

The Analysis of Turkish Match-Making TV Programs Among Turkish Cypriot Audience

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ABSTRACT

In Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, people usually like to watch private television channels from Turkey. This research has been conducted to find out what are the main perceptions of match-making programs have on people who live in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and watch these programs. In this study it is investigated what kind of gender images represented by match-making programs broadcasted in Turkish private TV channels.

Match-making programs are adapted to Turkish TV channels as “marriage programs” since 2007. They became one of the most popular TV programs in Turkey, if we look at the raising ratings in 2011. This adapted version of match making programs both attracted high interest of audiences and also are criticized on media because of the moral values.

People enjoy watching these programs but it is important to understand what attract people to watching these kinds of programs. One of my research question is “Why audiences like or does not like and why they watch the match-making programs in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus?” Through the analyze of interviews it is elaborated how the programs reproduce some gendered social values on gender roles.

Keywords: Match-making shows, Television programs, Popular culture, Match-making.

ÖZ

Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nde genellikle Türkiye'deki özel TV kanallarının takip edildiği görülmektedir. Bu çalışma, Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'nde yaşayan izleyicilerin çöpçatan programlarına bakışlarını ve programlarda ilgilerini çeken noktaları anlamak için yapılmıştır. Çalışmada çöpçatan programlarının ortaya çıkışı ve yaygınlaşması ele alınmış, bunun yanı sıra temsil edilen cinsiyet rolleri incelenmiştir.

Çöpçatan programları 2007 yılında Türkiye'ye evlilik programları olarak uyarlandı. Programların giderek artan popülerliği 2011 yılının izlenme oranları incelendiğinde açıkça ortaya çıkmaktadır. Evlilik programları izleyicilerin ilgisini yüksek oranda çekmekle kalmamış bunun yanı sıra medyada da sıklıkla eleştirilmiştir.

Bireyler bu programları izlerken eğlenirler ancak kişilerin bu programları izlemeye değer bulmaları ve seçmeleri araştırmaya değer ve önemlidir. "Kuzey Kıbrıs'ta insanlar bu programları neden bu kadar çok sevmekte ve izlemektedir?" sorusu çalışmanın temel çerçevesini oluşturmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda izleyicilerin fikirlerini ve tecrübelerini incelemek adına röportaj yöntemi kullanılmış ve röportajlardan elde edilen bilgiler analiz edilmiştir.

Keywords; Çöpçatan programları, Televizyon programları, Popüler kültür.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The power of media over individuals, the effect on their thoughts and lifestyles has always been a matter of discussion. There have been some researches of David Gauntlett which shows that people get influenced by the news they read, the movies they watch and the celebrities they like. These studies show that even if they do not notice or accept that media influences on their identity, they are in fact by discourses or through constructed stories (2008: 267).

Films and television series are especially important as people identify themselves with the characters of the stories as Ien Ang states (1985: 29). Ang in her research (1985) has reached people (men and women) through letters, asking them to write their opinions about the television series, Dallas¹. The question she asked was simple: “Do you watch Dallas and if do not why not?” When she received the letters she aimed to analyze the reason of people’s enjoyment of watching the series. Similar to Ang’s research, in this study it is aimed to understand that why people watch match-making programs. Ang contacted people through a magazine and asked them questions. In this study there are face to face in depth interviews with audiences. Through the interviews the thoughts and the perceptions of the viewers are going to be analyzed.

¹ Dallas is an American soap opera which is broadcasted between 1978 to 1991. It is about the story of oil-rich Texas family, Ewing’s.

Language is the medium between people to communicate in a society and while they are communicating with each other they use different methods such as texting, oral language, and body language. All of those languages have common signs. All of those signs are related with their culture and indirectly with their history. Their culture is affected by what they experience and what their elders experienced. The pictures and symbols they use in their text are the results of their cultural background. In order to understand a story you need to understand the culture and it is important to be informed about the history of the author of the story. So there is a strong relationship between media and culture. Media represents culture and culture may shape the culture in communities.

Marriage organizes and controls the sexual conducts among people. It would be seen as a legal contract between couples which is socially accepted. This accepted contract provides rights for couples and for their children. The marriage is not only an institution which connects individuals but also it is a relationship between groups. Thomas Eriksen noted in his book that there are different approaches for marriage. According to Western civilizations there should be an emotional relationship between people who marry. On the other hand, there are some civilizations that believe that the marriage is basically a business relationship. The aim of the couples is to have children and work together in agriculture (2012: 178). Lots of different cultures exist in the universe that have different purposes for marriage. Each of them has their own reason, logic and rules.

In many of the civilizations there are some rules to order incest and exogamy. According to Pateman (2004) and Girard (2003), the construction of social order provided after incest relationships were banned and exogamy became legal (cited in

Tahincioğlu, 2011: 208). So it is possible to say that the match-making programs in Turkey support this constructed social order which tempt people to marry. In these programs people who don't know each other in their daily life can meet in front of the cameras and decide to get married through match-making programs. In these programs, if candidates like each other, they agree to try and develop their relationship, and then marry in the program in a determined period by themselves. So it is guaranteed to have exogamic marriage and the relationships are introduced to the whole community by cameras. This means programs reflect the culture and also give community what they expect to have. If anyone impeaches any of the potential relationship in these programs, has opportunity to call program and interfere. For instance, the neighbor, family or any person can do that because they are all free to call the program to complain or ask questions to them.

People marry and obey the society and act like others. Sonia Livingstone noticed that audiences, when they are watching soap operas, they like the characters “who were family oriented and moral, while they disliked temperamental and complicated characters” (1998: 137-139).

As Nevin Tahincioğlu (2011) mentioned in her book, named as “*Namusun Halleri*” that the concept of “honor” in Turkey, is a very important and critical issue as well as it has variability in the community. The research shows that the honor has become a part of society, especially in Şanlıurfa. Tahincioğlu divides her research results between three different groups. The participants of the first group live in villages and are tightly bound to their land. The participants of the second group live in urban areas and express themselves with their land. The participants of the third group are living in the city and express themselves through their nuclear family. In the study,

the notion of honor amongst these groups is analyzed and the differences between the definitions are discussed. It is observed that the concept of honor has different meanings according to each group which has a different culture. This study shows that honor might mean purity according to some groups but the one who should be honored is the woman. The man honors the woman. The protector might be father, brother or husband. Moreover, the uncles and cousins are always responsible from the protection of woman. The heterosexual based match-making programs aims to bring together a woman with a man who is the protector of her honor. To sum up, the marriage is related with honor and woman should be under the control of man to protect her honor. The films and the programs people watch are representations of culture; it is possible to say that the match-making programs might reflect some parts of culture in Turkey.

According to Raymond Williams, culture refers to “a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group” (quoted in Storey, 1996: 2). Kissing elders’ hand is one of the example that Turkish culture has. Especially young people kiss elders’ hand and this represents the respect and politeness. Cultural values are sometimes accepted as non-written rules of communities. It may change between societies and it may influence the way they conduct their daily lives.

Williams defines popular as “well-liked by many people”, “inferior kinds of work”, “work deliberately setting out to win favor with the people”, “culture actually made

by the people for themselves” (quoted in Storey, 1996: 5-6). Popular culture is the one that belongs to a certain period.² This means that it is temporary.

Television is an inseparable part of today’s culture. What people visualize gets connected with their culture through television or cinema. Whatever people follow in the media may re-produce the popular culture. Through television, people are more familiar with the lives of others. Sevilay Çelenk (2005) in her study situates the television as a small machine in people’s house that affects their lifestyles. She refers to a study by Mullan’s and says that unlike cinema, television takes away people’s consciousness about the distinction between TV shows and reality (2005: 281). In the cinema, people move from their home, go somewhere else that they do not belong to. Then the lights are switched off, they look at a white screen and watch the film. Even if the film has a classical narrative, there is a space and distance between the audiences and the film because of the screen. There is an imaginary line between audiences and the film. However, the situation is different when the issue is about television. It is always at home, people can switch it on at any time they want. They can channel - surf whenever they get bored. There are many options for them to watch. So they can spend hours and hours with television, inside, without leaving the house. They have no need to converse with anyone else. This one way communication may turn into a conversation in people’s imagination. They think about what they watch, they criticize the visuals they see, sometimes accepting, sometimes rejecting what they see on the screen.

² In recent years, there are some festivals which might be evaluated as part of popular culture in North Cyprus. In many villages, especially during the weekend, citizens of villages organize festivals, they sell products of North Cyprus, such as hellim, çakızdez and some hand-made arts and crafts.

According to Neil Postman (1987) this technological ‘machine’ became a medium between individuals and society. After this “machine” became widespread, people started to learn about cultures that they are not familiar with. People do not only get information through television but also they entertain themselves by watching “moving pictures.” Postman claims that after a while the things people follow through this machine became their model of the world (1987: 86-95).

People watch television to get information about the world in their houses. They do not need to be outside to learn what is going on there; they can just switch on the machine then sit on their chairs. To fill the day, to broadcast through the day, television channels need to produce new moving images and information. The images and the information are there to grab the attention of people. So they sometimes mention governmental policy, scientific improvements, and sometimes they provide soap operas and serials and music programs to make television more attractive.

Especially in Turkey, many of the private channels broadcast serials at the prime time. They have news program between 18.30 and 19.30 which reflects the ‘agenda’. After the ‘determined agenda’ reflected, they have serials for prime time. From 8.00 pm they start to broadcast their serials until late night. *Show TV*, *ATV*, *Star TV* and *Fox TV* are well-known private channels in Turkey. Four of them have similar broadcasting programs. They have serials for almost every day. *Show TV* has four different serials for prime time; *Aşk Emek İster*, *Benim İçin Üzülme*, *Her şey Yolunda Merkez*, *Pis Yedili*. *ATV* has *Kurtlar Vadisi Pusu*, *Alemin Kralı*, *Doksanlar*, *Karadayı*, *Huzur Sokağı* and *Tatar Ramazan* for the fall semester. *Star TV* has three very popular serials for the prime time which are named *Behzat Ç.*, *Muhteşem Yüzyıl*,

Bir Erkek Bir Kadın. Moreover, *Star TV* has *Dila Hanım*, *Beni Affet*, *İşler Güçler* serials for the prime time. *Fox TV* has six different serials for each day; *Deniz Yıldızı*, *Harem*, *Bir Aşk Hikayesi*, *Ali Ayşe'yi Seviyor*, *Karagül*, *Umutsuz Ev Kadınları* and *Lale Devri*. Many of those serials last more than sixty minutes interfered by commercials. The broadcasting period is the time when usually all family members are at home. Adults are back from work and children are back from school after a long and exhausting day in the public sphere and they are all tired. So the television channels perform their informative duty of world with news bulletin, by making audiences aware of the events in the country and then they entertain people with serials.

Sometimes family members, after they come back home, come together and watch television. This would be one of the most relaxing activities that they can do together when they are tired and do not feel synergy in private sphere. They do not need to make an effort, but they have the feeling of synergy. This might cause some communication gaps over period. They may lose the shared immediacy.

1.1 Problem Statement

After television became important in people's lives, they started to spend their free time by watching television. So, television programs began to be produced to accommodate people's leisure time. If the broadcasting hours of programs are examined, it is seen that in the morning women's programs start when the woman sends her husband to work and her children to school and finishes daily domestic "chores." Also, prime time broadcasting starts when people come back home from work and have dinner. Today, serials occupy a huge space in media sector, and there are many people addicted to them. Serials create some characters that have their own

personalities and many conflicts are constructed among those characters every week. So they took the audience with the continuity.

Television soap operas have very similar characteristics with match-making programs. As Doris Baltruschat elaborates in her study that the soap opera “Has multiple story lines which focus on human relationships; close up shots to connote intimacy and heightened identification with characters through online blogs.” (2009: 43). Like soap operas match-making programs have multiple story lines and focus on human relationships. Participants in the programs might be seen as characters of soap operas who reflect their personalities during the program. They are coming to the studio, they give information about themselves and their expectations, and then they start to wait for their candidates. Each candidate can call or come to the studio if they wish and many stories continue for days and days. So the personalities of the participants are expressed to the viewers. Everyday there are new people who are coming to the studio which might be seen as a possible new conflict in the serial.

Successive conflicts keep the viewer in front of the television. Emma Price accepts that “The audience is invited to engage with the unpredictability and familiarity of the narrative structure, following the story and characters with in their ‘everyday’ (2010: 455). People while they are watching programs connect themselves with the situations they see and sometimes they may compare themselves with the issues. This is how people get used to the discourses of texts on television. Especially, while the presenter of the program talks, the profile of the woman is part of discourse. She mentions about weight issues such as being thin or fat, says that women should give birth, and women should be polite.

While participants are giving information about themselves, they start to promote themselves. Characters, as if they are a brand product, give basic information about themselves, about their age, work, and income, and then indicate that they want to get married. According to Mert Seymen's thesis, men mention about their work, career and experiences more than women (2012:74). Then they define the person that they are looking for. This part of the program is very similar to daily life. People usually promote themselves and mention about themselves while they are talking, express their thoughts, ideas, experiences, emotions and through their families, their friends, they meet people. If they like each other they have a relationship.

In addition, all women participants while they talk about themselves firstly say how old they are, where they are living and with whom, and what kind of person they would like to be with. On the other side, male participants are asked about their age, education, job, income, and where they are from. So at that point the differences between gender roles and expectations can be seen. Men need to clarify their economic situation but women do not. The ideal man must be in a position to support the family, the ideal woman has to be good in domestic issues such as caring for elders and babies.

Women representations in the media carry similar gender roles. They are merciful and altruistic. Hülya Uğur Tanrıöver elaborates the differences and how women represented in the media. She noticed that even if woman, who is very successful in her field, usually represented with her motherhood roles (2007: 157). Motherhood is blessed issue. It is observed that the presenters of match-making programs often mention their children and motherhood during the program or in their interviews on journals. Esra Erol is seen in front of cameras with her son many times. The

motherhood is represented as one of the most important roles in woman's life. It is assumed that motherhood is one of the highest levels that a woman can reach. So as wife, as mother, the presenters of the programs have the perfect 'proper woman' image who tries to match people.

Stevi Jackson and Sue Scott also agree that "Women and girls are positioned as sexual properties that do the emotional work and watch their own emotions to ensure that they do not place excessive demands on men" (1997: 567). Therefore, both in daily life and in television programs men are expecting to meet someone who knows how to serve well, treat other people nicely and who are emotional. The problem is because of the discourses used in those programs the division of labor between man and woman is legitimized. Songül Karlı said in a newspaper article that "I wash my husband's feet". She is proud of this and do not hesitate to share this via paparazzi. Also she does not hesitate to express her privacy. Gauntlett indicates that "Women's interactions were very often concerned with romance or family problems." (2008: 47). The presenters with their "proper woman" images can be seen as the role models of audiences.

The present study aims to examine the perceptions of audiences about match-making programs which are collected by the interviewers. Turkish version of match making programs worth to study because the audiences do not choose these programs instantaneously. They have many other options but once they notice match-making programs in TV, they continue to watch. This study is measure the comments of the viewers and tries to understand their ideas about the match-making programs.

1.2 Aim and the Questions of the Study

Both young people and adults may be influenced when they watch these kinds of programs because there are certain aspects in match-making programs that intended to investigate with my interviewees.

This study aims to discover the thoughts of Turkish Republic of Northern citizens about the match-making programs and what is their motivation to watch them. This study sets out to measure the interest of citizens to the match-making programs, to what extent they follow those programs and what are the interesting things that attract them to watch those programs and how much they enjoy them, and what kind of relationship is created between viewers and the program while they are watching them (See appendix B). This study is important because the programs are the popular version of the arranged marriages in Turkey but adapted from Western countries. The privacy of the candidates is declared and the meaning of the marriage is reproduced.

The purpose is to understand how a viewer evaluates programs which are in similar formats and what are the main differences between those programs which attract them to choose one. Because those programs usually do not clash with each other which means none of them start and finish at the same time, there are many other options in other channels. It is essential to understand the viewer's criteria of choosing a specific program as they are likely to have particular reasons for watching it, and this thesis aimed to find explanations to this. What are the main issues that tend people to choose one program rather than another because as audiences, they are decision makers. It is aimed to elaborate the influences of match-making programs in Turkey, over social cultural, and gender roles. Match-making programs, which have

flourished in Turkey, have a huge audience in TRNC as well. It is worth while examining the program structure from the point of how they are shaping gender roles and the structure which is already available. Esra Erol and Songül Karlı stand out in the research because they are well-known by audiences and their programs have been watched for years.

1.3 Television Channels in Turkey

Turkey established its first television broadcasting station, Turkish Radio Television (TRT) in 1968. Until the 1990's there were no private television channels in Turkey. *TRT* had a state monopoly on broadcasting until *Star 1*, the first privatized channel, began broadcasting in 1990 as Beybin Kejanlıoğlu (2004) stated. According to Kejanlıoğlu, it is possible to say that with *Star 1*, the broadcasting entered a new era in Turkey (2004: 205 -323). Private channels attracted the attention of citizens. Then the number of private channels increased. After private channels rising up, the declamation is changed in Turkey. The programs that people watch are changed. For instance, after private channels, people in Turkey meet with arabesque music for the first time. They were not used to listen such kind of music in *TRT*. Since the video clips came out, audiences watched images with music. Then the *Kral TV* came out in 1994, in Turkey, which shows music videos 24 hours in a day. Then the sector has been widespread, the demand of labor is increased. More private channels needed more staff as cameraman, director, producer, editor and presenter.

Nowadays, the television channels compete to attract audiences. Entertainment programs play a huge part in the “rating competition” of private TV channels. Therefore, the focus is on entertainment programs more than the other programs. Match-making programs are one of the most popular entertainment programs in

Turkey and today many channels have a program which has a similar format. There were four private television channels in Turkey which broadcast match-making programs with the same concept in the spring season of 2011. There is a match-making program in *Star TV* with Zuhâl Topal (İzdivaç), also in *ATV* with Esra Erol (Evlen Benimle), in *Fox TV* with Songül Karlı and Uğur Arslan (Su Gibi), in *TNT* with Hande Ataizi (Dest-i izdivaç). None of those programs start and finish at the same time. *Su Gibi* was between 12.30 pm and 3.00 pm, *Dest-i İzdivaç* was between 1.30 pm and 4.00 pm. Similarly *Zuhâl Topal'la İzdivaç* was between 2.15 am and 5.15 pm, *Evlen Benimle* was between 4.00 pm and 7.00 pm. During the summer of 2011, these programs were off-air. In the following season of 2012 some of them changed their format or their channel. However, *Evlen Benimle*³ and *Su Gibi*⁴ were the most popular match-making programs in this period and they did not change their format. So in the present study, the audiences of *Evlen Benimle* and *Su Gibi* are preferred as interviewee.

There are few differences between these two programs. *Evlen Benimle* has two doors for candidates and participants. One of them belongs to the woman and other one belongs to the man. So the man only comes from the door on the left side, the woman only comes from the door on the right side. Those doors are next to each other and there is a paravan in the middle of these doors. The candidate and the participant talks to each other before the paravan gets opened, they get some comments about their friends, family or experts who are in the studio. Then they ask the presenter to open the paravan. Then music⁵ starts and the paravan gets open, and they see each other. They talk a little bit and decide to drink tea together or not. This means “I

³ Get married with me

⁴ Like water

⁵ The musicians are important for the studio, because they play according to the flow of the program.

would like to learn more about him/her.” *Su Gibi* has only one door for participants, candidates, man and woman. There is no paravan. Presenters firstly ask the participant to come next to each other, on the stage and invite the candidate to stage. Then they sit together and talk. Both women and men can attend to the program and look for the candidates. After they came to studio and introduce themselves, they sit on chairs which belong to them in the studio and wait. Every day, the presenter ask them to introduce themselves shortly again and repeat the expectations they ask from their candidates.

Another difference is *Evlen Benimle* has only one presenter who is Esra Erol, but *Su Gibi* has two presenters; Songül Karlı and Uğur Arslan. Esra Erol had some experience in film and serials as an actress, and had previously worked as a presenter on television. In 2007 she started the program *Dest-i İzdivaç* (Hand in Marriage) on *Flash TV*, in 2008 she moved to *Star TV* as *Esra Erol’la İzdivaç* and then in 2010 changed channels again to *ATV* as *Esra Erol’da Evlen Benimle*.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

“Moving images” make television more effective because visuality is very important. The images make television more powerful as a way of reaching people. The images have importance to construct visual memory. Most people have television in their houses and watch television regularly. Television never stops broadcasting. There are always some programs to watch. So people can switch on it and watch any time they like. People usually watch television in their free time to relax, to get some information about the society while they have a rest or when they are together at a friend’s place. As Postman states people may confirm and accept the information, reality, and facts that television display without questioning (1994: 91-94). So this might take people closer and closer to the point where the social world is primarily described by television. People are for the most part aware that what they watch on television is a representation, but sometimes they may watch because they postulate themselves in the images. They may identify themselves with the characters they watch on television. As Pierre Bourdieu states, television forces people to see the world divided and these divisions create groups that can be mobilized (1998: 22-32). Denis McQuail expands on this when he says “There is the provision of a consistent picture of the social world which may lead the audience to adopt this version of reality, a reality of ‘facts’ and of norms, values and expectations” (1979: 76). It is imperative not to examine the reality, and the objectivity of the media. Every angle

that camera frames, every record the television shows, every point the speaker mentions has a meaning or a conscious intent.

Moreover, television has changed the mode of communication between individuals. After television became popular people began to talk more about programs and what they watch such as serials, reality shows, and competition shows. It is possible to say that television frames the discussions between people in their daily lives. Moreover, when the significant role that television plays in people's lives was understood by political leaders, they began to use television as a propaganda device, like Hitler used media for propaganda. So they determine what people are going to talk about through media. Joseph Goebbels was one of the important names of Hitler's propaganda. He is also one of the people in the history who use media very well for the propaganda. It is noted that after he get the authority inside the government, he burned many books which were written against their ideology. It is possible to say that the *Fahrenheit 451*⁶, it is banned to read book and keep them at home. There are people who have the duty of finding and burning books. Their dresses and fire engine look like fire fighters. They have classes for new comers, and masters teach them their duties both theoretically and practically. The new comers learn how to find hidden books inside houses. All citizens were responsible to support government by delating the ones who has books. For people who likes to peach others there were some boxes in the street, they can put a written notice and let the fire fireman to be aware of the criminal. Then they descend on the houses and collect all the books they find in the house and then burn them all. If there are more books than they can collect and burn they have the power to burn the whole house. Citizens are only allowed to watch televisions. Television has an important meaning in their life. The

⁶ Fahrenheit 451 is a science fiction drama film directed by Francois Truffaut in 1966.

first frames in the beginning of the film show how important television is. There are many roofs of houses and they have television antennas. The camera zooms to antennas from different houses. These frames suggest that the television is the most important aspect of people's daily lives. In the film it is seen that the television is the only medium for people to entertain themselves or, to get information. There are announcers on the television who talk directly to the viewing audience. So people may assume that the presenter is talking to them, and can hear them. The presenter sometimes asks some questions and waits for a while, then continues. But just before and after the questions there are some comments and discussions which force the audience to accept what is being argued. The audience listens and watches television very carefully, without even moving. Even in the comic strips there are no written sentences. There are only drawn pictures. Reading is banned. So the images they watch may determine the ideology of the person. The authorities can direct media and control the population through television.

Audiences are looking at the huge screen and try to perceive, follow and interpret life. Ang points out that "Mass culture is the extreme embodiment of the subjection of culture to the economy; its most important characteristic is that it provides profit for the producers" (1985: 18). So the producers create the programs which set the trend and affect people the most, because the point is to be watched more. The aim of those programs is to sell the time to the advertisers. If they have bigger audiences that means, they will have more customers to sell time. The most important time line is the one when the most popular programs are on air. So the popularity of programs affects the income of channels. Private channels try to broadcast programs that people will be interested in and then they will earn more.

Television channels usually broadcasts talk show programs, discussion programs that have political themes in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus; they comment on the political issues on a daily basis in the programs and at the weekend they have sports review programs. There are not serials for audiences to watch during the prime time like the channels in Turkey. As Kejanlioğlu examines in her book, in the history of Turkish media the period of the 1980's has great importance. In this period the political situation in Turkey was very multi-faceted and complicated. There had been a military coup in September of 1980. Until 1990, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) was the state monopoly for television broadcasting in Turkey but the constitution of the military regime did not change the situation (2004: 273-322). This means people in Turkey had just one source to be informed. They had no other choices. However, after the first private channel was opened, they had the opportunity to reach information from at least from two sources. The media sector in Turkey is developed with many powerful television channels.

The economical differences between channels might be one of the main reasons for TRNC people to watch channels in Turkey instead of channels in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Some channels in Turkey are better financed, they have ability to have sponsorship for their programs, and this allows them to improve the 'quality' of the programs. It is possible to work with more staff and organize better studios. Also, they can buy programs that production companies do. In Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, broadcast managers of television channels, ask for advertisements and sponsorship from the production companies to broadcast the programs. Then it becomes more difficult to produce programs in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and broadcast them.

2.1 Intertextuality of Television

Kejanlıoğlu elaborates in her study saying that when broadcasting on a public service format in the case of financial difficulties, there are some attempts to solve troubles. As a result of this, instead of quality, they determine general audiences as target audiences (2004: 23). So the majorities became more important than minorities and the inequalities in the media are created. As McQuail states “The media establish a relation of dependence on the part of ordinary citizens, in respect not only of opinion but also of self-identity and consciousness.” (1994: 75). Over any given period, some groups in the community which are classified as minorities, like LGBT individuals, the women, children, and disabled people are either less represented or misrepresented. For instance, today many people work at least eight hours a day to survive, while some others work more than eight hours, sometimes even having extra jobs, in order to make ends meet. While this is not enough for them to survive, some other people might work less than eight hours a day and have a better life. The gap between rich and poor is growing day by day. For instance, in the media, power is represented either by wealth and gender, the powerful one is usually a rich male. Many movies and serials display that the rich people live more comfortable and happy lives, they are more successful, and men have more opportunities than women, which might suggest that the media reproduce of this gender division. Some television serials are criticized nowadays. For instance; *Adını Feriha Koydum*⁷ is one of the famous serial in Turkey which reflects class inequalities. The conflict between rich and poor is represented as a main obstacle in this serial. In this serial Feriha is

⁷ Adını Feriha Koydum is a Turkish television drama series which is released in 2011 until 2012 and directed by Barış Yöş in Show TV. The serial tells the story of a poor girl and rich boy who fall in love with each other.

represented not only as a poor but also a woman. She has performed not only as a lover, but also a woman who has jumped to a higher class level.

*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*⁸ is one of the serials which reflect both to hierarchy and a male dominated system. Different than the other two, in this serial, the main character, who is a Sultan, has harem. Those women are like in a competition for the Sultan. The successful one is the one who manages to sleep with the Sultan. He has the ability to sleep with any women in the harem. The most powerful one is the one who gave birth to a boy for the Sultan. There is polygamy in this serial which is naturalized. He has the power so he can have more wives than others.

Most of the advertisements have same kind of discriminations and shows the dominancy of men. In the *Biomen Shampoo* advertisement one of the most significant political leaders and mass murderer, Hitler, is used as a figure and he teaches people how to be a man by using the shampoo (Dryaa, 2012). He says ‘it is for men 100%’. In this advertisement, Hitler is reflected as “real man” and the ad uses him to promote the shampoo. There is not only gender discrimination in this advertisement but also racism. Advertisers discriminate against Jewish people, and it is possible to say that it affirms anti-semitism. Another advertisement, *Derimod* advertisement is narrated by a woman who likes her partner to wear a brand of *Derimod*. In this advertisement both women and men are taught how to be women and men. There is the impression that the things people wear is more important than their character. If a man wears this brand, there is no doubt that any woman could not reject him.

⁸ *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* is a Turkish soap opera TV series directed by Yağmur and Durul Taylan, which tells about Sultan Süleyman period who was the head of Ottoman Empire. It premiered in 2011 in Show TV and still continued in Star TV nowadays.

In many serials and advertisements it is noticed that the main characters are either from higher class or they have a relative from a higher class. The main characters or the relatives of the main characters use brands. For example; the main characters of *Aşk-ı Memnu*⁹ (Kanal D) were from higher class. They highlight their wealth and success by using Mercedes and BMW cars, i-Phones, like in *Adını Feriha Koydum* (Show TV) serial. *Adını Feriha Koydum* is one of the most popular serials in Turkey, and the main rich characters in the movie use Blackberry, i-Phones, BMWs, Mercedes, and Mini Cooper.

There is a similar issue observed in match-making programs. It is revealed how much money participants and candidates earn, whether they have their own car, or their own house(s). There are some candidates participating to the program and they only request for marry someone who has his own house.

2.2 Gender Socialization and Popular Culture

Turkish culture is a male dominated and patriarchal culture. As a symbol of this military is very powerful and important in Turkey. The phrase “Every Turk born as a soldier.” is one of the obvious examples of this. The motherland notion is very sacred and men in Turkey should protect their motherland. It is compulsory and it became a part of their patriarchal culture. This should an honor for them. As Afsaneh Najmabadi states that there is identification between the woman and the homeland, men always aim to protect the woman from all threats and enemies (2009: 442-467). Their homeland is identified with women who need to be protected all the time. Unless men can protect women this is a big problem for them, they will feel guilty,

⁹ *Aşk-ı Memnu* is a TV serial which is adapted by Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil’s novel and it is the story of a rich and old man who married with young woman. The serial is directed by Barış Yöş and broadcasted in Kanal D between 2008 - 2010.

and their honor is lost. So the homeland refers to women's body and all men try to protect their honor.

Shaun Best, in his study, indicates that "A female child is expected to behave in a 'feminine' fashion."(2002: 21). Children learn how to be a woman and how to be a man since their childhood. It is taught them how to act like a "real woman" and "real man" as society accepted. It is expected them to be tough, strong and brave. Others, who do not obey to those unwritten rules, may get some negative reactions from their environment and community. To be accepted by society is one of the most important thing for individuals, it refers to success.

The social divisions are not natural but naturalized. Linda Nicholson mentioned in her study that "Some theorists expressed in the opposition between 'domestic' and 'public' has been universally important in organizing gender." (1992: 36). Domestic refers to the privacy, and privacy refers to "Femininity." Women belong to interior places, interest with kitchen, cleaning. Many women are working today. They are unpaid domestic workers as well. On the other hand men belong to outside, work in public places. Because of the social structure and construction of the gender roles women are forced to play the roles of 'Femininity', men are forced to play the roles of masculinity every day. When a woman behaves aggressively and ravenous 'others' think that there is something wrong. When a man behaves emotional, romantic and polite, this might mean that he is not a "real" man. In the society, there are some terms that are used "Like a men" and "Like a lady." Those terms aims to reproduce the same categorization. "Like a man" is associated with power and decision making. "Like a lady" is associated to be more obedient. There would be some situations that men might need to be softer and sentimental. Both men and

women have senses and as a human being, it is not possible to carry the same role every day.

Women have important roles in society like having children and imparting inherited culture to new generations. It is also believed that “Yuvayı dişi kuş yapar.” (Female bird constructs the home), so the image of woman in the family is very important. The media uses the family concept especially in the advertisements. Even the big companies like *Coca-Cola* use this family concept in their advertisements. In every new frame, such as Bairam or New Year, *Coca Cola* uses the happy family picture which is one of the characteristics of culture in Turkey and show different families who have strong connections with each other and happy together, they all drink *Coca-Cola*. Postman argues that “Culture is a creation of speech; it is recreated anew by every medium of communication from painting to hieroglyphs to the alphabet to television.” (1985: 10). So media use this as a main source and produce their programs according to the norms, culture in order to reach people.

Television is affective in establishing and re-making culture prevalent. So it would be accepted as usual to observe the items of dominant culture on television programs. For instance, it would be seen more competition programs on television during the economical, financial crises period. There tends to be an increase in the number of quiz programs on television during periods of economic crisis. It’s flicker of hope for people. Some items of dominant culture became popular when represented by the media. At the same time television is also influenced by popular culture and uses items of popular culture. So television itself became a popular culture. The considerable popularity of match-making programs shows that they are part of a dominant culture and related to popular culture. By way of example, people watch

celebrities on television and it seems they wish to have similar lives to them. These programs are one perspective of culture, conversations, dress and behaviors. In other words, they reflect the popular culture.

Storey indicates that “Popular culture is always empowering and resistant.” (1996: 5). Popular culture is nourished by mass communication devices and mass communication devices are nourished by popular culture. Television is cheaper than going out, cinema or watching a film. It is one of the most widespread devices of mass communication so it is one of the greatest transmitters of popular culture as mentioned before (please see p.15). Because almost every house has television and it is easy to have one. It carries popular culture from the people to the media and from the media to society.

In some places in Turkey, except the touristic cities, a couple will be obliged to provide a marriage certificate if they want to share a room in a hotel. This might show the importance of marriage in Turkey. In such situations, it is possible to say that marriage provides “Freedom” in Turkey. Through marriage, citizens may burst and decrease the social pressure. There are some studies which aim to understand the importance of marriage and the social pressure related with marriage. Tahincioğlu states that each society is organized in the prohibition of unlawful mergers. According to Akal forbidden mergers are not only crimes but also socially absurd (cited in Tahincioğlu, 2011, 51). So it is not easy for a woman to live independently from their families without marriage. Considering this, the role of woman in society and the approach of people to marriages in Turkey, is predictable. Father’s to protect their honor, might limit their daughter’s freedom and independency until they get

married. After marriage husband takes the responsibility. That would be one of the reasons match-making programs are so popular.

Hatice Ergül (2010) who investigated the gender roles in TV shows firstly expressed in her research the concept of the program. According to Ergül, those programs take almost 10 hours every day and 50 hours every week. There are about 124,000 people apply for the programs as participant. There are about 135 people get married through those programs (2010: 63-64). There is no limit, to the number of participants which increases every day so the program attracts more people.

There are people who are addicted to these programs. The programs reach to huge masses through popular television channels and watch with interest. People find them vividly entertaining and also identify themselves with the programs. It is possible to observe various formats of television programs in match-making programs. It is possible to investigate them as talk shows, reality shows, serials and competitions. So people sit in their seats to watch another part of a serials or competition every day.

While they are watching programs, the ethical values, social norms and sometimes the gender roles are elaborated every day. How to be a “real” woman, how to be a “real” man, how to have a happy family is talked about by people in the program. Especially, in the introduction part of the program, the woman who is potential bride usually asks for assets, and high income instead of stressing a physical or emotional compatibility. This would be the reflection of a patriarchal culture. Instead of equality and sharing, woman should be interested matters that concern the home and children. Men should have a high income and protect the family, especially the

woman. Woman is responsible for unpaid domestic work and the man is responsible for paid work in the culture. So the financial control, the power will be under the control of man and the woman will be dependent on man economically. Many of the women who appear on those programs claim that it is very hard to be a single parent as a mother and care for children if they are divorced or widowed. Many of them complain about the work problems. They are not able to find a work that pays enough for their rent and care for their children. To find work for a woman is difficult, to find a work that pays sufficiently well to support a family is even more so. So this is the reason why they ask for a partner who has his own house and sometimes car. They want to marry a man who can support them financially.

Emel Baştürk Akça and Hasan Akbulut had a research about woman programs and they indicate that woman programs with the example of *Kadının Sesi* (Voice of Woman) which is announced by Yasemin Bozkurt, has a different format. This program purposed to elaborate, share and solve woman troubles in front of cameras (2006: 60-65). Television is a machine which positioned in many houses can reach many people. It is thought that it might use as a medium which can be showed many individuals others problems, and by television, people can be aware of other people's similar problems also.

In addition, those programs are classified by many of the television channels as women's programs. Woman programs in Turkey, usually starts in the morning, after housewives finish domestic duties and when they are free to watch television. It is possible to say that the general woman images are determined and reproduced by media. In Turkey, especially private channels support and broadcast similar representations for woman. These representations and discourses can be observed by

advertisements, serials, life style shows (like the ones which aims home renovations) cooking shows which they offer new receipt to cook foods and fashion programs which are popular in recent years. Many of the women in those programs are petite, well-groomed, smart, and chic. They are with make-up and their hairs are well combed. Their talking style is expected to be warm, devout. In the programs they talk “feminine” which usually refers to talk about domestic works which is supposed to be the “main responsibility” of woman, home economics, fashion, and daily problems of woman. As Baştürk and Akbulut states, after the 1990’s private television channels in Turkey teach tricks about housekeeping and domestic issues. Moreover, woman programs provide a platform to discuss about women’s problems in the program with a sensational dimension and they present themselves as the *Voice of Woman* (2006: 49). In the programs, they examine problems of woman, they give information about health issues especially weight problems. They teach woman how to lose weight and how to look slimmer. For instance, they give some diet recipes, mention what to eat to lose weight or what not to eat.

The presenters in match-making programs are also discuss about the problems woman face with in their daily life and try to solve them. They listen and share the troubles of woman and give them advices. For instance in one of the woman participant, told that her ex-husband does not let her to see her son. The lawyer who was in the studio in that day, explain her and all other audiences the legal procedure and give them advices. Then the woman fight for her rights and met with her son. Moreover, there are some situations that woman participate to the program and explain that they need to marry just because of the financial support or just to have a father for their child. Esra Erol announce and ask for help from the audiences. The sensitive audiences call the program and help them. Esra Erol met with many women

who are exposed to violence as well. Moreover, Esra Erol has a women's shelter called *Umut Evi* (Hope Home) and helps women who face violence. She published a book which name is *Kara Duvak* and with the money she spends all of her income to the *Umut Evi*. *Umut Evi* is a house which needy women can live in it. There are psychologist and lawyers who work voluntarily for the women living in *Umut Evi*.

On the other hand, the interesting point is that both women and men follow these programs at home. Moreover, in the format of these programs there are non-participating members in the audience including males. This shows that the programs are not only for women and the audience is not only comprised of women. The programs address both men and women.

The match-making programs, match people who are heterosexual. Heterosexuality is positive and accepted as natural by majority of the society. In Turkey, the homosexual marriages are not still legal.¹⁰ But there is not any point in Turkish law which bans homosexuality, however it is not also supported. In the culture, homosexuality is either ignored or disliked. This might be one of the reasons why match-making programs are all heterosexual based. When it is looked, there are some match-making programs in other countries which are homosexual based. *Fairy Tale*, presented by Nelson Torme is one of the examples from Canada. *Fairy Tale*, aims to match gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender participants in the program. It is the first LGBT dating show in the world and it has high ratings. In addition, there was a dating show for gay people which is named as *Boy Meets Boy* presented by Dani Behr and created by Douglas Ross. Different than *Fairy Tale*, it aimed to match only

¹⁰ According to the chapter 154 the male homosexuality is illegal in Cyprus.

gay men. The program is premiered in 2003 on the *Bravo TV* channel in America. However, it ended very soon and there has not been a second season.

Match-making programs while they are rejecting to match homosexual couples, they only show heterosexual couples. It has been seen in one of Esra Erol's program that the programs ignore homosexuals. A woman called the program and started to talk about her expectations, and she mentioned that they had a relationship before in Netherlands. She said that she like to attend program. Esra Erol invited her to the program. She expressed that she like to marry but not with a man, but with woman. Then Esra Erol reacted aggressively and gave a strict reaction then switch off the phone. She had some negative comments on homosexuality. The homosexuality is not only dominant in Turkey but in match-making programs, heterosexuality is reflected as majority in the media. It is like there is no homosexuality in the world. In match-making programs there is a huge support of heterosexual relationships and they only approve the applications of people who are heterosexual.

So the programs determined both man and woman as target audience. Especially in *Su Gibi* there are two announcers, one man and one woman. They have guests in the studio in both genders. So they have both man and woman audiences.

2.3 Match-Making Programs as Popular TV Shows

There are match-making programs in other countries and they are as popular as the ones in Turkey. They have both similarities and differences with the ones in Turkey. *The Dating Game* is the first match-making program which is created by Chuck Barris in United States at the beginning of 1960's. There are three single people who introduce themselves to audiences at the beginning of the program. Then the

presenter of the program invites one single participant from opposite sex. She starts to ask questions to three candidates. The candidates were hidden from the view. At the end of the questioning period, participant chooses one of the candidates according to their answers and voice. They go out for dinner and if they like they may date again. Similar format is used in Australia as *Perfect Match* and in United Kingdom as *Blind Date* and they were so popular as well.

Moreover there are some other match-making programs with different formats. For instance *Taken Out* is an Australian based match-making program. There is a single person who is going to choose one among thirty single people of the opposite sex to date. At the beginning of the program presenter and 30 single people (usually women) come to the studio, they take their places then the presenter invites the single person (usually a man) to the studio and shows his informative video. There are light button in front of thirty single women. Man turns off the lights of each woman that he does not like to match one by one. He asks questions to last three and decide to date with one of them. *Taken Out* is broadcasted between September 2008 and February 2009. Then it is adapted to United Kingdom, Ireland, Philippines and United States as *Take Me Out*, and in China as *Fei Cheng Wu Rao*.

The match-making programs in Turkey started with Nurseli İdiz. She presented a match-making program at the beginning of 1990's, which was the first match-making program concept in Turkey. The name of the program was *Saklambaç* (Hide and Seek). In this program, three singles of the same sex were introduced to the audience (Who are going to be chosen). At the beginning of the program, the candidates introduce themselves shortly with their names, personalities, and hobbies. Then they were questioned by a single of the opposite sex. She/he asks some open -

ended questions to candidates behind the paravan. Nazlı Ökten (2008) states that the paravan is actually highlighting an irreconcilable difference between men and women, instead of preventing the preferred partner to be chosen according to the biological differences. In *Saklambaç* program the participant decide according to candidate's answers and voice like people do in *The Dating Game*. They see each other after the decision and date, have a dinner with him/her. The audiences watch their date in the next episode of the program. Then Rya Ersavcı presented the same program after Nurseli Idiz, during the middle of 1990's. *Saklambaç* is more like *The Dating Game* program in United States.

Yasemin Bozkurt, who was the presenter of a woman program, named as *Kadının Sesi (Voice of Woman)*, added matching part in her program in 2003. She was inviting and matching people in her program. The matching part of the program was only ten minutes. After her program transferred to *Kanal D*, she increased the matching part period to 30 minutes. When it is noticed that the match-making and marriage has high ratings the new television program appeared as *Dest-i İzdivaç* in *Flash TV* in 2007. Esra Erol was the first popular name to present match-making programs as marriage shows in Turkey. When the program started on *Flash TV* with Esra Erol, it did not attract much attention. After a year, Esra Erol transferred to *Star TV* with her program and the format with the original name of the program. Then the program became very successful and the ratings improved. So other channels had marriage shows in their time - line as well. They are reviewed and criticized on media and became more popular. The programs but especially Esra Erol sometimes talked on other popular programs. Column writers, media people in Turkey, criticized and reviewed those programs. It is possible to say that in the programs the fiction is assumed as real because the programs imitate the reality. Match-making

on television is not a new version, it is used in many country to date. However, in Turkey they are more like arranged marriages and many people in the society are familiar with it. Arranged marriages are known by the society in Turkey. As Mustafa Yağbasan and Ahmet Çiçek mentioned in their article, the potential bride is decided by families or relatives in arranged marriages (2009:3). It is not enough for couples to like each other, the family and the relatives should confirm the marriage. So the match-making programs in Turkey might be seen as a part of the tradition. As Gözde Aytemur Nüfusçu and Ayça Yılmaz argue in their research, match-making programs in Turkey are reproduces the arranged marriages in different conditions which is provided by media. Nüfusçu and Yılmaz further argue that in the programs presenter represents the match-maker role and also she is the moderator of the programs (2012: 32-33).

The match-making programs in Turkey invite people who like to marry to the program and introduce them to audiences. After they introduce themselves participants of the programs start to wait for their candidates who like them. Candidates who see them on screen may call the program via phone or they can come to the studio directly to meet with the participants.

Match-making programs have a hierarchy in the studio. There is a presenter who is the moderator and direct the flow of the program. There are many people who join the program as candidates, as participant, or as guests every weekday. Some of them just call and talk and some of them came to the studio. There are experts there who are usually a psychologist, a sociologist, or a lawyer. These experts contribute to the show with perspectives from their own specialized field and inform people with their vast accumulations. They provide professional opinions on controversial or difficult

issues. They are not the ones who choose or who are chosen, but they are always there in the studio. They never judge participants like the guests in the studio. They are different than everybody in the studio, they are not one of them. Experts are the person who knows and comment the critical issues. Whenever there is a need for clarification on an issue the presenter-of the program consults them, and asks them to comment on the issue. They give advice or explain the issues. To sum up, there are four different character groups in the studio besides the presenter. Firstly, the presenter, who is the head of the program. Secondly, the experts, who provide an authority there. Thirdly, the participants, who come to present themselves in the hope of finding a marriage partner. Thirdly, the candidates, who watch the program and like someone on it and want to meet with them. Lastly, the audiences there, they call it bleachers, they are only guests sitting in the studio everyday and when there is a discussion point, they contribute their ideas.

Each participant and each candidate has a distinctive character and a different personality in these programs. In match-making programs there are many participants introduced during the program. Neither the candidates, nor the participants are the main character of the program. They are only supporting actress and actors of the program. The presenters of the programs have the main role in how the direction of the program will proceed. They are on air; they invite people, direct conversation and they are the moderators. The characterization is one of the most important issues of identification. As audiences, people identify themselves with the characters and follow more.

TNS and SBT are the best known rating companies in Turkey. According to their rating records *Su Gibi* and *Esra Erol'da Evlen Benimle* have the highest ratings of

the top 30 programs every day. When the ratings of Esra Erol's program are examined it is clear that it is among the 20 most popular programs almost every day. For instance, SBT results 5/12/2012 shows that *ATV* is 6th in ratings standings. Exactly one month later, according to TNS results show that Esra Erol's match-making program in *ATV* is at number 6. At the beginning of 2013, her program is still very popular. On February 11.02.13, Esra Erol's program is in 19th place, and on March 19, 2013 her program is at 18th place. As it is seen the programs are very popular and especially Esra Erol's program is does not decrease the ratings.

When looking at the rating figures of *Su Gibi* with Songül Karlı and Uğur Arslan, are looked at, it is seen that they are not as popular as Esra Erol's program but their programs are still among the 30 most highly rated programs. The program is at 21st place on 04/12/2012 and at 37th place on 05/12/12 while Esra Erol's program is at 11th place. According to the rating results, it is seen that the ratings of Esra Erol's program are higher than Songül Karlı's and Uğur Arslan's program. So there are many people following those programs, and many people are talking about them. There are many people who might shape their thoughts consciously or unconsciously from what goes on in these programs.

2.4 Match-Making Programs as a TV Format

As Postman stated that for programming in order "...to be successful there are many issues which need to be completed. The unique factor of broadcasting is that its communication is accessible to ordinary people's mindset: it requires no specific training which brings people within the orbit of public authority." (1985: 135). The programmers try to get high ratings to be successful.

Programming is based on culture, norms, and tradition. People usually love the products that they can identify with themselves. They love the songs that they feel close to; they love the serials if there is a character that they can identify themselves. Individuals like the mirrors because they see themselves in it. It is the same when they would like to have a partner; people prefer to be with someone like themselves. So programming has the same logic. Also, programming needs to entertain people too because entertainment is the one of the basic reasons people watch television. However, as Postman stated, the problem is not that television presents us with entertaining subject matter but that all subject matter is presented as entertaining, which is another issue altogether (1985: 89).

This structured, imagined life sometimes affects what the viewers wear, what they eat and other habits. For instance, mass media might affect the fashion and the viewer's life style. If there are popular programs such as serials which use specific brands or goods, these things might become more popular than before. Çağlar Soydemir (2012) elaborated in his thesis that the product placement increases the demand for those products. He gave the example of *Kuzey Guney*, one of the serial which has high ratings in Turkey during spring 2011. He observed that product placement is used and audiences of the serial are aware of the product placement application. This affects the usage of products among viewers. Some of Soydemir's research participants also confirmed that they prefer to use the products that their favorite characters use.

On the other hand, there is another popular sitcom in Turkey, named *Yalan Dünya*¹¹. This sitcom has characters that have exaggerated personalities. Each character has their different style. Each audience might identify with one or two character, and sometimes they imitate their style such as talking. Nowadays, the characters in *Yalan Dünya* are imitated by many people.

Reality TV shows are the programs which are based on real people and events. Those programs usually tell the stories of ordinary people and their experiences so they attract many viewers. People who have seen in these programs are not celebrities or famous. People like to follow programs which seem close to the reality. They may believe the reality of situations in those programs, characters or situations. So reality shows are very popular among viewer. Since there are no any professional actors or famous people, people may think that those programs are more realistic than others. By this way, reality programs became more popular. Zhanna Bagdasaraov's study "defines reality television genre as programs that have a high reality claim, stress, the actions and emotions of non-actors, and often use a combination of authentic and staged images" (2010: 299). People from the viewers' world are on television and the viewers may feel closer and interested in their lives. They come up to those programs and tell their stories to masses. According to Quellette and Murray (2004) there are six different kinds of reality show genres which are interested by viewers. These genres are gamedocs, dating programs, makeover and lifestyle, docusoaps, court programs, and reality sitcoms (cited in Bagdasarov, 2010: 207). In recent years many of those genres are seen in Turkey. For instance, Acun Ilıcalı who is one of the most known producers in Turkey, adapted *Survivor* which is a gamedoc. Many people like

¹¹ *Yalan Dünya* is a situation comedy which is written by Gülse Birsal and directed by Jale Atabey. It is premiered in 2012 to present in Kanal D.

the program. In this program participants of the game live in an island, they hunt their meal or gather some fruits. There are some individual and group competitions. If they win the competition they get a gift every weekend. The gift might be a blanket or dinner. So they try to survive in the island, this is the reason why the name of the program is *Survivor*. The program has a website and participant's daily activities are uploaded to the website. Activities in the island can be followed by audiences. There are elections every week and the viewers sent their SMS to decide whom to stay or whom to leave from the program. By this way the viewers join to the program indirectly by sending SMS.

Audience interactivity is provided by this way in *Survivor*, the viewers feel that they are a part of the program. Audience interactivity is one of the main differences between reality shows and other programs. The audiences feel that they have the access to the program. Audience interactivity has also seen in *BBG*¹², *Gelinim Olur Musun?*¹³ and also in match-making programs. Different than *BBG*, *Gelinim Olur Musun?* and *Survivor*, the viewers in match-making programs are not voting the competitors but they can call the program and tell their ideas.

Zizi Papacharissi and Andrew L. Mendelson had a research about reality TV shows in 2007. They had a survey with 157 graduate and undergraduate students and tried to analyze and, grasp their viewing of reality television shows. The participants in the research were between 18-34 years old. The participants volunteered to take part in the study and so attended the reality television shows. Reality entertainment, relaxation, social interaction, voyeurism are some of the interpretable factors of

¹² Biri Bizi Gözetliyor (Someone is watching us)

¹³ Gelinim Olur musun? (Will you be my bride?) and in this program the selectors are the mothers of potential groom.

watching reality television shows. Papacharissi and Mendelson (2007) in their articles elaborate that “Audiences found that reality television programs although not really a genre of their own, were only viewed as moderately real.” (cited in Nabi, 2003: 358). This might partly explain why people like to watch those programs. People think that real people talk about real stories. Papacharissi and Mendelson (2007) agree that such kinds of programs are full with voyeurism (cited in Nabi, 2003: 300). So voyeurism would be one of the reason that people like to watch those programs. The viewers think that the characters are attractive. While they are watching these programs they supply the deficiency of observing others.

According to their research, there are six different reasons that motivate people to watch reality television programs. “Habitual pass time and reality entertainment had the highest mean scores. Social interaction, voyeurism and relaxation were also fairly salient factors whereas companionship was a less salient reason for watching reality television.” (cited in Nabi, 2003: 363) Reality television watching is a habit for audiences and they socialize by talking about the programs. They spend their time watching these programs and entertain themselves by observing other’s life. They do it regularly and it becomes something ritual.

Bagdasarov (2010) in his study focused on three hypotheses based on reality television programming and voyeurism. For this aim Bagdasarov used both survey and a content analysis of television shows. The results of the study show that the individuality of the viewers and their viewing habits are related with each other. They choose the programs according to their personal taste. Another result of the study displays that audiences like to watch reality shows because these programs pacify their curiosity about others. They feel like they are observing others while

they are watching these programs. Bagdasarov (2010) operationalized voyeurism in his study and generalizes it, in to three different perspectives according to Blazer's (2006), Calvert (2000), and Nabi's (2006) studies. Blazer (2006) argues that the "personal variable" is one of the perspectives of voyeurism. According to Calvert (2000) "Message and content" are the main sides of voyeurism. On the other hand Nabi claims that "viewer gratification" has an important role in this issue (2006: 303).

The American Psychiatric Association's (2000) study and Calvert's (2002) argument defines voyeurism as "an exaggerated interest of viewing, observing unsuspecting people who are naked" (cited in Pin Ju Su, 2012: 10). This is a definition that includes sexual context. On the other hand, Calvert states that, there is also "non-sexual voyeurism" and it would be "a form of behavior" (2002: 10). The pleasure of voyeurism increases when audiences see other people in reality programs and they watch their lives through reality television shows. As Bagdasarov mentioned people satisfy themselves while they watch reality shows because they watch others who exhibit themselves on television (2010: 311).

2.5 "Reality" in Match-Making Programs

Match-making programs have similarities with reality TV shows. Both of them are semi-structured and based on actual situations. Only the formats of the programs are permanent and it is the structured part of it. The occasions, characters (people) and sometimes the location is changed. For instance Müge Anlı is one of the popular presenters of reality shows in Turkey. The name of her program is *Tatlı Sert* (Sweet and Hard). Both *Tatlı Sert* and match-making programs have a studio format, interior, and on-air program. The formats are permanent but the participants in the

program are changed after each step is completed. Muge Anli's program is a reality show which is based on criminal issues; she helps people to solve their problems about missing relatives or murders. However, match-making programs are not related with criminal issues but it aims to "entertain" people.

Many of the match-making programs in Turkey are shown daily. They start at the lunch time and continue until dinner time. Many of them are usually three hours in total. The presenters state that their aim is to help people to marry and they say they believe that everybody believes it. According to them it is important to marry in front of cameras because it's safer than meeting someone outside. People have the facility to see candidates and they can warn participants if there would be any risk.

In the match-making programs, people are expressing themselves to the public via media. They share their past experiences, past, and their private lives such as how many times they have been married, their property holdings, whatever they like or dislike are explained. Those programs have continuity; someone comes in the beginning of the week then the story does not finish in that day or even in the same week. So this continuity keeps the audiences in front of the television. It is possible to say match-making programs carry similar characteristics with serials.

The continuity of the programs gives the feeling of daily life routine. People watch the characters step by step like they do their own lives. Serials usually tell the story of characters in detail. Audiences suppose that they follow all the activities of the character in the serial. Some of the audiences devote themselves to watch the serials because they do not want to give up the continuity. Otherwise it gives the feeling as if the audience missed something very important about the serial. According to the

structures of serials, directors prefer to cut each part when the story is on climax, so the audiences will be very excited for the next part of the serial. By this way, the watching probability of the viewers is increased. Until next part of the serial, they can discuss about the characters and think about the next events. They will try to guess about what will happen in the next part.

People relate themselves to the programs they watch and get pleasure while they are watching. As Ang states in her study “A hedonistic attitude which is at odds with the doctrine that mass culture primarily manipulates the masses.” (1985: 17). Ang further argues and she continues with Adorno and Horkheimer and agree with them; “The experience of pleasure in mass culture is a false kind of pleasure, event part of the trick of manipulating the masses more effectively in order to lock them in the eternal status quo of exploitation and oppression.” (1985: 17). People may get some pleasure of wondering and they satisfy themselves by learning about others life or maybe they compare themselves.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter elaborates the research method of the present study. In the chapter the two main approaches, qualitative and quantitative approaches are elaborated shortly. The research methodology is presented. It is explained why this method is chosen. There are some information about the participants and how they are found.

There are participants who are single (11), engaged (3), widowed (2), married (20) (please see appendix A). The research was used with 36 audiences between the ages of 18 and 70 and their marital status or their schooling history was not taken into consideration. However, two of the participants did not give permission to record the interview, they said “We can discuss about whatever you want but we do not want you to record or note them.” So their names are not mentioned in the participant list. In addition there are four people that they accept to meet but they changed their mind and hesitate to give an exact date for the interview by giving different reasons.

The field study is not restricted or confined by educational background, because it is noticed that there are many university students watching these programs. Eleventh of the participants were either university students or graduated from university.

This chapter elaborated the methodological work in the study. The interview method and the reason to choose interview method as a research way is explained. The information gathered from the participants will be analyzed in the fourth chapter.

3.1 Interviews

The qualitative methods are approaches which includes distinctive interests and research methods. Those research methods may be divided to different roots and questions. For instance, it is possible to apply them to the culture of a people, experiences of people or the characteristics of the phenomenon. Qualitative research is defined by Strauss & Corbin (1990) as “Any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification.” (Cited in Golafshani, 2003: 600).

In this study, the subject is the audiences and the main point is to get the experiences of people so qualitative research is more suitable. It is aimed to collect people’s observations and get information about their ideas by interviewing them. This might provide a way of understanding the social knowledge and social reality that the audiences live in.

The interview method as a qualitative technique aims to get people’s opinions about a determined issue. People who are aware of or interested with the same issue can explain their opinions with their own words in the interview method. As Michael Quinn Patton argues “In-depth, open-ended interviewing is aimed at capturing interviewees’ experiences with and perspectives on the program being evaluated to facilitate interview participants expressing their program experiences and judgments in their own terms.” (2002: 7). Boyce and Neale argue that the experiences,

expectations and thoughts of participants are asked associated with the program's outcomes and processes (2006: 3). In this study it is aimed to get participant's perspective about match-making programs.

The interviews on match-making programs try to understand the viewing habits of people. For the present study, by using an in-depth interview method the perspective of viewers, who are Turkish Cypriots living in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and watching match-making programs on Turkish channels are analyzed. Interviews are important because they lead the researcher to grasp the attitudes and opinions of people. In this thesis the collected interviews are seen as texts need to analyze. So the textual analyze is used in the thesis when the interviews are analyzed. Whatever the interviewees said during the interviews are decoded. The meanings under their words and sentences are tried to evaluate.

I used interview technique and it is expected from interviewees to express themselves with their own words. To focus on just one interviewee, it is preferred to have face to face interview. The personal feelings, experiences about the television and what they see on the television is taken. Their personal opinions are very important for the study.

In this study I interviewed with local people of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Interviews were conducted with people between 18 and 70 years old. No age limit was imposed because it was considered important how the young generation commented on television programs and what their opinions about match-making were. Two of the participants, Nebile and Alkan who agreed to be part of the

research were only 18 at the time the research was being done. But they both have very different ideas than each other about the programs.

The questions were ready before the meeting but there was some new questions come up according to the conversation during the interviews. However, it is very important for researchers to explain the purpose of the study to the participants to get the answers. To trust the researcher is very important for the participants. Both participants and researcher should be in a corporation. So in this research it is provided for participants to trust researcher with dialogues and behaviors.

Interviewer should have the self confidence to keep the participants in confidence. By this way s/he can collect good data. Not to disturb the participants, interviewer has to be careful about her/his behaviors and reactions. S/he should not make omissible comments for what the participants said and what the other interviewees said. To do this the place of interview is very important. The participants of the study have to feel comfortable or homely. So the researcher has to choose a suitable place for meeting. In this research it mostly it is preferred to meet at participants home. There are some exceptions, some participants asked to meet outside, in a café, and the meeting and time arranged according to their requests.

In this study it was helpful to meet with local people to gain access to the population. Watching Dallas by Ien Ang (1985) is formed a reference base and a primary idea source for this thesis. In her study, she also elaborated the points of view of audiences and tried to investigate the view of them by asking open-ended questions, and by avoiding by yes/no questions. The main difference between Ang's study and this thesis is that Ang collected her data's by publishing a call in a magazine and

getting answers through letters. In this study, it was face to face, informal, interview with people in their own places. Secondly, in this study the emphasis will not be only be whether the audiences like or not like the programs, it is also important to determine what kind of identifications they are structuring with these programs.

For the study, there are seven different open - ended questions prepared for the participants (please see appendix B). These questions are framed in an attempt to establish if the programs are creating any addiction, if those surveyed are regular views of the programs, the general opinion they have of the programs which parts of the programs they find most entertaining and if or not they can identify themselves with the people they watch. At the beginning of the interviews it is asked them for how long they are aware of the programs or for how long they are following the programs, so it shows us how much they are interested and since when they are interested with the programs. Then it is added which programs they know or like to follow. The answers of these questions are expected to be short. It is aimed to have these short answered questions as warm up questions. Then I asked them to explain what the main points were, that takes their attention and tell one of the episode that they remember, so the researcher might get what are the points that take the viewers interest.

As an observer it is important to learn what the participants thinks about the program even if they are not addicted to the program. So it is asked them to tell their ideas about the positive and negative aspects of the programs.

It is also asked them if they like to attend such kind of program. This is a personal question which is directed to single people. For the ones who are married, it is asked

them if they like their children to match with someone in these programs. So the distance between the audiences and the people they watch on television is aimed to be understood.

The interviews are unstructured and informal with a kind of discussion process. Also the conversations are recorded because it is less inhibiting and also saves time. All participants had been made aware of the interviews a few days previously and they all voluntarily agreed to participate in the research. They were all informed about the general concept of the study. For the interviews, at least one hour spend in each participant's home to allow enough time for friendly discussion and to keep it easy for the participants.

3.2 Snowball Sampling

After each interview was completed, it was asked to participants if they knew any relative who watches match-making programs. They usually mentioned their other family members or friends. So the snowball method is used to reach source to source. In snowball sampling as Natasha Mack and Cynthia Woodson reported "Participants or informants with whom contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study." (2005: 5). This is a process which the researcher follows until the all of the research material is collected.

Chapter 4

RE-READING THE INTERVIEWS AND ANALYSES

This chapter discusses the interviews about marriage shows which were collected from thirty six interviewees selected by “snowball” method. There were twenty one women and fifteen men who were interviewed. Individual interviews were used as the primary method for collecting data. The interview format was open-ended and focused on the research questions. Interviews took approximately two hours. The interviews began in July 2012 and ended in September 2012. In this period the programs were in vacation.

In this chapter their interviews are investigated from the perspective of gender studies, and television watching habits. The analysis is generally based on why people are watching these programs and what are their main interests in the programs which tempt them to watch.

In the interviews it is noticed that participants expressed themselves by using “I follow match-making programs.”, “I watch match-making programs.”, “I watch match-making programs compulsively”. So the interviewees’ are divided to three different groups. The followers are the member of first group. The participants who say that they follow match-making programs are the ones who watch programs everyday and they often arrange their daily routine according to the program schedule. For instance, if the program is running between 16.00 and 19.00 the

followers may arrange all of their other meetings, duties and responsibilities according to these hours. They arrange their private affairs, personal duties and leave the program hours empty. They report that they try to follow programs almost every day and they sometimes arrange their other works according to the starting time of programs. Second group members are the ones who watch programs in their spare time if they do not have anything to do. So they said they do not watch the programs more than three times a week. Third group members are the ones who do not like the programs and they watch programs compulsively.

The second group watching match-making programs, usually watch programs randomly. In other words, if they have free time during the time the program, is being broadcast they will watch it. They do not go out of their way or set aside time to watch the programs. They are neither addicted nor especially engaged by these programs but are happy to watch them if there is nothing else on TV during the day that might otherwise catch their attention.

The third category includes the participants who say that they never watch these programs. However, after further questioning they say that they had to watch the program in a way. They would never choose to watch those programs voluntarily but their parents, their husbands, wives or friends are the reason for watching those programs so they have to watch them. This group found themselves in situations where they had no other choice. They are the ones that have the most negative comments about the programs and the group that criticizes the programs the harshest. They try to express the harmful points of the programs. Moreover they are the ones who can observe the negative effects the programs have over the people around them.

Burçin (32) is a member of the third group members. He tried to specify the negative aspects of the program and he criticized the purpose such programs and broadcasting them.

“Most of the time individuals can not behave naturally even in their own world the real world. So how they are going to be natural in front of cameras conscious of the fact that millions of people are watching them. I think those programs are only consist of popular culture and deception.”

According to Burçin (32) in the programs instead of the natural aspects of the individuals, the aspect that the program makers ask them to display is reflected. He does not like programs because he does not trust them. He believes them people in the programs do not behave natural.

Erhan (33) is another participant who is a member of the third group. Erhan said he only heard the name of the program and some information about the program. But he did not choose to watch it. He commented “Mr. Adnan is one of the participants in Esra Erol’s program. He has been in the program a long times but seems he is very picky, isn’t he? He still hasn’t managed to find a wife.” After this question, Erhan started to express his ideas with other examples from the show but none of his comments were positive.

“One day, a man who was a participant on the program introduced himself was waiting for his candidates to call or come. Suddenly, a woman called the program and claimed that she is his wife. She claimed that they had not divorced yet. All of his life came out in front of the cameras.” Erhan (33).

Erhan conveyed his ideas through this example and he mentioned the distinction between Turkey and North Cyprus. Erhan draws attention to the cultural differences between Turkey and North Cyprus and states that such kind of programs might be useful in Turkey but not in Cypriot culture. He believes that Cypriots all know each and trust each other and but in Turkey, it is different. Turkey is a big country with a high population. This might be seen as a threat for Turkish Cypriots. Cypriots feel more comfortable when they know each other in a small society. They may get information about the people they like to learn about by asking their friends.

As an audience, Erhan, consciously or unconsciously is aware that there is a relationship between television programs and culture. So he does not like the program because he felt that it does not reflect his own culture.

Arzu (23) is one of the participants from the second group. She says “When I started to watch those programs Esra Erol was very popular.” This might show us that audiences are influenced by trends in popular culture and celebrity.

Erçin (38) is one of the members of the second group. He cannot follow programs regularly but wherever he has the opportunity he tries to watch. He says that it has been three years since he started watching the programs but he never arranges his daily life or duties according to program. So this shows that he is not dependent on or addicted to the program. He has some positive comments about the programs. He claims that the programs work for one of the basic needs of the human-being, which is marriage.

Unlike Burçin, Erçin argues that to match with someone in the program would be better than matching in the *real-life*:

“You write your personal statement, and submit this to these programs. You have the chance to meet with many candidates and discuss your expectations with other participants, so your personality has been drawn. People easily recognize each other.” Erçin (38).

“Today, our children want to marry with people that they are in a relationship with. However, how you will know the personality of this person as a family member. So it is better to marry in these programs because they are more reliable. In addition, these programs increase the importance of marriage and tempt people to marry.” Hanim (65).

There is a similar comment from Refik (30). He believes that match-making programs might be reliable and useful in Turkey. However, he added that the programs are not necessary in North Cyprus because people can easily get information about the person they want by asking relatives. According to him, these programs do the same thing that Cypriots do in their country.

The programs increase reliability and when people trust programs, they believe and watch them more. The participants in the first and second groups said that the matches in these programs would be more reliable and trustworthy. So the marriages will continue longer with fewer problems. They think that in the program people will be less likely to lie to each other, and even if they tell lies, the lie will be exposed.

Erçin noted that he just prefers to watch the programs in his free time. It's important to note that leisure time is the period of the day which people actually devote for

themselves, that people's spare time is that time of their day which they can use for their personal development. Actually, it is important how people use their spare time to create an impression on other people. Whatever people do in those hours is not compulsory. A person's free time is there to be filled with whatever choice the person makes, so whatever they prefer to do or not to do is important.

4.1 Television; As A Member of the Family

Television is a communication medium which is improved by technology, which is part of people's lives and offers different connection with the world. People are able to get information about politics and people in other countries. People are not only getting information through television but also it is a device that individuals can entertain themselves with. In a short, it has become an indispensable part of daily-life because it has several advantages. It is not only more economic than going to a cinema as it does not require ticket, but it is also more affordable as anyone can buy it. So middle-class and low class citizens preferred watching television instead of going out cinema. Postman argues that television became more powerful very rapidly, every perceived fact filtered through television is accepted as truth, as real (1994: 91-92).

Postman states that instead of reading books, people prefer to get their information by watching television passively without any active engagement with the world. Postman further argues that it is possible to say that television abolishes the culture of reading but there is nothing that can replace the habit of reading for mental development (1994: 174). The relationship between developing technology and evolving human relationships can be seen in our daily lifestyle. It seems like people prefer spending time watching TV instead of spending time with others, they get rid

of loneliness by watching the TV and feeling like they are a part of the conversation. Individuals use television to get rid of the need of going out with someone else's house or inviting others to his or her place, they can easily end the activity by turning the TV off. The interviewees reported that they have the assumption of being relative with the people they watch on the programs.

Sevgün (60) one of the interviewees said;

“I get to know people by watching marriage TV shows and they become like an individual in my house come to visit me. There are some participants who stay in the show for a week, I get to know those people and they become like my neighbor, I wonder what will happen finally. So if I am alone at home, it is nice to watch them.”

İlper (55), another interviewee, also mentioned about the familiarity of the characters in the show. After watching the show a few times she says, the characters in the show became like one of her neighbors that she sees every day. She argues that this emotional connection is important because people do not feel alone while watching television. Viewers get to know about the name, age, hometown and the need of the participants and follow the television show to predict if they will want to marry any of the prospective candidates.

Hanım (65) reported that “It is the same as having guests in my house, as soon as I come home from work I turn the TV on, I lie down and start to watch. There are Mr. Cüneyt, Mr. Hakan, and Mr. Yıldırım. For instance Mr. Yıldırım always comment and criticized others but he does this because he is informed, he knows many things. I like his comments.”

In match-making programs, many people are matched and leave the program; new ones join. These sub-characters change very often but there are some participants who stay there for long time and viewers became familiar with them. In match-making programs the character analysis is provided over a long period of time. The more the participants stay in the show, the better they become known by the viewers and most of the time the viewers identify themselves with those characters or they become a follower of one of them or they feel like they are friends with them. Sometimes they feel like they are the relatives of the participants. In this regard, the television programs' characterization is similar to the television serials. They predict what they will possibly do in any extra-ordinary case.

People both men and women 'visit' Esra Erol or Songül Karlı in their studio which may appears to be the inside of a house and also refer to house. They all take their seats, then others switch on their television and join to them in this meeting. They all have discussions and conversations together. When anybody in his/her house switches off the television, it means they have left. This sequence of events repeats itself everyday or many times in a week. So audiences became familiar with the people they watch on television. They basically invite people to their house by turning the television on instead of going to someone's house for coffee. It is not very different from the traditional Turkish habit of women visiting each other to chat, the difference is that you stay home and experience everything with their television.

The television is not just an electronic device sitting in the corner or a living room, it is like an individual in the house. So people when they are alone at home, they switch on television and get rid of this feeling of loneliness. Audiences feel close to television and the characters created by program makers. They develop emotional

connections with the machine and the people they watch. As Postman states “Television’s strongest point is that it brings personalities in to our hearts not abstractions into our heads.” (1987: 125). Whoever the audiences watch on television, if they can identify themselves with the characters, audiences accept them as real people. So television becomes a medium that helps people to meet with other people in a fabricated life.

4.2 One of Us; “Good Girl.”

Another issue to point out while considering the identification is the importance of the presenter. When the participants have been asked which marriage program they like the most, the answers were very similar to each other. According to this, participants watch the show because they appreciate, like and feel close to the presenter. They also watched the other programs but did not like them.

“I follow Esra Erol, because she shares everything with the audience, she also got married in the studio. She also talks about her son in the show and everyone likes her.” Ilper (55).

Esra Erol shares her private life with the audience and that is the reason why she became popular and everybody thinks she is modest. Middle aged people call her “Our daughter” and others call her “Our sister.” Even when people connect to the show over the phone, they talk like the presenter is a member of their family. The participants are other relatives to them that they met through the presenter but they are not as close as the presenter to them. They see the presenter so close to themselves, her education and good heart attracts them as well. Here are some examples;

“She tells the truth; she has good dialogues with people and explains what is right or wrong in a good way. When I watch her I feel like she is one of us.” Nebile (18).

“Esra Erol’s program is the most successful marriage program in Turkey and I like to watch it every day. She is very good in her job. She always tries to teach people good and right things and never force participants to do something that they do not want to do. She is very honest and loyal.” Hanım (65).

“Songül Karlı is more straightforward and appropriate. I don’t like Esra’s behavior, she is so flirtatious.” Hatice (65).

Hatice (65) is comparing Esra Erol and Songül Karlı to rate which one of them suits her family type more. She is considering her values before judging and choosing which one is better. Songül Karlı is honest, appropriate and straightforward. These are important characteristics and it is enough reason to follow her show. As it is mentioned in the introduction according to Livingstone’s research audiences like the characters who are loyal to their families and who respect moral issues (1998: 137-139). As it is seen in the case of Esra Erol and Songül Karlı, the interviewees like them and describe them as “one of us”, someone like themselves.

“I like to follow Esra Erol’s program because she is serious and knows what to do in unexpected situations. As an audience the presenter is very important for me. The presenter should be both cheerful and also administrate the program. She is one of us, she understands what people expect.” Hasan (30).

Sometimes presenters are classified as sisters, sometimes daughters and they are appreciated by their followers. Because they are both married, have kids so they are

seen as family oriented and moral. So they have a happy family image with audiences. Also they have a good job, especially what is considered a “woman’s” job like matching people. Audience met with Esra Erol on *Flash TV* years ago and they observed that her character has been developed.

Songül Karlı also has a similar characteristic image. Long-term followers believe that she lives a stable family life with her husband and son. She always mentions that she is not only successful in her career but also she is contented in her home life. She explained to paparazzi that she cooks the meal her husband likes, never does anything that he does not want her to do, she washes his feet. She is proud of this and does not hesitate to share this via magazines, and she does not hesitate to express her privacy. She is presenting her marriage life and certain degree of her privacy for the sake of the program.

“I was very happy when I learned that Esra Erol is pregnant, the first thing I thought was ‘she will be a good mother’.” Sevilay (65).

“The episode which Songül Karlı is married was the best for the season. The name of her husband is Metin, he is tall and very handsome man. Their marriage ceremony was in the studio. They sing songs, dance and have fun together.” Türkan (55).

Audiences know many things about the presenters. It is like they are not only following the program but also they are following the presenter of the programs. So the presenters of the program become a role model. In the interview survey conducted for this study, Esra Erol and Songül Karlı’s name frequently came up. When the ratings of those two programs are checked it is seen that they are the most

popular match-making programs in Turkey. This might suggest that there is a connection between the previous popularity of the presenter among television audiences and the popularity of the program. The audiences believe that the program presenter is honest and sincere. Whenever the presenters are happy, audiences also feel happy. For instance, many of the interviewees mentioned the marriage ceremonies of Songül Karlı and Esra Erol. They express their happiness when they see the presenter's marriage ceremony on screen. The happiness of the presenters makes the audiences happy. Many of the interviewees mentioned the marriage ceremonies of the presenters during the interviews. It was something very important and shared with the audiences.

4.2.1 Esra Erol Become One of Them

In the match-making programs, it is seen that the family concept is also used like it is used in advertisements. Especially in *Esra Erol'la Evlen Benimle* the presenter of the program mentions her family life very often. Firstly, when she decided to get married, she announced that, in 2010 and she got married in front of the cameras in the same year as her match-making program on ATV. Moreover, when she got pregnant she shared it with her audiences in tears. When she gave birth, the program was off-air for the summer. When the program resumed at the end of the summer, it began with a video clip and photos of the presenter's baby narrated by her for the audience. Esra Erol prepared a letter and after the generic, her voice is heard with the slow motion video of the announcer came out. Scenes were totally focused on her pregnancy and her baby. The letter was dedicated to the audiences and gave some information about her private life and her memories. She dramatized motherhood concept of family in this video clip. She exploited the emotions of the audience. The introduction to this video continued for around four minutes and motherhood was

exploited and dramatized. She made the audience and participants sure that, they too share all of her private life in the program. She states that audiences are her friends and they felt as close to each other, as she would to members of her own family. In the same program she promised her audiences that she will release the records of the day she give birth and that she would bring her baby to the program. The audiences in the studio usually referred to her as “Our daughter” or “The role model of our tradition, our culture.” Sometimes the audience said that they felt “They are like a family there.” People identified themselves with her. So this made them interested in the program too. They felt close to her.

Generally, the women participants who are going to be the potential brides of the program say how old they are, where they live and with whom, whether they experienced marriage before, and sometimes they mention their education, or work. The men say how old they are, what kind of work they do, how much they earn, where they are living and with whom, and their educational background. This shows the expectation from men is to have a stable income, where it is not necessary for women. It is important for men to have a house, and car but not so for the woman. It is not important that the women to be educated but the men should be more educated than the women. It is critical that the men be financially independent but not so for the women. However, there are some other differences between men and women apart from economic issues. Women usually are expected to be good in in regard to domestic issues and there is a certain description among people for women that “Oturmasını, kalkmasını bilen kadın¹⁴” which refers to women in proper behaviors. These two points are very important. “Oturmasını kalkmasını bilen kadın” is a metaphorical expression in the culture which defines woman but in terms of positive

¹⁴ Woman who knows how to act.

meaning. However, there is not a certain definition of the expression. It may refer to whole cultural behaviors, attitudes and consuetude. It may change from person to person. Although it refers to not to be richer than men, not to be older than men, and not to be more active than men. So the description represents a woman who is living under the protection of her man. In the program it is used as it has a certain meanings and everybody knows them.

4.3 Gender Roles and Marriage

Aysun Yüksel states that “Through newspapers, magazines, cinema, radio and television, popular culture has been created and shared by the public. These cultures have been transferred to other generations as well through media.” (2013: 64). Because of the patriarchal structure and the gender division of labor it is expected from woman to care for kids and elders, and be involved with domestic issues. So woman should be respectful, gentle, polite, and kind. Philippa Gates states that “Masculinity, like femininity is a product of culture, not of nature: It is constructed and performed.” (2006: 28). It is possible to observe that the programs also reproduce those masculinity and femininity discourses. The patriarchal society is supported with the discussions and they associate femininity with parental affection and romantic tendencies. For instance, many women who attend those programs ask for candidates who can live in the same city with their families. They want to be close to their families. In addition, when the woman participants talk about their expectations, it is seen that man has to be tough, powerful, and independent. To define tough, powerful and independent man, they ask candidates if they are working, if they have a high income, and if they are in a position to protect the family. By this way, the man and woman are divided as public and private entities; the woman belongs to the private area of the home with domestic responsibilities and

a proper set of “Feminine” attitudes but the man belongs to the outside, the public domain of work with all its responsibilities. Gender roles are being supported and reproduced through television programs. As Yüksel claims “The woman is always under threat environment that we are living in and also in the television and the cinema. They show that woman has so many threats outside her house, so she should not go out.” (2013: 138). Therefore, woman should stay in her private life and should not be engaged with the outside world.

“Songül Karlı is very talkative and she gives advices to young women who did not marry before. She says that marriage is not a game. She shares her experiences and tells that they should be patient, conservative and insightful for their husbands.” Ülfet (62).

“Esra Erol teaches young girls that your husband candidates should have their own house, car and regular salary. She is a good teacher, I think she is right. If I had the opportunity to marry with my boyfriend, I also wish him to have a regular salary.” Kemal (25).

Seymen noticed that during the program there are some discourses that they use regularly. For instance: “Man like a man” (adam gibi adam), “He-man” (erkek adam) which represent to be powerful both physically, emotionally and also to have a high income (2012: 80).

“Songül Karlı says that she has a child, marriage is not easy. She goes home after work, wear her trousers and complete her domestic duties. This is how we lived the marriage.” Naciye (75).

The presenter also plays “The teacher”, the audience listens to her comments and whatever she says and they try to apply to their life. Her ideas and reactions became

so important and valuable to the people she speaks to. She is like a role model. Besides Esra Erol, Songül Karlı's dialogues with people are also good. They both tell people what the main issues to have a happy marriage are. So many interviewees think that the programs are very useful for especially young people. They believe that the programs educate young people about marriage because they tells how to have a good relationship.

4.4 Watching Match-Making Programs with Others

People watch television and whatever they watch on television might make up part of their daily routine. The relationship between audiences and the program might be seen like the relationships between people that are living in the same neighborhood. They all know each other and their stories and when they meet, they talk about each other's life. They may gossip about each other or criticize one another. If one of them has a problem, they can discuss the problem and try to solve it together because they are close to each other in the neighborhood.

Coşku (24) says that whenever her auntie comes to visit them, and while they are having their tea or coffee together, her auntie suddenly checks the time and asks him/her to switch on the television to watch Esra Erol.

This shows that the television is not an entertainment device that people use when they are alone. They can watch it when they are with their friends, or their family. People may follow the programs even if they are not alone or feel lonely. They may watch it together and comment on them.

Işık (50) who is a Sales Manager in her confection store reported that:

“I sometimes visit other stores next to mine and we watch the match-making programs together, there are some match-making programs on Friday night, I like to watch them with my family at home.”

Watching these programs together is like sharing something in common with people’s relatives, friends or neighbors. As Kubey indicates “Particularly because watching television is so easy to do, family members may have become less imaginative about other ways to spend their time together.” (1996: 13). So television can set people to be together especially when they are very tired after work, without doing any other activity. They can just lie in front of the television and they may comment on whatever they are watching if they like.

4.5 Match-Making Programs as a Tool of Daily Socialization

The film ‘*Wag The Dog*’¹⁵(1997) shows how television can determine the agenda and direct what people talk about and from which perspective they will see the world. The movie tells us the story of a president, who is reflected as a deviant with a sex scandal, in the news media just before elections. So the mission of his assistants in the film is to deflect attention by creating another story which would be more sensational than the news about the president. So they ask for the help of a Hollywood producer and the producer with his new team write a scenario, and of a so-called war with Albania. All the citizens in the country now focus on this contrived war with Albanian, the scandal is forgotten, and the president is re-elected. One of our interviewees supported this theory when he claimed that;

“The television has also become a key topic of the majority of conversations. People prefer to talk about TV programs and if someone

¹⁵ *Wag The Dog* (1997) is a film directed by Barry Levinson which criticise the role of television.

has no idea about the programs or does not watch TV to make a comment they are ignored by the conversations.” Volkan (50).

In addition, Arzu (23) said that she felt like she have to watch those programs at the beginning, because many of her friends were talking about the programs and she felt bad when she could not add any comment on the conversation.

Emine (39) elaborated that she was not following those programs but she had to follow them because she could not join to conversations during the meetings with her friends. She added that everybody was talking about those programs and she felt useless and ridiculous while everybody was expressing their ideas about the programs but she could not. This shows us that those programs are not only popular but also occupy a public debate and direct people what to talk about, and how to talk. Even if people do not like them, she feels the pressure and watch at least one time then they usually continue to watch. Nihat (37) has similar arguments about this issue. He states that these programs are important for the socialization of people.

“In fact, the programs are imperative to be socialized; otherwise people cannot get in to the conversations. I look around me, everybody talks about the programs, if you cannot comment on the issue and you will be eliminated from the conversation.” Nihat (37).

The quotations taken from Nihat, shows how popular culture and daily life might be created by television. Television may determine the agenda of people and impose what they are going to talk about. People when they watch match-making programs might be interested in marriages and relationships more because television

naturalizes it. So people might become more interested in others' privacy more and reflect it in their own life.

“After watching them several times on television, they become like famous people and they become a subject of conversations. People start to gossip about them rather than gossiping about each other.” says Senem (26) and explains the situation from a different point of view. People find a new theme for their conversations with neighbors by watching those programs. They find a new subject to gossip about in those shows. Senem also says that this will enable them to gossip about people on the TV rather than gossip about their friends and relatives.

Audiences know the characters like their neighbors or relatives so they talk about them because the person they watch every day is someone familiar to them and no longer a stranger. They talk about someone and they think that they know them personally. The images on television became real after a while because the program imitates reality. People come on screen and tell their stories to everyone. So there are similarities between the marriage shows and daily life. In their daily life couples date, and go to drink tea or coffee. During the time they're going out together, people around them comment on their relationship or intervene. There is a similar construction in Esra Erol's program.



Figure 1: Couples talking behind paravan

Couples see each other after the paravan open, and they get some comment from guests or other participants who are in the studio. They decide to date or not. If they decide to date they go to have tea or talk together. As Ökten argues in her article different than *Saklambaç*, in new version of match-making programs, paravan is used when the participants chat with suitable candidates, to increase the attention. During their conversation the participant wonders the candidate and asks some questions to the people in the studio about the candidate.

“I realized that, when someone is interested with a participant, the participant asks others for opinions. Before he or she shares her opinion, s/he seeks opinions from others. So the participant is affected by others when he or she makes a choice.” BÜKE (24).

Arzu refers to the audience's interference to the relations;

“Sometimes for example a girl likes a guy and the audience indicates that they do not approve of a relationship between the two people. Even if the couple gets on well, they get affected by others while they make a choice. This shows the characteristics of people as well, they like to be involved in other people's life and business. At the end of the day, it is none of other people's business about two stranger's relationship but they see it as normal behavior to give their opinions in the matter.” Arzu (23).

As mentioned above, also in real life what people say about others becomes something very important. People get affected by what others would say while making decisions. These programs demonstrate the situations that happen in real life. Participants and other people in the program start to talk about what they think of a possible relationship between two other people or they criticize a relationship if present. So any stranger can talk about someone else's relationship. Nihat (37) says those programs are no different than usual life, it is taking everyday life and putting it on display.

4.6 Representation of the (Constructed) Reality

Television is one of the strongest media forces in people's life. The ordinary people who attend programs tempt audiences to believe that the program reflects reality. However, according to Postman, instead of reflecting reality, television constructs another reality, its own reality (1994: 12-30).

Today, many viewers relate their watching habits according to reality. People generally, follow reality shows because they believe the reality of the situations. In many cases they may not explore the characters or situations. Viewers know their

names, age and sometimes they know the habits of the participants. Some of them say “When I switch on television, it is like my neighbors came.” As Erol Mutlu mentioned television became an indispensable part of our lives and while we describe our feelings about it, we use the phrases like “One of us”, “Member of our family.” (1991: 16).

The visual aspect of television and cinema can work to make them more affective and “Realistic.” There is a separation between real and ‘Real-like’. The ‘Real-like’ structures of media usually duplicate the reality. Even if television focuses on some issue which is the past, such as historical issues, there is a special perspective of on it. Whatever it show us has a representation in it. Most of the programs on television represent life. So the issue of representation is very important. They are representations of images and audiences try to give meaning to those images with texts. The similarities between real life and programs raise the attention of audiences. For instance; when the couples met for the first time, they would go to a café to drink tea or coffee. Also in match-making programs, there is a part when potential couples sit together and discuss. Two people sit together and have a chat, at the end of the program they say if they liked each other or not. There is a strong connection between match-making programs and life. People may like the relation between programs and real life so they believe programs and watch them. Producers and directors use themes that people find easy to believe in. The stories that they tell people may not be true but it contains enough characteristics to make people believe. When people believe that it might be true, they feel more attracted. It is important that the characters are people from the general public. There are some examples at the below, that interviewees noted when it is asked them to tell what was the most affective episode of match-making programs that they watch.

“One day a woman called the program and introduces herself. She added that she is pregnant and she is going to give birth after one month. What she wishes is to marry with someone who can give his surname to her child. Then she invited to studio, she met with someone and married. After one month she gave birth, their records from hospital are shown to us, they were very happy. Esra saved her and her child’s life.” Belgin (55).

“Sometimes disabled people participate to the programs and match there. It is hard them to meet with each other in their daily lives. For instance, one day a deaf girl attends to the program with her mother. Her mother helped her to introduce herself. Then she met with a boy who is also deaf and they married.” Ülfet (62).

“I believe that Esra Erol does not only aim to match people, but also she tries to increase the social awareness. She tempts people to collect blue covers of bottles to buy chairs for disable people. She does everything to help disable people. Moreover, she helps women who face with violence. This shows how she is sensitive about these issues.” Kemal (25).

Marie Gillespie argues that “The audience ‘associates’ themselves and or their friends with characters, situations, feelings and problems.” (1995: 148). As a result of this, when they see a character sad or hopeless, they feel the same way, they empathize. When a character is happy, they feel positive senses as if they are experiencing whatever the character is living. If a woman watches another woman who has been cheated on, she may identify herself with the character and feel sorry for her. Sometimes they go further and as Katz and Liebes stated, they “Relate the characters to real people and in turn relate these real people to their own real worlds.” (1990: 100).

“I think these programs are very useful to socialize disable people. They can increase their self confidence and match them. In this program I saw that a disable couple married last week and I liked it.” Buke (25).

“I did not know that there are young boys in Turkey who are forced to marry. Through the match-making programs I learned different cultures that I am not familiar. One day a man participates to the program and told his story. He said his family forced him to marry with a woman who is older than him. I was shocked.” Sevim (25).

“There was a widowed woman participate to the program. She has one child and she was not working. She wanted to marry with someone who can care her and her child and also provide financial support for them. If people are not young enough to start a new life, especially woman needs to guarantee some criteria’s for their future.” Pertev (40).

Pertev agreed that it might be difficult for a woman to live alone and care a child. So it would be naturalized that women attends to match-making programs and asks for candidates who has a house, car and regular salary. On the other hand, Senem as a young woman believes that this makes programs less persuasive. She believes that love should be the most important reason to marry with someone.

“Recently an Iranian girl participates to the program and she wanted to match with someone who is rich and between 35-40 years old. She said that she likes Turkey and wants to live in Turkey because Iran is different and she does not wants to go back there. Beside this, some people from Turkey ask to match with someone from other countries and live there. I think their aim is not only marriage.” Senem (26).

As it would be seen from the speeches of the interviewees, television sells people's stories with these programs. Fatoş (50) with her argument summarize the point from her perspective.

“People who have tragic life attend to these programs. They all have different stories and audiences wonder them. Actually their stories are the ones which attract audiences.” Fatoş (50).

According to Nancy Baym while viewers are watching, they personalize and identify themselves with the fictional characters they watch (2000: 71). They feel close to the characters or the situation; they remember past events in their lives and find a connection between their experiences and what they are watching. They may find an emotional connection between the fictionalized character and themselves. When the participants of the interviews started to talk about the program, they mention the dramatic stories. They can say many things about the characters, outfit, behaviors, and private life.

It is understood that for many of the interviewees the programs became more attractive when they see a participant from North Cyprus. For instance Gönül (50) mentioned one of the episodes in the program that she remembers;

“There was a man who went on the program from North Cyprus with a bunch of flowers in hand. The woman he wanted said that she goes to North Cyprus a lot. The man was educated and worked in managerial positions. He also had children, everything was going well. Then they decided not to get married, I was disappointed.” Gönül (50).

“Recently, a woman from North Cyprus attends to the program. I know her. She passes in front of our store every day. I surprised. She said she loves and wants to be with her ex-husband again. Then her ex-husband called the program. They married again.” Ilper (45).

“One of my friend told me that a man from Sütlüce¹⁶ attend to Esra Erol’s program. I wanted to see who is he and after that day I follow the program regularly.” Kaan (24).

As it can be seen in the examples above, the people that have been interviewed remember the participants that they watch on the program, they also remember their stories, and they feel sad and happy about those stories. Even though they do not know those people they watch on television, they become curious about them and hence they watch the show. When there is a possibility that they might know the person as it is seen in the examples of Gönül (50), Ilper (45), Kaan (24) it became more interesting. To see someone from North Cyprus in the program might take their attention.

Ang argues that the audiences are talking about fictional characters like they are talking about “real people” such as somebody they know but not fictionalized (1985: 30). Even though the stories are based on real life, it becomes another reality. In this research it is noticed that interviewees usually know the name of the participants in the programs, some of their attitudes or stories. Audiences are familiar with the lives they watch on television. They have already experienced some of participants’ pleasures, or problems in their life. During the program audiences tries to guess if they will like their candidates or not by connecting the character and personality of the participants with their own view of themselves.

¹⁶ Sütlüce is a village in North Cyprus in Mesaoria Plain, close to Famagusta.

4.7 Being a Semi-Celebrity for a Period

With the establishment of private channels, the understanding of what broadcasting was about in Turkey changed. To get the interest of audiences, producers invite celebrities that audiences know to the programs.

Baştürk and Akbulut noted that “After the first private channel opened in Turkey, the television sector has been changed. Through Star 1, people were able to see many popular names on television regularly. Then the new television format came out and audiences realized that anyone from the general public can be on television.” (2005: 47). The audiences became used to watching and following the lives of celebrities and popular names through television. Paparazzi programs ¹⁷are one of the programs that people watch celebrities and follow their lives.

Senem (26) says that match-making programs are much like paparazzi programs. According to her, people who follow the news about celebrities ¹⁸ on paparazzi programs are the ones who are the viewers of the match-making programs and follow the participants of those programs. While paparazzi programs show the well-off lifestyles of rich people, match-making programs display the characters of individuals as well. Participants give details about their life and advertise themselves to the potential partners and share their private issues.

¹⁷ Paparazzi programs report always about celebrities’ private lives; where they go, with whom they are with, what kind of lifestyle they lead, what they wear and so on.. Louis Hodges (1994) claims that “We should publish private information about them if readers are interested in knowing that information, provided that the information does no harm to the celebrity as a person.” (pp: 197-212).

¹⁸ “Celebrity is the person who is well known for his ‘well-knownness’” as Daniel J. Boorstin states (1987: 57). People watch and follow them via mass media and like to get information about them to satisfy their curiosity.

Aslı Soydan says that the lifestyle and consumptions of those semi-celebrities who are created by such kind of programs can redefine the culture which is re-produced and constructed by television (2011: 11). Nowadays, there are some people who became a celebrity or a semi-celebrity through taking part in the competitions, reality shows or match-making programs they take part in. People join programs and they are watched by others via television. Audiences become familiar with participants and their names through television programs and they became popular. People talk about them, and become interested with them. Some of them might catch the opportunities and stay in front of the camera longer than others. Those are the ones that Boorstin categorized in his study as “last generation celebrities.” (1987: 22).

“There was a man; he was thirty-nine years old. I could not grasp why he was there. There were many candidates, young and old women come for him but he rejected them all. There was very beautiful and rich girls, he did not want to be with them. I think his aim was not to get marry with someone, he was just waiting to become a celebrity.” Arzu (23).

“There was a man who is waiting for candidates for three seasons. He did not like any of the candidates who came for him. He finds many excuses to reject them. He is the one who expect to be popular and became someone known.” Alkan (18).

“I noticed that some of the woman participants there just attend to program to be celebrity. The old ones are honest but the young ones want to be seen and expect to be recognized and became popular.” Büke (24).

“There are match-making programs almost all TV channels. The people who attend these programs aim to be seen there and take a part in front of cameras. They presenting themselves in the programs and they will be famous.” Muhittin (32).

In the case of Turkey, Pelin Akat is the mother of reality shows in the 2000s. She brings the format of many reality shows and adapted to Turkey. She saw some programs in other countries and she used their formats in Turkey. The programs were very successful. BBG is the first reality show that she was successful with in 2001. The original name of the program was *Taxi Orange*. In BBG there was a house with women and men were living together. The house was full of cameras except in the toilets. The program was on air the whole day and throughout the whole week. Every candidate had a number and audiences were voting for candidates' during the week via SMS. At the end of the week the votes were counted and the one who had the least points of votes was forced to leave the house. During the week all candidates were supposed to work in a taxi, and earn money for house requirements. The money from the taxi was the only income of the candidates. Many of the participants who were part of those shows became popular and well-known by people in Turkey. Some of them tried to maintain this popularity after the program finished airing on TV. For instance, some of them tried to make a music album, one of them wrote a book about what she experienced during the competition, some of them played some roles in serials, but none of them became permanent celebrities.

BBG, paparazzi and match-making programs in Turkey have some similarities. All of them are based on voyeurism and the invasion of privacy. Through those programs, the private lives of people became popular and their everyday activities became common knowledge. Candidates of BBG were on air and broadcasting 24 hours a day. In Marriage shows people are watched everyday but in the studio, not performing as much as the candidates of BBG. Both program types have ordinary people for the competition. Both of them has some discourses which are repeated

again and again and re-enacting and re-enforcing the established culture such as being a “real man”, and a “real woman”, is discussed in both programs many times.

4.8 Excluding Self as Audience

Even though many of the interviewees follows the programs regularly, just four of them said that they would like to attend to the programs as participant and one of them said she can just attend there as candidate but not as participant.

Even if they like the program, they do not want to be one of them. The people they watch on television are just there to watch but not more. They are abstracting themselves from the ones on screen.

“I have never thought to participate to the programs but if I see and like someone, I may like to go there as a candidate but not as a participant.”
Sevim (25).

“People who like to attend these programs are asocial. They do not go out and meet with new people. I do not need to attend there.” Alkan (18).

“I do not want my children to attend these programs because the participants consciously or unconsciously became a fodder of the media.”
Fatoş (50).

“I never thought to participate to programs because it is foolish, irrational but if my child likes to go, s/he can.” BÜke (24).

As we see in these interviews, the interviewees think that they are Cypriot and being Cypriot is one of the most important barriers for them not to be there. If they are shown on screen, everybody in North Cyprus is going to be aware and gossip about

them. Many of the interviewees feel the social pressure of living in a small society. So the social pressure might influence people's decisions and shape their life.

“Even if I was not engaged I do not like to attend these programs, we are living in a small society, everybody will see and gossip about me and my family. How I am going to walk on the street and how I am going to meet with my relatives then?” Arzu (23).

“I do not want my daughter to attend these programs. Everybody will see her and say that Gönül's daughter is looking for husband, I cannot imagine. Shameful!” Gönül (50).

“I do not think that I will be happy if everybody in our village talk about my daughter. My husband will be very angry.” Sevgün (60).

It is observed that interviewees have a division between being Cypriot and Turkish. They emphasized that Cypriots are more reliable so they do not need to attend such kind of programs. They argue that Cypriots can trust people that they meet in their daily life. Especially Erhan noted that it is unnecessary to have such kind of programs in North Cyprus but they are necessary in Turkey because the Cypriots cannot lie but Turkish people are use to lie and he added that:

“All people know each other in North Cyprus. When I decided to marry with my girlfriend, her father got much information about my family and my life. People cannot hide anything in Cyprus.” Erhan (33).

“In Cyprus, we do not need such kind of programs, people know each other and they can trust. Turkey is a big society, it is difficult to get information about each other. You cannot know if a person is good or

not. The person that you fall in love might be a bad person, how will you know?" Ülfet (62).

It is noticed that the participants of the study put a distance between themselves and the ones they are watching. They like to watch others but not themselves. They believe that there is a class difference between the participants of the program and themselves but it is disappeared and overlapped. Audiences construct a relationship between the people on screen and themselves. There is a "self", "other" relationship. The links between their social identity and the one's on television are different. They as audiences categorize themselves in another place but not next to "others." They do not need to be there, because they have already a better place. As Eleni Andreouli states "These identities, taken on and negotiated by individuals, help them structure their social world." (2010: 13). According to interviewees the participants are not a part of their social world. They are Turkish, they represent a different culture (but this culture is not higher than their culture), and their social relations are different. Andreouli further argues that "Social representations provide people with a variety of positions but these positions are further elaborated by one's relations with an 'other'" (2010:14). Audiences identify themselves and identify others but when they abject the participants, they identify others different than themselves.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

In this chapter the analysis of the interviews and the texts are given as a summary. The research questions and answers are elaborated upon and revisited.

Television is very important in people's life as it is elaborated in the introduction chapter. The improvement of the television in Turkey, the content of television programs, and the popularity of match-making programs are covered in the literature review section. This study aimed to analyse the match-making programs by focusing the audiences perspective in Turkey in 2012. By explanations and the approaches of interviewees are used to analyze the programs.

The interviewees are the people who are usually addicted to the programs or the ones who says that they are not addicted but still like to watch. These are the groups which are mentioned at the beginning of the analyses and classified as first and second group. To reflect reality or to be "reality-like" is one of the most important criteria for the program producers and directors to take into account. Viewers must be convinced that what they are watching has truth, because they need to believe that the reality of what they see on television matches the reality of their own lives. So "reality-like" programs are the programs that tells the story of other people's lives. Human-beings like to learn about others stories and wonder about their lives. Match-making programs have many similarities to reality shows and it is generally believed

that this is one of the reasons that accounts for their very high position in the television ratings.

On the other hand, third group members who says that they do not like programs, thinks that the programs are fabricated and bear no real connection to reality. So they do not like to watch those programs. They do not think that programs are genuine in any way. They concede that the programs have some representations of reality but insist that they are problematic and troublesome. It is noticeable that people who do not like to watch these programs, emphasize that culture, norms, and traditions are very important. In their views if the programs do not contain some symbolic references to the life they know then, then they are not worth watching.

The interviews shows that the programs are imitating reality and this is one of the most important elements of attracting audience's attention. The cultural proximity is indispensable factor of the success. As Xiaowei Huang argues "Cultural proximity provides an easy way to understand the background of the programs; audiences are easily by the plot." (2009: 129). In match-making programs they combined different cultures and practices then present to the audiences. To match people on screen is not a part of their culture but the producers reformed it with arranged marriages. So the acceptance of the audiences provided. The way the programs represent norms and prevailing culture, that the relationships are very similar to the reality or ordinary life. So many people who like to watch them find a connection between their own daily reality and the reality represented in the programs themselves.

Moreover, the conversations between people in the studio, the intimate behaviours of participants and the presenter's manipulation of the audience provides the program

with the feeling that “we are all together”, “we always support each other”. It is possible to see people from different social classes in the program. So the audiences feel they are surrounded by people who are from a variety of economic and social groups and they bond with each other in a way because as audiences they have the opportunity to call the program or to attend as a guest. In this way they connect with a diverse set of people and feel closer.

Furthermore, audiences like to watch match-making programs with their family members, friends and comment on them. Marriage is something which is very important for many people in society especially in Turkey. Marriage is regarded as a blessed relationship while also giving a legal status to the loving relationship of two people. It is because of the significance of marriage in Turkish society that these programs are so widely popular.

People are naturally curious. They wonder about other people’s lives. This is one of the reason they like voyeuristic programs like paparazzi shows, and reality programs like BBG. They like to watch celebrities, semi-celebrities, want to be celebrities, even Warhol’s “15 minute” celebrities.

The interviews evidenced the fact that the presenters of the programs are very essential ingredient in how successful these programs are. For audiences they are the most precious part of the show. It is clear from the research that the presenter is a significant factor in the popularity of the program and in whether audiences will tune in to watch it. It is understood that “good program” refers to being honest, friendly, open-hearted, and loyal. Conversely, the interviewees who said that they do not like to watch the programs argued that the presenters of the programs were dishonest,

unsympathetic, rude and disrespectful. So there is a clear relationship between the popularity of a program and the image that the audience has of its presenter.

Match-making programs represent womanhood with motherhood. A proper woman should marry and should be a “proper” wife who serves and obeys to her husband, elders and children. When a woman became a wife and mother, she goes up in to a higher social class. If she does not have a husband, there will not be anyone to protect her honor so her honor and privacy will be under the threat. However while they are trying to match people to marry, they betray all of participants privacy to the public and the marriage which is a private institution became public and voyeured by audiences.

To sum up, the imitation of the reality and the attitudes of the presenter incite the feelings of the viewers. They feel close to the “good girls” and play neighbourhood game together. In addition, the voyeurism is very effective and tempt people to watch programs as if they are watching paparazzi programs. Even if the viewers do not agree that the program identify themselves, they can not refuse to watch the programs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The List of Participants

	Name	Age	Status	Work
1	Sevim	60	Married	Retired
2	Tülin	65	Married	Retired
3	Sevgün	60	Married	Unemployed
4	Türkan	55	Married	Business Executive
5	Ülfet	62	Married	Unemployed
6	Işık	50	Married	Sales manager
7	Ilper	45	Married	Sales manager
8	Hatice	65	Married	Unemployed
9	Hanım	65	Married	Private Sector
10	Gönül	50	Married	Employee
11	Belgin	55	Married	House wife
12	Fatoş	50	Married	Sales Manager
13	Naciye	75	Married	Unemployed
14	Sevilay	65	Widowed	Unemployed
15	Senem	26	Engaged	Airline Hostess
16	Nebile	18	Engaged	Unemployed
17	Arzu	23	Engaged	Sales Manager
18	Sevim	25	Single	Business Executive
19	Büke	24	Single	Teller
20	Coşku	24	Single	Bookkeeper
21	Emine	39	Single	Unemployed
22	İsmail	65	Married	Retired
23	Erhan	33	Married	Business Executive
24	Erçin	38	Married	Employee
25	Hasan	30	Married	Teacher
26	Volkan	50	Married	Employee
27	Kemal	36	Married	Business Executive
28	Pertev	40	Married	Employee
29	Nihat	37	Widowed	Police
30	Kemal	25	Single	Student
31	Alkan	18	Single	Student
32	Burçin	32	Single	Bank Employee
33	Refik	30	Single	Unemployed
34	Kaan	24	Single	Barista
35	Onur	22	Single	Barista
36	Muhittin	32	Single	Student

Appendix B: The Research Questions

1 - How long have you been watching the match-making programs? When did you realize the match-making programs?

2 - There are many different match-making programs in Turkey? Do you prefer any particular program or not? Why?

3 - What is the most important thing that attracts you to watch the match-making programs? (Through this question it is going to be elaborated if they have any favorite person, icon in the program which keeps them watch).

4 - What are the positive ways of match-making programs? Can you say that this things in the programs are useful?

5 - What are the negative ways of match-making programs? Can you say that I do not like this part of the program?

6 - Would you like to attend to match-making programs and to marry there? (If the participant does not have children).

7 - What do you think if your child likes to attend match-making programs as candidate or participant? (If the participant has children).

8 - Why do you think people prefer to be candidate in these programs?

