

# TRANSNATIONALIZATION OF TURKISH TELEVISION SERIES

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EDITORS

Özlem ARDA, Pınar ASLAN, Constanza MUJICA





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## PREFACE

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Television series are undoubtedly an audio-visual production space that people in every country are eagerly following. Television series are known to have an impact in the public sphere. These effects are discussed in various topics. Another feature of television series, which can be examined in many dimensions in public life, is that productions are demanded not only nationally but also in the international arena.

Television series produced in Turkey are in demand worldwide and this issue is worth examining from a scientific point of view. Examining this issue as an export element is another research title. In this context, this book offers an idea of the domain, reception status and acceptance of international turkish television series in various countries.

As a foresight; television will have quite a series as well; perhaps it will change in terms of production techniques, but it will continue to be popular as a production type.

This book aims to contribute the field that needs to be discussed at all points in media scope and we hope to light the fuse for the international academic community.

**Prof. Dr. Ergün YOLCU**

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## INTRODUCTION

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Turkish television series have recently become a great phenomenon: With the rise of their popularity as of the 2010s, they have been among the most viewed programmes in many of the countries they are exported to breaking viewership records. Meanwhile, for many people, they have become a direct and “live” representation of Turkey and this turned the series into one of the prominent components of global presence and soft power for Turkey. This doubtlessly creates a snowball effect that needs to be studied within the political, economic, cultural and social contexts. This is the main idea that led to the publication of “*TRANSNATIONALIZATION OF TURKISH TELEVISION SERIES*”.

Turkey has now the second place in global television series sales. Turkish television series have been named as soap operas, telenovelas, dramas, or simply *las turcas* in many countries. However, in the meantime, more people have started to call them *Turkish dizis* since it is becoming a brand by itself with its duration, production techniques, scenarios, and music. *Turkish dizis* have become a brand new (and a habitually well-known) category that does not fit into the existing ones and this edited book aims to understand how this happened and where it is possibly going.

This book has eight chapters. In the first one, in “Will It Travel? The Local Vs. Global Tug-Of-War For Telenovela And Turkish Dizi Producers”, Carolina Acosta-Alzuru brings a wholistic perspective to the telenovela and dizi industry including national audiences and contexts, the global market trends, the perennial tension between prioritizing the domestic or the international market, and other factors that influence the writing, casting and production processes. With field research and in-depth analysis of interviews, this study gives a crucial insight regarding the concept of telenovela and dizis.

The second chapter explains the case of Turkish television series in Chile. In the chapter titled “Digital Transformations and The Impact of Turkish Telenovelas in Chile: Back To Melodrama”, Lorena Antezana Barrios, Pablo Andrada, and Constanza Mujica look into why Turkish television series have been so successful in Chile indicating the need to empower local characteristics to generate the global recognition of a Chilean model of television production.

Another country that can cited as an example of the areas where Turkish series have been surprisingly popular is India. Sushmita Pandit, in the chapter titled Turkish Television Series in India: Tracing the Alternative Circuits of Transnational Media Flow, aims to understand in what way Turkish television series can be read as an illustrative instance of understanding transnational media flow through digital alternative channels in a neoliberal, developing country like India.

Next chapter is about the Turkish series in Cuba. Cuba is quite an interesting case since Turkish television series are not broadcast on television. The popularity of *las turcas* comes thanks to the weekly package system created by Cubans, el paquete. In the chapter titled “The

## INTRODUCTION

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consumption of Turkish TV series in Cuba: A Study on the distribution, access, and effects of Popular Culture”, Nadia Herrada Hidalgo, Pınar Aslan and Laura Elena Almora aim to discover how the weekly package system works and how it helps the circulation of Turkish television series. Additionally, they aim to explore the distribution, access and consumption strategies of Turkish TV series in Cuba.

The fifth chapter aims to explain the current situation of Turkish television series in Greece. Greece may be considered an example of the effect of Turkish television series in Turkey’s neighbours who share a certain physical and cultural proximity with Turkey. In the chapter titled “‘They’re Not That Much Different After All...’ The Reception of Turkish Soap-Operas by Women in Greece: Between Otherness and Proximity”, Dimitra Laurence Larochelle aims to present the results of her empirical research concerning the representations of Turkish culture projected by Turkish television soap operas and their reception by Greeks.

Next chapter is not country-based, it is a study on one of Turkish series that have succeeded in becoming a sensation in many countries with a nomination of 46th International Emmy Awards in the category of telenovelas: *Istanbullu Gelin*. In “Cultural Codes Creating A Universal Context and Reception of The Audience: The Case Study of *Istanbullu Gelin*”, Özlem Çağlan Bilsel and Özlem Arda analyze cultural codes of the television series and how they contribute to the creation of a universal context with a research on *Istanbullu Gelin*.

Next chapter is titled “Digital Transformation: Turkish Telenovelas on Peruvian Television”. Giuliana Cassano Iturri explains the current situation of Turkish television series in Peru with the idea that Turkish melodramas participate in Latin American melodrama’s cultural and symbolic field associated with shared identity matrices - urban and rural, tradition and modernity. Findings of this research show that Turkey’s melodramas have displaced the Brazilian, Colombian and American industry -among others- as a source of foreign titles in Peruvian television.

Last but not the least, Özgü Yolcu focuses on the digital platforms and Turkish television series. In the chapter titled “Youtube as A New Broadcasting Medium For Turkish Television Series: The Case Study of *Magnificent Century*”, Yolcu conducts research on another sensational Turkish series, *Magnificent Century*, with the main aim to determine the importance of YouTube and the possibilities it offers in terms of showing Turkish dramas. The chapter explains how dizi producers as content generators have also become broadcasters and how they have adapted to this new process.

As the editors, we hope you enjoy reading the latest research on Turkish TV series, Turkish dizis, and the book triggers more research on Turkish TV Series.



# CHAPTER 1

## WILL IT TRAVEL? THE LOCAL VS. GLOBAL TUG-OF-WAR FOR TELENOVELA AND TURKISH DIZI PRODUCERS

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### ABSTRACT

Dramatic serialized television content currently enjoys a dominant position in the television and OTT global market. Simultaneously, production and consumption are changing due to digital technologies. In this environment, long-established telenovela production powerhouses—Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and U.S. Telemundo—face new opportunities and threats that complicate some of the differences between their local and global audiences. In addition, new non-Latino-American players, such as Turkey, have been displacing telenovela producers in several markets, including on their own turf. Turkish dramas—dizis—have made a global footprint. Annual revenue from overseas sales of Turkish TV shows exceeded the \$300 million mark in 2017, giving Turkey a 25% share of the international market for television fiction. Turkey and the major telenovela producers mentioned above are undergoing political and economic changes that impact their television sectors, the stories they tell, and their production conditions. As production decision makers for both telenovelas and dizis factor in both their national audiences and contexts and the global market trends, the perennial tension between prioritizing the domestic or the international market has become even more critical. Underpinned by how they rank local ratings versus global sales, these tensions influence the writing, casting and production processes. In this chapter, I examine the tensions between local and global markets for the telenovelas produced for Telemundo and Univision—which are inextricably linked to Mexico’s telenovela production and consumption—and for Turkish dizis, and how these impact their production.

**Keywords:** Telenovelas, dizis, Turkish dramas, production, distribution

## INTRODUCTION

Dramatic serialized television content currently enjoys a dominant position in the television and OTT global market (Roxborough, 2018). Simultaneously, production, and consumption are changing due to digital technologies (Farveen, 2019; Laporte, 2016). In this environment, long-established *telenovela* production powerhouses—Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and U.S. Telemundo<sup>1</sup>—face new opportunities and threats that complicate some of the differences between their local and global audiences. In addition, new non-Latino-American players, such as Turkey, have been displacing *telenovela* producers in several markets, including on their own turf (Bowen-Tombari, 2018). Turkish dramas—*dizis*—have made a global footprint. Annual revenue from overseas sales of Turkish TV shows surpassed \$350 million in October 2016 (Vivarelli, 2017), and continued to exceed the \$300 million mark in 2017, giving Turkey a 25% share of the international market for television fiction (“Turkish TV series, productions showcased at Cannes series festival,” 2018).

Turkey and the major *telenovela* producers mentioned above are undergoing political and economic changes that impact their television sectors, the stories they tell, and their production conditions. In addition, changes at the helm of key broadcasting, production and distribution companies also have consequences on the sector as a whole (“Patricio Wills Joins Televisa to Replace Rosy Ocampo,” 2018; Ravindran, 2018; Tan, 2019).

As production decision makers for *telenovelas* and *dizis* factor in both their national audiences and contexts and the global market trends, the perennial tension between whether to prioritize the domestic or the international market has become even more critical. Underpinned by how they rank local ratings versus global sales, these tensions influence the writing, casting and production processes.

In this chapter, I examine the tensions between local and global markets for the *telenovelas* produced for Telemundo and Univision—which are inextricably linked to Mexico’s *telenovela* production and consumption—and for Turkish *dizis*, and how these impact their production.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Telenovelas* and “Turkish *Telenovelas*”**

*Telenovelas* and *dizis* are serialized genres marked by the paradox of being simultaneously successful and disdained. Both are melodramatic in their essence and dramatic structure;

---

1 Telemundo’s main competitor, Univision, is not included in this list because it does not produce the *telenovelas* it broadcasts.

2 Due to this chapter’s length restrictions, Brazil and Colombia—also strong *telenovela* producers—are not included.

hence, emotions are underscored and accentuated as they become the main ingredient in the spectacle that these shows provide, which almost always include a strong love story. *Telenovelas* and *dizis* own the primetime of the countries that produce them, and have colonized important slots in the programming grids of many nations around the world (Vassallo de Lopes & Orozco Gómez, 2017; Vivarelli, 2017).

Their stories can be original, or they can be adapted from, or straightforward remakes of, other *telenovelas* and *dizis*, films or books. *Telenovelas* and *dizis* are regulated, first by the regulatory bodies of their countries of origin, and later by similar institutions in the countries that buy and broadcast them. These regulations determine what the audience will and will not watch in these shows.

*Telenovelas* are, generally, less restricted regarding political content—both overt and understated—while *dizis* are devoid of overt political content. In the *dizi* sector there is a much stronger and clear sense that they have to play within the general political climate created by the ruling party, AKP.<sup>3</sup> It is also worth noting that Turkey’s Radio and Television Supreme Council—RTÜK—has strict rules that prohibit steamy love scenes and the showing of a lot of skin. These rules are not nearly as stringent in *telenovela* producing countries. Hence, the absence of these kinds of scenes is one of the first distinctions that the audience notices between *dizis* and *telenovelas*.

But there are other important differences. The most conspicuous one is the contrast between their broadcast schedules: *telenovelas* air daily, while *dizis* are broadcast weekly. Therefore, *telenovela* episodes are written, produced and edited for one-hour slots (including commercials). Their net duration is 40-45 minutes. *Dizi* episodes are much longer: 140-165 minutes (without commercials, which means that their actual air time is three hours or more). This length has consequences for *dizi*’s storytelling since the show must grab the audience’s attention for a long time and keep it hooked for one whole week until the next installment. As the CEO of an important Turkish production company explained, the plot might take the audience through several genres:

In some Turkish content you don’t have a genre. Since it’s over two hours long, you may start with a romantic comedy, then in the middle of it, it’s a drama, then it’s a love story, then sometimes it ends like a thriller (Çatay, 2016).

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3 An illustrative example is that almost all networks broadcast regularly a *dizi* set in the military whose plots are in line with the government’s discourse. Also, the official network TRT broadcasts historical *dizis* that “reflect the political elite’s populist-nationalism and are in line with the AKP’s (Justice and Development Party) political discourse” (Çevik, 2019).

The story's pace is also different from that of *telenovelas*:

Because *dizis* are shot in natural settings and because dialogues are performed almost in real time, *dizis* are “naturally slow”. The musical, textual and visual diversity is richer than the soap and the telenovela, which also have a slow narrative flow (Öztürkmen, 2018, p. 7).

For *telenovela* watchers, *dizis* may seem slow at first. At the same time, *telenovela* audiences end up with the feeling that “a lot happened.” For Öztürkmen (2018) the number of locations presented in these shows is a factor that influences this perception:

Structurally speaking, *dizis* offer easily comprehensible narratives in their naturally communicated slowness in a wide variety of settings. The large range of locations raises curiosity as each place becomes a puzzle for the local audience, and for the foreign viewers, an eye on places where they do not have the opportunity to travel (p. 7).

I believe that another reason for this perception is that the level of drama of Turkish *dizis* is noticeably higher than that of *telenovelas* (Panjeta, 2014). The intense dramatic crescendos are accentuated with the use of slow motion and of the music score, which is often composed for each specific *dizi*.<sup>4</sup> Since the audience's engagement with the story must stay strong for a whole week until the next installment, the end of each episode has to be particularly compelling (and followed by carefully edited advances of the next one that are broadcast throughout the week). As a genre, *dizis* are much closer to Greek tragedy than *telenovelas*. Hence, the happy ending is not guaranteed in *dizis*, as it used to be in *telenovelas*.<sup>5</sup> This is another way in which the dramatic intensity of *dizis* surpasses that of *telenovelas* because the level of uncertainty ingrained in the stories is higher.

While most *telenovelas* are still broadcast continuously from beginning to end,<sup>6</sup> the *dizi* sector works on a season basis. *Dizis* are broadcast from mid-September to the end of May. In June, July and August broadcasters show “summer *dizis*”, which are lighter and more on the romantic comedy side,<sup>7</sup> and reruns.

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4 See for example in iTunes, the music of Toygar Işıklı (Işıklı, 2019).

5 The happy ending is still prevalent in telenovelas. But as telenovelas evolve and adapt to their audience's increased exposure to other genres, we are seeing more variations of the traditional happy ending.

6 This is also changing, particularly for shorter, more expensive shows, that are labeled as “series” by Univision and “super series” by Telemundo. These products may have seasons, but their broadcast schedule is not fixed by a season system, like it happens in Turkey.

7 Successful summer *dizis* are often tested on the regular season. Many of them fail, but sometimes there is one that survives. The most recent example is *Erkenci Kuş* (Early Bird), which was broadcast on Tuesdays during the summer of 2018, moved to Saturdays during the regular season and returned to Tuesdays in the summer 2019, after a two-week break.

Given the business and production models of the most important *telenovela* producers these days, the number of episodes of a *telenovela* is pre-determined. *Dizis*, by contrast, must first survive in the extremely competitive Turkish market. Hence, the total number of episodes is, usually, not known *a priori*.

Finally, regarding production values, those of *dizis* are generally higher than those of *telenovelas*. This is not only evident on the screen but also in the everyday production routine, which can be quite brutal in Turkey (Konuslu, 2012).<sup>8</sup>

In Latin America (the birthplace of *telenovelas*), Spain and other *telenovela* consuming countries, *dizis* are often called “Turkish *telenovelas*,” which is also the term of choice of entertainment media outlets (Degorgue Alegre, 2019; “Fatmagül’, la novela que rompió récords, regresa a Nova,” 2019). Even the version in Spanish of the official Turkish outlet TRT, uses the term (“Las 10 telenovelas turcas más vistas del mundo,” 2018). But Panjeta argues that these are different genres:

Determining factor that separates the Turkish series out of telenovelas is the vitality of their stories and the manner of technical realization. Characters are not set or preset, but evolving, just as in the works of classical literature. [...] Specifically, in the Turkish series, compared to soap operas or telenovelas, there is an organic compound of everyday life and tragedy elements (Panjeta, 2014, pp. 161-162).

I agree that there are key differences between the two genres, but I disagree with the implication that *telenovela* stories are less vital and lack “an organic compound of everyday life and tragedy.” It is too broad of a generalization of a genre whose plots range from traditional “Cinderella” stories to social and political critique (Acosta-Alzuru, 2011, 2013, 2017; La Pastina, 2004; La Pastina & Joyce, 2014; Porto, 2005). It would also be a mistake to assume that all *dizis* are similar. *Dizis* do hold the advantage regarding production values, but, *telenovela* producers are trying to close the gap.

To be sure, *dizis* and *telenovelas* are not the same, but they are closely related. They are successful serialized melodramatic genres trying to redefine themselves so as to maintain their success and, simultaneously, shake off the stigmas they carry.

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8 I have observed production in Caracas, Miami and Istanbul. The level of detail in production is much higher in Turkey (more camera shots per scene, more complex locations, etc.). The Turkish work longer days and more days per week.

## Theory: The Cultural and Political Economic Imperatives of Media Flow

Theories of cultural imperialism that involve one-way flow of communication from the West to the rest (and from North to South), and their ensuing hegemony (Mattelart, 1979; Schiller, 1976) have been challenged for quite some time. Ang (1985), and Katz and Liebes (1987) underscored the importance of being aware of the audience's interpretative differences. Later Straubhaar (1991) suggested that audiences prefer content that is produced in their own local or national context. This cultural proximity theory has been further developed. For instance, it states that if a specific genre of television content was not produced in a particular country, viewers will choose shows from similar and/or close cultures, countries and languages (Straubhaar, 2007). Additionally, La Pastina and Straubhaar (2005) refined the concept by presenting cultural proximity as a complex interaction between texts and audiences whose members' identities are not unidimensional:

We argue that audience preferences are indeed formed within the overall trend toward cultural proximity within both national and cultural-linguistic boundaries. However, as Iwabuchi (2002) points out, cultural proximity cannot be seen as an essential quality of culture or audience orientation, but rather a shifting phenomenon in dialectical relation to other cultural forces (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005, p. 272).

These authors underscore the importance of ethnicity, gender, religion, diasporic background and genre. The latter is particularly important as we try to understand the global appeal of melodramatic genres, like *telenovelas* and *dizis* because:

Melodrama builds on underlying oral structures, formulas and archetypes that can be shared by cultures. The underlying structure of melodrama has offshoots in almost all parts of the world, so melodrama can reach past cultural differences. Many, if not most, cultures seem to have experienced some form of serial storytelling rather like melodrama even before television became available to them (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005, p. 275).

Notwithstanding the contribution of cultural proximity, some scholars have argued that the theory is insufficient to explain media flows and that political economy imperatives must be included in the analysis equation. For example, in her examination of the global success of Colombian *telenovela* "*Yo soy Betty, la fea*," Jade Miller (2010) underscores the "cross-ownership structure of and multinational flows that mark the telenovela industry" and argues that "telenovelas can best be understood as localizable, yet universally appealing cultural products traversing global networks of capitalist cultural concerns" (p. 198). For her part, Bilge Yesil (2015) argues that the transnational flow of Turkish *dizis* "is a by-product of those

political economic factors in the mid–late 2000s that increased the drama output in Turkey and created a favourable environment for its distribution” (p. 46). She points to the mid-late 2000s when, due to financial issues, the Turkish film and theatre talent migrated to television and their know-how and expertise was utilized by commercial broadcasters. At that time, the advertising market expanded and the demand for television content by broadcasters increased sharply. Many new production companies were created and some film production companies also entered the television sector. At the same time, the government saw (and sees) these dramas as potential soft power vehicles; therefore, it gives producers and distributors financial assistance to attend trade shows, and has awards for actors and producers who are deemed to play a role in promoting Turkey.

Studying the consumption of *dizis* by Iranians who reside in Vienna, Deniz Özalpman (2017) confirms Yesil’s emphasis on political economic factors over cultural proximity and adds that the latter does not take into consideration “the series of opportunities arising from regional conjuncture as the war in Syria and political turmoil in Egypt and Lebanon; countries who were traditionally producing TV dramas in the Arab/Muslim world before the Turkish drama expansion and/or the economic crisis in Greece” (p. 27).

Looking at the flow of *dizis* from the *telenovela* side, some distributors argued that as *telenovela* producers placed an emphasis on *narconovelas*,<sup>9</sup> Turkish *dizis* fulfilled the audience’s craving for more traditional love stories (Santana, 2018; Villanueva, 2018). This is an oversimplification of the *dizi* phenomenon that assumes that all *dizis* are like *telenovelas rosa*.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the previous scholarly rationales also developed as counter arguments to the consideration of globalization as the theoretical umbrella that explains the characteristics of the products that flow. Focusing on the transnationalization of the *telenovela* industry, Daniel Mato (2005) tried to articulate both cultural and economic analysis as he argued that both the “homogenizing” and “deterritorialized” features assumed to be hallmarks of globalization were not actually present in the *telenovela* sector. Mato focused on the rise of Miami as the point of reference, and important location of choice, for the transnationalization of the *telenovela* industry (2002).

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9 Narconovelas’ plots are set within the drug trade (and sometimes also immigration) larger context. Mafia-like behavior and violence are part and parcel of them.

10 The first two *dizis* that were widely successful in Latin America were *Binbir Gece* (One thousand and one nights) and *Fatmagül’ün suçu ne?* (What’s Fatmagül’s fault?). Because these are slower *dizis* with strong, uphill star-crossed love stories, there was the general sense that *dizis* were like traditional *telenovelas rosa*.

For his part, Juan Piñón (2014) underscored a later development—the emergence of a *telenovela* production axis comprised by Miami, Mexico and Bogotá— and put forward the term “reglobalization:”

Reglobalization is a process through which Latinidad is re-crafted for regional/global consumption through notions of traveling narratives, multinational settings, multicultural castings, and transnational co-production agreements in which local entities produce a hybrid version of the region that includes a commodified production of a hemispheric Latinidad for global consumption (p. 655).

Piñón’s assertion of the existence of a Latinidad constructed for regional and global consumption points to the area of representation—in the cultural studies sense, of creation of meaning through language—and, in particular, to representations that are easily consumed beyond their local origin.

This notion has a counterpart in the *dizi* camp. Marwan M. Kraidy and Omar Al-Ghazzi (2013) set out to answer the question of why Turkish dramas were so popular with Arab audiences, when Arab cultural production was undergoing an “unprecedented period of vibrancy” (p. 17) They concluded that some *dizis* “conjure up an accessible modernity” while others “enact a counter-hegemonic narrative that puts Middle Easterners in the role of heroes” (p. 18). Kraidy and Al Ghazzi call this “Neo-Ottoman Cool,” which is “grounded in a Turkish modernity that has been attractive to Arabs” (p. 26), one that is “selectively both Western and Islamic” (p. 26).

Neo-Ottoman cool, of course, does not explain the popularity of *dizis* in non-Arab countries. Other factors already mentioned in cultural proximity theories and political economy imperatives play a role. But for Latin Americans, in particular, Turkish *dizis* bring together many of the codes of a genre they already know well, the similarity of people’s phenotypes and of some key cultural cues—like the presence of strong mothers in a patriarchal society—with the exoticism of new landscapes and varying cultural mores, all wrapped in high production values. This is a different “Neo-Ottoman cool,” one that has proven to be highly attractive to Latin Americans.

Both Latinidad and Neo-Ottoman Cool point to representations that are appealing to non-domestic audiences. These representations are the end results of writing and production decisions. How are these impacted by the inevitable differences and ensuing tensions between the domestic and global markets for *telenovelas* and *dizis*?

## AIM AND METHODOLOGY

There is an undeniable economic element driving television production. But production “cannot be reduced to a question of ‘economics’ alone” because production processes are “assemblages of meaningful practices” (du Gay, 1997, p. 7). In other words, media industries produce content and, in doing so, they constitute communities with their own ways of seeing, and their own processes, rituals and routines (Mayer, 2013). These production cultures warrant examination (Caldwell, 2008). This paper delves in the area in which the production cultures of *telenovelas* and *dizis* intersect with their output and global distribution.

The study is based on in-depth, semi-structured interviews and observations in Miami and Istanbul during several time periods since October 2015. The observations were conducted on production sets in both cities. The study also includes interviews and observations at two of the world’s largest television content trade shows: MIPCOM Cannes 2018 and NATPE Miami 2019. Throughout the years included in this study, interviews were conducted with *telenovela* and *dizi* producers, distributors, writers, directors and actors. When necessary, interviews in Istanbul were conducted with the help of an interpreter.

## FINDINGS

### From Idea to Screen: Production and Business Models

In the *telenovela* world projects usually start with a writer submitting a story idea that goes through a multistep approval process. In that process the writer eventually submits “the bible,” which consists of an extended synopsis, characters’ profiles, the “route map” (what will happen and when throughout the story) and the first three episodes. Once the story receives the final approval, the *telenovela* goes into the pre-production and production stages (Farías, 2018). Increasingly, we also see cases in which writers are assigned a specific task: an adaptation of an older *telenovela*, book or film, or the next season of a successful show. Once the decision has been made and the writer selected, then the process is the one briefly described above (Santana, 2018; Wills, 2018).

In the last ten years, the business and production models of *telenovelas* have changed in important ways. For the most part, gone are the days in which *telenovelas* were produced almost at the same time as they appeared on the air, and when writers and producers considered the audience’s reactions as they worked on the story. Today, production is at least 40 episodes ahead from air time. Often the whole *telenovela* has been produced before it goes on the

air. This means that when the show is broadcast, there are no possible changes, no steering of the wheel, no wiggle room. If the *telenovela* fails, (and if there is a substitute *telenovela* available), the broadcaster can only “demote” the product by moving it to a less important time slot in the programming grid. As a Telemundo executive told me, “we broadcast the first episode with a prayer that all goes well” (Farías, 2018). Because of this, the writing process is heavily checked throughout. Episodes are reviewed by teams designed for this task, and writers receive continuous feedback. This is an attempt to immunize the show from failure, given the inflexibility that the distance between shooting and broadcast time brings to the product. Paradoxically, it is that same distance which makes this checking process possible, a process which in the previous production model had been significantly less thorough.

Also gone are the days in which the ratio of studio to locations in *telenovelas* was about 70-30%. Today *telenovelas* strive to shoot almost everything on location. This, of course, has raised their budgets significantly, which, in turn, has required not only new financial schemes to fund the necessary investment, but also a revised business model. The project’s capital structure is now defined in advance; therefore, the budget is also set in advance (Santana, 2018; Wills, 2018). This means that the number of episodes is also decided ahead of time; hence, that number is now independent of the show’s performance. The *telenovela*’s time slot is often predetermined too, which influences both writing and production.<sup>11</sup>

This new business model for *telenovelas*, in which many decisions are made in advance, is more efficient in financial terms and also makes possible a more efficient production process. Nonetheless, actors, directors, production and technical crews still work long days.

Miami, Mexico and Bogotá still configure an important production axis (Piñón, 2014), with Miami and Mexico being the two main decision loci. This is due to the demographics of Latinos in the United States: more than 60% are of Mexican origin (López, Bialik, & Radford, 2018; Lopez, Gonzalez-Barrera, & Cuddington, 2013). For Telemundo and Univision, catering to Hispanics of Mexican origin is crucial to winning the ratings war. This is the main reason behind the longstanding, albeit not always smooth, close relationship between Mexico’s Televisa and Univision. It is also a key factor in the decision making process at Telemundo (Farías, 2018; Santana, 2018) and the guidelines its writers must follow (Párraga, 2016; Stopello, 2016; Zelkowicz, 2016). *Telenovelas* may be written by non-Mexican writers, but the language is then thoroughly Mexicanized (Padrón, 2018; Párraga, 2016; Stopello,

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11 For example: “The 10 p.m. telenovela needs a lot of incidental music and a faster pace to keep the audience awake and hooked” (Stopello, 2016).

2016; Zelkowicz, 2016).<sup>12</sup> Non-Mexican actors are expected to speak with a “neutral accent,” which is really a milder form of a Mexican accent (Ibarra, 2016; Manzo, 2016; Valdés, 2016).

Focusing now on Turkey, both the production and business models for *dizis* are significantly different than those of *telenovelas* because in Turkey there are more competing broadcasters and production companies than in any of the *telenovela* producing countries. In any given night, seven commercial networks (atv, Fox, Kanal D, Kanal 7, Kanal 8, Show, Star) and the government’s TRT1 may broadcast *dizis* on prime time.<sup>13</sup> At 8 p.m., most channels broadcast a 30-45-minute summary/reminder of the last episode (remember that *dizis* are broadcast weekly), followed by the *dizi*’s new installment. The episode is broadcast in large chunks of time—some are 45 minutes long—followed by a significant number of commercials, before going back to the episode. The broadcast ends around midnight.

The large majority of these *dizis* are not produced in-house by the broadcaster, but by a production company that has struck a deal with the broadcaster. The characteristics of these deals (investment scheme, revenue distribution) vary depending on several factors. A key one of these is the individual negotiation power of the production company and the broadcaster, which depends on the previous successes of each party and how prior projects in common worked out for them. Typically, the producer proposes the project to the broadcaster (plot and possible cast) and the negotiation begins. The broadcaster invests in the project, but the financial risk is heavier on the producer. Because of this, and because the Turkish local market is so competitive that a *dizi* that does not achieve good ratings in its first 4-6 episodes is cancelled, the strongest producers make the broadcaster sign agreements for a minimum number of episodes to protect themselves from heavy losses.<sup>14</sup> But not all producers have the power to establish this condition. Regarding revenues, usually producers receive money depending on the *dizi*’s rating points and shares. As for international sales, the typical deal is that the broadcaster and producer split these earnings equally.

Istanbul is the decision center of the *dizi* sector and its main production center. As already mentioned, the starting point of a *dizi* occurs in the production company, and it can vary from receiving a writer’s idea to making decisions in brainstorming sessions:

Sometimes my two writers just give me an idea, a paragraph. And if I like it, we start working on the script for about 18 months before we start producing (Alp, 2017).

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12 Not only the dialogues are Mexicanized, writers’ indications to actors, producers and directors are also rewritten using the vocabulary used in Mexico.

13 The number of *dizis* on a given night is between four and eight.

14 This number also varies, but is usually between 8 and 13 episodes.

I said that I wanted to make a revenge story and she said, “you mean like a Count of Montecristo?” and from that came *Ezel* (Çatay, 2016).

The production process is, at the most, only two installments ahead of the episode being broadcast. In most cases, production finishes shooting and editing an episode only 48-72 hours before it airs. This means that writing is only three or four episodes ahead; hence, audience-induced script modifications are common. This short distance between production and broadcast is one of the factors that makes the *dizi* production process so grueling. The high production values of these shows also add a layer of complexity. Almost all scenes are shot on location, which means that the weather is a factor. Unlike Miami, Istanbul is a city with four clearly defined seasons in which light changes dramatically, even in the same day. Istanbul is also a huge, complex metropolis of 20 million that sits on two continents. It boasts an incredible array of neighborhoods that provide an impressive diversity of possible sets, but it is also a city permanently hobbled by its traffic. “It isn’t easy. Imagine moving like 20 trucks through this city” (Çatay, 2016). Some *dizis* are shot in other Turkish cities and towns. These bring visual and plot variety, but require transportation and housing for the cast and crew away from Istanbul.

Production days are very long. Directors and main actors report working 16 hours a day, with the hardships that this amount of work bring to their private lives. For example, a director told me:

I work roughly 16 hours a day. I have a daughter who lives abroad and who I really didn’t see grow up because of my work. I keep a blanket and a set of spare clothes in my car because sometimes I can’t go home. (İşbilen, 2017).

Technical workers may labor almost non-stop for 18-20 hours a day, six days a week, in precarious conditions in which they may be exposed to the rigors of the weather for many hours and in which accidents may happen (Konuslu, 2012).<sup>15</sup> There have been bouts of uproar regarding labor conditions in the Turkish television sector (AFP, 2015). Producers are aware that the situation must be improved, but the length of each episode and the closeness to air time work against changing the way things are done.

Right now, I produce every week 165 minutes for each of two series. It’s like producing four movies every week. And I have to try to do it in five days (Alp, 2017).

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15 Accidents are, unfortunately, common. For example, in April, 2019 a technical worker lost his life after he fell from a ladder on the set of *Atiye*, produced by OG Media for Netflix (“Netflix’in yeni dizisi *Atiye*’nin setinde kaza! 1 çalışan hayatını kaybetti,” 2019).

So, producers place the final responsibility on the directors:

We have a rule that says no more than 12 hours. But, it's sometimes the call of the director. If he or she wants to finish that scene, they continue. If they're working on the first episodes or if it's a wedding scene, they push the limits sometimes (Çatay, 2016).

But directors know that within the current time and quality expectations, it is very difficult to reduce the number of hours on the set:

It's 150-165 minutes of material per week, so that's why we work long hours. Now there are new regulations, 12 hours maximum, so I'm trying to reduce daily timing. But because it's 150-165 minutes, there's not much I can do. We have to work a lot (Saral, 2016).

## The Domestic Market

The domestic markets of the big *telenovela* producers consist of two main competitors: Brazil (Rede Globo and Record TV), Mexico (Televisa and TV Azteca), Colombia (Caracol, RCN) and in the United States Spanish language television (Univision and Telemundo). Some markets are pretty static. In Brazil and Mexico, for example, the competition has rarely been even, with Rede Globo and Televisa dominating the audience metrics for decades. In the US, Univision led for years, but in 2011, Telemundo started getting closer and closer with the *narconovela* *La Reina del Sur* at 10 p.m. Since then, spearheaded by the success of many of their “super series” in the 10 p.m. slot, the battle between the two broadcasters for the primetime has been more interesting and its outcome less predictable (Smith & Garsd, 2016).

*Telenovelas* tend to establish themselves in a head-to-head, winning or losing position against their competitor and stay there most of the time until the competitor changes. At that point, the game begins again and the positions may change. A *telenovela*, then, may win or lose every night, and so will its broadcaster. Battles are defined by the time slot (See Table 1).

It is important to mention the concept of “key demographic” or “desired demographic,” which is the advertisers’ most coveted demographic group. Its definition varies according to genre, broadcaster and time of day, but it broadly draws a group that has spending power. For *telenovelas* broadcast in the United States, the key demographic is adults 18-49 years old. In contrast, Mexico’s advertisers and broadcasters pay attention to total figures over any specific demographic group. In the United States, it is rare to see a *telenovela* win in the key demographic and lose in total ratings.

Things are very different in Turkey—the local market of *dizis*. Since *dizis* air weekly, every night is a different race. (See Table 2).

Because there are many production companies, there are always new shows waiting in line for an available slot. Hence, broadcasters pull from the air rather quickly any *dizi* that does not garner the numbers they expect. For example, in the 2018-2019 season, commercial networks premiered 24 new *dizis* on primetime. Twelve of them were cancelled, and three ended on their first season due to severe erosion of their ratings.

Audience measurements in Turkey have a troubled history of corruption (Temel, 2016). People who work in the television sector repeatedly warn me that the ratings system has been intervened by the government for populist purposes. Still, ratings and shares are the currency of the commercial television system and these constitute the most important factor that determines the life expectancy of a *dizi*. Ratings impact the decision-making process of broadcasters and producers alike.

The equivalent to the “desired demographic” in Turkey is the AB group, the higher income stratum. It is not uncommon for a *dizi* to perform well in total audience measurements and not so well in the AB demographic. The inverse is also true.

When speaking of audience measurements in Turkey, it is important to pinpoint the year 2012, when the definition of the rating demographic groups changed. It now privileges income over education, which was not the case before. More importantly, the relative weight that each group had in the calculation of total ratings and shares changed. The weight of the lower socioeconomic level DE tripled. (See Table 3).

As we will see in the next sections, these changes had important implications not only for the domestic market of *dizis*, but also for their international sales.

## **International Sales**

There is a recurrent question I ask of all who I interview for my research about *telenovelas* and *dizis*:

Please rank the following three factors in order of importance for a successful *telenovela/dizi*: cast, story, production values.

There is consensus among the participants of my studies that the story is the most important element. So, what stories sell better in the international market?

For *telenovela* producer Patricio Wills,<sup>16</sup> the love story is essential: “we’ve failed when we’ve tried to reinvent the drama without a love story” (Wills, 2018). For writer and former Telemundo Senior Vice President for Scripted Development, Perla Farías (2014, 2018), if the characters are well constructed, and there is an emphasis on their actions and not on their cultural context, the *telenovela* will travel well. Marcello Coltro, Senior Vice President for Content & Creative for NBC Universal, argues that people “are looking for evasion, so realistic plots have a narrower audience” (2016), and *telenovela* writer Valentina Párraga states that “tears are universal, but humor is local” (2016); hence, an emphasis on drama is necessary for a *telenovela* to sell well abroad.

*Narconovelas* are an interesting case. For some years now, producers, writers and distributors have been telling me that the end of the *narconovela* period is here. But the fact is that *narconovelas* are still being produced and many are still very successful. Telemundo’s most recent huge hit, for example, is the second season of *La Reina del Sur*, even though it has been eight years since its first season (Clancy, 2019).

In Turkey, distributors agree that the *dizis* that travel better are “hardcore dramas, with love, tears and revenge” (Filizketin, 2017), and a moral or ethical issue at the core of the plot (Özkübat, 2017; Turna, 2017). And even though there are some notable exceptions to this tenet,<sup>17</sup> Turkish distributors believe that stories that are “too local” with “lots of ladies with headscarves” and heavily immersed in “tribe” culture and other cultural mores of the more traditional towns and cities in the interior of Turkey, do not sell well on the international market (Arat, 2018; Filizketin, 2018; Özkübat, 2017; Turna, 2017; Ziyatlar, 2018).

Importantly, both *telenovela* and dizi *distributors* must go through a negotiation process with producers to be given the shows they will represent on the international market. For *telenovela* distributors, the process is more or less centralized, since most broadcasters also produce and distribute. But Turkish content, as we have seen, is the output of a highly competitive and complex sector. Only atv and Kanal D distribute most (not all) their content (Akar, 2017; Turna, 2017). Other *dizis* are sold by companies specialized in distribution. Not surprisingly, the distribution sector is also competitive and complex. Content Acquisition Heads for these distributors have to choose products early in the game, sometimes even before

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16 A few days after our conversation, Wills was named President of Televisa Studios. He is the first non-Mexican to hold that position.

17 *Sıla*—a dizi produced in 2006—is the most notable exception, and is mentioned as such by most people I have talked to in the dizi sector.

the first episode has been broadcast. It is a difficult guessing game, followed by a negotiation with the producer (and sometimes also with the broadcaster) that can be quite involved.

*Telenovelas*, once the “world’s most watched television genre” (McAnany & La Pastina, 1994), have lost a lot of ground on the international market. More research is needed to determine why this has happened. The genre seems to have evolved too slowly to keep up with audiences around the world whose media consumption habits are changing due to digital media technologies that expose them to content from around the world. Newcomer countries to serialized melodrama production have also challenged *telenovelas*. Korean and Indian dramas have travelled some, but it is Turkish *dizis* which have posed the biggest challenge to the *telenovela* world, colonizing programming grids in many regions of the world, and planting themselves on Latin American television screens.

At first, some *telenovela* decision makers underestimated the challenge. In our conversations they would mention the short-lived fad of Korean drama in Latin America as a predictor of what would happen to *dizis*. They severely undercalculated the production output and the strength of the Turkish television sector. Today, *telenovela* executives no longer underestimate the Turkish phenomenon, but they are generally disinformed about the *dizi* sector’s business and production model, and how the Turkish domestic market works. The same happens in the *dizi* sector in which most people are not well versed on the *telenovela* industry.

*Dizis* started spreading first in some Arab countries and in the Middle East. This was followed by their spread in the Balkans and Asia, and now in Latin America. Distributors point out that there are areas of the world that they have not been able to penetrate. For instance, Western Europe. In addition, distributors keep monitoring the markets for signs of declining interest in *dizis* and keep pushing their products. Persistence is a lesson they have learned well:

For six years we went to NATPE in Miami and L.A. Screenings and we didn’t do a single deal. And, then, we did. And Latin America became our next booming market. Now we are attending trade shows in Africa knowing that, at the end of the day, it will pay off (Okan, 2018).

Latin American sales, then, became a life saver for *dizis* when other markets started slowing down or when international politics interfered, as was the case recently when the Dubai-based MBC Group—which was instrumental in the spread of Turkish *dizis* in the Arab region—stopped broadcasting Turkish content due to the political differences between Saudi Arabia and the Turkish government (“MBC stops all Turkish TV drama,” 2018). Turkish distributors are now reaping the benefits of the Latin American markets while they look ahead to Africa and take advantage of the boost the genre received when *Kara Sevda* won the

International Emmy for Best Telenovela in 2017, beating melodramas produced in Canada and in the country that has dominated this award: Brazil (“Turkish drama ‘Kara Sevda’ wins ‘Best Telenovela’ at International Emmy Awards,” 2017). Their strategy continues to be to place one product at a very low price and use its success as a spearhead to sell more content. The most recent example of this is Spain, where *Fatmagül’ün suçu ne?* started what now has all the characteristics of a boom (“Las telenovelas turcas que llegarán a España,” 2019).

Interestingly, *Fatmagül’ün suçu ne?* and other older *dizis* are, generally speaking, selling more easily than many of the products that succeeded them on the Turkish screens (Pérez, 2019; Turna, 2017). When asked about the cause of this, distributors point to the 2012 changes in the Turkish ratings system. They argue that the newly placed emphasis on the DE socioeconomic level exacerbated the differences between local and global consumers for *dizis* (Filizketin, 2017; Özkübat, 2017; Turna, 2017; Ziyatlar, 2016).

## **Tensions between the Domestic and Global Markets**

When examining these tensions, my starting point was to understand the relative weight that international sales have in the business and production models of both *telenovelas* and *dizis*. I also tried to understand the issue from the opposite perspective: how do their business and production models impinge on their respective domestic-global markets equations.

In the *telenovela* sector, an aspect that has changed dramatically is the importance given to the product’s international sales. The conventional wisdom used to be that it was risky to put the business of exporting ahead of the domestic market (Mato, 2005). Hence, international sales were long considered to be “the ‘gravy’ to the ‘main course’ of domestic earnings” (Miller, 2010, p. 201). This is not the case anymore. As production values and budgets go up, the need to partially finance the projects with global sales is now unavoidable:

Our business model is *sui generis* because our content production is very tied to the international market. We know we need new stories, daring stories, but also elevated production levels. We wouldn’t be able to produce what we produce without global sales (Santana, 2016).

Hence, *telenovela* producers consider international sales at every step of a project’s development. Given that the broadcast of a *telenovela* is now distanced from writing and production, writers and producers try to calibrate local and global markets throughout their work. It is not an easy nor a straightforward task, but the performance in the domestic market of the *telenovela* does not determine the shape—story, cast, locations and number of episodes—of the product that goes on sale on the international market.

The Turkish case is more complicated. Turkish *dizi* producers insist that they have in mind first and foremost the Turkish audience when they make production decisions:

No one, including this company, took those *dizis* to be successful in other countries. We did everything for the Turkish audience. We still do everything for the Turkish audience. Yes, we know about international sales and we care about them, they are profit. But, you have to create content for the Turkish audience because if it isn't successful here, it's going to be cancelled in 3-4 episodes and then, you don't have anything to sell anywhere (Çatay, 2016).

When I produce, I think about Turkey. If the Turks buy your content, other people will buy it also. I have to be successful first in my country, then I'll be successful in other countries (Alp, 2017).

Distributors acknowledge that for international sales it is essential for a *dizi* to have a minimum number of hours:

Producers first think of the Turkish audience because they need money from the broadcaster. And the broadcaster gives the money according to the ratings. To produce more than 13 episodes, you need good ratings. If you have less, the *dizi* is way too short to be sold abroad. Our international clients never buy less than 26 episodes (Turkish length) that are edited and segmented into approximately 85 one-hour episodes. But, in order to give them this number of episodes, you need continuity here in Turkey, and for continuity you need ratings. So, everything is affecting everything. But, first, you need ratings in Turkey (Filizketin, 2017).

However, distributors also state that things are rapidly changing and international sales *are* in the mind of producers, even if they do not admit it. Producers often consult with distributors about story and cast decisions with an eye on the international market:

The broadcast in Turkey cannot cover the cost of the series. This wasn't the case five years ago. Back then, none of the producers were thinking of the sales in the international market. And they were making their plans based on the payments received from the broadcasters. But now, all the broadcasters are constantly thinking of the international sales, and producers too. At the beginning of a project, they're asking us our opinions about the cast, for instance, whether it would work in the international market or not (Okan, 2016).

But, ratings and international sales do not always go hand in hand, and there are important examples of this both in the *telenovela* and *dizi* sector. For instance, in terms of local ratings, the most successful "super series" franchise for Telemundo is *El Señor de los Cielos*, written by Luis Zelkowicz. *El Señor* has aired for six seasons, always beating Univision by a large margin. Interestingly, it is not its author's best seller internationally. *Una Maid en Manhattan*, a romantic *telenovela* based on the film *A Maid in Manhattan*, which never won the ratings war in its time slot, has sold in many more markets than *El Señor* (Fariás, 2018; Zelkowicz, 2016).

In Turkey, *Kara Para Aşk*, did not garner the ratings that both the broadcaster and producer were expecting. The *dizi* had a short, 13-episode, first season with decent ratings ranging from 5 to 7 points. However, in the second season the ratings dropped dramatically to two points. However, international sales had already started and the *dizi* was selling well. Hence, even with these audience numbers, production and broadcast in Turkey continued for the full second season. In the end, there were 54 episodes (Turkish length) to sell and, while the final episode's rating in Turkey was a meager 2.75 points, in 2016 *Kara Para Aşk* became the *dizi* which was sold to most countries ever (Okan, 2016).

The appearance and increasing prevalence of OTT platforms like Netflix and Hulu has also changed the equation of the relative importance between the domestic and global markets. For all purposes, placing the product on these platforms is considered an international sale. For some decision makers those platforms *are* now the international market: "Every time I'm considering a project, I ask myself 'would this work on Netflix?'" (Wills, 2018). So even though almost all *telenovelas* are designed for open television, VOD platforms are in the mind of decision makers (Fariás, 2018; Santana, 2018).

The same happens to Turkish producers. At the time of this writing, in addition to Netflix, there are two digital platforms in Turkey: BluTV and PuhuTV. Generally speaking, these platforms offer the *dizis* that are on the air and some older ones on an on-demand basis. But, some production companies have created *dizis* specifically for these platforms. These stories are not subjected to the strict content regulations of RTÜK; therefore, the stories are darker and the love scenes have some steam.<sup>18</sup> But these two platforms have not performed as expected financially, and the Turkish government has threatened to regulate their content also (Solaker, 2018). Therefore, Turkish producers are aiming to place their products on Netflix. More importantly, they want to produce *for* Netflix (Vivarelli, 2019b).

On December 2018, the first original Turkish series made for Netflix premiered. *Hakan: Muhafız (The Protector)*, produced by O3 Medya for Netflix, had a successful first season. The second season is already out and a third one has been commissioned. At least three other original Turkish series for Netflix are in production: *Ottoman Rising* (Weatherbee, 2018), *Atiye* (Vivarelli, 2019a) and *Aşk 101(Tan, 2019)*.

The casts of all of these are headed by actors who are well known abroad because of their work in *dizis*. These (and a few other) Turkish actors are quite famous in *dizi* buying countries, where their fans are organized in clubs and are very active on social media. Distributors advise

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18 Fi, Çi (2017-2018), Dip (2018) and Şahsiyet (2018) are three examples.

producers to include these actors in their productions as a way of boosting their chances in the competitive international arena (Filizketin, 2018; Okan, 2019; Özkübat, 2017). Turkish actors are aware of this. However, only a handful of them—the most famous ones—receive a percentage of the international sales of the *dizis* they have worked in. “I don’t get a single lira from that” was the sentence I heard from most of the Turkish actors I talked to.

Regarding the role that actors play in international sales, a paradox is brewing. While “big names” are still recommended to increase the chances of international sales, those names no longer guarantee ratings on the Turkish market as they used to.<sup>19</sup> Still, as was the case with *Kara Para Aşk*, if the producer and broadcaster trust that the *dizi* will sell well internationally, they might agree to continue the series for a number of episodes that will allow them to offer it abroad. A recent case that illustrates this is *Çarpışma*, a show with an impressive cast headed by one of the most famous Turkish actors—Kıvanç Tatlıtuğ, and a first episode ambitiously produced and directed, that included a terrorist attack in a stadium and a four-car collision. From the beginning, *Çarpışma*’s ratings were unimpressive and they continued to drop, even in the AB demographics. Nonetheless, 24 episodes were produced and broadcasted while it was pushed in the international market (“MADD’s ‘Crash’ Lands In Hungary,” 2019; Vanoli, 2019). In other words, *Çarpışma* ended up being produced for the international market. This may be a sign that a shift is brewing in the international sales-domestic market equation in Turkey.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

What works in my market? What travels well? Can the answers to these two queries be reconciled? These are the main questions on the minds of *telenovela* and *dizi* producers. As they try to answer them, they grapple with shifting definitions of the local. Univision is an interesting case because the *telenovelas* it broadcasts are made, first for the Mexican audience, and then for the US Spanish language audience. The *telenovela*’s checking process is done by Televisa with Mexico’s audience in mind. This used to work well, given the demographics of Latinos in the US. But that is not always the case. Hence, the assumption that a Mexican is a Mexican, even when leaving abroad, does not hold anymore for Univision and Televisa. Still, for these products the success in Mexico is paramount, often more important than their performance in Univision. In other words, Univision’s domestic market is, for all effects, an international sale for Mexico.

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19 Recent examples include: Mehmed (2018), starring Kenan İmirzalıođlu, which was cancelled after only six episodes and Vurgun (2019), with Erkan Petekkaya, which was also cancelled on the sixth episode.

Its competitor—Telemundo—does produce with the US Hispanic audience in mind first, but conceptualizes it almost as a country within the US, and that country is similar to Mexico. At the same time, Mexico is the most important international market for Telemundo, the one that it “can’t afford to lose” (Santana, 2018). Hence, the borders between Mexico and the US Spanish language audience are blurred for the two major *telenovela* broadcasters in the US and for their producers too. This means that as the makeup of the Latino population in the US changes and becomes more diverse regarding country of origin (Flores, 2017), the production decision process for Telemundo and those who produce for Univision will become increasingly complex, and co-productions that involve countries other than Mexico will be more and more frequent.

For the *dizi* sector, the local and the global are clearly delimited. The factor in common between them is the universal appetite for melodramatic serialized content. However, the current business and production models for *dizis* make international sales too dependent on the show’s domestic performance. This could be the main reason behind “Turkey’s successful sales of *dizis* in countries that are like Turkey, but not in countries that are different from Turkey, like those in Western Europe, for instance” (Turna, 2017).

The current business and production models for *dizis* could change if the Turkish economy continues its recent decline (“What can stop Turkey’s economy from unravelling?,” 2019). We are already seeing signs of this; for example, the above-mentioned case of *Çarpışma*. But we will see more. Due to Turkey’s deteriorating economy, advertising expenditures have dropped. This means that broadcasters have less money to invest in content. Therefore, producers are looking for new investment sources for their products. Some are associating with distributors, as is the case of the revival of *Behzat Ç* for Turkish platform BluTV, in which distributor InterMedya both co-produces and distributes worldwide (Franks, 2019). Other producers are associating with each other and creating their own distribution firms (“Medyapim and Ay Yapim Present New Turkish Distributor Madd Entertainment,” 2018). Some are establishing agreements, particularly with Latin American players. So far, these deals take the form of co-production using a Turkish script in a Latin American country (“Ay Yapim announced two coproductions in Latin America: with VIS and Mega,” 2019). But, according to the interviews I conducted in January 2019 at NATPE-Miami, there could also be agreements in which the story takes place in both Turkey and Latin America with Turkish and Latin American actors shooting scenes in Turkey and Latin American countries. Language is a factor, of course, since most Turkish actors do not speak Spanish and Latin American actors do not speak Turkish. In any case, these agreements not only help the *dizi* sector circumvent the local economic

conditions, but also point to Latin American producers' acknowledgment of the success of Turkish products, and to both *telenovela* and *dizi* producers' determination to take advantage of the common codes between the two genres and the shared meanings between Turkish and Latin American cultures. From a theoretical perspective, these agreements underscore that both the political economy of television and cultural proximity are factors in the way melodramas are engineered so they can travel.

*Telenovelas* and *dizis* evolve in mutual competition. Their producers are not simply glancing at each other anymore. Some are talking to each other as they produce under local conditions for increasingly sophisticated non-local audiences, trying to guess what the future will be for all television content. So maybe the question is not "will it travel?," but "who will it travel with?"

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## Tables and Figures

**Table 1.** Domestic Market USA Spanish language television primetime (Week of February 12, 2018)

A	B	C	D	E	F
<b>8:00 PM</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
1	Rico y Lázaro	Rico y Lázaro	Rico y Lázaro	Rico y Lázaro	Rico y Lázaro
2	José José				
<b>9:00 PM</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
1	Papá a toda madre	Papá a toda madre	Papá a toda madre	Papá a toda madre	Papá a toda madre
2	Al otro lado del muro	Al otro lado del muro	Al otro lado del muro	Al otro lado del muro	Al otro lado del muro
<b>10:00 PM</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
1	Enemigo Intimo	Enemigo Intimo	Enemigo Intimo	Enemigo Intimo	Enemigo Intimo
2	Por amar sin ley	Por amar sin ley	Por amar sin ley	Por amar sin ley	Por amar sin ley
<b>Legend:</b>	Telemundo				
	Univision				

**Table 2.** Domestic Market Turkey (Week of December 10, 2018)

Ratings	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	Çukur	Kadin	Dirilis Ertugrul	Bir Zamanlar Çukurova	Arka Sokaklar	İkizler Memo-Can	Savasci
2	Söz	Eşkya Dünyaya Hükümdar Olmaz	Sen Anlat Karadeniz	Avlu	Gülperi	Erkenci Kuş ep.	
3	Yasak Elma		Yaparsın Aşkim	Bizim Hikaye	Kızım		Elimi Bırakma
4			Cocuklar Duymasın	Çarpışma	Payitaht "Abdülhamid"		Bir Litre Gözyaş
5		Ufak Tefek Cinayetler			Şahin Tepesi	Kalk Gidelim	Ağlama Anne
6		Mehmetçik Kutlu Zafer	Jet Sosyete	Muhteşem İkili	Istanbul Gelin	Yaparsın Aşkim	
7	Ege'nin hamsisi			3 Te 3 Tarh			
<b>Legend:</b>	Star TV						
	Kanal D						
	ATV						
	Show TV						
	Fox TV						
	TRT1						
	Kanal 8						

**Note:** Slots in which the broadcaster did not air a dizi are shown without content. Kanal 7 is not included in the table.

Demographic Level	Relative Weight in Total (before 2012)	Relative Weight in Total (since 2012)
AB	21%	11%
C1C2	67%	53%
DE	12%	36%

## CHAPTER 2

# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND THE IMPACT OF TURKISH TELENVELAS IN CHILE: BACK TO MELODRAMA

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### ABSTRACT

In March 2014, Turkish melodramas took Chilean TV screens, and thereafter Latin American screens, by storm. Since then, Chilean television has incorporated Turkish productions in its usual programming. Ten titles were broadcast during the first two years. Between 2014 and 2018, 40 melodramas were aired, and for the last two years they have occupied more screen time than fictions from any other country, including Chile. What are the reasons for the success of Turkish dramas in the Chilean context? What are the main challenges that Chilean and Turkish productions have been facing since the eruption of Turkish telenovelas?

The methodology used in this research was that of a semi-structured interview which was conducted with 146 people in order to discover the reason for the appeal of Turkish telenovelas as compared with local melodramas that were broadcast at the same time. These interviews were used to build selection criteria for nine in-depth interviews.

The results indicate that Turkish telenovela succeeded in Chile for various reasons. First, these telenovela produced an identification by contrast or opposition in the viewers due to the fact that the recognition of a distinct other affirms and assures one's own experience. Second, the novelty of showing places, characters, and stories that have not been seen before that were produced by an industry unknown to Chileans, resulted in the return of more classic dramas and narratives as well as melodrama aesthetic to the television screen. Third, the type of audiences of these programs grew and diversified thereby influencing Chilean programming. The results presented above suggest that telenovela must begin to utilize local characteristics more frequently in order to generate conditions for the global recognition of a Chilean production model.

**Keywords:** Media industries, transformations, telenovelas, reception, melodrama

## INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in the 60s, the telenovela genre has been present in the regular programming of Chilean television. National productions shared this space with other Latin American productions, which varied according to the development and fluctuations of this industry in each of the countries that produces this genre –mainly Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico, Argentina and Colombia.

From the 80s until the 90s, national productions were the audiences' favorites, although they would share the screen with other telenovelas produced in Latin America. Even though they were from a different country, the reality shown in these foreign telenovelas felt quite close, both geographically and culturally, to that of Chilean viewers.

From 2000 onwards, there has been a reduction in television audiences. Since 2006, the Chilean chapters of the Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction (Obitel) Report have shown a steady decline in the Chilean channels' home ratings, reaching critical levels after 2016. This drop in the public's consumption caused, in turn, financial losses in almost the entire Chilean television system (including the public channel). Therefore, faced with a crisis, the channels turned to formats with cheaper production costs, such as reality shows or talk shows, and to outsourcing local fiction production to production companies and to looking for international fiction products in new markets.

It was in this context that, in March 2014, Chilean screens –and then, those of the rest of Latin America– were invaded by Turkish melodrama. The story has taken the contours of a legend: two Mega executives, at that time a channel with very poor audience levels, were waiting for a meeting in the 2013 MIPTV television content market, when they found themselves facing an almost empty stand in which a Turkish producer was offering the series *Las Mil y Una Noches*. Although there were no subtitles and they did not understand the language, they felt an emotional bond with what they were watching and were able to understand what was happening. They thought it could be an alternative for their channel's prime time because it was addressed to a “general, broad, mostly feminine audience” (Julio et al., 2015). The rest is well-known in the Chilean industry: Mega went from 4.7 rating points to 29, becoming the most relevant actor in the Chilean market, and the Turkish series, with an intense melodramatic component, became a success in almost all countries of Latin America.

Since then, Chilean television has incorporated other Turkish telenovelas into its regular programming, broadcasting 10 titles during the first two years. Between 2014 and 2018, 40 titles have been broadcast and in the last two years they have had more screen time than any

fiction of other origin, including Chile. Although their average household rating has dropped over the years (from 16.6 points to 7.7), it has not been due to the loss of popularity, but rather because of the increase in titles offered per year (from 6 in 2014 to 16 in 2018), and also because of a change in time slots (from primarily prime time to after lunch and evening) and an increase in channels (from two channels in 2014 to five in 2018) (Obitel, 2018).

The success of Turkish melodrama stresses the complex relationship between that which is foreign and that which is local; yet this time, it has been hard to explain the viewers' preference for a seemingly distant production, both geographically and culturally.

Due to the changes produced by advances in technology, the media has stopped offering uniform and massive content and has started to adapt to different segments of the population, customizing the contents. New communicative practices have allowed the coexistence of passive audiences, typical of the television era as a hegemonic medium, and communicating audiences that produce communications from their consumption, transforming themselves into consumers who produce, or prosumers. The prosumer's idea makes it possible to think and wish for a society in which people intervene in the production of the media contents. The passive consumer becomes a message creator, making the relationship between the media and audiences much more horizontal.

The prosumer is part of a convergent media ecosystem. Instead of grouping all the media in one device, technological development has created different artifacts that link to each other. According to Jenkins (2008), this convergence is part of a cultural process that alters the relationship between existing technologies, industries, markets, genres and audiences.

The media industry business model of calculating audiences through rating measurements, and then offering them to advertisers, is becoming increasingly obsolete. The culture of convergence entails a reconceptualization of the public's relationship with the media industry, so the latter should change its strategy from stickiness to propagability.

The stickiness strategy, that considers fixed recipients with unified experiences and pre-structured interactivity, must give way to propagation strategies, in which individuals navigate through the media in search of dispersed materials, as happens with YouTube, where we can find different experiences and open endings. Considering this, the classic sales teams of media industry marketing should give way to proselytizing consumers that reformulate their products (Jenkins, 2008).

Television seeks to adapt to this new media ecosystem by incorporating elements of interactivity, with the inclusion of hashtags or narratives in other formats, to their television (transmedia) products. For Orozco (2011) one of the keys in studies of audiences in network societies will be determining where the consumption ends and where the “communicants” production begins.

## **AIM AND METHODOLOGY**

In this work we ask ourselves: What are the reasons for the success of Turkish telenovelas in the Chilean context? And which main challenges have Turkish and Chilean productions faced after the Turkish eruption?

The epistemological basis of this research is found in the audience studies developed in Latin America since the 1990s, which link English cultural studies and critical theory (Focás, 2014). We understand that television reception is not only related to the viewers’ social class (Grossberg, 2009), their cultural resources or their gender and specific needs, but also to the contextual and political characteristics in which these processes occur (Antezana & Cabalin, 2016). In line with the above, we consider that viewers are part of interpretation communities (Varela, 1999), and characterized by multiple mediations (Orozco, 2003). Thus, we used a strategy that incorporated, at different levels, two of the epistemological bases of qualitative methodology: interpretivism and social constructivism (Schwandt, 2000).

The field work was organized in two phases. The first consisted in the development of a semi-structured, self-applied questionnaire (involving 146 people) that allowed us to perceive the characteristics of the consumption of Turkish telenovelas at the time of the research and the reasons for their attractiveness when compared with those of the national telenovelas that were broadcast in the same period. It also enabled us to draw up the criteria for selecting the people to be interviewed in the second stage, which considered: (1) life experience, with age ranges between 20 to 30 years; 31 to 50 years, and 51 to 65 years; (2) socioeconomic status, divided into three large groups: high, middle and low, and built according to the classification of the community in which they live, and (3) their occupation, also in three categories: student, dependent worker, and independent worker (housework). Thus, we conducted nine in-depth interviews with people who met these criteria.

The reception analysis that we developed is based on the recognition of “proximity” that these productions propose, understanding it as the relationship that brings together two subjects (or objects), and that implies a minimal differentiation between them, which

distinguishes it from pure and simple fusion. Intrinsically dynamic, proximity constantly oscillates between two opposite poles of a variable nature (close–far, familiar–foreign, imminent–remote, etc.). Working from this framework involves asking about the relationship between the media product and its recipients, from an appreciative dimension that makes it dependent on the sociocultural context in which it occurs, since what is close in one culture is not necessarily so in another (Fastrez & Meyer, 1999). Therefore, proximity would not be a fixed state but rather an intermediate position where a distance reduction movement is made (Antezana, 2018), which should be evidenced.

Thus, a good part of the studies regarding television consumption of foreign programming in local contexts suggest that audiences prefer to watch products whose origins they perceive to be culturally related (Straubhaar, 1991). However, cultural proximity as the main criterion of television consumption has been relativized by studies on the success of melodramatic fiction in diverse cultural contexts. Thus, the Latin American telenovela has been consumed in Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East since the 90s (Piñón & Rojas, 2011); Japanese and Korean melodramatic fiction is successful among the Latin American youth audience (Dettleff, 2018; Hartzell, 2019). These studies suggest that the recognition of the keys of a specific genre relativizes the relevance of language or customs similarities in a television product’s perceived proximity (Hartzell, 2019; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005).

## FINDINGS

Below are the main results obtained from the interviews contrasted with the survey data. According to the analysis, there are several factors that would explain the interest generated by Turkish telenovelas in Chilean television viewers, one of them being its novel character that would arouse curiosity about this new product.

In general, the people interviewed, and almost regardless of their age, already had a well-nourished previous repertoire of telenovelas, and were well acquainted with the particular features of foreign telenovelas that were being broadcast in Chile, namely, Venezuelan, Mexican, Brazilian, Argentinian and Colombian, but they had not yet seen a production that seemed so geographically distant, which made it attractive. They say:

*“I wanted to know the culture they showed, the landscapes, the architecture, all of it. From a cultural point of view, it is very attractive” (interviewee, female).*

This factor, together with the dissemination strategies of the first Turkish telenovela broadcast in Chile by MEGA, gave good results in terms of audience. The strategies used were:

(1) Self-promotion, making announcements before and after the broadcast of other telenovelas and throughout the day, involving the viewer through captivating questions such as “Would you sell your body to save your child?” or “What would you be willing to do to save your child?”.

(2) Broadcasting summaries of the week during the weekend.

(3) Scheduling its broadcast at nighttime.

In addition, they managed to increase interest in the telenovela through the use of the current media ecosystem (press and entertainment programs, comments on social networks, recommendations of other people), aspects recognized as part of a second-order television (López, 2014), a feature of current consumption and of digital transformations.

*[...] And out of curiosity too, because I wanted to know why so many people were watching Turkish telenovelas, because it's somehow weird" (interviewee, female).*

Once the initial curiosity to watch some episodes of the new Turkish telenovelas was satisfied, the viewers were able to recognize their distinctive features by relating them and contrasting them with other types of productions they knew. Thus, they perceive the Turkish telenovelas to be close to the Venezuelan ones (which are regarded as the classic ones) for three reasons: first, because women suffer throughout the television show to be rewarded at the end; second, they respond to patriarchal values and, third, their language is more neat, i.e., they do not use bad words or idioms (which might, in part, be due to the “neutral” translations used). Turkish telenovelas were regarded as being close to those from Brazil because of the perception that Turkish productions develop social themes, but they would be more distant from Chilean ones, considered to have less depth and to be closer to humor than to drama.

In this regard, viewers recognize the constant elements of the telenovela structure (presentation of the initial situation and the leading couple, a development of intrigue with conflicts and obstacles that must be overcome and a happy ending –generally happy– with a moral) and distinguish the typical aspects of Turkish productions. Thus, as we have already said, they value the combination between what is familiar and what is novel and strange. As a national media outlet acknowledges when referring to *Las mil y una noches*: “It is a very attractive story that shows us a context different from the Chilean. This is Turkish, but regardless of whether it shows us another country, it is very contemporary” (Duarte, *La Segunda*, 2014).

Regarding the duration of Turkish dramas, which could be too long for new generations of viewers who are used to shorter and more limited serial formats, our interviewees point

out that this is not an important factor. For many, it is better that way, since it allows them to become familiar with the characters and the complexities of the stories; they can also incorporate these new landscapes, rituals and traditions into their knowledge, and, if they are already “hooked” on the story, they can enjoy it for a longer time and integrate it into their daily routines and habits. This is the case as long as the telenovelas are agile and entertaining (which would be another characteristic that they recognize in Turkish productions), i.e., many things happen, different and surprising, that maintain interest and tension, and the stories and secondary characters have a good development in the intrigue.

*“The characteristic of this telenovela is that there are conflict and the conflicts are super short. A conflict appears and it ends, you know, it is resolved, then another appears, and it is resolved, there are constantly conflicts that are resolved” (interviewee).*

The viewers’ knowledge of the genre allows them to recognize that telenovelas tell stories related to the place of origin, therefore they broadcast customs, music, rituals, forms of relationship, typical concerns, from which they can learn. They can also get to know other geographies, landscapes, and natural features of a country of which many had no previous knowledge, and so the telenovela “is like reading a book”, as they say. All of this in an audiovisual format that they recognize as very good, with a “cinematic” aesthetic, which would account for a quality production (Antezana & Mateos-Pérez, 2017).

*“[...] The telenovela also transmits how the society is culturally, you know, how is the people’s idiosyncrasy, and it amazes me” (interviewee).*

This aspect is also ratified by their assessment of the characters, the performances, and their evolution and transformations throughout the story. Characters were deemed more complex and very well-built. The actors also display a type of beauty perceived as more exotic, which, while recognizing that they are surely based on stereotypes, allows the viewers to expand their own repertoires. Their performances would also be more exaggerated –as in theater– and they would be more expressive, facially and bodily, which the viewers value positively because this allows them to empathize more easily with their feelings, which is precisely one of the aspects that make these melodramatic stories attractive (Herlinghaus, 2002).

*“I liked the characters, I got involved in the story, let us say. It was like a super real thing. And I suffered with the things that happened” (interviewee).*

*“The outstanding performances and the actors and actresses’ expressiveness” (survey).*

At the content level, interviewees highlight three main aspects of these productions: drama, romance and traditional values. Regarding the first point, they indicate that Turkish telenovelas

address current issues and problems, such as drug and arms trafficking, power, corruption and socially sensitive issues such as abortion, discrimination, and rape, among others. This would make them “realistic” in their eyes. They also point out that drama is important because “it makes you feel and think”. A national newspaper recognized this stating that “the public values the multiple issues addressed. It is not only love, there is also an important historical component and very well-structured characters” (Obilinovic, La Tercera, 2015).

*“[...] Real problems, rape, abuse, police and legal corruption” (survey).*

Regarding romance, a traditional narrative (Herlinghaus, 2002), they recognize that telenovelas should be about love, that would be the genre’s core and what they are looking for in these stories. They appreciate a romanticism that they consider “pure” in these telenovelas, i.e., without sex and without nudity, which somehow gives them indications of being in front of a “healthier” society, “with more values”, something they are critical of in national and some foreign productions. This aspect –which could be attributed to older respondents– also appears as part of the answers of our younger respondents, who appreciate the contrast between these broadcasts and the more explicit ones, which they are more used to watching.

*“[...] A very romantic story, a traditional one [...]. If a telenovela is too explicit it loses romanticism, you see” (interviewee).*

As for traditional values, participants identify the family as a primary institution, a support system, children as a central aspect of life, and respect and tradition as ways to protect these spaces. These features are part of the Chilean social imaginary built in the post-dictatorship and one of the pillars –along with work– of the current model (Araujo & Martucelli, 2012).

*“Because it seems that they are very conservative, very traditional, of many customs [...].” (interviewee).*

However, although they value that women are not treated as objects (i.e., they are not shown naked) and are respected and cared for, they do not like it when they appear as very submissive, or when they suffer greatly (without nuances), and they do not feel they can identify with them.

*“Because it is very denigrating, that is why I don’t like it, because the guy raped her and then she falls in love with him, I found her stupid [...] the others I can stand them, because women are below men but they are more bearable” (interviewee).*

Regarding identification, the interviewees, without exception, say that they do not resemble the female characters presented on the screen, nor the other characters, i.e., they recognize them all as different. And this is precisely one of the aspects that stands out.

*“That is the idea, I don’t want to watch my life on TV, I want to see the lives of others [...] I don’t feel I identified with any” (interviewee).*

Once curiosity was satisfied and when the “surprise factor” of these broadcasts had passed, the viewers integrated these productions into their habitual logic of consumption of telenovelas and began to operate with them in the same way as they do with the others. For example, they decide if they are interested in the specific issue that the new broadcast proposes; if they like the actors (they recognize and extend their star system repertoire); if they can watch when it is being broadcast (or later on other mobile devices); if they “get hooked” after watching the weekend’s summary, and if the people around them and the media they usually consume and use (morning shows, radio and press programs specialized in shows –digital or printed–) refer to it (so as to not to be left out).

*“[...] The actor... you see him, and you are like, oh, ok, this is a good telenovela. Because the actor is like that, like his characters are always the same, because I had already seen a telenovela with him” (interviewee).*

In summary, among the features most valued by audiences in Turkish telenovelas are their identification with great aesthetic quality (the scenery and costumes are highlighted), the fact that they show other realities, customs and places to be real in “appearance” (because although it is a fiction, those who embody the characters belong to that culture, which contributes to the likelihood of the story), the return to the most classic dramas, to melodrama in essence, and the use of a more paused way of building the scenes, with a lot of dialogue, seduction, eroticism and no pornography.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

One of the strategies proposed by reception studies to address the proximity relationship between the reader/viewer and the work/telenovela is to see the phenomenon of identification as a positive dimension of the aesthetic experience whose primary social function is the experience of the other (Pasquier, 1998). In this regard, what we observe from the readings analyzed in relation to Turkish telenovelas is that there would be an identification by contrast or opposition (which could be a distinction from the ironic identification developed by Pasquier) since, in this case, the recognition of a different other allows the experience of oneself to be affirmed and strengthened.

This type of program also allows viewers to access a vicarious experience: the possibility of generating catharsis through the subjects watched and experienced through the screens. The

action of “living through the other”, which “immediately refers to the so-called *soul transfer* that the representations suffer” (Panchi, 2014, p. 41) allows not only an identification with characters and situations, but also, at the very least, an empathy with them, which occurs “not so much because the subject or the situation is shown as close or possible, but because what is looked at constitutes a sort of ‘classic’ scene; a scene that has never necessarily happened to the viewer, but that at the community and media level, is typical” (Panchi, 2014, p. 43).

Foreign telenovelas, even those that are –in appearance– geographically and culturally very distant from the place where they are broadcast, are also capable of generating empathy, due to the materials that make up their staging while operating in a registration of universal emotions, and because they show a reality different from the everyday one that arouses curiosity. They show “the alien”, the exotic, and the “other” with which one can empathize, and which, because of the difference, allows a reaffirmation of one’s own identity traits, “that is to say that the affirmation of an identity is strengthened and recreated in communication, encounter and conflict, with the other” (Vassallo de López, 2008, p. 38). Telenovelas from other latitudes allow us to recognize more clearly the aspects of a specific culture, with its particular life cycles and local problems.

Turkish telenovelas triumphed in Chile for several reasons. Among these reasons are the novelty of showing places, characters and stories that had not been seen before, from a film industry unknown to the country; a return to the small screen of the most classic dramas, the narrative and the aesthetics of melodrama; an expansion and diversification of the type of audience attracted to these programs (influencing the programmatic grid, the channels’ strategies and expanding the topics addressed). All this could bring benefits in the development of local industry, since the new competition forces local characteristics in telenovelas to be enhanced, thus generating conditions for the global recognition of a Chilean production model, among others.

Turkish production needs to consolidate its presence in the Chilean market by enhancing what is stressed by audiences: recognizable characters (i.e., that integrate into the local repertoire and star system), current and short-term themes mixed with specific traditions, customs and ways of life, music and landscapes that show the country, quality productions, well-worked scripts, complex characters, and elaborated intrigues (that make many and varied things happen) all working together in an agile and entertaining story.

## NOTES

The field work was conducted by the students Bárbara Olmedo, Erika Sánchez and María Ignacia Vallejos of the Institute of Communication and Image of the Universidad de Chile.

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## TABLES AND FIGURES

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount of titles</b>	<b>Amount of broadcasters</b>	<b>Average household ratings</b>	<b>Highest average household rating</b>	<b>Lowest average household rating</b>
2014	6	2	16,6	29,22 (Fatmagul, Mega, Prime)	6,24 (Kusey Guney, Canal 13, After lunch)
2015	13	3	13,26	24,45 (Fatmagul, Mega, Prime)	5,56 (Kusey Guney, Canal 13, After lunch)
2016	6	2	13,8	19,62 (Sila, Mega, Prime)	8,88 (El Sultán, Canal 13, Prime)
2017	19	3	8,65	20,04 (Icerde, Mega, Prime)	3,86 (Rivales de Sangre, Canal 13, After Lunch)
2018	16	5	7,71	20,2 (Madre no hay una sola, Mega, Prime)	2,35 (Me robó mi vida, La Red, Prime)



## CHAPTER 3

# TURKISH TELEVISION SERIES IN INDIA: TRACING THE ALTERNATIVE CIRCUITS OF TRANSNATIONAL MEDIA FLOW

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### ABSTRACT

Turkish television series have become increasingly popular in India, particularly since the telecast of the dubbed version of *Adını Feriha Koydum* in 2015. While India has a strong market of regional language TV series or serials, as they are known locally, international shows, except for syndicated television content from the United States, have hardly been popular in traditional television broadcasting. However, the rising popularity of Turkish television series and their circulation through digital media in India have opened up a rich site for exploring changing practices of audience engagement with transnational television content. This paper draws from ethnographic fieldwork among audiences of Turkish television series in India. Presently, there are hardly any Turkish series available on Indian cable television channels, barring a few on video on demand (VoD) platforms. However, social media platforms, such as Facebook, video-sharing sites, like YouTube, and file-sharing torrent sites, have continued the circulation of Turkish television series in India. These alternative modes of distribution compel us to rethink the notions of technology, medium, and emerging viewing practices and underline the parallel, often illegitimate circuits of distribution and access to international television content. Hence, this paper broadly addresses how Turkish TV series become an emblematic instance of understanding transnational media flow through alternative digital channels in a neoliberal, developing country like India.

**Keywords:** Turkish TV series, ethnography, transnational television, neo-liberalism, India

## INTRODUCTION

Turkish television series gained popularity among Indian audiences primarily after the broadcast of the Hindi language dubbed version of the series *Feriha* (*Adını Feriha Koydum*) in September 2015 on the Zindagi television channel. Since then, the channel has broadcast a number of dubbed series from Turkey, like *Fatmagul* (*Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?*), *Little Lord* (*Küçük Ağa*), *A Love Story* (*Bir Aşk Hikayesi*), and *Kuzey Guney* (*Kuzey Güney*). Zindagi, launched in June 2014, was an Indian entertainment channel that telecast series having finite episodes in comparison to long-running Indian television serials broadcast on general entertainment channels (GEC).<sup>1</sup> The channel mostly ran syndicated content from foreign countries like Pakistan, Turkey, South Korea, Brazil, and Ukraine. Suni Buch, Chief Business Officer of Zee Entertainment Enterprise Ltd (parent company of Zindagi), explained that Zindagi, as a channel, caters to a niche audience, who is accommodating to new content from different geographical regions; according to Buch, “This audience is well-travelled and demands a content which is not a typical Hindi GEC.” (Buch quoted in Menon, 2017). The shows became widely popular among Indian audiences, especially the Turkish and Pakistani shows. The popularity of the Turkish shows was a surprise for the channel and motivated the channel to plan further to acquire the rights of more international shows (Menon, 2017). However, with the growing tension between India and Pakistan due to the Uri attacks in September 2016,<sup>2</sup> the channel decided to proscribe all Pakistani shows and revamp the programming catalogue by focusing on Indian narratives on the Muslim community (India Today, 2016). The premium Hindi entertainment channel finally decided to move away from the television broadcast platform to the emerging video-on-demand platform OZEE from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017, citing evolving audience preferences in terms of choices and control of content (PTI, 2017). The online streaming platform OZEE has now been merged with DittoTV to form ZEE5, an online streaming service (Mukherjee, 2018). The closure of the broadcasting channel led to the restriction of accessibility of the Turkish content for most of the TV-viewing audiences. The streaming service ZEE5 offers only the reruns of already broadcast Turkish TV shows. However, it is important to mention that the shows remain popular among Indian audiences. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, video sharing sites, like YouTube, and file-sharing torrent sites continue the circulation of Turkish television series in India. These alternative modes of distribution not only compel us to rethink the notions of technology, medium, and emerging viewing practices but also underline the parallel, often illegitimate

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1 Soap operas in India are popularly known as “serials”.

2 On 18 September 2016, terrorists attacked Indian Army brigade headquarters near the town of Uri in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. The attack escalated the tension between the two countries.

circuits of distribution and access of international television content. The unavailability of Turkish television programs on Indian television, irrespective of an active and enthusiastic audience base in India, has opened up a site for understanding the consumption of Turkish television series in India as public culture, a zone of cultural debate that emerges with the tensions and contradictions between national sites and transnational cultural processes (Appadurai and Breckenridge, 1998, p.5). Hence, this chapter broadly addresses in what way Turkish TV series have become an illustrative instance of understanding transnational media flow through digital alternative channels in a neoliberal, developing country like India. The engagement of Indian audiences with Turkish television series generate arenas where the debates related to neoliberalism, emergent Indian public, and control of cultural production contest one another in dynamic ways.

The objective of this study compelled us to find alternatives to the established practice of doing ethnographic research focused on a single site. Janice Radway, while explaining how to develop an ethnographic approach to media reception, claimed that it is necessary to investigate “the endlessly shifting, ever-evolving kaleidoscope of daily life and the way in which the media are integrated and implicated within it” (1988, p. 366). These shifting practices in which media is integrated and implicated has emerged as exceedingly fluid, flexible, and connected over the years with the advent of digital communication. Hence, our approach was fluid and multi-sited in contrast to focusing on a singular bounded field of audience engagement (Amit, 1999; Marcus, 1995). The emergence of a multi-sited ethnography, as Marcus points out, is useful for interdisciplinary studies, including media studies and cultural studies, particularly because such interdisciplinary fields such as Turkish television content and the practice of accessing mainstream content through alternative channels of distribution, do not share an evidently demarcated object of study and the distinct disciplinary perspectives involved with them can be challenged. Following such an approach, this study draws from ethnographic fieldwork among audiences in India who have watched Turkish television serials either on mainstream or digital platforms. Twenty-seven respondents were pursued using snowball-sampling method, which is based on referrals from initial subjects to generate additional subjects. For the purpose of understanding transnational media flow through digital alternative channels, it was useful to contextualize it by the macro-constructions of the neoliberal social order in India.

## Indian television broadcasting in the post-liberalization period

Before we move into the discussion, it is necessary to discuss the historical trajectory that interspersed neoliberal policy, television broadcasting, and public culture in India. Television was introduced in India in 1959 for educational purposes by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Ford Foundation. The Indian government soon realized the potential of television and undertook the responsibility to inform, educate, and entertain people. A public service broadcasting model (similar to BBC) was charted out. From time to time, different measures were undertaken by the government to strengthen the reach of television as an educational and informational apparatus especially for the rural community. State-endorsed schemes like the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (1975), the development of the INSAT- IB satellite (1982), the introduction of color transmission (1982), and the setting up of television production centers for creating educational content were undertaken primarily under the aegis of the government. Initially, television in India was under the patronage of All India Radio (AIR), but it was separated from radio in 1976. The government soon started producing pro-development soap operas, inspired by the successful and popular soap operas of Mexico, known as *telenovelas*. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting initiated several meetings with Televisa's Miguel Sabido, which led to the conceptualization of the first Indian soap opera, *Hum Log* (1984) (Singhal and Rogers, 1988, p. 114). The popularity of the serial led to the launch of many more serials like *Yeh Jo Hain Zindagi* (1984), *Buniyaad* (1986), *Nukkad* (1986), *Ramayana* (1987), *Mahabharata* (1988), and *Waghley Ki Duniya* (1988), among several others. Most of the serials focused on the trials and tribulations of Indian middle-class families with the exception of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, which were based on Hindu mythological epics. It is important to note that Doordarshan, the state television broadcaster, remained the only broadcaster until 1991, after which economic reforms were introduced by the government offering opportunities for domestic and foreign private channels to televise their content.

The Indian economy witnessed a rapid and formative change in perception with the commencement of liberalization (Rajagopal, 2001, p. 3). According to Rajagopal, the process of liberalization, which was initiated in the middle of 1980s, became more effective and persuasive in 1991 with the government adopting policies aimed towards neoliberal reforms (Ibid, p. 17). The New Economic Policy of the government led to the entry of multinational companies into the Indian market. Subsequently, the emergence of private satellite channels proved to be a watershed moment and ushered in a new era in Indian television. Interestingly, a series of events shaped the development of television broadcasting under neoliberal

imperatives in India. Star Plus became the first GEC satellite channel to be launched in India by Hong Kong-based entrepreneur Richard Li. Soon, Zee TV followed suit and began broadcasting in 1992. Zee TV was the first Indian-owned private satellite channel. Before long, the public service broadcaster, Doordarshan, started selling slots to private companies for producing news. This led to the emergence of private producers making news-based content for Doordarshan. However, while Doordarshan focused more on news-based programs, the private channels started focusing more on entertainment programs (Mathur, 2013).

With an ever-increasing range of television channels, people were offered options to choose their content. Neo-liberalization brought variety in programming style by opening the bandwidth for more private channels. Major transnational broadcasters, like CNN, Disney, CNBC, MTV, Star, Sony Entertainment Television, and BBC, started catering to the demands of the English-educated, affluent Indian middleclass. Soon, the companies changed their strategy by broadcasting content in view of audience habits which were heavily influenced by traditional Indian television content. They also tried to grab audiences' attention by producing programs in regional and local languages. For instance, MTV, which was known for broadcasting predominantly American music videos and English language music-based programs, gradually transformed into a channel that plays primarily popular Bollywood songs in Hindi to tap into the larger consumer base and to increase advertising revenue (Dey, 2009).

Indian general entertainment channels, on the other hand, were mainly dominated by long-running family melodramas that often revolved around family feuds between the housewife and the mother-in-law.<sup>3</sup> There have been reality shows, talk shows, and musical programs on Indian television, too, but the majority of content is dominated by serials. A number of entertainment channels continued to be launched often in partnership with multinational mass media conglomerate, for instance, the Colors TV channel, which was a joint venture between USA based, Viacom and India based, Network 18. However, eventually over the years, the content turned out to be repetitive and often focused more on the melodramatic narratives of wealthy upper caste families with stereotypical characters or narratives inspired by traditional mythological or folk characters. Traditional and moral values are maintained by showing

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3 One cannot deny the fact that television programming in India did experience a major creative upsurge during the 1990s but the television programming shifted its style to more melodramatic and family-oriented content mainly from the year 2000 with the launch of the TV serial, *Kyunki Saas bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* on the channel Star Plus. The success of the show has led to the homogenization of the television content by sticking to family values, morals and bringing in superstitious elements to engage the viewers. Majority of these serials have been criticized by feminist scholars as being regressive.

“good” women wearing *sarees*, *bindi*, and *sindoor*,<sup>4</sup> engaging in traditional routines, like performing *puja* (Hindu ritual of worshipping God), taking care of extended family, and participating in the act of self-sacrifice for the good of the family. These serials tend to enjoy a substantive viewership, mostly consisting of housewives (Deprez, 2009, p. 429). Interestingly, the Hindi serials broadcast on satellite television channels have been so popular that the regional television channels, too, have started to follow the same format (Ibid.). It has also been argued that Indian television channels conceptualize television serials glorifying the traditional roles of women within family in order to generate revenue from the rural market (Bakshi, 2018). It is important to note that the India Brand Equity Foundation report 2018 has pointed to a growth of US\$ 220 billion by 2025 from US\$ 29.4 billion in 2016 in the rural FMCG market in India. Thus, it is believed that there is a huge potential for television channels to earn revenue from this sector through targeted sponsored shows. On the other hand, experimental content depicting real, sometimes uncomfortable issues with progressive female characters have found digital platforms to be lucrative enough to reach out to its target audience, which mostly consists of the urban population who are more accustomed to watching international TV series on their laptops or 4G-enabled smartphones (Ibid.). Hence, even after the neoliberal reforms, there was a significant demand for quality content on Indian television, especially among the urban, upwardly mobile middleclass audience of India.

### **Audience engagement with Turkish television series: Notes from the field**

The brief overview of the trajectory of Indian television broadcasting in the post-liberalization period was necessary to understand how foreign television series create a notable impact among Indian audiences. As mentioned earlier, the availability of foreign television shows is limited within the conventional television-viewing pattern, with channels mostly focusing on national and regional content. However, online platforms like Zee5 offer a number of foreign TV shows dubbed in Hindi, yet availability of the most popular and recent foreign shows is restricted to some paid platforms. Therefore, the question is then how Turkish shows are gaining popularity in India? Which section of the audience is viewing these shows in India and with what kind of access?

Broadly, Turkish TV series have similarities to the ‘soap-opera’ format, which has been popular in India for a long time since the launch of the first Indian TV serial, *Hum Log*.

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4 These markers are part of the Hindu practice of ‘Solah Shringar’, which literally translates into sixteen adornments that have been mentioned by the Hindu scriptures. Each of these adornments is believed to be auspicious.

The soap opera format has been mainly used in non-western contexts in countries like India, Brazil, and Egypt (Yanardagoglu & Karam, 2013). As mentioned earlier, the soap opera format was introduced in India by the Indian public service broadcaster, *Doordarshan*, following the model of Mexican *telenovelas*, to inform and educate the people about issues related to social development and national unity. The format is still popular in India though the notion of promoting developmental and ethical issues through serials have been replaced by melodramatic morality tales often revolving around the undivided Hindu family. Turkish TV series thus become a natural extension of the narrative and aesthetic content that is otherwise available in the mainstream, Hindi language television serials in India.

Turkish TV series have gained popularity due to their melodramatic plot structure showing protagonists belonging to business families, living in palatial mansions, travelling to chic locales, engaging in romantic relationships, suffering from betrayal, confronting the female vamp, and finding a resolution in the end. Indian audiences are familiar with these narrative and aesthetic traits through Indian serials and popular Hindi cinema, and hence, when presented in different geographical context, they have found it interesting. *“Whenever I see the actors and their dilemmas, I feel so connected to their problems. The problems somehow seem very Indian”*-said Taufikul Islam, 22. The question is how to account for this “connection” of viewers within the experiential sphere? One important aspect of the Turkish TV series has been the actors who have been able to generate significant interest among the Indian audiences. Nandita Adhikary, 24, says *“Most of the Turkish actors have features that appear to be Indian- black hair, big brown eyes, and a fair skin tone. That is what attracts me to them. Turkish men are often identical to Punjabi or Jaat men of India, who are supposed to be the traditionally good-looking men.”* One of the reasons for the popularity of Turkish dramas in India has been the emotional connect that the audience experiences while watching them. *“They are very similar to our culture. They show a lot of emotion.”* –said Partha Chakraborty, 35. Romance, family feuds, and action has been the main narrative points of series that have engaged Indian audiences due to their familiarity with the narrative and aesthetic characteristics of Bollywood cinema. The viewers can also relate to the rigid, often patriarchal family values, the tradition, and the culture to which the protagonists stick to in the Turkish TV series. *“We can definitely relate to the characters. They are very Indian in their thinking,”*-says Deepshikha Naskar, 31. She further adds, *“Feriha (Adını Feriha Koydum) doesn’t want to hurt the sentiments of her mother, but she wants to create a sense of identity for herself at her university by not revealing her background. I think we see such crisis in Hindi TV serials, but here it somehow appears fresh.”* For Chandan Jana, 22, it is the simplicity of

the narrative structure of most Turkish TV series that attracts him; He says, “*Turkish series deal with simple people who have a modern outlook and suffer from their own fault. The narrative structure is easy to follow and does not involve over-the-top twists and turns, unlike Indian television series.*” Indeed, Turkish TV series often depict common universal themes of love, emotions, family, betrayal and tragedy (Maanvi, 2016). The issues dealt with are usually non-political and non-religious, similar to the story patterns of popular Hindi Television serials.<sup>5</sup> However, Indian television serials are usually of a thirty-minute duration whereas, in the case of Turkish series, one episode often extends to two hours or more. Indian mega-serials are broadcast over a period of 4-5 years (until their Television Rating Points (TRPs) begin to wane), and this is what has disinterested the audiences. “*They keep repeating the same story again and again through generations, with illogical plot twists. A number of characters are added to break the monotony, but they fail to portray them in a believable manner*”, says Sudeshna Das, 25, “*The case is not so for the Turkish series. The episodes of the Turkish series are fixed, and this helps in retaining the quality of the series and also the attention of the viewers*”.

In addition, a number of respondents mentioned that the predicament between tradition and modernity in the narrative often underlines a similarity between Indian and Turkish television series. However, in contrast to Hindi mainstream serials as Sweta Chakraborty, 30, mentioned, “*Turkish series represent the familiar story in a much more enjoyable package. The presentation of the story is often much more intelligently done. It brings a breath of fresh air which offers a respite from the daily drudgery shown in the Hindi TV serials.*” Hence, while the narratives often seem known, if not predictable, there is a feeling of newness and freshness which the respondents think is missing from Hindi TV serials. The sense of newness emerges from various factors; for some it is the “geographical location” or “cultural practices shown in the series” while for others “it is the actors” “production value,” or simply the “quality of the script.” Rather than providing a competitive narrative in comparison to Indian serials, Turkish series complement them. This is evident as India and Turkey share common social and political discourses due to the shifting socio-economic background. Turkish series bring in an element of modernity in their narrative structure. Hence, the stories in Turkish series provide a link with Indian audiences as they challenge the patriarchal traditions by bringing women to the fore, who form a significant part of both modern India and Turkey (Ahmad, 2017).

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5 Interestingly, a number of television serials in India are based on mythological or folk narratives or characters. Although the mythological narratives are often a part of the religious texts, but they are not overtly religion-oriented television serials. However, there is evidently a Hindu dominance in terms of showing mythological and epic narratives.

A recurring aspect mentioned during the interviews was the rising popularity of the actors of these television shows. The well-dressed, handsome, and fashionable actors are often the main attraction for some of the Indian viewers. As Jaya Das, 30, mentions, *“I am in love with Can Yaman of Full Moon. He is such a good-looking actor. First, I saw a short clip of him on YouTube, and from then on, I have tried to watch all the TV series that featured Can Yaman.”* In the same way, Pritha Adhikari, 24, responded, *“I cannot forget the way the character Ferit looks at Nazli. He is such a good actor. I am certain that none of the TV actors in India would be able to match up to that.”* Neha Ghosh, 32, stressed on enjoying watching the chemistry between the character Hayat (Hande Erçel) and Murat (Burak Deniz) in the series *Aşk Laftan Anlamaz*, *“I felt that both of them have been made for each other. The way they fight and tease each other is awesome. Especially, I love the romantic comedy of Burak Deniz. We do not have much romantic comedy on Indian television”.*

Turkish dramas have been popular on the traditional broadcast medium since its launch on the Zindagi channel. The show *Feriha* held the number one spot in terms of ratings on the channel in 2015. The show *Fatmagül (Fatmagül’ün Suçu Ne)* even helped Zindagi to retain its leading position in the premium channels category that year (Irani, 2017). Thus, the popularity of Turkish series among traditional Indian television viewers have been witnessed by the industry. However, the Indian fandom around Turkish television series is most expressive in YouTube, where thousands of fan-made music videos have been uploaded showing clips from Turkish television series with popular Hindi film songs in the background. The editing has been done in such a manner that the song appears to be part of the original Turkish series. The songs are supposed to fit the atmosphere completely, thus providing a new identity to the series. A passing glance at the comments section may give us the transnational nature of these videos. The videos may be uploaded by Indian viewers, but comments from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Spain, Russia, Sri Lanka, and various Middle Eastern countries underline that the videos have been popular not only among Indian audiences but also among audiences from various other geographic regions. So, what makes the music videos popular? *“Bollywood films are replete with romance and music,”* says Poulomi Ghosh, 28, *“These music videos produce the feelings of a romantic musical, which fits perfectly with the Turkish TV series. In fact, I started watching Turkish TV series because of these music videos.”* Such responses point to a growing fandom culture in India dedicated to Turkish television series.

Three themes may emerge from this discussion that can help to frame an understanding of the rising popularity of Turkish TV series. First, there is a narrative and representational continuity between Turkish TV series and popular Hindi serials and mainstream Hindi films;

second, the aspirational markers of neoliberal culture are in tandem with Turkish TV series. Third, the growing digital network and alternative circuits of distribution facilitate the flow of transnational media content.

### **Emerging viewing practices and Circuits of distribution**

While the Turkish series which were broadcast on television or are available on streaming platforms are dubbed in Hindi, a significant number of Turkish series which are available on YouTube or other websites which host links and embedded videos, allowing users to stream or download pirated content, are not available as dubbed versions. On these websites, the availability of series with English subtitles is also very limited. The viewer has to search for the matching subtitle from other online sources to watch the series. As Nazia Akhtar, 27, remarks, “*I was interested in watching the series Magnificent Century: Kosem but couldn’t find any English subtitles after accessing a few episodes on YouTube.*” This brings us to the question of alternative circuits of distribution.

Indian audiences primarily remain television-oriented viewers. The Broadcast India (BI) 2018 survey released by the Broadcast Audience Research Council of India (BARC) pointed to an increase in television viewership by 12 percent compared to 2016. Also, the number of TV-owning households has increased to 197 million, which points to a 7.5 percent increase. TV in India continues to play a crucial role in the generation of advertising revenues, even in comparison to online platforms. This points out that, though there has been a rise in the use of smart phones with inexpensive, high-speed internet connection, particularly due to the launch of Reliance Jio in India, over-the-top (OTT) viewing practices are yet to catch up thus, retaining the popularity of television (Tandon, 2018). However, one cannot deny the rise of digital platforms and the growing popularity of OTT platforms in India. According to the FICCI-EY report, 2019, India has about 570 million internet subscribers, which is second highest in the world, and it is increasing at a rate of 13 percent yearly. As of 2018, India is the tenth largest market for OTT in the world with overall revenue standing at INR. 44 billion. The over-the-top video industry, as per report, “will record the highest growth rate among all segments and drive evolution over the next four years in the overall media and entertainment industry in the country” (Jha, 2019). Nonetheless, it is to be noted that India has a huge market for its locally produced content, and so, the dominance of Hollywood films, or Turkish series for that matter, is limited to a niche audience. However, with the growing interest in international TV series and focus on critically acclaimed TV shows available on streaming platforms, there has been a steady rise in the access of variety of content online.

Nonetheless, in the context of Turkish television series in India, the problem of access has always been a critical issue. *“It is not easy to get hold of all the episodes online. I don’t have Netflix, so I have watched most of the episodes of the show Ask Laftan Anlamaz on the online streaming website kinemania.tv. The series is available on the Show TV website, but there are no English subtitles,”* states Budhaditya Adhikari, 25. The availability of Turkish television series have been limited on television due to the closure of Zindagi TV channel from the traditional broadcasting domain and its subsequent shift to the online video-on-demand platform, OZEE. Though paid online streaming platforms like Netflix do offer subtitled versions of some old Turkish television shows but, the reach of Netflix in India is limited to only 1.2 million subscribers (Gupta, 2019), which is significantly low compared to television viewership in India. Hence, the audiences watching the Turkish television series have been mostly dependent on alternative circuits of distribution like YouTube, illegitimate online video-streaming websites, and Facebook groups for the availability of content. The major challenge for Indian viewers has been language, and so some of the shows, though officially available on the website of the television channel where they were broadcast in Turkey, are difficult to comprehend because of the lack of subtitles. As Meghna Ghosh, 26, mentioned, *“One day randomly while browsing through YouTube, I found a fan-made video of a Turkish TV series named Ask Laftan Anlamaz. I became desperate to watch the series and got hold of one or two episodes with English subtitles on YouTube, but as the other episodes were not available in English, so after a long search, I started watching the episodes free of cost with English subtitles on turksub24.com.”* A number of respondents echoed Meghna’s concern about getting suitable subtitles of the series. A parallel circuit of distribution has been established, consisting of Facebook communities, file sharing websites, online discussion groups, pirated video sites, and sometimes even the comments section of YouTube. Interestingly, although initially the alternative platforms offered their services free of cost, like providing English SRT files for download, now most of them charge for the content they provide. Perhaps, the growing popularity of Turkish television series and rising demands from the viewers are gradually transforming a peer-to-peer sharing network into a profit-based distribution network. As Rahul Indurkar, 30, added, *“I watched the entire series, Ask Laftan Anlamaz on kinemania.tv without paying a single penny at the end of 2017, but now they charge money for viewing the newer content. I had tried to access the series Afili Ask on their website, but they asked for about five euros.”* The norms of open access and voluntary response may not be tenable in the long run, as the control of cultural production is governed by competing state and private enterprise in a delicate and capricious way. However, the growing popularity of Turkish television series in India opens up these alternative circuits

of transnational media flow as part of a public culture that dynamically negotiate values, attitudes, and pleasures related to the collective association through media and other social practices. Turkish television series are able to appeal to a consciously diverse audience and as “messages of public culture are therefore directed to audiences without regard to the limits of family, locality, or social category” (Appadurai & Breckenridge, 1995, p.6).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter was to understand in what way Turkish television series can be read as an illustrative instance of understanding transnational media flow through digital alternative channels in a neoliberal, developing country like India. What can be said with much confidence is that the narrative and representational continuity between Turkish TV series and popular Hindi serials and mainstream Hindi films invest in the growing popularity of these television series. Although there is a familiarity in terms of narrative structure, there is a sense of newness, which emerges from various factors, including attractive actors, high production value, exotic locations, and interesting cultural practices. Also, the aspirational markers of neoliberal culture, such as a cosmopolitan lifestyle, the display of wealth and power, and global associations are unambiguously displayed in these series. Such visual and narrative signifiers function suitably among an audience imbibed with neoliberal rhetoric. Finally, the expanding digital network and alternative circuits of distribution facilitate the flow of transnational media content. Social media and video sharing sites bear witness of the fact that Indian fandom around Turkish television series is expanding with the help of digital communication. These alternative circuits of transnational media flow contribute to the popularity of Turkish television series in India. These series as part of public culture dynamically negotiate values, attitudes, and pleasures related to the collective association through media and other social practices in India. Turkish television series stimulate cultural debate that emerges with the tensions and contradictions between national sites and transnational cultural processes. However, this chapter, with all its limitations, aimed to address the gap in research on the popularity of Turkish television programs beyond their domestic market and explored how Turkish television series in India produce sites, where the debates related to neoliberalism, emergent Indian public, and control of cultural production challenge one another in dynamic ways.

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## CHAPTER 4

# THE CONSUMPTION OF TURKISH TV SERIES IN CUBA: A STUDY ON THE DISTRIBUTION, ACCESS, AND EFFECTS OF POPULAR CULTURE

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### ABSTRACT

In recent years Turkish TV series have gained popularity among the Cuban population. This is the first time that Brazilian, Mexican and Colombian soap operas - traditionally with many followers on the island - have been displaced by Turkish products regarding the preference of the national public. Access to Turkish TV series in Cuba isn't through national television broadcast. The distribution is happening from an alternative network of informal exchange of audiovisual products. The popularly known "Weekly Package- el paquete" (a kind of offline Netflix with 1 terabyte of information that can be purchased clandestinely on the island for the approximate value of 1 USD) distributes new episodes of Turkish soap operas on a weekly basis. Hence, because of the informal nature of its distribution, it is very difficult to know accurately the audience rating and other relevant data of the reception process regarding Turkish Television Series. This study aims to explore the distribution, access and consumption strategies of Turkish TV series in Cuba from a qualitative methodological perspective. Since the study is the first research on las turcas in Cuba, it presents some valuable data on the current situation of popular culture in Cuba with a focus on Turkish television series.

**Keywords:** Turkish Tv series, las turcas, el paquete, cultural flow, globalization

## INTRODUCTION

Popular culture and its global circulation is a matter of cultural politics today. Thanks to the developments in internet technologies, popular culture which is supposed to be local has had the chance of going beyond national and cultural borders. This possibility of global circulation is not solely under control of media industry anymore. There may be alternative voices that can penetrate today's culture industry.

This chapter aims to deal with the circulation and diffusion of popular culture in today's world from a different perspective. The literature deals with the global circulation of popular culture and popular culture in Cuban context. The research of the study is realized in Cuba where Turkish television series are surprisingly popular. Since Cuba is not totally included in the global popular culture due to many reasons including governmental policies, the fact that Turkish television series are one of the leading popular culture products in the country is to be studied in detail. Taking the popularity of Turkish television series in Cuba as an example, it is aimed to discover the changing nature of cultural flows.

### Popular Culture in Today's World

Today, when culture is evaluated within the context of globalization, one of the most important factors that enables the globalization process to accelerate is popular culture. Popularization of any cultural product means that product is likely to become a part of the global culture and cultural process thanks to global circulation of culture. In this age of information, every cultural product that reaches people on a global scale via means of mass communication or internet technologies is an element that nourishes popular culture.

Popular culture studies has become a multidisciplinary field that is enriched with many different disciplines. "The development of popular cultural studies is based on the contributions of many different disciplines. These include literature, literary criticism, history, psychoanalysis, and sociology" (Strinati, 2003, p.xv). The interdisciplinary nature of the popular culture leads to a constant change in popular culture studies that constantly evolves with the addition of conceptual innovations, empirical research techniques and theoretical discussions from related fields. One of the primary concepts that developed and changed the studies of popular culture is globalization.

According to Mattelart, the world is in search of a global culture (Mattelart, 2001, p. 104), and therefore a single image market is to be created. The creation of this market is additionally related to creative culture industries as well as communication technologies that

make their circulation much easier. Dworkin defines the cultural understanding of the new world order and the cultural products as a part of the special language we share (Dworkin, 1985, p. 231). The continuity of this particular language may be possible as long as a common understanding lasts. This is where popular culture comes into play and creates a common language, understanding and sharing area. Nowadays thanks to internet technologies, popular culture is also spreading in different ways and this circulation creates a new form of cultural understanding which is worth in-depth analysis.

As a result of the globalization and current situation of the unlimitedness that come along with the latest technologies, alternative cultural movements from different parts of the world have been included in the global circulation of culture. The one-way communication activities and cultural impact coming from the West have become multifaceted and the idea of a rather global cultural flow has been accepted (Biltreyst and Meers, 2000, p. 394). US is no longer the only one who has a say in the cultural flow. Alternative streams also have a considerable success in the production of culture products, and they can often be preferred over the American one for creating alternatives. The consumer, who has been looking for a way out of American culture, can easily reach the alternatives in today's world and Cuba has always been a good alternative for many reasons. The changing culture of Cuba is to be analyzed in the next chapter.

## **Popular Culture in Cuba**

Cuban popular culture is formed by a mix of cultures: Indigenous, Spanish, African and Chinese culture. This phenomenon is called by Fernando Ortiz (1940) “ajjiaco cultural”, an authentic dish made up of the mixture of different ingredients. This definition recognizes that the popular culture is traditional by essence, totalizing by its breadth and transcends the boundaries of the sectors properly identifiable as popular (Martínez Casanova, 2001). At the same time, in the case of current Cuba, popular culture is constantly changing and regularly incorporates diverse cultural goods from around the world because of the inclusion of the country in globalized world through intensification, diversification and acceleration of the flow of goods, information and people (Hernández & Pezo, 2010, p. 85).

Although Arjun Appadurai (2015) recognizes that there has always been cross-border flow, exchange and mixing, today these processes occur rapidly due to the speed and diffusion of the Internet, the simultaneous growth of travel, the communication through intercultural media and global advertising, phenomena which is also more present in Cuban everyday life now.

Cuba has been permeated, although not with the speed that the globalization brings and the opening to current communication services and products, by the cultural mix, hybridization in terms of García Canclini (2008), which had its origins from the XVth century with the process of Spanish colonization.

Nevertheless, after the Triumph of Cuban Revolution the circulation of foreign cultural products decreased because of political, economics and ideological reasons. The idea was to protect the revolutionary process from everything that could go against it, and the foreign popular culture could be a powerful enemy but today the reality is completely different. After 60 years of Cuban Revolution, the cultural policy of Cuban government is more flexible about the consumption of foreign cultural products. Many years ago, it was prohibited for example, to listen the music of The Beatles, but young people developed strategies to break the prohibition (Saborido, 2009; Castellanos, 2005). They listened to music in low volume and danced, copied songs in cassettes and spread it among friends. However, today the reality is very different. But we need to consider that the flow of popular culture in socialist countries is different in many aspects such as the role of the market, the state cultural policy and the limits of cultural commercialization (Manuel, 1987).

In spite of the geographic situation, Cuban people don't live the cultural isolation anymore, especially after the recent actualization of economic model in 2011 and the new ties with United States since 2014. Nowadays, Cuba is becoming a part of the global cultural flow. Three examples of the current relevance of Cuba in the global flow of popular culture would be helpful to see the situation more clearly. These events all took place in 2016. The first was the concert of The Rolling Stones in Havana, the second was in the same place, the first fashion show of Coco Chanel in a Latin American country and the last one took place in the capital city also, and it was the filming of the popular movie *Fast and Furious 8*.

These events not only brought important exponents of international popular culture to the island, but also they positioned Cuba as the protagonist and source of inspiration for popular culture expressions such as music, fashion and cinema.

The major insertion of Cuba in the globalized world allows Cuban people a major access to foreign popular culture as well. The Cuban immigration reform in 2012 made it possible for Cuban citizens to travel abroad without the government authorization. They can be in touch with international popular cultures directly and when they come back, they bring their experiences and material objects of popular culture with them. Also, the tourism, a relevant economic activity in the country, allows local population to have more proximity to foreign

products of popular culture. Another important change is a larger access to information via Internet starting 2015 with the implementation of Wi-Fi connection points in public spaces, and then with the possibility to connect from houses. Cuban people have access to internet via data mobile technology as of 2019, but it is limited since the cost is quite high and there are internal and external regulations to access some websites.

As a natural consequence of the contact with the global world, in the last years (since 2009 approximately) an explosion of consumption of foreign popular culture occurred, this sudden consumption started especially in audiovisual culture and this is directly related to the creation of “the weekly package” (*El paquete semanal*). It’s a kind of offline Internet content that you can purchase for 1 dollar approximately every week, and you can access to 1 terabyte of international information such as series, movies, television shows, concerts, music, apps, etc. “the weekly package” has an underground distribution strategy from Havana, where it is created, to other cities in the country. Also, the distribution is a-legal: it is not legal but, at the same time is not illegal, there seems to be a legal ambiguity. This is the exact reason why the weekly package has become the most popular strategy of distribution. Furthermore, it is easy to distribute from hand to hand.

Before “the weekly package”, Cuban people consumed foreign audiovisual products as well but it was much less. Indeed, Cuban television broadcasts many programs from different countries and the most popular series have been from Mexico, Brazil, Colombia and the United States. There were also alternative ways to consume foreign television programs through banks of VHS cassettes in the last of years 1990 and then, with CD and DVD. The other alternative way is called “the cable” or “the antenna” and it works only in the most populated neighborhoods in the capital city such as Habana Vieja and Centro Habana. “the cable” is installed illegally from house to house and it allows to access contents through satellite antenna, and you have access to a wide variety of content, especially programs from Florida (the United States).

Research about the informal consumption of audiovisual products argues that “the weekly package” is result of a progressive socio-technological evolution of the information circulation mechanisms in Cuba (Perterra, 2012; Basail, 2006). However, “the weekly package” extends the access to audiovisual products from the capital city to all other cities in the country. In that process, a significant part of circulation happens without money between friends and relatives, this action becomes a distinctive act that proves the associative capacity of people (Rodríguez, 2019). Also, “the weekly package” contains more information than other alternative ways of information circulation and thus, people have the possibility to choose from a great variety

of different programs (series, movies, shows, news, etc.) from geographically and culturally distant countries such as Korea and Turkey.

## **A Research on Turkish series in Cuba**

### **AIM AND METHODOLOGY**

This research is based on the fact that Turkish television series and their success in Cuba where they are not broadcasted in national television can be considered an example of the global circulation of popular culture. The research conducted in Cuba aims to discover the limits and nature of this circulation and to understand how it functions.

Such a study could present important insight on popular culture and the way it spreads in today's global world. Furthermore, there is limited research on global popular culture in Cuba and there is no research on Turkish television series in Cuba, either.

The research includes in-depth interviews realized with the Cuban audience who regularly watch Turkish television series. Miller & Glassner state that “a strength of qualitative interviewing is the opportunity it provides to collect and rigorously examine narrative accounts of social worlds” (Miller & Glassner, 2006, p. 137). The reason why this technique was adopted is the fact that there is no research on the topic and the first research is to be exploratory through narration. The participants were selected using the snowball technique. 15 women were interviewed in total. The majority of the sample is women who reside in two both rural and urban areas. Nevertheless, that was not relevant in their consumption and reception of Turkish series. The participants are asked open-ended questions regarding Cuban popular culture, the system of the weekly package and Turkish television series. The interviews were all conducted in Spanish. The questions asked during the interviews include questions about the function and distribution of “the weekly package”, what they think about Turkish television series and how Turkish television series have changed their ideas regarding other cultures.

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Function and Distribution of the weekly package, *el paquete***

Participants affirmed that they all have access to Turkish series through “the weekly package” every week. If series aren't new (new meaning they belong to the same season or they are still broadcast in Turkey), they can copy many episodes at the same time, but when series are recent, they can only copy the latest episodes once a week. On the other hand,

people don't have capacity to save a large volume of information, Turkish series have too many episodes generally, and for that reason people need to go to the house of "Paquetero" (the person that has "the weekly package") many times during the time they watch one series. Some people also told that they copy the content that has already been bought by some of their friends and they pay much less. Thanks to the distribution and variety that comes with the weekly package, the participants mostly prefer the weekly package to the national television.

According to interviewees, the moment of the copy becomes a social meeting where it is possible to meet new people, to talk about their lives and receive advice about audiovisual products. Also, people discuss about series, movies and shows and, make suggestions to each other on what to watch next.

We suppose that the origin of the visualization of Turkish series in Cuba is due to the success of this series in Latin America and the United States, especially in Florida television (Hechavarría, August 12, 2015). Cuban people have a close relationship with the popular culture in the USA, especially because of their ties with parents, relatives and friends who live there. This nexus could explain the origin of expansion of Turkish series in Cuba through underground mechanisms of their distribution. Another reason is the fact that Turkish television series have also conquered South America and this meant dubbed Turkish content could circulate much more easily.

### **What Cuban people think about Turkish television series**

When the participants were asked about why they prefer Turkish television series over other series or telenovelas, they stated that they prefer Turkish telenovelas over others such as Brazilian or Mexican telenovelas because there is a great variety in Turkish series. Many of them refer to their love of Turkish television series with the phrases "estoy enganchada" or "Me casé con las turcas" referring to the current situation that they are simply hooked with or obsessed with Turkish television series and the main reason is that there is always something new in terms of what is happening throughout a series of events. Another reason why they prefer Turkish television series is that Cuban audience interviewed appreciate that there are conflicts in Turkish television series and this makes series exciting.

Another reason why Cuban audience enjoys Turkish series is the fact that love is shown in a different way, it is not like series from Brasil, Columbia, or Mexico where love is quite carnal and always includes sex. Turkish way of depicting love is what makes Cuban audience enjoy since there are long glances at each other or holding hands. The way the theme of love appears in Turkish television series seem quite "tranquil" and "not aggressive" in their own words.

When the participants are asked what exactly it is that they enjoy watching Turkish series, many of them referred to Istanbul and architecture. They also know some other Turkish cities such as Bursa or İzmir only because they have seen some Turkish series that were shot in those cities. For instance, thanks to the famous Turkish series titled as *İstanbulu Gelin* (*Evermore – La Novia de Estambul*) they have no difficulty in remembering or pronouncing the Turkish city Bursa. Architecture, houses and furniture is the other elements they like seeing in Turkish series. They are curious about how Turkish people live and seeing those beautiful houses nicely decorated with design furniture makes them enjoy the in-house scenes besides the outdoor scenes where they enjoy the beauty of Istanbul or the Bosphorus.

Another theme that came up in the interviews is the Turkish fashion which is quite visible in Turkish television series. In nearly every Turkish series, there is a stylist working to differentiate the characters in the series through their way of dressing. This is seen and very much appreciated by the Cuban audience. They consider Turkish women beautiful and chic.

Food is also another topic that is often referred to in the interviews. Cuban audience is curiously watching how and what Turkish people eat. The fact that Turkish people drink a lot of tea during the day is mentioned in many of the interviews and 2 interviewees even told that they started drinking tea thanks to Turkish television series. Another participant told that she enjoys the scenes where the characters cook step by step nearly giving a recipe. She also said that she has tried to follow the recipes and cook in the Turkish style although she has had to replace some ingredients; also she started drinking tea, that is not common in Cuban culture, but she tasted and liked it after watching Turkish series.

### **How Turkish television series have changed their ideas regarding other cultures**

Out of the 15 people interviewed, all of them told that they do not know anyone who is Turkish or who has been to Turkey. They also agreed on the fact that before watching Turkish television series they knew nearly nothing about Turkey. However, they are now familiar with Turkey, Turkish culture and Turkish traditions. The person that watches Turkish television series for the longest period is the one who said she watched the Turkish series for nearly ten years. Among other participants, there are people who watch Turkish television series for different time spans from five years to one year. Since they have the access to many episodes of the same series at the same time, they watch the content “sin parar”, that is without having to wait for the next episode. It is not possible to calculate how long they have been exposed to Turkish content (due to the subtle nature of the weekly package system) but a participant

told that she has been seeing “the 900<sup>th</sup> episode of the Turkish series *Elif*”. Also participants mentioned a lot of Turkish television series including *Aşk-ı Memnu (Amor Prohibido)*, *Erkenci Kuş (Pajaro Soñador)*, *Vatanım Sensin (Te Amaré Por Siempre)*. When asked how many Turkish television series she has seen, an interviewee told she has seen around fifty. All these signal to the fact that they have seen a lot of Turkish television series.

All the participants had some idea about Turkey and Turkish culture. Informants highlighted the central role of the family in Turkish culture: they admired the importance of the family in Turkish people, especially the respect to old relatives and their behaviors. Many times, they compared that reality with Cuban everyday life in families adding that they would like it to be similar. Moreover, interviewees drew attention to the strong presence of customs and traditions in Turkish everyday life regardless of generations. Besides the fact that they don’t understand some of these they still admire the customs. For example, women’s costumes, especially the head scarf is another reference point on Turkish culture. Also, they appreciate the style and elegance of Turkish woman for dressing.

Interviewees refer to Turkish television series they have seen as a source of information on Turkey. They admit that they did not know anything about Turkey before starting to watch Turkish television series. However, they think they know more about Turkey now. For instance, a participant told about *Vatanım Sensin (Te Amaré Por Siempre)* highlighting the fact that she did not know about the war between Turkey and Greece. While watching the series, she also looked it up a lot.

Some of the participants also said that before watching the series they thought Turkey was an underdeveloped country and their ideas completely changed. None of the interviewees has visited Turkey, but they all would like to travel there. They think that Turkey is a beautiful and developed country, but they wonder if it really is as shown in the series.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The weekly package system can be considered an alternative to the global circulation of culture which functions based on many criteria such as transnational agreements, copyrights, media conglomerates, distribution and broadcasting. The system of the weekly package is solely based on uses and gratifications: is the audience wants the series, the people downloading the content will include it in the weekly package. This alternative media system seems to be free from any mediators between the audience and the content.

A natural result of the weekly package which seems to be free from any legal dependence is the current situation of Cuban television: Cuban audience does not have to endure what national television gives them. They have alternatives thanks to the weekly package and the most popular alternative that comes forward in television series is the Turkish television series for the time being. Cuban audience seems to be fans of Turkish content that comes weekly to their memory sticks. They have become quite familiar with Turkish television series and they have seen some old ones while they are also seeing some recent ones like *Erkenci Kuş* (*Pajaro Soñador*) which has had its final episode in Turkey quite recently. They like Turkish television series for a number of reasons including the content quality, the way love is depicted, Turkish scenery, Turkish fashion, and the beauty of Turkish people. Furthermore, Turkish content in Cuba serves Cuban people as a source of information on Turkey. Cuban audience enjoy Turkish television series while they also see them as documentaries on Turkish culture consciously or unconsciously. People interviewed all had opinions on Turkey, they never told they did not know anything about Turkey. This level of familiarity comes from the series only regarding the physical and cultural distance between two countries.

This chapter only shows preliminary results of an ongoing research. We need to deepen in the analysis and to pay special attention to topics like the role of women in Turkish society and on the one hand how it is narrated in series and on the other hand what is the opinion of Cuban audience about this topic.

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## CHAPTER 5

# ***“THEY’RE NOT THAT MUCH DIFFERENT AFTER ALL...”*. THE RECEPTION OF TURKISH SERIES BY GREEKS: BETWEEN ALTERITY AND PROXIMITY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Through this article, I aim to present the results of my empirical research concerning the representations of Turkish culture projected by Turkish television soap operas and their reception by Greeks. More precisely, the narrative that nourished the Greek War of Independence, is based not only to the direct descendants of modern Greeks from ancient Greeks but also to the difference between the modern Greek identity and the Turkish culture which was considered as the exact opposite. Thus, negative stereotypes emerged from both sides and these stereotypes dominate collective imaginaries until today. During the period of the economic crisis, as Greek television channels did not have the means to produce local series, they turned to productions from the neighboring country. Turkish television soap operas propose an “alternative modernity” as not only they contain ingredients that conduct the viewer into a fantasy world of globalized consumerism and romantic love that defies national boundaries, but they also project traditional family structures and gender roles. It is this element that differentiates the soap operas in question from the American prototype. This “alternative modernity” seems to be more familiar to Greek audiences than the modernity proposed by occidental television products. As a consequence, through the consumption of Turkish drama series, Greeks have the possibility to re-examine the representation they have for the Turks and are invited to discover not only the cultural differences but also the common traits between the two populations.

**Keywords:** Cultural proximity, alterity, intercultural communication, national identities, television drama

## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, exchanges between countries and cultures do not cease to grow. Media constantly diffuse worldwide images, information, artistic and cultural productions of various countries (Ladmiral & Lipiansky, 2015).

The narrative (the way in which a society describes itself in a symbolical way) is an extremely important element for this society's self-consciousness (Constantopoulou, 2017) and from a dramatological perspective (Goffman, 1959), for the projection and/or the explanation of a culture and of its attractive characteristics to outsiders (Lundberg et al. 2017). Consequently, it can be understood, that mass media texts play a significant role in narrating a society's shared values and norms to transnational audiences.

Television, is the “principal storyteller” in contemporary society (Kozloff, 1992, p. 67). Despite the discourse of concurrence between Internet and television that accompanied the emergence of the first, television is still a dominant mass media. This, not only because television is still much more accessible than the Internet, but also because televisual consumption is inherent to expectations of sociability that are not satisfied by the Internet (Maigret, 2007). Thus, television is still the main canal through which narratives are diffused to the audience.

Consequently, television narratives can be analyzed as texts conveying the shared values of a society. Similarly, the study of the consumption practices of television texts can inform us on the negotiation of meanings related to identification issues.

Through this article, I aim to present the results of my empirical research concerning the consumption of Turkish drama series from Greeks. First, I discuss my methodology and I analyze the relations between the two countries as well as the historical narratives that constitute the foundation of modern Greek identity which since its conception until today is considered to be “opposed” to the Turkish cultural identity. Then, I present my results and the reason why these series enhance Greeks to better understand Turkish culture and civilization.

## AIM AND METHODOLOGY

This study concerns the representations projected by Turkish television soap operas and their reception by fans in Greece. In order to study the consumption of these soap operas, I have conducted an empirical research based on 50 in depth interviews with individuals having different socio-economic backgrounds, different ages and residing in different geographical

areas in Greece<sup>1</sup> between 2016 and 2018. The recruitment of people who participated in my research was realized with convenience sampling and snowball method.

## Cultural Identity and Alterity

Identity presupposes *difference*. The consciousness of belonging to the same community emerges only when one is facing other communities that are perceived as “foreign” (Ladmiral & Lipiansky, 2015). Thus, alterity is a crucial element for the construction of one’s identity, as social subjects tend to identify themselves to a particular social group with which they consider that they share similar characteristics and values which are by definition opposed to the characteristics or the values of a different group (Todorov, 1989).

Cultural identity is based upon factors considered as objective (such as heritage, history, political context, ethnic origins, traditions, religion etc.), but it is also based on subjective elements that are part of the consciousness of the members of a community. First and foremost, cultural identity is a social representation that allows a community to define itself and to be recognized by others. This representation is made by images, symbols, stereotypes, myths and historical narrations that allow the community to figure out its own “personality” and its unity.

In philosophy, it has been highlighted several times that self-awareness as a specific identity and singular individuality is formed only in close interaction with others. Thus, for Hegel (2012), self-awareness is only possible through the recognition of another consciousness. Each one tries to dominate the other or to suppress it in order to acquire the certainty of itself. Each tends to assert itself as unique and thus exclude the other. As a result, the sentiment of identity is forged and reaches self-consciousness only by opposition to what is considered to be different and the rejection of the *Other*. Furthermore, Sartre (1943, 1954), pointed out that the *Other* exists as *Other* only if I reject him and consider him as different. Similarly, I exist only if I am denied by the *Other*.

Additionally, psychologists demonstrated that identity is formed progressively since the first months of a baby’s life and always in interaction with others<sup>2</sup> (Spitz, 1968). Consequently, social subjects form their identity since the moment they are born by learning to recognize what is familiar and similar to them and what is “different” and thus opposed to their identity. The child thus gradually interiorizes the different groups to which it belongs and which are rooted in the history, in the memory, in the experiences and in the representations of the group.

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1 The interviews took place in Athens, Chalcis, Thessaloniki and Komotini.

2 Since the first months of a child’s life begins a process by which the individual will come to perceive his own individuality as distinct and separated from others, through affective, cognitive and semantic mechanisms.

In other words, an identity can never be defined in isolation. On the contrary, as Denis-Constant Martin (1995) has pointed out, the only way to circumscribe to an identity is by opposing it to other identities. Because of the process of identity formation described above, the distinctive traits between different social groups are quite often overestimated (İnaç & Ünal, 2013). Therefore, in order to value their own identity, social groups tend to carry out a process of *otherization*. In this sense, individuals tend to construct positive stereotypes for their own social group while at the same time they create negative stereotypes for individuals who are excluded from it (Constantopoulou et al., 1999). In this sense, according to Stuart Hall, “identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render ‘outside’, adjected” (Hall, 1996, p. 5).

Thus, every identity (national, gendered, political, etc.) is formed by opposition to another identity and hence by its rejection. Taking this under consideration, it can be understood, that *Others* are also part of our identity as they represent what *we are not*.

For Benedict Anderson (1991), the nation is an *imagined community* that is socially constructed. Anderson refers to an “imagined” community because “the members, even of the smallest nation, will never know most of their fellows, will not meet them or even hear of them, but in the minds of each one lives the image of their communion” (Anderson, 1983, p. 49). In this context, television narratives - and particularly soap opera narratives<sup>3</sup> - play a significant role as they provide common images that shape the imaginary community described by Anderson (Dhoest, 2004). National identity refers to the sense of difference that one individual feels towards another. This difference is based on the conceptualization that these two individuals belong to different nations or distinct national groups within a multicultural environment (Smith, 1995). According to Jacques Derrida (1978), there is no culture or cultural identity that does not have its “other” of “self”.

### **National narratives and Greek Identity: The Turk as the *Other***

The Greek-Turkish antagonism is one of the few oldest enduring conflicts between neighbors worldwide and it is not only based on tangible and objective conflicts (minority issues, the Cyprus problem, interests over Aegean, etc.) but also on emotional elements (Heraclides, 2011).

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3 For Alexander Dhoest (2004), soap operas constitute a particular category of television program not only because they occupy an important position in the prime-time zone but also because they are considered to be important narrators of myths in contemporary society.

Historically, the encounters between the two neighboring countries could be classified in three different periods. The origin of this rivalry can be found in the Middle Ages, at the battle of Manzikert in 1071, between Byzantine “Greeks” and Seljuk “Turks”. This first phase of encounters ends with the conquer of Constantinople by Mehmed II the Conqueror (1453). The second period is from 1453 to 1821, which is portrayed by the Greeks as 400 years of “Turkish occupation” and “yoke” while the same period is considered by the Turks as a model of tolerance and multiculturalism, in which the Greeks flourished as no other non-Muslim community. Finally, the third phase of confrontation is the period from 1821 (the start of the Greek War of Independence) until today (ibid, 2011).

During the Enlightenment, Turks (and generally Muslims) become synonymous of the “*Other*”. Against the Turkish “demon” the opposite was considered to be Greece (Moskov, 1972). Upon this logic begins to rise the philological philhellenism that nourishes the Greek national consciousness. Thus, during this period modern Greeks are considered to be descendants of the ancient Greeks. This conception of Greekness, which is supported for various reasons by the philhellènes among the European elites, becomes the dominant narrative upon which Greeks are considered to be part of the “civilized” modern European world while Turks constitute the exact opposite (Constantopoulou & Larochele, 2013). Thus, at the moment of its creation (1830) the Greek state is named Hellas. This name refers to the historical and cultural heritage of the ancient Greece and its claim by the Greeks who are self-defined as Hellenes (Couroucli, 2002).

The historian Constantinos Papanigopoulos, who is considered to be the founder of modern Greek historiography, establishes in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the concept of historical continuity of the Greek nation from antiquity to the present, making the distinction of Greek history in three different periods: ancient, byzantine and modern. Thus, Papanigopoulos integrated the Hellenistic and Byzantine eras in the Greek narrative and thus was able to achieve historical continuity between Ancient Hellenism, Christianity and Byzantium (Heraclides, 2011). Despite the disagreements between the historical narrative established by Papanigopoulos, the idea that modern Greeks are descendants of the ancient Greeks and have an interrupted history of 3000 years is commonly accepted (ibid, 2011).

The narrative that nourished the Greek War of Independence, is based not only to the idea of direct descendance of modern Greeks from ancient Greeks but also to the difference between the modern Greek identity (which was considered to be “modern”, “European”, “westernized”, “progressive” etc.) and the Ottoman (Turkish) which was considered as the exact opposite (“uncivilized”, “barbarian”, “backward” etc.), (Constantopoulou

& Larochele, 2013). On the other side, Greeks are considered by Turks as a Christian group who lived under the tyrannical Byzantine Empire, who have not any relation to the ancient Greece, who had the occasion to flourish under the Ottoman Empire and who were ungratefully opposed to it without any reason (Heraclides, 2011). Turks are thus considered to be Greeks' traditional enemies. This is not only due to tangible elements but also to the different historical narratives that constitute a source of conflict and of negative feelings between the two parties (ibid., 2011).

On this point, we have to highlight, that prejudices and stereotypes reflect the relations between different socio-cultural groups. Thus, they are highly influenced by the characteristics of such relations. Hence, a situation of conflict between two countries will cause negative representations for each other. Very often, stereotypes serve as tools in order to justify the existing relations. For instance, conquerors and oppressors always justified their actions by creating an undermining image of the nations and the populations submitted to them (Said, 1978; Ladmiral & Lipiansky, 2015).

On a political level, the bad relations between the two countries are considered from both sides as given and inevitable following Carl Schmitt's logic according to which the “Other” is the great “Enemy” that can never be a “friend” (Heraclides, 2011).

On a social level, taking a closer look on media representations might be useful in order to better understand Greek-Turkish relations and the enduring negative feelings between the two neighboring populations. Very often, Greek popular culture products represent Turks. This representation is not only negative but also rather stereotypical. A characteristic example of this is the movie entitled *Loafing and Camouflage: Sirens in the Aegean* (2005) as well as its sequels *Loafing and Camouflage: Sirens in the Shore* (2011), *Loafing and Camouflage: I4* and the very recent film *Aegean SOS* (2019).

All these three comedies have as objects the life of Greek soldiers who are doing their military service while there is a conflict or a rivalry with Turkey. In these movies, Turks are always represented as dark-skinned and aggressive individuals who provoke Greeks without any particular reason. Thus, it can be understood, not only that negative stereotypes persist until today but also that the eventuality of an army conflict between Turkey and Greece is still considered as possible. Similarly, Greeks are being otherized by Turkish media products (Yilmazok, 2018).

## Turkish dramas in Greek television

Since 2000, the production of Turkish soap operas<sup>4</sup> is in constant development. These soap operas have indisputably a great success at a local level and are also exported abroad. More precisely, they were first diffused in countries that were in the sphere of cultural influence of the ancient Ottoman Empire (which means the Balkans and the Middle East). Later they were also exported even as far as, Latin America, in China, in Pakistan, in India, in Bangladesh, etc.

Turkish television soap operas contain ingredients that conduct the viewer into a fantasy world of globalized consumerism and romantic love that defies national boundaries (Olson, 2000). At the same time, however, they project traditional family structures and gender roles. It is this element that differentiates the soap operas in question from the American prototype. Alexandra Bucciante (2010, p. 7) has described this peculiarity of Turkish soap operas with the phrase the “Turkish touch”<sup>5</sup>.

Turkish soap operas are now exported in more than 140 countries. One of the most popular soap operas is *Muhtesem Yuzyil* (Magnificent century) that has been watched by almost 400 millions of viewers worldwide. The soap operas in question seem to have even overcome in popularity telenovelas in Latin America that until recently were “dominant” in this particular geographical area.

Among the countries that consume Turkish soap operas, Greece has become a great consumer of these products. This consumption has considerably augmented since the economic crisis. During this period, the local production has been practically diminished. As Greek television channels did not have the means to produce local series, they turned to productions from the neighboring country. On this point, it should be pointed out that the

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4 Some researchers use the term “diziler” (translation from Turkish to English: series) to refer to Turkish serial fictions, in order to underline the particularities that differentiate these products from classic American soap operas or Latin American telenovelas. However, since soap opera is a transnational and transcultural phenomenon, its articulation also changes from one place to another. Specifically, as Allen (1989) explains, each country’s experience with the range of texts that are defined as soap operas is different: “It’s like ornithologists, taxidermists and bird watchers who come from a dozen different countries. They all talk about birds, but in one country there are only eagles, in another pigeons and chickens but not eagles, in another parrots and pigeons but not eagles and chickens, and so on” (Allen, 1989: 45). In other words, the communities of viewers, industrialists, and critics that make up the three interpretive communities described by Robert C. Allen are different for each national culture. In this sense, the same television genre can have many variations from one country to another. Turkish soap operas have similarities with American soap operas but differ from them in many ways. Moreover, in non-Western countries the soap opera format is seen as part of the melodramatic tradition since the target audience is mostly female and the stories deal with conflicts between rich and poor. In this sense, Turkish serial fiction should be defined as melodramatic TV series while taking into consideration that the products in question contain stylistic and narrative elements that are peculiar to the Turkish TV industry (Kesirli Unur, 2015).

5 For more information on the representations projected through Turkish soap operas consult the article of D. L. Larochele entitled ““Brad Pitt Halal” and the Hybrid Woman: Gender Representations and Religion through Turkish Soap Operas”, published in 2019.

production of a single episode of a Greek serial fiction costs about 70,000 to 80,000 euros, while the purchase of an episode of a Turkish soap opera costs about 7,000 to 8,000 euros (Moore, 2013). Furthermore, according to the European Bank, Greek households were forced to adopt a certain number of strategies in order to affront the new financial situation. These strategies included reducing the consumption of specific goods, discontinuing subscriptions to services, postponing payments, obtaining an additional job or increasing the number of working hours etc. Consequently, the consumption of “non-necessities” (theatre, cinema, museums etc.) was dramatically reduced. Therefore, Turkish soap operas had an ideal context of diffusion, in this country in a state of lack.

In 2010, the Greek market began to import systematically soap-operas from the neighboring country. More precisely, in June 2010, the soap-opera *Binbir Gece* was the first big success that established the leading role of Turkish soap-operas in Greece. The serial in question that was diffused by *Ant1 TV*, marked very high audience rates and thus was the top program in the prime-time zone during several weeks competing with other Greek products of the same genre that were particularly successful until this moment. Since 2010 up until today over 50 Turkish soap operas have been diffused by Greek TV channels.

## FINDINGS

Globalization is considered as the worldwide spread of Western - particularly American - popular culture. However, other de-westernized cultural and media flows may challenge the domination of Americanized cultural products (Iwabuchi, 2002). For instance, Japan is a leading country as far as the production and the exportation of cultural goods is concerned (e.g. anime, television dramas, pop music etc.). As the global economy develops into an increasingly capitalist system, there is constant pressure to commercialize media systems (Straubhaar 1991). At the same time, technological development has favored - especially since the second half of the 1990s - the transnational export of local media content (Barker, 1997), thus making available to national audiences various types of alternative modernity’s that differ from the modernity as proposed by American media productions. In this context, American serial fiction has become both more powerful and influential as well as less hegemonic and less popular (Ang, 2007). The conceptual shift from “cultural imperialism” to “globalization” serves to better grasp this contradictory complexity. Cultural imperialism involves a one-way mechanistic process of homogenizing and absorbing the culture of the colonized into the culture of the colonizer. In contrast, globalization refers to a much more incoherent and

multilateral transnational process whose cultural outcomes and impacts are much more difficult to grasp (Ang, 2007).

In his pioneering study on cultural globalization, Arjun Appadurai (1996), referred to a new global economic culture. This new global economic culture can no longer be understood according to models that describe the structural relationship between an “advanced” center and a “less developed” periphery. On the contrary, this new global economic culture should be understood through a more fluid model of transnational cultural flow in which the United States do not have the leading role but constitute a node in this complex system. On this point, it should be emphasized that the United States continue to play a central role within this complex system. Nevertheless, the hegemonic position previously occupied by the United States is now in competition with other countries such as South Korea or Turkey. In this sense, Appadurai describes a polycentric system in which the United States is only one of the central nodes.

The further development of neo-liberal capitalist modernity has allowed the global television culture to flourish. In this context, global capitalist modernity represents a world that is increasingly interconnected and interdependent (Straubhaar, 1991). Global capitalist modernity goes hand in hand with the proliferation of new versions of modern culture that highlight particular identities that are different from hegemonic Americanism. In other words, this global culture is simultaneously characterized by homogenization and heterogenization, similarity and difference (Ang, 2007). As a result, in recent decades, global television culture has been characterized by the emergence of local and/or regional alternatives that offer new versions of modernity. In this context, the hegemonic role of the United States as the cultural avatar of contemporary modernity seems to be declining in favor of the emergence of new forms of modernity that are more familiar and/or close to American modernity for some countries (Iwabuchi, 2002). In recent decades, Turkey has become one of the central nodes of this complex televisual system described above.

Straubhaar (1991) introduced the concept of *cultural proximity* in order to explain the success of local (de-westernized) media products over global (Americanized) products. According to him, cultural proximity occurs when “nationally or locally produced material that is closer to and more reinforcing of traditional identities, based in regional, ethnic, dialect/language, religious, and other elements” (ibid., 1991, p. 51).

Thus, the particular success of Turkish drama series in Greece could be explained as an effect of the *cultural proximity* between the two countries. As mentioned above, at the moment

of its creation (1830) the Greek state is named *Hellas*. This name refers to the heritage of the ancient Greece and its claim by the Greeks who have self-defined *Hellenes*. Up to this moment, Greeks were named *Rums*. They formed the Rum-millet of the Ottoman Empire and they had as a religious and communitarian leader the Patriarch of Constantinople. The transit from Rum to Hellene symbolizes the transit to the official Modern-Greek identity. The revendication of an identity in continuity with ancient Greece took shape within the group of literate trading communities residing in urban centers and with the support of philhellenes who were literate people with a classical education and militant for the return of Greece among the free and Christian nations. However, this “new”, “modern” and “official” identity (the identity of the Hellene) did not conduct to the abolition of certain ethics, values and habits with Ottoman influence, especially as far as popular class is concerned<sup>7</sup> (Couroucli, 2002). Consequently, Greek identity is marked by this ambivalence between these two different traditions. While being “European”, the Greek cultural identity is also determined by oriental traditions, customs and ethics. This ambivalence of the modern Greek identity has been highlighted several times by social anthropologists who have conducted field studies in Greece. For instance, Michael Herzfeld (1997) proposed the term “cultural intimacy” in order to describe this phenomenon. By proposing this term, Herzfeld explained that the official cultural affiliation (in our case the modern Greeks’ claim to the heritage of Ancient Greece) does not always correspond with the cultural affiliation at an intimate level (inherited traditions and values by the Ottoman Empire).

Through Turkish drama series are portrayed values, habits and elements that are common to the two countries and do not characterize westernized cultural products. These elements (traditional family structures and gender roles) are what Alexandra Buccianti (2010) has described as the “Turkish touch”. More precisely, the subjects I interviewed during my research seemed to particularly enjoy the gendered roles accorded to men and women (31 individuals), the representation of the institution of family (29 individuals), as well as the representation of romantic love (23 individuals). As a consequence, the *cultural proximity* between Greece and Turkey and more particularly the common elements between Turkish culture and Greek popular identity contribute to the great success of the series in question in Greece over other cultural products projecting the occidental way of life. Thus, Turkish soap operas offer an *alternative modernity* that is closer to Greeks than the modernity proposed by

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7 The fighters of the war of Greek Independence (1821-1830) did not have the same origin with the literate communities that initiated the national project. Many of them were speaking diverse popular dialects and they knew neither ancient Greek language nor ancient Greek history and were not involved in the national project from the beginning.

American TV series. The following declarations are representative of this trend:

“They [Turks] have values. They respect the family (...) Turkish series do not project anything vulgar like the American series”, Female – 51 years old.

“I like that they [Turks] don’t mix roles, that everyone has their place. Men are men and women are women. I also like that they respect the family. Everyone in the family has a specific role. The older ones are the most respected. That’s the way it should be”, Female – 24 years old.

“I love that they [Turks] show the true love. Pure love without vulgarities and without underestimating women. Not like in the American series where everyone sleeps with everyone”, Female - 52 years old.

Thus, Greeks seem to identify their everyday life habits more easily to the narratives of Turkish series. This identification of individuals to the characters, to the situations and to the social environments represented in Turkish soaps enhance their emotional attachment to the storylines. Furthermore, Turkish soap operas do not surprise them as they are capable of understanding the interpretations, the intentions, the attitudes, the roles and the social and cultural situations they watch and that they consider as being part of their own lives. This identification with the audiovisual contents dedicated to everyday life and culture creates a sense of proximity to the audiences which not only intensifies their interest for the program but also their emotional implication to them. We can argue, that as far as soap operas are concerned, their appreciation and their quality is evaluated in terms of identification and of representativity. One of the main characteristics of soap operas is their focus on everyday problems in the private sphere (Hobson, 1981; Ang, 1985; Geraghty, 1991; Modleski, 1994). Thus, their perception in terms of quality depends on an important level from their ability to identify themselves with the narratives projected through them. The more these narratives describe realities closer to their lives, the more their qualitative perception is raised.

Through the consumption of Turkish soap operas, Greek audiences have the possibility to discover the common traits between their own culture and Turkish culture. Consequently, several subjects that participated in my research pointed out that through the viewing of Turkish soap operas they realized that the two neighboring populations share several common characteristics and habits. The realization of the similarities between Greeks and Turks stimulated some of the subjects I interviewed (14 individuals) to reconsider some of the negative stereotypes that they may have believed in the past for the Turks. The following declarations are representative of this trend:

“Turks have many similarities with Greeks. I recognize myself through these serials. I recognize my values (...) They look like us. The appearance, the customs, the foods, the hospitality, the importance accorded to God...”, Female, 52 years old

“They [Turks] are not that much different after all... They have the same habits, the same values... I like that, I believe it’s closer to us than Americans”, Female – 42 years old.

“They [Turks] are becoming more likable through Turkish series... how to explain you that? I had a different image of them in my mind before I started watching these series but I realized that we have much in common...”, Male – 57 years old.

“These series really changed my mind in relation to the Orient. Before, I was really reluctant of even visiting Turkey. Now I am more open in discovering their culture (...) They really look like us”, Female – 60 years old.

Turkish soap operas propose an alternative modernity. This modernity - characterized by elements such as traditional family structures and gender roles – is more familiar to the subjects that participated in my study than the modernity offered by occidental narratives. As a result, Greeks do not only better identify themselves with the narratives proposed by Turkish series but they also discover Turkish culture and redefine their definition of the *Other*. Consequently, it seems that Turkish series enhance a *decentration process*. Ethnocentrism is the first and natural movement when social subjects are confronted to alterity. Social subjects tend to consider that their own narratives, values and ways of thinking are natural and thus they constitute the obliged foundation of humanity. Decentration is the process of admitting that the *Other* may be *different* but it is also *similar* as it is also a *human*. Turkish soap operas’ storylines project the lives of human beings that may have several problems too as it is the case of the content recipients. Love problems, social problems, economic problems... All these have as common denominator the vulnerability of human beings. Thus, the Greek audience is invited to look to the *Other* projected through these cultural products as a human being with which they may have several differences (religious, political, historical etc.) but also many similarities.

Consequently, Turkish series function as elements of intercultural communication as they “explain” Turkish culture to Greeks who are invited to evaluate this culture on a new basis beyond the historical and emotional narratives that constitute a source of negative feelings. Thus, they conduct to the recognition of the cultural similarities between the two countries. However, we have to point out that this is not valid for all the subjects’ interviewed during our research. The degree of identification with Turkish soap-operas’ characters and of decentration depends on the instruction level, on the geographical area in which interviewees reside as well as to the personal and family history.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Alterity is a crucial element for the construction of one's identity, as social subjects tend to identify themselves with a particular social group with which they consider that they share similar characteristics and values which are by definition opposed to the characteristics or the values of a different group.

The narrative that nourished the Greek War of Independence, is based not only to the direct descendants of modern Greeks from ancient Greeks but also to the difference between the modern Greek identity and the Ottoman (Turkish) culture which was considered as the exact opposite. Thus, negative stereotypes emerged from both sides that dominate collective imaginaries until today.

The representations projected through Turkish soap operas offered alternatives to the Greek audience. More precisely, through Turkish drama series are portrayed values, habits and elements that are common to both countries and that do not characterize westernized cultural products. Thus, Greeks seem to identify themselves more easily to the characters of Turkish series. Additionally, through the consumption of these soap operas Greek audiences have the possibility to re-examine the representation they have for the Turks and are invited to discover not only the cultural differences but also the common traits between the two populations.

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## CHAPTER 6

# CULTURAL CODES CREATING A UNIVERSAL CONTEXT AND RECEPTION OF THE AUDIENCE: THE CASE STUDY OF *İSTANBULLU GELİN*

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### ABSTRACT

Television series is one of the production types that has a wide audience in the broadcasting industry. Turkish series have a rising value that are received with a great interest both in national and international scale. In this study, how the series *İstanbul Gelin* (*La Novia de Estambul*) presents cultural codes by creating a universal context, will be analyzed. With both its nomination for an international award and its formal features differentiation in the Turkish series industry, *İstanbul Gelin* was chosen as a sample of the study. Following a survey, it is revealed that the viewers of *İstanbul Gelin* are encoding the cultural codes. The study investigates which cultural codes exist, how these codes are received, how to create a universal context beyond the national in *İstanbul Gelin* by conducting a questionnaire with open ended and closed ended questions, a technique that was made using the/a descriptive study method. The aim of this study is to describe how Turkish cultural values are received and how the audience gave meaning to the cultural codes through the television series and to determine of the existence of cultural codes in *İstanbul Gelin* and the universal representation of these cultural codes. The method of the study is qualitative research that provides descriptive data for the topic of study and also the questionnaire technique is made use of in the study. In the study, the sample group is created to represent strong ability and it is targeted to gather systematic data through the obtained data. It is revealed that maternity and being a peer are equally sacred and most of the participants think that family, relatives and children are Turkish cultural values.

**Keywords:** Television series, culture, cultural codes, universal context, *İstanbul gelin*

## INTRODUCTION

Television series as a production are produced with the purpose of reaching a mass audience. It is also known that television series, which gather their target audience per screen with various format and content features, are undoubtedly a profitable investment.

National TV series broadcasted on national TV channels in Turkey are followed by large audiences which surpass the international examples. These productions have the features of both the unique characteristics of national production dynamics and the content of being a ‘ Turkish’ series. In particular, various themes in Turkish TV series are in great demand and the plots are made in a manner that is fascinating to the audience.

The series are filled with cultural codes and have become a channel for the reproduction of culture at the same time. Culture, as a living organism, affects and is also influenced by mass media. How viewers perceive television production as a matter of curiosity due to the fact that, in the watching process, the viewer’s code revelation process is basically a personal process. Some productions, however, can pass over national boundaries and create an international context as a production beyond all personal processes. Herein, cultural codes surpass their national contexts and are carried to international dimensions with universal themes and universal feelings.

In this study, the elements of Turkish culture *İstanbul Gelin* contains are analyzed and how these elements are processed at the level of cultural codes and how it forms a universal context. an analysis of how the audience watching the *İstanbul Gelin* perceive cultural codes will be presented.

### **Culture: Transferring and Transforming System of Local and Universal**

There are multiple definitions of the concept of culture covering all the material and spiritual values that each society has. According to some sources, culture is everything about how a society lives and what human beings create. It is the accumulation of knowledge and stereotyped behaviors transferred from one generation to another (Tezcan, 2008, p. 4).

According to the Turkish Language Association , culture is the totality of the tools which is created in the social development process by creating material and spiritual values and is used to transfer them to future generations, showing the scale of domination to human’s natural and social environment (Kültür, 2019) .

British anthropologist Edward B. Tylor defines culture as a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morality, tradition and other characteristics and habits acquired by humans as a member of society (Yöre, 2012, p. 565).

Culture is a set of values that form a parameter of human behaviour and that express abstract or concrete meaning. Hofstede states that culture is the result of the co-programming of the mind and continues to exist within this framework. Co-programming of the mind takes place in three stages. These stages are as follows; human nature, culture and personality (Demirel & Tikici, 2004, p. 53). The images that have the same meaning by people who share a common culture constitute the cultural codes of that culture.

### **Cultural Codes and Encoding-Decoding**

According to Clotaire Rapaille, cultural codes, which are named as an image of cultural values, are defined as “the unconscious meaning we attribute to an entity for the culture we were raised in” (Kayalık, 2012, p. 3). Culture includes the social structure as well as the different concepts that make up belief, language, thought and art. These different concepts are called cultural codes. The code of culture is the concept that we attach to nearly anything (car, food, relationship, country) through our culture. Cultural codes are seen as sources that define, explain and even guide societies (Nalçakan et al, p. 70).

The beginning of the work for the reception of media receivers is based on the tradition of cultural studies. The reception studies based on Stuart Hall’s “Encoding-Decoding” aimed to determine the position of the recipients in the face of media messages. Hall’s model assumes that the audience receives the media texts in three ways: (dominant), negotiated or oppositional, according to the desire of the coders (Şeker, 2009, p. 105). In his article in 1973, “Encoding / Decoding” Hall, (1999, pp. 59-61) sees the audience as both a receiver and a source. Dominant reading; naturally and inevitably corresponds to the hegemonic point of view.

Opposite reading; the meaning that the person who encodes the message as desired is interpreted in the opposite way to the interpretation of the meaning of the message. With partial adoption of dominated meanings, discussant reading is defined as the keeping the comments for himself/herself in a negotiated way due to exclusive situations as the local conditions (Kulademir, 2007, p. 255).

Hall does not assume a direct communication or intention overlap between the sender and the receiver in this process, but refers to coding and decoding as separate, not random, processes. The creation and encoding processes of the message relate to social, economic,

cultural and ideological contexts. He argues that not all people see the same text in the same way as the interaction process causes differentiation in the reading of media texts. In reception studies, three traditions exist: reading and comprehending texts in the context of literary studies, suggesting that different texts are possible with the tradition of Cultural Studies, and reading the ideology in the messages with semiotics. (Serttaş & Gürkan, 2015, p. 92).

## **Series as a Universal Production Form in Television**

Series are one of the program genres of televisions. Nowadays, series that are intertwined with the serials are watched by many people due to the fact that they arouse curiosity, tell a continuous story in each chapter and are a dramatic narrative based on a common ground of a continuous place but consisting of different series of events.

Television series are the most watched program types in society. This type of program is different from other program types in many ways. Scenarios similar to human daily life are covered in series. With these features, a combination of these qualities and the characteristics of television as a mass communication tool form a basis for the high rate of watching movies and acceptance of the society easily and the increase in its influence. Its active role in society has made television and television series the subject of much research (Kırtepe, 2015, p. 230).

Single-episode television films, mini-series, long-running series are generally referred to under the title of drama. In the research conducted in the USA, dramas are classified under two titles. According to this classification, series are dramas that are usually broadcasted once a week and include a story that begins and ends in each episode. A serial is a drama that consists of a main story that does not end in each section but only the side stories end in each one. It is not possible to distinguish the two species with precise lines. In order to attract a larger number of viewers, both types contain a lot of the same characteristics (Özmen & Yıldızhan, 2004, pp. 293-294).

series consist of an episodic structure in terms of narrative. In a sense, each chapter tells a different event. The story that begins in each chapter is concluded at the end of the chapter. On the other hand, serial by definition, is endless, creating continuity that will last for months and years, while each chapter that makes up the series tells an uninterrupted story and each chapter is cut at the most exciting part of this story. Each episode is a continuation of the previous one, so there is a main event and every episode around this event is told. There are a (large) number of characters and there is an end, so it is possible to end the serial when the main plot is resolved (Çöteli, 2016, p. 125).

The common goal of series and serials is to create a habit for the audience. In this respect, the series can be considered lucky . Due to the nature of serials, each episode continues with the same plot of the previous episode and the episode is cut at the most exciting part and this arouses interest for the audience. The charm of serials is the ending of the episode and the audience has to wait for the next episode. However, it is difficult to say the same thing for the series. The series' habit-forming strategy is composed of sympathy for the main characters and entertaining or emotionally satisfying the audience. *Avrupa Yakası, 7 Numara, Çiçek Taksi, Arka Sokaklar, Çocuklar Duymasın, En Son Babalar Duyar ve Benim Annem Bir Melek, Kanıt* can be seen as the examples for series. *Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?, Muhteşem Yüzyıl, Adını Feriha Koydum, Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki, Al Yazmalım and İffet* are the examples of serials (Çöteli, 2007, p. 126).

Nowadays, serial-series have emerged by combining the positive elements of the two formats and eliminating the negative elements. In this unified format, each chapter tells a story that is opened and closed, as well as an ongoing story. Thus, this does not distract someone who misses a part of an episode from the program. In addition, thanks to the ongoing story, program-dependent audiences are created. The creation of integrity within each episode and the expanding of time and space from episode to episode increases the tempo (İmik & Yağbasan, 2007, p. 105).

Considering the existence of an industrialization targeting leisure time and studies which assert that entertainment is becoming more and more routine, it is seen that an important part of this process is television programs based on standard and continuous renewal. Within these programs, series have a special place and are also among the most popular program types (Geçer, 2015, p. 15).

### **Series as Cultural Production, Transfer and Reproduction of Culture**

Television series are built on specific topics. These consist of social issues and problems such as poverty, love, wealth, violence, war, heroism, gender, family, justice, health, education, religion, youth, murder, theft, suicide, and so on. The stories and scenarios of the series are built on the cultural values of society within the framework of social and individual problems. Television series communicate with viewers through poverty, lovelessness, loneliness, search for confidence, hopelessness, injustice, violence, work, many individual and other social problems in home and school life (Karaboğa, 2016, p. 187).

Mass media is a channel where the values of social structure and culture are reproduced within the framework of the characteristics of societies. The process of interpretation of mass media is based on the interaction with the audience. Media texts are produced through social representations. It is important for the audience to know the development process and values of the social structure in the process of interpretation of these texts. Being visual and audio, its ability to reach large audiences make it inevitable that television will be a medium where representations related to culture are re-produced. (Karadaş, 2013, p. 69).

Being a mediating factor in a social structure, culture creates a social harmony by providing the integrity of the elements in the society and giving them a personality. In doing so, the aim is to create a culture instalment process that imposes and adopts norms, values and roles to community members. In this process, the individual is under the influence of mass media along with many other variables. With the effect of recent developments, television has gained importance in social life in this respect. Almost every kind of program plays an important role in spreading the messages in the society especially with series (Oğuz, 2005, p. 169).

The concept that has been advanced by Singhal and Udornpim (1997) highlights the importance of language in the success of exported television content, but it also addresses the significance of common values, images, archetypes, and themes across cultures that allow content to reach beyond cultural boundaries (Berg, 2017, p. 3417).

These TV series broke viewer records in the Middle Eastern and North African countries, bringing in foreign currency while, at the same time, helped Turkey's clout to rise in the region through the promotion of the Turkish lifestyle (Mihalakopoulos, 2011, p. 181).

On the other hand, Kemal Uzun, the director of TV series *Noor*, said that "neither the characters nor the subject matter, nor the featured locations are foreign [to viewers]". "They do not feel like outsiders to what is taking place. We are close cultures, close geographies; we have close ties" (Mihalakopoulos, 2011, p. 183).

Turkey is a Muslim society, and regardless of their genres or storylines, the dramas communicated through Turkish soap operas occur against the background of a Muslim society. Orhan Tekelioğlu points out the conservative nature of modernity that is presented in the Turkish series with a strong tendency for the "protection of family," which, he argues, has its roots in the Turkish modernization process. Most of the dramas take as their main theme conflict between generations and various clashes between the norms of modernity and tradition, all of which are usually eventually consolidated within a conservative normative framework (Yörük & Vatikiotis, 2013, p. 2370).

Moreover, Turkish TV series, as much as being a pole attraction, also provoke a great deal of conservative criticism around the Middle East. While presenting an alternative portrayal of women to the conventional Middle Eastern housewife, their storylines usually include divorce, extramarital affairs, and premarital sex (unfaithfulness, unwanted pregnancies, etc.). Strong fatwas against the most popular of Turkish soaps, *Noor*, have been an issue for top Muslim clerics charging it with immorality and corruption. Turkish programs are held responsible for increasing divorce, weakening of faith among the youth, and even mass murder. Since 2010, the Arab Spring has also blamed on the liberal inspirations of Turkish soaps (Yörük & Vatikiotis, 2013, p. 2376).

Globalization and regionalization have found their mutual language through the mass profitable industry of TV series. While one stream tries to unify and universalize, the other one uses the oldest manner and through narrative techniques presents the uniqueness of human fate in given circumstances found in special social systems. Showing one culture in a different manner, about which the other one has previously developed stereotypic connotations, and breaking such stereotypes, telenovelas and series can be a form of fight against cultural stereotypes. Therefore, spreading the understanding between cultures, television series and their social networks, through interactions on forums and blog pages become a culture for itself. In other words, the term cult TV would seem to refer to the method of watching and reacting to certain shows rather than referring to the shows themselves” (Panjeta, 2013, p. 108).

## History of Turkish Television Series

As a tool that changes and transforms daily and social life practices, habits and culture, television is positioned in the middle of social life with its unique dynamics and it led to serious changes in our habits of both receiving the news and entertainment. As an entertainment text, the local series which are a type of television and television series have further strengthened its place in our lives with an increase in their number in recent years (Kızılışımşek, 2019, p. 70).

Even though the history of the local series began in 1975, Turkish audiences first met the series in 1972 with the translation of a French series called “*Bedava Dünya Gezisi*” into Turkish. Following this, in the period of Musa Oğün’s being Turkey’s Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) director, foreign series such as *Shirley’in Dünyası*, *Görevimiz Tehlike*, *Uzay Yolu*, *Kaçak* and *Sirk Dünyası* were broadcasted. In addition to foreign series, local films such as *Karaoğlan*, *Tarkan*, *Malkoçoğlu*, *Kara Murat*, *Küçük Hanımşefendi*, *Kezban*, *Ayşecik* and *Turist Ömer*, which were shot in serial form, were also effective in terms of creating the habit of watching series in Turkish audiences (Ünür, 2013, p. 34).

With the 2000s, Turkish production companies, which have become prominent in producing content for the series sector, have reached a level that can compete with the world with their rich content and technical foundations. Over a hundred series are produced every year in Turkey (Öztürk & Atik, 2016, p. 75).

The number of television series that increased and started to be watched a lot, especially in the 2000s, became a “craze” in colloquial terms. During this period, almost all national television channels, except news and music channels, allocated their generation of “prime time” (the most watched time period of television) into series. In the last decade, Turkish TV series have made significant progress in terms of shooting quality and artistic value (Ergüney, 2017, p. 53).

Turkish television series, which have an significant mass audience in Turkey, have taken their place in the international market today. The process of attracting attention of Turkish television series abroad; series became more popular than expected and became a promotion that promoted and represented Turkey. Turkey has risen up to the country with the second most increased number of series exports in the world as of 2018 (Turkish television series broke the record exports, 2019).

Ratings in Turkey and conducted researches show that series broadcasted especially during prime-time broke records and they become the subject of daily conversation for individuals. In front of the television, the viewer can find himself getting rid of the troubles and routine of his daily life and relate himself to social representations Karadaş, 2013, p. 69). It needs deep and interdisciplinary research to understand why the audience is so intensely interested in the series. There are a lot of questions that require field surveys integrating psychology, sociology and economics.

According to the survey conducted by Radio and Television Supreme Council in 2018; local series are the second most watched programs. Looking at the broadcast streaming of the channels in prime-time, which is the most watched television of the day in our country, it is seen that mostly the series take place in the period above mentioned. (RTUK, Television Watching Tendencies Survey, 2018: 53). This program type is different in many ways from other program types. Scenarios similar to human daily life are covered in series. With these features, a combination of these qualities and the characteristics of television as a mass communication tool form a basis for the high rate of movies watched, easy acceptance of society and the increase in its influence (Kırtepe, 2015, p. 230).

## **Turkish TV Series: Dynamics of Intense Interest in Country and Abroad**

The television series sector in Turkey constitutes a rapidly developing market. This market is a world not limited to Turkey and expands over the world. Television series becomes the most effortless and economical tool for reaching entertainment . The series are broadcasted during the prime-time period, which is defined as the period in which television is watched the most (Şener & Güçlü, 2018, p. 281).

Dramas have been one of the most prevalent, and consequently most popular, forms of television programming in Turkey for the last few decades, and these serials have recently been heavily exported with great success. There are now about 70 different Turkish programs being broadcast in 40 countries around the globe—half of which are from the Arab League (Berg, 2017, p. 3415).

Turkish dramas have developed from being merely homegrown programs to being internationally exported products—in some markets even challenging local productions and U.S. imports in terms of viewership figures. Turkish programs have also expanded into countries in and beyond their own linguistic regions such as Azerbaijan and other Turkic-speaking countries as well as Western Europe, where many expatriate Turk's reside (Berg, 2017, p. 3416).

Reaching a very satisfying point in the local market in a short time, the starting process of local production series began in 2001 with the sale of the *Deli Yürek* series to Kazakhstan. In 2007, the series *Gümüş* was sold to the Middle East and then to Bulgaria and the Turkish series reached the Middle East and Balkan countries. Next, *Ihlamurlar Altında*, *Kaybolan Yıllar*, *Deli Yürek* as well as the 9 popular series in Turkey were sold to Middle Eastern countries for symbolic prices (Öztürk & Waste, 2016, p. 75).

Since the 2000s, Turkish production companies, which have become prominent in content production in the series sector, have reached a level that can compete with the world with their rich content and technical foundation. Series are produced in Turkey. Three out of every four series are exported to 103 countries. In 2013, Ukraine, Pakistan, Russia and China entered the market for the first time. Turkish TV series now reach 400 million viewers worldwide (Öztürk & Atik, 2016, p. 76).

It is seen that the extraordinary success of Turkish television series is becoming more and more popular in Arab countries, the Balkans as well as in North Africa and Latin America

which can be easily explained by factors such as geographical and cultural proximity (Aslan, 2018, p. 1).

Turkey is the second country that exports the most series of films after the United States and has obtained \$350 million in revenue from the series of films it exports. (Export of Turkish TV series, 2019).

### ***İstanbul Gelin: The Union of Local and Universal***

*İstanbul Gelin* is a Star TV series, produced by O3 Media with the signature of Onur Güvenatam, directed by Zeynep Günay Tan and Deniz Koloş, written by Deniz Akçay Katıksız-Armağan Gülşahin starring Özcan Deniz, Aslı Enver, İpek Bilgin, Salih Bademci, Dilara Aksüyek and Fırat Tanış. The series started broadcasting on March 3, 2017 and ended with the 87th episode on May 31, 2019 (About *İstanbul Gelin*, 2019). *İstanbul Gelin* is based on a real life story, adapted from “*Hayata Dön*” by Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu.

The series, starring Özcan Deniz and Aslı Enver, has been sold to Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica, Kazakhstan, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovakia, Kosovo, Iraq, Albania, Greece, Georgia and Israel . The CEO of the Global Agency, İzzet Pinto said in his statement that they are continuing negotiations with several regions for the series (Turkish TV Series Exports, 2019).

Produced by O3 Media and starring Özcan Deniz and Aslı Enver, Star TV’s series *İstanbul Gelin*, which has left its mark on Friday evenings, also attracts great attention from world television. *İstanbul Gelin*, after the success of its launch in Turkey, has reached large audiences in many countries. Talks are also ongoing with Argentina, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Brazil and Panama for the production, which is counting down the days to go on air in Mexico and Costa Rica. Many foreign channel representatives come to our country to visit the set of the *İstanbul Gelin* and to conduct interviews with the starring actors in particular. The leading actors of the series, Özcan Deniz and Aslı Enver, recently hosted guests from Croatia, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and talked about the success of the *İstanbul Gelin* (Countries to which the Istanbul Bride Series was exported, 2019).

After *İstanbul Gelin* was nominated for the 46th International Emmy Awards in the category of series, the director of the project, Zeynep Gunay Tan emphasizes that they represented Turkey on an international platform. By adding, “We are all very happy and excited and even being a candidate is a great honor, also it is a special honour representing

Turkey on an international platform. Moreover, two of the remaining 4 series are Turkish productions, which is very good for this sector” she said (46. Emmy Awards, 2019).

In the series, a love story of Süreyya, a beautiful and proud young girl who lost her mother and father at an early age and grew up with her only aunt, had to bear the burden of life at a young age. A love story is told that begins when Süreyya suddenly comes across a rich and handsome businessman, Faruk, and goes to Bursa as a bride. In the big city, the love between Süreyya, who grew up almost alone and devoted to his freedom, and Faruk, who, despite his modern appearance, was firmly committed to his family and traditions, had to pass many exams from day one. Süreyya deals with a lot of problems in the mansion. Süreyya; her mother-in-law, Esma, who wants to be the sole judge of everyone living in the mansion, is struggling with problems related to her husband’s troubled brothers Fikret, Osman and Murat. Süreyya deals with a lot of problems like her mother-in-law Esma who wants to be the sole judge of everyone living in the mansion. Faruk, on the other hand, will have to fight an enemy that comes across him at an unexpected moment. A half-brother, whom they do not recognize, unexpectedly sends life in the mansion in different directions later in the series. As the series progresses and the events develop, there is upheaval in the mansion, which has been kept in all its glory for almost four hundred years, and the whole family gets its share. As can be understood from the name of the series, it deals with the relationship with Süreyya and those around her and the fiction in this context (Kızılışimşek, 2019, p. 77).

The *İstanbullu Gelin* offers a framework that can be called local first; but beyond this framework, it acts on the central universal theme. Universal themes such as family, love and children are the backbone of the series. Presented as a plot of love story between two people, conflicts within the family and struggles unite local values with universal values. It has achieved measurable success on a national and international scale.

Global Agency, one of the leading distribution companies of Turkey, is preparing to take the *İstanbullu Gelin* series to MIPCOM (Series, Film, Content, TV and Production Fair) which will be held in Cannes between 14-17 October of this year (46. Emmy Awards, 2019).

## AIM AND METHODOLOGY

### Aim

The aim of this study is to describe how Turkish cultural values are received and how the audience gave the meaning to the cultural codes through the television series and determine

the existence of cultural codes, universally represented in *İstanbulu Gelin*. In this study, a representative sample group was formed and it was aimed to systematize the obtained data. In this study, how the *İstanbulu Gelin* series presents cultural codes in a universal context will be analyzed. The study of ‘how the cultural codes in the series *İstanbulu Gelin* form an universal context’ constitutes the original value of this work. The importance of the study is to contribute to the field and to extend very few studies.

## **Methodology**

The method of the study is qualitative research that provides descriptive data for the topic of study and also the questionnaire technique used in the study. The survey, which consisted of open and close ended questions, was applied to the audience who watched the *İstanbulu Gelin*. In the descriptive study conducted with the survey technique, it is examined which cultural codes exist, how these codes are acquired, and how they form a universal context beyond the national context in *İstanbulu Gelin*.

## **Universe**

Of the thirty-two series that aired in prime time on eight national channels; The series *İstanbulu Gelin*, a television series that is believed to have created within the framework of the universal theme such as national viewership success, its place in the international market, the number of international marketations, the international award nomination and family, love, has been selected.

## **Sample**

The Turkish series *İstanbulu Gelin*, which was nominated for the 46th International Emmy Awards, was launched in 2017. Because of being nominated for an international award and having distinctive formal features of the Turkish series sector, *İstanbulu Gelin* was chosen as the sample of the study. The field sample of the research consists of 609 participants. The demographic information of the survey participants were as follows: 609 participants; 30.4% of them were 35-44 years old, 28.9% of them were 30-34 years old, 18.2% of them were 25-29 years old, 17.9% of them were 45 years old and over, % 4,6 were in the 20-24 age group (Table 1). Socio-Economic Status (SES) is distributed to reflect the overall. 68.6% of the participants were female and 31.4% were male (Table 2). According to the marital status of the participants; The majority (62.9%) were married, 33.7% were single, 2.5% separated from their husbands, 1% were widows (Table 3). 7 out of 10 participants were university graduates,

14.1% were high school graduates, 3.9% were secondary, 2.8% were primary, 2.8% were graduate, 1% has a doctorate degree (Table 4).

## Process

The participants were asked 9 questions. In the survey; there were 5 close-ended questions, 2 separate 5-point likert type questions including 16 questions, and 2 open-ended questions. The *İstanbul Gelin* survey was conducted by the CATI (Computer Aided Telephone Survey) method and concurrently in the link environment. 609 participants were interviewed with 95% confidence interval (+/-) and 4% error margin. Age and gender quota were applied in the study. In the gender distribution, 2 out of 3 participants were female and 1 was male. The research was carried out in 39 districts of Istanbul. The sample distribution was directly proportional to the population of the districts. SPSS-23 version was used. Open-ended questions were coded by giving the code number by considering frequency level and percentage ratio. The expressions with low question-based frequency were collected under the other. The survey was a questionnaire in which participants participated with appreciation and interest. As a result of the reliability analysis applied to the scale containing the expressions related to the series, the scale form was found to be reliable ( $0.6 < p < 0.8$ ) ( $p = 0.725$ ) (Table 5). As a result of the reliability analysis applied to the scale containing the statements about *İstanbul Gelin*, the scale form was found to be reliable. ( $0.6 < p < 0.8$ ) ( $p = 0.758$ ) reliable (Table 6).

## FINDINGS

This study aimed to describe how Turkish codes are received and how the audience gave meaning to the codes through the television series *İstanbul Gelin*. The universe of this research consists of viewers watching television series. The sample of the research is 609 participants in Istanbul. Age and gender quota was applied in the study. The survey consists of open and closed-ended questions. After the fieldwork some important data was collected and made possible to evaluate the reception duration for *İstanbul Gelin*.

The series, *İstanbul Gelin*, has a structure that shows universal characteristics based on national values; it has been determined that the tendencies and levels of participation of viewers in expressions have some differences.

The participants were asked about the series they watched in the last year and they/we tried to get more than one answer. The highest percentage of respondents ( $n = 609$ ) answered

*İstanbul Gelin*. The other series that were watched are; *Kızım* (n = 219), *Kadın* (n = 180), *Çarpışma* (n = 175), *Söz* (n = 149), *Diriliş* (n = 134) (Table 7).

The participants who stated that they were watching *İstanbul Gelin* were asked some statements about the series and they were asked to give points 1-5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The participants who agreed with the statement “Turkish TV series attracted great interest abroad” gave an average point of 4.27 and stated that they agree with this statement. While the points that are given to “Culture is the carrier of local and universal values” statement is 4,16, it is seen that the score given to the statement “series are cultural productions” is below 4 (3.93) (Table 8 and Table 9).

When the participants were asked which of the values pertain to Turkey, more than half (57%) of the 609 respondents answered all, 27.3% answered “family”, 10.2% “relative”, 4.9% “child” and 0.7% answered “none” (Table 10).

It was aimed to receive more than one answer when the participants were asked the first thing that comes to their mind when they hear “*İstanbul Gelin*”. The highest percentage of the participants (32.8%) stated that “family / structure / drama / problems”. “Love” is among the answers at a high rate. Other than these, respectively; “Süreyya&Boran’s love, child, tradition / custom, relatives, bride, mother-in-law, pain / distress, Esmâ Sultan’s rules, mansion, solidarity, happiness, Faruk Boran and family business are given as answers (Table 11).

The 609 participants who stated that they were watching the *İstanbul Gelin* were presented with some expressions about the series and were asked to give points between 1-5 (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The highest score among the expressions was “the mother-in-law figure in *İstanbul Gelin* is unique to Turkish culture” (point = 4.17). Participants stated that they agree with most statements; The most important theme in “*İstanbul Gelin*” is the child and it is stated that participants are irresolute about whether or not the marriage ritual in *İstanbul Gelin* reflects Turkish traditions (Table 12).

When participants were asked “statements about the most important theme in the series”; the highest score of the participants at the level of importance was determined as “The most important theme in *İstanbul Gelin* is the mother” (Table 13).

When the question “Are products of Turkish brands used in *İstanbul Gelin*?” was asked to the 609 participants that stated that they watched *İstanbul Gelin*, the majority of the participants (70.8%) stated that they were not used, while 29.2% stated that they were used (Table 14).

When 178 participants who stated that products of Turkish brands were used in the İstanbullu Gelin were asked to name the brands of these products, the answers were İpekyol (10.7%), Karaca (9.6%) and Mango (9.6%) . Apart from these, many brands were mentioned. Some of the brands which were highly mentioned are Mercedes, Koton, ADL, Akay Gelinlik and Kervan (Table 15).

When the question whether Sureyya or Esma Sultan is a stronger character was asked to the 609 participants stated that they were watching the İstanbullu Gelin, it was determined that approximately 7 out of 10 participants considered Esma Sultan and 3 of them considered Süreyya as a strong figure (Table 16).

When participants were asked to compare the struggles of Süreyya and Esma Sultan, the participants stated that they thought that the struggle of Esma Sultan was more sacred than that of Süreyya by a small margin (0.8%). As the difference is very low, it can be interpreted that the participants see the struggle of both sides in approximately the same holiness (Table 17).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As a production type, television series are among the most-watched programs. The Turkish TV series, which attracted great interest in Turkey, have received great interest abroad in recent years. As of 2018, Turkey is the second country that exports the most series after the USA.

In Turkey where more than 100 series are directed each year, television series are built on specific topics. These include social issues and problems such as poverty, love, wealth, violence, war, heroism, gender, family, justice, health, education, religion, youth, murder, theft, suicide, etc.

It would be useful to mention some of the work done on television series. Emek Çaylı Rahte, in the article titled “Global Flow of Culture and Media: The Audience Reception of Turkish TV Series in Kosovo” (2017), placed expressed that geographical proximity, cultural consociates, historical backgrounds, personal links are also important elements for reception. Also, Anıl Yücel, in the article titled, “The Reception Analysis of “Muhteşem Yüzyıl”: Different Interpretations on The Image of Woman and Man” (2014), revealed that the audience decide according to the intellectual and ideological framework with an active and sensitive eye. Selin Sürar on “Effects of The Magnificent Century Series on the Greek People on the Axis of Reception Theory” (2016), found that the audience defend their nation-states and religions, but they follow this series because they follow the common cultural memory of the people of the two countries. At the same time, Lejla Panjeta stated that in the

article titled “Reception and Inherent Genre Features of the Turkish Series in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia: The Return of the Classical Story” (2013), traveling to other worlds and other peoples’ lives and cultures is the allure that performing serials are offering nowadays. The culture is untamable, and like lava is able to set roots in peoples’ hearts. Current works, Yunus Emre Ökmen and Oğuz Göksu, in the article titled “Export of Turkish Series In The Context of Cultural Diplomacy and Contribution to Cultural Transfer: the example of *Diriliş Ertuğrul*” (2020), cultural values were transferred through exported television series and improved the country’s recognition. With the series *Diriliş Ertuğrul*, cultural values were transferred and the country’s recognition was achieved. Oğuz Aktürk and Mustafa Yağbasan, in the article titled “The Effects of Turkish Series on Azerbaijan Citizens and Contribution to Turkish” (2020), tried to determine the extent of Turkey’s role in Azerbaijani culture and to what extent it contributes to the spread of the Turkish language by survey method. Sezer Ahmet Kına, in the master’s thesis titled “Cultural Representations in Television Series: The Example of Mardin Series” (2020), examined how cultural elements are represented in the series shot in Mardin by discourse analysis method. Aykut Sığın and Raheb Mohammadi Ghanbarlou, in the article titled “An Evaluation Towards Understanding the Socio-Cultural Impacts of Turkish Television Series on the Azerbaijani Society” (2020), their relationship with Turkey from Turkish television series both in terms of working with similar lifestyles and ethnic “fellow” Azerbaijan aimed to investigate the socio-cultural classes of society.

*İstanbul Gelin*, which started broadcasting on Star TV in 2017, met the audience as a series with the most watched and national themes such as love, wealth, family, children and motherhood. The series has also been nominated for the 46th International Emmy Awards. In this study, how the audience encodes the themes and cultural codes in the series called *İstanbul Gelin*, and how the series form a universal context beyond national is examined.

Television series, as a product of the culture of the geography in which they are produced, have many functions socially. They ensure the transfer of culture at the level of codes and are reproduced through these codes. In this context, the series is shaped as a cultural production. It is seen that the points given to the statement ‘Series are cultural production’ remain below 4 (3.93). The participants remark that they agree with the statement that the Turkish TV series received a lot of attention abroad and culture is a carrier of local and universal values.

Culture consists of several elements and family, relatives, children as constituents are important elements for the traditional cultural structure. When the participants were asked from which values *İstanbul Gelin* reflects that are peculiar to Turkish culture (family, relatives, children, all, none), it is seen that more than half (57%) of the participants said

“all”. In this context; it is possible to say that values such as family, relatives and children are unique to Turkish society in *İstanbul Gelin*.

It is aimed to receive more than one answer was aimed for when the participants were asked about the first thing that comes to their mind when they hear “*İstanbul Gelin*”. The highest percentage of the participants (32.8%) stated “family / structure / drama / problems”. “Love” is among the most frequent answers . Although the series is based on the theme of love, the audience perceive the theme of family in the foreground.

The participants were asked about the relationship between the mother-in-law and the bride, whether the marriage ritual was unique to the Turks, whether the themes of family discords, motherhood, children and love were peculiar to the Turks and the extent of its universality. The statement that the mother-in-law in the series was unique to the Turks received the highest score (4.17). The most important theme in the series is the child. It is estimated that the participants are irresolute about the statement “the marriage ritual reflects Turkish traditions in *İstanbul Gelin*. Similarities such as Faruk-Süreyya’s eloped relationship, Esma Sultan’s dowry shopping for the brides, and gold etc. can be found in Turkish traditions.

The participants stated that the most important theme in the series is “motherhood”. In the series, it is possible to say that the mother role of Esma Sultan who first appeared as a mother figure, was later attributed to her brides Süreyya and İpek, Süreyya’s aunt and friend, and the housekeeper Gülistan where the theme of motherhood was highlighted.

When the participants who watched the *İstanbul Gelin* series were asked whether Esma Sultan or Süreyya is the strongest character of the series, 66.2%. answered Esma Sultan Although the character Süreyya, who stands on her own feet without her family and stands up t for love, as seen as strong, it is possible to say that the participants see Esma Sultan as the stronger as she gave up her love for the family and kept her 400-year-old Boran surname and her mansion.

To summarize the results of the research; *İstanbul Gelin* is a production where themes such as motherhood, children, love and wealth are shown and can be seen together. The fact that scenes of violence are not included and Esma Sultan and Süreyya’s sacred struggle are highlighted in the series makes it different from other series. It also differs from the presentation of women in Turkish television series with the struggle of two women and the relationship between bride and mother-in-law. It is revealed that maternity and being a peer are equally sacred and most of the participants think that family, relatives and children are Turkish cultural values.

It was found that *İstanbulu Gelin* transfers the values and codes of Turkish culture to the audience and that the audience perceives these codes on different levels.

In the series *İstanbulu Gelin*, the description of the psychologist scenes clearly is one of the important factors that distinguishes it from other series. In the series, the findings and recommendations made by the psychologist are shaped as an important element that makes the series more watchable.

In this study carried out within the scope of the television series named *İstanbulu Gelin*, a certain point with regards to the comparison of the concept of 'culture' on a national and universal basis, come to the forefront:

Of those participating in the study, 459 out of 609 participants are university graduates, while 383 are married, 418 are female, and 361 are within the age group of 30-44. The opinions of the university graduate audience, who live in Istanbul, make up the majority in this study, with a ratio of 75,4%.

The majority of the participants stated that the Turkish television series attract a great deal of attention in foreign countries. 483 of those participating in the survey think that the culture is the carrier of national and universal values.

410 of the participants recognize television series as cultural productions, while 199 of the same are not of the same opinion, which, as a matter of fact, is a high percentage compared to the number of participants. It is of importance that the prioritized values of Turkish culture are family, relatives and children, respectively. Yet, this perception contradicts itself due to placing family in first place but not placing 'children' in second, which comes after 'relatives'. 472 of the participants state that the 'mother-in-law' character in the television series bears the characteristics that are specific to Turkish culture, which leads us to the conclusion that the 'mother-in-law' is accepted as a national factor. Moreover, 415 of the participants think the same for the 'bride' character in the same television series as stated above.

A national encoding is present in *İstanbulu Gelin* within the scope of the 'bride' and 'mother-in-law', as the main characters. In this equation, the relationality of the bride and mother in law is defined on a national basis, as well. 441 of the participants state that the relationship between the bride and the mother-in-law is reflected as it is in Turkish traditions.

Within the scope of the conflict of bride-mother-in-law and relatives, 420 of the participants state that the character of the mother-in-law reflects the truth based on the

Turkish traditions. The conflict of the characters of bride, mother in law and relatives are adapted into *İstanbul Gelin* as national codes. encoding.

With regards to the question of whether the parental discords are specific to Turkey and Turkish people, it can be seen that this situation is presented in *İstanbul Gelin* in a manner being encoded on a more universal basis, within the scope of the research. While 378 of the participants think that the parental discords are specific to Turkey and Turkish people, 163 of the same were undecided and 68 did not agree with this statement.

In the research, 317 of the participants suggested that the ‘wedding ritual’ reflect Turkish traditions, while 185 of the same were undecided and 107 did not agree with this statement. This ritual was established on a basis that is more inclusive in universal aspects, rather than solely reflecting the Turkish traditions.

384 of the participants think that the representation of ‘motherhood’ in *İstanbul Gelin* is specific to Turkish people, while 147 of the same were undecided and 78 did not agree with this statement.

509 of the participants stated that the ‘child’ factor is of importance within the scope of *İstanbul Gelin*. The child, as a universal encoding, is a dominant element in *İstanbul Gelin*. Additionally, 488 of the participants stated the theme of ‘love’ is significant in *İstanbul Gelin*. 422 of the participants mentioned that the most important character of *İstanbul Gelin* is the ‘mother’ character. It can be said that ‘mother’ character, along with the representation of ‘motherhood’ function as the entire carrier system for *İstanbul Gelin*.

403 of the participants stated the character of ‘Esmâ’ (mother in law) is the most powerful character of *İstanbul Gelin*, while 206 of the same suggested the same thing for ‘Süreyya’ (bride). This leads us to the conclusion that placing the ‘mother’ character can be done on a more powerful foundation.

Another interesting point obtained from the research is on which conflict is recognized as “more sacred”. The audience participating in the research attributed sacredness to the conflict between Esmâ and Süreyya on an equal level. This equality in the sacredness level forces the limits of the national frame, thus carrying it to a universal scale. Notwithstanding that the conflict between the bride and mother in law is given within a national encoding, the type and process of this conflict is given through larger outlines.

Another matter recognized within the scope of the research and must be approached delicately is the number of participants (413), who are of the opinion that no Turkish brands

were used in *İstanbul Gelin*. This situation reminds us of the fact that Turkish branded products should be considered to be used in Turkish television series.

Based on all the data collected, *İstanbul Gelin* involves universal values in itself, which is beyond being solely recognized as a national production. For this reason, it can be seen as an accomplished association of national production with universal values. Television series are aired as part of popular trends, which are essential products of broadcasting both in the national and international industries. While the success rate of *İstanbul Gelin* is measured based on the rating on national TV, its international success rate is shaped depending on the sales made to foreign countries. The competing demand for *İstanbul Gelin* from foreign countries can be described as the ability of identifying the universal aspects within the framework of Turkish Culture and Turkish productions.

As known to many, culture is the carrier factor for national productions and the one that is universal. Based on the fact that cultural codes are perceived both nationally and international in this process, television series - as the universal production format - produce strong representations. The television series *İstanbul Gelin* should be analyzed within this scope and through the flawless production to the precise. In fact, it displays a structure that does not only go beyond the national borders, but it also becomes a part of the universal production, thus managing to be approved by audiences on a universal scale. *İstanbul Gelin* is an accomplished Turkish television series proving its success both nationally and internationally.

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## TABLES AND FIGURES

		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
What is your age?	20-24	28	4,6%
	25-29	111	18,2%
	30-34	176	28,9%
	35-44	185	30,4%
	45+	109	17,9%
<b>Total</b>		<b>609</b>	<b>100%</b>

		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
What is your gender?	Woman	418	68,6%
	Man	191	31,4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>609</b>	<b>100%</b>

		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Marital Status	Single	205	33,7%
	The married	383	62,9%
	Divorced	15	2,5%
	Widow (Wife is Dead)	6	1,0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>609</b>	<b>100%</b>

		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
What is your educational status?	Primary school	17	2,8%
	Middle School	24	3,9%
	High school	86	14,1%
	University	459	75,4%
	Master's Degree	17	2,8%
	Doctorate	6	1,0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>609</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Reliability Analysis

<b>Table 5.</b> Reliability Test of Expressions Related to Sequences	
<b>Reliability Statistics</b>	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
<b>,725</b>	3

<b>Table 6.</b> Reliability Test of Expressions Regarding <i>İstanbullu Gelin</i>	
<b>Reliability Statistics</b>	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
<b>,758</b>	13

<b>Table 7.</b> Watched Sequences			
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Watched sequences	<i>Kadın</i>	180	29,6%
	<i>Diriliş</i>	134	22,0%
	<i>İstanbullu Gelin</i>	609	100,0%
	<i>Kızım</i>	219	36,0%
	<i>Söz</i>	149	24,5%
	<i>Çarpışma</i>	175	28,7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>1466</b>	<b>240.80 %</b>

<b>Table 8. Level of Participation in Expressions Related to Series</b>			
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Turkish TV series attracts great interest abroad	I strongly disagree	4	0.7%
	I do not agree	12	2.0%
	undecided	76	12,5%
	I agree	242	39,7%
	Absolutely I agree	275	45,2%
Culture is the carrier of local and universal values	I strongly disagree	6	1,0%
	I do not agree	14	2,3%
	undecided	106	17,4%
	I agree	231	37,9%
	Absolutely I agree	252	41,4%
Arrays are cultural production	I strongly disagree	22	3,6%
	I do not agree	28	4,6%
	undecided	149	24,5%
	I agree	184	30,2%
	Absolutely I agree	226	37,1%

<b>Table 9. Average Level of Participation of Expressions Regarding Sequences</b>		
<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>		
	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Turkish TV series attracts great interest abroad	609	4.27
Culture is the carrier of local and universal values	609	4.16
Arrays are cultural production	609	3.93

<b>Table 10. Values That Reflect Turkish Culture in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i></b>			
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Which of the following reflects the values of Turkish culture in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> ?	Family	166	27,3%
	Child	30	4,9%
	Relative	62	10,2%
	All	347	57,0%
	None	4	0,7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>609</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 11.** When the *İstanbulu Gelin* Comes to Mind First

		n	%
When the <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> comes to mind first?	Family / structure / drama / problems	200	32,8%
	Love	141	23.2%
	Child	47	7.7%
	Relative	36	5.9%
	Tradition custom / custom pieces	45	7.4%
	Süreyya Boran's love	49	8.0%
	Mansion	20	3.3%
	Bride, mother-in-law	35	5.7%
	Faruk Boran	18	3.0%
	Esmâ Sultan rules	26	4.3%
	Pain / discomfort	34	5,6%
	Happiness	19	3.1%
	Solidarity	19	3.1%
	Family company	11	1.8%
	Other <sub>1...</sub>	22	3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>118.5%</b>	

... It's a real story, it's a lot of series, the difficulties of being a woman, its houses, its withdrawal in Istanbul, its music, the clothes of the Boran brothers, different lives, Dilara's friends, Özcan Deniz, a series that I'm very sorry to do in the final, a popular series in Arab countries Osman's naivety and Fikret's ambition, Boran brotherhood, newly married people from İstanbul, spouse, newly married couple, new life, new house, wedding, Bursa Boran.

**Table 12.** Average Level of Participation in Expressions Regarding *İstanbulu Gelin*

Descriptive Statistics		
	N	Mean
The mother-in-law of the <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is unique to the Turks	609	4.17
The bride in the <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is unique to the Turks	609	3.94
The relationship between the bride and mother-in-law in the <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is the same as in Turkish traditions	609	4.03
The 'mother-in-law' in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> reflects the truth	609	3.94
The intra-family disputes <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is unique to Turkey and Turks	609	3.79
Domestic disputes are universal in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i>	609	3.54
'Marriage ritual' reflects Turkish traditions in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i>	609	3.49
The 'motherhood' in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is unique to the Turks	609	3.80
Children are important in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i>	609	4.16
Love is important in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i>	609	4.03

Mother is the most important theme in the <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i>	609	3.76
The most important theme in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is children	609	3.13
The most important theme in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is love	609	3.69
Valid N ( listwise )	609	

**Table 13.** Levels of Participation in Statements Related to *İstanbulu Gelin*

		n	%
The mother-in-law of the <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is unique to the Turks	I strongly disagree	20	3.3%
	I do not agree	17	2.8%
	undecided	100	16.4%
	I agree	177	29.1%
	Absolutely I agree	295	48.4%
The bride in the <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is unique to the Turks	I strongly disagree	24	3.9%
	I do not agree	35	5.7%
	undecided	135	22,2%
	I agree	174	28,6%
	Absolutely I agree	241	39,6%
The relationship between the bride and mother-in-law in the <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is the same as in Turkish traditions	I strongly disagree	18	3.0%
	I do not agree	30	4.9%
	undecided	120	19.7%
	I agree	188	30.9%
	Absolutely I agree	253	41,5%
The ‘mother-in-law’ in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> reflects the truth	I strongly disagree	24	3.9%
	I do not agree	33	5.4%
	undecided	132	21,7%
	I agree	187	30,7%
	Absolutely I agree	233	38.3%
The intra-family disputes <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i> is unique to Turkey and Turks	I strongly disagree	34	5,6%
	I do not agree	34	5,6%
	undecided	163	26,8%
	I agree	172	28,2%
	Absolutely I agree	206	33,8%
Domestic disputes are universal in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i>	I strongly disagree	35	5.7%
	I do not agree	55	9.0%
	undecided	215	35.3%
	I agree	154	25.3%
	Absolutely I agree	150	24,6%
‘Marriage ritual’ reflects Turkish traditions in <i>İstanbulu Gelin</i>	I strongly disagree	67	11,0%
	I do not agree	40	6.6%
	undecided	185	30,4%
	I agree	161	26.4%
	Absolutely I agree	156	25.6%

The 'motherhood' in <i>İstanbullu Gelin</i> is unique to the Turks	I strongly disagree	39	6.4%
	I do not agree	39	6.4%
	undecided	147	24,1%
	I agree	163	26,8%
	Absolutely I agree	221	36.3%
Children are important in <i>İstanbullu Gelin</i>	I strongly disagree	13	2.1%
	I do not agree	17	2.8%
	undecided	70	11.5%
	I agree	268	44,0%
	Absolutely I agree	241	39,6%
Love is important in <i>İstanbullu Gelin</i>	I strongly disagree	34	5,6%
	I do not agree	28	4.6%
	undecided	59	9.7%
	I agree	251	41.2%
	Absolutely I agree	237	38.9%
Mother is the most important theme in the <i>İstanbullu Gelin</i>	I strongly disagree	69	11,3%
	I do not agree	43	7.1%
	undecided	75	12.3%
	I agree	202	33.2%
	Absolutely I agree	220	36.1%
The most important theme in <i>İstanbullu Gelin</i> is children	I strongly disagree	127	20,9%
	I do not agree	74	12,2%
	undecided	113	18,6%
	I agree	183	30,0%
	Absolutely I agree	112	18.4%
The most important theme in <i>İstanbullu Gelin</i> is love	I strongly disagree	50	8.2%
	I do not agree	72	11,8%
	undecided	94	15,4%
	I agree	194	31.9%
	Absolutely I agree	199	32.7%

<b>Table 14.</b> Are Turkish branded products used in series of <i>İstanbullu Gelin</i> ?			
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Are Turkish branded products used in series of <i>İstanbullu Gelin</i> ?	Yes	178	29,2%
	No	431	70,8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>609</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Table 15.</b> Which Turkish brand products are used in series of <i>İstanbullu Gelin</i> ?			
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>

Which Turkish brand products are used in <i>İstanbul Gelin</i> series?	Kervan	9	5.1%
	ADL	10	5,6%
	Akay Brides	10	5,6%
	Arzum	6	3,4%
	Mercedes	15	8.4%
	Mango	17	9.6%
	LG	6	3,4%
	Mavi	8	4.5%
	Karaca	17	9.6%
	İpekyol	19	10,7%
	Koton	10	5,6%
	Mudo	7	3.9%
	Desa	6	3,4%
	Hatemoğlu	5	2.8%
	Not Remember	8	4.5%
Other <sub>2,****</sub>	25	14.0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>100%</b>	

\*\*\*\* Boran Turizm, Odak Mobilya, Boyner, Patik, Çağlar Şömine, Yargıcı, Takı Tasarım, Ramsey, e- Bebek

<b>Table 16. Who is the Most Powerful Character in <i>İstanbul Gelin</i>?</b>			
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Who is the most powerful character in <i>İstanbul Gelin</i> ?	Sureyya	206	33,8%
	Esmâ	403	66,2%
<b>Total</b>		<b>609</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Table 17. Whose struggle is more sacred in <i>İstanbul Gelin</i>?</b>			
		<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Whose struggle is more sacred in <i>İstanbul Gelin</i> ?	Sureyya	302	49,6%
	Esmâ	307	50.4%
<b>Total</b>		<b>609</b>	<b>100%</b>



## CHAPTER 7

# DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: TURKISH MELODRAMAS ON PERUVIAN TELEVISION

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### ABSTRACT

The idea that guides this research is that Turkish melodramas participate in Latin American melodrama's cultural and symbolic field associated with shared identity matrices - urban and rural, tradition and modernity. This cultural and symbolic capital is expressed in the topics of love, feminine subjectivities, family, conflicts, and traditions. What topics do they offer us? What dialogues do they establish with our cultural matrices? What changes have they produced on Peruvian television? In Peru, melodrama appears as a narrative form that makes the social order transparent. A form of representation of life with its own characteristics: women as protagonists of their own history, women as competent subjects in the most extreme conditions, and female sisterhood. Some findings of this research show that Turkey's melodramas have displaced the Brazilian, Colombian and American industry -among others- as source of foreign titles in Peruvian television. The most important topics are love and family, while religion appears as a meeting point for two countries with deep Faith traditions. A shared characteristic of Turkish and Peruvian productions is the centrality of female subjectivities and emotions. Finally, Turkish stories mobilize the local industry and offer a new repertoire of images to the audiences.

**Keywords:** Peruvian telenovela, Turkish melodrama, gender studies, female subjectivities, cultural matrices

## INTRODUCTION

Peruvian television has a substantial melodramatic presence. National miniseries and soap operas, as well as Mexican, Brazilian, Colombian and Argentine productions, have historically been part of Peruvian television programming. However, in 2014 Latina Television Network<sup>1</sup> decided to buy Turkish melodramas, which were successful on TV stations in neighboring South American countries. The Peruvian import was made from Chile, and *One thousand and one nights (Binbir Gece)* quickly captured the interest of the audience - directly competing with América Televisión<sup>2</sup> for the rating. The premiere of Turkish melodramas on broadcast stations in Peru has been constant since 2015 and has surpassed the importation of Latin American titles.

The idea that guides this research is that Turkish melodramas participate in the cultural and symbolic field of Latin American melodrama associated with shared identity matrices - urban and rural, tradition and modernity. This cultural and symbolic capital is expressed in the topics of love, feminine subjectivities, family, conflicts, and traditions. These images, stories, characters and topics brought on a stage effect around the processes of change that are taking place in the Peruvian audiovisual dynamic.

## AIM AND METHODOLOGY

This research analyzes the phenomenon of Turkish melodramas on Peruvian television. What topics do they offer us? What dialogues do they establish with our cultural matrices? What changes have they produced on national television? Analyzing melodrama and its varieties is necessary because it allows us to get closer to meanings shared by societies, to the spaces where different cultural dynamics are located (Hall 1997)

A mixed exploratory methodology is used in this research, combining different methodological tools. We have only worked with Turkish titles premiered on Peruvian screens in the 2015-2019 period.

- a) Recovery of the total number of Turkish titles premiered on Peruvian screens based on production typologies -titles, TV stations and programming schedules.
- b) Qualitative analysis of the content of Turkish stories.

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1 Latina is the second TV Network in the Peruvian market concerning audiences, ratings and production.

2 América Televisión is the most important TV Network in the Peruvian market, the driving force of Peruvian fiction production.

- c) Elaboration of an analysis matrix for the systematization of the topics present in all Turkish stories premiered in Peru.
- d) Development of a topics' word cloud.

This methodological exercise allowed us to generate and observe the issues in which the Turkish stories are concerned about and the relationships that may be established with the Peruvian audiovisual industry.

### **Turkish Melodramas Conquer The World**

Different authors argue that the success and demand for Turkish productions began in 2008 with *Noor* (*Gummus*). When it was broadcasted by the Saudi multinational broadcast company MBC (Middle East Broadcasting Center), *Gummus* and Mehmet's romance became a hit without precedents. Various factors made possible the transnationalization of Turkish melodramas. Mutlu (2010) claims that with the Republic of Turkey's establishment, the country entered a rapid modernization process. Some of the reforms led society's polarization around some dichotomies: Modernity / Tradition, Own / Foreign, East / West. For Mutlu (2010), the Yeşilçam melodramas on Turkish television collect these tensions and are represented in the conflicts generated by the difference in social classes and the existing differences between modernity and the urban of "the rich" and, tradition and the rural "of the poor." Cities appear as transcendent places, witnesses of changes and transformations, where the leading couple experiences their love in a context of difference and tension. One rich, the other poor; one urban, the other rural; one modern, the other traditional. These are topics that we recognize as similar to those in Latin America.

In these stories, the happy endings embody the possibility of managing the anxieties produced by the country's polarization, building representations that show modernity as something desirable, as a process that today's Turkey has to undergo. These melodramas are characterized by the cooperation between the traditional rural world and the modern urban world, and this characteristic express very powerful cultural proximity in relation to Latin America and Peru.

Lejla Panjeta (2015) points out that the stories of Turkish melodramas take up the original matrix of the great classic stories of history, expressing in the contemporary world an update of the "to be continued" as the narrative technique par excellence. Turkish cultural products also have their own aesthetic, expressed in camera movements, close up, slow motion, the complexity of the characters, their soundtracks, and the sound overlap as constitutive elements of each story. However, these characteristics were already present in Brazilian productions of

the late 20th century, audiovisual products that revolutionized Latin American melodramatic production.

Cavusoglu, Horn, Jerome and Cavazos (2018) point out that Turkish stories' success can be interpreted from Porter's Diamond model<sup>3</sup>: the capacities and demands of the market, the market conditions, the backings and institutional supports, and, finally, industry strategies.

Concerning the capacities and demands of the market, Turkish melodramas are installed in the cultural practice of fiction consumption and the demand of the markets. "Turkish soap operas attract a wider audience in these regions compared to American series, as they present a synthesis of modern life and customs / religion: *a unique combination of the foreign and the familiar*" (Cavusoglu, et al. 2018, 48)

Regarding market conditions, the authors mentioned above point out that it is indisputable that conditions in Turkey were favorable for the establishment of the *telenovela* industry. There is a close relationship with the established film industry, which is recovering after years of stagnation in the first decade of the new millennium, and has continued to show strength, both in the domestic market and abroad. Regarding institutional supports and backing, the authors acknowledge that the Turkish state has been the main driving force, with changes in state policies that encourage the growth of the *telenovela* industry:

For the *telenovela* industry, low prices for intermediate goods were encouraged by government subsidies and control of the broadcasting industry. This has contributed to the low initial cost of Turkish soap operas in international markets. (...). In 1980, TRT began outsourcing its television program production, which set the stage for the emergence of the *telenovela* industry (...). Furthermore, after 2010, the film and television sector received growing support from the Ministry of Customs and Trade to promote exports in the sector (Cavusoglu, et al. 2018, 49).

Cavusoglu, Horn, Jerome and Cavazos (2018) add that most of these products were filmed in Istanbul, a place with a unique historical and geographical background -a point of intersection between Eastern and Western cultures, a meeting place of two worlds-, that makes it unique. Finally, the *telenovela* industry itself has generated its strategies to be competitive in the local and international markets. When Turkish television ceased to be a state monopoly in the early 1990s, the different networks began to compete for the excellence of their products and audiences.

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3 Michael Porter developed in the 90s an analysis model that is part of economic theory. Its model looks at the competitive advantage of companies from four aspects: capacities and demands, market conditions, institutional supports and backings, and strategies developed by the industry itself.

Yesil (2015) points out that there are currently six Turkish companies consolidated in the production of fiction stories: Medyapim, Bocek Yapim, Mind-Made in Turkey Produksiyon, Pana Film, TIMS Production and Ay Yapim. And there are three major distribution companies for his fiction productions: Global Agency, ITV Inter Medya and Calinos Entertainment. These companies have made Turkey the second-largest exporter of television fiction stories in the world. Some companies have established alliances with Western companies, while others have become international distributors of audiovisual content, selling their productions directly to the United States, Europe and Latin America. ITV Inter Medya, founded in 1992, currently maintains its business interests in Latin America.

Turkish products are exported to about a hundred countries, surpassing Mexico and Brazil in the *telenovela* export market. In the Middle East and the Balkans, they have replaced Latin stories, and in Latin America -where there is a long tradition of melodramatic storytelling- Turkish melodramas have had a brilliant rise, in several cases surpassing the audience of national melodramas. Regarding this Turkish phenomenon, Yesil (2015) affirms that the significance of the transnationalization processes of Turkish dramas is closely related to the flows of the television medium themselves -the melodramatic cultural proximity of their stories, the know-how of the Turkish industry and the dynamics of the global television industry itself.

### **A Look at Melodrama in Peru**

Jesús Martín-Barbero (1993) points out that melodrama in Latin America is a privileged space to observe the different times of modernity, because it is a narrative of exaggeration and paradox, that touches everyday life as long as it lives from the time of recurrence and anachronisms, configuring spaces of primordial identities (Martín- Barbero 1993). Melodrama in Latin America lives in the *telenovela*.

A cultural matrix that feeds popular recognition in mass culture, a key territory for studying the non-simultaneity of the contemporary as the key to the miscegenation of which we are made (...) melodrama works in these lands a deep vein of the collective imagination, and there is no access to memory or projection into the future that does not pass through the imagination (Martín- Barbero and Rey 1999, 125).

Nora Mazziotti (2006) points out that the *telenovela* is a collective vocabulary that we Latin Americans share, a glossary that we can activate, share, discuss and contributes to our cultural identity.

Television started in Peru in 1958, in a context of illusion for modernity. Since its inception, Peruvian television opted for the melodramatic matrix -that of impossible loves, secrets, identities, lost affiliations and the exaltation of happy endings. The first titles produced raised a high dose of social content, denouncing social problems. Quiroz and Cano (1987) acknowledge that this “answered to a reality that was changing some aspects of the social composition of cities like Lima. Migrations to cities of the coast are larger, turning the neighborhoods into a new factor in the political game” (Quiroz and Cano 1987, 206). The founding character of the Peruvian melodrama will be María Ramos, the main character in *Simplemente María* (1969), who offers us a female model with agency, a model that escapes the domestic sphere and the role of wife-mother to fulfill herself as a woman.

*Simplemente María* presented an unusual character, but much more positive: the hardworking, creative, independent woman, who rises socially because of her talent, not because of her ability to seduce the boss with eyelashes flapping (Reyes de la Maza 1999, 64).

In the Peruvian case, melodrama appears to us as a narrative form that makes the social order transparent. In it, the values, fears, concerns of social groups that share the melodramatic experience are condensed. It is, in essence, a form of representation of life itself with its own characteristics: the presence of the variable race, migration as a possibility of female fulfillment, women as competent subjects in the most extreme conditions, women as protagonists of their own history, confluent love and demand for other masculinities, presence of extended families and female sisterhood (Cassano 2019).

Impossible loves, lost children, confused parents, heroines and mothers with agency, powerful villains, family relationships, intrigues and secrets are the elements and resources that these stories present to articulate their own ways of telling. Stories that seduce and establish themselves as “what we want to imagine” (Absatz 1995, 44).

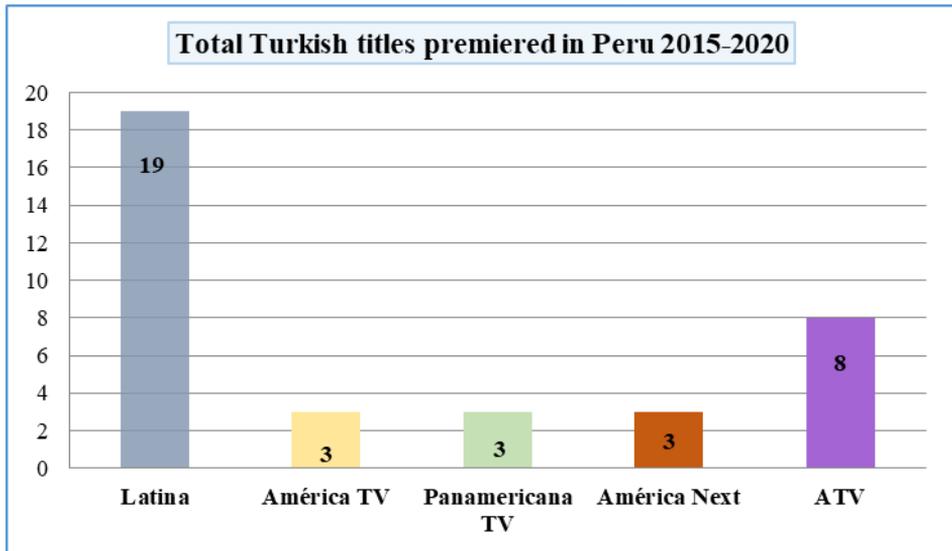
## **Turkish Fictions in Peru: First Findings and Links**

To introduce Turkish stories to Peru, Latina mimicked the commercial strategy of Mega (Chile), highlighting the romance and the more traditional keys of the genre that these stories have. This:

... meant a shaking in the audience, in the programming of several networks, and in the production of Peruvian fiction, mainly from América Televisión, which is the driving force of Peruvian fiction production. Latina premiered the Turkish telenovela *Las Mil y Una Noches* (*Binbir Gece*) in prime time on February 9, and during the first week it broadcasted hour-and-a-half episodes without commercial breaks (Dettleff, Cassano and Vásquez 2016, 335).

By replicating Mega's commercial strategy Latina won a good part of the Peruvian audience, consolidating its block of Turkish telenovelas in the national prime time schedule (Dettleff, Cassano and Vásquez 2016). The success of these productions made the other TV networks buy Turkish content. Figure 1 allows us to observe how Turkish TV products had spread since then.

**Figure 1.** Turkish fiction by TV networks in the period 2015-2020<sup>4</sup>



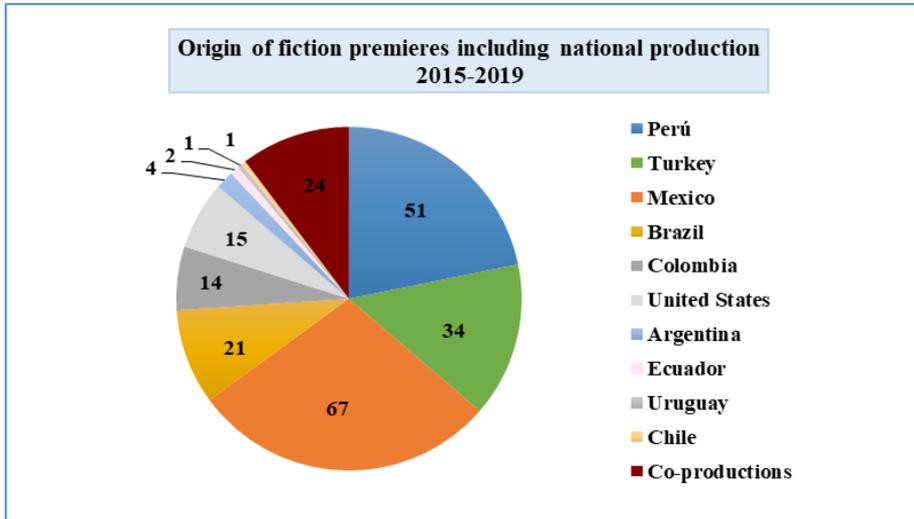
**Source:** Peruvian Audiovisual Observatory. Assembled by author.

In the period analyzed, the Turkish titles premiered in Peru are 36, with Latina and ATV being the networks with the most Turkish productions, broadcasting them in prime time, competing directly with local productions, but especially competing and surpassing the *rating* achieved by Mexican and Brazilian productions.

The success of the Turkish stories meant for the competing networks to reorder strategies and content, delaying or canceling several local projects, even though Peruvian stories were never surpassed in rating or share by the Turkish stories, showing how volatile Peruvian television industry is. Despite continuing their own projects, América Televisión -the leading TV network in local production- also broadcasted some Turkish titles: *Sila, captive of love (Sila)*, *La vida amarga (Acı Hayat)*, and *Recuerda cariño (Hatırla Sevgili)*.

<sup>4</sup> In this figure the two titles premiered in 2020 are added, as it seems important to us to show the continuity of their presence and loyalty of the market.

Figure 2. Origin of fiction premiered in Peru 2015-2019



Source: Peruvian Audiovisual Observatory. Assembled by author.

For the 2015-2019 period, the Turkish fiction audiovisual industry became the second provider of fiction content on Peruvian screens, displacing Brazil, Colombia and the Latin United States. It also surpasses co-productions imported by commercial broadcasting networks. Mexico is the only country that maintains its dominant presence in the Peruvian market, a presence sustained by the cultural proximity and the historical proximity of shared fates. To highlight, *Sila, captive of love (Sila)*, *One thousand and one nights (Binbir Gece)*, *Fatmagul (Fatmagul)* and *Elif (Elif)* were on the top 10 most viewed titles on their premiere years on Peruvian screens, surpassing Brazilian and Mexican premieres. Although Brazilian stories<sup>6</sup> haven't achieved the main spots of share in the last ten years, being surpassed by the most successful Turkish stories, meant a setback in the importation of Brazilian soap operas -especially from Globo TV<sup>7</sup>.

5 For the elaboration of this figure, the period 2015-2019 is considered because the complete data for 2020 is not available. The United States refers to Latin production. Co-productions are considered to be all those products made by more than one Latin American country.

6 Brazilian *telenovelas* have been present on Peruvian screens since the late 1970s. They have a captive middle-class audience.

7 For more detail, review the Peruvian chapters of the OBITEL 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 Yearbooks. In: <https://investigacion.pucp.edu.pe/grupos/oap/publicaciones/?tipo=Libros>

**Figure 3.** Dominant topics of Turkish productions premiered in Peru 2015-2020



Source: Peruvian Audiovisual Observatory. Assembled by author

The topics with the highest presence are those related to love and family, tensions between social classes and power, the search for justice, marriage and motherhood as the consolidation of love. All of them are part of the Latin American melodramatic cultural field.

Other important topics are those related to heritage and religion that we can associate with tradition, the identity of the self, the past, but also with what constitutes our today. In Peru, the religious tradition is a constitutive space of local identities. The religion represented in Turkish stories may be different, but faith, morals and the divine are topics that summon us as a society, and they are important in Peruvian stories also. Yesil states:

For years we imported Brazilian soap operas. Now our writers prepare similar storylines, but located in the Turkish context. Different country, different city, different names, but similar storylines: Love, money, romance, and family relationships. (Yesil 2015, 45).

Turkish melodramas are oriented towards universal topics and are inscribed in the cultural matrices of the genre –love, passion, intrigue, class confrontation-, but geared towards a global world, making sure to wisely combine the universe of the local –tradition- with global dynamics –late modernity. They are particular, but minimizing the Turkish specificities; they are global without being absolutely culturally homogeneous; they are culturally close to Latin America.

A shared characteristic of Turkish and Peruvian productions is the centrality of female subjectivities and emotions, the story centered on female characters with agency. In Peruvian fiction, it had opted for female characters with agency, dedicated to their families but with their own desires.

In recent years we find Marian characters along with many female characters with the seal of rupture of María Ramos. Entrepreneurial women, young people with their own life projects, more empowered female models that distance themselves from the Marian image (...). This feminine model of empowerment shows the complexity of the generic construction itself since it makes visible the mandates, the ruptures, the affective and emotional overloads that women experience (Dettleff, Cassano and Vásquez 2015, 325).

By 2015, the topics of Peruvian productions continued to propose some interesting advances –oriented towards family values, racial discrimination, migration, women’s entrepreneurship, self-improvement and sisterhood-, reaching a good reception from the audience.

In this context, América Televisión resumed soap operas production - which had been put aside favoring miniseries -, recovering the maternal female figure. Among the titles we can identify: *Amor de madre* (2015), which tells the story of five women, their struggles, their children, their dreams; *Valiente amor* (2016), which portrays the story of a young orphan due to the confrontation between two families from different social classes; *Solo una Madre* (2017), which tells the story of a young mother whose newborn child is exchanged for another one; *Mujercitas* (2017), a free version of the classic story by Mary Louise Alcott; *Mi Esperanza* (2018) story that brings us closer to the love and sacrifices of mothers; *Ojitos hechiceros* (2018) telenovela that introduces a plot line about gender violence; *En el piel de Alicia* (2019), a story that focuses on making visible the problem of gender violence against women.

As we can see, the arrival of Turkish stories and their good reception boosted the local industry, producing a return to what was known, to the founding model of *Simplemente Maria*, to our own melodramatic cultural matrices. This is a bid to return to our essence, to our know-how of making soap operas. Peruvian productions preserve the traits of enterprising women,

but from the figure of the mother. In several of these titles, the mother is the protagonist of these stories, becoming an agent of transformation. If we look at the three most successful Turkish titles on Peruvian screens, we can recognize similar traits.

Title	Television Network	Broadcasted	Rating
Sila	América televisión	Prime time	27,2
One thousand and one nights (Binbir Gece)	Latina	Prime time	27,1
Fatmagul	Latina	Prime time	26,8

Source: Kantar IBOPE Media Perú. Assembled by author

Sila, Sherezade and Fatmagul represent women who make a journey towards their own autonomy, they find their own agency. They are characters that demand transformations in their environment; they represent feminities that demand other masculinities. And the Peruvian audiences of Turkish productions seem to recognize themselves in these stories, finding experiences that dialogue with their lives and daily experiences.

All this happens in a convulsed national context. In recent years, Peru has seen a growth of groups and movements claiming the struggle of women and LGTBIQ+ people. #NiUnaMenosPeru joins the projects for changes in national legislation to combat cases of violence against women. At the same time, the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations works on public policies in favor of women and their rights to decide on their own bodies. All these spaces today face the onslaught of a conservative wave led by evangelical, Adventist and Christian churches, right-wing political parties with national reach and the international movement *Con mis hijos no te metas* -don't mess with my children-, who are seeking to undercut the recognition of citizen equality of men and women of different social, ethnic and gender classes.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the Peruvian case, the arrival of Turkish stories into our audiovisual industry has generated at least three displacements in the local cultural dynamics:

- a) **Mobility of the local industry**, a return to our essence of domestic production with social issues that today summons us as a society.
- b) **Changes in the products, which are imported**. Turkish productions displace global products from the Latin United States due to their similarity in topics and to Brazilian products due to the scenarios, audiovisual aesthetics and topics. Globo TV ceases to be the leading exporter for Peru and is replaced by Record TV.

- c) **Globalization of cultural forms**, a new repertoire of images summons us as audiences, new geographical and tourist imaginations<sup>8</sup> and proximity to other cultural industries such as music.

In this research, we find three discursive strategies in Turkish audiovisual production that make up a particular aesthetic wager: the use of close-ups centered on the hands and the touch of bodies as an element of action and the dramatic pause; the use of the *racconto* to locate the audience at a specific moment in history; and the use of the *voice-over* of the leading characters as an expression of shared thought, which expresses the character's desire. These aesthetic characteristics are key to thinking about the relationship with its audiences in Peru; one of the significant challenges of Brazilian productions for their vast consumption was the complexity of their plots. Turkish soap operas are also complex, but their aesthetic-narrative style may be facilitating the reading and interpretation of their contents.

We can read the Turkish stories in the light of the theoretical framework of melodrama as a cultural and symbolic field, since they show the tension between settings that coexist with the reality of Peru: tradition and late modernity; the rural world and the urban world; the myth of the past with the present and the possibility of the future. These Turkish stories recover everyday forms where recurrence, time of life, affection and family come together, and are probably directly dialoguing with polarities typical of our country. For example, in Peru, many of the tensions are manifested in the mishaps experienced by the coastal, more urban world, in relation to the Andean and Amazonian worlds, mainly rural.

Finally, the shared topics also reveal certain conservatism, of more traditional views of the romantic relationship –always heterosexual-, or of the idealization of female sacrifices in pursuit of achieving the goal of family happiness. Expressions that dispute with the modernity of female groups, LGTBIQ+ and minorities, laws in the quest of equal civil rights and more inclusive political projects that recognize changes in sexual and gender diversity.

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## CHAPTER 8

# YOUTUBE AS A NEW BROADCASTING MEDIUM FOR TURKISH TV DRAMAS: THE CASE OF THE MAGNIFICENT CENTURY DRAMA

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### ABSTRACT

While new communication technologies offer film production companies new possibilities, they also create new problems. Dramas have begun to be broadcast in new broadcast media other than traditional television. Among these is YouTube, a social media application and a video-sharing platform. Our study reviews *The Magnificent Century* drama. The reason for choosing *The Magnificent Century* drama is that it is the Turkish drama that has been exported to the most countries. Official channels were opened on YouTube for *The Magnificent Century* drama in 12 languages. In our research, we will use content analysis to try and identify the similar and different aspects of the YouTube channels in 12 different languages. Later, our study will focus in greater depth on the Turkish YouTube channel itself, which was the first to be opened, and which had the highest number of followers and views, as well as the highest number of shares, on the date our study was made. Open-ended questions were prepared and sent to the TIMs production company via e-mail, and the answers were also received via e-mail. Our study aims to determine the importance of YouTube and the possibilities it offers for the showing of Turkish dramas.

**Keywords:** Turkish dramas, The Magnificent Century, new communication technologies, YouTube, social media

## INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of new communication technologies, the media, telecommunications, and information industries have converged. The technical infrastructure that constitutes the traditional media has undergone rapid renewal, a major digital transformation has taken place, and new communication technologies have become widespread. The transition from traditional media to new media has led to significant changes in both the production and consumption of the messages broadcast. New communication technologies have provided many new possibilities such as the presentation of newspapers, magazines, radio, and television broadcasts in the same medium and the ability to instantly follow the analytical reports of those who follow these broadcasts. Rogers (1986, pp. 2-6) used the terms “interactivity,” “de-massification,” and “asynchronicity” to express new media. These features mean that users of new media can interact either in real-time or later, personalized messages can be sent to targeted users, and recipients can access messages either in real-time or later.

It has been claimed that the viewers/listeners/readers regarded as “*passive*” and “*receiver only*” in traditional media have been replaced by new media users/participants regarded as “*active*.” According to Castells, the potential to integrate text, images, and sounds in the same system in a chosen time period (real or delayed) and to interact from very different points in a global network where access is not financially problematic has completely changed the character of communication (2008, p. 440). Castells argued that revolutionary forms of mass self-communication were born from the genius of young users who became producers (Castells, 2016, p. 103). Jenkins also argued that participatory culture emerged in contrast to passive media audience, but also underlined that all participants are not created equal (Jenkins, 2018, p. 20).

Approaching the subject using a critical political economy method different from Castells and Jenkins, Fuchs states that the new media transforms every user into both customer and employee (Çakır, 2014, p. 82, 95). Fuchs says: “*The typical web 2.0 trading strategy ‘doesn’t sell access to people,’ whereas providers give users free access and sell them to third parties as productive commodities to generate profits. This relationship is extremely unequal.*” (Fuchs, 2020, p. 141) According to Fuchs; “*The users who google data, upload or watch videos on YouTube, upload or browse personal images on Flickr, or accumulate friends with whom they exchange content or communicate online via social networking platforms like MySpace or Facebook, constitute an audience commodity that is sold to advertisers. The difference between the audience commodity on traditional mass media and on the internet is that in the latter the users are also content producers; there is user-generated content, the*

*users engage in permanent creative activity, communication, community building and content-production.”* (Fuchs, 2010, p. 148)

The new media has enabled both media professionals and major media companies and other citizens to create and share their own media content, follow other shared content, and in turn share their own comments on the shared content or comments. It has become common for people from different geographies, from different cultures, with different socioeconomic status, to meet online, follow each other’s shares, and to interact. However, new media has introduced previously unknown problems to the agenda along with new possibilities. Many new issues such as failure to ensure the security of personal data, digital surveillance, violation of the confidentiality of private life, violation of copyright, use of content without permission and/or without giving credit, the blurring of boundaries between news and commercial information, heavy advertising content, misleading labeling and headings, disinformation, image manipulation, and hate rhetoric have started being discussed in the context of new media (Atabek, 2006; Evers, 2009; Geray & Aydoğan, 2009; Binark & Bayraktutan, 2013)

## **TV Dramas and New Broadcasting Platforms**

*“Beginning in the mid-1990s, digitalization led to a transformation of television’s technology, distribution, economics, media policy and use.”* (Lothar Mikos, 2016, p. 154) Using the means offered by the new media, television broadcasters present audiences with different alternatives every day. Today, television viewers are, on the one hand, able to watch broadcasts in a linear fashion on traditional media while, on the other, they can watch them at their own convenience through IPTV, Web TV, Mobile TV, digital platforms, mobile apps, and social media apps. Viewers can also access broadcasts on a mobile basis, switch between different devices while watching a program, share their comments on the programs they watch, and meet up with other viewers on the Internet to form fan communities.

The question at this time is whether or not television will become extinct and if it does continue to live, what will television broadcasts be like in the future? Asking *“Is television really dying?”* Katz writes: *“For the television some of us knew in the 1960s and 1970s, the answer is yes. The television of ‘sharedness’ - of nation-building and family togetherness - is no longer with us, having made room for a television of hundreds of channels, of ‘niche’ broadcasting, of portability, one that is part of a system that integrates with the Internet and the other new media.”* (Katz, 2009:7) Katz points out that television has changed in terms of both content and contact: *“Television has evolved along two axes - content-wise from ‘same’ to ‘differentiated’ and contact-wise from ‘together’ to ‘alone’* (Katz, 2009, p. 7).

By asking the question, “*In a Social Networking World, What’s the Future of TV?*” Henry Jenkins draws attention to the power of fans watching TV shows and notes that the programs are not limited to a single platform; rather, they are presented in various new media applications. Jenkins says “*Increasingly, these television programs come bundled with a range of other media ‘extensions’ as part of what people in the industry are calling ‘transmedia’ or ‘crossplatform’ or ‘360 Degree’ strategies.*” Jenkins points out that television content is accessed via different devices rather than the classic TV set: “*My students at University of Southern California are watching more television content now than ever before but relatively few of them own television sets. They are watching television series through boxed DVD sets and off sites like Hulu (for free) or iTunes (at a price), or through illegal downloads. They are watching television on computer screens and through their ipods. And those who own television sets may be watching it through their game systems rather than subscribing to cable. So, television without TVs?*” (Jenkins, November 23, 2009).

With the widespread use of new communication technologies, TV dramas have started being broadcast on the Internet, social media, and digital platforms in addition to traditional television channels. The number of TV dramas produced for new media such as Netflix, HBO, Puhu TV, and Blu TV is also increasing. Film production companies in Turkey also use new media with ever-increasing effectiveness.

The social media applications most preferred by film production companies in Turkey are YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, which are also the social media applications used the most in Turkey. Unlike the other three social media applications, YouTube is a video sharing platform.

Many Turkish dramas shot for television have an official channel on YouTube. All of the episodes of many dramas broadcast on television, or just the key scenes, are uploaded by the production companies to the drama’s official channel on YouTube. Broadcasting Turkish dramas on YouTube makes it possible for people living in different parts of the world with access to the Internet to watch Turkish dramas one episode at a time or in full provided no access restrictions are in place.

### **The Possibilities Offered by YouTube to its Users**

According to the “*Facts and Figures 2019 /Measuring Digital Development*” report published by International Telecommunication Union, approximately 53.6% of the global population (4,1 billion) used the Internet in 2019 (ITU, 2019, p. 1). The development of the

Internet, its use by more people, and the strengthening of its technical infrastructure encourage media organizations to use the Internet more and more.

According to the “Digital 2020” report, the most popular social media platform in the world is Facebook, which is used by 2.499 billion people. This is followed by YouTube with 2 billion, Whatsapp with 1.6 billion, FB Messenger with 1.3 billion, Weixin/Wechat with 1.151 billion, and Instagram with 1 billion people (wearesocial, 2020, p. 95). According to the “Digital 2020 Turkey” report, the most popular social media platform used by Internet users in Turkey is YouTube at 90%. This is followed by Instagram, Whatsapp, Facebook, and Twitter respectively (wearesocial, 2020, p. 43).

Founded in 2005, YouTube was acquired by Google in 2006. More than a billion hours of videos are watched on YouTube every day (Youtube, 2020) making it a very important platform for content-creating people and organizations to bring their content to their target audiences. In addition to broadcasting pre-prepared videos, YouTube also provides the means to make live broadcasts. The technical infrastructure that allows uploading long videos, the provision of free access, and revenue sharing with channel owners through advertising makes YouTube an important platform as well as being a medium in which dramas are advertised and promoted and which enables communication with fan bases.

YouTube has many features that increase interaction. There is a section below YouTube videos for user comments. Users can convey their thoughts to the content provider or other users by writing their comments in this section. Users can show what they think about each other’s comments by clicking the like or dislike buttons or they can reply to comments. In this way, users can share their comments with others, express their thoughts about other people’s comments, or learn what other users think about their comments.

YouTube can also provide users with some technical conveniences. These include free access to videos 24 hours a day, watching videos with subtitles in different languages, watching the video faster or slower by changing the playback speed of the video, and changing the screen sizes.

YouTube offers many alternatives for users to access the videos they are interested in with ease. The ability to search within the YouTube archive, search the channel’s own archive, create playlists, use tags, and sort the videos shared by the channel by date or by popularity are but a few of these alternatives. In addition, like every social media application, YouTube suggests new videos to the users by considering their profile information and viewing history thanks to its algorithm.

As with other social media applications, both the number of views of videos on YouTube and the interaction received have become important indicators of prestige and success. The number of times a video, be it a singer's video clip or a trailer for a new movie, has been watched can be considered as important data regarding the potential success of future projects, and this information can be used in planning the number of future events as well as their venues and locations.

YouTube also offers important amenities to channel owners. One of the most important amenities it offers is access to analytical reports. Channel owners on YouTube can get access to YouTube's data regarding access to their channels. In this way, they can find out such information as who their viewers are, where they connect and with what devices, how long they watch videos, and how they react to videos. This information makes it easier to get a more accurate understanding of audience expectations and to make the right decisions for planning new videos and new projects.

In addition, YouTube also has some features available to partners using Content Manager. One of these allows content to be blocked in certain regions in certain circumstances (Youtube, September 1, 2020). In this way, the producers of a drama can prevent episodes being watched on YouTube if some parts of the drama have not yet been broadcast in certain regions.

As stated above, new media has brought new problems in addition to new possibilities to the agenda. *"Violation of copyright"* and *"use of contents without permission and/or credit"* are among these problems. Original content produced by making large investments and taking economic risks can be copied and shared on the Internet and other digital media without permission. Legislation is being made to prevent these situations and new technologies are being developed to facilitate technical pursuit. Moreover, the use of official channels for content producers with easy access to their own content when possible is becoming a key method in combating pirated broadcasts. In this way, they can make decisions about the shared content themselves and not lose what is rightfully theirs in economic terms. Replying to the question *"What sets YouTube apart from other social media applications when it comes to the drama called The Magnificent Century?"* the TIMs production company touched on this issue, saying: (TIMs, September 1, 2020)

*"YouTube is the biggest television channel in the world right now. It contains hundreds of thousands of different formats with countless content that is renewed every day. For us not to work with such a collective 'television channel' is unthinkable. In addition, in the digital age, if you do not make them available to common use as the owner of the business, they will end*

*up on the Internet anyway through piracy or other ways. The content is easy for people to access but we want it to be broadcast correctly and on official channels. For this reason, we are continuing to bring our content to the whole world via YouTube or other free platforms. In addition, unlike other channels, YouTube is a platform that shares revenue through advertising broadcasting, as you know. In this respect, it is a win-win model for the audience and the producer, making a positive contribution to all our archive works.”*

## **The Rise in Exports of Turkish TV Dramas in Recent Years**

Since the mid-2000s, Turkish dramas have been increasingly marketed abroad, getting high ratings in the countries where they are broadcast. It is said that Turkey has recently emerged as a key player in transnational television flows (Yeşil, 2015, p. 54). **Turkish dramas** reportedly reach more than 700 million viewers and Turkey is the second-highest exporter of dramas after the United States, exporting more than 150 dramas (Uştuk, 2019).

The rise in drama exports in Turkey in recent years began with “*Deli Yürek*” in 2001. The sale of the drama called “*Gümüüş*” (*Silver*) to the Middle East and then to Bulgaria in 2007 saw Turkish dramas open up to the Middle East and Balkan countries. Turkish dramas made their debut in Latin America with “*Binbir Gece*” (2009) in Chile and Ecuador (Öztürk ve Atık, 2016, p. 76). The success of “*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*” (*The Magnificent Century*) is regarded as an important milestone in the expansion of Turkish dramas abroad. Export figures have grown exponentially since *The Magnificent Century* was first aired from 2011 to 2015. It was this drama which first penetrated the markets in Ukraine, Pakistan, Russia, China, and Japan. *The Magnificent Century* is reportedly exported to more countries than any other Turkish drama. The drama called “*Son*” was aired in Sweden in 2013 under the name “*The Lie*.” The day it aired on Swedish state television STV it broke the viewing record. The latest drama, “*Runner*”, aired on the famous ABC channel as the first Turkish drama to be adapted in the United States (Öztürk ve Atık, 2016, p. 76). Turkish dramas have started making a name for themselves at international awards ceremonies following their sales and rating successes. A drama called “*Kara Sevda*”, broadcast in more than 60 countries, won Best Production in the Telenova category at the 45th International Emmy Awards (ntv.com.tr, 2017). Actor Haluk Bilginer won Best Actor at the 47th International Emmy Awards for his performance in the “*Şahsiyet*” drama (AA, 2019).

There are said to be many reasons for the success of Turkish dramas. “*High production value, a dynamic narration, professional casting, and a good soundtrack are technical and physical features that make Turkish soap operas appealing. However, the impact of images*

*and identities, which they contain, also play role in their domestic popularity, along with their increasing exports. As storylines in soap operas center on different issues from romance to mafia relations, the modernity traditionality conflict occur among individuals and families.*” (Karlıdağ and Bulut, 2014: 91). In a study conducted in Chile, people who watch Turkish dramas listed filming and production quality, having original stories, and successful acting among their reasons, and they also stated that one important factor in their preferences was the creation of an alternative drama that they could watch with their families during prime time (Arslan, 2019, pp. 39-41).

According to Eurodata, Turkey exports its programs mostly to Eastern Europe, Middle East, and South America (Eurodatatv, 2018). While the Turkish drama industry provided \$10 million in export revenue in 2008, this figure increased to \$500 million in 2018. (Uştuk, 2019) A 50-fold increase has been observed in the past 11 years (see Table 1).

Turkey’s income from the export of dramas is not limited to the increase in export figures alone. Turkish dramas provide Turkey with much more than just export income. It is said that interest in, and opinion of, Turkey is changing for the better in countries where Turkish dramas are broadcast. It is also said that people who watch Turkish dramas have more interest in Turkey and the Turkish language (Öztürk and Atık, 2016, pp. 78-79) (Kuyucu, 2014, p. 118, 120) and that this has resulted in more tourists coming to Turkey (Nurluoğlu, 2013, p. 11) (İTO, 2017, p. 198). One study found that foreign news about Turkish dramas presented positive themes and that this made a positive contribution to Turkey’s image (Özarslan, 2020, p. 215). Broadcasting dramas in different countries also contributes to intercultural communication. In a study of Turkish dramas broadcast in Greece, interviews were made with people who watched *The Magnificent Century* drama. Some of the interviewees said they thought that Turkish dramas aired in Greece made a great contribution to Turkish-Greek friendship the like of which had not been achieved in years (Kuyucu, 2014, p. 120). However, in the same study, it was stated that there were also nationalists who claimed that Turkish dramas, although few in number, carried out cultural propaganda in Greece and could thus threaten the national will (Kuyucu, 2014, p. 120). Similarly, while Turkish dramas receive high ratings in different countries, they also receive negative criticism from certain conservative, religious, and nationalist segments of society (Özalpman & Sarikakis, 2018, p. 252).

### ***The Magnificent Century* TV Drama**

Timur Savcı is the producer of *The Magnificent Century* drama, made by TIMs Productions. Its directors are Yağmur Taylan-Durul Taylan (chapters 1-103) and Mert Baykal-Yağız Alp

Akaydın (chapters 134-139), and the screenwriters are Meral Okay (chapters 1-56) and Yılmaz Şahin (chapters 57-139). The first episode of *The Magnificent Century*, which aired 139 episodes over four seasons, was broadcast on 5 January 2011 and the last episode was on 11 June 2014.

The drama is set between 1520 and 1566 and tells the life of Suleiman the Magnificent, who ruled the Ottoman Empire, from his enthronement to his death, by placing his marriage with Hürrem Sultan in the foreground. The reasons why *The Magnificent Century* has been greatly talked about, why it has been the subject of documentaries and television programs, and why it has had many news articles published about it include: rating success; the size of the production budget; the presence of successful and famous names in the cast, production-management, script, art, and technical teams; custom designs for the venue, costume and accessories; and the fact that its script is about important and interesting characters that really existed in history.

According to the information received from the TIMs production company, *The Magnificent Century* drama has been exported to 140 countries as of 1 September 2020. It is still being broadcast in about 38 countries. It is available on the SVOD (Subscription Video on Demand) or AVOD (Ad-based Video-on-demand)/TVOD (Transactional Video on Demand) platforms through independent sales in some countries and on existing television channels in other countries (TIMs, September 1, 2020) (see Table 2).

## AIM AND METHODOLOGY

This study reviews *The Magnificent Century* drama. The reason for choosing this drama is that it is the Turkish drama that has been exported to the highest number of countries. Our study will examine the official channels opened on YouTube for *The Magnificent Century* drama. Channels were opened on YouTube for this drama in 12 languages (see Table 4). In our research, we will use content analysis to identify the similar and different aspects of the YouTube channels in 12 different languages. Later, our study will focus in greater depth on the Turkish YouTube channel, which was the first to be opened, and which had the highest number of followers and views as well as the highest number of shares on the date our study was made. In addition, open-ended questions were prepared and sent to the TIMs production company via e-mail, and the answers also were received via e-mail. Our study aims to determine the importance of YouTube and the possibilities it offers in terms of showing Turkish dramas.

The sample group in the content analysis includes only those videos that appear when the “*Videos*” tab on the YouTube channels is clicked. All videos accessible by clicking the “*Videos*” section may be listed by selecting the “*Most popular*,” “*Date added (oldest)*,” “*Date added (newest)*” options. In our research, the “*Date added (oldest)*” option was selected and the thumbnails of the videos were listed on the screen starting with the oldest shared video. There is information about the videos above and below the thumbnails of the videos listed on the screen. At this stage, information about each video’s title, duration, number of views, and when each was last shared can be seen. Table 5 was created using this information. At this stage, the video itself was watched by clicking the thumbnail of the video only when needed. Table 5 shows the distribution by year of the number of videos broadcast on the Turkish, Persian, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Croatian, Urdu, English, Czech, Indonesian, Bengali, and Albanian YouTube channels of *The Magnificent Century* drama. On the English, Indonesian, and Albanian channels, when the “*Videos*” tab is clicked notices appear saying “*There is no content on this channel*” or “*The uploader has not made this video available in your country/The video is blocked in the country*” and most of the accessible videos cannot be opened. Therefore, the English, Indonesian, and Albanian channels are not included in Table 5.

The next stage in our research involved watching and analyzing in greater detail 20 videos shared by each channel which were taken as samples. For this the content analysis was used. For those channels with less than 20 videos, all videos were examined. The videos to be analyzed were selected using the simple random sampling method. At this stage of our research, a total of 230 videos were examined and Table 6 was created using the information obtained. Table 7 was created by examining the videos of the first and last episodes of the drama broadcast on the channels, while Table 8 was created by determining the most popular videos on the channels.

Within the scope of the research, the Turkish YouTube channel of *The Magnificent Century* drama was examined in more detail. A total of 5,263 videos that were found to be shared on the channel between 2 April 2014 and 1 July 2020 were categorized according to sharing date and content type (see Table 9 and Graphic 1).

YouTube channel owners may at any time in the future delete the videos they share and may block access to some videos in certain regions for various reasons. Within these restrictions, our study examined videos accessible from Turkey between May and July 2020.

## Official Website and Social Media Accounts of *The Magnificent Century* Drama

There is an official web page for *The Magnificent Century* on the production company's official website which can be found at the following address: <https://tims.tv/muhtesem-yuzyil> (Access Date: May 30, 2020). On the web page, the content presented is categorized under the following subheadings: Actor photos, Story, Credits, Actors, Social Media, Photos, Episodes. All episodes of the drama can be watched on the site with the support of YouTube. When the videos under "*Episodes*" are clicked, all 139 episodes can be watched on the official YouTube channel.

The TIMs production company stated that they had published the entire drama on their official website, but when websites traffic began to slump compared to the past they started to use YouTube as the source of the episode videos on their official website. This was because YouTube was beginning to be used more and more (TIMs, September 1, 2020).

*"As a company, we broadcast from the address tims.tv. However, we have made changes recently and we do not upload them to a separate source, the video source is YouTube. Website traffic has slumped compared to the past and YouTube is the biggest search engine after Google. Naturally, people who want to watch The Magnificent Century search on YouTube because they know they will be able to watch it there. The habit of going to a website and watching from there is over."*

The TIMs production company stated that, as with the situation of official websites, mobile applications are not preferred by the audience. When asked "*Do you use a mobile application for The Magnificent Century drama?*" he replied (TIMs, September 1, 2020):

*"What we thought about the website in the previous question also applies to mobile apps. In a world with YouTube, users do not prefer an alternative search and viewing model."*

It was observed that the official website for *The Magnificent Century* drama includes four different social media platforms accounts adres. These are YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (see Table 3).

The first official social media account in Turkish was opened on YouTube. Accounts on Facebook and Twitter were added in later years. There is also an Instagram account opened for the TV drama but nothing has been shared on this account so far. Official social media accounts are important in terms of delivering information about *The Magnificent Century* drama to target audiences directly. The TIMs production company was asked "*Why use*

*different social media apps?” to which they replied that the reason for using different social media applications was to reach different target audiences (TIMs, September 1, 2020):*

*“These days, the user bases for every social media platform, the topics discussed, and the content access methods are all different. We observe that the majority of Facebook users do not use Instagram, and those who use Instagram do not use Twitter. That’s why it is now imperative to reach different audiences in different ways for every medium. If your project is one that appeals to people of all ages from 7 to 70, there are separate advantages to be had in using every medium. For example, since the Facebook audience is a platform used by the upper middle-age group, it is enough simply to share the drama there. You need to be more visual and more creative if you want to introduce the drama to younger audiences on Twitter and Instagram.”*

### ***The Magnificent Century’s YouTube Channels in Different Languages***

Channels were opened on YouTube for *The Magnificent Century* drama in 12 languages. These are listed in order of the date they were opened: Turkish, Persian, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Croatian, Urdu, English, Czech, Indonesian, Bengali, and Albanian channels (see Table 4):

Our research found that YouTube channels were first opened in 2014 (2 channels), and no channels were opened in 2015, 2016, and 2017. Channels started to be opened again in 2018, and later the number of channels increased every year. One new channel was opened in 2018, four in 2019, and five in 2020.

The TIMs production company gave the following answer to the question as to the reasons for opening channels in different languages other than Turkish (TIMs, September 1, 2020):

*“This is actually a technical issue. The YouTube algorithm lists the contents of the search results according to the broadcast language. So when you upload a German subtitle to The Magnificent Century’s Turkish channel, the result is not correct for a person searching from Germany. That’s why we treat each language as a separate channel and open a new channel. So, when a search is made in the respective country, the search results easily appear with options for subtitles or dubbed.”*

The TIMs production company said there is a team within the company that only deals with the organization/management/follow-up of social media broadcasts, and that they also outsource to reporting and management agencies. Asked “*Do you plan to open other channels on YouTube for ‘The Magnificent Century’ in the future?*” the company spokesperson replied (TIMs, September 1, 2020):

*“Yes, we have many more channels planned. This is actually a technical issue. You need to know the YouTube algorithm well. We have a specific and timed plan to open different languages at different times. In addition, foreign sales of our TV dramas are continuing and, naturally, the buyer party may ask us to shut down the YouTube broadcast in a country where sales are made. This is why we don’t broadcast in certain countries.”*

Clearly, many criteria can be used to compare the success of YouTube channels. The number of subscribers obtained by channels, the number of views, and the number of comments made on videos can also be considered as important criteria. For this reason, the number of views and subscribers to the official YouTube channels opened for *The Magnificent Century* drama were examined. When Table 4 is examined, it can be seen that the number of videos shared is an important factor for the number of views and subscribers, but not the only one.

The channel with the most views and subscribers and the most video shares is the Turkish channel. The channel with the second-highest number of views, subscribers, and video shares is the Arabic channel. The channel with the third-highest number of views and subscribers and the fourth-highest number of video shares is the Russian channel while the third highest in terms of video shares and fourth highest in views and subscribers is the Spanish channel.

Under the “*Videos*” tab it is possible to list all the videos of the channel “*by popularity*.” The number of comments received by the most popular videos on the channels was determined. When compared in terms of the number of comments posted on the most popular video, it was seen that the first five channels were the Arabic, Turkish, Urdu, Russian, and Spanish channels.

When Table 4 and Table 5 are examined, a general downward trend is observed between 2014-2017 in terms of both the number of newly opened channels and the number of shared videos, and the general trend was upward between 2018 and 2020. The year with the highest number of videos shared is 2020, and the channel that shares the most videos is the Turkish YouTube channel.

The original language of *The Magnificent Century* TV drama is Turkish. While the videos shared on the Persian, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, Czech, and Bengali channels are shared dubbed, the Croatian and English channels broadcast episodes in the original language with subtitles. In some scenes of the drama, informative notes about time and place appear on the screen. The translations of these notes were broadcast in writing on the Persian, Arabic, and Croatian channels, and in voice on the Russian, Spanish, and Czech channels (see Table 6).

The TIMs production company states that the videos uploaded to YouTube are shared exactly as they are broadcast on foreign television channels, and they do not make any additional dubbing or subtitles for YouTube (TIMs, 1 September 2020):

*“As you know, The Magnificent Century and Kösem dramas have been sold to many countries. Our customers who bought them broadcast these dramas using the dubbing or subtitle option at their own initiative. We upload to YouTube using existing material. It is very costly to provide extra dubbing or subtitles just for YouTube.”*

Our examination found that 6 different types of videos are shared on *The Magnificent Century's* YouTube channels. These are categorized and briefly named. For example, an entire episode is called “*Episode Video*.” One scene from the drama is called a “*Scene Video*.” There is also a “*Promotional Video/Trailer*.” Videos where scenes sharing similar characteristics are edited together are called “*Special Scenes Videos*.” Videos showing behind-the-scenes work on the drama are called “*Documentary Videos*.” Videos that include music from the drama are called “*Drama Music Videos*” (see Table 6). The only type of video shared on all channels is the Episode Video. The type of video that has the most number of shares and whose number increased the most over time is the Scene Video. Episode and Scene videos rank highest on the most popular video lists.

The duration of *Episode Video* may vary from country to country. The episodes of Turkish dramas broadcast on Turkish television channels are usually longer than the episodes broadcast on television channels outside Turkey. For this reason, each episode is broadcast by dividing it into parts in accordance with the broadcast flow of the television channel that will show it. The episodes are uploaded to YouTube like broadcast on the television channels of those countries. For example, on the Czech channel, the first shared episode of the drama lasts 30 minutes and 25 seconds while on the Turkish channel it lasts 1 hour 42 minutes and 32 seconds (see Table 7).

Film production companies on YouTube are not only “*content creators*,” they are also “*YouTube channel owners*” in status. Film production companies that open channels on YouTube decide which episodes are to be shared, when, with what titles and text, and which regions the videos are going to be viewed in. Production companies are instantly able to access analytical reports that show the continually updated viewing reports and YouTube channel performance reports for the videos they share on YouTube, and whenever they want they can obtain important information about the video comments and viewing behaviors of audiences in different regions thanks to these reports. The fact that similar videos receive different

viewing figures and different comments on channels opened in different languages for *The Magnificent Century* drama is important in terms of revealing the common and differing aspects of viewer expectations in different regions. For example, when looking at the most popular videos of *The Magnificent Century*'s channels in 9 different languages where this information is accessible, the differences are immediately noticeable. The most popular video on the Persian, Czech, and Bengali channels was Episode 1, but different videos were ranked first on the Turkish, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Croatian, and Urdu channels (see Table 8).

Replying to the question “*What advantages does YouTube provide as a ‘broadcasting platform’ compared with traditional television channels and digital platforms?*” the TIMs production company said the data obtained via YouTube channels are important for making decisions on new projects (TIMs, 1 September 2020):

*“First of all, there is an audience all over the world that does not watch television and we think this is going to grow. Reaching these people is a huge advantage. The second and biggest advantage is that television is a blind medium. Everything is broadcast in turn, but you don’t know who is watching what, when, or how. The answers to these questions are important for advertisers as well as producers. You can obtain data from social media platforms answering questions as to what the non-television viewing masses want, when they want it, and many more besides. This data allows you to pinpoint critical questions such as what your new project is going to be or where it will be broadcast.”*

Not only the number of views but also the “like” and “dislike” buttons and the comment sections provide important data for YouTube channel owners. Viewers of YouTube videos can write comments, read comments written by others, use the “like” or “dislike” buttons for the comments they read, and reply to comments. In this way, these sections let followers communicate with one another and make themselves heard to the channel’s owners and managers.

Like all other TV programs, TV dramas can be watched on traditional television broadcasts only within the time periods allotted to them in the broadcast flow, whereas the audience on the Internet, digital platforms, official websites, mobile apps, social media, and YouTube can access the episode they want whenever and wherever they want. This creates different possibilities for both the producer and the viewer that they do not have with traditional television broadcasts. TV dramas are no longer content that is archived after being broadcast; rather, they are kept “accessible” and “ready to go” to be watched, commented on, and shared on social media at any time. Unlike traditional television broadcasting, the time slot

in which an episode is broadcast represents the “start” but not “the start and the end.” Upon examination of the TV drama’s videos on YouTube, it can be seen that videos that were shared years ago still receive views and that new comments are added to the comment section under the video every day. The TIMs production company also states that it receives more interaction now than when *The Magnificent Century* was being broadcast on television (TIMs, 1 September 2020):

*“Our drama gets more interaction these days than it got when it was first broadcast. This is very pleasing for us. The new generation is able to watch quality work today as well. Nobody wants the film or drama they make to be watched for a while then shelved. In this day and age, shelving good work is out of the question. Every bit of accessible content is like a whole other world for every new generation to watch.”*

Replying to the question “As a ‘streaming platform,’ does YouTube have any disadvantages compared with traditional television channels and digital platforms?” the TIMs production company replied : “Pressure created by fast consumption” (TIMs, September 1, 2020):

*“I think we can call it fast consumption -- perhaps because we have trouble getting used to it. Most young viewers state that they watch even short content with the option to watch at 1.5 to 2 times faster. This is an element of pressure for content creators. The time for the content to attract a person has dropped to less than 15 seconds. Creativity has become much more important and old habits have to be broken. Although fast content consumption is an advantage for people who do a certain level of business, it is actually a disadvantage as it reduces the quality of content in general circulation.”*

While watching a drama on YouTube users can make use of the different amenities offered by YouTube, the Internet, and by new communication technologies in general. For example, they can make use of such features as fast watching videos, rewinding or pause the video, displaying video on demand (VOD) and creating their own playlist, binge-watching multiple episodes of a drama, writing comments, respond to other comments, or liking/disliking other comments, making use of different language and subtitle features, searching, reading additional texts of videos, and so on. For this reason, the viewers’ relationship with the content they watch has changed and viewing behavior is bound to be different from traditional television channels. In this process, the consumption of content on new media is faster compared with that on traditional media.

## The Magnificent Century Turkish YouTube Channel

Within the scope of the study, the Turkish YouTube channel of *The Magnificent Century* drama was examined in more detail. A total of 5,263 videos that were found to be shared on the channel between 2 April 2014 and 1 July 2020 were categorized according to sharing date and content type. It was determined that there are six different types of videos on *The Magnificent Century's* Turkish YouTube channel. These are episode video (142 items), scene video (4829 items), promotional video (265 items), special scenes video (16 items), documentary video (8 items), and drama music video (3 items) (see Table 9 and Chart 1).

When the distribution of video types of the channel by year is examined, it can be seen that the video type that has increased the most over the years among the videos broadcast on the channel is the scene video.

Looking at the most popular videos on the channel, it is clear that four of the top 10 videos are episode videos and six are scene videos (see Table 10). Looking at the top 50 most popular videos, our examination showed that 12 are episode videos and 38 are scene videos. Looking at the top 100 most popular videos, it can be seen that 52 are episode videos and 48 are scene videos.

Considering the channel's status today, it is clear that episode videos and scene videos are the most important type of video for this channel.

A total of 39 episodes including the 104th episode were broadcast on the YouTube channel on 2 April 2014. All other old episodes (except for five episodes ) that had previously been broadcast on television were broadcast on the YouTube channel between 2 and 11 April 2014. (Those five episodes were added to YouTube at a later date.)

Furthermore, starting from 2 April, new episodes broadcast on television were uploaded for broadcast to the YouTube channel the very next day. Accordingly, the 10 episodes from the 130th to the 139th episode inclusive were broadcast on the YouTube channel the day after they were broadcast on television.

Apart from two videos each broadcast in 2019 and 2020, all the videos showing an entire episode were broadcast in 2014.

On April 2, scene videos and promotional videos were broadcast in addition to episode videos. The first promotional video published carried the title "*The Magnificent Century 129th Episode, 1st Trailer*" and it lasted one minute 12 seconds. The first scene video carried the title "*Muhteşem Yüzyıl 129. Bölüm - Allah her şeyin hayırlısını versin, Aşkın bile*" (*The*

*Magnificent Century 129th Episode - God give the best of all, even love*) and it lasted two minutes 21 seconds.

In later years, scene videos became the most frequently broadcast type of video and a total of 4,829 scene videos were identified. The duration of these videos ranges from 35 seconds to 22 minutes.

Our research also found that the same scenes were broadcast several times on different dates carrying different titles. For example, the scene where Hürrem dances in front of Sultan Suleiman is seen in five different videos (see Table 11) and the scene where Firuze dances in front of Sultan Suleiman is seen in six different videos (see Table 12).

Media content on YouTube is consumed much faster than traditional television broadcasts, but a drama has a finite number of episodes and scenes. This may mean that after a while there will be no new content to be shared, especially for productions where filming has ended. This may be considered one reason why some scenes from the drama are shared multiple times under different names. Resharing the same scenes with different titles can reach audiences who have not watched the drama before and keep the drama current by reminding people who have watched that scene before.

A total of 265 promotional videos were broadcast in 2014, 2015, and 2020.

Videos containing similar-themed scenes edited together are broadcast on *The Magnificent Century's* YouTube channel. The expressions “*Special scenes*” or “*Memorable Scenes*” are used in the titles of these videos. The first of these videos carried the title “*Magnificent Century 82nd Episode Special - The Words That Bring About the End of Pargali*” (six minutes 11 seconds), broadcast on July 14, 2015. Four similar videos were observed in 2019 and 11 more in 2020.

These videos carried such titles as *Special scenes of Pargali Ibrahim, Scenes of Hürrem sultan and Pargali Ibrahim, The most special scenes of Firuze, The most special scenes of Hatice Sultan, Unforgettable Scenes of Hürrem Sultan, Unforgettable Scenes of Sultan Süleyman, Unforgettable Scenes of Pargali Ibrahim, Unforgettable Scenes of Prince Mustafa, Unforgettable Scenes of Ebussuud efendi, The Magnificent Century's Most Unforgettable Scenes, Lands Conquered by Sultan Suleiman Khan, Unforgettable Scenes of Mihrimah Sultan, Tension Between Hürrem Sultan and Mahidevran Sultan, Magnificent Century Legends and Legendary Violin Performances of Pargali Ibrahim.*

After the great interest in and success of *The Magnificent Century* drama, a documentary on the production and filming of the drama was prepared. The documentary, which includes behind-the-scenes footage, as well as interviews with the producer, directors, screenwriter, actors, and other members of the team, was broadcast in eight separate episodes lasting from 44 minutes to one hour 16 minutes. The documentary was broadcast starting one month after June 11, 2014, when the last episode of the last season of *The Magnificent Century* drama was broadcast on Turkish television. All episodes were broadcast between 8 July and 29 August 2014.

Three drama music video were broadcast on YouTube channel from 2015 to 2020. The titles of these videos are *The Magnificent Century Most Special Images* (Slideshow) (59 min. 23 sec.), *Zahit Bizi Tan Eyleme, Şehzade Mustafa Vefat Müziği | Muhteşem Yüzyıl* (3 min. 22 sec.) and *Ninni melodisi* (Lullaby) (1 min. 47 sec.)

### **Timing for the Sharing of Videos on the YouTube Channel**

Barring important problems, dramas on television are mostly broadcast at regular intervals (once a week, every weekday, etc.) and they are broadcast in order from the first episode to the last. However, a different broadcasting policy is applied for *The Magnificent Century's* Turkish YouTube channel. When the videos on the Turkish YouTube channel are examined according to the dates on which they were shared, it can be seen that a regular order starting with Episode 1 is not followed and that the number of shared videos falls in some periods and increases in others. The number of shared videos went as high as 200 on some days and went as low as zero on others. There were periods when videos were shared every day and periods were no videos at all were shared.

When the distribution of the videos on the YouTube channel by year is examined, it can be seen that a similar number of videos were shared in 2014 and 2015, that the number of videos decreased by approximately 60% in 2016 compared with the previous year, and that no videos were broadcast in 2017 and 2018. Video sharing began again in 2019, and video sharing continued to increase in 2020. The number of video shares made in the first six months of 2020 is higher than the number of shares in 2019 (see Table 5).

The full episode videos shared on *The Magnificent Century's* Turkish YouTube channel did not proceed in order either. Table 13 shows *The Magnificent Century* episode videos identified as being shared on YouTube in the period starting from when the YouTube channel was established to 11 June 2014, when the last episode was broadcast.

When deciding which episodes to broadcast and when, many factors can be influential. When the order of the videos shared on YouTube is examined, it is seen that the episodes are shared after being broadcast on television.

Although *The Magnificent Century*'s Turkish YouTube Channel was opened on July 14, 2010, the first video on the channel was "*The Magnificent Century Episode 104 (HD)*" (1 hour 59 min. 50 sec.) broadcast on 2 April 2014. On the said date, it can be observed that the 4th season (final season) of *The Magnificent Century* drama on Turkish television was still on-going and that the 130th episode of the drama was broadcast on the evening of April 2, 2014. On the day the 130th episode was broadcast on TV, a total of 102 episodes, including the 129th episode, were shared on YouTube. The next day, on 3 April 2014, 32 episodes, including episode 130, were shared at once. Most of the episodes of the drama were shared between 2 and 10 April 2014. During the nine weeks that followed 2 April 2014, episodes were uploaded to YouTube the next day after being broadcast on television. The last episode of the drama, the 139th episode, was broadcast on television on June 11 2014 and shared on YouTube on June 12, 2014.

Replying to the question "*As far as your production company is concerned, what is the priority order of the platforms you use for broadcasting a drama?*" the TIMs production company said that episodes are typically broadcast on the main broadcasting channel in Turkey first, followed by sales to foreign channels and digital platforms. Sharing the episodes on YouTube is carried out at the third stage and at the same time as the production company's own website (TIMs, September 1, 2020).

*"We usually go in this order:*

- 1. The main broadcasting channel in Turkey*
- 2. Sales to foreign channels. This happens simultaneously with digital platforms because they have come to carry as much content as mainstream channels and/or because these channels generate revenue from their own digital platforms.*
- 3. As the official website and YouTube feed off each other, this usually happens at the same time; however, if it has been agreed with the main broadcasting channel to use its own platform first, windows open accordingly at different intervals.*
- 4. Mobile applications. We do not make a separate placement for this. Since customers use a platform's own mobile app to access digital content, mobile advances in parallel with parent platforms.*

5. *Other broadcasters in Turkey. This option, known as the “re-run,” is used when the main broadcaster’s rights to the drama are exhausted.*

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

With the effect of digitalization, the spread of the Internet, and convergence, major changes have occurred in the media industry, and like all other mass media, television channels where TV dramas are broadcast are undergoing a major transformation. While new communication technologies have offered film production companies new possibilities, they have also created new problems to solve. Dramas have begun to be broadcast on new media other than traditional television. Among these new media is YouTube, which is a social media application and a video-sharing platform. The production company has opened channels on YouTube in 12 languages for *The Magnificent Century*, which is Turkey’s most exported drama to date.

Unlike many social media applications, YouTube pays channel owners according to the number of clicks, so broadcasting dramas on YouTube provides additional income for film production companies. This is one of the important amenities offered by YouTube for film production companies. However, this revenue model is not enough for production companies to prepare and present big-budget productions only and/or firstly for YouTube. When regarded in terms of priority ranking for the TIMs production company and looking at *The Magnificent Century*, in particular, broadcasting on YouTube ranks fourth after mainstream television channels in Turkey, television channels abroad, and sales to and broadcasting on digital platforms. As far as the production company is concerned, YouTube offers an additional revenue model as a medium where dramas that have completed the first three stages can be shared.

In addition to YouTube generating additional income, as far as film production companies are concerned, one of the biggest advantages to broadcasting on YouTube is the ability to reach the people who watch YouTube but not television.

Another important advantage of being on YouTube is that one can see the access and viewing reports on shared content prepared and continually updated by YouTube at any time. Film production companies can thus quickly identify the trends of viewers who have access to the Internet from all over the world.

YouTube is the social media application and video-sharing platform clicked the most in Turkey and all over the world. The TIMs production company describes YouTube as “*The world’s largest television channel*” and “*a collective television channel.*”

Digitization and the spread of the Internet have also made the unauthorized copying and distribution of illegal content easier. New legal and technical measures are constantly being taken to prevent publishers who violate copyright. However, in addition to these methods, it is of great importance that, wherever possible, the individuals and organizations producing media content share their content through their official addresses and deliver content to audiences through legally correct channels. In this way, viewers can access technically higher quality content without the need to go to pirate addresses. In addition, viewers and content can get together through legally correct channels, the revenues from viewing new media can be directed to the content producer and content owner, illicit earnings can be prevented, and it is possible to funnel income to the sector and into the production of new projects.

When a drama is broadcast on conventional television, it is over. Even if people who watch dramas can talk and comment about the drama, it is generally not possible for viewers to access the drama again whenever they want unless the broadcasting TV channel decides to broadcast it again. The advent of new media has changed this process. When a drama is shared on YouTube, it is not finished; on the contrary, this marks the start date for the viewer being able to call up the drama “*on-demand*” “*any time he wants,*” and “*as much as he wants.*” Moreover, as YouTube offers free access to everyone, access to dramas is much easier than on many digital platforms. In short, dramas broadcast on YouTube are not “*finished.*” they are just getting “*started.*” As long as no access restrictions are placed later or the video is not deleted from the channel, it remains in the broadcast archive ready to be watched at any time. The fact that the number of views of videos shared in the past is still increasing and new comments are still being added to the videos shows that the interest shown in the drama is kept “*alive*” on YouTube even after it has stopped being broadcast on television.

With YouTube, film production companies are no longer just “*content creators*”; in addition, they have become “*broadcasters*” in their own right as “*YouTube channel owners*” *too*. This makes them the decision-makers when it comes to such topics as timing the broadcasts of their proprietary content on YouTube, how the videos are to be shared (title, additional text, thumbnails, duration, etc.) and which regions can have access to content.

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## TABLES AND FIGURES

**Table 1.** Export Revenues of Turkish TV Dramas (Deloitte, 2015), (Bozkurt, 2017), (AA, 2019)

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Export Revenues (Millions of US Dollars)	10	25	45	65	100	150	200	250	300	350	500

**Table 2.** List of countries where *The Magnificent Century* is exported (including Netflix worldwide broadcasts) (TIMs, 1 September 2020)

Afghanistan	Dominique (*)	Kazakhstan (*)	Nicaragua (*)	South Africa (*)
Albania (*)	Ecuador (*)	Kenya (*)	Oman	South Korea (*)
Algeria,	Egypt	Kosovo	Pakistan	Sudan
Angola (*)	El Salvador (*)	Kuwait	Palestine	Syria
Argentina	Estonia	Kyrgyzstan	Panama	Tanzania (*)
Azerbaijan	Georgia	Latvia	Paraguay (*)	Thailand (*)
Bahrain	Greece	Lebanon	Peru	Tunisia
Bangladesh	Guatemala (*)	Libya	Poland	Tunisia (*)
Bolivia (*)	Honduras (*)	Lithuania	Poland (*)	Uganda (*)
Bosnia Herzegovina (*)	Hungary	Macedonia	Puerto Rico	Ukraine (*)
Brundi, (*)	Indonesia	Malawi (*)	Qatar	United Arab Emirates
Brunei (*)	Iraq (not including the North and Kurdish rights)	Malaysia	Romania	Uruguay
Bulgaria	Irak (Kurdish Rights)	Malaysia (*)	Russia (*)	USA-Spanish
Chile	Iran (Farsi rights)	Mauritania,	Rwanda (*)	Uzbekistan (*)
China	Iran	Mexico	Saudi Arabia	Vietnam
Colombia (*)	Israel	Moldova	Serbia (*)	Yemen
Costarica (*)	Israel (*)	Mongolia (*)	Singapore (*)	
Croatia	Italy	Montenegro (*)	Slovakia	
Czech Republic (*)	Japan (*)	Morocco	Slovenia	
Djibuti	Jordan	Mozambique (*)	Somalia	

(\*) List of countries where *The Magnificent Century* is still being broadcast as of 1 September 2020.

**Table 3.** The name, opening date, and number of followers/subscribers of the Turkish official social media accounts of *The Magnificent Century* drama (Access Date: September 1, 2020).

Social Media Application	Account Name	Language	Opening Date	Number of Followers/ Subscribers
Youtube	Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Turkish	July 14, 2010	1,580,000
Facebook	MuhtesemYuzyl	Turkish	January 10, 2011	2,888,617
Twitter	MYAskiderun	Turkish	February 13, 2012	67,014
Instagram	muhtesemyuzyl2011	Turkish	Not detected	2

**Table 4.** The opening date of the official YouTube channels of *The Magnificent Century* drama in different languages, the date the first video was shared, the number of shares, the number of subscribers, the number of views, the number of comments posted on the most popular video (Access Date: September 1, 2020).

Social Media Application	Channel Name	Language	The Opening Date	The date the first video was shared, the number of shares	The Number of Videos	The Number of Subscribers	The Number of Views	The number of comments posted on the most popular video
Youtube	Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Turkish	14.07.2010	02.04.2014	5.662	1,58 million	2.036.690.611	2074
Youtube	ن ا ط ل س م ی ر ح	Persian	25.11.2014	20.12.2014	639	10,2 thousand	5.038.777	50
Youtube	ط ل س ل ا م ی ر ح Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Arabic	04.04.2018	20.04.2018	3.564	1,4 million	1.530.445.053	3621
Youtube	Великолепный век - Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Russian	18.06.2019	11.07.2019	1768	722 thousand	510.691.119	1136
Youtube	El Sultán	Spanish	19.07.2019	22.07.2019	2537	528 thousand	380.289.418	750
Youtube	Sulejman Velićanstveni	Croatian	07.10.2019	16.12.2019	138	20,7 thousand	14.945.604	57
Youtube	Mera Sultan	Urdu	14.10.2019	21.10.2019	1129	186 thousand	102.129.530	1461
Youtube	Magnificent Century	English	22.10.2019	19.11.2019	10 67	119 thousand	59.587.519	32
Youtube	Velkolepé století	Czech	25.12.2019	05.02.2020	442	2,51 thousand	2.919.886	12
Youtube	Abad kejayaan - Muhteşem Yüzyıl Indonesia	Indonesian	11.02.2020	Not accessible	-	93 thousand	23.964.89	Not accessible
Youtube	সুলতান সুলমোন - Sultan Suleiman Bangla	Bengal	02.03.20	22.06.2020	92	13,6 thousand	2.878.623	60
Youtube	Sulejmani i Madhërihëm	Albanian	02.03.20	Not accessible	-	5,64 thousand	2.933.082	Not accessible

**Table 5.** Distribution by year of the number of videos broadcast on the Turkish, Persian, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Urdu, Bengali, Czech, and Croatian YouTube channels of *The Magnificent Century* TV drama. (Accessed: 20 August 2020).

	Turkish	Persian	Arabic	Russian	Spanish	Croatian	Urdu	Czech	Bengal	Total
2014	710	119	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	829
2015	793	70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	863
2016	309	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	309
2017	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	0	0	372	0	0	0	0	0	0	372
2019	1552	450	1324	138	935	6	8	0	0	4413
2020 (first 6 months)	1899	0	1417	1218	1491	6	432	286	18	6767
<b>Total</b>	5263	639	3113	1356	2426	12	440	286	18	13553

**Table 6.** The types of videos shared on the YouTube channels of *The Magnificent Century* drama in terms of content and the types of translation used in the videos.

Channel Name	Language	What types of video have been detected?	Is there dubbing?	Is there a sound overlay while the original sound of the scene continues?	Are there subtitles?	Are translations for the credits and informational articles written or spoken?
Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Turkish	Episode Video, Scene Video, Promotional Video, Special Scenes Video, Documentary Video, TV Drama Music Video	Original language	Original language	Original language	Original language
ناطلس مړح	Persian	Episode Video, Scene Video	Yes	No	No	Written translations of credits and informational articles
طلسل مړح Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Arabic	Episode Video, Scene Video	Yes	No	No	Written translations of credits and informational articles
Великолепный век - Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Russian	Episode Video, Scene Video	Yes	No	No	Some have spoken translations.

El Sultán	Spanish	Episode Video, Scene Video, Documentary Video	Yes	No	No	Spoken translations
Sulejman Veličanstveni	Croatian	Episode Video	Yok	No	Var	Written translations
Mera Sultan	Urdu	Episode Video, Scene Video	Yes	No	No	No
Magnificent Century	English	Episode Video, Scene Video	Yok	No	Var	No
Velkolepé století	Czech	Episode Video, Scene Video	Yes	No	No	Some have spoken translations.
Abad kejayaan - Muhteşem Yüzyıl Indonesia	Indonesian	Not accessible	Not accessible	Not accessible	Not accessible	Not accessible
সুলতান সুলেমান - Sultan Suleiman Bangla	Bengal	Episode Video	Yes	No	No	No
Sulejmani i Madhërishëm	Albanian	Not accessible	Not accessible	Not accessible	Not accessible	Not accessible

**Table 7.** As Shared on *The Magnificent Century's* YouTube Channels Duration of the First and Last Episodes.

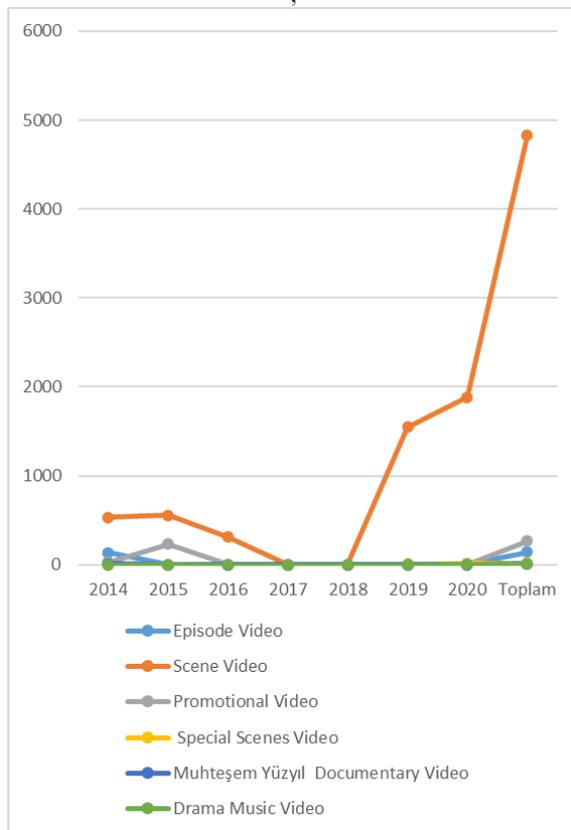
Channel Name	Language	Duration of the First Episodes	Duration of the Last Episodes
Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Turkish	1 hour 42 min. 32 sec.	2 hour 37 min. 03 sec.
حریم سلطان	Persian	42 min. 06 sec.	Video could not be detected
حریم السلط Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Arabic	49 min. 51 sec.	41 min. 42 sec.
Великолепный век - Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Russian	1 hour 40 min. 48 sec	2 hour 33 min. 34 sec.
El Sultán	Spanish	50 min. 53 sec.	46 min. 28 sec.
Sulejman Veličanstveni	Croatian	Not accessible	Not accessible
Mera Sultan	Urdu	43 min.	38 min. 34 sec.
Magnificent Century	English	Not accessible	Not accessible
Velkolepé století	Czech	30 min. 25 sec.	1 hour 24 min. 12 sec.
Abad kejayaan - Muhteşem Yüzyıl Indonesia	Indonesian	Not accessible	Not accessible
সুলতান সুলেমান - Sultan Suleiman Bangla	Bengal	39 min. 33 sec.	Video have not been broadcast yet
Sulejmani i Madhërishëm	Albanian	Not accessible	Not accessible

**Table 8.** The Most Viewed Videos Shared on the YouTube Channels of *The Magnificent Century* Drama (Access Date: September 1, 2020)

Channel Name	Language	What is the most viewed video?	What does the title of the most viewed video of the channel mean?	The number of views	The number of comments posted on the most popular video
Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Turkish	Victoria zor kurtuldu - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 16. Bölüm	Victoria barely survived	53.456.323	2074
حریم سلطان	Persian	بخش 1 حریم سلطان	Hurrem Sultan, Episode 1	147.696	50
حریم السلط Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Arabic	عفو السلطان سليمان   حریم السلطان الحلقة 38	Sultan Suleiman/ The Sultan's Harem, Episode 38	14.619.638	3621
Великолепный век - Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Russian	Султан Сулейман и Александра Халветт   Великолепный век	Sultan Suleiman and Alexandra Halvett! The Magnificent Century	9.455.936	1136
El Sultán	Spanish	El chequeo de salud en harem!   El Sultán	Health Check in the Harem! -- The Sultan	10.199.927	750
Sulejman Veličanstveni	Croatian	Sulejman Veličanstveni Epizoda 63 Sa prevodom	Sultan Suleiman the Lawgiver, Episode 63	146.968	57
Mera Sultan	Urdu	Mera Sultan - Episode 1 (Urdu Dubbed)	My Sultan, Episode 1	2.210.209	1461
Magnificent Century	English	Erişilemiyor	Not accessible	Not accessible	Not accessible
Velkolepé století	Çekçe	Velkolepé století 1. Díl	The Magnificent Century, Episode 1	34.766	12
Abad kejayaan - Muhteşem Yüzyıl Indonesia	Indonesian	Erişilemiyor	Not accessible	Not accessible	Not accessible
সুলতান সুলমোন - Sultan Suleiman Bangla	Bengal	সুলতান সুলমোন   অধ্যায় 1	Sultan Suleiman, Episode 1	113.911	60
Sulejmani i Madhërishëm	Albanian	Erişilemiyor	Not accessible	Not accessible	Not accessible

**Table 9.** Types of Videos Broadcast on *The Magnificent Century's* Turkish YouTube Channel by Year.

	Episode Video	Scene Video	Promotional Video	Special Scenes Video	Documentary Video	Drama Music Video	Total
2014	138	535	29	0	8	0	710
2015	0	557	234	1	0	1	793
2016	0	309	0	0	0	0	309
2017	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2018	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	2	1546	0	4	0	0	1552
2020 (first 6 months)	2	1882	2	11	0	2	1899
<b>Total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>4829</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5263</b>



**Chart 1:** Types of Videos Broadcast on *The Magnificent Century's* Turkish YouTube Channel by Year

**Table 10.** Videos Posted on *The Magnificent Century* Turkish YouTube Channel by Popularity (Access: 20 August 2020).

Number	Video Title	Types of Video	Share Date	Duration	The Number of Views	The Number of Comments
1	Victoria zor kurtuldu - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 16. Bölüm	Scene Video	29.09.2014	1 min. 52 sec.	53,209,720	2045
2	Muhteşem Yüzyıl - 1.Bölüm (HD)	Episode Video	03.04.2014	1 hour 42 min. 31 sec.	52,346,447	8593
3	Hürrem Hamamda Kavga Ediyor - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 1. Bölüm	Scene Video	03.08.2015	1 min. 37 sec.	25,736,632	411
4	Osmanlı Haremde Sağlık Kontrolü!   Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Scene Video	04.07.2019	9 min. 14 sec.	12,207,510	2661
5	Nurbanu ve Selim Yatak - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 107.Bölüm	Scene Video	14.10.2015	2 min. 01 sec.	11,617,534	632
6	Muhteşem Yüzyıl - 19.Bölüm (HD)	Episode Video	03.04.2014	1 hour 41 min. 13 sec.	11,093,778	1944
7	Mimar Sinan'ın Çözümü - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 93.Bölüm	Scene Video	16.01.2016	9 min. 57 sec.	10,667,076	1783
8	Muhteşem Yüzyıl - 2.Bölüm (HD)	Episode Video	03.04.2014	1 hour 34 min.28 sec.	9,850,660	4 bin 410
9	Muhteşem Yüzyıl 139. Bölüm (HD) (Final)	Episode Video	12.06.2014	2 hour 37 min. 3 sec.	9,134,390	6 bin 241
10	Sultan Süleyman'ın Firuze'ye İlgisi   Muhteşem Yüzyıl	Scene Video	20.10.2019	8 min. 53 sec.	9,109,854	506

**Table 11.** Videos featuring Hürrem's dance scene on *The Magnificent Century's* Turkish YouTube channel.

Number	Video Title	Share Date	Duration
1	Hürrem'in mor mendil aldığı dansı - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 1.Bölüm	13.05.2014	1 min. 34 sec.
2	Hürrem'in Dansı - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 1.Bölüm	21.07.2015	1 min. 35 sec.
3	Hürrem Dans - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 1. Bölüm	13.08.2015	5 min. 03 sec.
4	Sultan Süleyman'dan Alexandra'ya Mor Mendil   Muhteşem Yüzyıl	04.07.2019	9 min. 21 sec.
5	Sultan Süleyman'dan Alexandra'ya Mor Mendil   Muhteşem Yüzyıl	11.03.2020	9 min. 21 sec.

**Table 12.** Videos featuring Firuze’s dance scene on *The Magnificent Century’s* Turkish YouTube channel.

Number	Video Title	Share Date	Duration
1	Firuze’nin Dans Sahnesi - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 66.Bölüm	12.05.2014	1 min. 43 sec.
2	Firuze Dans - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 66.Bölüm	21.07.2015	2 min. 12 sec.
3	Firuze Dans - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 66.Bölüm	23.10.2015	5 min. 58 sec.
4	Firuze’nin Raksı - Muhteşem Yüzyıl 66.Bölüm	02.01.2016	2 min. 41 sec.
5	Sultan Süleyman’dan Firuze’ye Mor Mendil   Muhteşem Yüzyıl	18.10.2019	10 min. 53 sec.
6	Firuze, Sultan Süleyman’dan Mendili Kaptı!   Muhteşem Yüzyıl	15.05.2020	10 min. 53 sec.

**Table 13.** April 2 2014 to 11 June 2014 --Videos of the Episodes Broadcast on *The Magnificent Century’s* Turkish YouTube Channel.

Date	Episode Videos
02.04.2014	Episodes 64-99, 102-125, 129.
03.04.2014	Episodes 1-10, 12-21, 25-32, 34-36, 130.
11.04.2014	Episodes 11, 63.
04.04.2014	Episodes 33, 37-42, 45-62.
10.04.2014	Episodes 126-128, 131.
17.04.2014	Episode 132
24.04.2014	Episode 133
01.05.2014	Episode 134
08.05.2014	Episode 135
22.05.2014	Episode 136
29.05.2014	Episode 137
05.06.2014	Episode 138
12.06.2014	Episode 139

## PICTURES - SCREEN PHOTOS

**MUHTEŞEM YÜZYIL**

14. Bölüm Fragmanı

**ORTUCA FOTOGRAFILAR**

**Hikaye ve Künye**

Muhteşem Yüzyıl, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun en parlak dönemini konu alan bir dizi. 16. yüzyılın ortalarında yaşanan olayları anlatan bu dizi, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun en parlak dönemini konu alan bir dizi. 16. yüzyılın ortalarında yaşanan olayları anlatan bu dizi, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun en parlak dönemini konu alan bir dizi.

**Yapım**

- TİM&B Production
- Yapımcı: Timur Sarıca
- Yönetmenler: Yağmur Taşkın, Doruk Taşkın
- Senaryo: Nihal Okuy

**Oyuncular**

Hadî Ergüç, Melika Ceylan, İsmail Hacıoğlu, Cihan Yılmaz, Nur Arman, Selma Ergüç, Seren Keleş, Fikri Akın, Selim Bayraktar, Sultan Çelebi, Nihal Okuy, Mustafa Murat, Mustafa Özalp, Arif Erkin, Ali Çayırman, Alp Özyurt, Mustafa Taşkın, Çiğdem Turan, Gülşah Çelebi, Nihal Okuy

**Sosyal Medya**

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- YouTube

**FOTOGRAFILAR**

**KÜLLÜKLER**

**13. BÖLÜM**

**14. BÖLÜM**

**15. BÖLÜM**

**TİM&B**

**Bize Ulaşın**

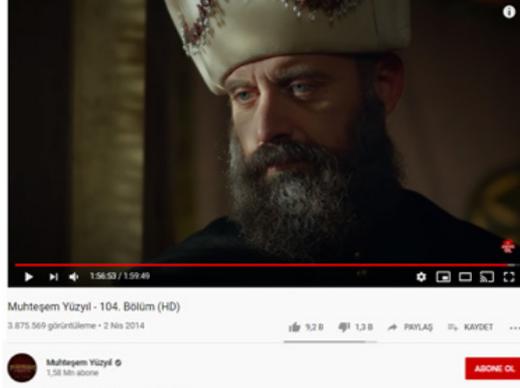
+90 312 281 42 42  
info@timb.com.tr  
Lisans/Yetkilendirme/İzleme Ücreti  
Lale Sok. No:5, 06500  
Beşiktaş/İstanbul

**Sosyal Medya**

Facebook  
Twitter  
Instagram  
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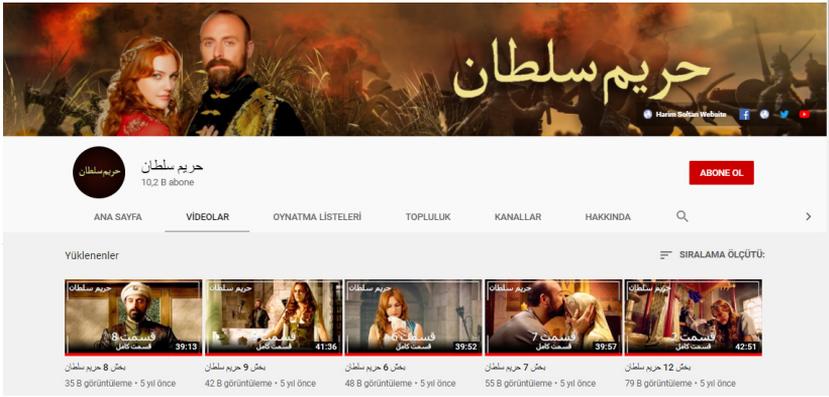
Picture 1: Image of the main screen of the official web page of *The Magnificent Century* Drama



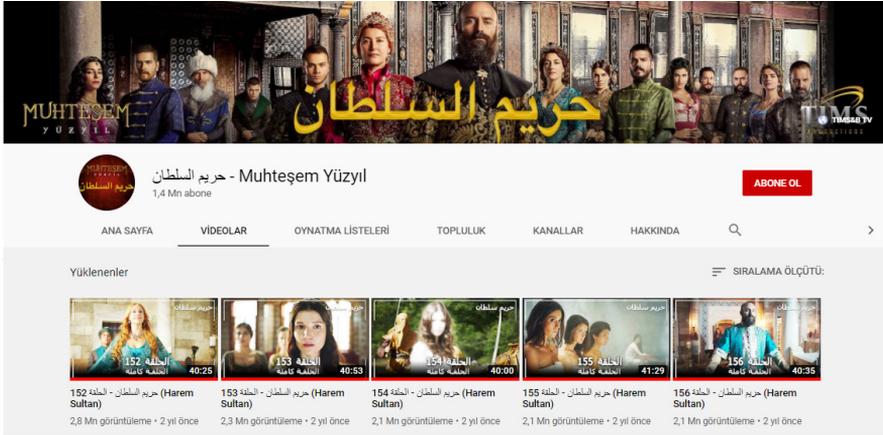
**Picture 2:** As of September 1, 2020, a total of 2,750 people had commented on the first video of *The Magnificent Century* broadcast on YouTube. In some viewer comments, it can be seen that users reply to each other and like each other's comments. It is also seen that the latest comment made on a video shared in 2014 was made one hour ago (on 1 September 2020, the date of the study).



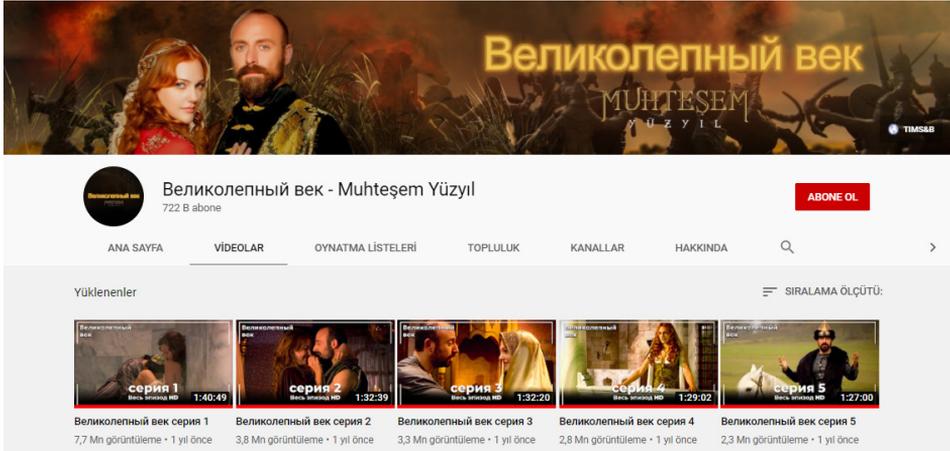
**Picture 3:** Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century*'s Turkish YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020)



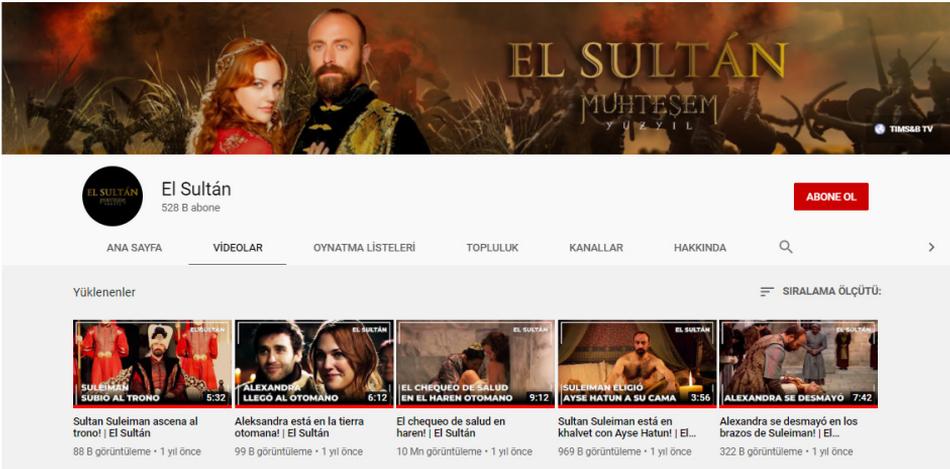
Picture 4: Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century*'s Persian YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).



Picture 5: Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century*'s Arabic YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).



Picture 6: Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century's* Russian YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).



Picture 7: Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century's* Spanish YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).

**Sulejman Veličanstveni**  
20,7 B abone

ABONE OL

ANA SAYFA VİDEOLAR OYNATMA LİSTELERİ TOPLULUK KANALLAR HAKKINDA

Yüklenenler SIRALAMA ÖLÇÜTÜ:

Episode	Duration	Views	Added
47. Epizoda	1:23:58	88 B	8 ay önce
51. Epizoda	1:44:30	102 B	8 ay önce
59. Epizoda	1:44:49	99 B	8 ay önce
60. Epizoda	1:45:29	89 B	8 ay önce
63. Epizoda	2:11:15	146 B	8 ay önce

**Picture 8:** Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century's* Croatian YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).

**Mera Sultan**  
186 B abone

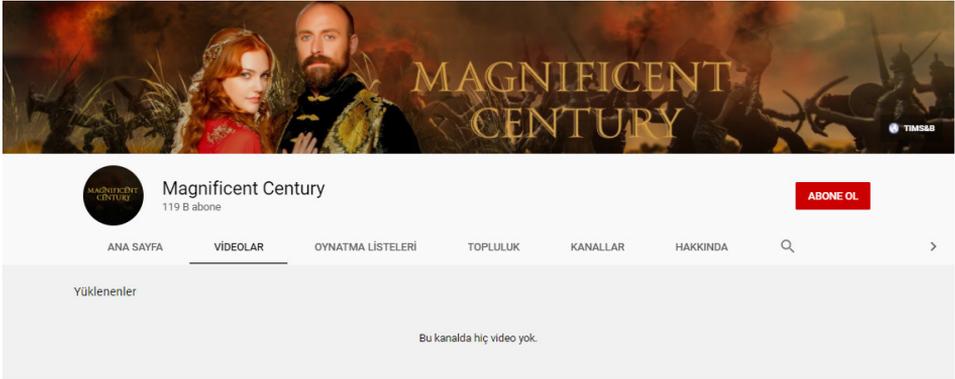
ABONE OL

ANA SAYFA VİDEOLAR OYNATMA LİSTELERİ TOPLULUK KANALLAR HAKKINDA

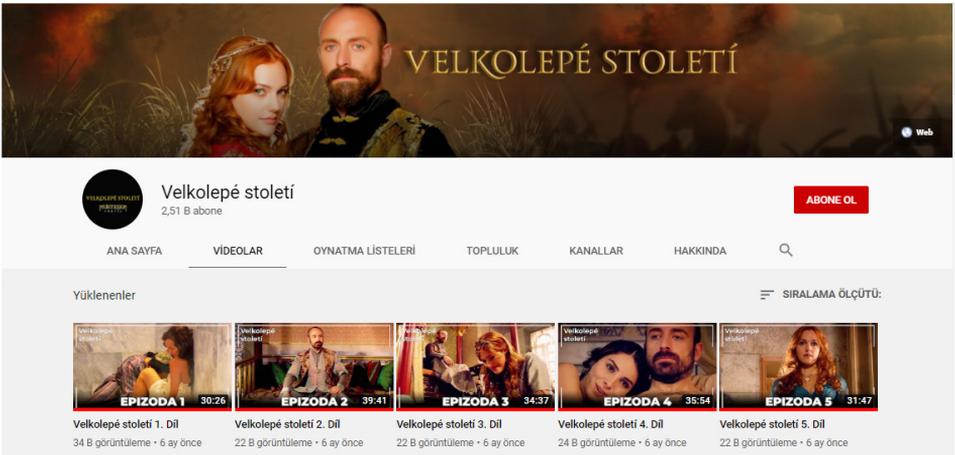
Yüklenenler SIRALAMA ÖLÇÜTÜ:

Episode	Duration	Views	Added
EPISODE 1	43:01	2,2 Mn	10 ay önce
EPISODE 107	33:34	291 B	8 ay önce
EPISODE 122	37:19	268 B	8 ay önce
EPISODE 138	41:31	440 B	8 ay önce
EPISODE 140	42:17	298 B	8 ay önce

**Picture 9:** Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century's* Urdu YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).



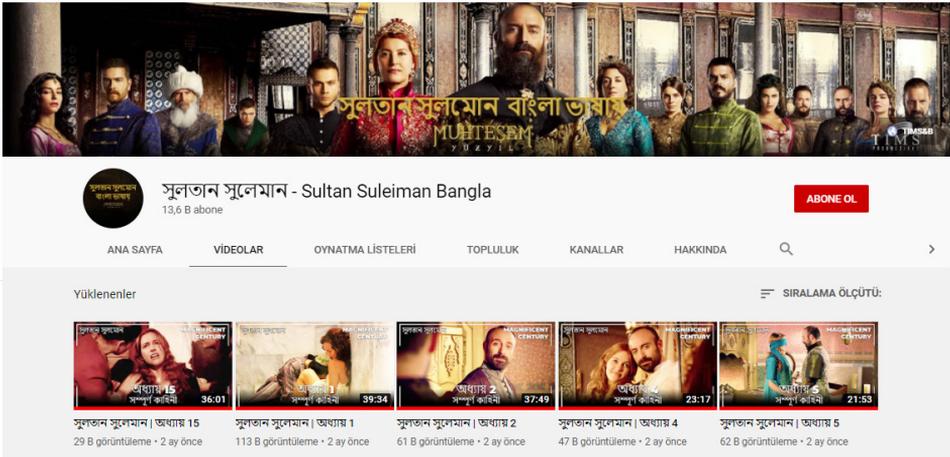
Picture 10: Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century*'s English YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).



Picture 11: Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century*'s Czech YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).



**Picture 12:** Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century*'s Indonesian YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).



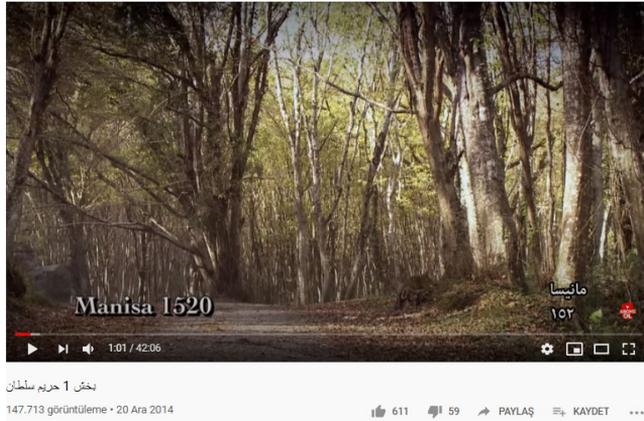
**Picture 13:** Videos Tab on *The Magnificent Century*'s Bengal YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).



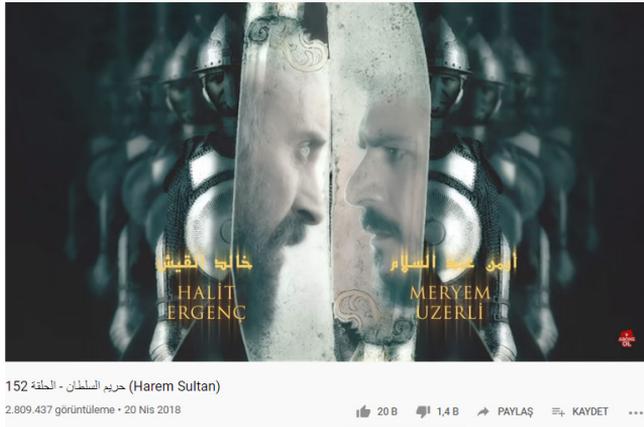
**Picture 14:** Videos Tab on The Magnificent Century’s Albanian YouTube Channel (Date Added/Oldest) screenshot (Access Date: September 1, 2020).



**Picture 15:** In the credits of the videos shared on *The Magnificent Century*’s Persian YouTube channel, Turkish words and their Persian equivalents are displayed on the screen (Access Date: August 25, 2020).



**Picture 16:** Should Turkish words appear on screen in scenes in videos shared on *The Magnificent Century's* Persian YouTube channel, their Persian equivalents are also displayed (Access Date: August 25, 2020).



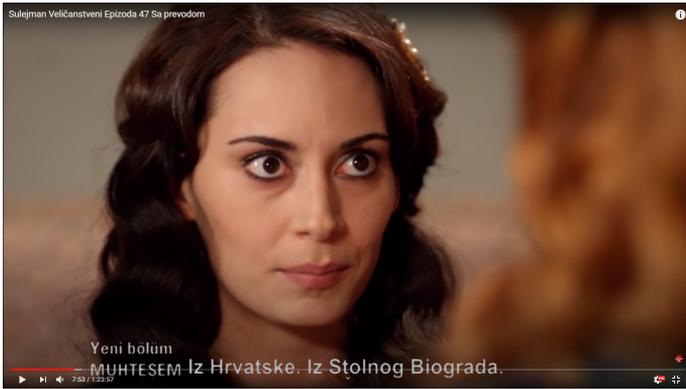
**Picture 17:** In the credits of the videos shared on *The Magnificent Century's* Arabic YouTube channel, Turkish words and their Arabic equivalents are displayed on the screen (Access Date: August 25, 2020).



**Picture 18:** Should Turkish words appear on screen in scenes in videos shared on *The Magnificent Century's* Arabic YouTube channel, their Arabic equivalents are also displayed (Access Date: August 25, 2020).



**Figure 19:** When Turkish words appeared in scenes in videos shared on *The Magnificent Century's* Spanish YouTube channel, they were translated into Spanish using voice (Access Date: August 25, 2020).



**Figure 20:** The first video shared on *The Magnificent Century's* Croatian YouTube channel is the episode where the Croatian character Nora entered the cast of the drama. It is seen that all the videos on the channel have the original Turkish voices with subtitles in Croatian (Access Date: August 25, 2020).



**Picture 21:** Should Turkish words appear on screen in scenes in videos shared on *The Magnificent Century's* Croatian YouTube channel, their Croatian equivalents are also displayed (Access Date: August 25, 2020).



**Figure 22:** On *The Magnificent Century's* Urdu YouTube channel, it is seen that the videos are dubbed in Urdu. However, the video titles are in English. It is stated that the video is dubbed in Urdu by putting the phrase “Urdu Dubbed” in all video titles (Access Date: August 25, 2020).



**Figure 23:** It is seen that the videos are not dubbed on *The Magnificent Century's* English YouTube channel. The original Turkish voices are accompanied by on-screen subtitles (Access Date: August 25, 2020).



**Figure 24:** It is seen that the videos shared on *The Magnificent Century's* Czech YouTube channel are dubbed in Czech and that when Turkish text appears on the screen, the Czech translations are given in voice (Access Date: August 25, 2020).