

**Modern Marriage, Traditional Roles? Gendered division of household labor among
“newly” married couples in Astana**

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SOC 499: Capstone II

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May 2, 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Modern Marriage, Traditional Roles? Gendered division of household labor among “newly” married couples in Astana

ABSTRACT	3
Introduction	5
Literature Review	8
Conceptual Framework.....	8
Family, Gender and Domestic Labor in post-Soviet and Kazakhstan.....	12
Comparative context: family, work and gender in Europe and beyond.....	16
Gaps and Conceptual Contributions.....	18
Research design	20
Research sample, recruitment and feasibility.....	21
Ethical Considerations.....	23
Limitations.....	24
Data Analysis Techniques.....	25
Findings	25
Negotiating household work: everyday life experiences of young couples in Astana.....	25
The Division of “Inside” vs. “Outside” Labor.....	27
The Wife as “Project Manager”.....	30
Practical “Student-Stage” Egalitarianism.....	32
The Paradox of Negotiation and the Power of the “Final Word”.....	35
Gender Accountability and Social Performance: The Kelin Identity.....	37
Discussion	40
Double Burden.....	40
Resource Substitution.....	40
Traditional Patriarchal Basis.....	41
Negotiated Traditionalism.....	42
Conclusion	43
References	46
Appendix A	50
Individual Interview Questions.....	50
Joint Interview Questions.....	51
Жеке сұхбат сұрақтары.....	53
Бірлескен сұхбат сұрақтары.....	54
Вопросы для индивидуального интервью.....	56
Вопросы для совместного интервью.....	57
Appendix B	60
7-Day Diary Completion Guide.....	60

7-Day Diary Instructions.....	60
7 күндік күнделік толтыру нұсқаулығы.....	62
Appendix C	64
Invitation to the interviews and diary completion.....	64

ABSTRACT

The modern marriage in the bustling urban setting in Astana is on the border between the modernization of the professional world and strong cultural tradition, with both high educational attainment and labor market engagement levels, such as women constituting 64 percent of Master students, and the adherence to the patriarchal standards, according to which women are expected to be primary caregivers and the moral guardians of the household. This generates a chronic “Double Burden” in which women are supposed to become successful professionals and still be the chief domestic life managers. This paper examines the negotiation of household roles by new, university-educated, couples in Astana and how these practices are reflective or disruptive of traditional gender scripts. Based on the theoretical frameworks of “Doing Gender”, “Family Practices” and the “Second Shift”, the study employs qualitative triangulations of 18 individual and joint semi-structured interviews and 7-day household diaries of six middle-class couples. The results suggest five main themes: how the role of the wife as the household “Project Manager” who takes on the main mental load of noticing and planning; a strict symbolic division between repetitive “Inside” (feminine) and finite “Outside” (masculine) work; the application of temporary “Student-Stage Egalitarianism” as a practical survival strategy in university life without losing a traditional foundation; the staging of the “Kelin” identity to external social audience to meet “Gender Accountability”. Finally, this study discovers a phenomenon of “Negotiated Traditionalism”: a high-order bargain in which couples use contemporary egalitarian discourse to cope with urban living, and in which the hierarchies of symbols and management of the domestic space are not yet broken down by modernization in the workplace.

Keywords: household labor, newlywed couples, family practices, negotiated traditionalism, second shift, doing gender, kelin identity

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my Capstone Professor, Dana Burkhanova, with all my heart, who believed in me. Also my greatest and most heartfelt appreciation is to my supervisor, Dr. Ana Marques. She was patient, kind and incredibly supportive at all stages of this journey. Without her I really could not have done this. To my dear grandmother, Gulzada Moldabayevna: thanks to all the warm meals you cooked with so much love. Due to you, I never needed to worry, I just needed to concentrate. Your silent nurture nourished my soul as well as my body. To my loving parents, Alibek Yerlanuly and Zhanargul Yerkinkyzy: thank you for providing me with the opportunity to be there where I am now, at Nazarbayev University, your unending sacrifices, and all the prayers you uttered in my favor. I bring your love and faith to all I do. And to God: thank You, wisdom which You set on my way, and thank You, that You never leave me. I sense you in all the blessings, large and small.

Introduction

In a fast-paced urban environment of the capital of Kazakhstan, Astana, modern marriage is on the border of tradition and change. Educated young couples who get married today have to negotiate their household duties in a manner that represents the legacies of the Soviet gender norms, as well as the requirements of the twenty-first century urban life. Although nowadays women are very educated and present in the labor market, culture and patriarchy still tend to assign them the roles of primary caregivers and moral guardians of the house in post-soviet Kazakhstan (Naizabayeva et al., 2022). This paradox is especially acute to the new, educated urban middle class of Astana, who have to balance their modernistic ambitions with strong traditional values. The home is thus a key location where gender is not only manifested but constructed and negotiated by the daily practices of cooking, washing and cleaning. Thus, the main questions that will inform this study will be: *how do new married couples in Astana bargain household roles? And to what degree do these practices represent or challenge traditional gender roles?* The answer to these questions demands a multi-layered approach that will include structural, cultural and interactional aspects. Structurally, Kazakhstan inherited a history of Soviet state-driven gender equality policies, while maintaining women's responsibility for childcare and housework, creating a paradox: the strengthening of women's gender roles in the country. The persistence of patriarchal demands culturally penetrates marriage life, despite the influence of modernization and education on the development of new values of equality. However, one significant dimension of social life where unequal gender power relations continue very present is the household, and how couples negotiate household labour (Crompton, 2006).

Taking into account the paradox of gender in Kazakhstan, the first main aim of the study is to determine how practical and emotional workload, the invisible work of managing the

household, is distributed between newly married couples. Secondly, to examine the way in which symbolic and spatial divisions of labor, including the dichotomy between the inside and the outside, is being exploited to validate traditional masculine and feminine identities.

To examine this interaction, the study relies on the concept of “doing gender” developed by West and Zimmerman (1987) and the concept of “family practices” developed by Morgan (2011) that highlight both the symbolic and interactional aspects of gender and family life. This conceptual framework will be put in the context of the structure and culture of Kazakhstan, particularly in terms of labor policies, gender values, and post-Soviet transitions. A comparative perspective of European and East Asian contexts is also incorporated in the research, to place the Kazakhstani case in the context of global discourses of gender, work and family. Later in the following chapters, the thesis offers an in-depth literature review of the relevance of the research and the conceptual framework of “doing gender”, “family practices”, the “second shift” and the “double burden”. After that, the research methodology is presented with the description of qualitative research design, purposive sampling of six newlywed couples in Astana, the socio-geographic background of the study. The subsequent substantive chapters present the findings and discussion of major emergent categories based on the thematic analysis of the individual and joint interviews, along with 7-day household diaries. Lastly, the capstone project concluded by highlighting the main findings of the research, implications of the study to the contemporary family dynamics in Kazakhstani community, and future research directions.

Alongside its scholarly importance, this work has great practical importance to modern-day Kazakhstan because it is dealing with the mounting tension between the neoliberal economic engagement and the continuity of the so-called double burden in a post-Soviet welfare state in which the social endorsement of care work has declined. The way educated urban

couples bargain these positions is crucial to inform the social policy to respond to the gendered quality of paid and unpaid labor and to establish the background cultural pressures that add to the relationship strains and increased divorce rates in the modernizing cities of Kazakhstan

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework: doing gender, family practices, and second shift

Firstly, as a conceptual framework, the idea of *doing gender* can be used to explain how these everyday encounters are part of the process of making gender. The concept of *doing gender* by West and Zimmerman (1987) defines gender as a process of achievement in social interaction rather than a possession. People “do” gender roles in the daily activities that conform to social norms, such as when women cook or men fix things about the house, such activities reinstate cultural femininity and masculinity. These processes are sustained by what the authors refer to as “gender accountability”, that is, individuals are supposed to act in a manner that is in accordance with societal gender expectation and may be punished indirectly whenever they do not do so. The present interactional approach is important in the context of studying the household routines of Astana couples, as such activities as cooking, cleaning, or budgeting are conducted daily, in gendered ways, in the marriage environment. Nevertheless, the boundaries of “*doing gender*” have been controversial among scholars. On one hand authors such as Deutsch (2007) present the concept of “*undoing gender*” in which gender norms can be undone as well through interaction. For instance, by dividing the household chores equally between a husband or a wife, or by turning it into a primary provider, a wife can break gender scripts instead of recreating them. Similarly, Davis (2017) argues that doing gender is an interpretive practice, not a theory, and, therefore, researchers should not reduce all behaviors to gender reproduction. On the other hand, West and Zimmerman (2009) still maintain that gender remains a ubiquitous process which is core to the organization of social life, hence still informing the everyday life interaction of individuals. In this project, these criticisms will ensure that the application of the concept will be

balanced and reflexive; in these processes, the actions of gender and the possibility of reverse actions in gender expectations and practices in the marital life will be reflected and discussed through the analysis of the negotiations, compliance, or alternations in gender expectations and practices. This moderate stand of doing and perhaps undoing gender provides a subtle viewpoint of looking at the way marriage works on a daily level.

Similarly to the approach taken by West and Zimmerman (1987) with doing gender, *in Rethinking Family Practices*, Morgan (2011) does not focus on the family as a fixed institution but as a practice that people engage in. The creation and reproduction of families is seen as a continuous process that takes place in the processes of cooking dinner, eating a meal, or planning how to spend free time. Everyday practices are steeped in symbolic meanings showing how people make sense of belonging and responsibility. Later, Morgan (2019) relates family practices to *time* and *space* demonstrating how urban space, employment schedules, and time constraints affect the way families' structure everyday life. This framework is useful in a fast-paced modernizing city such as Astana to clarify how couples combine the demands of the profession's modernity with the traditional cultural expectations in their daily lives.

The following concepts, associated with gender and family practices and the structures that conditioned them, are the concepts of the “second shift” and “double burden” (Hochschild, 1989). The “second shift” is the unpaid household and care labor that women do despite full-time employment, which they are left to do at home after their paid labor hours. This creates a “double burden” of professional and domestic labor that they tend to shoulder without the support of their spouses. Such tendencies, as demonstrated by Snitsyna (2022) and Trevisani (2020), have a long history in the Soviet Union, with women being supposed to make an equal contribution to production, yet at the same time, they had to keep the household order. The

“second shift”, as it applies to Astana, is still an insightful idea on how the significant presence of women in the labor market does not correspond to more equality within the household.

“Doing gender”, “family practices”, “second shift” and ‘double burden’ offer a combined conceptual framework to examine the stasis and change of the household experiences in contemporary marriages in Kazakhstan. It positions the home as a place of both social reproduction and possible conflict. Social reproduction, in this case, can be defined as the ongoing process of producing, sustaining, and nourishing families based on the daily routine of cooking, cleaning, and emotional support that help to support the social order and the symbolic significance of belonging. It is revealed that this process is continuing and changing in the city micro-cosmos of Astana. It is perpetuated by the maintenance of traditional family life and a patriarchal base on which the wife is the project manager of the domestic sphere. But it is also evolving as couples deal with neoliberal demands, careerism and arguably pragmatic egalitarianism(equal sharing of household chores) of the student-stage that loosens gender scripts temporarily in university years. In the end, when couples fail to make a compromise on who should do housework and balance modern professional desires on the one hand and traditional demands on the other, the home turns from a place of reproduction to a place of conflict and tension.

The next concept that this paper employs is the “patriarchal bargain” that was formulated by Deniz Kandiyoti (1988) to understand the reason women adhere to the old rules. A patriarchal bargain is such a complex trade-off or bargain. It is a code of unwritten rules which men and women obey so as to survive in their society. Such bargains may evolve; sometimes women may disregard the regulations when the family is in need of money, and other times they adhere to them as they have always been followed because the traditional version is safer than an uncertain

future . A large portion of this is what Kandiyoti terms as “classic patriarchy”. It is an ancient practice of marrying off young girls and taking them into the house of their husband’s father. A young wife in these homes is required to obey not only the men, but also the older women, particularly her mother-in-law. Due to this history, women in Central Asia have been inclined to “bargain” by defending traditional systems even when these restrict their freedom as it is the only way to guarantee that they can be safe and respected within their community. Further, Kandiyoti (2008) finds a “Soviet paradox” in the region. It means the situation of confusion when the government encouraged women to receive an education and enter the labor market, and it did not alter the person who could take care of the house. Due to this, women nowadays tend to experience a “double burden”: they have to be successful professionals in the workplace and at the same time, the main managers and employees in the home.

The paper also suggests the idea of “negotiated traditionalism” as a framework to analyze by integrating these frameworks. It relies on the theory of gender as an interactional accomplishment developed by West and Zimmerman (1987) and the so-called “patriarchal bargain” created by Kandiyoti (1988) to understand how the couples in the contemporary city such as Astana cope with domesticity. In this context, the term “negotiated traditionalism” is established as a form of social practice wherein couples use the language of the contemporary, egalitarian unions to manage the practicality of the so-called speed-up of life in the city, but retain a symbolic safety net of masculine strategic dominance and feminine managerial accountability. This idea allows one to explore the concept of marriage as the place where modernization of the professional world does not always destroy the patriarchal basis of the home.

All in all, these concepts focus on the *interactional aspect* of family and gender, and they also show how *structural* and *cultural* contexts influence such practices. These dynamics are put into context in the following sections in Kazakhstan and in the post-Soviet space.

Family, Gender and Domestic Labor in post-Soviet and Kazakhstan

Several authors (Ashwin, 2000; Gradsanova 2022; 2022; Sinitsyna, 2022) argue that Soviet ‘modernising’ policies pushing women to the labour market did not challenge gender unequal power relations within the household, with women continuing to be the main responsible for care and domestic work. Traditionally, the Soviet policies encouraged women to work and at the same time preserve the family norms that required them to give birth to a child and be able to perform the household chores (Hochschild, 1989; Ashwin, 2000). The working mother was idealized, but little was done to redistribute domestic responsibilities by the state. According to Sinitsyna (2022), such an imbalance was institutionalized in the gender policy of the Soviet Union and was embedded in the culture that women had to perform both professional and domestic roles. Similarly, Gradsanova (2022) indicates that the involvement of women in the labor market during Soviet modernization did not break the patriarchy but instead strengthened it by redefining the responsibilities of women as “productive mothers”. According to Szelewa (2022), Under the Soviet system, the state formally encouraged both men and women to participate in the labor force and supported this through extensive social infrastructure — maternity leave, state-funded childcare, and workplace kindergartens. Yet, even with these supports, women remained responsible for most domestic work, creating the well-known “double burden.”

This trend continued into the post-Soviet transition in Kazakhstan. Trevisani (2020) shows that the reorganization of industrial labor, which was made through workforce cuttings and less stable

labor, reproduced labor inequalities at home. The higher-income and status of men at work predetermined their less active involvement in the domestic and caring chores. Equally, McGuire (2017) discovered that the unpaid labor of women in the rural family was the foundation of family survival, but was not valued. It was an arrangement that was condoned by the cultural concepts of femininity and duty.

Naizabayeva, Garifolla, and Mukhanbet (2022) emphasized the increasing contradiction between modernization and tradition in the urban life of Kazakhstan. Women were becoming more visible in the professional arena, but the old rules were not completely gone: women were still viewed as primary caregivers and moral compasses of the family. While authors described this as “modernization,” it is important as mentioned above that Soviet policies had already integrated women into education and the labor force. Therefore, what is often called modernization in the current context refers less to the initial inclusion of women in paid work, and more to the ongoing *westernization* or *neoliberal restructuring* of family and work life. In contemporary Kazakhstan, this means that middle-class urban women, though already employed, now navigate new pressures of consumerism, individual responsibility, and professional competition, all while maintaining traditional domestic expectations. This conflict, according to authors, creates ambivalence in marital relations - one of the main aspects to explain new marital relations of Astana. Such duality tends to create marriage tensions especially during the initial stages of marriage as married couples’ bargain on what they have learned in their parents and society. With modernization, where women are playing more roles outside the home, it does not automatically change the role of the men at home. In this way, according to Naizabayeva et.al (2022), couples are symbolically and emotionally incompatible: women are exhausted and feel

guilty as they are not doing enough at home, and men are unable to comprehend how to reconcile the role of breadwinners with contemporary partnership ideals.

Another crucial cultural aspect that is used to characterize the domesticating gender order in Kazakhstan is the Kelin identity (daughter-in-law status). Turaeva (2017) views the status of the Kelin as an intermediate stage of young brides whose submissive home behavior is accompanied by a shift to a new social order, where their labor is the main commodity of presence in the family. This identity is the core of what Kudaibergenova (2018) calls “Project Kelin”, the re-traditionalization process in post-Soviet Kazakhstan when the young bride is expected to preserve the image and the status of the relatives of her husband with her household performance. This identity demonstrates the Soviet paradox, which Gradszkova (2022) and Kandiyoti (2008) identify; although the modernization conducted by the state involved women in the professional workforce, it did not eliminate the patriarchal basis of the home, thus redefining women as productive mothers who remain the major manager of the household. In this context, the Kelin is subjected to a high standard of gender responsibility wherein her invisible work in the domestic sphere of the inside is justified by cultural constructs of femininity and responsibility. More so, according to Torno (2024), these care practices are not merely activities, but they are critical to the reproduction of the social order and family status in the community. Therefore, the Kelin identity is an influential behavioral controller and may often require a third shift of management of social life in order to prevent social judgment and safeguard the reputation of the family.

These tensions are sometimes a cause of relationship strain and even divorce, as shown in the Concept of Gender and Family Policy of Kazakhstan until 2030 (EEAS Report, 2017). But the very act of divorce is becoming more and more stigmatized in the moral discourse of

Kazakhstan which only adds to the conflict within the family (Kovyazina, 2024). These strains are not merely related to women taking up more jobs, but to the fact that men find it hard to embrace the diminished household duties of women. The same trends have been noticed in the Western setting: with the increased professional involvement of middle- and upper-class women, the involvement of men in the household setting has not grown accordingly. The result of this imbalance, women working more outside the home and men not working more inside, is emotional distance and constant bargaining of equality in marriages (Hochschild, 1989).

Szelewa (2022) continues that the welfare systems in post-socialist countries are still based on the role of families, privatizing the responsibility and strengthening gender disparities. This shift marks one of the key differences between Soviet and post-Soviet arrangements. In the post-Soviet period, many of these institutional supports weakened as welfare functions were increasingly transferred to the private sector or individual families. As a result, care work and household maintenance became even more privatized, falling back on women's unpaid labor. This is similar to the neoliberal welfare reforms in the West where the withdrawal of the state in social care increased gender inequality within the household (Fraser, 2016). The same tension is recreated in Kazakhstan, which takes a hybrid approach between its socialist past and its policies towards the global market: women are now encouraged to work, yet the safety net that would support them at home is diminished, strengthening their role in unpaid care. Meanwhile, Szelewa (2022) asserts that the position of a breadwinner and a man of power remains strongly tied, and men do not have the incentive to take up the role of a home caregiver. Astana couples form their relationships while caught between the past and the present. They follow traditional gender practices, but sometimes they challenge them.

In this way, in the context of Kazakhstan and other post-soviet countries in central Asia, family becomes a place in which the socialist traditions, neoliberal shifts, and conservative patriarchal discourses collide. It is these structural and cultural contexts which are the background upon which the Astana couples play out - and occasionally challenge - gendered family practices. Domestic work is the most important central location where gender and family are performed and negotiated on a regular basis, which is precisely what the notions of doing gender and family practices aim to describe. The next section puts these patterns into a comparative, international context.

Comparative context: family, work and gender in Europe and beyond

Although the case of Kazakhstan is the context of post-soviet central Asia countries, the existence of unequal responsibility for domestic and care labor is a worldwide issue. For instance, Coelho, Maciel and Torres (2021) showed that even with the gains in gender equality, such as high educational attainment and notable presence in the labor market, European families still reproduce inequalities throughout the life course, like parenthood, where the “second shift” of domestic work remains a feminine burden regardless of the professional status of women. Gender and social class interact to construct the domestic roles: professional women can hire a third party to do the domestic tasks but hardly ever become completely equal at home. This is familiar to the urban middle class of Kazakhstan. Resource substitution - which is a coping strategy that middle-class women in Astana use - involves the ordering of ready-made food or the plan of employing nannies and housemaids to take care of the so-called “double burden”. Indicatively, Aisaule (Wife #6) directly states that she will consider outsourcing in the future so that she does not have to bear the psychological burden of housewifery.

Interestingly, this continuation of gender unequal power relations in the household gendered division of labour exists along changes in intimate and family norms and practices. Thus, Gouveia and Castren (2021) addressed the *redefining of the family boundaries* in modern Europe, and revealed that intimacy and partnership are more and more a matter of dynamic negotiation with the help of communication, not a matter of fixed norms, which are no longer as significant but are considered as achievement of interaction. Their analysis is directly related to Morgan (2011) and West and Zimmerman (1987) models, in which gender and family are seen as *interactional achievements*, and equality is based on the way in which couples communicate and create a sense of commonality. It is the daily negotiations of gender and family, which is the subject of this study.

These tendencies, which are the changes of intimacy being viewed as a “project” whereby equality is co-created in the way spouses communicate and generate a “sense of commonality” in their everyday family activities, are supported by quantitative studies (Gouveia & Castren, 2021). Matteazzi and Scherer (2021) show that the gender wage gap is highly associated with the lack of equal domestic work: the lower the wages from that women get, the more domestic work they do unpaid. By lowering the wages of women, it means that sometimes women are paid less for the same job as men do. This work highlights the continuous relevance of Crompton’s findings (2006) that women expected to be in the household are given jobs that are more undervalued. Moreover, Crompton (2006) demonstrates that the tension between work and home persists even in the dual-earner family, stating that structural change is not sufficient to break the cultural traditions of gendered responsibility. Tammelin (2018) further notes that although welfare provisions offer a safety net, flexible work policies can actually increase inequalities by privatizing the care responsibility. Flexibility becomes an issue within a

neoliberal context of Kazakhstan where women are pressed to take on the speed-up of labour by organising the household logistics on their allegedly flexible schedules, which consolidates the feminine project manager role. Therefore, the combination of economic systems and cultural values forms a vicious circle of inequality.

Outside of Europe, Lee (2020) studied the phenomenon of “weekend couples” in Korea - a term for couples who live separately during the week due to work commitments and only reunite on weekends. He found out that despite the environment of modernity and the principles of egalitarianism, couples still reproduce traditional patterns because of the working week burden and distance. Lee (2020) concluded that distance and high-workweeks do not allow real-time negotiation of chores. Thus, the failure to adhere to conventional gender scripts is a logistical lack to which the couple resorts as the wife handles the domestic house in one place and the husband handles the role of the “provider” from a distance.

All these sources show that the combination of structural and cultural variables continues to perpetuate gender inequality in household work at the global level. It highlights the point that the case of Kazakhstan, despite being affected by the historical peculiarities, is a part of a larger picture in the world, where the typical definition of equality in family life is being challenged because contemporary career aspirations are coming into conflict with old traditional foundations.

Gaps and Conceptual Contributions

Although gender and family are being paid more attention in Central Asia, there are still significant gaps. To begin with, the majority of the studies in Kazakhstan and post-Soviet nations focus on rural or industrial groups and overlook the new urban middle class (Trevisani, McGuire & Sinitsyna, 2022). Second, these studies do not pay much attention to *newly married couples* -

the stage in life when the role of the housewife and house-husband is still being discussed. Third, the theoretical frameworks such as *doing gender* and *family practices* have hardly been applied to post-Soviet settings, which means that interactional processes are under-researched. This paper fills these gaps. It is empirically documented and shows how young urban couples in Astana carry out and negotiate domestic labor, disclosing the continuity of Soviet gender legacies. It will combine the conceptual frameworks of “doing gender”, “family practices”, and “second shift” into the framework of structural and cultural context of Kazakhstan and existing comparative family sociology in the post-socialist region. Methodologically, it shows the importance of couple interviews in the process of identifying the relational dynamics of the negotiation of equality, that is, the attitudes, expectations and practices of both men and women.

In the end, this study focuses on Astana, as a microcosm of modern family change in Kazakhstan, a place where *the modern wants collide with the traditional demands*. A space in which masculinity is still defined by men as main breadwinners, and care as a moral obligation by women, while both men and women are expected to be present in the labour market. However, in their daily negotiations, couples *do* and occasionally *undo* gender in the process of assigning household chores, talking about fairness, or redefining contribution.

Research design

Family and gendered division of labour studies utilize a variety of methodologies from large-scale quantitative surveys to detailed qualitative research. For instance, Crompton (2006) and Tammelin (2018) demonstrate the importance of mixed methods that incorporate both structural data (e.g., employment patterns) and micro-level interviews. The quantitative literature, including work that rely on the European Social Survey, assists in determining the structural patterns in time use and gender division of labor (Matteazzi and Scherer, 2021). In turn, most of the studies based on *doing gender* or *family practices* (Morgan, 2019) frameworks are qualitative and concentrate on meaning-making through interactions. Qualitative approaches are important to reveal the symbolic and emotional aspects of home life, how couples tell justice, duty or affection in their relationships.

This project follows the design of qualitative and semi-structured interviews, as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), and a 7-day completion diary with about six well-educated and middle-class newly married couples in Astana. Diary completion was conducted to identify the association between what was said in the interviews and what was done in reality. This approach gives the opportunity to focus on the voices of men and women and examine the way they perceive equality, responsibility, and contemporary partnership. Based on Starkweather (2012) joint interviews bring about collaborative storytelling, which reveals how spouses' bargain to produce common narratives. Mellor et al. (2013) warn of ethical complexities in interviews with couples (dealing with disagreement or emotional exposure) - issues that will be overcome by integrating joint and individual interviews.

Research sample, recruitment and feasibility

There was a sample of 6 married, cohabiting couples in Astana that satisfied the inclusion criteria (age 21-30, married less than 3 years, no children). The sample size was 12 individuals whose roles were actively negotiated and they were balancing the exact tension between tradition and modernity that the study is focused on. The factors of education and social class were specified so that all of the spouses had to have a bachelor's degree and some of them had a Master or PhD degree. Most of them are members of the Nazarbayev University community and now live in university dormitories or apartments. The variation in employment structure (dual-earner, single-earner), educational qualification, and housing type was done through purposive sampling. The sample employment model was a combination of both dual earner families and full time students who were working in qualified sectors like IT, research and law. The participants were reached via a multi-channel approach and purposive convenience sampling, and direct recruitment via existing networks. The study did not initially take ethnicity into account, resulting in representatives of the Kazakh nation being included in the sample. All couples did not have any children yet. With the help of that sample, it was possible to study the household duties in the absence of a significant impact of children on the household work. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with the spouses individually (20-30 minutes), and joint interview (25-30 minutes) to observe the process of negotiations between the spouses, and a 7-day household task diary that was kept by both spouses to triangulate the practices they completed daily. The number of interviews was counted for 18, including all joint and individual interviews. About half of the interviews were done face-to-face in private locations such as silent rooms and cafes in Nazarbayev University and the remaining half was done through Google Meet. In the face-to-face sessions, the iPhone "Voice Memo" app was used to record audio; in

the remote sessions, Google meet was used to record videos with the consent of the participants. Since the interviews were recorded in the Kazakh and Russian languages, significant parts were translated and synthesized into one English coding matrix to compare the cases across and find common patterns. The transcriptions of the recordings were done manually, translated in Google Translator and coded with the Atlas software. The recorded practices during interviews were confirmed and cross-checked with the diaries to enhance reliability. Daily activities, impression of fairness, negotiation, and post-marriage change were investigated through interviews. Participants were recruited through a multi-channel strategy using purposive convenience sampling. The primary methods were targeted advertising and direct recruitment through pre-existing networks, supported by a standardized script to ensure consistency and ethical transparency. The research question - *how do newly married couples in Astana bargain household roles and to what degree do these practices represent or challenge traditional gender roles* - required a methodology that reflected the complexity of the interactional process of doing gender in everyday life. The selected techniques of semi-structured individual and joint interviews, supplemented by a 7-day diary, were the most suitable ones since they collectively revealed the discrepancy between the proclaimed beliefs (interviews) and the actual behaviors (diary), and directly observed the co-construction and bargaining of roles (joint interview), which presented a rich and multi-layered insight into the phenomenon.

Table 1*Demographic information of participants*

Husband - Wife	Pseudonyms	Ethnicity	Age	Marriage duration	Highest Education Level	Current Occupation	Currently living
Couple #1	Dimash - Ainur	Kazakh	23 - 23	1 year	Bachelor - Masters	IT Company worker - Student	Dormitory
Couple #2	Darkhan - Dina	Kazakh	25 - 22	2 years	Bachelor - Masters	IT programmer - Student	Apartment
Couple #3	Yersaiyn - Fariza	Kazakh	24 - 23	9 months	Bachelor - Bachelor	Electric engineer - Civil engineer	Apartment
Couple #4	Daniyar - Aray	Kazakh	23 - 21	1 year	Bachelor - Bachelor	Analyst - Student	Apartment
Couple #5	Alisher - Nazly	Kazakh	24 - 23	1 year	Bachelor - Bachelor	Student&Freelancer - Student	Dormitory
Couple #6	Dias - Aisaule	Kazakh	24 - 23	9 months	PhD - Masters	Business Development Specialist - Student	Apartment

Ethical Considerations

The ethical principles of the present research fully complied with the procedures set by the Nazarbayev University Institutional Research Ethics Committee (SSH IREC). All participants received informed consent before the data collection process; since the multi-channel recruitment strategy was used, the informed consent was signed electronically and manually. All participants were given pseudonyms in order to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality (e.g., Couple #1, Husband #4, Wife #1) at the beginning of data analysis. Any direct identifying data including precise workplaces, home addresses, or surnames were taken out of transcripts and the final report in a systematic way. The password-protected computer stored digital audio recordings and electronic transcripts, whereas the physical diaries and

consent forms were stored in a locked cabinet. The participants were made aware that they had the right to withdraw at any given time without any penalty.

Limitations

There are a number of constraints that need to be taken into account in this study. To begin with, the limited number of the small sample of six couples (12 people) who mainly belong to the Nazarbayev University community does not allow generalizing the results to the social classes that are more diverse and larger in the city of Astana. Secondly, the data could have been affected by social desirability bias especially when the interviews were conducted jointly. During such sessions, couples tended to do collaborative storytelling to create a common narrative of harmony and equality. Nevertheless, the original study design was to have both spouses keeping separate 7-day diaries to triangulate their respective perspectives with the interview information. But the implementation process showed a large imbalance of gender participation. As it has been mentioned, though all couples were asked to give two accounts, in the situations with Couple #2 (Darkhan and Dina), Couple #4 (Daniyar and Arai) and Couple #5 (Alisher and Nazly), the wives filled the questionnaires in. Instead of considering this a failure in the procedures, this trend was incorporated into the study as an explicit behavioral manifestation of domestic hierarchies. This indicates that the administrative burden of the research was considered a feminine management work, which is against the assertions of egalitarianism that were raised in the interviews. Moreover, as demonstrated in the example of Arai and Daniyar (Couple #4), the subjects were aware of *gender accountability*, acknowledging that their stage acting of roles and performing them in the street is not always similar to their interactions with each other to prevent judgment. This shows that there is a possibility that the answers given

during interviews were influenced by the participants wanting to conform to the ideals of the modern profession as well as the conventional cultural norms.

Data Analysis Techniques

A thematic analysis was adopted, which is based on the rigorous six-step method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). It included several readings of transcripts to become familiar with it and then start the manual coding. The coding approach was dual, using both an inductive (meaning letting ideas, like student-phase egalitarianism, to come up out of the narratives) and a deductive (meaning applying the existing theoretical categories of doing gender and family practices to the interactions) strategy. Lastly, the triangulation of the interview data with the 7-day diaries was conducted to detect the differences between the beliefs of the couples and their daily routines. The data revealed five themes: *The Division of “Inside” vs. “Outside” Labor; The Wife as “Project Manager”; Practical “Student-Stage” Egalitarianism: A Transitional Period; The Paradox of Negotiation and the Power of the “Final Word”; Gender Accountability and Social Performance: The Kelin Identity*. These themes will be investigated in the following section

Findings

Negotiating household work: everyday life experiences of young couples in Astana

Literature on post-Soviet Kazakhstan reveals that female education and participation in the labor market is high, but the country still has many patriarchal norms that ascribe women the role of primary caregivers and as moral guardians (Kandiyoti, 2008). The study aims to examine the negotiations of new married couples in Astana within this “gender paradox” with the question of the bargaining processes that help them balance their modern professional interests

with traditional cultural roots. Although the Soviet legacy was effective in introducing women to the professional field, it did not redistribute the domestic domain, and the house was a patriarchal island with the double burden as an established order. In this part, I shall describe how these couples employ various interactional strategies to balance their home life which includes practical sharing during university years, to the maintenance of the traditional roles by use of social performance. The results are systematized into five substantive themes: *The Division of “Inside” vs. “Outside” Labor*; *The Wife as “Project Manager”*; *Practical “Student-Stage” Egalitarianism: A Transitional Period*; *The Paradox of Negotiation and the Power of the “Final Word”*; *Gender Accountability and Social Performance: The Kelin Identity*.

In order to be able to comprehend these dynamics, one has to first contextualize the participants of the study that are the representatives of a new urban professional layer of Astana. A particular cohort mentioned in the methodology, was selected due to the fact that they exemplify the group of people who are the most directly affected by the collision of the modern desires of Westernized professional competition and the cultural demands of their upbringing. Such couples are in a crucial life period when the patterns of domesticity are initially negotiated and developed, which makes them a microcosm of contemporary family transformation in Kazakhstan.

These findings are analyzed by starting with the practical division of labor in the household which gives the required basis to comprehend greater symbolic negotiations. Although most couples suggest that their relationship is like a team where they share everything, in reality, there is a gendered system of allocating day-to-day responsibilities. Individual interview and 7-day diary results indicate that the division of labor is between inside feminine daily chores and outside masculine occasional chores. Husbands always assert heavy or technical

work as their own to do the physical masculinity like repairs, clearing garbage or water transportation. On the contrary, wives are the ones doing the monotonous, hourly chores of cooking, setting the table, and cleaning the house everyday. Even in instances where household tasks are undertaken in the course of their academic work, husbands are likely to place themselves as assistants and not actors with their wives doing the executive planning and the mental load. This fieldwork allocation shows that modernization has changed the language of marriage in Astana, but has not yet broken the symbolic and managerial stratification of the family.

The Division of “Inside” vs. “Outside” Labor. Symbolic spatial specialization is often used to justify the household roles negotiation in terms of domestic activities being divided into “inside” (feminine) and “outside” (masculine) spaces. Such a dichotomous divide enables the couples to practice gender by locating domestic actions within the cultural conceptions of physical masculinity or femininity. In this respect, the spatial boundary is not simply a repertoire of chores, but what Morgan (2011) refers to as a “family practice”, a process, in which couples jointly create the symbolic meanings of their marriage, and establish their mutual responsibility in day-to-day action. Men have always asserted that “heavy”, “technical” or “external” work as their domain and women do the routine daily work of the domestic. Frequency analysis of the 7-day diaries shows that outside activities (repairs, trash, water) were prevalent in the daily routine of each household (1.5 times a week), and inside activities (cooking, dishes, daily cleaning) were 12-15 times a week. Such data of behavior proves that the second shift is not only characterized by the type of work, but also by its inexorable daily repetition.

This territorial boundary was clearly defined in the individual interview of Alisher (Husband #5):

“Since I am a man, it means that most of the tasks such as repairs, removing garbage or carrying heavy stuff are on me. I do not want to impose on my wife.”

This “protectionist” rhetoric usually conceals the reality that the work of “man”, such as fixing a cabinet or carrying water, is done infrequently, whereas the work of “woman”, such as cooking and washing dishes is done regularly and daily. This discrepancy is brought out in the 7-day diaries. In the third couple, Ersaiyn (Husband #3) documented his major activities of the week such as repairing a cabinet and picking up trash among his main activities. Fariza (Wife #3), on the contrary, was in charge of the daily, hourly chores of cooking, setting the table, and cleaning the fridge. The masculinity of protectionism in Astana, where men boast of visible, occasional work, and women of repetitive, invisible work, is no exception, and finds confirmation in rural (McGuire, 2017) and industrial (Trevisani, 2020) environments that show that the domestic gender order is not going anywhere. On the same note, Dimash (Husband #1) underlined his contribution to the “water delivery” to their dorm room, which in the context of the Nazarbayev University dorm clearly implies some physical strength in everyday life. The external (husbands) chores (bringing water, going to the store) are discrete and finite. Once the water is brought, his “work” for that task is over. This can be compared to the tasks that the wife does (cooking, washing dishes), which seem to be daily and more than once a day. The husband brought water three times in the diary of Couple #1 whereas the wife washed dishes and cooked everyday. This depicts that masculine work is periodic whereas female work is monotonous and unavoidable.

This is a spatial specialization, but a strategy to keep traditional binary gender identities in a contemporary urban setting where “heavy” physical work is hardly needed in a day-to-day setting. This specialization can be viewed as a strategy to overcome the contradiction between

professional modernization and enduring traditional foundations in urban Kazakhstan as Naizabayeva et al. (2022) imply. According to Daniyar (Husband #4), they may be sharing some of the work but he takes care of the work “outside” the home such as rent and repairs and his wife takes care of the “interior”. This would enable husbands to play the symbolic role of the “provider” or the “protector” without necessarily changing the “double burden” of wives. Similar to the weekend couples in Korea (Lee, 2020), who return to the old scripts to take care of the logistics of professional life, the Astana couples are using the spatial specialization as a form of logistical shortcut in order to preserve their modern image as long as the home is a patriarchal island.

The interaction with the information demonstrates that when identifying the activity of collecting trash or repairing something as something “manly”, husbands can minimize the time spent at home. As Aisaule (Wife #6) pointed out:

“I do the “wet” cleaning of the bathroom and put the closet order, which is concealed and monotonous, and Dias does the very visible technical activity of vacuum cleaning.”

This division repeats the gender arrangement of the previous generations by keeping the husband as the strategic head of the outside world, and the wife as the executive head of the inside world. Finally, as Crompton (2006) suggests, education and work restructuring is not enough to interrupt these cultural traditions of gendered responsibility, which makes the wife endure the “second shift” of household mental burden when the husband is still a “helper” and not a possessor of the household domain (Hochschild, 1989). This movement forms a symbolic paradox since the wife is formally the leader of the domestic realm, but leadership is characterized by the execution of repetitive and unseen work that supports the home. On the

other hand, the husband can do gender by being part of some of the more visible or technical indoor labor, like vacuuming or water delivery, and remain detached in relation to the daily mental overload of running the household.

The Wife as “Project Manager”. The next key result of this study is that the division of labor between newly married couples in Astana is not only about physical work but also built on a deeper level of the distribution of managerial labor. Although the rhetoric of “teamwork”, “partnership” and “fairness” were also commonly used by the participants in joint interviews, a closer study of individual transcripts and behavioral data shows that the “mental load”, i.e. the need to notice, plan, and control the household is still a feminine burden. As a result of diaries, although the wife (Dina/Aqniat) enters the tasks of both, the tasks of the husband are usually entered as single, passive blocks (e.g., Working, Lessons), whereas the tasks of the wife are active and multi-tasked (e.g., Gen. cleaning, baking bread, organizing groceries). It is a key interaction process in which this managerial role imposes accountability on wives over the domestic sphere, which in effect does gender, internalizing an executive identity which is “assisted” by husbands but is not owned by them. This dynamic gives a striking local example of how West and Zimmerman (1987) describe gender accountability where wives are held accountable of the household world irrespective of their professional or academic success which essentially recreates home as a main place of social reproduction.

The data collection process was an eye opener but a conclusive behavioral measure of unequal distribution of intellectual and mental load in the home. As determined in the methodology, most of the 7-day diaries, especially the ones in Couples #2, #4, and #5, were filled in by the wives only. This tendency shows that the administrative load of checking, recording, and registering domestic life is regarded as a feminine one and, in fact, the research

process is being defined as a part of the managerial duties of the wife. Although husbands could do physical work, they still were not engaged in the thinking work of monitoring that work and they are positioned as helpers who do not possess the executive role of the house.

This intellectual division of labor is a significant discovery as it shows that even in the 21st century, the burden of the mind, the constant effort to pay attention and plan, is still gendered. It is in close agreement with the concept of the “second shift”, introduced by Arlie Hochschild (1989) in which women assume the role of the time and motion experts of the family. Although couples may employ egalitarian rhetoric during interviews, their actions of refusing to participate in the administrative work of the diary confirm that the patriarchal character of the management system is still very deep-rooted. The husbands delegate the documentation to their wives, and in the process they reinforce a hierarchy that they do not have to be bothered with the dull, or monotonous stuff of domestic management, and so the home is once again a patriarchal island in which the wife is the only project manager.

Data showed that husbands tend to see themselves as “helpers” as opposed to independent actors. They are in a waiting position instead of playing an active role meaning that they leave the executive role of the home to their wives. This practical hierarchy was stated with the clearest expression by Daniyar (Husband #4):

“I believe that the woman must be the manager of the household chores within the home. Thinking and planning should be on her side.”

The fact that Daniyar explicitly delegates thinking and planning to the wife proves that even the high-qualified middle classes of Astana are not ready to implement structural changes in education to overcome the cultural tradition of gendered responsibility, which Crompton (2006)

records as a global trend. This outsourcing of mental labor results in a situation where the wife has to have a permanent “project management” attitude. Even in Couple 6, where Dias (Husband 6) is engaged in physical tasks, such as vacuuming, he explains his commitment by technical superiority, which is that he does it because he “knows the scheme” of the machine better. That leaves Aisaule (Wife #6) with the “wet” cleaning as well as the day-to-day running of the house.

The interactional relationship entrenches the wife as the individual who is the main contributor to the domestic world so that the husband may remain uninvolved with the ‘dullness’ of the management work. This is a manifestation of the “second shift” that Hochschild describes (1989), in which the workload is not simply the physical one following a working day, but the constant mental effort needed to make the home run. As a result, despite the division of physical labor 50/50 - a model specifically mentioned by student-stage interviewees like Dias (#6) who says they clean the house a fifty-fifty split and Ainur (#1) who asserts that they share everything to handle their study responsibilities - the patriarchal nature of the management system is still deeply gendered, and the wife is reinstated as the moral protector and the head of the house. This egalitarian discourse is mostly at odds with the behavioral information presented in the 7-day diaries, in which the true amount of repetitive day-to-day activities is still biased towards the wife, even when physical labor is presented as shared on the surface.

Practical “Student-Stage” Egalitarianism: A Transitional Period. The concept of “otpeли kezen” (transitional period) is one of the distinct discoveries that were made within the context of Nazarbayev University (NU). In the case of couples both of whom are students (as was the case with Arai), or both of whom are masters students (as with Aisaule), and both of whom husbands (as with Alisher or Dias) are PhD students, division of labor is usually practical

and egalitarian. This arrangement is enabled by the living in university dormitories (Couples #1, #5, #6) since the couples do not yet feel “committed to the house” permanently.

The functional nature of this model was described by Ainur (Wife #1):

“At present, we are both students and not leading a life associated with the house, which is why we share everything. This model is effective among students.”

Nevertheless, interaction with the information indicates that this “undoing of gender” (Deutsch, 2007) is handled as a temporary concession which was caused by the urban student atmosphere and not a value change. Dimash (Husband #1) is not ashamed to confess that he now assists, because his wife heavily works in medical school. But the general household model, where father works and mother takes care of the house, is his “foundation” and his ultimate aim. He has made it clear that his dream is to see the wife “running the home” as he is the main provider.

“My previous life is a foundation (фундамент) for me now... My concrete goal is to reach such a life [a traditional household], taking this model as a basis and adapting it to current life”

This equality, “temporary equality”, is also evident in Couple #5. Although both the partners are doing their thesis, Nazly (Wife #5) indicated that she has to do the cooking most of the time to allow Alisher to work on his project, and even Alisher perceives the male role as the main breadwinner in future. Such conduct actually represents continued inequality over egalitarianism; taking into herself the cooking labor in order to safeguard the Alisher academic time, Nazly (Wife #5) strengthens a set of roles in which the professional growth of the husband

is the main future asset of the family. During the joint interview, Dias says that they are a good team and they obviously know who does what. The Couple #6 diary however has a note of qualification: this week the wife was very busy. The equality observed in the diary (where Samat/Dias does dishes and rooms) is not a fixed but a responsive one. The diary confirms that the husband does not play the role of an inside partner but is merely a reserve when the wife is at home with her outside schedule (study/work) taking it. This is the same as what Hochschild (1989) refers to as the gendered leisure gap in which the time of women is viewed as more flexible and less precious as that of men. The student phase is a period that is a window of suspended and not dismantled gender scripts. Although the student stage gives the opportunity to share the tasks practically because of a lack of space in dormitories, the inequality is the prevailing trend. The data indicates that in such couples, it is a practical reaction to university pressures rather than to a denial of gender scripts that husbands tend to help more with visible and occasional things and wives take care of the daily routine that is inside the house.

It means that the future viewpoint is that as soon as the “status of the student is eliminated”, and there is an appearance of children, the couples are supposed to go back to the traditional roles. The reappearance of traditional roles does not happen in the future but is an ongoing fact with husbands being seen as taking a back seat or playing the role of being a helper. As an example, Daniyar (Husband #4) comes out categorically that his wife is the manager of chores and he is not engaged in the process of the mental planning when he is still outside the family before the child is born. Aisaule (Wife #6) confessed that she has been practicing cooking now because it is an acquired skill that has allowed her to cease depending on her mother but she hopes to employ a housemaid sometime in the future so that she can avoid the entire burden of domesticity. Coelho, Maciel, and Torres (2021) in literature confirm that middle-class women

may outsource physical work (e.g., housemaids), but they hardly become equal due to the burden of the managerial work and the need to control the home, which is the woman's responsibility. This gives an illusion of transformation without undermining the gendered responsibility of the home. This implies that to the educated young people in Astana, egalitarianism is a stage in life. This egalitarianism of stages is evidenced by participants who perceive university life as a phase of transition (temporarily referred to as *өтпелі кезең*) during which the traditional underpinnings are forgiven but not destroyed. After graduation, rhetoric of partnership gets replaced with the rhetoric of provider-homemaker, which is regarded as the ultimate purpose of marriage. They use egalitarian rhetoric to manage their hectic student lives but have an unrealistic allegiance to a patriarchal "foundation" that will be re-activated in their future professional and parental careers.

The Paradox of Negotiation and the Power of the "Final Word". Although almost all couples referred to their relationship as a "team" in which they "consult" each other on all issues, in-depth analysis shows that there was an underlying paradox involving the power of decision-making. Though the daily house work is negotiated according to the number of hours available, the husband still has the "final word" when it comes to the big matters in life, money or investments. This play is an illustration of how "doing gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987) constitutes a demonstration of feminine submission in high-stakes domains, despite the apparent day-to-day equality of chores.

Fariza (Wife #3) has given a rather straightforward description of this relinquishment of responsibility:

“We discuss and come to a mutual decision. However, the ultimate decision is largely left to my husband as I am too scared to take responsibility or make a mistake.”

This feeling was reflected in Ainur (Wife #1) who confessed that the opinion of her husband is dominant since she regards her personal ideas as “impulsive”. In Couple #2, where Darkhan is extremely helpful with cleaning, he mentioned that, although there is a discussion about travel, “investments and major decisions” are his area of concern as the leader of his own business. The discourse of the so-called joint consultation is in many cases disguised by a hierarchical structure, in which the husband is the strategic manager and the wife is the administrative manager.

This male dominance system adds more weight to the traditional male who is the “head” of the family, the idea that is deeply entrenched in the Kazakh cultural “foundation” (Zhaksybekov, 2009). The negotiation process is usually used to sustain a semblance of contemporary equality, and the final responsibility on the direction of the family is still masculine. Dimash (Husband #1) pointedly mentioned that it is “always up to me to have the last word” and they talk and he is the one that takes the final decision. This shows the “Astana Paradox” couples use the language of modern union, yet the symbolic dominance of men is the safe net of making significant life decisions. Women have a tendency to play the bargaining game but deliberately “making a mistake” to the men. This trend is depicted by wives who self-define their unreliability in making decisions in justifying the transfer of power to their spouses. As an example, Fariza (Wife #3) literally transfers the ultimate decision-making in that she is too afraid to take charge or to err and in effect, the threat of error is used to justify why her husband should continue to be the strategic head of the family. This indicates that equality within

the domestic setting in Astana is at present a negotiation of tasks that is seen in the research as “negotiated traditionalism”, but not a redesigning of power and responsibility in the marriage. Although physical performance of daily chores is being increasingly shared as a serviceable, practical reaction to urban time, it does not represent an ideological change towards equality. The inequality is not removed as the mental load of the domestic management is held by women and the ultimate decision-making on the high-stakes areas including finances and major life choices is still the preserve of men and the fundamental patriarchal system is left intact.

Gender Accountability and Social Performance: The Kelin Identity. Finally, the data showed that the doings of family and gender practices in high qualified Astana couples are usually conducted as a performance to a social audience, which is called “gender accountability” (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This notion, as stipulated in the theoretical framework, assumes that individuals are subject to evaluation by other people depending on normative expectations that should be maintained in their sex category. Doing gender, in this context, is closely implicated with doing family in terms of what Morgan (2011), refers to as family practices- everyday activities that have strong symbolic meanings of belonging. To these couples, it is not only that domesticity is negotiated, but an interactive accomplishment which affirms them in the family and beyond in the society. One of the critical tendencies in the Astana environment is the dramatic change in domestic behavior according to the appearance of more ‘conservative’ relatives. Chores shared privately by couples often revert to a more traditional “Kelín” (daughter-in-law) identity so that social judgment does not occur and so that the husband can retain his masculine identity in the kin network. According to Kudaibergenova (2018), as mentioned in the literature review, the “Project Kelín” was one of the main characteristics of re-traditionalization in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, where a young bride status remains a transitional

period of submissive domesticity. This is consistent with the empirical study conducted by Turaeva (2017), which emphasizes that the Kelin identity is one of the main social institutions of ensuring family reputation and status.

Arai (Wife #4) brought out the fact in which her husband (Daniyar) expressly demanded this performance in order to safeguard their image:

“He told me: ‘In front of them [conservative relatives], I will not perform housework so they do not talk about me. Please don’t be offended.’”

This brings out the fact that gender is not just simply a static internalized identity but a social accomplishment that should be sustained to meet the external cultural requirements; therefore, being fluid and changeable depending on specific audiences. Although in modern Astana couples do not live with their parents, they are still attached to the requirements of their extended families. Arai observed that her mother-in-law could not consider a man assisting in the kitchen as it was the “woman’s work”. However, she lets her husband ‘assist’ when family members are not present. The pressure of these demands is further supported by the constant contact; in the case of Couple #6, the couple claims to see their parents on the weekend in order to stay in touch with people and find support, and the isolation of the urban home is a short-lived solution and not a permanent one of escaping tradition.

This generates a “third shift” of social management to many wives in the study. This idea builds upon the second shift described by Arlie Hochschild (1989) by revealing a third tier of work: the mental and emotional one that women put in to manage and enact a classic family image to a crowd. This does not mean that this shift entails physical work, but rather, it entails the continual balancing of the social perceptions so as to ensure that current professional desires

are met with the traditional requirements. Not only do they have to study/work and handle the home but they also have to act in a traditional submissive way so that they do not subject the husband to the label of being weak particularly on weekends when visiting the parental residence or on occasions when they have elders and conservative family members in their city apartments. Aisaule (Wife #6) remarked that they are creating their “own model” at home but when they go to their parents, they still experience the example of “better not” of their traditional homes.

This social responsibility is a continuation of the Soviet tradition of women being “productive mothers” who are still expected to be able to take care of the home to become a socially desirable woman. The fear of becoming a “subject of gossip” is an effective controller of household work, which does not allow completely “undoing gender” in the urban middle class. Therefore, egalitarianism in Astana is usually a “private practice” that is easily abandoned to meet the dictates of the “traditional needs” of the wider community. This trend of privatized equality vs. the traditionalism of the state reflects the trends of the world that have been captured in the literature. Coelho, Maciel, and Torres (2021) reveal that despite the high qualification of couples in the European Union, they tend to reproduce gendered inequalities when it comes to life transition that involves kin interaction. On the local level, it emphasizes the consistency of the domestic gender order across the social classes; according to the results of McGuire (2017) in the rural areas, the unseen backbone of family survival is feminine labor, condoned by the cultural notions of duty and femininity that are still present in the modern micro-cosmos of Astana.

Discussion

Double Burden

The findings contribute to the overall knowledge of the problem of the “double burden” in the city of Kazakhstan. Distribution of household labor, in such households, is carried out by strict symbolic spatial specialization as well as a mental hierarchy. Women carry virtually no responsibilities outside the home, their realm, the day to day, repetitive, and mundane tasks of cooking and cleaning, whereas husbands have the outsourcing of work, the infrequent, technical, or physically heavy work of cleaning up and repairs. This physical division is supported by a managerial division whereby the wife is set up as the project manager who has to observe, organize and oversee the home whereas the husband takes a waiter role as an assistant who can only work when requested.

Resource Substitution

The results indicate that although modernization and education have altered the vocabulary of marriage in Astana, it has not yet broken the symbolic, practical and managerial hierarchy of the household. The young men in the study always mentioned their fathers as the “foundation” of their gender identity. They do not lose a symbolic relationship to the traditional model of breadwinners even when washing dishes or vacuuming in the so-called “student phase”. This makes the home continue to be a “patriarchal island” despite the women joining the workforce as Master and Bachelor holders. One of the major urban strategies is resource substitution. Resource substitution refers to an urban coping mechanism that is used by the middle class to deal with the increased pace of work and time-related pressures of Astana life. This is called utilizing market based solutions to substitute personal household work so that the

couples preserve the semblance of a modern, egalitarian life but without necessarily disrupting the traditional patriarchal roots of their marital institution. Instead of renegotiating gender roles, market solutions, including prepared food ordering or hiring help, are used by busy Astana couples to deal with their “second shift”. In what happens to be the case of Couple #1 and Couple #6, the ability to order food presents an appearance of equality without frustrating the underlying assumption that the wife is the one in charge of the domestic world.

Traditional Patriarchal Basis

Although the past studies of Kazakhstan, such as McGuire (2017), were aimed at the role of unpaid female labor as the cornerstone of the survival of a rural family, our results change the perspective and refer to the newly formed urban middle society. These urban couples, unlike rural families, are extremely dependent on resource substitution, including ordering ready-made food or intending to employ domestic workers, as a primary way to manage their double burden. This shows that within the professional settings of Astana, the double burden is not addressed by renegotiating the roles, but by market solutions that would enable the husband to continue his position as a strategic provider and the wife to continue to be the manager of these outsourced services. The newlywed stage is not well covered in literature because it is the most critical stage in which domestic patterns are initially negotiated. As we will see, couples are already establishing a Project Manager hierarchy at this stage of foundation, which is still in this day of seeming modernity. Interactional evidence that mental load and managerial responsibility are gendered even at the very beginning of the marriage is the fact that 7-day diaries were filled in by wives almost solely (Couples #2, #4, and #5). This shows that the traditional patriarchal basis that the participants referred to is formed very early in the marriage, even though the couple may pretend to be equal when they are still students. This paper bridges the gap on the subject of

interactional processes within the post-Soviet environment by showing how gender is achieved through the delegation of management and not only physical tasks. This is evidenced by the way wives adopt an executive identity; it is they who must observe, scheme and keep track of what must be done, as husbands are not involved in the mental labor of running the household. The paradox of the final word in the Couples #1 and #3 demonstrates that the symbolic order of the male as the head will not be overturned when making high stakes decisions however much physical labor is shared (a temporary undoing of the gender). This echoes the notion of gender accountability as put forward by West and Zimmerman (1987) that the couples such as Daniyar and Arait (Couple #4) re-enact the traditional gender roles before their family, as evidenced by the fact that even in the privacy of their homes, their equality takes second place to the way they carry out the traditional Kazakh identities. Couples are compelled to conform to these stereotypical scripts due to their social responsibility to social sanctions; they will be subject to social judgment or gossip (өсек) and the condemnation of their extended family in case they do not act as a “good kelin” or a “good provider”. Importantly, this paper concludes that despite the outsourcing of physical labor by replacing resources, the managerial workload is a feminine responsibility. Although the physical “second shift” could be relieved through ordering food or a housemaid, the mental burden of the task, the necessity to arrange, coordinate, and supervise these external services, remains squarely on the wife, and she becomes more of an executive as the moral and administrative caretaker of the home.

Negotiated Traditionalism

Referring back to the Research Question, newly married couples in Astana challenge and at the same time represent traditional roles. They question the strictness of the conventional roles by sharing the everyday tasks in a practical way in the city. Nevertheless, they are classic

hierarchies due to the continuity of the so-called “mental load”, the symbolic spatial gap of the labor and the presentation of the so-called “Kelin” identity to the social audiences. Finally, the home to the urban middle classes of Astana is a location of “negotiated traditionalism”, in which, at the workplace, modernization has not broken the symbolic gendered structures of the home.

Conclusion

This paper examined the complex dynamics of managing household roles on the newly married couples of Astana City, Kazakhstan, who were educated. Using the theoretical concepts of “doing gender”, “family practices” and “second shift”, the study aimed at identifying how much these couples transform or reproduce the traditional gender order. The results indicate a phenomenon known as “negotiated traditionalism” from literature review, in which a new rhetoric of collaboration conceals firmly rooted patriarchal structures. The role of the wife as the “project manager” of the household, where the “mental load” of the home is undertaken, is among the most important ones. Although physical tasks are divided, the administrative task of planning and control is still a feminine burden, as it is reflected by the fact that only wives mostly do the household diaries of 7 days. Moreover, the division of labor tends to take a symbolic spatial differentiation of “inside” and “outside” activities. Men will always assert that they do less, “technical”, or “heavy” external work to retain a masculine identity as a “protector” or a “provider” whereas women do the more common, regular and the repetitive internal labor.

The most important thing that this study demonstrated is the so-called “student-stage egalitarianism” (өтпелі кезең), a middle ground between the couple where they start to learn more practical, egalitarian ways of living because of the pressure of college life and the absence of any domestic duties. This division of labor, as discussed in the findings, is a survival mechanism that is pragmatic in order to survive through university. It occurs due to the fact that

small rooms in a university do not impose any heavy and permanent responsibilities on a couple. The functional tool of time saving by sharing labor is an important tool to complete their degrees together instead of the actual change in their thoughts of what they think is right. Actually, the interviews indicate that this is frequently a concessionary measure as opposed to a change in fundamental values, husbands at this age tend to refer to their present assistance as a temporary favor and even intend to remain the main breadwinner and have the wife run the household in the future. This is also made more complicated by the conflict of the “final word” where day-to-day tasks are bargained but major life aspects like money and investments are left to the husband. Lastly, the paper points out the strength of gender accountability and the “identity of Kelin”. Practicing conservative roles in front of a social audience of conservative relatives to prevent judgment, couples show that even in contemporary Astana, the home is still a “patriarchal island” where gender is enacted to meet the demands of the extended family and kin network.

The importance of these findings is in that they contribute to the knowledge about post-Soviet gender dynamics. The study depicts the impact of the so-called “double burden”, which is a heritage of the Soviet-era policies and reinforced by today’s neoliberal environment that promoted the idea of women engaging in work without reallocating domestic labor. This paper puts the Kazakhstani experience into a global framework, indicating that the local cultural peculiarity, such as the identity of the so-called “Kelin”, is unique, but the ongoing inequality of domestic work is not a local problem.

The next generation of research is to extend the scope of the study to the educated middle class living in Astana to other less homogeneous socio-economic and geographic groups to determine whether these trends of “negotiated traditionalism” are replicated or not among various layers of the Kazakhstani population. Also, longitudinal research must be conducted to

follow these couples once they leave the “student stage” and enter the parenthood stage as many of the participants noted this as the stage when they will feel like going back to the more traditional roles. More research on the place of “market solutions” like hired domestic help or food delivery services would also be able to show how resource substitution influences the process of negotiation or avoidance of gender role restructuring. Lastly, it might be interesting to examine the views of the extended family to gain a better understanding of the processes of social accountability and their influence on the personal life of young couples. At this point, scholars can keep on untangling tensions that have existed over time in the domestic sphere between modernization and tradition.

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Appendix A

Individual Interview Questions (For Wife & Husband Separately)

Introduction: Thank you for speaking with me individually. I'm interested in your personal perspective on your household and marriage. There are no right or wrong answers.

Topic 1: Everyday Life and Division of Labor

1. Could you please describe a typical weekday of yours, morning to evening? What are your household duties?
2. And what about a typical weekend? How are chores different?
3. Consider individual activities: cooking, everyday cleaning, through cleaning, laundry, shopping, finances, house/car repairs. What ones are mainly your responsibility? Which are your spouse's?
4. What was the origin of this division of labor? Was it a conversation or did it occur naturally?

Topic 2: Fairness and Satisfaction perceptions

5. What is your opinion of your present house work division between you and your spouse? What works well?
6. Do you think there are any things you would rather not do or would like your spouse to participate more in?
7. Do you and your spouse make big decisions (such as a big purchase or a vacation) in the household?

8. How do you perceive your employment/education with respect to one another, in the case that you are both employed/studying outside the home? Is one of them more demanding or important to you?

Topic 3: Gender Roles, Expectations and Conflict

9. In your opinion, what does it mean to be a good wife/good husband? What are the ways these understandings affect your behaviour at home?
10. What were the household responsibilities in your family when you were growing up? What do you believe the impact of that is on your perceptions nowadays?
11. Have you ever had conflicts on housework? What was an example of how that was resolved?
12. Is there anything you do at home that you feel your spouse doesn't notice or appreciate?

Closing

13. Is there anything else that you want me to know about your experience of managing your home and marriage?

Joint Interview Questions (Couple Together)

Introduction: Now I would like to speak to you both. I would like to know your perception of your life as a couple and how you make it work as a team.

Topic 1: Common Story and Cooperation

1. What is the story of how you were first living together? What was your first decision on who would do what in the house?

2. What do you call your partnership in terms of how you handle your home(e.g. We are a great team, we have our strengths and weaknesses)
3. Could you describe a situation when you managed to collaborate in a household task or problem. What made it work?
4. Do you have any activities that you like to do together? Which ones?

Topic 2: Negotiation and Decision-making

5. What do you do when one of you is overwhelmed by housework? What does that conversation look like?
6. Suppose you are both very busy next week. What are your strategies and arrangements in terms of schedules and household tasks?
7. What do you do to ensure that both of your needs are listened to during a major decision-making in the family?
8. How do you understand the term “fairness” in your marriage? Is it a matter of dividing everything 50/50 or otherwise?

Topic 3: External influences and Future Prospect

9. What are the effects of the marriage of your parents or your friends on your thoughts about roles at home?
10. How do you manage the work/study and your life as a couple?
11. Has your division of labor been altered since the time you were first married? What do you think it would be like in the future, say, when you have children?
12. What is something that you value that your partner does to help you in the home and life together?

Closing

13. Do you think there is anything we have not discussed that you consider important to the way your household works?

Жеке сұхбат сұрақтары (Әйелі мен күйеуіне бөлек)

Кіріспе: Жеке сұхбатқа қатысуға келіскеніңіз үшін рақмет. Маған сіздің отбасыңыз бен некеңіз туралы жеке пікіріңіз қызық. Бұл жерде дұрыс немесе бұрыс жауаптар жоқ.

Тақырып 1: Күнделікті өмір мен үй тірлігінің бөлінісі

1. Күнделікті таңертеңнен кешке дейінгі жұмыс күніңізді сипаттап бере аласыз ба? Үй жұмысынан қандай міндеттер сіздікі?
2. Ал демалыс күні қалай өтеді? Үй тірлігі қалай ерекшеленеді/өзгереді?
3. Нақты тапсырмалар туралы ойланып көрсеңіз: тамақ дайындау, күнделікті тазалау, үйді толық тазалау(генеральная уборка), киім жуу, азық-түлік сатып алу, қаржыны басқару, көлік/үйді жөндеу. Олардың қайсысы негізінен сіздің мойныңызда?
Қайсысы жұбайыңыздың мойнында?
4. Мұндай бөлініске/ келісімге қалай келдіңіздер? Сіздер мұны талқыладыңыздар ба, әлде өздігінен солай қалыптасып кетті ме?

Тақырып 2: Әділдік пен қанағаттанудың түсінігі

5. Жұбайыңызбен үй тірлігін бөліп алуға қалай қарайсыз? Қандай тұстары жақсы жұмыс істейді?
6. Сіз жасағыңыз келмейтін немесе жұбайыңыздың көбірек көмектессе екен дейтін

істер бар ма?

7. Үй шаруасына қатысты маңызды шешімдерді (мысалы, үлкен төлемдер (крупные покупки) немесе сапарлар) қалай қабылдайсыздар?

8. Егер сіздердің екеуіңіз де үйден тыс жерде жұмыс істейтін/оқитын болсаңыз, жұмысты/оқуды қарым-қатынас тұрғысынан қалай көресіз? Жұмыстарыңыздың бірін талапшылдырақ немесе маңыздырақ деп санайсыз ба?

Тақырып 3: Гендерлік рөлдер, күтулер мен қайшылықтар

9. Сіздің ойыңызша «жақсы әйел» / «жақсы күйеу» болу деген не? Бұл түсініктер үйдегі әрекетіңізге қалай әсер етеді?

10. Сіз өскен отбасында үй тірлігі қалай бөлінді? Бұл бүгінгі көзқарасыңызға қалай әсер етіп жатыр деп ойлайсыз?

11. Сізде үй жұмысына байланысты қайшылықтар/түсініспеушіліктер болды ма? Оның қалай шешілгеніне мысал келтіре аласыз ба?

12. Үйде жұбайыңыз байқамайды-ау немесе бағаламайды-ау деп ойлайтын істеріңіз бар ма?

Қорытынды:

13. Сіздің үй тірлігін бөлісу мен неке туралы тәжірибеңізде айтылмай қалған, бірақ сіз маңызды деп санайтын қандай да бір қосарыңыз бар ма?

Бірлескен сұхбат сұрақтары (Жұппен бірге)

Кіріспе: Енді сіздердің екеулеріңізбен сұхбат жүргізсек. Мені сіздердің жұп ретіндегі өмірлеріңізге көзқарастарыңыз бен топ ретінде қалай жұмыс істейтіндіктеріңіз қызық.

Тақырып 1: Ортақ түсінік мен бірлік

1. Бірге тұрудың қалай басталғаны туралы айтып бере аласыздар ба? Бастапқыда үйде кім не істейтінін қалай шештіңіздер?
2. Үй шаруасын жүргізудегі серіктестігіңізді қалай сипаттар едіңіздер? (мысалы, «Біз тамаша командамыз», «Біздің күшті және әлсіз жақтарымыз бар»).
3. Бір үй тірлігінде / мәселесінде бірлескен күйде жұмыс істеп, оң нәтиже берген кезді айтып берсеңіздер. Мәселені шешуге не көмектесті?
4. Сіздерге бірге жасаған ұнайтын үй тірліктері бар ма? Олар қандай?

Тақырып 2: Келіссөздер және шешім қабылдау

5. Біріңіз үй тірлігінің шамадан тыс жүктелгенін сезгенде не істейсіздер? Бұл туралы әдетте қалай әңгімелесесіздер?
6. Екеуіңіздің де алдағы апталарыңызда жұмыстарыңыз көп деп елестетейік.
Жоспарларыңыз бен үй міндеттеріңізді қалай бөліп аласыздар?
7. Отбасы үшін маңызды шешім қабылдаған кезде екеуіңіздің де қажеттіліктеріңіз ескерілетініне қалай көз жеткізесіздер?
8. Некедегі «әділдікті» қалай түсінесіздер? Барлығын тең бөлу бе, әлде басқа нәрсе ме?

Тақырып 3: Сыртқы әсерлер және болашаққа көзқарас

9. Ата-анаңыздың немесе достарыңыздың некелері үйдегі рөлдеріңіз туралы түсінікке қалай әсер етеді?
10. Жұмыс/оқу талаптары мен бірлескен үй тірлігін қалай теңгертіп (баланс ұстап) жүресіздер?
11. Некелескендеріңізден бері үй тірлігін бөліп алуларыңыз өзгерді ме? Мысалы,

болашақта бала жоспарласаңыздар, үй тірлігіне деген қарым-қатынастарыңыз қалай өзгереді деп ойлайсыздар?

12. Жұбайыңызға үйіңіз бен бірге сүріп жатқан өмірлеріңізге қосқан үлесі үшін қандай алғыс айтар едіңіз?

Қорытынды:

13. Сіздердің үй тірлігін бөлісуде, неке туралы тәжірибеңізде біз талқыламаған, бірақ сіз маңызды деп санайтын қандай да қосарыңыз бар ма?

Вопросы для индивидуального интервью (Отдельно для жены и мужа)

Введение: «Спасибо, что согласились поговорить со мной наедине. Мне интересна ваша личная точка зрения на ваш быт и брак. Здесь нет правильных или неправильных ответов».

Тема 1: Распорядок дня и распределение обязанностей

1. Опишите, пожалуйста, ваш обычный будний день, с утра до вечера? Какими делами по дому вы занимаетесь?
2. А как выглядит обычный выходной? Чем работа по дому отличается?
3. Подумайте о конкретных задачах: готовка, ежедневная уборка, генеральная уборка, стирка, покупка продуктов, управление финансами, ремонт машины/дома. Какие из них в основном лежат на вас? Какие — на вашем супруге?
4. Как так получилось? Вы это обсуждали, или всё вышло само собой?

Тема 2: Восприятие справедливости и удовлетворенность

5. Как вы относитесь к тому, как вы с супругом делите работу по дому? Что работает

хорошо?

6. Есть ли дела, от которых вы бы хотели отказаться или чтобы супруг/а помогал/ла больше?

7. Как вы принимаете важные решения, касающиеся домашнего хозяйства (например, о крупной покупке или поездке)?

8. Если вы оба работаете, как вы видите свои работы по отношению друг к другу? Считаете ли вы, что одна работа более требовательная или важная?

Тема 3: Гендерные роли, ожидания и конфликты

9. Что, по-вашему, значит быть «хорошей женой» / «хорошим мужем»? Как эти представления влияют на ваши действия дома?

10. Как делилась работа по дому в семье, в которой вы выросли? Как вы думаете, как это влияет на ваши взгляды сегодня?

11. Были ли у вас разногласия по поводу работы по дому? Можете привести пример, как вы это разрешили?

12. Есть ли что-то, что вы делаете по дому, что, как вам кажется, остается незамеченным или неоцененным вашим супругом?

Завершение:

13. Есть ли что-то еще в вашем опыте ведения домашнего хозяйства и браке, что, по-вашему, важно для моего понимания?

Вопросы для совместного интервью (Для пары)

Введение: «Сейчас я бы хотела поговорить с вами обоими вместе. Мне интересно, как вы видите вашу жизнь как пара и как вам удастся работать командой».

Тема 1: Общее видение и сотрудничество

1. Расскажите историю о том, как вы начали жить вместе. Как вы изначально решали, кто чем будет заниматься по дому?
2. Как бы вы описали ваше партнерство в ведении домашнего хозяйства? (например, «Мы отличная команда», «У нас есть сильные и слабые стороны»).
3. Расскажите о случае, когда вы успешно вместе работали над каким-то домашним проектом или проблемой. Что помогло вам справиться?
4. Есть ли дела по дому, которые вам нравится делать вместе? Какие?

Тема 2: Переговоры и принятие решений

5. Как вы поступаете, когда один из вас чувствует себя перегруженным домашними делами? Опишите, как обычно выглядит такой разговор.
6. Представьте, что у вас обоих намечается очень напряженная неделя. Как вы планируете и координируете свои графики и домашние обязанности?
7. Как вы убеждаетесь, что при принятии важных семейных решений учитываются потребности вас обоих?
8. Что для вас значит «справедливость» в браке? Это разделение всего 50/50, или что-то другое?

Тема 3: Внешнее влияние и взгляд в будущее

9. Как браки ваших родителей или друзей влияют на ваши представления о ваших собственных ролях дома?

10. Как вы балансируете между требованиями работы/учебы и вашей совместной домашней жизнью?
11. Изменилось ли разделение обязанностей с тех пор, как вы поженились? Как вы видите его изменение в будущем, например, если решите завести детей?
12. Что бы вы хотели поблагодарить в своем партнере за его вклад в ваш дом и общую жизнь?

Завершение:

13. Есть ли что-то, о чем мы не поговорили, но что, по-вашему, является ключевым для понимания того, как устроен ваш домашний быт?

Appendix B

7-Day Diary Completion Guide

The 7-day diary is important in the sense that it is a transition of the talk to action. Interviews are helpful in revealing the statement of what couples say they do but the diary gives tangible, behavioral evidence of what they actually do on a daily basis. It documents the unspoken, everyday “doing of gender” and domestic work, exposing how their ideals and their everyday actions might be at variance with each other. This objective account of tasks is the ultimate one based on which you can contrast their interview accounts of fairness, negotiation, and roles.

7-Day Diary Instructions

Purpose: Thank you that you agreed to complete this 7-day diary! This is the last section of the research study. It meant to assist me in gaining a clear understanding of your day-to-day life in the house and the routines taken by you and your spouse.

Time: Please write this diary for 7 consecutive days.

When to write: You can complete it at any time that will be convenient to you after completing each task or at the end of the day, but it is not recommended to do it the next day to avoid possible forgetfulness.

How to write: Please do not write long sentences / paragraphs. Just write down a list of the housework that was done every day in a short list. You can do it paper-based or digital-based as you want.

What to include: In relation to each chore, please indicate:

- Name of the task (e.g. cooked dinner, vacuumed living room, paid electricity bill, dropped off dry clean)
- Who did it. Please indicate this by a simple code:
 - [M] for tasks you did yourself
 - [S] for tasks your spouse did
 - [T] for tasks you did together

One Diary per spouse: You and your spouse complete two separate diaries. You have your own separate list for the same 7 days.

Example of a Completed Day:

Date: Monday, January 12

- Made breakfast [M]
- Drove us to work [S]
- Shopping in the groceries after a working day [T]
- Cooked dinner [S]
- Washed dishes [M]
- Planned weekend trip [S]

Important Notes:

- It has no correct or incorrect entries. Write down whatever you think is a household chore in your life.
- There is no need to worry about forgetting something to do. This is not a test. All you can do is do your best to write down what you remember.
- The best thing in this research is your honesty.

The diary should be returned at the end of the 7-day period. Once more, thank you so much for being of invaluable help in this study!

7 күндік күнделік толтыру нұсқаулығы

Мақсаты: 7 күндік күнделікті толтыруға келіскеніңіз үшін рақмет! Бұл зерттеу жобасының соңғы бөлімі. Оның мақсаты – сіздердің үй ішіндегі күнделікті өміріңіздің, жұбайыңызбен бірге орындайтын істеріңіздің нақты көрінісін анықтау.

Ұзақтығы: Күнделікті 7 күн бойына толтыру арқылы жүргізесіз.

Қашан: Оны әр тапсырманы орындағаннан кейін немесе күн біткен соң, өзіңізге ыңғайлы кез келген уақытта толтыра аласыз. Алайда, ұмытып қалмауды болдырмау үшін келесі күнге қалдырмауыңыз сұралады.

Қалай: Әр күні орындалған үй жұмыстарын ұзақ сөйлемдер / абзацтар түрінде емес, жай ғана қысқа тізім түрінде жазасыз. Бұны қалағаныңызша қағаз бетінде не электронды форматта орындауға болады.

Не енгізу керек: Әрбір үй жұмысы үшін мыналарды көрсетіңіз:

- **Тапсырманың атауы** (мысалы: кешкі ас әзірледі, қонақ бөлмені шаңсорғышпен тазалады, электр қуаты үшін төлем жасады, киімді тазалауға тапсырды).
- **Оны кім орындады.** Мұны қарапайым код арқылы белгілеңіз:
 - [М] өзіңіз орындаған тапсырмалар үшін
 - [Ж] жұбайыңыз орындаған тапсырмалар үшін
 - [Б] бірлесіп орындаған тапсырмалар үшін

Әр адам үшін жеке күнделік: Әрқайсыңыз жеке-жеке күнделік жүргізесіз.

Толтырылған күннің мысалы:

- **Күні:** Дүйсенбі, 12 Қаңтар
- Таңғы ас әзірледім [М]
- Жұмысқа әкеліп тастады [Ж]
- Жұмыстан кейін азық-түлік дүкенінен сауда жасадық [Б]
- Кешкі ас пісірдім [М]
- Ыдыс жудым [М]
- Демалыс сапарын жоспарлады [Ж]

Маңызды ескертпелер:

- **Бұл жерде дұрыс немесе бұрыс жазбалар жоқ.** Өміріңіздегі үй тірлігі деп санайтын кез келген нәрсені жазыңыз.
- **Қандай да бір істі ұмытып қалу жөнінде алаңдамаңыз.** Бұл сынақ емес. Есіңізде қалғанын жазуға тырысыңыз.
- **Бұл зерттеуде ең құнды нәрсе - сіздердің шынайылығыңыз.**

Күнделік 7 күндік мерзім аяқталғаннан кейін қайтарылуы керек. Зерттеуге қосқан баға жетпес үлесіңіз үшін тағы да алғыс білдіремін!

Appendix C

Invitation to the interviews and diary completion

Dear [Couples' names],

My name is Narkyz Yerlan and I am a senior Sociology student at Nazarbayev University. I would like to ask you to take part in my research project concerning contemporary marriage and the household roles division among newly married couples in Astana.

The research will be structured to get to know about your day-to-day life, and will be divided into three sections, all of which are voluntary:

1. Individual interviews (25-30 minutes each): First, I will individually interview each of you in a one-on-one and confidential interview. It is an opportunity to discuss your own idea of your family life and marriage in a confidential atmosphere.
2. Joint interview(30-40 minutes): This will be followed by a joint interview where I will sit with both of you and talk about the way you work and make decisions as a couple.
3. 7-Day Diary Task (5-10 minutes a day): Lastly, you will be requested to keep a basic simple diary during a week, listing your daily activities at home so that I can get to know about your routine.

The interviews may take place in a comfortable and personal place within the university or through a safe video call(Google Meeting). The diary would be filled in on paper or digitally depending on your choice.

Participation is only allowed to couples whose partners are between 21 and 30 years, and married for less than 3 years. Participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw from any part of the study at any time without any negative consequences. All your information will be kept confidential. If you are willing to participate or would like to learn more, please reply to this email. We can schedule the first interviews at your convenience. Thank you for considering this invitation. Your insights would be incredibly valuable to this research.

Best regards, Narkyz