept separate, but there is now increasing recognition that social identities intersect and are not independent of each other (see Dommelen, Schmidt, Hewstone, Gonsalkorale, & Brewer, 2015, for a recent study). Once multiple social identities intersect, they may either harmoniously function together or they might be incompatible, with potentially important implications for wellbeing. This study aims to look at the intersection of two potentially conflicting identities among Turkish gay men. For this group, gay and male identities may be experienced as incompatible, resulting in poorer wellbeing, because being gay violates the prescriptive norms of hegemonic masculinity, the dominant ideal way of being a man in a given time and place. However, in the current paper, we propose that the compatibility or otherwise of these two social identities depends in turn on the adoption of a third social identity—as a ‘global citizen’.

#### **Hegemonic masculinity and its implications**

Masculine ideology defines cultural standards for male behaviour and highlights the importance of following these standards (Pleck, 1995; Thompson & Pleck, 1995). *Hegemonic masculinity*, the driving force underlying masculinity ideology, is an idealised form of masculinity which men strive to live up to (Connell, 2005). Although the meaning of hegemonic masculinity may change over time and across cultures (Connell, 2012), the currently hegemonic form of masculinity, both globally and in Turkey, requires men to be tough, independent, aggressive, dominant, and successful; on the other hand, it also prescribes them not to be effeminate, dependent or submissive (Connell, 2005; Herek, 1986).

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Hegemonic masculinity is said to “subordinate” all other masculinities (Pyke, 1996): Certain men, not being able to live up to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, are thus marginalised and are forced to construct their gender identities by validating other masculinities (Messerschmidt, 1993). This is congruent with Connell’s (2005) proposition that masculinities are plural: If men reject or fail to endorse hegemonic masculinity, they can then identify with other masculinities; however, such other masculinities are regarded as inferior and subordinate (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).<sup>1</sup>

Connell (2005) claims that gender is constructed in a dynamic process, and cultures provide a context to understand hegemonic masculinity as a product of this dynamic process (Herek, 1986). Men are born and grow up in societies where the context of family and other institutions favours heterosexuality (Connell, 2005). People often act in ways that are compatible with their cultural notions of masculinity and femininity rather than their own identities (Pleck, 1995). In this context, when being a man becomes an essential aspect of one’s personal identity, this also requires one to be heterosexual (Pleck, 1995) and not to be a woman (Kimmel, 1994). Male homosexuality is seen as a threat to masculinity (Glick, Gangl, Gibb, Klumpner, & Weinberg, 2007; Herek, 1986; Kimmel, 1994; Plummer, 2005; Parrott, 2009), since gays are often thought to have innately feminine qualities (Kite & Deaux, 1987; Herek, 1984). Hence, anti-femininity and anti-gay prejudice are common responses against masculinity threat (Pleck, 1981; Glick et al., 2007), so as to maintain masculine ideology in the context of masculine socialisation (Shields & Harrimon, 1984).

To the extent that subordination of gay men is an integral part of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005), it might function as a coping mechanism for heterosexual men: Masculine identity may be reaffirmed by attacking gay men (Herek, 1986), who are perceived to be guilty of violating existing gender norms (Franklin, 2000; Pharr, 1988). Heterosexuals define the boundaries of their masculine identity, putting themselves on the

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inside and gay men on the outside (Herek, 1986). In so doing, they may derive self-esteem by attacking gay or effeminate men as deviant in-group members (see subjective group dynamics theory: Marques, Abrams, Paez, & Martinez-Taboada, 1998) and thus maintain their masculine identity (which is in line with social identity theory: Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, gay men inherently possess both of these sexual and gender identities, and how this conflict is manifest and experienced in gay men's lives has received little attention.

Although this is changing in some parts of the world, and being a male in Turkey still requires one to be heterosexual and to endorse the features of hegemonic masculinity, according to the perspectives of heterosexual men (Bolak-Boratav, Fişek, & Eslen-Ziya, 2014; Sancar, 2009), and gay men (Koc & Eslen-Ziya, 2012). Gay identity, on the other hand, is a threat to one's male identity, as it is perceived to violate the requirements of hegemonic masculinity even for gay men themselves (Eslen-Ziya & Koc, 2016). Hence, it is possible to say that gay and male identities are incompatible in Turkey, and that Turkish gay men are likely to experience conflict between their sexual and gender identities, as discussed by Franklin (2000) and Herek (1986). Accordingly, we focus here on the paradoxical coexistence of these two identities – gay and male – in a context where hegemonic masculinity entails that they are incompatible, and we examine the predictors and implications of their experienced (in)compatibility.

### **Identity integration and wellbeing**

How do people deal with multiple identities that may potentially be in conflict? This question has been addressed in studies of people with multiple cultural identities. Thus, bicultural identity integration can be taken as an analogue problem of the one we address here. Bicultural identity integration (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002) was developed to address individuals' subjective experiences of managing dual identities. In this

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study, we take bicultural identity integration as a framework to understand the experiences of gay men negotiating their sexual and gender identities.

Bicultural identity integration incorporates two bipolar components of identity integration. The first is *blendedness versus compartmentalisation*, capturing the “degree of dissociation versus overlap perceived between the two cultural orientations” (Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martínez, 2011; p. 830), whereas the second is *harmony versus conflict*, capturing the “degree of tension or clash versus compatibility between the two cultures” (p. 830). The first component taps into the performance-related aspect of identity integration whereas the second one focuses on the affective aspect (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). A recent meta-analysis has shown that a high level of identity integration is associated with psychological, sociocultural, and health-related adjustment outcomes such as higher self-esteem, lower anxiety, and greater life satisfaction in bicultural individuals (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2012). One of the advantages of this framework is its flexibility to apply to different forms of social identity beyond cultural identities. Huynh et al. (2011) suggest that this framework might be applied to other potentially incompatible identities such as racial, religious, sexual, and professional identities, and their possible combinations. Yet we are aware of no research that has attempted this to date. Accordingly, we focus here on the integration of potentially incompatible sexual and gender identities.

### **Coping with masculinity threat through global identification**

In a previous qualitative study among Turkish gay men, Koc and Eslen-Ziya (2012) found that gay sexual identity was perceived to ‘violate’ hegemonic masculinity ideology, and hence the male gender identity of the participants. Since gay men inherently possess both gay sexual and male gender identities at the same time, this threat is always present (although not necessarily salient). When identities are under threat, people may use a wide variety of coping strategies to maintain or restore a satisfactory sense of identity (Breakwell, 1986).

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One way to cope with threat is to reject endorsement of the threatening identity (Breakwell, 1986). However, in a culturally diverse online sample of men who have sex with men, non-endorsement of gay identity was found to be related to negative outcomes such as maladaptive sexual patterns, which suggests that it is not an especially viable coping mechanism (Rosenmann & Safir, 2007).

In an attempt to compensate for lacking hegemonic masculinity, marginalised men may try to create alternative masculinities (Connell, 2005; Messerschmidt, 1993; Pyke, 1996; Wilson et al., 2010). Alternative masculinities are not homogenous, and they may be created as a product of sexual and gender identity negotiation. In a study with gay, bisexual, and questioning US adolescents, Wilson et al. (2010) found that negotiating masculine ideology might result in different alternative masculinities, such as accepting hegemonic masculinity by rejecting feminine and endorsing masculine behaviour, or rejecting all the stereotypes and creating their own ways. A third and more balanced way was to “blend the most appealing qualities of the two genders” (Wilson et al., 2010; p.181). Those individuals achieving to blend these qualities might benefit from positive aspects of both identities.

A third coping mechanism is that people can change their patterns of group identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). For instance, when a new social context posed a threat to the ethnic identity of Hispanic students in their first year in college in the US, those with initially low identification further lowered their group identification to maintain their self-esteem, whereas those with initially high identification maintained and strengthened their ethnic identification (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Shifts in identification functioned as a coping mechanism for the threat to their identity. In their qualitative study with Turkish gay men, Koc and Eslen-Ziya (2012) concluded that adopting a global identity as “citizen of the world” might provide an opportunity to escape from traditional masculine ideology and open the

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path for construction of positive alternative masculinities, by aligning the individual with a globalised Western culture where gay identity is more accepted (see also Rosenmann, 2016).

Globalisation provides high degrees of contact with other cultures (Berry, 2008). Accordingly, intercultural contact may make new contexts available to individuals, and people might use these contexts as new social environments within which to construct or transform their identities (Arnett, 2002). In other words, beyond the limitations of cultural and national identities and related traditional views on masculinity, globalisation might enable individuals to have novel and positive perspectives, which might not be readily available in their cultural contexts of origin. In this way, being a male will not necessarily conflict with being gay, because alternative masculinities may overlap with the features of gay identities. Thus, alternative definitions of masculinity attributed to males can also be attributed to gays, which in turn predictably decreases incompatibility.

Extending this argument, Arnett (2002) stated that “when people are allowed to make their own choices about values, love, and work, the likelihood may be enhanced that they will find a psychologically rewarding match between their choices and their individual desires” (p. 781). In other words, they will choose to perform their identities in contexts which reinforce their life choices. In this sense, globalisation might be perceived as a facilitating context for gay-male identity integration because homosexuality is increasingly accepted in the Western world (Pew Research Centre, 2013), particularly in European and North American countries associated with global culture, as well as by non-Western individuals who identify with global culture (Rosenmann, 2016), and being gay is gradually becoming more of an accepted self-trait (Simon, 2004). Jaspal and Cinnirella (2012) suggested that gay-affirmative social contexts provide feelings of belonging and increased wellbeing for those who have potentially incompatible identities (i.e., British Muslim gay men), and we suggest that global identification might function to create a gay-affirmative social context for gay



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male Turkish individuals. People who identify with globalised Western culture might gain access to positive aspects of gay identity, that are otherwise unavailable in a culture where negative anti-gay attitudes are prevalent (Anderson & Koc, 2015) and gay men report experiencing internalised sexual prejudice as a function of violating male gender roles (Eslenziya & Koc, 2016). Accordingly, we expect that the more strongly Turkish gay men identify as “global citizens”, the more they should experience their gay and male identities as compatible, with corresponding benefits for their psychological wellbeing.

### **Overview of the Current Study and the Hypotheses**

In this study, we aimed to test if global identification would predict greater compatibility between two conflicting identities, namely gay and male identities, via alternative masculinity representations, thereby predicting higher wellbeing among gay male individuals (see Figure 1).

In particular, we hypothesised that global identification would predict higher gay-male identity integration (H1), and that gay-male identity integration would predict higher levels of wellbeing (H2). Combining H1 and H2, we expected a significant indirect effect of global identification on wellbeing via gay-male identity integration.

Moreover, we hypothesised that global identification would predict alternative masculinity representations for gay identity (H3a) and for male identity (H3b), and that these alternative masculinity representations for gay identity (H4a) and for male identity (H4b) would predict gay-male identity integration separately. Combining H3a, H3b, H4a and H4b, we expected significant indirect effects of global identification on gay-male identity integration via these alternative masculinity representations.

We controlled for Turkish identification, as an alternative to global identification, and we did not make any specific predictions. Finally, we also controlled for religiosity. Because

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religiosity might inherently be perceived as incompatible with gay identity (e.g., Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010), although not the main focus of our current study, we hypothesised that religiosity would predict lower levels of gay-male identity integration (H5) and hence lower wellbeing.

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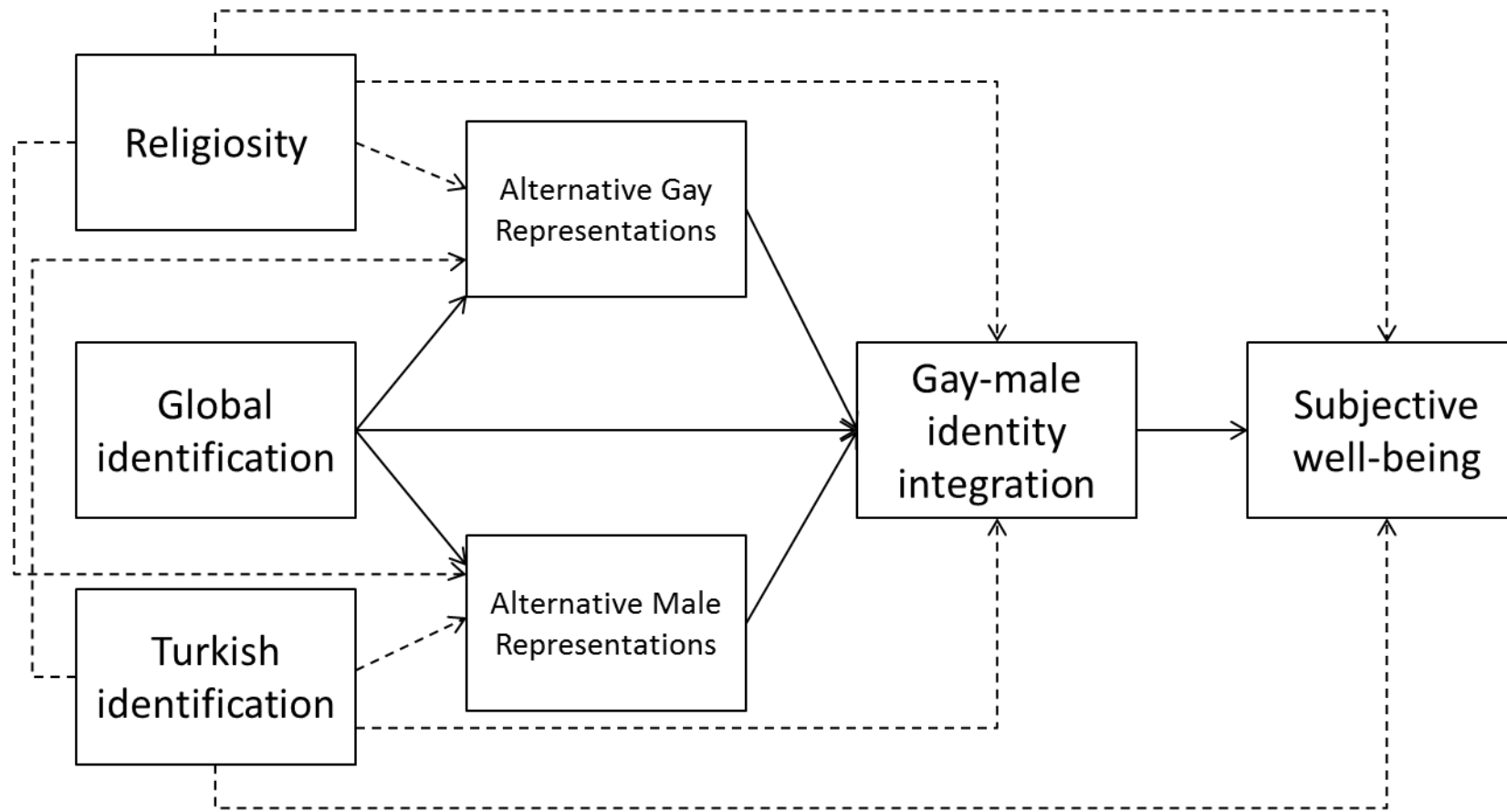


Figure 1. Conceptual model (solid lines show the hypothesised model, and dashed lines show that we controlled for religiosity and Turkish identification)

## Method

### Participants and Procedure

An opportunity sample of 226 respondents completed the study; initially, six respondents were removed due to being younger than 18 years old, and one further requested to withdraw his data after debrief. Of the remaining 219 respondents<sup>2</sup>, 188 were self-identified gay, 27 were self-identified bisexual, and four were other (one gender-queer, two cross-dressers, and one rejected such categorisation). In the final sample, the mean age was 27.08 ( $SD = 8.22$ ) ranging from 18 to 56. We measured certain demographic variables such as occupation, subjective socio-economic status (SES), and relationship status. Fifty one percent were students, and the remainder had various occupations including tailors, teachers, and engineers. Subjective SES was measured asking respondents to place themselves on the rungs of a ladder from 1 to 10 (higher scores indicating higher status) in comparison to other people in Turkish society (Adler, Epel, Castellazzo, & Ickovics, 2000), and the mean SES was 5.56 ( $SD = 1.57$ ). 76.7% of the respondents were single, 8.2% were in an open relationship, 13.7% were in a monogamous relationship, and 1.4% were married<sup>3</sup>. We also measured respondents' level of outness using the Outness Inventory (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000): they were mostly closeted, as would be expected in a traditional society like Turkey (overall openness  $M = 2.44$  on a 7-point scale from 1 to 7 higher scores indicating more openness). They were most open to friends ( $M = 3.76$ ) followed by siblings ( $M = 2.90$ ) in the family, and less than average open to the supervisors at work ( $M = 1.85$ ).

Once the study was approved by our university's research ethics committee, the first author translated the entire questionnaire into Turkish, and we refined the translation using established back-translation procedures (Brislin, 1970). Next, we created a recruitment message, including a description of the study, eligibility criteria, and the online link to the study. Using this message, we recruited the respondents via online social networks (e.g.,

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Facebook and Twitter), online gay dating websites (e.g., Gayromeo) and applications (e.g., Hornet), and via a gay magazine website in Turkey. A similar number of respondents was recruited from each source. When respondents clicked on the link, they were directed to the study website where they were given information about the study, gave their consent for participation, completed the questionnaire, and were finally debriefed.

### **Design**

This was a correlational study using observed and latent variables testing both direct and indirect paths for mediation effects (see Figure 1). In our analysis, we used religiosity, and Turkish and global identification constructs as observed variables, whereas alternative gay and male representations, gay-male identity integration, and subjective wellbeing constructs were used as latent factors. Latent factors are theoretical constructs created with observed variables representing the different aspects of the hypothesised construct (Kline, 2005). Following the recommendations of Little, Cunningham, Shahar, and Widaman (2002), we measured each latent factor with three observed indicators, so that each latent factor was locally just-identified. These indicators are described below.

### **Measures<sup>4</sup>**

**Religiosity.** We measured religiosity with two questions. We first asked if respondents belonged to a religion, and if yes, we asked them to report their religion. Then we asked them to what extent they agreed with the following statement: “I often think about the fact that I am a member of my religious affiliation” on a 5-point Likert scale (anchors: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Participants who did not belong to a religion was recoded as the lowest score. Higher scores indicate higher levels of agreement.

**Turkish and global identification measures.** Two single-item identification measures were used for Turkish identification and global identification, separately (adapted

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from Postmes, Haslam, & Jans, 2013). The Single Item Identification Scale was found to be a valid and reliable measure of identification, as Postmes et al. (2013) claim that social identification is homogenous enough to be measured with a single item. For this study, each item was worded as “I identify with Turks”, and “I identify with the citizens of the world.” Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with these statements on a 5-point Likert scale (anchors: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate higher levels of identification.

**Alternative gay and male representations.** Based on previous research on masculinities (Bolak-Boratav, Fişek, & Eslen-Ziya, 2014; Koc & Eslen-Ziya, 2012), two lists of ten attributes including traditional and alternative masculinity representations for male and gay identities were compiled separately (see Table 1). This rating measure aimed to capture how much respondents would associate these traditional and alternative masculinity representations with males and gays as separate social identity categories. We expected that higher levels of alternative representations, rather than traditional, would be related to higher levels of compatibility between these identities. Accordingly, respondents were told that these attributes could be used to describe males (or gays), and they were asked to indicate their level of agreement on a 9-point scale. Anchors were only provided for five main points (from 1 = *does not describe males [gays] at all* to 5 = *describes males [gays] perfectly*), and the respondents were also given an opportunity to select numbers between main points such as 3½ (between 3 and 4) if they were undecided between two responses, resulting in a 9-point scale. The ratings were presented in a random order both within and across the two categories. Higher scores indicate higher levels of association between alternative masculinity representations and the two social identity categories, separately.

Since this measure was new, we initially conducted principal component analysis using IBM SPSS statistics for windows, Version 22.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA). To

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control for individual differences in response style, we first ipsatised the items for each rating list by calculating a mean score of all the items in each list and subtracting them from individual item scores (Fischer & Milfont, 2010). Because the analysis uses ipsative data, principal component analysis rather than exploratory factor analysis is appropriate (Baron, 1996; Ten Berge, 1999). For both male and gay ratings, there was a strong one factor solution, where alternative attributes loaded against traditional items in the same factor for each rating list. We decided to retain the first six highest loadings including three traditional and three alternative representations for each scale (see retained items in Table 1 with asterisk). Each single factor scale explained 28.63% of the variance for the male representations, and 27.85% of the variance for gay representations. Reliabilities were acceptable for the male scale,  $\alpha = .73$ , and for the gay scale,  $\alpha = .69$ .

Table 1

### *Traditional and alternative representations for male and gay identities*

Male		Gay	
Traditional	Alternative	Traditional	Alternative
Dominant*	Supportive*	Timid	Open-minded*
Protective	Empathetic*	Flamboyant*	Creative*
Manly	Responsible	Effeminate*	Fashionable
Promiscuous*	Egalitarian*	Immoral*	Expressive*
Traditional*	Independent	Capricious	Sensitive

Notes: \* indicates the words retained after factor analysis

**Gay-male identity integration.** We used three indicators to measure gay-male identity integration: a single-item pictorial measure adapted from the Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992) and two subscales of our adapted version of the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale (Huynh, 2009).

**Gay-male compatibility circles.** We adapted the Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (Aron et al., 1992) to measure compatibility between gay and male identities. This is a single-

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item, pictorial measure originally measuring interpersonal connectedness; two circles measuring self and other gradually overlap on a seven-step scale from no overlap to almost complete overlap. In this study, we reconceptualised this scale with two identity categories, gay and male, and these identities were represented in each circle. Respondents were told that the circles show how gay and male identities might relate to one another, and were asked to choose the picture that best describes their perception. There were seven pictures, and scores ranged from 1 to 7 with higher scores indicating higher levels of compatibility between the two identities.

***Gay-male identity integration scale.*** We adapted the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale (Huynh, 2009) to measure integration between gay and male identities on a personal level. The original version is a 19-item scale originally measuring individual differences in structure and experiences of biculturalism (e.g., immigrant, ethnic, and sojourner identity). This scale has two bipolar dimensions, blendedness versus compartmentalisation, and harmony versus conflict. In this study, we reconceptualised this scale with two identity categories, gay and male, and 16 of the original items were adapted accordingly, eight for each dimension. Example items are “Both gay and male identities make me who I am” (blendedness), “I find it difficult to combine gay and male identities” (compartmentalisation), “My gay and male identities are compatible” (harmony), and “I feel torn between gay and male identities” (conflict). Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the statements using a 6-point scale (anchors: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*) with higher scores indicating higher levels of integration.

Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on gay-male identity integration items using MPLUS version 6 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010).. We estimated two correlated latent factors for blendedness (versus compartmentalisation) and harmony (versus conflict). To account for acquiescent responding, we modelled an uncorrelated method factor that loaded



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onto every item fixed at 1 (Welkenhuysen-Gybels, Billiet, & Cambré, 2003). The model showed acceptable fit to the data, according to Kline's (2005) criteria  $\chi^2(102) = 235.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ; comparative fit index ( $CFI$ ) = 0.90; root mean square error of approximation ( $RMSEA$ ) = 0.09 (90 % CI, 0.07-0.10); standardised root mean square residual ( $SRMR$ ) = 0.08; however, there were issues regarding two items: one of them had a very low loading, and the other one had a positive loading while it was supposed to load negatively. Looking at the item contents, we concluded that the issues could be related to translation into Turkish language, and item contents were not accurately reflected in these two items. Hence, we repeated the analysis excluding these items with 14 items in total<sup>5</sup>. This model was a better fit to data;  $\chi^2(73) = 158.60$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $CFI = 0.94$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.08$  (90% CIs, 0.06-0.10);  $SRMR = 0.06$ ; and all items loaded accurately ( $|\beta_s| \geq .37$ ,  $p < .001$ ). After items measuring compartmentalisation and conflict were recoded, reliabilities for each factor were computed, and were acceptable,  $\alpha = .75$  for blendedness vs. compartmentalisation (6 items), and  $\alpha = .89$  for harmony vs. conflict (8 items).

**Subjective wellbeing.** We measured subjective wellbeing according to the well-known tripartite model (Diener, 1984; Metler & Busseri, 2015), using three indicators: satisfaction with life, positive affect, and (absence of) negative affect.

**Life satisfaction.** A single item from the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) was used to measure life satisfaction after being adapted to reflect state satisfaction rather than trait. This single item measure was previously found to be valid to reflect life satisfaction as well as the full scale (Cheung & Lucas, 2014). The item used was "Right now, I am satisfied with my life." Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement on the statement using a 5-point scale (anchor: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*). Higher scores indicate higher levels of life satisfaction.

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***Positive and negative affect.*** We included six items constituting the positive and negative affect subscales of the Affect Valuation Index (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006). Example items were “content” for positive, and “sad” for negative. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they felt each affect at that moment using a 5-point scale (anchor: 1 = *not at all*, 5 = *entirely*). Scale means were computed with higher scores indicating higher levels of positive and negative affect separately. Reliabilities were good for positive affect  $\alpha = .91$ , and for negative affect  $\alpha = .84$ .

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Insert Table 2 here

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### **Results**

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between variables are presented in Table 2. We tested our hypotheses within a structural equation model including both latent and observed variables.

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Table 2 Means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for variables in the study,  $N_s = 122-219$

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 Global identification	-										4.61	1.35
2 Turkish identification	-.06	-									2.76	1.58
3 Religiosity	-.19**	.09	-								2.48	1.75
4 Alternative male representations	.04	.15*	-.05	-							4.13	1.18
5 Alternative gay representations	.27***	-.08	-.11	-.12	-						5.63	1.13
6 Gay-male compatibility circles	.18*	-.13	-.10	.10	.06	-					5.33	1.96
7 Harmony vs conflict	.27***	.01	-.24**	-.08	-.03	.31***	-				4.93	0.98
8 Blendedness vs compartmentalisation	.20**	.10	-.27***	-.04	-.02	.24**	.73***				4.73	1.12
9 Satisfaction with life	.21*	.19*	-.11	.05	.14	.05	.08	.28***			4.11	1.45
10 Positive Affect	.21*	.14	-.05	-.14	.10	.22*	.14	.20*	.70***		2.99	1.03
11 Negative Affect	-.17	-.15	.05	-.03	-.12	-.11	-.14	-.30**	-.67***	-.71***	2.60	1.14

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .00$

### **Measurement model for latent factors**

Initially, we tested a four-factor measurement model consisting of latent factors for alternative gay and alternative male representations, gay-male identity compatibility, and subjective wellbeing. We used three indicators for each latent factor, so as to have locally just-identified latent factors which tend to give more stable results (see Little et al., 2002). According to Boomsma (1982), a sample size of 100 or more is usually acceptable for modelling latent variables with 3 or 4 indicators per factor, and our current sample size comfortably met this criterion. We followed Little and colleagues' (2002) recommendations to create equally balanced item parcels for gay and male masculinity representations: For each scale, we created three item parcels including one traditional (reverse-scored) and one alternative item. Thus, we constructed two latent factors using three item parcels each for gay and male masculinity representations separately. Then, we constructed a subjective wellbeing latent factor with three indicators (see Diener, 1984): one with the single-item from Satisfaction with Life Scale, and the other two with positive and negative affect words from Affect Valuation Index. Finally, we constructed a gay-male integration latent factor using the Gay-Male Compatibility Circles and the two subscales of the Gay-Male Identity Integration Scale based on the confirmatory factor analysis described earlier. The measurement model showed acceptable fit to the data:  $\chi^2(48) = 61.68, p = .089; CFI = 0.97; RMSEA = 0.04$  (90% CIs, 0.00-0.06);  $SRMR = 0.06$ . All indicators loaded significantly onto their respective latent factors ( $|\beta_s| \geq .31, p < .001$ ).

### **Main analysis**

Using these latent factors, we then tested a structural model of the hypothesised paths from global identification through to subjective wellbeing (see Figure 1). First, we modelled direct paths from global identification measures to alternative gay and male representations

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latent factors; then we modelled direct paths from alternative gay and male representation latent factors to gay-male integration latent factor; and finally, a direct path from gay-male identity integration latent factor to subjective wellbeing. We also modelled direct paths from global identification to gay-male integration and subjective wellbeing latent factors, and from alternative gay and male representations to subjective wellbeing latent factor. In this way, we tested both direct and indirect paths to wellbeing. We also controlled for religiosity and Turkish identification by modelling paths from both variables to all dependent variables.

Our structural model showed a good fit to the data;  $\chi^2(73) = 86.13, p = .14$ ;  $CFI = 0.98$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.03$  (90% CIs, 0.00-0.05);  $SRMR = 0.06$ . Significant paths from this model are summarised in Figure 2.

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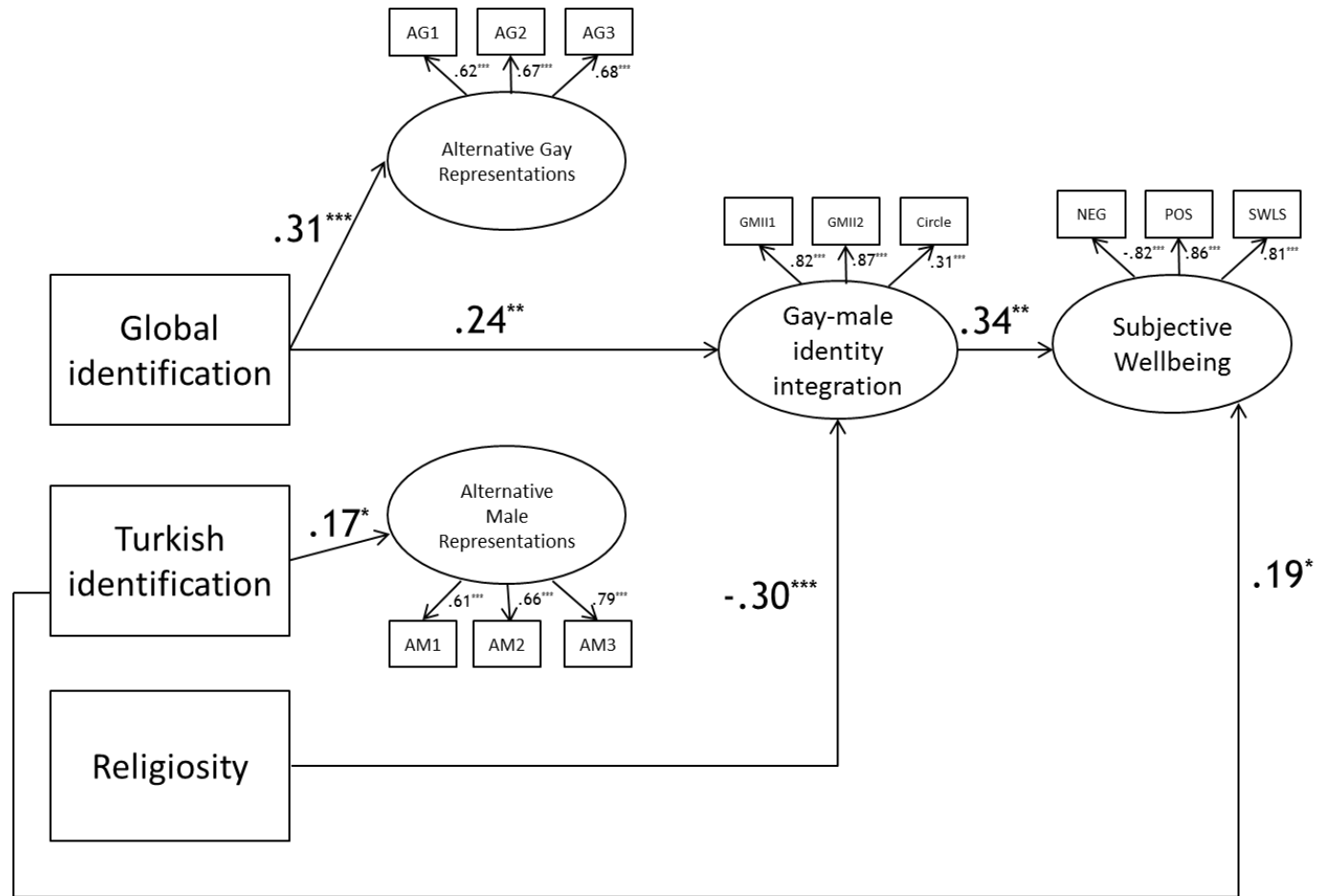


Figure 2. Structural equation model with standardized estimates. Solid lines show significant paths and non-significant paths were not included in the figure (\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ )

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Supporting H1, global identification significantly predicted higher gay-male integration ( $\beta = .24, p = .006$ ). In turn, supporting H2, gay-male integration significantly predicted higher levels of wellbeing ( $\beta = .34, p = .004$ ). Combining these paths, global identification had a significant indirect effect on subjective wellbeing via gay-male integration but not a significant direct effect (indirect effect:  $\beta = .08, p = .036$ ; direct effect:  $\beta = .15, p = .133$ ). Supporting H3a, global identification also significantly predicted higher alternative gay representations ( $\beta = .31, p < .001$ ); but failing to support H3b, it did not significantly predict alternative male representations ( $\beta = .03, p = .650$ ). Similarly, failing to support H4a and H4b, neither alternative male nor alternative gay representations was significantly related to gay-male identity integration or subjective wellbeing ( $ps \geq .433$ ).

We also controlled for Turkish identification in the analysis. Turkish identification was not related to gay-male identity integration ( $\beta = .07, p = .420$ ), nor to alternative gay representations ( $\beta = .07, p = .420$ ). However, unexpectedly, Turkish identification significantly predicted higher alternative male representations ( $\beta = .17, p = .043$ ) and higher subjective wellbeing ( $\beta = .19, p = .031$ ).

Finally, supporting H5, religiosity significantly predicted lower levels of gay-male identity integration ( $\beta = -.30, p < .001$ ) and had a significant negative indirect effect on subjective wellbeing via gay-male identity integration but not a significant direct path (indirect effect:  $\beta = -.10, p = .021$ ; direct effect:  $\beta = .08, p = .450$ ).

We also bootstrapped with 10,000 resamples to test the robustness of our findings checking at 90% bias-corrected adjusted confidence intervals (BCa CIs; MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). Bootstrapping is especially important for indirect effects, which are not assumed to be normally distributed. If confidence intervals do not cross zero, this provides stronger evidence that the effects are robust. Accordingly, confidence intervals

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did not cross zero for the significant indirect effect of global identification on subjective wellbeing via gay-male integration (BCa CI = 0.001 to 0.16), nor for the significant negative indirect effect of religiosity on subjective wellbeing via gay-male integration (BCa CI = -0.19 to -0.01).

The final model accounted for 11.7% of the variance in alternative gay representations, 3.4% of the variance in alternative male representations, 16.7% of variance in gay-male identity integration, and 21.1% of variance in subjective wellbeing.

### Discussion

In this study, we tested if global identification would predict higher gay-male identity integration, which in turn would predict wellbeing. We also tested if the relationship between global identification and gay-male identity integration could be mediated by alternative masculinity representations for gays and males. We used existing measures of identification and wellbeing, and created new measures of alternative masculinities and of gay-male identity integration. As we had hypothesized, global identification predicted higher levels of gay-male identity integration (H1), which in turn predicted higher wellbeing among gay men in Turkey (H2). However, this relationship was not mediated by alternative masculinity representations (H4a, H4b), even if global identification was related to higher levels of alternative representations for gays as expected (H3a). On the other hand, religiosity was found to be negatively related to gay-male identity integration and indirectly to wellbeing (H5), whereas Turkish identification was not significantly related to gay-male identity integration.

Our results provide the first quantitative support for previous qualitative findings in the field with respect to gay-male identity integration (see Koc & Eslen-Ziya, 2012), and they



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highlight the importance of identity intersectionality and its implications for one's overall sense of identity. Shields (2008, p. 302) defines intersectionality as follows: "social identities which serve as organizing features of social relations, mutually constitute, reinforce, and naturalize one another." In other words, when different social identities intersect, they give meaning to one another, and help each other change and maintain themselves in a dynamic reciprocal relationship. In our study, we saw that people's level of identification with a supranational identity, namely global identification, as well as the importance of religious identity can seemingly affect the relationship between two other social identities, namely sexual and gender identities. Hence, future research should continue this intersectional approach and further investigate the mechanisms underlying these effects.

Another important aspect of our study is its focus on global identity. Today, global culture is very salient all over the world and easily accessible to most people via remote acculturation, which refers to the exposure of local people to remote cultures in which they never lived, via technology or via other means such as tourism (Ferguson & Bornstein, 2012). Remote acculturation is thought to have positive health outcomes by providing people with feelings of solidarity, belonging, and validation, especially in contexts when their local culture conflicts with their personal identity enactments (Ferguson, Tran, Mendez, & van de Vijver, in press). In our study, the positive effect of global identification on gay-male identity integration could potentially be explained by this facilitating aspect of remote acculturation to a supra-national 'global culture'.

However, one limitation of our study is that we did not examine what participants understood by the term 'global citizen' that was used to measure global identification. In contrast, Ferguson and Bornstein (2012) measured remote acculturation of Jamaican individuals specifically with European-American, African-American, and Jamaican cultures rather than with vaguely-defined targets like global culture or the Western world. Future

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studies should specify what global culture means to the study participants, and examine the specific benefits that it offers with respect to gay and male identities. Considering that gay identity is becoming more accepted in the Western world (Simon, 2004) that is associated with global culture, gay men living in non-Western cultures might endorse and benefit from such specific aspects of global culture which could then result in positive health outcomes. Accordingly, further research could also prime specific definitions or forms of global identity that are relevant to gay identities, and test their effect on identity integration.

Our data did not support the predicted mediating role of alternative masculinities in the link between global identification and gay-male identity integration. This raises questions about our initial conceptualisation of the processes underlying identity integration. Initially, we thought of identity integration in mainly cognitive terms—hence the focus on definitions of the two identities. But perhaps global identification helps gay-male identity integration not through cognitive endorsement of alternative masculinities, but through providing access to a (virtual) social context in which one is able to feel accepted as a member of these two groups simultaneously. This explanation gains importance if one considers global identification as providing access a gay affirmative social context that enables conflicting social identities to function compatibly (e.g., Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2012). For instance, global identification might prompt feelings of belonging as a function of affirmative social contexts, and this might mediate the relationship between global identification and gay-male identity integration. Future work should investigate this possibility.

On the other hand, religiosity was found to be an important negative predictor of gay-male identity integration. This is in line with previous work regarding anti-gay attitudes in Turkey as a function of religion (Anderson & Koc, 2015); if gay men endorse prescriptions of the culturally dominant religion, this creates incompatibility between their religious and sexual identities. Religiosity also had a negative indirect effect on wellbeing. Previous

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research found links between internalised homophobia and mental health problems as a function of religiosity among young religious gay men (Harris, Cook, & Kashubeck-West, 2008). Young people suffering from conflicting religious and sexual identities might give up their religion to maintain their sense of identity, as sexual identity becomes more salient and dominant in their lives (Jaspal, 2014; Rodriguez & Ouellette, 2000). However, negative religious coping (such as giving up religious beliefs or being angry at God) was found to cause distress and negative impact on wellbeing (Shilo, Yossef, & Savaya, 2015) for religious gay men, and hence current debates in social services call for sensitivity to religious/spiritual needs of young gay and bisexual individuals (Meanley, Pingel, & Bauermeister, 2015). Our findings provide novel quantitative evidence for the relationship between religiosity, identity incompatibility and reduced wellbeing in a Muslim sample; yet our single-item measure for religiosity provides only a limited understanding. Future research should use more fine-grained measures of religiosity to identify different aspects of religion that are incompatible with sexual identity and to develop potential interventions.

This study has several implications for the situation of gay men in Turkey (or in similarly hostile cultures) regarding possible interventions that might enhance their wellbeing. As global identification was found to be positively related to wellbeing, existing connections with the global community can be enhanced and utilised as a coping mechanism against threats to gay-male identity. For instance, gay magazines (e.g., where we advertised our study) can promote positive global gay images, which can increase people's likelihood to identify themselves with those images, and hence their sexual identity. Similarly, constructing gay-affirmative social spaces is crucial where gay men can be introduced to positive global gay images, and where they can also freely interact with other gays and express their identities. This could in turn increase gay men's identity flexibility so that they would rely on relevant aspects of their identities in pertinent contexts. On the other hand, the

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negative relationship of religiosity with wellbeing requires more cautious treatment. Since negative religious coping is related to distress and reduced wellbeing (Shilo et al., 2015), practitioners working with gay men (and other members of LGBT community) might try to introduce their clients progressive interpretations of the relationship between Islam and homosexuality (Jamal, 2001), and help them reconcile these conflicting aspects of their identities.

Overall, our findings bring the first quantitative evidence to the study of gay-male identity integration, and extend the theoretical understanding of intersectional identities. Nonetheless, we need to be careful in interpretations due to the correlational design of the study. These findings should be substantiated with experimental or longitudinal designs where the direction and the causality of the effects can be tested. However, longitudinal research is highly difficult in this population (where gays are still an actively persecuted minority) because of respondents' concerns for anonymity. Future research could benefit from recently developed ways of priming global identification (Rosenmann, 2016) in experimental designs, and could incorporate novel theoretical frameworks like remote acculturation (Ferguson et al., in press) to extend the current findings.

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<sup>1</sup> Connell's (2005) notion of hegemonic masculinity has been criticised as too rigid to incorporate the embodiment of masculinities (Demetriou, 2001) and is challenged by more recent theories such as E. Anderson's inclusive masculinity theory (E. Anderson, 2009; 2012), which proposes that masculinities can exist linearly, with no hegemony over one another. However, Anderson's theorising is mainly rooted in examples from non-homophobic settings, where homosexuality is no longer stigmatised and cultural homophobia is reduced (E. Anderson, 2012). Recent studies show the continuing pervasiveness of anti-gay attitudes in Turkey during the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (J. Anderson & Koc, 2015; Gelbal & Duyan, 2006; Sakalli, 2002), and so the concept of hegemonic masculinity is appropriate to describe our research context. Nonetheless, we recognize that masculinities are socially constructed in particular local and historical circumstances, and so the hegemony is not unbreakable (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> We retained the bisexual and four other participants with different sexual orientations in the analysis, given that they had self-selected as relevant for a study that was advertised for gay participants, and we believe they all experience similar negative experiences in Turkey. Removing these participants did not change the substantive findings of this study,

<sup>3</sup> Married respondents were married to women not to other gay men (as there is no legal status for gay men in Turkey), and they all identified as bisexual.

<sup>4</sup> We originally attempted to manipulate global identification, using a biased questionnaire with bogus feedback. However, the manipulation showed no effects on any of our measures, and so we disregarded it here. We suspect that participants in this research context would have been strongly invested in their prior identity positions with regards to globalisation, making this very hard to manipulate experimentally. The study also included some further

measures that we have not reported here: Self-Concept Clarity Scale (Campbell et al., 1996), Internalised Homophobia Scale (Herek, Cogan, Gillis, & Glunt, 1997), Identification Scale (adapted from Leach et al., 2008), Disidentification Scale (adapted from Becker & Tausch, 2014), discomfort affect words (from Elliot & Devine, 1994), and State Identity Motive Satisfaction Scale.

<sup>5</sup> Based on modification indices, we also allowed two covariances between pairs of indicator residuals to improve the fit in this model. The first one was between two items on the blendedness factor (“Both gay and male identities make me who I am” and “It is impossible for me to ignore the gay or male side of me”), and the second one was between two items on the conflict factor (“It is effortful to be gay and male at the same time” and “Being both gay and male means having two identities pulling me in different directions”).