

**T.C.
SAKARYA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
CULTURAL STUDIES**

**THE EFFECT OF TURKISH TV SERIES ON KOSOVAR
AUDIENCE: A CASE STUDY ON THE RECEPTION OF
ALBANIAN WOMEN**

Shaha HYSENI

MASTER THESIS

Thesis Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Tlay ELİK

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Enstitü Anabilim Dalı : Kültürel Çalışmalar
Enstitü Bilim Dalı : Kültürel Çalışmalar

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ABSTRACT	
Title of Thesis: The Effect Of Turkish TV Series On Kosovar Audience: A Case Study On The Reception Of Albanian Women	
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Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Tülay ÇELİK	
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Popular culture studies are crucial for understanding everyday meaning-making processes of people. It has a central place in Cultural and Feminist Studies as this area considers every ordinary thing as part of the culture. The influence of Turkish Soap Operas over the Albanian female audience is an unexamined area in academic literature. This study aims to contribute to popular culture studies in this line. This thesis is grounded in ethnography, focusing on the Albanian female audience in Kosova, following a qualitative methodology. Semi-structured interviews are conducted to see the diversity of the responses in relation with their socio-economic backgrounds with one-to-one interviews and focus groups. It has been found that Albanian women of Prishtina have watched Turkish Soap Operas for years now. Soaps are the escapism from their everyday struggles. It is found that soaps serve as a learning hub, and a way of adding more to the table when discussing with other women. Data shows that women's appeal to Turkish Soap Operas, despite their patriarchal aspects, it helps them understand the role of women in society. Among critical reflections, this study found that women emphasise femicide and the rights of women today by comparing Turkish and Albanian cultures. Mostly, they have been loyal to these soap operas because they have been loyal to them inasmuch as its cultural proximity between the two cultures. The findings contribute to understanding the production of culture in industrial societies beyond what the system imposes on people for consumerist reasons only.	
Keywords: Popular Culture, Turkish TV Series, Reception, Kosovo, Prishtina, Albanian Women.	

ÖZET	
Başlık: Türk Dizilerinin Kosovalı İzleyiciler Üzerindeki Etkisi: Arnavut Kadınların Alımlaması Üzerine Bir Çalışma	
Yazar: Shaha HYSENI	
Danışman: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Tülay ÇELİK	
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Popüler kültür çalışmaları, insanların gündelik anlam oluşturma süreçlerini anlamak için çok önemlidir. Bu alan, her sıradan şeyi kültürün bir parçası olarak gördüğü için Kültürel Çalışmalar'da merkezi bir yere sahiptir. Türk dizilerinin Arnavut kadın seyirci üzerindeki etkisi akademik olarak üzerinde yeteri kadar çalışılmış bir alan değildir. Popüler kültür çalışmalarına bu doğrultuda katkı sağlamayı amaçlayan bu çalışma, nitel bir metodoloji izleyerek Kosova'daki Arnavut kadın izleyiciye odaklanan etnografik bir araştırmadır. Bu bağlamda, verilere ulaşabilmek amacıyla bire bir ve odak grupları ile görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşmeler, katılımcıların sosyo-ekonomik geçmişleri ile yanıtlar arasındaki ilişkiyi yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler aracılığıyla ortaya koymuştur. Buna göre, Priştineli Arnavut kadınlarının yıllardır Türk dizilerini izlediği tespit edilmiştir. Gündelik uğraşlardan bir kaçış olarak değerlendirilebilecek Türk dizilerinin öğretici bir işlevi vardır. Bununla birlikte bu diziler diğer kadınlarla sohbet ederken konuyu çeşitlendirmeye de hizmet etmektedir. Priştineli kadınlar, ataerkil yönleri olan Türk dizilerine yönelmektedir fakat bu eğilim, onlara kadının toplumdaki rolünü anlama ve eleştirme imkanı vermektedir. Kadınların dizilere sadık kalmalarının nedeni, Türkiye ile kurulmuş olan kültürel yakınlık olsa da, araştırmaya katılan kadınların Türk ve Arnavut kültürünü karşılaştırdıkları, kadın cinayetlerine ve kadın haklarına vurgu yaptıkları görülmüştür. Bu bağlamda çalışmada elde edilen bulgular, dizilerin yalnızca tüketime yönelik bir dayatma olarak değerlendirilemeyeceğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu yönüyle çalışma, kültür üretiminin anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır.	
Anahtar Kelimeler: Popüler Kültür, Türk Dizileri, Alımlama, Kosova, Priştine, Arnavut Kadınlar.	

INTRODUCTION

Soap operas have always been the ones that have conquered television, yet they are not about to leave. While Latin telenovelas were formerly popular, Turkish soap operas and Tv series are now capturing the interest of many people from the Middle East to the Balkans. Turkey is the second country after the US to sell the most series. Turkish TV shows are highly followed, admired, and discussed in the Balkans. Soap operas' significance as a global phenomenon has remained unchanged. Because it is mass produced, the status of this genre, which is especially oriented towards a female audience, stays low. Popular or mass-produced media, on the other hand, is what shapes people's attitudes and the construction of meanings in the production of culture. In this sense, there was a lot of focus on popular culture from feminists and cultural studies. In this way, soap operas are a reflection of varied political and sociological attitudes within a society and not merely a source of entertainment.

When the well-known actor Kenan İmirzalıoğlu played Mehmet Kosova in the serial *Acı Hayat*, Turkish series were extremely popular in the Balkans, particularly in Kosova. When the actor visited Kosovo, people were ecstatic to meet him, and both the series and the actor gained even greater fame. *Acı Hayat* is considered by many to be one of the most beautiful and tragic series ever broadcasted. That is how the trajectory of Turkish broadcasting series started in Kosovo and today are amid most watched series. Yet, there happens to exist a gap in research about the relation between media and women, especially popular culture. Besides the gap, the status of soap opera hasn't changed in Kosovo as well. Mostly considered as media consumption for housewives and not for "intelligent" people, a great attention is made on what is the relation between women, media, everyday life and the production of culture.

The Objective of the Study

A great importance to popular culture was given by Cultural Studies, with challenges towards the canon and the definitions of culture. In this regard, it was Frankfurt School who mostly saw popular culture as a threat to cultural and social authority. They argued that the cultural industry was producing merely for entertainment and in this way, it prevented people from receiving the reality. The arguments included also that popular culture was something new, productive and never reproductive. In this regard, Cultural

Studies studied popular culture by benefiting from semiology, Marxism, and other disciplines. While the divisions continued between “polite” for high culture and “vulgar” for popular culture, in capitalist or industrial societies this has changed. According to Cultural Studies, culture should not be divided along class lines or taste, because taste makes culture ideological. The main argument of mass critics was that popular culture is produced for consumerist purposes. Yet, audiences are the ones who determine its products. Except the divisions of buying and selling commodities, from popular culture various meanings derive, in other words it’s not a hopelessly commercial culture. Despite amusement and entertainment, popular culture has many functions. It provides role models and it helps people with emotional and social growth. Through popular culture many women were presented with the idea of what a liberated woman is. As a popular genre, soap operas have been here since the 1930s, which were aimed specifically at a female audience. Soaps were explicitly created for profit purposes. They were the vehicle through which ad agencies were profiting.

Yet, besides this function, soap operas were a significant cultural space for women, where the private and public sphere mingled. It is one of the assumptions on which the thesis is based. The first to take soap operas seriously, and understand audiencehood was the second wave of feminists. The genre started to have attention around the 1970s. Since soap operas were analysed as television texts, feminists paid great attention to how women responded to soap operas. The challenge towards media scholarship was made when feminists had two targets: melodrama and soap operas. Although soap operas have been considered feminine, many men watch as well. Yet, there are various reasons why soap operas appeal to women, mainly the women alone, problems of marriage, family etc. What keeps soap operas alive is the aspect of everyday life. Domestic life, marriage problems, and the role of women are some of the aspects that women identify through soap operas. As identification is one of the most essential aspects of soap operas, parasocial interaction is a significant concept. This view is the second assumption of the thesis. According to Paul W. Ballantine and Brett A.S. Martin, have argued that through parasocial interaction, viewers solve their problems through the narrative that online communities give, and the characters are no longer threatening to them (Ballantine and Martin, 2005: 197) In this regard, viewers of a television program meet a performer who later start experiencing intimacy that television series or other media becomes a friend,

where viewers get to share feelings with the characters, and improve their interpersonal relationships as soaps are mainly a learning hub, experience romance and engage in the criticism of women's role in society.

Despite the criticism that soap operas were mainly about women suffering from psychological, emotional or social problems, feminists challenged this by taking audiences seriously and considering them active rather than passive viewers. Mass critics directed the arguments toward audiences as passive and that they merely accept what the cultural industry imposes on them. Yet, it is argued that culture cannot be imposed from above and can only be produced from within. Although the cultural industry produces for the masses, audiences decode based on their ideological beliefs what also proves to be the third assumption of this study based on the data. The discourse for passive audiences is not inviting, in the sense that audiences now make selections of the text. There exists a continuity of meaning creation because culture is concerned with the production of meanings, especially in everyday life, as the fourth assumption of this thesis. Meaning is what gives people the feeling of who they are.

Significance of the Study

Existing research on Television and popular culture in general, emphasizing Turkish series in the Balkans, is an area mainly based on “soft-power” concepts. This study aims at contributing to the discourse of media-women from an academic perspective adding significance to popular culture. The influence of Turkish soap operas over Albanian female audiences is an unexamined area in academic literature. Moreover, as this study will make an ethnographic account of this phenomena, it expects to present a comprehensive study of how Albanian women from different socio-economic backgrounds decode Turkish TV series, how they perceive the characters, and what positions they take while reading such texts. In this line, this study is interesting to see how the culture of the viewer and the culture of the producer come together. Regarding this, it also explores whether the popularity of these soaps offer any type of explanation to the viewer's fictional world and the real one too. It aims to deal primarily with how Albanian women in Prishtina give meaning to these series. Moreover, it will examine how the public and the private are absorbed and intertwined into their everyday lives through these cultural artefacts. More importantly, how are Turkish series a forum for all

ages, and how are women of different age groups responding to these soap operas in their everyday lives?

This study holds significance as it is the first empirical study done on women only. In this line, it gives emphasis on the development of private sphere, its political role and how do Albanian women read and select their text despite patriarchal aspects. Regarding the reading process, this study is significant in two lines: the examining of active viewing in two categories, time and geography. This study analyses reading process after the war in 1999 in Kosovo and nowadays Kosovo, geographically near Europe and at the same time following a European lifestyle. This study holds importance as the active viewer, Albanian women read and are critical of Turkish Soap Operas in many levels but emphasizing in patriarchy and how power enables different discourses.

Statement of the Problem

Based on the assumptions listed above, in this thesis, we investigate the following questions:

1. Do Turkish series create a significant cultural space where the private and public sphere mingle for Kosovar Albanian women?
2. Do Kosovar women find a chance to interrogate traditional and patriarchal paradigms and the role of women in society through Turkish Tv Series?
3. Do Kosovar women create their own meaning while watching Turkish TV series? How much do their own thoughts affect the viewing process?
4. Is Turkey and Kosovo's historical and cultural affinity effective on watching Turkish TV series?

To understand why there is so much appeal to Turkish series, this thesis aims to understand why such series has been part of women's lives for years now. How does the private sphere come to the public? Why are series a great supporter of daily life struggles? How do women of Prishtina with different age groups respond to Turkish series regarding cultural proximity? Is Turkish soap opera the only escapism they have, or do they see it as a learning forum? In recent years, television has reclaimed itself as still the most crucial box in the corner, especially with the pandemic.

This study is underlined to discuss the problematic and analyze the data through these chapters: Literature Review, Methodology, Findings and Discussions and Conclusion. The first chapter of this thesis includes a scope from Cultural to Feminists studies on the relevance of popular culture. Before discussing popular culture, this chapter discusses what culture is and how the concept was perceived outside what meant “proper” culture. In this line, importance is driven by popular culture and its function in industrial societies. Emphasis falls on mass critics who argued that popular culture was the culture of people who were deceived by the system and they are nothing but numbers for commercial purposes. Echoing from the functions of popular culture, this chapter explains soap operas as a popular genre. Starting from the history of soap operas, how they were created and for what kind of reasons, it also entails the feminist approach towards soap operas. How soap operas started to be considered severe and available for academia is what is discussed in this chapter. Moreover, through different approaches of feminists, it is explained why soap operas are still a prominent part of women, why is pleasure a vital concept to be discussed and how ideology is essential to understand taste, or in other words, to comprehend television or media choice. While soap operas are so popular, they have many features that make them more appealing. The next part of literature review includes a broad overview of how audiences are considered only for profit and above all passive. Significance is drawn on television text and meaning, everyday life as previous studies to conceptualize the basis of this study. In regard to that this chapter also includes a history of Turkish *dizi* to understand the broadcast around the world including the Balkans as well. The second chapter covers the methodology for data collection and analysis. Empirical approach is used to understand the relation of Albanian women of Kosovo with Turkish Series. The primary data includes semi-structured interviews. Respondents are from the capital, and the study is limited to Prishtina. Focus groups and one to one interview were conducted with different age groups. Chapter three explores the findings from the collected data following the hypothesis. This study shows that television’s textual forms and modes of receptions have changed through years, by simultaneously changing social patterns and redefining femininity in the case of Albanian women of Prishtina. Collected data showcases an active audience since the beginning of the broadcast of Turkish series rather than passive viewers. This chapter expands on ten main themes found from the data collection. Through these themes in this chapter it is

intended to understand the relation of Turkish soap operas and Albanian women of Kosovo, the production of culture and the importance of popular culture. Lastly, chapter four includes the concluding remarks of the thesis, where the importance of this study is drawn and suggestions for future research as well.



CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

An altogether different and complex concept as culture has taken another turn within Cultural Studies. Cultural Studies was founded by Richard Hoggart at the University of Birmingham (Storey, 2009:57). The birth of the Birmingham University Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies which was founded in 1964, coincides with New Left emergence during the 1950s for which Stuart Hall argued that cultural studies could be identified with “the debate about the nature of social and cultural change in postwar Britain” (Ogdon, 2001:501). A discipline with its interdisciplinary nature, however Richard Hoggart (1969) argued that cultural studies does not have a stable discipline, (Grossberg, Nelson & Treichler, 2013: 2) it withdraws from other disciplines, it challenges the idea of canon, and gives space to heterogeneity by also challenging culture’s definitions from literary and philosophical canons. Even though it does not hold a specific methodology rather described as “bricolage” cultural studies draws from many theories of the last decade like Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, and postmodernism. For Hall, (1990a, 22) the goal was ‘to enable people to understand what (was) going on, and especially to provide ways of thinking, strategies for survival and resources for resistance’ (Grossberg, Nelson & Treichler, 2013:2). Ben Agger observes that culture “in the broad anthropological sense is any expressive activity contributing to social learning” (Agger, 1992: 2). The next section of this study goes through the lines of the theories and concepts of both Cultural Studies and Feminists. The importance of taking into consideration both these fields in analyzing a popular genre such as soap operas, is because both have included soap operas as an important, serious study in academia. It is Cultural Studies that shaped the general arguments of culture and feminist who engaged in bringing women’s private sphere to the public one.

The concept of the public sphere is often discussed through the book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* by Jürgen Habermas. It was Britain and France during the eighteenth century who formed a bourgeois public sphere. A shift from feudalism to capitalism was when coffee houses were turned into sites for the middle-class and aristocrats would share their thoughts. Yet the equality and freedom to access the public sphere were difficult for women and the subordinate class. With the emergence of capitalism, the same marginalized groups started asking for their rights. A notice of the

fall of the bourgeois public sphere was during the middle of the twentieth century, when the bourgeois grieved that the masses were getting involved in mundane activities (McGuigan, 2005: 8-9). In the same book, Habermas distinguishes two types of the public sphere: the literary public sphere and the political public sphere. Their function, though was different. According to McGuigan, referencing Habermas “Speech and writing went hand in hand, but certain kinds of writing and literary comment transcended fleeting topics of conversation. The Parisian salons, for instance, were important sites of the literary public sphere, somewhere that women were at least present. Writers could try out their ideas before committing pen to paper” (McGuigan, 2005: 10). Yet the public sphere of the eighteenth century is much different in the late-modern world, rather “it includes the various channels and circuits of mass popular culture and entertainment, the routinely mediated aesthetic and emotional reflections on how we live and imagine the good life” (15). In other words, the new concept of a cultural public sphere refers to both public and personal, politics, aesthetics and emotional ways of communication.

McGuigan argues that nowadays public sphere serves as a way for people to ponder and negotiate their lives in the system. Thus it provides, “vehicles for thought and feeling, for imagination and disputatious argument, that are not necessarily of inherent merit but may be of some consequence” (16). In that regard, McGuigan argues that famous debate was raised when Princess Diana died, at the same time questioning the Royals. On the other hand, according to Jacquie Smyth, the split between men’s and women’s public spheres is peculiar to European history. For her, “the traditional image of the Western European bourgeois male was that of a public figure” (Smyth, 2008: 8). It was men who were financially stable, educated and had access to resources that women could not. Women’s sphere was nothing like that of men. She was obliged to stay at home and raise her children. They were never involved in politics and usually her husband’s political stance had to be hers as well. The strong figure usually was in the outside world as the mild one had to stay at home, and this is how the spheres were defined. Smyth argues that the differentiation between public and private spheres “have roots in religious, cultural, and sexual traditions in bourgeois society” (Smyth, 2008: 34).

Taking a turn in culture, its cultivation is essential to see and understand everyday life and activities that shape societies' socio-economic and ideological aspects. This chapter is designed to argue on the role of culture, popular culture and soap operas, popular

culture within the framework of Cultural Studies, what are the functions of popular culture, soap operas history, features, why is it considered feminine and why it enters in the category of popular culture. How feminists took soap operas seriously and deployed academic research about them. Why is pleasure an important concept, and how does ideology affect people's decision in choosing media.

1.1. Popular Culture and Soap Opera

The following section discusses the arguments made on what is good culture. Echoing from Frankfurt School to Cultural studies, this section has analysed Frankfurt School's idea on culture. Drawing from Cultural Theory, discussions have been made on the industrialization of the culture, that according to Frankfurt School it has decreased individual activity and that it is no longer the artist but the industry. On the trajectory of high and low culture, Cultural Studies takes on a different scale, and considers popular culture as a critical activity. In this section it is argued that despite critical theory and dominant ideology, popular culture is not imposed from above.

This study is an empirical attempt to shape the general discourse about TV considering the complex of deploying only few academic work about it, especially popular culture and soap opera. Furthermore, there is a considerable gap on research about women and media. To challenge the discourse this study aims at analysing the relation of the audience and the text. Often seen as second hand culture or looked upon as unworthy, through this study it is aimed to analyse soap opera outside critical theory. A huge emphasis is made on the argument that audiences are not homogenous, that meaning is constructed and not given. This study seeks to understand what influences most of the reception of TV series, whether it is age; class or socio-economic reasons. The everyday life and women, public and private spheres, having defined popular culture and soap opera, this study aims at understanding why women seek to escape through romance, does soap opera reinvents their femininity, and how did soap opera become a pleasurable activity. To challenge the general discourse, analysis of audience and text are not always influenced by the dominant ideology but also by social discourses is what this study aims to explain.

1.1.1. Popular Culture Within the Framework of Cultural Studies

Many raised the question of whether popular culture should be considered severe, a question submitted within humanities and social sciences. A great emphasis on the seriousness of popular culture was done when Marxist scholars grew the thought that popular culture was pivotal in mobilizing political action. Moreover, popular culture emerged as a severe activity because of the theoretical developments, particularly the revival of Marxism during the 1960s, analyzing culture from a broader aspect to have a general understanding of social life (Mukerji & Schudson, 1986: 48). In other words, the basic arguments of cultural studies are grounded in Marxism (Storey, 1996: 3). Within these developments, cultural studies brought various conceptualized ways of seeing and perceiving culture outside the realm of the official culture. This expansion of cultural analysis happened when poststructuralism took a turn in anthropology by ignoring the traditional theorists. Thus, a great deal of this change occurred also with the growth of popular culture as a critical activity.

Yet, Frankfurt School saw popular culture as a threat to cultural and social authority. Frankfurt School was a group of German intellectuals associated with the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt. It was founded in 1923, but with the ruling of Hitler, it moved to New York and back to Germany in 1949. Frankfurt School is mainly associated with Critical Theory. According to John Storey, the name indicates the mix of Marxism and psychoanalysis. The school was concerned with the technological developments that allowed all classes to have access to culture, in other words, the rise of 'mass culture' (Cole, 2019). Prominent names of Frankfurt School were Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, Leo Lowenthal and Herbert Marcuse (Storey, 2009: 62). In 1944 it was Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer who formulated the notion 'cultural industry' which was "to designate the products and processes of mass culture" (Storey, 2009: 62). According to Adorno and Horkheimer cultural industry, what was once called mass culture, produces the standardized forms which are a demand from the consumers and that is why they are accepted with little resistance. For them, technical rationality is what keeps the domination. They argue that "Any need which might escape the central control is repressed by that of individual consciousness" (Horkheimer & Max, 2002: 95). In this way consumers are divided through statistics based on income yet during their leisure time as well, they have to behave in line with the unity of production.

For them, “This dreamless art for the people fulfills the dreamy idealism which went too far for idealism in its critical form” (Horkheimer & Max, 2020: 98).

According to Leo Lowenthal, Storey argues, the cultural industry was producing a culture which was based on stereotypes dishonesty which “has worked to depoliticize the working class – limiting its horizon to political and economic goals that could be realized within the oppressive and exploitative framework of capitalist society” (Storey, 2009: 63). According to them, what cultural industry produces has two features: homogeneity and predictability. Besides the worry that popular culture was a real threat, Frankfurt school argued that it actually maintains social authority. They argue that culture industry prevents ‘masses’ from perceiving the present. In this way, capitalism produces certain needs which in other words it prevents people from the political imagination (63). The industrialization of the culture was seen as a menace to the real art. Arnold Schuetz argues that Marxists considered art to be the production of the economic condition. On the other hand, “Critical Theory considers popular culture essentially as an industry, it becomes part of the economic base: popular culture not as intellectual result, but as a part of the production process” (Schuetz, 1989: 4). In other words, the industrialization of the culture has suppressed individual creativity. They argued that culture got replaced with ‘manipulated pleasures’ (Schuetz, 1989: 4). They deemed that the value of culture is the negotiation of power and rebellion, unlike popular culture, it lacks these components. Frankfurt Schools’ ideas coincide more with Horkheimer and Adorno. According to them Schuetz argues, “Light art fosters acceptance and false harmony. It is socially and politically detrimental” (Schuetz, 1989: 6). They say that popular culture is used to create a system and this system uses it as a commodity, in which it is not the artist, but the industry becomes the main source of cultural products. Frankfurt school was not against mass culture; what they argue against is the culture that submits to mere market. According to Frankfurt school, emphasizing more on Horkheimer and Adorno, art should be the critical force in society; for this reason mass culture or light art transforms people into consumers of trash (Schuetz, 1989: 7).

Unlike some of the members of the Frankfurt School who held ideas of what is proper culture, cultural studies consider popular culture as a “legitimate subject of academic inquiry because *culture matters*” (Agger, 1992: 4). The theoretical paradigms that happened through time, the idea that mass culture was affected by commercial pressure,

Cultural Studies took a turn to analyze it on a sociological and a Marxist model. However, the development of cultural studies brought various frames to analyze the text benefiting from semiology together with analysis of ideology and gender. This particular development happened due to three movements: *Culturalism: The late 1950s*, *Marxism/Structuralism: The 1960s*, *Hegemony and Textuality: From 1970* (Easthope, 1991: 69). The three above mentioned movements are being discussed based on Easthope's observation. In both his works *Culture and Society* (1985) and *The Long Revolution* (1961), Raymond Williams observed the concept of 'culture' contested by Leavis as the culture of the English ruling class, in opposition to popular culture that belonged to the working class. This binary opposition, usually held by the culturalist, claims that the working class does not encounter the rest of the social formations, and for this reason, it has to make up its 'own' culture. The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies under Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall used Marxism and structuralism to understand popular culture. Marxism took a stance on the economic state for production and consumption, while structuralism was used to see how the text was framed to the relation of the dominant ideology. Again, the analysis of popular culture led to one conclusion, that it was not a free expression of the working class but rather imposed from above. Thus, Stuart Hall using William's culturalism and Marxist structuralism came to the conclusion that these were two pivotal paradigms yet not reconciled enough to understand popular culture (Easthope, 1991: 69-72).

A mix which consisted of British post-structuralism came to affect cultural studies during the 1970s. This mix consisted of the writings of Lacan, Barthes, Kristeva, and Foucault. The idea was to focus on different signifying practices such as cinema, advertising art, music et cetera as autonomous work determined by economic practice. However, the distinction between high and low, there was a need to observe the history of the split between these two (69-72). Following Easthope's comments, the split happened during the 1660s in England when the 'polite' with their 'proper' values directed the 'vulgarity' of the ordinary people. Moreover, this emphasis happened in the United States, that the shift especially from 1900 between high and low was even more ingrained (Easthope, 1991: 74). However, the split, it is of importance to see again what popular culture is and stands for. According to Gary L. Harmon:

Popular culture may be defined as consisting of the arts, rituals and events, myths and beliefs, and artifacts widely shared by a significant portion of a group of people at a specific time. These basic ingredients of a culture include language (even gestures), customs, mores, values, attitudes, ideas, knowledge, and other acquired capabilities, for these embody beliefs and are often expressed in rituals, artefacts, or the arts. They are typical experiences. They are what a large number of people generally use, purchase, enjoy or practice. (Harmon, 1983: 4)

Within the binary oppositions of 'high' and 'low', Heather McIntosh argues that three assumptions take place. The first one is that "culture divides along class lines," second, "appreciation of 'high' culture requires both financial and educational means," and third, "high' culture holds supposed vaunted esteem over 'low' culture" (Burns, 2016: 519). Concluding remarks are made out of these assumptions that it is only the 'high' culture that should be considered severe, because it has value, unlike 'low' culture that does not trigger the mind towards acknowledgement. For this reason, Stuart Hall (2) argued that 'High culture versus popular culture was, for many years, the classic way of framing the debate about culture – the terms carrying a powerfully evaluative charge' (519).

A great deal of these distinctions lay on ideas of 'taste,' which make culture ideological. As John Storey notes, "ideology is without doubt the central concept in cultural studies" (Storey, 1996: 3). Within the concept of 'taste', popular culture is ranked as 'low' because it is produced for consumerist purposes. Its consumption in capitalist societies changes. Audiences, in this case, determine its products. In lines of McIntosh, referring to Bourdieu (213), 'the tastes actually realized depend on the state system of goods offered; every change in the system of good induces a change in tastes' (Burns, 2016: 520). Thus, Agger takes the view that:

One of the strongest insights of cultural studies is that culture is transacted between consumers and producers (via distributors). It is not simply laid on people from above, although typically in capitalism culture is differentially controlled and disseminated by elites. Cultural studies recognize that receivers are inherently empowered in the sense that they inevitably participate in the constitution of cultural meanings; culture is never simply

provided from without, to use Lenin's telling phrase in a different context. To this extent, then, culture can be remade, even when it is controlled at the epicenter of global capitalism's global village. (Agger, 1992: 8)

1.1.2. From Culture to Popular Culture

Throughout history, there existed two distinctions of culture: the high culture, considered the traditional one, and mass culture, the one produced for the market. The general picture of popular culture, which is defined as 'mass culture', is often seen as the culture of the working-class people, *the other*, empty and, above all, useless. To define popular culture, there is a need to go through the concept of culture itself.

According to Besim Dellaloğlu, in its narrow meaning, culture comes from Latin "cultura," which originated from "colere," meaning to cultivate the land, to dwell, to protect it (Dellaloğlu, 2020: 21). Dellaloğlu argues that, the concept of culture has a positive connotation, but when it comes to its meaning, there is a great uncertainty. According to Terry Eagleton, culture "Is the second or third most complex word in English language, so it has been claimed" (Eagleton, 2016: 11). Just around 1691, the concept of culture started being used in English, yet not until the 18th century the concept did not have the same meaning that it is used today. In French, he argues, the concept enters in the 18th century together with the concept of civilization. While in German, it entered at the beginning of the 19th century as 'kultur' which has the same meaning as civilization. Eagleton argues that, "It is industrial civilization, then which helps to bring the idea of culture to birth. The word 'culture' did not become widely current until the nineteenth century" (Eagleton, 2016: 23). In Mathew Arnold's view, culture "Is not in itself a question of action. It is rather the source from which the fruitful action may spring" (Eagleton, 2014: 125). According to Arnold, culture should be rooted in perfection, which requires God's will as well (Arnold, 2006: 22), because according to him, "Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is *a study of perfection*. It moves by force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good" (Arnold, 2006: 34). Arnold's idea of perfection meant an *inward* condition, a harmonious state between spirit and mind (37). In Arnold's terms, culture is the study of perfection, beauty, intelligence, sweetness and light, and if culture ought not to be like

this, it will belong to the Philistines (53). Having defined the concept of culture, it is of importance to analyze culture from the lenses of cultural studies theorists.

Raymond Williams (1983) outlines three main definitions. First, culture can refer to 'a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development', a 'particular way of life', and third "culture as signifying practices" (Storey, 2009: 2). According to Williams, although culture is a complicated theoretical concept, it refers to artistic and intellectual effort but also other things that are not intellectual but contain meaning and value, by which Williams refers to a 'way of life' (Williams, 2018: 904). Referring to the views of Williams, when culture stays alone as a concept, it usually contains particular activities based on the class associated with a peculiar occupation, and it is kept out from being called anything 'popular.' Conversely, anything 'popular' would refer to practices which reach many people that are distinct from the others of the high culture, which for so long the suppositions between popular and high culture have existed. Williams argues that to understand the popular culture, it is of importance to observe it historically. In other words, he argues that "it is simply not possible to adapt to a supra-historical scheme the notion, that is to say, of a body of highly important work which is always enjoyed by a minority and a body of different work, whether valuable or not, which is enjoyed by a majority" (904).

For Williams, making distinctions between a minority and majority art "is an act of faith and will- an act of will really against the historical evidence" (905). The theoretical distinctions between popular culture and high culture happened in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. With the significant changes in technology and mostly in cultural technology, theoretical problems evolved as well, mainly related to how these changes affected class relations. Additionally, a radically qualitative difference between popular culture and the opposite one shifted socially since the transformation of the early nineteenth century. From this time on, popular culture was something new and productive rather than reproductive (Williams, 2018: 906). Similarly, Harmon argues that the division between 'upper' and 'lower' happened as a result of the burgeoning population that was moving from Europe to America (Harmon, 1983: 4).

Before the discussion of the concept of culture, Stuart Hall argues that the concept of culture is not problematic as the term popular because most of the time it refers to

something negative or opposite. Thus, for Hall, culture is about the meaning and it 'permeates all of society' (Sommier, 2014: 2). The most common opposition that is made is the contrast between 'popular' and 'elite' (Hall, 2018: 930). In other words, it is often seen as the culture that simply fails to meet certain standards in opposition to high culture and for that reason, it is defined as the inferior culture (Storey, 2009: 6).

Historically popular culture was problematic as a concept but for industrial societies even more contradictory. The main discussion generates between the differences in commodities and profit-making industries that follow their interest. According to John Fiske, if popular culture is the culture made from people and for it to function as a commodity made by the industries it needs the interest of the people as well. Notably, popular culture is a culture from which meanings and pleasure derive, conversely industrialized, there are various nuances except the division of buying and selling of commodities. For Fiske, culture "is a living, active process: it can be developed only from within, it cannot be imposed from without above" (Fiske, 1987: 23).

Mass culture theorists fear homogenous produced culture, which is one of the definitions of popular culture, drawing on Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, Gramsci (2009) used the term to describe a group of people who dominate through their intellectual and moral influence on the other groups in society (Storey, 2009: 10). Moreover, liberal and the Frankfurt school considered ordinary people as fool (Easthope, 1991: 77) Along with other definitions of popular culture it is considered as "hopelessly commercial culture" (Storey, 2009: 8) however, in light of Fiske, culture cannot function or be sold ready for the masses because culture doesn't work like that. Considered as mass-produced culture unlike high culture as the culture of the individuals, this certain division entails many problems. For instance, Shakespeare was considered part of the popular theater in the late nineteenth century, unlike today it is considered as high culture (Storey, 2009: 6). Dwight Macdonald writes that mass culture is imposed from above and its participants are passive (Macdonald, 1953: 2). Thus, for Fiske, "popular culture is made by the people, not produced by the culture industry" (Fiske, 1987: 23-24).

Furthermore, the term 'the people' for Fiske bears social allegiances that are not determined by sociological elements such as class, gender, or age but by how people feel collectively. The formation of these people is as active agents rather than subjugated

subjects. Fiske argues that it is difficult to study or generalize them because their formation derives from people within a particular context and time. These people are “a matter of practice, not of structure” (Fiske, 1987: 24-25).

1.1.3. Popular Culture and its Function

Experiences of cultural activity that are less diverse than the sophisticated one are often seen as mere entertainment, which do not foster critical thinking. Although popular culture has been perceived in this way, it functions beyond amusement or distraction. According to Harmon, popular culture helps people attain attitudes through which its participants become aware of “the existing cultural attitudes and lifeways.” For instance, melodrama or mystery detection fosters thinking and behaving accordingly towards the surroundings. Furthermore, popular culture provides role models. Through different mass media Americans were presented with the idea of what a liberated woman is and started to understand things differently. Moreover, values, lifestyles can also be fostered through popular culture. It helps reflect the new beliefs around us but also opens up opportunities for individual or collective growth. While the criticism of ‘fools’ still stands, popular culture helps the society as “its consciousness-raising capacity.” Through the “imaginative constructs” individuals are recalled to ideas, attitudes, or phenomena which also excites the imagination (Harmon, 1983: 10).

On the other hand, popular culture as a consciousness-raising, through “simplifying complex issues” can show to an audience about certain happenings such as nuclear catastrophe, how is oil made et cetera (Harmon, 1983: 10-12). Harmon further maintains that “the ‘popularization’ of complex matters is a process often (and easily) maligned by experts, but in a world where no one can be an expert in everything, such popularization often represents the only opportunity most people have to try to understand the issues and events that affect them. The kind of simplifying, edifying, or predicting popular culture provides may help society survive with greater social stability and harmony through shared consciousness” (12). Thus, one of the most important functions of popular culture might be as “aid to emotional and social growth.” This stands for children and what fairytales offer. The dual activity that fairytales provide is from the “pleasure principle” to “the reality principle.” From this cathartic function, popular culture often helps to “explore the boundary between the permitted and the forbidden and to experience the

possibility of stepping across that boundary in a carefully controlled way" (13). Despite the general discourse that popular culture is harmful, it often alters consciousness activity.

1.1.4. Soap Opera's Main Features and its History

This chapter is designed to explore soap operas as a form of popular genre. As it starts with a historical overview, it will look into main characteristics as a genre. In addition to that, it will address discussions that resonate why it is considered an "inferior type of work"; feminists theory challenges, soap opera's inclusion in academia as text and women's relation to them.

Soap opera and its history dates since the 1930s, a televisional genre primarily aimed at the female audience. In her book, *"Her Stories, Daytime Soap Opera and US Television History"*, Elana Levine notes that soap opera was a product of radio networking dating in the 1920s. These daytime soap operas were vehicles of the networks to keep substantial economic profit proving beneficial sales to ad agencies that produced soaps. Besides the fact that soaps were a commercial utility, they were a pivotal cultural space for women which also connected the private and the public making women understand what is going on around them and their role in society (Levine, 2020: 9-10). In light of that, Levine notes that the "US daytime Tv soap opera is a history of a media form, but it is also a history of a prominent cultural construction of femininity and its imbrication within the institutional and artistic evolution of the primary mass medium in American society for nearly three-quarters of a century" (Levine, 2020: 9).

The term "soap" alludes to the cleaning detergent that the serial was used as the advertising structure. The "opera" on the other hand, stands for "the highest of dramatic art forms is made to describe the lowest" (Allen, 1995: 3-4). The narration of the serial would be interrupted by the advertisement that contained dirt. In this way, the characters in the commercial had dirty laundry, floors, and toilets and only one brand of soap could wash this dirt. Based on the logic of these commercials it is women's job to clean the dirt. Extending from the "dirt" another aspect of soap opera is "the dirty discourse of gossip." Series seem to encourage the pleasure of talking to other people about what they are watching (4).

On the other hand, Roger Hagedorn underlines that in comparison to the classic narrative, series have a prominent narrative where the relation between producing industry and readers should be analyzed. However, a significant aspect of serial that distinguished it from "classic" narrative text is the "episodicity." A classic text can be used based on the wishes of the consumer unlike serial consumers are under the command of the ones who urge them to present.

In other words, episodicity "functions as a textual of the serial's material existence as merchandise and, therefore, of the discourse established between the producing industry and the consuming public" (Allen, 1995: 28). This certain work came from the second wave of feminism of the Western world exploring concepts of "spectatorship and audiencehood, the relationship between textual analysis and contextual inquiry, and the specific of film and television as narrative forms and sites for the construction of identity" (Levine, 2018: 117). Similarly, Charlotte Brunsdon argues that the genre started to have attention during the 1970s, and the status of soap opera has changed in the last twenty years as an academic study (Allen, 1995: 50). In the same way, Brunsdon also argues that the feminist had an interest in the audiences and that the first analyses that were made were about how women responded to soap operas and how they 'read' television programs (55).

Referring to the views of Levine, a significant turn to challenge the media scholarship was made in the late 1970s and 1980s, by film and television studies. This turn of feminist thinkers had two targets: melodrama and soap opera. Historizing cultural forms is important to understand how certain divisions and changes came to be made. According to Christine Gledhill, such is the division of melodrama and soap opera. Soap opera started as an advertising vehicle, a cultural form directed to women within the domestic realism and romance frameworks. However, when soap opera became an independent aesthetic form, specific thematic and formal features made it subject to melodramatization (Gledhill, 1992: 103). To understand these changes, it is of importance to go through both of their historical formation; melodrama arose in the nineteenth century while soap opera is a twentieth century form. Echoing from Peter Brooks, melodrama is considered as the genre with bad reputation in which only excessive feelings, extravagant expression etc. Yet, few have argued about its psychological effect. For these critics Brooks argues, melodrama allows people to be in a state of "the pleasures of self-pity and the experience

of wholeness brought by the identification¹ with “monopathic” emotion as has Robert Heilman called it (Brooks, 1976: 12). On another note, Brooks argues, “In considering melodrama, we are in a sense talking about a form of theatricality which will underlie novelistic efforts at representation—which will provide a model for the making of meaning in fictional dramatization of existence” (Brooks, 1976: 13). Although melodramas bad reputation goes along with soap opera, indeed it represents the relationships, morals of the everyday life. Originally, the word melodrama was a drama that is followed by music that was used in the sense by Rousseau. Yet its peculiar modern form is located with French Revolution and after it. According to Brooks, melodrama has many aspects in common with gothic novels. Furthermore, its main feature is the theological aspect. As he notes,

melodrama is indeed, typically, not only a moralistic drama but the drama of morality: it strives to find, to articulate, to demonstrate, to “prove” the existence of a moral universe in which, though put into question, masked by villainy and perversions of judgement, does exist and can be made to assert its presence and its categorical force among men (Brooks, 1976: 20).

¹ When we talk about identification as a concept, Freud’s explanation takes place as the concept itself originates from him. Although he argues about the Oedipus complex of children, which is usually the attachment to another person, according to him there are other forms of identification. In other words, identification is not isolated egos but “subjects who are, from the very start, open to the world and to other people” (Meunier 2019: 48). To understand the concept in psychological terms, a turn is made in referencing Hesnard. For Hesnard, Meunier explains, identification in its simplest form is when a person sees another person who is structurally alike is a situation that gives meaning to one another. In this way, both the behavior and meaning does not belong to one person only, but they both can read each other’s intentions, as two human beings. Hesnard calls this the intersubjective link, when these two people haven’t shared anything and the relation is still anonymous, it is argued that “the intersubjective link becomes private” (Meunier 2019: 49). In this way people start to identify with others through sympathy. In other words, “Sympathy, indeed, is nothing other than the affective dimension of the comprehension of other people, and this, as we have seen, is realized in and through identification. Sympathy would thus be unable to exist independently, outside of the behavior of identification of which it is one of the essential aspects” (Meunier 2019: 49). In this case, sympathy is the generator of sudden sentiment which leads to understanding and identification. An example of a photograph is given to explain identification. The person in the photography immediately gives a series of elements with which the observer can identify, and the moment they are seen they form a structure. In other words now it is easier to comprehend a person of whom one has the image of them. In this way the feelings of sympathy and antipathy come to the front. In this case “All these considerations allow us to glimpse the subtlety and astonishing complexity of the process of identification, when we envisage it on the level of lived experiences” (Meunier 2019: 52). In other words, humans feel the need to identify with others, in which exactly through the process of identification gives people the “social mode” (54) of other people a “sort of generic coexistence of subjectivities – but subsequently structuring itself in personal relationship (118).

Although he related melodrama to Balzac and James, Brooks suggests the perception of melodrama as “dramatization essential to spiritual conflict” (Brooks, 1976: 20). According to him melodrama brings to reality something that is not visible. Since the Romantic era has started, melodrama can be seen as the most ambitious art (22).

On the other hand, Gledhill argues that “The conditions for the emergence of melodrama, many histories suggest, were created when, during the eighteenth century, the bourgeoisie took power from the aristocracy by assimilation or revolution and manoeuvred for cultural hegemony in the name of ‘ordinary citizens’” (Gledhill, 1997: 14). Yet not until the 60s that melodrama started receiving serious attention (Gledhill 1987: 5). Furthermore, in the fluidity of cultural processes, there is a need of identifying changes and transformation. Thus, in relation to melodrama, Gledhill argues “For instance, the history of realism displays an epistemological and aesthetic project—to present the real world—the terms and conceptions of which change as the social construction of reality, the philosophy of knowledge and means of representation change. In this perspective, realism as cultural practice and aesthetic theory constitutes an arena of debate in which the construction of reality itself is contested” (Gledhill, 1992: 104). In other words, melodrama is closely ‘related’ to realism in nowadays popular culture.

Although melodrama of nineteenth century holds aspects of aesthetic pleasures and ideological processes, contemporary criticism has “displaced in modern consciousness by the superior values of realism or modernism and retained merely as a derogatory term to berate the products of mass culture for a backwardness excusable only in women and children” (105). Here is the space where feminists enter, because soap opera shares the same fate as melodrama. Gledhill argues echoing from Peter Brooks, suggested that the devaluation that is made to soap opera and melodrama of nineteenth century, he takes it to twentieth century in great sentiment as areas of worth studying. What Gledhill is arguing is that historicizing cultural forms is not about aesthetics and their ideological aspects rather a shifting in cultural valuations. In other words, shifting cultural valuations especially melodrama and soap opera is closely related to class denigration which often coincides with devaluation by gender. The melodrama of nineteenth century “gave rise to an imaginative mode which informed not only artistic production across the media, but intellectual, social, and political thought as well.

Twentieth century gender specification has obscured melodrama's existence as a central imaginative and epistemological mode, and its role in the institutional and aesthetic foundation of popular culture" (Gledhill, 1992: 106). The public sphere of nineteenth century, be that theatrical, fictional or intellectual, melodramatic culture was consisted of men and women of working class as well. Yet, a division took place in the late nineteenth century which separated audiences by class, gender and aesthetic category.

The concept *melodramatic* in "twentieth-century usage comes to refer to emotions demanded for insignificant situations" (106). For Gledhill, narrowing melodrama as only feminine contains a huge contradiction of the term. In other words, "since soap opera is known to have been devised to reach female audiences and to deploy subject matter designated 'feminine,' namely family and personal relationships and a focus on emotion, it is melodrama somehow a 'woman's' cultural form" (Gledhill, 1992: 106). The concept *melodramatic* has come to mean "the oppression of women in the home" (106). To bourgeois taste melodrama was problematic because it entailed women. In other words, melodrama is seen as the lowliest form of Hollywood, but constituted in the tradition of Hollywood in the nineteenth century (Gledhill, 1987: 11). According to Gledhill, "The designation of the family as a bourgeois institution, the perceived materialization of bourgeois ideology in these films in a sphere conventionally assigned to women – the home, family relations, domestic trivia, consumption, fantasy and romance, sentiment – all imply equivalence between the 'feminine' and bourgeois ideology (Gledhill, 1987: 12). In regard to melodrama and realism there is a small difference that divides them. While realism produced individualized characters, who describe social and political movements, melodrama does the opposite, it understands "the social and political only as they touch on the moral identities and relationships of individuals" (Gledhill, 1992: 108).

1.1.5. Soap Opera as Feminine and Popular

Many theorists have argued that soap opera contains characteristics that makes it a female genre. Charlotte Brunsdon notes that women were to be considered the makers of the soap opera, and the genre is believed to be feminine. "In short, women have been targeted by the makers of soap opera, women have been investigated as the viewers of soap opera, and the genre is widely and popularly believed to be feminine, despite stubborn evidence that it is not only women who watch" (Allen, 1995: 58). Dorothy Hobson notes that

women indirectly use soap operas to talk about their lives. Thus talking, discussing soap operas with others is seen as a pleasurable activity (Ahmed, 2012: 1). Based on Natan Katzman's views out of 71% of the audience was composed of females (Katzman 1972: 203)

According to Drain, three main themes make soap opera appealing to women: first it is "the woman alone, problems of marriage, and family relationships" (Drain, 1996: 2). According to Fiske (1987) and Brown (1994) the narrative style of the soap opera is very enjoyable by women, making soap opera genre as the "ultimate feminine narrative" (Drain, 1996: 11). Amid characteristics of soap opera that Drain explains taking into consideration Brown's (1994) views, is the centrality of female characters. Here women like and want to identify with the lives of other women portrayed in soap opera.

Besides the fact that women are in favor numerically in soap opera, they are portrayed as powerful individuals. In this regard, "Soap opera viewing, therefore, allows women to see themselves not as minor characters in relation to men but instead as powerful, independent individuals functioning in an atmosphere that is closer to true quality than any other they have seen or personally experienced" (Drain 1996: 13). The general opinion of women in soap opera as mothers, daughters and more emphasized as housewives, Derry (1992) argues that soap opera actually portrays more women and careers than any other genre (Drain, 1996: 14). Moreover, it also functions as a way of empowering their roles as mother, wives in male dominated professions (14). In the same fashion, Christine Gledhill using the term cultural form as a general idea of culture, argues that family and community as a subject matter or soaps is what makes it women's cultural form (Gledhill, 1997:366).

Soap opera takes the place of the most popular form of television programming even today. Soap opera's preoccupation is everyday life. This certain characteristic has kept soap operas popular for years now. Domestic life, everyday problems, weddings, divorce the role of women in marriage, and many other aspects have attracted many viewers who watch the portrayals of things that happen in daily life. Besides these aspects, soap opera gained popularity also because of the relation between the viewer and the characters. This particular bond is often used to justify people's actions or behavior. It is of importance to bring the concept of parasocial interaction here. The concept was developed first by

Donald Horton and R. R. Wohl inspired by Robert K. Merton's work. Parasocial interaction is "the degree to which an audience individual develops a perceived interpersonal relationship with a media character (s)" (Rogers, Rogers & Singhal, 1998: 4). This happens when viewers perceive characters as real. In this regard, Ien Ang argues similarly. The identification with the characters leads to sharing feelings with them. Ang argues that the identification of the characters as 'real people' gives the viewer the pleasure to discuss about them not for the position they hold in the serial but for how they are (Ang, 1986:30). A very interesting relation happens when the viewer watches their favorite soap opera character on and on and they become familiar with them and the character is no longer threatening. Another issue is identifying with character's affairs and writing to them. As a quasi-interpersonal relationship, it gives the viewer companionship and interpersonal interaction (Rogers, Rogers & Singhal, 1998:5). One of the benefits of parasocial interaction is that through soap opera characters viewers solve their own problems through the narrative given by soap opera (5). A very crucial aspect of the involvement of the viewer and the characters in the serial is 'genuineness' Ang argues. Further she notes that "They have to be able to believe that the characters constructed in the text are 'real people' whom they can find pleasant or unpleasant, with whom they can feel affinity or otherwise, and so on" (Ang, 1986:34), or, "listeners *borrow* the extraordinary experiences of characters on soap operas in order to, for example feel something typically absent in their lives such as excitement or desire" (Cavalcante, Press & Sender, 2017: 2). All in all, soap opera is popular because of its "continuity, regularity and familiarity" (Ahmed, 2012: 4).

Another aspect of its popularity as Ahmed argues is its "openness" to a text without a start, middle, or end (4). But what makes it even more popular is that people find soap opera therapeutic by using them to discuss their problems, thus Ahmed notes that "soap opera as a genre has been successful in creating a style that fits well with women's discourse and problems" (Ahmed, 2012:4).

1.1.6. Feminist Approach of Soap Opera

Audience research during the 1940s was mainly done on women who were suffering from any emotional, psychological, or social problem. For this reason, soap was considered 'feminine' because it met the needs of these women. Despite its successful transition from

radio to television, soap opera was not considered serious. Besides the numerous criticisms that soap opera is popular culture, and that its audiences are passive and they do not contain meaningful worth, a great turn of feminist scholars challenged this idea.

Feminism itself broke through many disciplines, like literary theory, sociology, anthropology etc. They challenged the idea of the canon for its patriarchal bias by also deconstructing the existing discourses about high and low culture. According to Christine Geraghty and Elke Weismann scholars avoided TV as a legitimate object of study, “rather had highlighted how the medium’s devaluation was based on gendered hierarchies of taste...scholars in the late 1970s and 1980s made evident how the most reviled of all genres within TV included complex narratives and characters and offered many pleasures to audiences, particularly (otherwise under-served) female viewers” (Geraghty& Weismann, 2016: 366). Moreover, they emphasize that soap opera should be comprehended as a political-feminists project. In this regard, they argue that, “It was radical and subversive, precisely because it took women’s pleasures seriously and recognized that soap opera offered spaced of interaction into traditional discourses of gender” (Geraghty& Weismann, 2016: 367). The genre was deeply into the feminist agenda.

Thus, a great turn was made towards texts that were considered low in status and unworthy of study, feminists inevitably strived for analysis of these texts that were connected to female pleasure or popular romance. Thus, “Romances, previously denigrated as the trash brainless housewives consumed in reflection of their lack of critical thought, were thus re-appropriated by feminist theorists as tools of escape from drudgery” (Cavalcante, Press & Sender, 2017: 2). According to Elaine Aston and Ian Clarke television soap opera was seen as low in status and as a result pejoratively a woman’s genre, for these reasons it became a pivotal object of feminist. There was a need to reevaluate the traditional discourses towards women and that their pleasures were to be considered serious rather than dismissed (Aston & Clarke, 1994: 211) Feminist analysis of soap operas comes from two distinct yet connected disciplines: media/TV studies and film theory. The first analyzed women’s work and daytime soap operas while the latter as a focus had the recognition “that the ‘visual pleasure’ in mainstream (male) Hollywood film-making is constructed for the ‘male gaze’” (Aston& Clarke, 1994: 212). Basically, women were filmed as objects for male desires.

During the 1970s, the slogan “the personal is political” affected widely the media research. What strikes this period is that feminist critics argued that the home and personal are pivotal and not determined by economics. Thus, Brunsdon argues that “if the personal is political—if it is in the home, in relationships, in families, that women’s intimate oppression—or the oppression of women as women – is most consensually secured, then the media construction and representation of personal life becomes fascinating and an urgent object of study” (Allen, 1995: 59) This urgent object of study pushed the scholars to the everyday instead of the exceptional. That is why soap opera is an essential subject of study. But not until the 1980s soap opera began to be considered as a text.

The entire antipathy towards mass culture, in this case specifically soap operas, broke after they started being considered as texts and when popular culture, soaps in this case were to be understood based on their reception and use. Further, Brunsdon argues that “the interest in television programs directed at women/housewives displayed by feminist critics coincides with popular serial melodrama as a worldwide phenomenon” (Allen, 1995:54-55). Thus, one of the pioneers to challenge this was Tania Modleski’s work “*Loving with a Vengeance*” (1982) which was pivotal concerning feminist theory (Allen, 1995: 6-7) Moreover, Tania Modleski withstands the argument that soap opera might stay as the most feminist televisual form (Butler, 1986: 53). Along with Modleski, Ien Ang’s work “*Watching Dallas*, (1982) and Dorothy Hobsons’s “*Crossroads*” (1982) pioneered with Modleski in analyzing soap opera outside the inferior realm. Prior to 1980s, feminist scholars challenged the traditional way of analyzing soap opera by focusing on the ideas about audience.

While feminist researches were focused on how women ‘read’ television programs, a new form of media research towards audiences was ‘decoding’ which emphasized changes during the 1980s. From this time on, pivotal to feminist research two textual analyses of the programs happened: first, it was an “emphasis on the domestic environment and familial relationship therein.... Second, literature about “audience-as-fans and fan identity” can be identified as feminist work (Allen, 1995: 55). Feminism was more than just a bunch of academics and texts, but a political movement that was deeply concerned with women’s oppression and their empowerment just as bell hooks (1989) describes ‘finding a voice’ (cited in Storey, 2005: 135) For feminists’ popular culture was a great

part of their analysis as a result of producing incredible productive ways of reading texts. In other words, feminists struggled over meaning. According to Lana Rakow (2009: 186),

Though contemporary feminists have taken a diversity of approaches to popular culture, they have shared two major assumptions. The first is that women have a particular relationship to popular culture that is different from men's...The second assumption is that understanding how popular culture functions both for women and for a patriarchal culture is important if women are to gain control over their own identities and change both social mythologies and social relations...Feminists are saying that popular culture plays a role in patriarchal society and that theoretical analysis of this role warrants a major position in ongoing discussions (Quoted in Storey, 2005: 136).

Feminist work is important because it challenges the traditional way of analyzing soap opera and this happened primarily with audience studies. According to Gabriele Kreutzner and Ellen Seiter, feminist critics such as Tania Modleski, Charlotte Brunsdon and Carol Lopate "were interested in the possibility that soap operas offered women an entertainment vehicle which was inextricably bound up in the problems in their lives caused by the split between public and private cultures, and the burden placed on women for the psychological nurturance of the family" (Kreutzner & Seiter, 1995: 234).

1.1.7. Pleasure and Ideology

In her book *Dallas*, Ien Ang explains how its popularity broke ratings and how people started using aspects of it to interpret their own life. Ang does not try to explain why *Dallas* was famous rather focuses on a much more complex issue which is pleasure. Ang questions the main factors of this enjoyment and pleasure that comes out of soap opera. She then argues that this certain pleasure is not as a result of some "satisfaction of needs" but instead the effect that a cultural artefact provides. Ang called for letters to be written so people could express their ideas and why they like *Dallas*. Ang analyzed them on the basis of discourse, in other words, as texts. Ang argues that if we look at pleasure from the perspective of Adorno and Horkheimer, they argue that pleasure in mass culture is false which enables people to be fooled easily in the "status quo of exploitation and oppression" (Ang, 1986: 4-17). In Marxist view Ang argues, culture coincides with the

laws of capitalism turning cultural products into commodities for the market. For the product Marx argued that to have exchange value it needs to also have use-value. “In other words, one cannot succeed in selling a commodity if it does not have a certain usefulness” (Ang, 1986: 18). Furthermore, a product cannot be imposed directly from above, Ang also notes that socio-cultural and psychological aspects are important to take into account when a product is produced and when consumed (18).

Many argued that entertainment usually named as ‘mere entertainment’ comes from simple things, that do not associate with something philosophical. Ang argues that any type of pleasure is not automatic, thus it has a historical and social construct. Taking the example of *Dallas* in this case, Ang develops the argument of pleasure as a use-value, what the industry imposes on, but that to be available to large group of people, masses in our case, it has to know what is pleasurable to viewers as well. According to Pierre Bourdieu “popular pleasure is characterized by an immediate emotional or sensual involvement in the object of pleasure. What matters is the possibility of identifying oneself with it in some way or other, to integrate it into everyday life. In other words, popular pleasure is first and foremost a pleasure of recognition” (cited in Ang, 1986: 20). Ang emphasizes socio-cultural and ideological aspects when analyzing pleasure. Television viewing itself is connected to entertainment, in other words, relaxation or resting. As Ang notes, “entertainment belongs to the domain of leisure, and leisure is regarded in the everyday experimental worlds as ‘time for yourself,’ as liberation from the chafing bonds of the official world of the factory, school, or office, or from the worries of running the home” (21). Furthermore, she notes that entertainment is something people consider it earned. For this reason, when watching television as a cultural practice it is already a pleasure because it is leisure and relaxing time (21). For Janice Radway, relaxation “implies a reduction in the state of tension produced by prior condition” (Radway, 1991: 90). This particular entertainment, which is part of people’s leisure time, it is strongly connected to television itself, as a medium which takes place in the living room, as so, it is “an extension of daily life and routine activity” (Ang, 1986: 23).

On another note, television viewing and commercial television network, Ang argues, this relation has to meet audience’s wishes as well. In other words, audiences do not ask for a certain television program, but once they have it that does not mean that they consume from it in a passive way, moreover emotional energy and pleasure are emphasized as

aspects of watching (24). Although the letter writing, expressing why they watch *Dallas* might be an individual way of expressing their psychological state, Ang argues that television serial "is connected with our individual life histories, with the social situation we are in, with the aesthetic and cultural preferences we have developed, and so on" (26). She further argues that the individual letters picture a "specific socio-cultural manner" (26).

Another crucial element from which pleasure derives is how the story is set to describe actions and consequences. In regard to this, Tania Modleski argues that "Thus the narrative, by placing more complex obstacles between desire and its fulfilment, makes the anticipation of an end in itself. Soap operas invest exquisite pleasure in the central condition of a woman's life" (Modleski, 1979:12). In the meantime, an illusion for the narrative is created in the viewer. This illusion is strengthened by the chronology of the narrative. Ang emphasizes that the episodic character of the serial itself is very crucial. Television series appears as a historical sense of time, where the wish to know what will happen in the next episode a 'cliffhanger' is aroused in them (53-54). The constructed illusions, are one of the fundamental aspects of pleasure, because the viewer already lets him or her to be owned by the narrative without them including any effort. The pleasure is not in the content of the serial, but in the form is what Ang argues (41).

Ang explains that texts are not read entirely, viewers make selections of it, based on what they find pleasurable. Ang draws on Roland Barthes from *The Pleasure of the Text*, "it is the very rhythm of what is read and what is not read that creates the pleasure of the great narratives..." (43). The letter perception of *Dallas* itself as a serial, which is connected to pleasure, it is related to what viewers perceive "realistic" a judgement reached by the selection of the text. Viewers think that what happens in the serial, in this case *Dallas*, are things "taken from life" something not very different to what could happen to them as well (44). According to Ang, viewers perceive realism in series on an emotional level, noting that "what is recognized as real is not knowledge of the world, but a subjective experience of the world: a 'structure of feeling' (45). Ang calls this feeling "*tragic-structure of feeling*" because people are likely to recognize themselves by experiencing it as "real" which arouses pleasure (45-46). A very important concept here is escape. Ang notes that often the word "escape" connotes something negative, but in most cases, it is a division between "sense of reality" and "flight from reality". Furthermore, Ang notes that

“The ‘flight’ into a fictional fantasy world is not so much a denial of reality as playing with it” (49). In regard to this Janice Radway remarks that the shifting from the real world to the fictional one is a “more desirable universe where events are happily resolved” (Radway, 1983: 60). Data from this study shows that these women were fleeing from “pressure” and “tension” from daily experiences as mothers and wives (60). This created space, amid all the ongoing at home as mothers “By placing the barrier of the book between themselves and their families, these women reserve a special space and time for themselves alone” (61). Turning to romance reading indicates a world where fantasy is included in which she is the heroine and the man there makes her feel unique. Romances thus provide hope and pleasure for them.

For Janice Radway, women use romance novels to “diversify their pace and the character of their habitual existence” (Radway, 1991:89). Radway argues that women’s doubts often come from their husbands and children. She further argues that escape is the reason for resentment and guilt feelings. Radway explains that “Relaxation implies a reduction in the state of tension produced by prior conditions, whereas escape obviously suggests flight from one state of being to another more desirable one” (90). In addition to escape, both Ang and Radway agree that women use romance to escape, drawing from Radway, “to describe the act of denying the present”, moreover, Radway argues, “they used the word in a more figurative fashion to give substance to the somewhat vague but nonetheless intense sense of relief they experience by identifying with a heroine whose life does not resembles their own in certain crucial aspects” (90). Escapism was a legitimate way of opposing a reality that was too difficult to bear (Radway, 1983: 59). But what makes it more pleasurable “...it is precisely the unreal, fantastic shape of the story that makes their literal escape even more complete and gratifying” (Radway, 1983: 59). Radway explains that women escape because of their roles as mothers and wives, which they deem it as an emotional need and necessity (92). Drawing from Radway (1991) she argues that reading:

As an activity, it so engages their attention that it enables them to deny their physical presence in an environment associated as too onerous to bear. Reading, in this sense, connotes a free space where they feel liberated from the need to perform duties that they otherwise willingly accept as their own. At the same time, by carefully choosing stories that make them feel

particularly happy, they escape figuratively into a fairy tale where a heroine's similar needs are adequately met. As a result, they vicariously attend to their own requirements as independent individuals who require emotional sustenance and solicitude (93).

On another note, Radway (1991) also argues as follows:

Almost all women search for emotional gratification because romance help them release tensions, and gives them the chance to involve themselves in fantasy which provides good feelings. Romance itself help women to get that emotional release, something they cannot identify as mothers or wives because there is not enough space for "self-interested pursuit of individual pleasure. (95-96)

On another hand regarding ideology, melodrama as a cultural form, people have found it difficult to take it seriously. Seen as the 'banal' or failed tragedy, Ang argues that the exaggerated events inside soap opera should be seen as the holder of the melodramatic function (64). But pleasure itself, Ang argues, is not something rationally motivated, because most of the time people don't question themselves of why they like something, it is a more spontaneous feeling (86). On the other hand, hating *Dallas* in this case, has much to do with the ideology of popular culture itself explained above.

1.2. Mass Communication and Audiences

Many of the pessimistic theoretical paradigms that were developed against mass society came from Frankfurt School. When they moved to America during the 1930s, the 'mass society' and Fascism was not really acceptable to the American society. In reaction to that, American researchers came up with a positivist methodology for radio audience in an empirical way. David Morley discusses two paradigms that were developed to analyze audiences: the "normative" and "interpretative" one (Morley, 1992: 42-43).

The mass communications research broke through the "pessimistic mass society thesis" by challenging the idea that informal communication didn't have a significant impact in the society. One of the pioneers to challenge this was Robert Merton. Merton analyzed both the content and the effect that it has in the audience. Merton and many others, who followed the same path, rejected the idea that there is direct influence from media to the

individual. Later on, there was a prediction that an end to mass-communications research might happen because there were constant analyses in a quantitative approach which also came to be made a routine.

However, Elihu Katz (1959) argued that the smallest content of mass media had no effect on the psychological and social aspects of their lives if it did not have any "use". Similarly, to what Ang argues, in regard to pleasure, Katz also argues that the "uses" approach "assumes that people's values, their interests...associations...social roles, are pre-potent, and that people selectively fashion what they see and hear" (45). In this case "uses of gratification" approach was tailored to move forward in the mass communication research. The approach's focus was on the effect. Researches later showed that television, was not a cause of harm instead a "contributing factor" (45). On the other hand, the interpretative paradigm had a more sociological perspective. The interpretative paradigm dealt more with the role of language, symbols, how a certain was interpreted and everyday communication (Morley, 1992: 46).

This chapter is designed to explain what audiences are, why are they considered as passive and, how audiences have turned into collected data as a profit to the economy. The following section discusses the arguments mainly made by feminists on audiences as active viewers and producers of meanings. In this section it is also argued how meaning is produced from television text in order to understand the cultural activity. By analyzing that, everyday life and TV is taken into consideration, as how daily routines activate viewers in the production of meanings and how despite other media TV continues to dominate.

1.2.1. Audiences as 'taxonomic collective' and Passive Audiences

Audiences have been considered passive for a long time, and television viewing, in this case, is something controlled by the industry. Ang argues that the strategies compiled to "control", measure and predict what audiences like only help to manage. Even though these strategies exist, there is no specific result that the audience's viewing behaviour is controlled by institutions (Ang, 1991: 15). Audience measurement Ang notes is a technique as a "power/knowledge device in the structural operations of commercial television" (17). The acquired knowledge about audiences, according to Ang:

No matter whether they are formal or informal, explicit or implicit, scientific or intuitive, 'objective' or 'subjective', they are all forms of interested knowledge, aimed at inducing strategic know-how: their purpose is to clarify what one should do in order to sustain a hold over the audience. It is this goal-directed requirement that binds all forms of institutional knowledge (including research) together, and that determines their common discursive constructions of 'television audience' as a category of others to be controlled (Ang, 1991: 18-19).

In a way, from the gained knowledge about audiences, the institution wants to colonize audiences, and this is a constant battle between audiences and institutions Ang emphasizes (20). According to Ang, even though all institutions target audiences as object to be controlled, "the meaning, intent or import of the conquest is not constructed in the same way in the two systems" (21). Commercial television has one aim, to make profit out of the advertisement from television channels. Moreover, Ang emphasizes, "the driving force of the system is ultimately a purely economic matter: it is principally connected with the capitalist concern of making money" (21). Collected ratings are the knowledge about audiences which are used for the functioning of the economic system. The good ratings are made out of the relation between audience and advertiser, and here television programs are the most essential tool for television commercial. Ratings in this case play a very pivotal role, because they inform the managers about the feedback. All these ratings help to determine the market (22). In many definitions about audience, such as a group of people gathered who are attending something, Rom Harre (1981) called audiences a "taxonomic collective" which are individuals in group who do not relate to one another (27). But the audience of the television, is different. This is because television is there all the time and one can watch any time, for this reason audiences cannot be observed directly and not having a direct empirical mirror, and this invisibility does not give sufficient knowledge to the institutions about "television audience" (28) According to Ang, "No representation of 'television audience', empirical or otherwise, gives us direct access to any actual audience" (28). As a result of not having direct access, only "fictive" aspects of "audience" are created, in other words, not unreal but fabricated. The institutions through "taxonomic collective" definition of "audience" Ang argues, is to establish 'television audience' and discourses around it so it meets the economic profit. Ang further notes that, it is not only the audience-as-market but also the audience-as-public that are seen as taxonomic collective (29). In regard to this Ang emphasizes that

“As members of a taxonomic collective audience members—whether defined as consumers or citizens—are extremely depersonalized. They are not seen as individual persons or social subjects with their own particularities, but are given the status of serialized parts of an objectified whole (market or public)” (30). The term ‘television audiences’ denies the nature of the actual audiences. John Ellis (1983:49) has emphasized the difference between audiences and viewers.

‘For audience’ is a profoundly ideological concept, that has very little to do with what viewers are doing or how they are interpellated. Broadcasting institutions are not concerned with ‘viewers’, but they are with ‘audience’. Viewers are the few people who ring in to the duty officer, or write to the broadcasters or to newspapers, expressing their opinions. Viewers record programmes on VCRs and use them later, pausing or replaying when attention wanders, shuttling forward when interest fades. Audiences, however, do not have these irritating characteristics. They have no voices and the most basic of elements, they ‘belong’ to income groups and are endowed with a few broad educational and cultural features. Audiences do not use TV; they watch and consume it. Broadcasting institutions do not seek viewers, they seek audiences’ (as cited in Ang, 1991: 30).

The whole system has been supported from advertisers as sponsors. The commercial broadcasting industry and the advertisers see audiences as consumers. Audience measurement in this case is the economic tool through which advertisers set their selling goals (44). In the same fashion, Toby Miller argues the same. According to him, audiences were never in the position of supply and demand, instead “Most of the time, television is not directly selling anything to its audience, and the audience is not buying anything from it” (Miller, 2010: 111). Miller draws on Hartley’s work and according to him, TV texts were never consumer commodities, but more powerful than just data.

For a long time now, the term "audiences" has been used in a pejorative manner. With the "mass" communication, audiences have been considered as ignorant and easily manipulated. Yet, an involvement of audiences with the programmes Livingstone argues, “...and their experiences cannot be dismissed as one of the mindless escapisms, of irrelevant and barely attended trivia, now as the banal experience of a passive and

unintelligent mass” (Livingstone, 1988: 56). Just like Ang, Sonia Livingstone argues the same, that audiences are seen a subject of institutional interest used for commercial profit (Livingstone, 2005: 2). The history of audience dates much longer than the analysis of the twentieth century which were made primarily to television audience. Audience meant face-to face lead by or in the presence of someone, be that a political meeting, a concert or theater. The technological and innovation of mass media eliminated the physical aspect, resulting in communication at distance or in other words producer and audience.

One of the genres that challenged the discourses built for audiences is soap operas. As a result of the longevity of the series, soap opera fans were the largest who followed and watched soaps. As a result, many theorists, Livingstone argues, “They have taken as their starting point the argument that, as media contents are complex, multilayered texts, inviting semiotic analysis to unpack their meanings, then audiences are best understood as ‘readers’” (13). Similarly to what Ang argues, that people make a selection of the texts, Robert Allen (1995) argues the same. Readers know what they want to be shown next. In the same lines as Ang, Allen agrees that viewers can predict what will happen through "the cliffhanger" (Livingstone, 2005: 14). The discussions that audiences are passive is no longer true, because they do not receive directly what the institutions serve. The prove stays in how they constantly fashion from the text what they prefer to read and “audiences are "written into" media texts themselves (14). According to Livingstone, drawing on Ellen Seiter’s work, there are three arguments on how people use media actively. First,

Audiences must interpret what they see even to construct (or decode) the message as meaningful and orderly, however routine this interpretation may be. Second, the experiences and knowledge become a resource for the interpretative process of viewing. Third, audiences diverge in their performances, generating different readings of the same media text. These differences may be anticipated by an open text, though at other times, they are readings ‘against the grain’ of a closed text. Interestingly, sometimes viewers are playful, reflexively self-conscious in their critical or creative approach to the conventions of the text. Audience creativity and heterogeneity are not unlimited; however, viewers’ social positions are structurally constrained. Hence, viewers diverge in their interpretations and uses of media

according to their gender, ethnicity, political and class identities, age, personal experience, nationality and other factors (Livingstone 2005: 16).

The elitist concepts about passive audiences were challenged with the rise of the notion of the "active viewer", mainly analyzed within the literary criticism theories as reader-response theory. Reader response theory sees the process between the reader and the text, their experiences in the past, their beliefs and meaning is determined from these processes (Spirovskaja, 2019: 22). According to Livingstone, "As people are increasingly seen as active interpreters of everyday life, they inevitably become active viewers also" (Livingstone 1990: 37) As a result, there is an active audience and viewer's read when there is a programme or text, and researches have shown that audiences are both heterogeneous and selective in regard to television (Livingstone, 1990: 17).

1.2.2. Television Texts and Meaning

Culture as a complex concept as it is, is concerned with the production of meanings. Cultural practices are essential to understand that things we say, feel or give sense to is part of our everyday practice. In regard to where is meaning produced, Stuart Hall claims that "Our 'circuit of culture' suggests that, in fact, meanings are produced at several different sites and circulated through several different processes or practices (the cultural circuit). Meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity, of who we are and with whom we 'belong'—so it is tied up with questions of how culture is used to mark out and maintain identity within difference between groups" (Hall, 1997: 3). There is a constant production of meaning in personal interactions. Beside personal interactions, meaning is also produced in the use of media, in the time that we express ourselves and how we make use of culture when we mingle them into our daily lives and practices is how also significance and value is given as well.

However, language is the privileged "media" is what Hall argues. According to him, "Members of the same culture must share sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, and thus to interpret the world, in roughly similar ways. They must share, broadly speaking, the same 'cultural codes'" (Hall, 1997: 4). In this regard, meaning is not found rather constructed and produced. What connects meaning and language to culture is representation. The usage of language to express something meaningful to other people is representation. "Representation is an essential

part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture” (Hall, 1997: 15). In other words, “Representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between concepts and language which enables us to *refer* to either the ‘real’ world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events” (17). At the core center of the meaning process in culture, there are two "systems of representations", the former gives us the possibility to give meaning to the world, while the latter is a connection between conceptual map and signs. From all this process, at its center lies meaning, and the process that links this is called representation. People who share the same culture broadly share also the same conceptual map, by also interpreting the signs of the language only in manners that meaning are effective to people. Further on, if no meaning is taken then there is no consumption. Hall argues that, “If the meaning is not articulated in practice, it has no effect” (Hall, 1993:508). The production and reception of television messages are not identical but social relations and communication as a whole enters as a process to determine messages. Thus, Hall argues that “The institution-societal relations of production must pass under the discursive rules of language for its product to be ‘realized’. This initiates a further differentiated moment, in which the formal rules of discourse and language are in dominance. Before this message can have an ‘effect’ (however defined), satisfy a ‘need’ or be put to a ‘use’, it must first be appropriated as a meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded” (509). This set of decoded meanings with its "effect" can instruct meanings in cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioral aspects. The "effect" can be shaped by social and economic relations which help the meanings to be put into practice. Thus, reality Hall argues, exists outside the language, but it is constantly mediated through language, but also through discourse as well.

In regard to discourse, Hall remarks that “Discursive ‘knowledge’ is the product not of the transparent representation of the ‘real’ in language but of the articulation of language on real relations and conditions. Thus, there is no intelligible discourse without the operation of a code” (511). Codes can be distributed within a specific culture or language but also learned from a young age.

In the same fashion, Christine Gledhill argues that “all social practices – whether reading newspapers and magazines, visiting museums, shopping for clothes - take place within representation and are saturated with meanings and values which contribute to our sense of

who we are – our culturally constructed identities” (Gledhill, 1997: 339) What Geraghty argues is that, earnestly representation should not be limited only to figures or events but to bring pleasure and especially situations that have been as lived experiences.

Along theorists who did ethnography, which is to get to see how people live their culture, the work of David Morley pioneered to challenge the previous arguments about passive audiences. Morley’s work with different viewers from different backgrounds proves that Hall’s preferred reading theory overemphasizes class as a factor. Hall’s model “sees the text as a structured polysemy, as a potential of unequal meanings, some of which are preferred over, or preferred more strongly than, others, and which can only be activated by socially situated viewers in a process of negotiation between the text and their social situation” (Fiske, 1987: 64). Basically, television text reading is a process of negotiating with the “subject position and the one proposed by the text itself, and in this negotiation the balance of power lies with the reader. The meanings found in the text shift towards the subject position of the reader more than the reader’s subjectivity is subjected to the ideological power of the text” (65). The text when read by a different social group, has to be enjoyed. Television texts are more polysemic than previous theorist have argued. For Hobson (1982) the audience works on the text, and the message can be changed based on the interpretation that audiences make out of the programme. As for Volosinov (1973) “reading is not a garnering of meanings from the text but is a dialogue between text and the socially situated reader” (cited in Fiske, 1987: 65) Morley (1980a) thus argues that meaning can be constructed based on the discourses available. In other words, information, prejudices and other aspects are key factors.

According to Fiske, “Our way of understanding our subjectivity is that it is composed of the variety of discourses that we use to make sense of the social domains that constitute our social experience. Because our social experience has varied and does vary, so much, our subjectivities are likely to be composed of a number of different, possibly contradictory discourses, each bearing traces of a different specific ideology. (A discourse bears a specific ideology and through that relates to the dominant ideology or ideology in general).” (Fiske, 1987:66). People watch based on different modes of attention; what Hartley called ‘regimes of watching’ (Fiske, 1987: 73). Studies have shown that people do other things when they watch. Many women ,in this case do their housework and watch

TV at the same time, but only pay great attention when something that strikes their interest happens (73).

Television as a cultural space brings different meanings and viewing comes from a varied number of social discourses. An exciting part of these discourses, which often are considered something that women cannot distinguish between fact or fiction, is gossip. Gossip is “an active engagement with the issues of the program and a desire to read them in a way that makes them relevant to the rest of their lives (76). Both ethnography and Uses and Gratification has shown that gossip can bring back the program and that it can activate certain meanings. Much of the talk about social media as cultural commodities represent our social experience by making it pleasurable and meaningful. In regard to that Fiske argues that, “These meanings, these pleasures are instrumental in constructing social relations and thus our sense of social identity” (77). Feminists see gossip as a creative activity and resistance to patriarchy. The study of *Dallas* Katz and Liebes (1984, 1985) have found that people discuss the program be it during or after, by selecting and interpreting parts of it based on their culture and personal experiences (Fiske 1987: 79). According to Fiske, what helps meanings be created is that oral culture is very active and participatory. In this regard, there is a circulation of meanings. Oral culture activates viewers by becoming producers of meanings (79). According to Katz and Liebes (1984: 28), talk is pivotal in ‘the social dynamics of meaning making’ (cited in Fiske, 1987: 79). Fiske argues that gossip has two functions: one is that “it constructs audience-driven meanings and it constructs audience communities within which those meanings circulate” (79). Meaning, according to Fiske, is determined socially. But this does not mean that all working-class people construct identical meanings, but at the same time, Fiske argues, there is feminine reading and working-class reading.

Marie Gillespie argues that viewing often generates gossip about characters and what they do. Gossip is also enlarged from what is published about the characters. Marie notes that many young people’s interpersonal communication is characterized by the soap opera they watch. Marie found out from the soap opera *Neighbours* that its fans, specifically young people found it very pleasurable for several reasons. In regard to “soap talk” which she argues that it shifts to “real talk” and that these two are inevitably linked, Gillespie notes that “They draw on the soap as a cultural resource in their everyday interactions both in the peer culture and with parents and other adults, as they endeavor to construct

new modes of identity for themselves” (Gillespie, 1995:143). One of the main factors that adult women find soap opera pleasurable is because they find validation for their own talk there. Soap opera in this case binds women together, because of its form and also that it provides extra information for talking or gossiping. The most significant part of enjoying soap opera comes from talking about it. Gillespie argues that “Retelling soap opera stories give viewers the opportunity to be story tellers, enabling them to extend their repertoires as storytellers and at the same time to inflect stories gleaned from TV in ways relevant to their own lives” (Gillespie, 1995: 144). Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes argue that “The image of a reader seeking validation for his reading from significant others implies a multi-step flow of communication, carrying not just short-run persuasion, but television- engendered concepts and values that may infiltrate the soul and the culture” (Katz&Liebes, 1990: 49).

Other theorists such as Hobson, found out that women enjoy talks about soap opera between friends and colleagues and how talk about soap opera brings private sphere concerns to the public one (Gillespie, 1995: 144). Gillespie in her analysis of *Neighbours* found out that young people used soap opera as a shared culture through which they could judge, evaluate, make comparisons with their "real" life and the events in soap opera. Gillespie draws also on Hobson's views, and according to her the narrative of soap opera is already familiar to the viewers, so there is a flow of information when people talk as a “collaborative reading” of the TV text by which they in a way inform their own social experiences. In this regard, there is an interweaving of fiction and real experiences which characterizes soap talk. As argued above Gillespie notes as well that “Young people themselves see talking about soaps as important because it allows them to talk about their own problems, indirectly, through a particular character or situation” (Gillespie, 1995:147).

In other words, soap opera bonds friendships, because it allows them to talk about their own problems by taking concrete examples from soaps (147). According to Reader Response Theory which was developed by Iser (1976) and Fish (1976), they argue that there are reading competencies and the informed reader is dependent on the linguistic level who has the ability and understands the use of language. Fish also introduced the notion of interpretative communities. According to him it is not the text rather the challenges, varieties and functions of the interpretative strategies. In this regard,

interpretative strategies are a result of socio-cultural experiences. This is as a result of readers using the same interpretative methods because they come from the same background or interpretative community. The informed reader, “is a self-aware, self-monitoring subject, who may belong to more than one interpretative community. Hence, a single reader may employ more than one interpretative strategy not only to read different texts, but to read one text at different times, how they read depending upon the experience they associate with previous readings and the membership of whichever interpretative community upon which they call at the time of reading” (Davin & Jackson, 2008: 77-80).

1.2.3. Everyday Life and TV

From radio to today’s technological advances, media has played a crucial role in shaping, building, and affecting people’s daily lives. Of all media, television has the longest stay within families. Television is the medium that organizes our living rooms, conversations and pleasures. It is no surprise that television takes part in people’s lives and routines.

David Morley’s work in this area is pivotal because he was among the first to analyse TV watching environment. For this reason, it is of importance to take a stance on his work. Considering the fact that TV is still a domestic medium Morley remarks that it is significant to explore audiences and “the implications of this set of changes if we are to understand the changing significance of the ‘box in the corner’, in diversifying the nature of the home-based leisure opportunities and in re-emphasising the existence of the home as the principal site of leisure” (Morley, 1986:3). Morley’s study analyses the individual viewing activity within the social relations with an emphasis on the “viewing behaviour”. Thus, the selection of the television programme is a direct result of the individual, yet it is not separated from the domestic context. For Morley, the individual cannot be studied or treated alone because he is part of the family, what Sean Cubitt calls “the politics of the living room”. Morley echoes Herman Bausinger’s research, and he argues that when people turn on the TV does not always mean that they want to watch their favorite favourite programme, instead, it is an indirect way of “I don’t want to talk to anybody”(7-8-9). Bausinger remarks on some points to understand the relation of the domestic media consumption:

- 1) To make a meaningful study of the use of the media, it is necessary to consider different media, the media ensemble which everyone deals with today... The recipient integrates the content of different media.
- 2) As a rule the media are not used completely, nor with full concentration...the degree of attention depends on the time of the day, or moods, the media message competes with other messages.
- 3) The media are an integral part of the way the everyday is conducted (for example, the newspaper as a necessary constituent part of 'breakfast') and (media) decisions are constantly crossed through and influenced by nonmedia conditions and decisions.
- 4) It is not a question of an isolated, individual process, but of a collective process. Even when reading a newspaper one is not truly alone, it takes place in the context of the family, friends, colleagues.
- 5) Media communication cannot be separated from direct personal communication. Media contacts are materials for conversation (as cited in Morley 1986: 9).

Taking into account the cultural snobbery that people often consider not watching TV as something superior to the others who do, television attracts conversation. Previous researchers have noted that television had a direct effect on people, thus examining in terms of mediation it was television's effects that were mediated by people. Often, ongoings, television is kept on in many houses as an indicator of 'filler' inside the ongoings of domestic life. In the case of soap opera and women, Lazarsfeld and Hertzog's study in the 1940s, shows that "these melodramas provide practical suggestions for social interaction which are widely imitated by audience members...these imitations may be useful in solving family problems which bear resemblance to difficulties resolved in television drama. At the very least, television provides an abundance of role models which audience members find socially useful" (Morley, 1986: 27).

Regarding social use of television, James Lull argues that "Television programs do not simply *arrive* uniformly in the homes of their audiences. Programs and commercials are received, interpreted, and acted upon in many different ways by individuals and families" (Lull, 1980: 319). According to Lull, empirical studies have shown that to understand the

process of how families are influenced by television is to look at their interpersonal communication at home.

On the other hand, following Sonia Livingstone, she explains the relationship of the everyday life and TV, especially soap operas. Her work is pivotal because she analyses social knowledge to ordinary experiences, which are complex in essence. In this regard, watching television has been considered a passive process, and mass media has been neglected from the everyday life. Indeed interpersonal and mediated communication is a very complex or constructive set of operations. Above all media, hours spend on television dominate. Despite the arguments that everyday life is real and TV is not, Livingstone argues that there is a strong bond between everyday life and TV (Livingstone, 1990: 4). Critical school of mass communication avoid the media effect on audiences, with the argument that the impact is irrelevant and usually controlled by hegemonic ideologies (16), thus arguing that people do not pay attention when they watch. Still, for Livingstone this applies in the same way in daily conversations with people, sometimes people do not pay attention at all. In this regard, she argues that in the interpersonal level people do not pay attention all the time, but the question asked is when and why are people passive or active viewers. Thus, meanings derived from television are closely related to people's previous experiences with everyday life and television life (6). When people interpret a particular programme, Livingstone notes, they do use not only the information of the programme but also their personal experiences with what is portrayed (18). Regarding meaning Livingstone argues that "The creation of meaning through the interaction of texts and readers is a struggle, a site of negotiation between two semi-powerful sources" (23).

According to Robert W. Kubey, the link between personality characteristics and media usage is not something new. To explain this and many other media effects, he draws on the work of Windahl and Rubin to distinguish two types of viewing modes. The first one is "Instrumental viewing (goal-directed use of media content to satisfy information needs) and ritualized viewing (a habitualized use directed toward the need for diversion)" (Kubey, 1986: 109). Kubey argues that viewing moods should be examined as to why and when people watch television. Experimental studies have shown that people with higher levels of anxiety and stress tend to be most satisfied with television viewing. Norlund's study (41), Kubey argues has shown that "higher scores on a neuroticism index

correlated positively with the importance of television to the individual. More recently Morgan (39) has shown that heavy television use is related to a more negative overall appraisal of the quality of one's life" (110). This relationship was rarely shown before by other studies, but this in other words explains why people watch television as first hand.

Jerome Singer's "cognitive-effect" hypothesis of psychological adaptation and television viewing are argued to reduce negative effects. On the other hand, Kubey drawing on the work of Bryant and Zillman (8) argues that "cognitive interruption" and "emotional incompatibility" may be an "equally valid mechanism for using television to provide relief from stress" and that "different viewing strategies work for different people" (Kubey, 1986: 110). Data from this study shows that television is chosen to escape from negative feelings and responsibilities of reality. This study shows that the respondents watched television mostly at home. Alienation from self and lower moods were significantly related to spending more hours in front of the TV. Regarding this Kubey remarks that "For those most alienated from self, television offers a ready means of structuring attention that permits both escape from and avoidance of the discomfort that normally occurs during idle time" (117). Thus for structured activities such as working, cooking and cleaning, respondents who watched more TV were inclined to feel worse in unstructured activities such as staring at the wall, waiting for someone, riding a car, and thinking about the future. Kubey argues that turning on TV may sometimes be related to negative moods and unstructured time. Kubey remarks that among all respondents in the study, divorced, less educated and less privileged were inclined to heavy viewing. Unlike other respondents, the above-mentioned ones when they were feeling bad in unstructured situations they, were more affluent to watch. In conclusion, those whose marriages and economic situation was stable they were less inclined to depend on TV for escape (120).

Turning to Roger Silverstone, he raised the question of how television has become a very intimate part of our daily lives. According to him, to understand everyday life, it is to understand the nature of the social life as a whole (Silverstone, 1994: 2). Television takes part in all parts of our lives, while we eat, drink, puts us to sleep, accompanies us and challenges us. He notes that "The palpable integration of television into our daily lives: its emotional significance, both as disturber and comforter; its cognitive significance, both ingrained as it is into the routines of daily life; its visibility, not just as an object, the box in the corner, but in a multitude of texts---journals, magazines, newspapers,

hoardings, books like this one; its impact, both remembered and forgotten; its political significance as a core institution of the modern state; this integration is both complete and fundamental (3). Silverstone draws on the work of Anthony Giddens to explain the relationship of television and ontological security. For Giddens,

[Ontological security] refers to the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and marital environments of action. A sense of the reliability of persons and things, so central to the notion of trust, is basic feelings of ontological security; hence the two are psychologically related. Ontological security has to do with 'being' or, in the terms of phenomenology, 'being-in-the-world.' But it is an emotional, rather than a cognitive, phenomenon, and it is rooted in the unconscious (Giddens, 1990: 92 as cited in Silverstone, 1994: 5).

Basically, security and trust are the key concepts of individuals and society. In this case, trust and ontological security are actively part of the world and concerns of everyday life. Silverstone argues that trust is that individual or collective is a result of our upbringing but for it to function, it has to be part of the routine of daily life. The structure of everyday life is connected to "routines that exist to protect individuals and collectivities from unmanageable anxieties, anxieties that accompany, indeed that define, situations of crisis" (7). Television as a medium continues to be part of everyday life and part of people's routines. Hobson's work (1982) shows that some women who were not subordinate to patriarchal families had television as their primary place in their culture (Fiske, 1987: 72) because as John Fiske notes, "the routines of viewing are part of the domestic routines by which home life is organized" (72). Silverstone draws on D.W. Winnicott's work about television as a potential space and a transitional object. Television serves as a transitional object because it carries a practical and symbolic significance. Moreover, "Television is, as many observers have noted, constantly present. It is eternal" (Silverstone, 1994: 15).

On the other hand, the permanent presence as a potential space of television is not only because of the quality of technology and what institutions aim, discussed, above, instead there is a circle going on, an ontological one. As an example, weather programmes. Silverstone argues that it "provides a constant reassurance" (Silverstone, 1994: 16). On the other hand, soap operas provoke and reassure a narrative which carries identifiable

reality aspects (16). The reassurance that television provides is strongly connected to ontological security because it sustains the idea of the familiar. In this case, television is a medium which extends the world of information, but it also serves as the object that defines the household day, primarily for housewives (20).

1.2.4. Cultural Proximity, Cross Cultural of Us and Them

In choosing television content, audiences mostly choose what feels familiar to them, for this reason, it is important to draw on the term cultural proximity. According to Joseph D Straubhaar, “...Audiences make an active choice to view international or regional or national television programs, a choice that favors the latter two when they are available, based on a search for cultural relevance or proximity” (Straubhaar, 1991: 39). Audiences select based on what feels closer to them, be that language or culture. In this regard Antonio C. La Pastina and Joseph D Straubhaar analyzed how a Mexican telenovela produced in a foreign country was more attractive than a national product. They argue that, “If national drama and other genres are too expensive for the market to bear, the audience’s second preference is usually for television programs produced within similar cultures, usually within a cultural-linguistic market defined by historical, ethnic, religious, linguistic, geographical and other similarities” (La Pastina& Straubhaar, 2005: 273). A great emphasis of cultural proximity is language, yet cultural proximity works in many levels. The complex relations between audiences and texts are as a result of cultural proximity. In essence people watch because they relate to television programs in many levels, be that religious ones, cultural, linguistic, historical or gender related, women from across cultures relate to the similarities in family roles.

Miriam Berg examined the appeal of Turkish dramas among students from Qatar. Amid the first reasons for the popularity of Turkish series is dubbing. People who could not even read enjoyed Turkish series. Dubbing, Miriam explains is a key aspect of why Arab speakers find them appealing. In regard to that she notes, “most importantly, the dubbing of Turkish programs has enabled Arab audiences to rediscover the cultural proximity between Turks and Arabs; dubbing has not only translated a language and localized a television format, but brought an entire culture closer that many in the Arab world were unaware was so proximate” (Berg, 2017: 3418). Drawing on Fadi Ismail who is considered to be the pioneering person to bring Turkish television to Arab networks,

according to him ethnic and cultural similarities between Arabs and Turks are what contributed to the success of Turkish series. According to Berg, because illiteracy is very high in the Arab world, especially among women, dubbing helps or invites all groups to be engaged and watch without any hesitation. The data from the study shows that people find them appealing because of ethnic and cultural similarities taking into account the importance of Ottoman-Arab history with many similarities in music, customs and tradition (3419-3430). In this regard Berg notes that the negative opinions about Turks from Arabs were not raised between students in the focus groups because the series conveyed a rediscovery of their similarities rather than differences.

Moreover, Berg in an interview with Dogan Media Group's chief executive officer, Irfan Sahin states that he himself stated that key factors to Turkish television drama were ethnic and cultural similarities, a strong reason why Fadi Ismail purchased them for the Arab audiences. According to Berg, "Arab students in this study described the importance of being able to relate to and understand characters in Turkish dramas on a personal level" (3420-3421). As noted earlier, Berg explained that cultural proximity has many levels. Another key factor why Arab audiences finds Turkish series appealing is religion. In this regard Berg argues, "...the portrayal of a Muslim, liberal, and cosmopolitan society, with element of apparent gender equality, has a unique pulling power in the Middle East because it fills a niche in Arab television that Western and local productions are unable to do" (Berg, 2017: 3421). A representation of a Muslim society is an essential factor which creates affinity making it more culturally acceptable. Berg draws on Joseph D Straubhaar's concept of cultural proximity, and it is argued that affinities form cultural capital which create cultural proximity by giving audiences the chance to make their choices. In regard to many levels of cultural proximity, Berg argues that to Qatari people, the importance of social relations play a crucial role. The respect of the older people and the importance of parents and families are values portrayed in Turkish series which makes very appealing to Arab audiences. Berg explains that Qatar has undergone many industrial changes and that people fear of losing their Islamic values. In this regard Turkish series bring cultural proximity on many levels, historical, religious and ethnic, thus Berg argues "Consequently, the representation of a Muslim Turkish society with an achievable degree of modernism that still cares for family values and the elderly seems to appeal to the social

imaginary of the Arab world, making Turkish dramas much more culturally proximate” (3423).

In relation to cross cultural aspect, Ming-tsung Lee argues that American TV dramas were not really successful in Taiwan, but according to many researches Japanese TV program is the most popular in Taiwan. This success or popularity is as a result that Japanese dramas “can represent the daily lives of urban youth in great detail” (LEE, 2004: 131). What adds more to its popularity is that audiences are known with the characters for a long time now and they create the space for imagination of Japanese culture portrayed in dramas. In this regard LEE argues that, “Thus, we could regard popular Japanese TV dramas as a bridgehead of Japanese modern culture, which invites Taiwanese youths to gaze and imagine Japan, and then lead them towards more understanding (at least imaginary understanding) of contemporary Japanese society and culture” (LEE, 2004: 132) Japanese TV drama was so successful that audiences repeatedly asked for their broadcasting. One of the most famous one remains *Tokyo Love* (1991) which was broadcasted between 1992 until 2000. The spread of these TV dramas was done through illegal ways because for a certain time Japanese dramas were banned. Through owning them individually, the audience and text relation were emphasized into having a deeper picture of Japan. LEE also argues that the Taiwanese affected by TV drama started visiting Japan. It is estimated that 4.4 million tourists visited Japan, among which 0.93 million were Taiwanese. According to many researchers, where people decide to travel, their selection of the destination is often influenced by the local-global media representation of different cultures. In this regard, Urry (1990: 3) argues:

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records, and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze (quoted in LEE, 2004: 135).

On the other hand, Elihu Katz and Tamar Liebes, in their study of *Dallas* with different ethnic groups based their analysis on sociological, psychological, and ideological themes. Drawing from literary theory, they argue that decoding can be classified as ‘referential’

meaning that they see the program as applicable to real life and ‘critical’ when the program consists of messages and narrative (Katz& Liebes, 1990: 53). According to them, people find themselves involved in the reality of the story not necessarily because they believe that reality is the same as in the text itself. Still, their decodings take them to the reality that they know by interpreting the characters of the soap to their own lives. In this regard, Livingstone remarks that :

This issue relates to that of how seriously viewers take soap opera, especially with respect to its claims to realism and social value, and how readily they may either distance themselves from the programme or, alternatively, but the distinction between, say problem solutions offered by characters and by real-life friends, thereby incorporating what they see into how they live. To learn from, or be influenced by, a character’s actions in drama, through such processes as identification or role modelling, one would expect the viewer to judge the character’s behaviour or problem as relevant to his or her own situation. This will depend upon perceived realms of the drama, similarity to self and moral position expressed (Livingstone, 1988: 59).

Many of the messages about the soap opera *Dallas* the Israeli group for example, thinks that the series is about America. The Russian group on the other hand, they agree with Israeli group but also think that the entire program is about imperialism and other messages include “the rich are immoral”, “Americans are uncultured” resulting in comparisons that we are better than them (57). Data from this study suggests that *Dallas* makes people reflect their own lives and as discussed above as well, it provokes talk. They argue that from the focus group discussions *Dallas* brought conversations about self and society. Questions about kinship and social relations were what mostly stroke people’s minds, whether their problems were the same or how did they differ from those of the programme (58).

1.3. The History of Turkish TV and Dizi’s

The history of soap opera in America started after post depression time in 1950s, unlike telenovela started during the authoritarian military coup in 1970s. Thus Turkish *dizi* according to Arzu Ozturkmen, “has been historically tied to the international repertoire of television drama” (Ozturkemen, 2018: 2). Ozturkmen argues that television became a

social part of Turkish people during 1970s, and that happened through TRT which was established a year before in 1969. The number of the television broadcasting was very limited at the beginning and in black and white. The first dramas were not very welcomed to the Turkish audiences. Later, what really attracted viewer's attention were two productions: "*Kaynanalar* (The in Laws), TRT, 1974-197, 950 episodes) and the adaptation of the novel *Aşk-ı Memnu* (Forbidden Love), TRT, 1975) by Halit Refiğ" (Ozturkmen, 2018: 3). TRT later attempted to use the adaptation of the novels into dramas. The very famous Turkish novelist Atilla İlhan wrote two *dizi* for TRT. Moreover, these mini-series were followed by national themes with a picture of the Ottoman history, and this genre began with 4. *Murat* (Murat the 4th) in TRT.

The adaptation and the broadcast of telenovelas and soap operas began on TRT during the 1980s. According to Ozturkmen, "The Turkish television viewers the content of soap operas and telenovelas matched very well the memory of Turkish cinema of the 1960s, which consisted heavily of melodrama. This was indeed the reason why TRT had also invested in family and neighbourhood drama in the 1980s" (Ozturkmen, 2018: 4). A shift from TRT to private channels happened, breaking TRT's monopoly, yet the genre of family and neighbourhood continued. Television industry had different directions during the 2000s. Both TRT and private television were broadcasting foreign and local dramas. The main genre of these years became melodrama. Amid the most cited ones was *1001 Gece* (1001 Nights), a series which dealt with class and gender. It is argued that *1001 Gece* was the series that broke records in the market being sold in almost 80 countries (Bhutto 2019). Besides these themes and genre, another subgenre was developed during these years which depicted intelligence services and other issues in the Middle East. *Kurtlar Vadisi* (Valley of Wolves) is amid examples that the series were moving towards a regional audience. In this regard Ozturkmen notes that, "Given all this diversity, once can easily state that the 2000s were in fact the constructive years of the *dizi* genre as we speak of today" (Ozturkmen, 2018: 6).

The term *dizi* stands apart from soap operas and telenovela in different ways. According to Ozturkmen, *dizi*,

As a genre, it has different features from the soap and telenovela. Many writers and directors believe that the style of telling the story makes a

difference. Because *dizis* are shot in natural setting 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. 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, and eye on places they do not have the opportunity to travel. *Dizis* also offer intertextuality between narrative forms such as musical, visual and textual. The pace of the production process is unique to the Turkish television industry (Oztrukmen, 2018: 7).

Although there is a difference between the concepts *dizi* and soap opera, this study coincides with the concept of soap opera because “a strong British prejudice on the part of TV producers and critics against the use of the US term, soap opera; the national context was and remains important within a feminist agenda...Soap opera, in this understanding, could represent TV as a whole because it functioned in production, form, content and reception in ways typical for TV” (Geraghty & Weismann, 2016: 367). Yet it is of importance to make the difference between series and serials. According to Gledhill, “the serial refers to a fiction which is divided into a sequence of parts, so that a strong sense of linear progression is maintained across episodes as the plot unfolds from the beginning, through an idle, to the end (while series) bases its sense of continuity on the stability of its central characters to whom different stories happen each week. In this respect, there is a strong sense of beginning, middle and end constructed within each episode”(Gledhill, 1997: 367-8). The continuous serial, on the other hand promises a "never-ending story

Another reason for their difference is that a *dizi* does not have the longevity of a soap opera. In this regard, the production of a *dizi* starts and the scripts continue to be written weekly. What was argued above in the case of Taiwanese people visiting Japan due to its series, Oztrukmen argues that *dizis* helped boosting Turkey’s economy. She notes two ways: one is that *dizis* have sparked interest in Istanbul, Cappadocia, the Black Sea Coast and second, people would search for a particular spot which was showed in *dizi* (9).

The popularity of dizis is quite enjoyed beyond borders. It is emphasized that they are attractive especially to viewers from Turkish Republic, Middle East and the Balkans. Thus entering the Ukrainian, Pakistani, Russian and Chinese market, Turkish dizis are broadcasted in more than fifty countries (Karlıdağ & Bulut, 2014: 76). Turkey remains the second after the US in worldwide television production (Bhutto 2019), with an export revenue of US\$200 million (Alankuş & Yanardağoğlu, 2016:3615). It is argued that the first company to market and sell Turkish programming is Calinos Entertainment, and at the same time it was Calinos Entertainment who sold abroad the first Turkish series named *Deliyürek* in Kazakhstan (Karlıdağ & Bulut, 2014: 85). The success of its distribution is also due to people's selection over non-western cultural commodities (Karlıdağ & Bulut, 2014: 76). This is as a result of containing themes that touch people's feelings, in a constant move (Bhutto, 2019). According to Directorate General of Copyrights/Ministry of Culture and Tourism, in 2011 cultural products in Turkey, in particular soap opera reached 10.500 hours. Amid series that reached millions of viewers are: *Gümüş* with 85 million viewers in Middle East, *Kaybolan Yıllar* with 65 million viewers and with nearly 150 million viewers was *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* in Middle East, Balkans and Turkic Republics (Karlıdağ & Bulut, 2014: 87). This worldwide success not only had a tremendous economic impact but "Turkish soap operas have become a primetime hit in a vast geography extending from Balkans to Middle East and Central Asia" (Karlıdağ & Bulut, 2014: 87). Its success was commented by very famous journals as well. The Wall Street Journal wrote "Turkish soaps have since 2008 become a staple in living rooms across the Middle East, North Africa, and the Balkans; enjoying a wild popularity in ostensibly traditional societies for their portrayal of modern life styles and relationships" (as quoted in Karlıdağ & Bulut, 2014: 88). Series serve as a guide inside Turkey for its magnificent beauty as a country and they boosted the country's economy and an increase in tourist visiting was mainly from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Qatar and Israel (88).

1.4. Turkish TV Series in the Balkans

The spread of Turkish series in the Balkans gained popularity and a great audience in many countries of the Balkans. The Balkans and Turkey have for years shared history and it is not a surprise that the series have reached this popularity. In an article of Balkan

Insight named “*Turks Bewitching the Balkans*” it is said that the series are screened daily from Albania to the Black Sea. According to the data the series are watched in Bosnia and Hercegovia, Macedonia, Kosovo and Serbia. In 2012, according to Index Kosovo “*Love and Punishment*” ranked top from other series (Cabric, Nedelkovska, Demoli & Hamzic, 2013). According to the Serbian sociologist Ratko Bozovic, people enjoy the linguistic and cultural similarities but also identifying with the patriarchal aspects of the Turkish series. In a way, they get help from the series for family values that are being lost in a way. On the other hand, Artan Muhaxhiri argues that the series are popular because they do not require much intellectual activity. Albanians can identify with Turkish soap opera because of the similar lifestyles, family values, food etc. For Darko Bozovic, the director of AGB Nielsen, series that contain love stories are more successful because they are watched by women. Another aspect of their popularity is dubbing, such is the case in Macedonia. The main reason for their success in above mentioned countries is family relations portrayed in the series (Cabric, Nedelkovska, Demoli & Hamzic, 2013). Besides the similarities and this popularity, many have raised the issue that the broadcast of Turkish series in the Balkans is Turkey’s “soft power” to deepen its role in these countries. The concept *soft power* was coined by professor Joseph Nye. According to Nye, “Soft power is not merely influence, though it is one source of influence. Influence can also rest on the hard power of threats or payments. And soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, though that is an important part of it” (Nye, 2008:95). According to him, soft power of a country dwells on three resources: political values, foreign policy and its culture (98). Echoing from Nicole Ely, for Balkan Insight, she argues that Turkey through soft power not only wants to boost its popularity but also rewrite history. Yet, there is no apparent reason why people watch. As argued above, cultural similarities and dubbing into local languages makes them even more appealing. Realistic characters, lack of violence are among aspects that people like in Turkish series (Ely, 2019). However, turning to the case in Kosovo more recently, there has been a decline of the number of the local shows in Kosovo and they have been replaced by a growing trend of Turkish shows. While there are a large number of shows produced in Turkey specific types are on the screens in Kosovo. Besiana Xharra for Balkan Insight said that foreign productions are making the local ones leave the scene in Kosovo. This is due to the price which is cheaper to buy from outside is what Xharra

emphasizes. Kastriot Sahatqija from KTV and Blerim Ajeti from RTV 21 both have emphasized that there is a stronger wish for Turkish series rather than local ones. Because the local ones take more capacity financially, foreign series, specifically Turkish ones in this case are broadcasted in the above mentioned TV stations (Xharra, 2012).

Taking a turn on the media system in Kosovo, Naser Miftari argues that in Kosovo after 1999 a dual media system was introduced which combined both public service and commercial radio and television. He notes that “Up to 2009 television was recognized as the most important source of information for the majority of the adult population” (Miftari, 2017: 19). Yet there is no clear evidence as to why this decline happened, yet this might be as a result of Kosovo having the youngest population 70% of it is youth between 20-35 with also a growing speed of internet penetration, young people are shifting more towards smartphones rather than TV. According to Miftari, in Kosovo there are 186 licensed broadcaster in Kosovo with 20 TV stations. Out of 21 TV stations, three of them cover Kosovo as the main ones: the public broadcaster Radio and Television of Kosovo (RTK), and the commercial broadcasters- Radio and Television 21 (RTV 21) and Kovavision (KTV). Television of Kosovo (RTK) is the country’s main public broadcaster which was established in 1999 by UNMIK (Miftari, 2017: 23).

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

This chapter is designed to explain the methodology that this thesis was guided by, how the collection of data was made and why was this methodology has been chosen for this research. It explains the importance of qualitative data collection in order to underly reasons and motivations on the appeal to Turkish Tv series. Semi structured technique is used following focus groups and one to one interviews. This chapter emphasizes on sampling, participants and its limitations.

2.1. Qualitative Research

As a quality of quantitative research which mainly covers statistics and work in front of the computer, qualitative research is concerned with data that comes from interactions with people. For this reason, qualitative research is being used for its advantages when trying to understand how people behave or change, their relation to TV as a domestic device, and its consumption as a medium. TV often is seen as what would John Fiske call “cultural agent” (Fiske, 2001: 1). Integrating with the attempt of this study, which is the cultural aspect, what Cultural Studies is concerned with, Raymond Williams defined culture as “the lived experience” of ordinary people and their everyday life (Williams 20005, as cited in Storey, 2009: 48).

To be able to understand people’s experiences and their relation to culture is why qualitative approach has been chosen. In this study, this method is used for getting to talk to people who constantly watch TV, and how is their life organized together with their daily activities based on the media consumption. Concerning media consumption, Raymond Williams was among the first to talk about media not as something which transfers information but as a text that people use to reflect their cultural meanings along historical intervals (White, 1993: 10). On the other hand, another feature of qualitative research is meaning (Bogdan&Biklen, 2007: 4-8) and meaning is closely related to culture, thus Stuart Hall argues that “culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings—the ‘giving and taking of meaning’—between the members of a society or group” (Hall, 1997: 2). Furthermore, because the main concern of this study is culture, Stuart Hall (1997) argued that culture is not consisted of books only but its production comes along an exchange of meanings, therefore to understand the world is to

make it meaningful. In addition, he argues that "Cultures are always both shared and contested networks of meanings: culture is where we share and contest meanings of ourselves, of each other and of the social world we live in" (cited in Sotrey, 2009: 87). Because the aim of this study is the Turkish Tv series and their influence on women of Kosovo, a set of questions is set to understand their appeal through qualitative research. What is the soap opera / Tv Series to them? Is the Tv series a space for them or a ghetto? How do cross cultural issues come to the surface? Is the Tv series mere escapism or a domestic lifestyle? Following what has been argued, this study analyses how women of Prishtina make meanings outside the soap operas that they watch. On account of the features of qualitative research such as descriptive data, depth information, naturalistic nature this study is based on this method for it facilitates and contains the tools to reach detailed data.

To understand the characteristics of the audience, portrayals of the situations empirically, the relation of the reader and the text, descriptive data is needed. Because soap opera enters the mass culture, Jensen and Jankowski, argued that qualitative approach is being applied to comprehend mass communication from a bigger horizon as to how language, cultural accommodation and everyday life mingles with each other. Examining people's reactions, talking to them will enable to analyse this particular mingling between how meaning between audiences and texts collides. In contrast with quantitative approach where data is gathered mainly through surveys, people tend not to pay attention seriously when they respond to what is being asked. Meanwhile, qualitative approach gives space for many views into how they make sense of everyday life and how is meaning produced. In this regard, Jensen and Jankowski also argued that, "qualitative approaches examine meaning production as a process which is contextualized and inextricably integrated with wider social and cultural practices"(Jensen and Jankowski, 2002: 4).

This study is based on four assumptions:

1. Soap operas were a significant cultural space for women, where the private and public sphere mingled.
2. As identification is one of the most essential aspects of soap operas, parasocial interaction is a significant concept.
3. Audiences decode based on their ideological beliefs.

4. There exists a continuity of meaning creation because culture is concerned with the production of meanings, especially in everyday life.

This study is undergone by four questions:

1. Do Turkish series create a significant cultural space where the private and public sphere mingle for Kosovar Albanian women?
2. Do Kosovar women find a chance to interrogate traditional and patriarchal paradigms and the role of women in society through Turkish Tv Series?
3. Do Kosovar women create their own meaning while watching Turkish TV series? How much do their own thoughts affect the viewing process?
4. Is Turkey and Kosovo's historical and cultural affinity effective on watching Turkish TV series?

2.2. Focus Groups

Focus groups are groups that are different in regard to its purpose, size and the sequence of its steps. A focus group is a group of people that shares common interest and views related to the topic presented, and is usually led by a moderator, in this case the researcher. During the 1930s, social scientists got concerned with the collected data from one- to-one interview because the approach seemed to provide one sided information and the advantages were few. Concerning the issue, social scientists examined potential strategies into leaving the respondents express their own attitudes without domination. From that time on, focus groups started being used. One of the focus groups conducted by Robert Merton whose pioneering work reveals why people felt more comfortable to share their opinions, is because of the nature of the group where respondents shared similar experiences and opinions. Later on, in 1950s focus groups started being used by marketing researches (Krueger & Casey 2014: 26-27-28). Primarily in marketing research to find out about people's outlooks and fondness (Hennink, 2007: 5).

The essence of focus groups and why they work is that the circumstances created among the participants where one doesn't feel judged and the conformity that the groups provide, assess the researcher to get to hear what people think and feel. Considering that usually people feel more comfortable sharing information about themselves with strangers is

what focus groups promote “self-disclosure among participants” (cited in Krueger & Casey, 2014: 30).

According to Monique M. Hennink, focus groups contribute more into giving the chance to the group to talk and behave spontaneously, elaborate and explain themselves more without having the concentration at the moderator (Hennink, 2007: 4).

Groups usually tend to give more because of its structure where people enjoy other people's opinions but at the same time express theirs by agreeing or disagreeing. In one to one interviews, responses are more individually based and often it is tended to be responded based on what the interviewers wants to hear, however focus groups construct different layers, they allow for more interpretations and they open space for everyone to engage. Moreover, studies have shown that 70% of the data (Fern 1982) is generated from focus groups rather than one to one, so the volume of data is higher(cited in Hennink, 2007: 8). For Buckingham, focus groups are a peculiar type of communications because it gives participants the chance to reveal how they convey meanings and how they develop their identities in which their attitudes actually are build and seen in talk (Buckingham, 2009: 644-645).

In this study, focus groups has been chosen to collect data because of the atmosphere created among participants. As noted earlier, focus groups provide comfort and people tend to share their experiences, perceptions and ideas with others. What focus groups offer is the homogeneity of the group, where in this case it is women who watch turkish soap opera. Taking into consideration the advantages that this certain method has, to get to know why these women watch turkish soap opera promotes ideas of any kind, enlarges the horizon of thought, stimulated by the nature of the circumstances, they also encourage discussions. It is argued that this certain method is adequate in collecting data because in contrast with surveys which offer a limit to the questions, focus groups offer insights that are not available through surveys. To get to know why women watch, what is their main interest in turkish soap opera it is needed to reach information in depth (Morgan, 1996: 137). Moreover, in this study this method offers to the researcher to also hear about sensitive issues, unlike surveys, answers are mostly limited to yes or no.

The “group effect” (Carey 1994, Careuy & Smith, 1994) is what makes focus groups peculiar because they produce insights that help explain the complex behaviors, attitudes

of people. In this fashion, considering the detailed outcome focus groups provide, it is of relevance to be used for this particular research. The diversity of the group, according to Morgan and Krueger (1993) provides pros and cons unlike the one to one data where aggregating information leads to speculation (cited in Morgan, 1996: 139). The main reason is to gather insights that the participants trigger when found in such groups, to understand behaviour, why certain issues are functioning with certain beliefs and why television viewing, soap operas in this case are important to them.

2.3. Participants

This study aims at focusing on female audience. In the discussions whether soaps should be considered women's genre is problematic in itself, because men watch too. Many theorists argued that the domination of family stories in soaps made soaps a production primarily for women (Geraghty, 2005: 130-131). Other theorists argued that women consume soaps because of the domestic features and as a way to indirectly talk about their lives (Ahmed, 2012: 1). No compatible statistics exists to define whether women are the only consumers of soap opera because people tend not to watch regularly and maintaining such statistics was difficult, but the fact that women make the majority and that soap opera is very appealing to them is considered a fact (Drain, 1996: 9-10). Moreover, the narrative in soap opera itself is peculiar that tends to be appealing more to women (Drain, 1996: 18). Another reason for choosing only women is because few studies are made related to women and media consumption, especially television studies in Kosovo. According to Vjollca Krasniqi, after 1999 most of the work had the focus on the war and international role ignoring gender (Krasniqi, 2007: 7).

The purpose of this research is to understand audiences, as so far studies upon Turkish TV series in the Balkans have been made in the lines of Turkey as a "soft power". This research's aim is deeper than the concept of "soft power" because it deals directly with the lives of women and their appeal towards Turkish Tv series.

This study's respondents are Albanian women. The reason why it covers only Albanian women considering the fact that Kosovo is a multi ethnic country, according to Kosovo Agency of Statistics, (2011 census) in Prishtina Albanian females make 97,105 % of the population (10). According to agency of statistics, 0-14 make up the 28% of the population, 15-64 make up the 65 % of the population and 65 + make only 7 % of the

population(Kosovo Agency of Statistics :10). Because they cover the largest number, Albanian women has been chosen as the respondent's of this study. This study cover four different age groups based on the demography of Prishtina. The group age is divided as follow: 13-22;23-34;35-44;45-55 +.

According to Robert Merton (1992), there are four criterias to conduct a sucessful focus group which he called “rules of thumb”: a homogenous groups of people, a well skilled moderator, each group should consist 6-10 people, and three to five groups should be conducted. In the same fashion Richard A. Krueger and Mary Anne Casey say that groups can be formed of 5 to 8 people the size can also be form 4-12(Krueger &Casey, 2014: 33). Based on what was said before, this study's groups are four in total, based on the rule of thumb suggested by Morgan, three to five groups are ideal to reach insights, but again everything depends on the involvement of the participants and the moderator as well. The participants vary from 7-10 people per group in order to have balance, because groups with six people tend to not be so informative and difficult to keep discussion, more than twelve provides difficulties in managing people (Morgan, 1997: 6-15) The formation of the groups is consisted of Albanian women with different age group.

2.4. Sampling

Snowball Sampling is a non-probability method. It is a procedure of selecting some people from the big group that has the expected characteristics related to the researcher's interest (Kumar, 2011: 193). Due to not being able to reach statistics of who watches, snowball sampling is applied to select the population.Snowball sampling is a procedure that starts with a certain network of people, people who can identify other people with the requiried characteristics for the study. In this way, a group of people is formed or the sample and the process goes on until the saturation point has been reached (Kumar, 2011: 208). Snowball sampling has many advantages. It doesn't cost and it used to reach individuals who are hard to find. Moreover, in regard to advantages, snowball sampling saves time because the sampling process is very quick (Johnson, 2011: 3).

This study's population has been selected through snowball sampling. The researcher has used potential network of people to reach the required respondents. To ensure that participants will show up, telephone calls were avoided, instead each participant was seen beforehand to form confidality and to inform them about the study.

2.5. Reliability and Validity of Data

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, a document was given to the participants that says that data is used confidentially. A demographic questionnaire was distributed to collect preliminary information of the respondents based on their names, age, marital status, education, occupation, monthly income, religious affiliation, neighborhood etc. This document was distributed before the interviewing because as suggested by Morgan talking about social class in front of other people might cause disharmony among participants that affects data as well. The goal was to make the group notice opinions about Turkish Tv series and overshadow other differences in front of the group (Morgan, 1997: 8).

In the same fashion participants were informed that note-taking and recording is used for research only. Video taping was not used to not make participants feel uncomfortable because sensitive issues were part of the discussion. Their names remained anonymous. The note taking section includes also the participants verbal communication during the interview, at the same time their sitting positions, the structure of the group. Due to lack of institutional support for researchers, one focus group was set at one NGO and the rest mostly in cafes. Not a single participant withdrew from the interview. This study was approved by the Institute of Social Sciences of Sakarya University in the spring of 2021. The consent forms of the study included: a summary of the study, its aim and how it is going to be conducted. Moreover, pre interview questionnaire and FGD questions were addressed to the ethical committee. The interviews were conducted between June - September 2021.

2.6. Limitations

This study has potential limitations. Although focus groups gather data more than one to one interviews, the group's dynamics may sometimes encourage dominant participants in the discussion. Due to social pressure within the group participants might agree with one another by giving little effort to the discussion which impacts the quality of the data. For these reasons the moderator should manage carefully and make sure thorough information and substance (Hennink, 2007: 9). On the other hand, this study is limited only within Prishtina, the capital. Having observed and based on the sampling method, it is of importance to note that Prishtina was chosen because:

1. The city offers more opportunities for women to gather;
2. It is easier to approach to the network of people who share the same similarities.
Due to not having potential ratings to measure the viewing process snowball sampling has been used and Prishtina as a city to get to form groups easier;
3. This study is limited in one group taking into consideration the multi-ethnic society of Kosovo, it focuses only on Albanian women.



CHAPTER III: FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The process of this study was undergone by four questions in which the data gathered in the field is analysed:

1. Do Turkish series create a significant cultural space where the private and public sphere mingle for Kosovar Albanian women?
2. Do Kosovar women find a chance to interrogate traditional and patriarchal paradigms and the role of women in society through Turkish Tv Series?
3. Do Kosovar women create their own meaning while watching Turkish TV series? How much do their own thoughts affect the viewing process?
4. Is Turkey and Kosovo's historical and cultural affinity effective on watching Turkish TV series?

This chapter entails the data and its analysis. Amid the gathered data, a few other preliminary information was gathered about the respondents. According to these data Respondent's Qualities are presented below. This title contains Socio Demographic Characteristics, Marital Status, Socio-Economic Status, Education qualities and attitudes. The analysis of the focus groups and one to one interviews data has resulted in nine main distinctive categories which are:

1. Learning About Life from Turkish Series
2. Improving Emotional Interaction Beyond the Identification
3. Interrogation Women's Role in a Patriarchal Society
4. Thinking About Gender Roles and Social Strata
5. Criticizing Moral Values in Series
6. Interfering the Viewing Process
7. Experiencing Romance
8. Enjoying Cultural Proximity
9. Desire to Escape from the Reality and Daily Struggles

In the analysis participant's social and economic background is going to be taken into consideration. This chapter presents the results of the data analysis. The first section presents the demographic of the groups and how they got implemented. The second section presents the qualitative findings on Kosovar women and their influence from Turkish Tv series. And the third section offers a discussion on the implications of Turkish Tv series.

3.1. Respondent's Qualities

Respondents were divided into four age groups based on the official demographisc of female residents of Prishtina. All respondents were female with the following age group: 13-22; 23-34; 35-44; 45-55+.

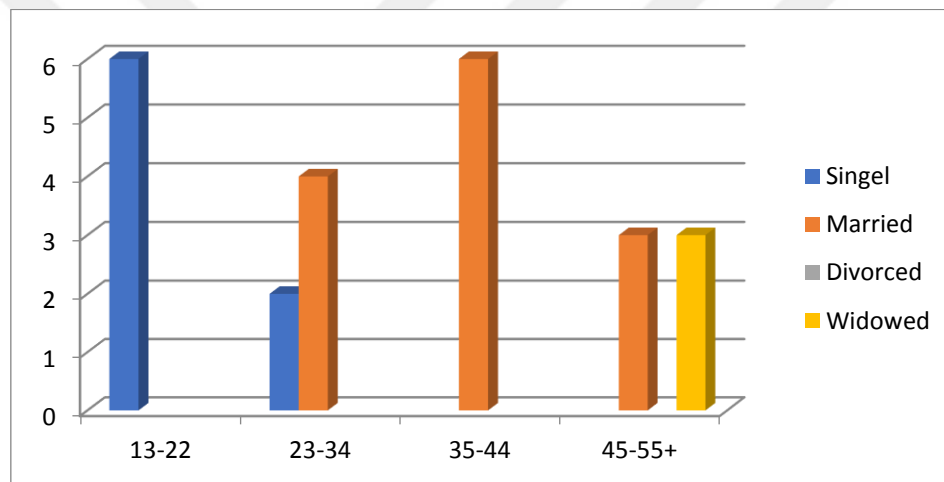


Figure 1: Marital Status

The data shows that respondents of all ages despite their marital status watch Turkish Soap operas. It is not only single women who search for emotional gratification through soap operas but married ones as well. Single women between the ages of 13-22 and married women between the ages of 45 and 44 were included in the survey. Among the women surveyed in the 45-55+ range, the ratio of married and divorced women was equal. Single women in this age group did not participate in the interviews.

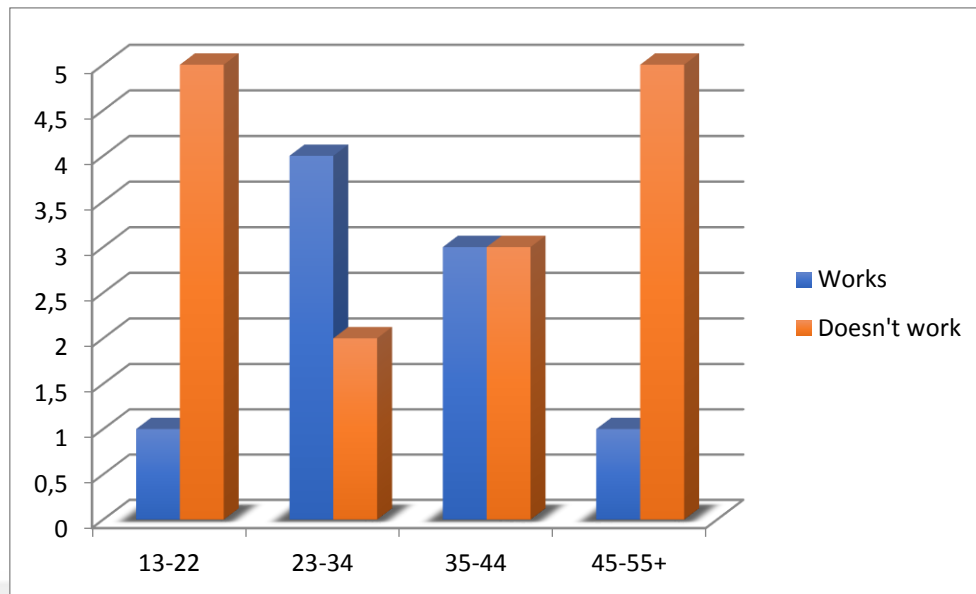


Figure 2: Socio-Economic Status

Figure 2 shows the socio-economic status of the respondents. As shown, groupage between 23-44 were the ones who worked. The income did not determine women's soap opera choice as their primary activity, instead other ideological-social patterns are discussed below. Watching TV thus is an affordable activity for people with low income because almost all respondents explained that they have a TV at home and all of them are equipped with a smartphone.

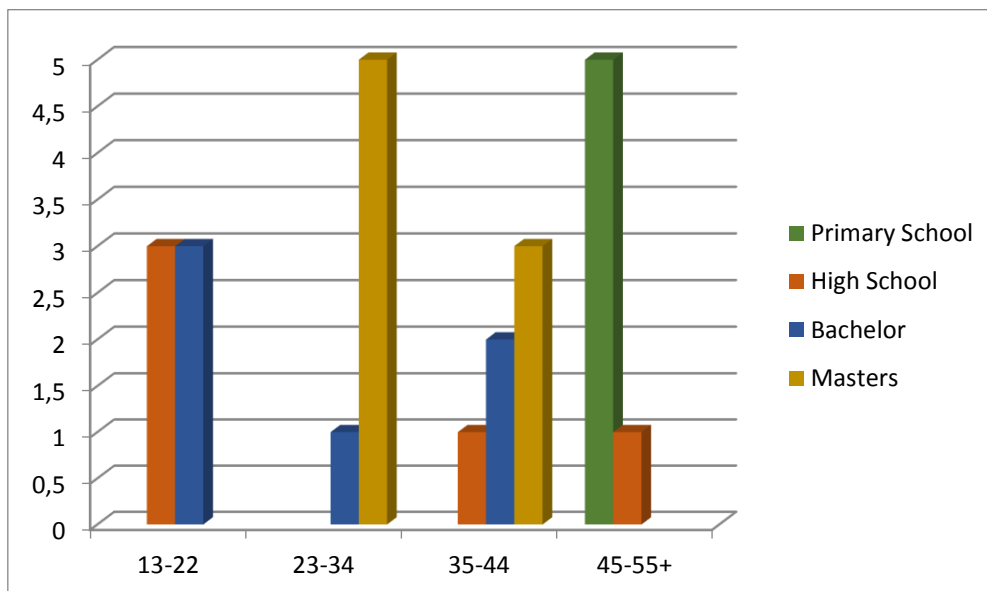


Figure 3: Educational Status

Fig 3 represents the educational status of the respondents. The findings showed that the 55 + generation's educational status was a primary school. Among respondents, many of them had their masters finished.

Almost all respondents were active viewers for 10-15 years now, most of them watch since primary school. Significant to this is that the participants talked in a chronological way of the thematic of Turkish series through the years. Younger generations articulated themselves better. They were more enthusiastic to discuss more romance and excited to talk about the characters. Unlike older generations, especially the last group found it difficult to describe how they feel about romance. Almost all participants expressed more emotions when the recording was off.

It is of importance to mention that only two focus groups were conducted and the rest of the interviews were done individually. The integration of focus groups and individual interviews has contributed to two things: discovering that there is no research culture in Kosovo and research culture is characterized as "a system of widely shared and strongly held values towards conducting and communicating research. Furthermore, in an institutional context, culture of research is not simply a group of scholars who see the importance of quality research. A culture of research provides a supportive context in which research is uniformly expected, discussed, produced, and valued (Kaçaniku, 2018: 9). This combined method has gathered more comprehensive understanding on the topic inasmuch as in focus groups participants formed a social space in which they responded due to the flow of the discussion rather than individual ones added other layers to the data.

During fieldwork, it was noticed that in Prishtina people (women) hesitated to be part of the interviews. From this, it is judged that there is no research culture in the capital. Although the number who watch is great in number many refused to be part of the interviews. One crucial reason for not participating in focus groups was the guilty pleasure of Turkish Tv series. Women refused to participate the moment they found out that it is a group discussion. The groupage who refused to be part of the focus group were 23-34 and 35-44 years old. One focus group was conducted with the age group 13-22 and the other group was 45-55 +. Young and old generations seemed not to care about guilty pleasure and they were even more open to discussing in the group, they even found it enjoyable. For these reasons, this study covers two focus groups and 12 one-to-one

interviews. All data obtained in this study were recorded and transcribed. Because all the participants were Albanians, the original transcription was written in Albanian then translated to English. The list of questions was combined in a chronological way in order to understand how many years women watch and admire Turkish Tv series, to the questions of why they have been loyal to these soap operas and how their private sphere evolves around such television content. This section explains the viewer's relation to Tv series mainly soap operas as televisual texts, its content, how much they internalize soap operas and reality, identification, and women's pleasures. First, it is important to explain the most important part of this thesis which is the active role of Albanian women of Prishtina by continuing to other sub-themes and main themes that came out from the field.

3.2. Beyond Fandom: Kosovar Women and Turkish Tv Series

The general perception of Kosovar women is that the viewers are active rather than passive followers of Turkish Soap opera. The data opposes the theory of passive viewers as Albanian women of Kosova have been watching Turkish series for 10 to 15 years now. Based on the data, they noted that they are aware of how Turkish Series have changed through years and this proves that watching soap operas is not a brainless activity for them. Since most of them started watching after the war ended in Kosovo (1999) on that note one responded added: "There's a difference between series in the past and now. Before topics of the Turkish series were much closer to our culture." This analysis supports the theory that audiences create meanings out of televisual text based on their background. For instance, older generations were inclined to judge more in binary oppositions unlike younger generations reflected more on how they perceive series. In other words, the younger generation have a specific relation to romance where they are engaged more with the characters, the older women however find romance difficult to pinpoint as their perceptions of romance are different from the younger women. The reason that they could not elaborate themselves on romance might be because their educational background was primary school only.

3.2.1. Learning from Turkish Tv Series

All group ages emphasized how much they learn from series. While older generations talked more about the negative things that happens in the series, such as intrigues, lying,

revenge, they mostly learn about the relationships between bride and mother in law. The data shows that popular culture functions as consciousness raising activity. On the other hand, few want to understand younger generations and the gap between them. Similarly, yet more eloquent on the educational role were other groups. While for many series have helped in their relationships, some have tried to understand familiar roles, interpersonal relations, love, and mostly it has helped develop their fantasy. Regarding that, one respondent answered:

“Well, through series you learn about life. Stories that are developed in the series are not merely fantasy, but are part of reality. When I watch, I really get into the series, I watch with full concentration. First, series teach us about what could happen in life, and I am a romantic person, so I like watching romance. Turkish series have an educational role. They are not empty from each episode you can learn something” (F.G. 35).

Although their educational background varied highly from other groups they reflected on other issues. Older generations tended to express sorrow for the characters. The analysis again showed that popular culture as a consciousness raising activity was noticed in all ages, but, it was more on raising for older generations. Other respondents highlighted that through discussion they analyze Tv series. Another respondent emphasized that she watched with her kids and discusses them to show them both sides of the coin. This is what F.G. (35) responded:

“I watch with my daughter. We discuss a lot. I do it with pleasure. And I purposely ask my kids, why did this happen, why do you think they behaved like this? In “Hayat Benim” it was so clear that how her “sister” stole her entire life. Here you can critically think about life, that everything can happen. However, in the series, justice always prevails”.

From the data it is of importance to highlight that respondents can make the difference between drama and real life. It is of importance to mention that respondents of all ages when discussing they usually want to learn something. From this, it is judged that the data supports the theory that popular culture serves as individual or collective growth. Amid crucial data from the field, was the relation that respondents have with the characters in the series.

3.2.2. Improving Emotional Interaction Beyond the Identification

Most of the respondents, especially the first group, explained how much they identify or seek to complete their wishful thinking for a future partner with the ones from the soap operas. When talking about this part, most of them were excited to explain how they feel and why soap operas offer this. This is how one young respondent answered:

“I really like Cem in *Cam Tavanlari*. I would like to have a partner like him”
(M.G. 18).

Younger generations portrayed the characters in the series as the potential partners they would like to have in real life. Regarding this one respondent added:

There is one character in Sultan Suleyman, his name is Cihangir. He reads a lot but has health problems. I really like him and how wise he is, the way he talks and behaves. In that series Cihangir is the perfect guy. I really appreciate people’s intellectual part, and how much people read. That is why I was attracted to Cihangir’s personality, and I would like to have a partner like him, despite that he had health issues (E.L. 21).

Other participants envisioned both their future partner and their profession through soap operas, how *parasocial* interactions help people create affinity with them, one responded added:

I watch because I am inspired by the characters related to my profession. For example in *Sen Cal Kapimi* Serkan Bolat was an architect, and I am an architect myself. To be honest I want my future to be like his. I want to become like Serkan, very clever, using ratio, because at the end he was both successful at work and family which teaches us that we shouldn’t focus on work only. I have colleagues, but I can’t find in them what I find in the series (E.H. 24).

Younger generations had a specific relation to few characters also because they watch from a young age, and for most of them some actors have become role models at the same time identifying with strong women. The data corresponds to the theory that popular culture is not merely amusement or distraction, in as much as it provides role models. One participant expressed herself like this in relation to characters:

I really like Hurrem. I cannot get enough of Hurrem. First, she is so beautiful, in comparison to other female slaves, she had a different culture. I liked her because she was brave, even towards the mother of Sultan. The character of Hurrem inspires me because of the way she talks and how she expressed her braveness. I was impressed a lot and wanted to behave like her (U.G. 21).

The data supports the theory that women like and want to identify with the lives of other women portrayed in soap opera. The last group of respondents talked about certain characters in Tv series by showing sorrow to what happened to them, a feeling of empathy raised amid all respondents. H.G. (65) highlighted this: "To be more empathic and understand women who are not happy and subordinated". On another example, another respondent of the same group age expressed sorrow about women who got raped in the series. This is what she said: "Fatmagul got raped, and I wanted to know what is going to happen with her" (S.N. 67). They expressed anger and sorrow at the same time because same things happen in reality and women do not deserve to suffer like that. On this topic, one participant added: "We do not like one thing, they do bad stuff to each other. For example, Fatmagul got raped and we felt sorry for her". (H.G. 60) Another one, on the same note added: "I watch because I really feel sorry for Feride, one moment she is with him and then you see that they got separated, this is why I feel sorry for her. We don't like divorces" (S.N. 67). On other instances, women showed sorrow for male characters as well. Most of them mentioned the series *Mucize Doktor* by expressing how they feel about the protagonist there, Ali. This is what one respondent said: "We like to see Ali take his hak (his right)" (D.G. 67).

3.2.3. Interrogating Woman's Role in a Patriarchal Society

Soap opera is still a significant cultural space for women, at the same time a prominent cultural construction of femininity. The data suggests that Albanian women of Kosovo through Turkish Tv series, mainly soap operas are involved in intellectual, social and political issues. An emphasis is made on the role of women, and whether readers in this case take directly what is given from cultural industry. As discussed above, Frankfurt School and mass critics, argued that audiences merely take what is served to them, directly. Thus, the data indicates that it is the opposite in the case of Albanian women. Although they take what is served to them, they remake their meanings from televisional

text. In other words, the concept *melodramatic* in twentieth century usually refers to emotions demanded for insignificant situations. Thus, the result does not fit this theory and the data builds on clear understanding that Albanian women of Kosovo through Turkish Tv series reflect not only on their role in society but of Turkish women as well

A very striking analysis from the data was the women's role in society. Kosovar women again expressed themselves as active soap opera viewers who can read televisual texts based on their constructed identities. Almost all age groups reflected on the issue of women by rediscovering similarities and differences between Albanian and Turkish women. While few held opinions that what they have in common is their strong nature, the ability to surpass many difficulties and be patient, other women reflected on differences. The data shows that Albanian women of Kosova made their reflections on differences based on two things: timing (years) and geography. The former explained how after the war many things started changing in Kosovo, with those changes women's role changed as well. As for the latter, many reflected on the rights of women and their freedom mainly because geographically speaking Kosovo is near Europe and that had an effect on the role of women in society. Almost all age groups mentioned what is it like to be in a patriarchal society, and what patriarchalism is.

This is how one respondent from older generation responded. "Before in Kosovo, our mothers, our grandmothers suffered a lot, but things have changed today. We did not like a patriarchal society, that is why we strive today to change things, and many things have changed. Look at us, we go out a lot, I'm the wife of the imam but I wear pants" (H.G. 65). Older generations reflected more on their relations with other familiar members, comparing them to the series. All of the emphasized that the position of women in society has changed in Kosovo. As one of them responded: "After the war in Kosovo, many things have changed, people are more civilized. I think that Albanian women are more emancipated than the Turkish ones. Here even old ladies in the villages have changed. Before women could only dream of going out for coffee, now even women from villages go out" (H.K. 68). While many highlighted that somehow we share the same mentality, like women staying at home and taking care of the kids, others reflected on the differences. As one respondent added:

When I was a kid, or younger, women had to stay at home, serve her husband and deal only with housework. Now, the status of women has really changed. Even though the emancipation of women happened in both countries, I think Kosovo had gone through changes after the war. For example when I visited Turkey in 2005 I would rarely see women drive, but this was not the case in Kosovo (F.G.35).

On the same note, another respondent added:

In Kosovo things have really changed. Especially younger generations. Now you have mothers that work and take care of their kids, are independent and do not sit at home to serve. I believe this is not the case in Turkey. Maybe because it is a huge country and not everyone gets the chance to get educated” (P.Z. 41).

Other respondents highlighted the similarities that both Turkish and Albanian women share, and that in both societies patriarchy still exists. Many of them said that life in the big cities has changed in Kosovo. Younger generations were even more critical to the freedom and rights of women. They judged in stronger nuances on how men are the main barriers to achieving success in life, and they highlighted this by taking examples from the Turkish Tv series they watch. This is how one respondent answered:

Both societies share patriarchal aspects. In *Cam Tavanları* the girl was going towards success, but men wanted to put her down all the time just because she was a woman. Women get abused a lot, and I think both share the same fate” (S.A. 16).

On the same note, another one highlighted:

I think both women share sort of the same fate. For example, wealth is not shared with their sisters. In *Alev Alev*, the man has a really important position in society and he used to beat his wife and no one trusted her, no one believed that she was being abused, and even if they would believe it people would say ‘she asked for it.’ Another thing is that if a woman cannot give birth to a kid, they marry someone else, and this is common in both Albanian and Turkish society (H.U. 16).

Younger generations were more critical of the series. Their emphasis was more on how women are treated in society. Moreover, there is a clear evidence about rape culture that young ones learn from the series. The study demonstrates a correlation of criticism and quality of the series by younger generations which they connected it directly to their private lives, a correlation of fiction and real experiences, which is one of the characteristics of soap opera.

3.2.4. Thinking about Gender Roles and Social Strata

The results build on existing evidence that, soap opera offers space to interaction into traditional discourses of gender. The data shows that older generations reflected on their position as women in society and how their emancipation in Kosovo started after the war, yet at the same time Turkish women's role judging through series. Relating to that, this is what one respondent said: "Here people have changed, especially youth are getting educated and are more aware than we were. Before, husbands did not call their wives by their names, but "hey" or with their kid's name. On the other hand, I believe that in Turkey there is still fanaticism left. Besides, there is so much cheating and revenge." Reflections of older generations were more on the relations mother in law-bride-son or groom. While few expressed opinions that Turkish mothers in law are mean, others said that mean people exist everywhere. One of the respondent made a comparison to Turkish mothers in law in the series to a Serb woman. "Turkish mothers in law are really mean, they are like seven Serb women" (Z.G. 60). It is of importance to take into consideration their historical background here. Kosovo was part of the communist country called Yugoslavia. From this we understand that viewers judge series based on their ideological background where their shared history with Serb women takes place here.

On the other hand, a younger respondent said that Turkish society is more patriarchal than the Albanian one. Relating to that, she added: "I think in Turkey people hold the idea that women should stay at home, they are more patriarchal than us. In Kosovo things have changed regarding this issue". Younger respondent compared both historical happenings, especially feminism, the reality itself, and at the same time reflected from the series. One respondent said:

People in Kosovo are more aware of gender roles and patriarchy. You see more women in different institutions, plus Kosovo has its first female

president in the region. On the other hand, in Turkey even though the Kemalist movement brought emancipation to women, oppression of women is still felt there (A.TH. 26).

On the same note but taking examples from the series, a young respondent said: “In Turkish series, all businesses are run by men. In *Anne* Cengiz was drinking all the time, beating his wife and his kids. And I think that this happens here as well” (H.U. 16).

Most of them expressed that Turkish Tv series do not help them understand gender roles. Although the patriarchal part exists in the series, respondents said that it exists in the series yet it is eye opening. According to them, Turkish Tv series have a patriarchal side as well, especially older Tv series, they help women see what could possibly happen to them, and they learn from it. Even though in Turkish Tv series the figure of strong women exists, they do not see them as a tool to understand gender roles as for them they have already seen it happening in reality. Besides the fact that there is a high engagement of the audiences with the series, the patriarchal part reminds them of what the situation used to be and what they do not want to be anymore. In other words, the data shows that although Turkish series have patriarchal aspects, in the respondents it has an unintended positive consequence. A very striking data from the field was on how the portrayal of strong vs weak women. Yet younger generations were much more involved in the reflection of the society, with an emphasis on social strata. The emphasis fell on how social classes and how women suffer because of men who have an important status in society. This is how two respondents answered:

It depends on the thematic of the series, some are based on true stories. But if I may specify Sultan Suleyman (referring to *Magnificent Century*), it talks about the Ottomans and they glorify their history. Unlike other series show how women can do things on their own, how they can be successful and rich. Before series portrayed poorer women who were married into rich families. In this way Turkish series portray social strata. For example, there is a business guy who marries a poor girl. *Yildiz* (referring to *Yasak Elma*) didn't know what a rich life was (U.G. 21).

On the same note another respondent added: *Yukses Sosyete* for example, they always portray women who are powerful, but the other class is just simple women. For example comparing to *Beni Affet*, Sevgi stays at home because she is not rich.” (H. U. 16) The data suggests that younger generations through Turkish Tv series seek for social and political changes in society. Based on their criticism on significant aspects of their television readings, their reflections held space on how much Turkish soap opera has been eye opening for them regarding women’s role in society.

3.2.5. Criticizing Moral Values in Series

An interesting reflection from older generations was on gossiping. They dislike gossiping in the series. Expressing dissatisfaction about doing wrong behind people’s back and relating it to their lives. Relating to that one respondent noted: “What we hate in the series is gossiping. That is how divorces happen, because mothers and sisters in law gossip behind the couple’s back” (S.N. 67). They again emphasized the educational role here that they learn and this is mostly done through discussion with other women. During the discussion, they express their opinions from which everyone learns something. Although older generations see gossip as a negative aspect of soap opera, they discuss with other women about what is going on in the series, in other words to discuss their own problems as well. They see gossip as a tool that damages relationships, especially familiar ones. In that regard the data highlights that the group 55+ was keen on judging more based on morals, as their critics were mostly on binary opposition of good/bad, as one respondent said: “We take the good and leave the bad” (H.G. 65). While their emphasis was on familiar roles, the cultural aspect enters here as well. For them, in Albanian culture but also Islam, morals are important. Their family model, familiar relationship was to be respectful and have healthy relations without gossiping, divorces or taking revenge. The last group judged more on morals by making comparisons between the two cultures. For some of them marrying with cousins is not a good thing. As (H.G. 65) said: “The only thing I don’t like about Turkish people is that they marry with their cousins”. On the other hand, they highlighted that they dropped a series because it was not in the norms of morality to do so. Like they said, one woman gets divorced and meet her ex husband again, there is too much cheating and revenge. Unlike in Kosovo, if people get divorced they never meet again (H.G. 65). Two participants said that they dropped the series *Beni*

Affet because they got disgusted from it. One respondent said: “I dropped watching *Beni Affet*. And I asked myself why am I watching this. The mother in law doesn’t like the bride, she destroys her son’s life. That is not good. Too much fanaticism” (H. K. 68). The last group although they had a great criticism towards series especially on gossiping, revenge and cheating they are constant viewers that it what again feels closest to them culturally.

3.2.6. Interfering the Viewing Process

Another significant main theme of this study is watching modes. Respondents were asked on their relation with Turkish Tv series and the pandemic, whether they have dedicated more time to series or not. In this regard, older generations responded that they watched the same, that their relationship with watching more or less hasn’t changed during the pandemic. On the other hand, married women with kids had less time to sit in front of TV. Most of them said that they couldn’t dedicate their free time to series because school came at home during the pandemic. Just as one respondent said: “Kids were at home so I had to fill the day with activities for them.” Other women and young girls watched more during pandemic. The data opposes the theory that people with heavy anxiety spend more time in front of TV. Respondents said that the main reason for watching was to fill the time during pandemic as many of them did not have to go to work or school. Unlike all groups, young girls watched Turkish content from Netflix as well. Not only series but movies as well. This is what one respondent said: “I watched more, even in Netflix. *Ask 101* for example. And of course *Miracle in Cell No. 7*.”

Tv series watching is usually related to people’s previous experiences by using both the serial and their experiences. When asked if they have watched the same series twice, younger generations responded that they watched many series twice. To experience and live the same moment on and on, create meanings at the same time, one respondent said: “*Kara Sevda!* It was so emotional! I watched it twice” (F.H. 35).

Other respondents watched because of the main characters there, usually a man. This is how one respondents answered: “Yes, *Kiralik Ask* and *Siyah Beyaz Ask*” (S.E. 41). Another sub theme is how respondents chose to watch the series. When asked which telecommunication system they use to watch there was a big difference between older

and all other young groups. All older respondents answered that they watch from TV while they are at home. Although they were equipped with smartphones, watching TV shows for them was more a domestic activity. They highlighted that if guests would come and they would not be able to watch their TV series, they would not choose Youtube to watch but ask their friends to explain to them what happened. On the other hand, other groups used to watch from TV and with family but with the technological changes, all of them watch from Youtube. Main reasons were that they could bring the same scene twice, or if they did not understand what was being said. In other words, for them it is more comfortable to open Youtube and watch whenever they can unlike sitting in front of TV. Most of them do not watch from TV because it takes a long time. This is what one respondent said: "I watch from Youtube because I don't have time to sit in front of TV for hours". Relating to their watching, respondents were asked if they skip or watch the entire episode. While older generations watch from TV they watch the entire episode. Other respondents said that they skip, and few others highlighted that they are long and it's impossible not to skip.

Due to the length of an episode, I personally may never be able to watch an episode from beginning to end. And secondly, the very dramatic scenes, in a surreal dramatic way, it is almost impossible to follow them without skipping (F.H. 30).

Another respondent answered that she skips in the scenes where she does not like the characters. "In series where I don't like characters, I skip. But mostly I don't skip because I want to learn Turkish" (D.H.A. 26). The data supports the theory that viewers have their preferred readings. The parts that they skip shows that, it is not what they relate to. Respondents who mostly skipped, highlighted that due to living a dynamic life, they don't have time to watch for hours. Others do not have the patience to be fully concentrated for two hours. From few respondents of the youngest group, they emphasised that if they watch from TV they watch the entire episode, but there are times that even if they are watching from Youtube they do not skip minutes. The data shows that viewers's relation to the series and their watching mode is related to the length of Turkish series, which according to them is very long, a dynamic life and married women who had to take care of their kids did not have the time to sit and watch the entire episode. From the data we understand that viewers are more active when they choose Youtube over TV for watching.

3.2.7. Experiencing Romance

Another noteworthy aspect identified in this study is how much appealing Turkish Tv series, specifically Soap Operas are for younger generations because of romance. While the viewer is already owned by the narrative, an aspect of pleasure is the constructed illusions. Although viewers make selections of the texts they perceive realism from the series on an emotional level. While they watch to feel what they do not get in real life, they also watch because it may incite in them messages in their subconsciousness regarding interpersonal relations and how they envision it to be. It triggers their emotionality. Even though it is soap opera, they get engaged in how characters build their romance and how that interplays emotionally in a certain episode. The data supports the theory that women search for emotional gratification and they mostly find it in romantic series. Related to romance which they mostly make a relation to expanding their fantasy one participant said:

They really bring in you something you can't find it in reality. But to fantasize or to have a utopic idea does not mean that you are not living the reality. Turkish series offer this, and I watch because they help me develop my fantasy (S.E. 41).

On the same note another respondent added: "The love that I don't receive it in real life, I find it there" (S.U. 16). Important aspects regarding romance as appealing to Kosovar women, the analysis supports the theory that readers seek validation through reading, and younger generation emphasized this on the characters because it brings enthusiasm, it makes them sensitive, it makes them feel alive and many expressed themselves that they took the courage to do things that they saw in the series crossing boundaries doing what is not often allowed.

Amid important data from the field is how women, especially younger ones seek for romantic men in soap operas. Albanian women reflected on the nature of Albanian and Turkish in comparative lines on the topic of love. Most of them argued that Albanian men squeeze their feelings. They highlighted that Turkish guys are braver when it comes to expressing love. For them, they understood men better from the series. It made them do the first step, taking into consideration that Albanian men do not express their feelings. This is how one respondent answered:

Albanian men try to show themselves as “men” by suppressing their own feelings. Turkish men are different. Series helped me understand that men do not express themselves, almost at all, and at this point I started making the first move (F.G. 35).

On the same note respondent (E.H. 24) said: “We are rougher and more cowards about love. In my opinion, Turkish guys are braver when it comes to expressing love, Albanian guys are different. It takes a long time until they tell you that they like you.” Based on the data, women through Turkish Tv series seek to understand Albanian men by comparing them to the characters in the series. In this way they find the men that they would like to have in their life. The emotional gratification that they seek through series was emphasized in the comparison to Albanian and Turkish men from the series. The data shows that Albanian women through Turkish Tv series have learnt how to be more romantic.

To many Kosovar women, romance in Turkish Tv series is exaggerated romance. According to this data, there is a different conception of romance amid Kosovar women. Younger generations argued that the romance in Turkish soap operas is not real and that they produce these kind of series merely for the market, judging that romance is the most sold type of series. In regard to that, they highlighted that they follow ratings of the series as well. For example, one respondent said:

I think they exaggerate with romantic scenes, because this is what is sold in the market, but there are really good Turkish series whose rating went down because it wasn't romantic. *Masumiyet* for example. The topic was perfect. That taught us a lot. A lot of women get raped, abused and no one knows about it. *Masumiyet* is an amazing serial, because for us as young girls it prepares us further in life (S.A. 16).

Another respondent expressed herself in the same note, highlighting that the industry of series is bringing other series beyond romanticism. Such a series she said, is *Masumlar Apartmani*.

They have found another much needed theme to immerse themselves in and bring interesting events and messages. Psychological and psychiatric issues and problems in society. They are broadcasting interesting things, that even

if you do not learn something extraordinary, at least a very sensitive and necessary topic is touched, maybe not only for the Turkish society (F.H. 30).

On the same note, relating to series that romance is not emphasized so much, older generations took as an example the series *Mucize Doktor*. As one of them responded: “The entire family watches *Mucize Doktor*. We like it because we want to see Ali take his hak (his right). We watch because it teaches us how to be empathic with autistic people” (Z.G. 60). For some respondents romance in Turkish Tv series was fake, as according to them reality is very much different. In other words, they highlighted by taking an example from the Tv series *Masumiyet* that love have become toxic in the entire world. (M.G. 18) On the other hand, other respondent learnt how to be romantic from Turkish Tv series. While older generations highlighted that during to their many years of marriage, romantic series did not help them in their romantic life, younger generations, despite the fact that for some it was exaggerated romance and not vis-à-vis with reality, they were eager to learn how to be more romantic. The data shows that Kosovar women are critical viewers, by reading televisual texts from the prism of the market, as to why romantic series are successful, patriarchalism and familiar roles.

3.2.8. Enjoying Cultural Proximity

Turks and Albanians have a shared history for more than five hundred years that includes common aspects from culture, religion and heritage. Cultural proximity exists in many levels when analysing audiences and television texts. The data supports the theory that audiences choose content that is familiar to them, as one participant noted “They are not foreign to us”. Besides being familiar because of the cultural, historic content they watch also because unlike Spanish telenovela they can watch with their families. Erotic scenes are not emphasized and one does not have to change the channel if they are watching with family is what respondents said. “We share the same idea about the concept of shame with Turks, in that regard, in our culture watching erotics scenes with family is still an issue, that is why we feel comfortable to watch Turkish soap opera with our family members” (S.M. 37).

This study reveals that older generations find Turkish Soap Opera appealing because they feel close to Turks culturally, corresponding to the theory that through popular culture people become aware of the existing attitudes and lifeways. Almost all groups were aware

of the differences and similarities between Albanians and Turks. Almost all of them remember the great singer Ibrahim Tatlis and noted that they grew up listening to his songs. Older generations started watching just after the war, and are active viewers for twenty years now.

The appealing of Turkish Tv series to Kosovar women is mainly related to linguistic, cultural, historical and religious reasons. The series rediscovered similarities and differences that Albanians have with Turks. All women emphasized that religion, food, weddings are all the same. Many of them pointed at Turkish coffee during interviews by saying that “Coffee and tea” is the most common thing. The data shows that similarities in family roles were what the respondents mostly expressed as close to Turks and what makes the series appealing. One of the respondent (V.I. 60) from the last group answered by saying that “Rahmet (mercy) is what we have in common”, at the same time acknowledging that bad people exist as well. While few of them agreed that the respect of the elderly is what we have in common, others saw this as a difference by saying that it is getting lost in Kosovo. Regarding similarities one respondent added: “Culturally speaking, we have borrowed a lot from Turkish one. Considering the social aspect, it is precisely the closeness of people, consideration for guests, hospitality, solidarity, respect for the elderly” (F.H. 30). Emphasizing that there is shared history one participant noted: “There is an Ottoman heritage that is present in our language, historical heritage, habits and customs, values and assumptions. It is not something alien but of course there are variations from my own culture but the core is similar” (M.H. 27). On another note data from this study supports the theory that series make people reflect on the self and society. Respondents highlighted that Turkish people are more a collective society than Albanians of Kosovo are. On the question as to what does soap opera tell about Turkey one respondent added:

There are many series who portray the power of Turkish people, for example Sultan Suleyman. But in many other series they tell a lot about betrayal for example Sadaktasiz. They portray for example in *Cukur* and *Icerde* that they are trustworthy people. People fight for their loved ones. For example in *Masumiyet*, they portray that love has become very toxic in the entire world. And there is an emphasis on a collective society, this is what they portray in almost all series” (M.G. 18).

Most of the respondents expressed the wish to visit Turkey because of the portrayals of beautiful spots. Most of them mentioned the architecture of the houses around Bosphorus and how they are fascinated by Ottoman architecture. One of the respondent even said “I want to visit Kapadokya before I die” (V.I. 60). Younger generations had a more critical eye while reading television texts, especially on how society has changed in the last years. Some expressed that a lot of changes are going on everywhere, even in Europe but feel also sorry for few lost values. As one respondent said: “I think there are drastic changes in Europe, not only in Turkey” (V.I. 60). On the other hand, the portrayal of Turkey, Turkish people and modernity. On that note one respondent added:

In my opinion, soaps try to entail a modern picture of Turkey, one that is heavily secularized and is insisting towards such a social drive. I do think they also bring forth a beautiful image of the country and that may spark tourism (M.H.27).

Again, the data from this study opposes the theory that viewers are passive. Kosovar women has shown that they reflect from Turkish series. Not that they were able to distinguish the similarities but also reflect on the differences as well. The appeal toward Turkish series is clearly based on the importance of religion, the importance of social relations and gender representation. Many of them highlighted the importance of strong and independent characters in soap opera. Yet the empathy towards the injustice done to Fatmagul who got raped by three rich men was brought by younger generations, emphasizing that the rich could escape easily and no one would find out about it. The study reveals that no matter the cultural background the struggles of women in a corrupt society which is mostly dominated by men is something universal, and data shows that younger generations reflected more on these issues seeing Turkish series as applicable to their lives.

3.2.9. Desiring to Escape from the Reality and the Daily Struggles

Soap Opera as a popular genre has for a long time been considered as inferior mainly for reducing political engagement in people, yet they are significant cultural spaces for women where the private sphere mingles with the public one which helps women comprehend their role in society. Kosovar women have shown that Turkish Tv series with an emphasis on soap opera makes them reflect on pivotal issues, yet through these series

they escape from domestic duties or reality in general. The data supports the theory that television viewing reduces negative effects, it is a mechanism which provides relief from stress. In that regard it is of importance to mention escapism as an important concept. While older generation uses them more to escape from domestic life, younger generation escaped from the negativity that surrounds them.

Turkish series are the only medium where older generation recharge from daily struggles. Just as two respondent said “This is what keeps us alive” (S.N. 67), “They really help us pass the time” (Z.H. 75). They highlighted that they finish their housework and get ready to watch their series. As one respondent from the last group said: “ Women are tired of many things, like taking care of kids and their house work. After they are done with this, they have their own time, and that time is reserved for series” (V.I. 60). At the same time, they emphasized that it is the best part of the day where they get to watch and forget about their housework. Escaping from the reality and getting involved in something that connects both reality and their fantasy is the best way for them to see how they feel about themselves and reflect upon issues that occupy them as women. As one respondent said: “Turkish soap opera are my me time. I recharge when I watch because I truly want to run away from what occupies me around” (S.E. 41). This certain escapism is not an activity to shut down the brain, rather relax yet ponder on things that are relevant to their personalities. Related to that, older generations highlighted that they ponder upon their role in the family with an emphasis on their relations with their brides and what they see in the series. In this way, soap opera connects women.

The data supports the theory that women use soaps to indirectly talk about their lives by identifying with the women whose fate or daily problems resembles on theirs. Basically, soap opera fits with women’s discourses and problems. In other words, women of all group ages use Turkish soap operas as a tool of escaping reality, daily struggles. Most of them highlighted that they simply shut down their brain just to relax, to have their own time and not engage with anything else.

3.3. General Assessment

In the cultivation of culture, mass media has taken a huge role in shaping people’s way of perceiving political engagement, civic activity, and socio-economic situations. In other words, women throughout history have been deprived by a dominating men culture,

where the private sphere of women has often been neglected and considered unimportant, even today. This study is a clear mirror that the private sphere is political and that mass media, everyday life, and women play a crucial role in shaping culture. The place and importance in this study among other studies are that it is the first empirical study done about Turkish Soap Opera in Kosovo concerning women from a Cultural Studies and feminist perspective. This study will contribute to the research area in Kosovo regarding the academic 'othering' of women and media inasmuch as this area is marginal to scholarly perspective. This study is a breakthrough into a cultural snobbery where women, everyday life, and media are not considered as worth studying.

Amid crucial data from the field, the data opposes the theory that there are passive viewers. Kosovar women are not passive viewers. This study demonstrates that viewers are not affected by the hegemonic ideologies, in this case, Turkey as a soft power through its series, opposing the theory of passive viewers, as Kosovar women use Turkish Tv series as social interactions through which they learn and try to solve problems in their lives. The data opposes the Frankfurt school's theory that followers of popular culture are fools, as Kosovar women are active in identifying and remaking meanings of televisual texts. They argued that the values of a culture are the negotiation of power and rebellion unlike popular culture is mere entertainment. Yet, the data shows that Kosovar women reflected on significant issues such as rape. On the other hand, culture does not refer to intellectual activity only, but to things that contain meaning and value as well. Just as many theorists have argued, understanding everyday life is to understand the nature of social life as a whole.

Turkish Tv series are both a disturber and comforter to Kosovar women. Amid reasons for choosing Turkish content is the cultural proximity that they feel with Turkish culture. Religion, history, Ottoman heritage were key components to feeling much closer to Turkish Tv series. Using soaps as an escape from reality, the plots sparking curiosity in them, its educational role on family relationships, especially on cheating and revenge, their relation to characters, and as a pleasurable activity because of their favorite characters was another reason to their appealing. Through soap operas, Kosovar women experience what they do not have in their real lives, identity with the lives of other women, and discussion about series as the best part of their activity, through which they recreate new meanings. Amid very important data, is that Kosovar women reflected a lot

on the role of women. Although they are aware of the patriarchal aspects of the series, they help them understand and be aware of what could possibly happen to them so they reflect on that issue. In this way, the data shows that Turkish Tv series serve as ontological security especially for older generations due to having more free time.

On the other hand, femicide, rape, abuse, and injustice towards women were what Kosovar women mostly reflected. As critical viewers, they made the difference and similarities between the two cultures, emphasizing that both cultures share patriarchal aspects yet the situation in Kosovo has really changed after the war. The data support the theory that Tv series/soap operas binds women together, as respondents discuss series when they gather by bringing their private sphere to the public one. The data is in line with the feminist theory that gossip activates oral culture through which new meanings circulate. This study correlates with the theory that people's previous experiences are what is consisted in their meaning-making. Kosovar women have shown that their historical experience with other ethnic women is part of their reading, as different viewing strategies work for different people. The data shows that the educational status of the respondents had an effect on the reading of television texts. Younger generations reflected more on class, education, love and quality of the Tv series, unlike older generations had an emphasis more on familiar roles, marriage and women alone. In that regard, younger generations could elaborate their thoughts better than older participants.

The only groups who could not elaborate themselves with longer sentences were the last group age 55 +. The data shows that education is seen as a key role in reading critically. The data also supports the theory that women use romance as an escape to diversify their pace and the character of their everyday life (Radway, 1991: 89). Younger respondents through Turkish Tv series could find the partner they would like to have, find love that they could not receive in real life, and reflect on the ways that Albanian men show or express love in comparison to Turkish men. The data supports the theory that respondents used reality and Tv series interchangeably.

In line with the assumptions, Turkish Tv series despite the fact that it contains patriarchal aspects it does not reinforce on Kosovar women a sense of acceptance of patriarchy as a *modus vivendi*. Based on data, Kosovar women reflect on patriarchal interactions and do not accept them as *modus vivendi*. They rather come to realize the negative effects of

patriarchy and where it could lead. Kosovar women actively reflect and interact on issues touched by Turkish Tv series. Not only as an internal monologue of reflection but also as dialogues and discussions with their peers and their perceptions and perspectives on morality, dogma, and patriarchy. The major point of this study is that Kosovar women are active viewers. As passive receivers, it would have an impact on them to further normalize patriarchy.

Another significant theme derived from the data was how did the pandemic affected watching modes. Between the age groups, mothers were affected mostly, as they had to dedicate their full time to their children. Yet for the last group, watching modes were almost the same. By choosing their preferred readings, younger generations watched the same series twice as an activity of recalling lost experiences and feelings. Viewer are more active when they prefer Youtube over TV as they have the chance to skip the parts they do not relate to referring to the length of the series as too long.

3.4. Suggestions for Future Research

This study is limited in many ways. First, the respondents were Albanian female residents of Prishtina. Considering the fact that Kosovo is a mosaic of ethnic groups, further research could be done including other ethnic groups and other cities in Kosovo. In many cases other ethnic groups, especially women are excluded from the public sphere, yet it is important to see how women of other ethnic groups feel about Turkish Soap Operas.

On the other hand, many men are constant viewers of Turkish Tv series, for that reason future research can also be done on respondents with men, or both women and men. The main reason for furthering such research is because, over the course of the fieldwork, I came across several negative stereotypes regarding Turkish Soap Operas, despite their sustained popularity. One was in the form of mothers reporting their son's discouragement of their watching the series. Another was in the hesitation of many women to participate in my research, for fear of being known for watching such shows. Further research is needed to more deeply elucidate what motivates such stigmatization, and what role Orientalism potentially might play. Taking into consideration the cultural snobbery in Kosovo, it is of importance to research the private sphere and women because it is a really weak area. On the other hand, during the field, many women expressed that they watch with their families, their in laws, and that many men watch as well. Further

research is needed also on the relation of men and the reasons for choosing Turkish television content. What do men think about women? Do Turkish series raise in them awareness about gender roles? What is their relation to the series, do they watch series related to Ottoman history or soap opera as well? What is the relation of romance and age when it comes to families who watch with their in laws? Has the idea of romance changed because of the series?

Taking into consideration the above mentioned reasons for furthering research in this area, a successful research would be on theorizing emotional difference of gender in relation to Turkish Soap Operas or series influence, and by gender it is of importance to have female, male binary queer.

The insights gained from this study are a new approach except of the 'soft power' discourses on Turkish series. This study clearly states the ways in which in industrial societies culture is not static, emphasizing on popular culture as a way of transforming everyday life into a considerable criticism not just for oneself but for the society one lives as well.

CONCLUSION

Popular culture has shown to influence people all around the world as it is the culture that involves social aspects that are mostly discussed in the public. As a culture that immediate almost all aspects of our lives, a great deal of research between “serious” and “vernacular” culture has been made by feminists and Cultural Studies. This study overviewed the concept of culture and how different critics outlined culture yet a challenge on the scholarship of “serious” academic work was undergone by many theorists whose theories are relevant in post- industrial societies. As people are mostly screening, this study focused on the most popular genre of TV, soap operas. It discussed the theories of audiencehood, the passive and active viewer, how television texts are received, how meaning is created with an emphasis on the relation of private and public sphere.

To specify with soap operas as a popular genre, has become worthy of study, as it is not merely the culture that is produced for consumerist purposes or to the desperate housewives who are not able to perceive reality, an important attempt by the second wave of feminism was made to challenge the theories of mass critics towards popular culture. Rather imposed by the system, feminists have argued that indeed soap operas are a cultural hub for women, a door to escape from their mother/ wife duties and to reflect on their roles as women. This study focuses on the theories of feminists to understand the discourses on women vis-à-vis media outside the scope of what many studies have argued before. Yet, concepts on pleasure, ideology, escapism, parasocial interaction, identification are amid most predominant concepts considered in this study.

A great importance was drawn on mass communication, audiences as numbers for consumerist purposes and audiences both as active and passive. Moreover, the aim of the cultural industry was to create homogeneous audiences to limit their economic and political activities. Most mass critics argued that masses function as the operational control of the industry suppressed the individual creativity by also creating manipulated desires and pleasures, a false harmony and not the critical force in society. On the other hand, Cultural Studies opposed binary oppositions when analyzing culture as they were usually put in front to keep the elite far away from the working class. Instead various frames came out of Cultural Studies to compile and comprehend popular culture not merely as the culture for entertainment rather, signifying practices such as cinema,

advertisement, pop music, soap operas as autonomous from the production of market on the creation of meanings. These distinctions and discussions were around “taste” making culture ideological. Yet theorists from Cultural Studies defined culture as “a way of life,” including not only performances or practices of high art, but also what consists of daily life. What consists of daily life is what hasn’t left yet despite the technological development, and that is the TV. Television remains the medium that organizes the living room, incites conversations and creates routines. In this regard, the literature review aimed to address the relationship of women and soap operas on the existing scholarship.

Unlike in many countries, Kosovo has a huge gap of research on the relation of women and media. For this reason, this study attempted to understand the relation of Albanian women and Turkish Tv series. Because of the lack of research, especially empirical one, a qualitative method was used to achieve the objectives of the study. Semi-structured interviews were compiled with focus groups and one-to-one interview consisting of different age groups. The themes that emerged from the data corresponded to the literature review. Ethical considerations were taken into account to keep the trustworthiness of the data.

Although the process of the qualitative method seemed exciting and overwhelming as I was about to be a pioneer in this, it had its difficulties as most of the time it is unpredictable how people behave towards a new thing, taking into consideration that there is no research culture in Kosovo. Most girls and women had a positive attitude towards me as a researcher even though they refused to take part, yet they talked to me about their favorite series. Most of the women who refused to be part of the interviews were because of two reasons: most of them were working and didn’t bother to spare time for the interview, and the other group refused to talk in front of other people. Bringing women together was amid big challenges. As the study aimed to do four focus groups, it compiled two focus groups and the rest of the data was gathered through one-to-one interviews. Another challenge that I mostly faced with women in their fifties was the consent form. Most of them were scared to sign. The first reason was that it was in Turkish, but at the same time that a total stranger appeared to interview them and asked to sign something. Different approaches were used for all groups, as not everyone was interested to contribute to what I was trying to do. On the other hand, younger generations who also understood Turkish and the majority had a bachelors and master degree were open to

participate and share their opinions. As a gathering place, the National Library was chosen to conduct the interviews yet the staff was not very supportive and left me on hold for weeks. Due to not having a quiet hall for the interviews, most of them were conducted in cafes and parks.

This study put forward four questions:

1. Do Turkish series create a significant cultural space where the private and public sphere mingle for Kosovar Albanian women?
2. Do Kosovar women find a chance to interrogate traditional and patriarchal paradigms and the role of women in society through Turkish Tv Series?
3. Do Kosovar women create their own meaning while watching Turkish TV series? How much do their own thoughts affect the viewing process?
4. Is Turkey and Kosovo's historical and cultural affinity effective on watching Turkish TV series?

This study concludes that based on qualitative research, cultural proximity is an important factor of the appeal to Turkish Soap operas amid Albanian women of Prishtina. This study shows that Turkish Soap Opera is liberatory rather than oppressive, as feminized pleasures are not constrained by patriarchy although respondents are aware of Turkish Soap Operas' patriarchal aspects. By analyzing the influence of Turkish Soap Opera on Albanian women of Kosovo through different age groups, this study has shown how media discourse and popular culture contribute to the awareness of femicide, raping, patriarchy, differences, and similarities between the two cultures. Although soap operas are considered as feminized emotional excess, this study shows that Kosovar women interchangeably bring private sphere to the public one and in this way, there is a constant circulation of meanings where they contribute to the production, shaping of culture by also sharing a conceptual map based on their educational, social and ideological background. On the other hand, this study shows the importance of popular culture when brought to the public sphere especially on topics of political engagement, civic activity and socio-economic.

Concluding remarks are made on the educational role that Turkish soap operas and series bring to the audience especially on familiar roles, gender representation, role models,

romance and the politics on the content of the series. Considered as banal experience, and masses as unintelligent, this study shows that Kosovar women's viewing motivations go beyond mindless escapism, their social life and their needs are found in Turkish Tv series wrapping their everyday social experiences.

This empirical research is a huge step in the research culture in Kosovo by examining an untouched area, especially soap operas. Scholarship on the genre is really weak in Kosovo taking into consideration that before Turkish Tv series, Latin ones were really famous. Although the data shows that women decode based on their own experiences, this study being the first itself shows that in Kosovo academic research on women is not considered important and that there is still a man dominating culture when it comes to media scholarship. This study shows that Albanian women's private sphere is political and they play a crucial role in shaping culture. Through qualitative research, this study brings women's experiences in a more analytical form by dealing directly with women's everyday life, their pleasures, and the reason why they find their answers about romance in Turkish Tv series.

This study holds great importance inasmuch as it is done by a local, yet on the other hand based on the observations on the field some women were not inclined to express their opinions to a non-foreigner. In this regard, taking into consideration the challenges in the field, this study covers both the cultural research in Kosovo and the main reason for choosing Turkish content. This study shows that meaning making amid Kosovar women is part of their past experiences, socio-economic condition and modernity in the sense that Kosovo as a country has been through changes and these changes mostly affected the emancipation of women in a positive way. The meaning creation, women's liberation, power and politics amid Albanian women resulted in two dimensions: the active viewer creates meanings holding onto time and geography. By time, Albanian women analyze Turkish Tv series differently as years passed by. In this line, Kosovo's liberation in 1999, country's changes in both social and economic aspects gave women access to education which at the same time saw their role changing in a patriarchal society. Echoing from this, the data showed that Albanian women read Turkish Soap Operas in a more critical way arguing that the series' thematic has changed through years. In this regard emphasis was given to the role of women and patriarchalism in comparison with Turkish women. The data shows that despite the patriarchal aspects in the series, Albanian women are

critical readers despite the fact of Turkey being a soft-power in the Balkans through its series.

On the other hand, geography was the other dimension that shows that Albanian women's reading texts and the creation of meanings is related to Kosovo being next to central Europe. In this regard, the data shows that Albanian women's emancipation comparing to Turkish ones has to do also with the exposing of a European lifestyle. Being geographically positioned next to Europe is what nuances the reading process. In this regard, although there is self-awareness about the fanaticism, cheating, revenge, patriarchal aspects that they notice in the series, Albanian women select their texts by skipping the parts they do not like, dropping series that had a negative effect on them, make differences and similarities between the two cultures by giving examples both from the series and reality, yet escape from their duties and relax after a long day watching their favorite soap operas.

The data was interpreted from observation, behavioural patterns, timing and how women responded to my approach. Yet the most critical part of interpreting the data was through focus groups and one to one interview. Both approaches brought highly-focused data segmentation through which different themes resulted from it.

Due to the limiting this study only with Albanian women, suggestions for future research are made on enlarging respondents from different ethnic groups, at the same time cities as well. Accordingly, future studies can be addressed in the same culture yet with a different context and theoretical background. From the experience on the field, many mothers expressed that their son's do not like the idea of them watching Turkish content. In this regard, a great step would be on understanding what role does Orientalism play and why such stigmatization exists. Why such opinions and stereotypes exist and how do people who do not watch feel towards the ones who are loyal to Turkish Soap Operas for years now. Future research could also be addressed not only for women but men as well. Future studies on this field can also assess new concepts and theories as different cultural patterns work for different societies. In that regard expanding research on beauty standards from the series is of great importance. Knowing that Turkish Soap Operas are not leaving but gaining more and more popularity it is significant to attribute future studies on the birthing of new theoretical approaches.

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APPENDICES

APENDIX I: Preliminary Questionnaire

Turkish Soap Opera and their Influence on Albanian Women of Kosovo

Thank you for taking part in this focus group and one to one interviews. Below you have some questions that I would like to know about you. This information will help this study and your information will stay anonymous.

Name Surname:

Age:

1. 13-22;
2. 23-34;
3. 35-44;
4. 45-55 +;

Education:

1. Primary School
2. High School
3. Bachelor
4. Master
5. PhD
6. None

Marital status:

1. Single
2. Married
3. Divorced

Occupation:

1. Works (Occupation)

2. Doesn't work

TV series watched:

So far, which series have you watched?

Currently which series are you watching?



APENDIX II: Focus Group Discussion Guide

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS PLANNING AND PROTOCOL

Kosovo, Prishtina 2021

Participant's profile:

Group N.	Location	Age	Gender	Language	Time of Implementation
1.	Prishtina	13-22	Female	Albanian	June-September
2.	Prishtina	23-34	Female	Albanian	June-September
3.	Prishtina	35-44	Female	Albanian	June-September
4.	Prishtina	45- 55 +	Female	Albanian	June-September

Introduction:

First and foremost, allow me to thank everyone that accepted my invitation to participate in the discussion today.

My name is Shaha Hyseni and I am a student at Sakarya University in Turkey. The purpose of this discussion is to learn more about Turkish Soap Opera and how you relate to them. It is my expectation that your opinions, thoughts will help me understand the reasons for watching and finding Turkish Soap Opera appealing.

When we talk today, I am interested in your opinions. The entire discussion will be recorded. This participation is voluntarily and your information remains anonymous.

APPENDIX III: Consent Form

T.C. Sakarya Üniversitesi

Etik Kurulu

BİLGİLENDİRİLMİŞ GÖNÜLLÜ ONAM FORMU

Sizi SHAHA HYSENI tarafından yürütülen “Türk Dizilerinin Kosovalı Arnavut Kadınlar Üzerindeki Etkisi” başlıklı araştırmaya davet ediyoruz. Bu araştırma, Arnavut kadınlarının Türk dizileriyle kurduğu ilişkiyi kültürel ve ideolojik boyutları ile ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Kar topu örnekleme tekniği ile belirlenecek kişilerin yaş, eğitim, medeni hal, meslek bilgilerine ulaşmak ve izledikleri dizileri tespit etmek amacıyla oluşturulan soru setinden sonra, belirlenen odak gruplarıyla, açık uçlu sorular ekseninde sözlü görüşmeler yapılacaktır. Görüşmeler sırasında, ses kaydı alınması ve gözlem yapılması planlanmaktadır. Araştırmada sizden tahminen bir saat ayırmanız istenmektedir. Araştırmaya sizin dışınızda tahminen yedi (7) kişi katılacaktır.¹ Bu çalışmaya katılmak tamamen **gönüllülük** esasına dayanmaktadır. Çalışmanın amacına ulaşması için sizden beklenen, bütün soruları eksiksiz, kimsenin baskısı veya telkini altında olmadan, size en uygun gelen cevapları içtenlikle verecek şekilde cevaplamanızdır. Bu formu okuyup onaylamanız, araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz anlamına gelecektir. Ancak, çalışmaya katılmama veya katıldıktan sonra herhangi bir anda çalışmayı bırakmahakkına da sahipsiniz. Bu çalışmadan elde edilecek bilgiler tamamen araştırma amacı ile kullanılacak olup kişisel bilgileriniz **gizli tutulacaktır**; ancak verileriniz yayın amacı ile kullanılabilir. İletişim bilgileriniz ise sadece izninize bağlı olarak ve farklı araştırmacıların sizinle iletişime geçebilmesi için “ortak katılımcı havuzuna” aktarılabilir. Eğer araştırmanın amacı ile ilgili verilen bu bilgiler dışında şimdi veya sonra daha fazla bilgiye ihtiyaç duyarsanız araştırmacıya şimdi sorabilir veya shaha.hyseni@gmail.com e-posta adresi ve 05317785464 numaralı telefondan ulaşabilirsiniz. Araştırma tamamlandığında genel/size özel sonuçların sizinle paylaşılmasını istiyorsanız lütfen araştırmacıya iletiniz.

Yukarıda yer alan ve araştırmadan önce katılımcıya verilmesi gereken bilgileri okudum ve katılmam istenen çalışmanın kapsamını ve amacını, gönüllü olarak üzerime düşen sorumlulukları anladım. Çalışma hakkında yazılı ve sözlü açıklama aşağıda adı

belirtilen arařtırmacı/arařtırmacılar tarafından yapıldı. Bana, alıřmanın muhtemel riskleri ve faydaları sözlü olarak da anlatıldı. Kiřisel bilgilerimin özenle korunacağı konusunda yeterli güven verildi.

Bu kořullarda söz konusu arařtırmaya kendi isteęimle, hiçbir baskı ve telkin olmaksızın katılmayı kabul ediyorum.

Katılımcının²

Adı-

Soyadı:.....

....

İmzası: İletişim Bilgileri: e-posta:

Telefon:

İletişim bilgilerimin dięer arařtırmacıların benimle iletişime geçebilmesi için “ortak arařtırma havuzuna” aktarılmasını; ☐ Kabul ediyorum ☐ Kabul etmiyorum (lütfen uygun seçeneęi işaretleysiniz)

Velayet veya Vesayet Altında Bulunanlar İçin:

Veli veya Vasisinin

Adı-

Soyadı:.....

....

İmzası:

Arařtırmacının

Adı-Soyadı:.

İmzası:

řahidin:³

Adı-

Soyadı:.....

....

İmzası:

¹Bu cümle yalnızca bir örnek olup bu cümlede araştırmanın amacının ve gerekiyorsa nasıl yapılacağı (örneğin psikometrik test mi, öyle ise kaç soru sorulacağı veya kaç ölçekten oluştuğu; ses kaydı, görüntü alımı, gözlem gibi işlemleri mi içerdiği ve ne kadar süreceği gibi) 3 cümleyi geçmeyecek şekilde kısaca anlatılması beklenilmektedir.

²İmza bölümünde ideal olan katılımcının kendisinin imzasının alınmasıdır. Bu durumda onam formunu katılımcı ve araştırmacı imzalar. Katılımcının araştırmaya bireysel olarak katılmayı kabul edip onam formunu imzalamayı istemediği durumlarda şahide ihtiyaç doğar ve bu durumda araştırmacı ve katılımcı yerine şahidin imzalarının olması yeterlidir.

Verilerin yüz yüze iletişim içermeyen; a) İnternet ortamında toplanması durumunda katılımcıların uygulama materyallerine erişebilmesi için, online sistemde sunulan bilgilendirilmiş onam formunu okuyup araştırmaya katılmayı onayladıklarına dair ilgili kutucuğu işaretlemeleri gerekmektedir. Bu işaretleme katılımcıların onam imzaları yerine geçer. Katılımcılar onam formunun sonundaki “araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiklerine dair” ilgili kutucuğu işaretlemedikleri takdirde onay vermemiş sayılırlar ve bu durumda araştırmaya devam edilmez. b) Telefonla uygulamalarda ise araştırmacı araştırma sorularına geçmeden önce Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formundaki bilgileri katılımcıya sesli olarak okur. Bu durumda katılımcının sözlü onayı imza yerine geçer. Telefonda bu sözlü onay alınmadığı takdirde uygulamaya geçilmez. Hem İnternet, hem telefon hem de benzeri yüz yüze iletişimin olmadığı ortamlarda yapılan uygulamalarda katılımcı onay vermediği takdirde bir şahidin onayına başvurulmaksızın uygulamaya devam edilmez.

Eğer veriler okullarda, kurumlarda vb. ortamlarda aynı anda birden fazla kişiden grup uygulaması şeklinde toplanacaksa, yine tercihen tüm katılımcıların onam formlarını bireysel olarak imzalamaları istenir. Ancak katılımcı sayısının fazlalığı ve bununla birlikte zamanın kısıtlılığı gibi durumlar söz konusu olduğunda araştırmacı tüm gruba onam formundaki bilgileri tek seferde sözlü olarak okumayı ve bir imza listesi dolaştırarak katılımcıların araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiklerine dair bu listeye imza atmalarını tercih edebilir. Grup çalışmasında da tercih edilen katılımcının kendisinin imzasıdır, ancak araştırmacının etik kurula tanımlaması gereken ender durumlarda ise şahit,

grup adına da imza atabilir. Fakat grup ortamında herkes çalışmaya katılmayı kabul etmeyebilir. Bu durumda sadece araştırmaya katılmayı isteyenlerin çalışmaya alınması ve bu kişiler adına toplu imza alınması gerekmektedir. (Çalışmanızda şahidin imzasını grup adına kullanmak istiyorsanız etik kurula koşullarını açıklamanız gerekmektedir).

³Şahit Kriterleri: Çalışmanın bir üyesi olmayan, araştırmacı tarafından belirlenen ve araştırmanın bulguları üzerinde herhangi bir olumlu/olumsuz etki yaratma olasılığı bulunmayan tarafsız yetişkinlerdir. Katılımcı araştırmaya katılmayı kabul edip onam formunu imzalamayı istemediği durumlarda araştırmacı onam formundaki bilgileri katılımcıya sözlü olarak okur. Katılımcı onayladığını sözlü olarak beyan ederse şahit de bu sözlü onam sürecine yazılı onam formunu imzalamak sureti ile şahitlik ettiğini beyan etmiş olur.

NOT:Araştırmacıdan, onam formunun imza kısmında bulunan ikili seçenekten çalışmasına uygun olan alternatifi yazması ve formda yer alan boşlukları çalışmasına uyarlamak yoluyla onam formuna son halini vermesi ve bu şekliyle formu göndermesi beklenilmektedir.

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İmza:



RESUME

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1.THERE ISNT AN ATMOSHPERE WITHOUT TALLAVA: STIRRING SOUND, SPACE AND RACE IN KOSOVO	
Published at ASOS Journal: The Journal of Academic Social Science.	
Author: Shaha Hyseni	
DOI: 10.29228/ASOS.48724	