GENDER, VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL NORMS IN TURKISH PSYCHOLOGICAL DRAMAS

YASEMİN BAHLOUL NİRUN

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Yasemin Bahloul Nirun

Boğaziçi University

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Gender, Violence and Social Norms in Turkish Psychological Dramas

The thesis of Yasemin Bahloul Nirun

has been approved by:

Assoc. Prof. Selcan Kaynak _____
(Thesis Advisor)

Assoc. Prof. Dilek Çınar _____

Assist. Prof. Alev Çavdar Sideris _____
(External Member)

June 2022

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I, Yasemin Bahloul Nirun, certify that

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ABSTRACT

Gender, Violence and Social Norms in Turkish Psychological Dramas

TV series have been an important part of the Turkish economy for the last two decades. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the psychological dramas suddenly took over the television. The psychiatrist, writer and producer Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu produced four TV series based on her own books, in which she wrote about the lives of her patients. One of these series, named the Red Room (Kırmızı Oda), is a drama that is filmed in a psychiatry room that is almost an exact replica of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu's therapy room. The series became an extreme success story due to its high ratings and viewing records. The production team claims that their mission is to stop the violence with this carefully structured show, which also received appreciation and support from the government institutions. This thesis does not focus on the psychological reasons behind the increased attention of the audience; instead it aims to analyze the sociological and political positioning of the popular dramas within the dynamics of the current Turkish media. Considering the amount of influence and power that the current government has on the structure of the Turkish media, the strong ideologies embedded in the series towards gender, violence, society, mental illness and most importantly the protection of the family, are far from coincidental. This thesis aims to analyze the social codes that are embedded and portrayed in the Red Room based on gender, violence and family to further understand the presentation of the ideologies in power through the current media in Turkey.

ÖZET

Gender, Violence and Social Norms in Turkish Psychological Dramas

Yaklaşık son yirmi yıldır Türkiye'de televizyon dizileri ekonominin önemli bir parçası haline geldi. Ancak özellikle COVID-19 salgınından sonra Türkiye'de psikoloji içerikli veya psikolojik unsur taşıyan dizilerin sayısında ciddi bir artış oldu. Bu trende en çok katkıyı sağlayan, alanındaki başarısıyla dikkat çeken bir isim oldu. Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu psikiyatr, yazar ve yapımcı kimlikleriyle sektörde sadece birkaç yılda büyük bir etkiye ulaştı. Yaklaşık dört dizisinin aynı zamanlarda farklı kanallarda gündeme gelmesiyle ve her birinin çok yüksek reyting sıralamalarına ulaşmasıyla başarısı dikkat çekti. Bu başarının ilgi çekici örneği ise kendi terapi odasından hikayeleri birebir aktardığı dizisi Kırmızı Oda oldu. Bu dizi tamamen bir terapi odasında geçmesinin yanı sıra danışanların özel hayatlarından, bilinçaltından geçenlere, en derin sırlarından, korkularına normalde izleyicinin görmesinin imkansız olduğu bilgileri izleyiciye iç alandan sundu. Dizi açık bir şekilde şiddeti durdurma misyonuyla üretildi ve bu içeriğin birçok alanına yansıtıldı. Bu tez, Türkiye'deki güncel medya yapılarını ve bu dizinin hükümet oluşumlarından aldığı direkt desteği göz önünde bulundurarak bu misyonun rastlantısal olmadığını ve dizinin Türkiye'nin güncel siyasal ve sosyal yapısıyla ilgili bir ayna etkisi gösterişini açıklamak amacıyla yazılmıştır. Dizide çok kez vurgulanan cinsiyet, şiddet, toplum, akıl sağlığı ve ailenin korunması gibi konulara yönelik sunulan bakış açılarının da siyasi iktidar tarafından desteklenen ve sunulan ideolojiyle nasıl örtüştüğü araştırılmıştır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The TV series of Turkey has become a success story both within Turkey and in other countries due to its high ratings. While the export numbers of Turkish TV series to other countries are worth analyzing, Turkish society has its own dynamic with the immensely popular series that have been shaping society and popular culture in many ways for the last few decades.

Violence has been a core theme of Turkish TV series because the audience mostly preferred watching violent stories of mafia and powerful men on television. Violence and the portrayal of women within the context of these TV series are still found extremely problematic by the public (RTÜK, 2019, p. 55), however due to the high ratings the series still contain violent scenes and characters. This discussion on violence, women and television series reflect the many layers of the society that the institutions and the society might ignore otherwise as the media is a strong representation of invisible social structures that form the society.

Interestingly, a new trend appeared on Turkish television, psychological TV series, which can be understood as TV series that contain an emphasized psychological perspective towards the characters or psychological elements such as psychologists, doctors, mentally ill people etc. These series captured the attention of the audiences and the producers in the last few years however a name came forward amongst many, psychiatrist/writer Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu, who produced four psychological TV series based on her books that contain the stories of her patients'. All of these four shows have had immensely high ratings however *The Red Room* (Kırmızı Oda) stands as a different example of this newly trending genre as the series

tells the stories of the people who come to a psychiatric clinic and most of the show consists of the scenes that happen within the Red Room, the room of a psychiatrist. The main character of the series, Dr. Manolya, is a representation of the psychiatrist Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu and the room is a replica of her office in real life.

The Red Room is a show with a mission to stop the violence within the families and many channels, media companies and governmental institutions that are related to the government in power have supported the show. The Red Room tells stories of violence from an interior perspective that is through the subjective experience of the character and in the therapy room, which differentiates the show from its predecessors where violence is shown externally. The series focuses on psychological violence, violence's effects on individuals and the loop of violence within the generations of families; however the series ignores all aspects of violence that are not individual. The gender inequality, the patriarchal system, economic inequalities, dysfunctional governmental institutions, the flaws of the law system and many other social aspects of violence are invisible throughout the series.

The Red Room has been at the center of many arguments due to its progressive nature, its strong storylines based on real-life stories and its famous cast; however it has also been criticized due to its portrayal of psychotherapy as unrealistic. Nevertheless, these arguments regarding the truthfulness of the show and the influence on the audience's expectations from a psychological perspective are not the subject of this thesis. This thesis aims to analyze the social and political portrayal of reinforced values within the show in order to present a different perspective to understand how the dominant ideologies are manifested through the media.

The Red Room had immensely high ratings[1] and the series caused intense conversations each week on social media proving that the audiences fully embraced the show and reacted to it. While many discussed the psychological aspects of the series, criticizing the show as a series where the producers untruthfully project what happens inside a psychiatry clinic, the Red Room also reflects a societal perspective of today due to its claim to be a project with a mission to stop the violence.

The claim to this mission is very sensitive in a time like today in Turkey because of the many political events and discussions happening related to women and violence within the society. Making of a series to prevent violence against women and to reflect the truth of Turkish society would have to contain some sort of a societal context however the Red Room as a TV series succeed to make violence look like an endgame of individual and familial wrong doings whereas it should also be explained as a result of governmental and societal actions. In view of the fact that the Ministry of Family supported the series with its mission to stop the violence by producing a public service ad and filming the actors and actresses that take part in the series, one can conclude that the series' approach toward violence and women aligns with the approach of the government in power.

Consequently, analyzing the show's codes that define violence, women, men, family, society and mental illness reflect the codes of current Turkish politics and the society with respect to gender and social hierarchies. The series shows the transformation of the characters from mentally ill, dysfunctional people to beneficial, healed individuals of the society. The characters all go through a resembling journey to heal and in the end the psychiatrist, Dr. Manolya guides them into a certain way of

[1] For further information please see Appendix A

healing which always validates certain social norms and functionality of an individual within a societal institution, mostly within the family.

The series use a pattern to explain the reasons that cause the individuals to experience violence. Dr. Manolya, who is a representation of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu herself, explains this pattern as the Pattern of Destiny (Kader Motifi). The Pattern of Destiny, which is described as the core reason for violence in the lives of the victims and the offenders, is formed under the dynamics of the family home. Dr. Manolya refers to the Pattern of Destiny as an individual's personal fate however the dynamics that supposedly shape this violent destiny are caused by societal values at the core. Within the series, the values of family and gender roles are emphasized often. Though there are many characters from many different social and economical groups the gender roles are usually centered on an idealized balance where men are more powerful than women within the unit of the family. The gender roles are strongly established within the series to the point that almost all characters agree on the same social contract that empowers men through their division of roles within the family and society.

The functioning society model that is portrayed through the show, where family exists as the core of the society, mothers are responsible for children's growth and a person's fate is only shaped by what happens in the house they were born to, is guarded by authority figures that are mostly men. The balance of authority is a key figure because it shapes the values and morals of the individuals without referring to the society or any other governmental institution. The authority represents the pressure of the society and affects the actions of every character. This authority is transferred to Dr. Manolya to ensure the healing and the reintegration of the patients to the society.

The series claims to fight against domestic violence however the main theme of the series revolves around the importance of family and the series emphasizes the role of women in the making of the family instead of encouraging liberation and equality for all in order to battle violence. Thus, this thesis aims to analyze how the Red Room, the most popular psychological drama of Turkish television, reproduces these social concepts, such as gender inequality, violence and prioritization of the family.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Violence in media

This chapter aims to define violence and its relationship with concepts such as power and patriarchy. Furthermore, the portrayal of violence on media is discussed as a potential tool to implicate certain values of those in power. Television series have an immense impact on the audiences especially through the demonstration of violent scenes. Thus many have analyzed how the television series conceptualized and normalized violence in alliance with patriarchal values. Apart from the demonstration of physical and psychological violence on TV, the symbolic violence is also recognized as an active part of a debate about television and its effect on audiences. The portrayal of physical, psychological and symbolic violence on television is a choice of those in power and an instrument of political balance.

2.1.1 Violence and patriarchy

George Gerbner defines violence as a social relationship where: “People hurt or kill to force (or deter) unwanted behavior, to dominate, to terrorize. It demonstrates power: who can get away with what against whom” (Gerbner, Morgan & Signorielli, 1993). Potter defines violence as “a violation of character’s physical or emotional well-being. It includes two key elements – intentionality and harm – at least one of which must be present” (Potter, 1999, p.2). As there are many ways to define what violence is, some statements don’t really fulfill the geographical meaning of violence for every group. Nevertheless the emphasis on the relationship between violence and power is present almost in all of the definitions. Violence might be explained as a

tool of balance within a society or within an individual's relationship with the self, or with another.

According to Hannah Arendt, violence is about power and the attention on violence is misplaced, as one should be more focused on the dynamics of power to better understand the social structure behind violence (Arendt, 1969). Arendt (1969) defines violence, as the opposite of power because violence happens when power is in jeopardy whereas when power is absolute there is no place for violence. Governments can either rule through violence or rule through the power because power is an investment whereas violence is an instrument. Arendt argues that both violence and power can help a government to obtain its political goals but the opposite relationship the two have is a direct one. Arendt summarizes this relation between the two terms as: "Loss of power becomes a temptation to substitute violence for power" (Arendt, 1969, p.54). Thus violence can be defined as a sign of loss of power and a wish to reinsure the realization of certain political goals of a group.

Violence, with all its forms, happens so often in daily life that sometimes it is normalized; however it is not always physical. The World Health Assembly announced in 1996 that violence became a major public health issue (World Report on Violence and Health, 2002). The World Health Assembly (2002) categorizes the types of violence into three main groups: self-directed violence, interpersonal violence and collective violence. All three categories can carry physical, psychological and neglecting characteristics. Interpersonal and collective abuse can also have a sexual base. Self-directed violence consists suicidal behavior and/or self-abuse. Interpersonal violence is either from a family member (a partner, a child or an

elder) or from a community (acquaintance or stranger). Finally, collective violence can be social, political or economic.

The interpersonal violence mostly occurs as domestic violence and is defined as “a pattern of behavior in any relationship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner” (United Nations, 2022). Domestic violence can be physical, economic, psychological or even symbolical and can happen to anyone whereas gender-based violence “refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender”, which derives from “gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms” (UNHCR, 2022). Patriarchy is a difficult word to define in a simple way due to the ongoing discussions about the terminology. Gerda Lerner’s (1986, p.293) definition of patriarchy is:

> The manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does not imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources.

Patriarchy, as it is “the institutionalized system of male dominance”, is seen as the main reason behind gender-based violence. Male violence is an outcome of patriarchy and it is a socially constructed phenomenon and not a biological fact. Male violence is a set of organized behaviors that are structured by hierarchies based on gender, age, class and ethnicity (Sancar, 2008, p.216). Mostly men, and sometimes women who borrow the authority from men, act on behalf of this system. The critical feminist theories argue that in modern patriarchal societies, men are granted the right to violence as a privilege. Even though men do not use violence directly, they benefit from the privileges of patriarchy and thus male violence in society. Similarly, even though women object to and react to singular acts of

violence in life, they experience some part of the masculine domination and violence through the institutions and other social structures that patriarchy dominates.

2.1.2 The portrayal of violence in the media

As nothing is arbitrary on media, the portrayal of violence is considered mostly a deliberate choice of the producers. According to Fiske, "…reality is already encoded, or rather the only way we can perceive and make sense of reality is by the codes of our culture" (Fiske, 2010, p.4). The content on television is never really raw on the contrary it is a reality formed by a reproduction of the social codes. Fiske introduces the concept of encoding and decoding to explain how social-political meaning is reproduced through television shows. Fiske (2010, p.5), describes the codes of television on three levels: reality, representation and ideology. The first sets of codes are "appearance, dress, make-up, environment, behavior, speech, gesture, expression etc." which are encoded by the second set of codes, "technical codes" such as "camera, lighting, editing, music, sound" (Fiske, 2010). The technical codes shape the representations by using the "narrative, conflict, character, action, dialogue, setting casting etc." which can be described as "conventional representational codes". These two levels of reproduction consist of reality and representation however what makes television an ideological tool is what John Fiske describes as "ideological codes", which are "individualism, patriarchy, race, class, materialism, capitalism etc." TV shows encode meaning through codes that audiences decode meaning from.

Gerbner differentiates television violence and real-life violence and argues that violence on media is problematic by nature because it promotes fear and vulnerability and excludes certain groups such as minorities, women, elders etc

(Gerbner, Morgan & Signorielli, 1993). Gerbner doesn't question the reasons behind violence as it is a greater discussion however he asks: "what contribution does constant exposure to particular scenarios of violence and terror make to different groups' conceptions of their own risks and vulnerabilities?" (Gerbner, Morgan & Signorielli, 1993).

Gerbner (1972, p.62), defines the amount of violence in a TV series as a result of programming policy. He defines the fundamental role of violence in TV series as "the maintenance of power". He explains that symbolic functions carry the power and violence is merely a way to use that power from the dominant perspective. These symbolic functions produce symbolic violence in the sense that the TV series shape the audiences towards the fear of danger and the cultivation of certain values (Gerbner, 1972, p.65).

The effects of media on the audiences have been denied by some whereas some researchers argue that the violence on media directly have consequences on the lives of the audiences. Violence on television series is debatable for all however for the children the question is even more risky. The National Television Violence Study in the United States examines the most dangerous types of representation of violence in the media. The four types of representation of violence that cause the underestimation of its real harms are unpunished violence, painless violence, happy violence and heroic violence (Carter, 2003, p.3). Unpunished violence occurs in many TV series where the villains are not properly punished for their violent acts, proving to the audiences that violence is not necessarily punished whereas painless violence is present when the characters that are abused or violent with others don't feel any pain. This painless violence form supposedly encourages the audiences towards a violent life because it empowers the belief that they won't hurt themselves

or anyone, cause injuries or even death because of violence. Happy violence happens in comedic scenes or children's cartoons because the violent act becomes humor. Heroic violence may be the most problematic one because watching the heroes, the good guys initiate violence end up as a celebratory, honorable act for them. The heroes who save others get celebrated whereas a villain in a drama series would not receive their reward for the violent act making the hero's violence even more dangerous in terms of encouragement towards a violent behavior through the media.

In Turkey, the duration of watching television is recorded as an average of 4 hours 34 minutes per day, especially through the primetime (Kaya, 2020). In a research study that has been conducted in Turkey, where the verbal and psychological violence content was the highest type of violence conducted in the TV series that were analyzed for the study, with a rate of 98.8% (Kaya, 2020). The criteria for the acts of psychological violence are defined as sadness, hurt, shock, pressure to feel someone threatened, teasing, intimidation, resentment, ignoring, showing weapons, holding hostage etc.

2.1.3 Symbolic violence

Gerbner defines symbolic violence as a literal "show of force" (Oulette, 1997). Symbolic violence can also be referred to invisible violence however the answer to what is violence and what is legal or illegal is really defined by the government in power (Özsöz, 2014). Through written rules, such as the law, the power to control violence in society is given to the government in power. The government has the means to use physical violence on its people however every government would prefer to adjust the people to their values to avoid any rebellious conflict. Cihad Özsöz (2014) argues that violence and government in power are twins according to

Somersan. The institutionalization of violence paves the way for symbolic violence due to the humane capacity of thinking conceptually and the symbolism of language. Symbolic violence can take the shape of restriction, judgment or neglect and it can also be invisible and gentle. Symbolic violence exploits the dominated through a softer set of actions sometimes presented with love and affection (Özsöz, 2014). This softness of symbolic violence helps it become invisible due to the hegemonic relationship between the dominated and the dominant. The *habitus* of the dominated is aligned with the social structu itres and values of domination in the sense that the dominated gives permission to dominance through the acceptance of certain social values (Özsöz, 2014).

Television is considered one of the main tools of symbolic violence. Bourdieu discusses that television can either be an "extraordinary instrument of direct democracy" or an instrument of "symbolic oppression" (Bourdieu, 1996, p.13). He also argues that television can be used for the maintenance of the symbolic order established by the government in power. Bourdieu describes symbolic violence as "violence wielded with tacit complicity between its victims and its agents, insofar as both remain unconscious of submitting to or wielding it" (Bourdieu, 1996, p.13). Symbolic violence is invisible thus it dangerously affects the actions of the people without them recognizing it. The acceptance of symbolic violence can happen through television where the reproduction of certain values happens through programming policy. Bourdieu (1996, p.19) argues that the reproduction happens through hiding things and showing something different on television. In some cases the reconstruction of reality occurs in a way that makes the audiences perceive what's happening in a completely different way by designating the reality with a different set of meanings (Bourdieu, 1996). The formation of Television News is a

great example in order to understand the reproduction of the truth by hiding some things instead of showing them. For example, if a news channel does not show certain aspects of a war; it still contributes to the manipulation of the audiences from an indirect perspective.

The symbolic function of television includes broadcasting content that proposes and means something to everyone. The content that is presented won't surprise the audience as it is about subjects that are generally agreed on and won't "touch anything important". Bourdieu relates symbolic violence directly to the state because he defines the state as "the central bank of symbolic violence" (Wacquant, 2014). He argues that the state has the power to use legitimized physical violence through police and military however the state also has access to symbolical violence as a tool through education, law or media as the state can reproduce the reality of daily life through symbolical violence.

Masculine domination is reproduced through symbolic violence. Bourdieu (2002, p.52) defines the masculine domination as the result of not only the actions of men who use symbolic and physical violence but also the effort of institutions such as family, religious institutions, schools, states that reproduce a certain product. Symbolic violence is reproduced through the relationship of the dominated with the dominant because the only forms of relation known to the dominated are the values that support the system that favors the dominant.

Media reproduce masculine domination in relation to symbolic violence. Through symbolic violence, media reproduces gender inequalities by legitimizing masculine domination. Symbolic violence doesn't present a new theory or a new mindset for domination it strengthens the existing social structure. The internalization of the social structures causes the reproduction of the values that

shaped the structures such as masculine domination. Cultural devices such as television series are great tools for the reproduction of symbolic violence because it has a mirroring effect on audiences as they watch some kind of a representation of themselves on screen (Bourdieu, 1996). The unconscious process of reproduction in media through symbolic violence is dangerous in a different way than physical violence on TV and should also be analyzed carefully in order to expose the reproduction of social, especially gender-based, inequalities it proposes due to its invisibility as a form of violence and domination.

2.2 Gender roles and hegemony

2.2.1 Hegemonic masculinity

Mosco defines hegemony as "a lived network of mutually constituting meanings and values, which, as they are experienced as practices, appear to be mutually confirming." (Park, 2009). Hegemony, as the concept's original thinker Antonio Gramsci defines it, is about the ways that the ruling class maintains their power of domination over the rest (Gramsci, Hoare & Nowell-Smith, 1999). The hegemony is realized through consent and not violence. Gramsci refers to the consent given by the subjugated as common sense and the manipulation is made in the areas of language, culture and morality. The hegemony of the ruling class can change through social action however as the negotiation between the ruling class and the dominated class exists indefinitely, economic, social or political tension of the dominated class might result in a conflict. Gramsci also argues that consent and coercion are complementary parts of hegemonic ideology.

Gramsci's definition of hegemony doesn't only consist of physical dominance. In his Prison Notebooks, he developed a concept called "cultural hegemony" (Gramsci et al., 1999). Gramsci further analyzes this concept from a Marxist standing point, arguing that media and culture reproduce the exploitative systems of capitalism.

Raewyn Connell first defined the concept of hegemonic masculinity in the 1980s as a proposal to explain the social inequalities and hierarchies that developed in terms of gender and class (Messerschmidt, 2019, p.830). Hegemonic masculinity is a structure that revolves around the positioning of the women however it also influences a hierarchy amongst men themselves (Connell, 1987). Connell changed the description of hegemonic masculinity over time to make it a more inclusive statement towards all kinds of inequalities that happen due to the structures of patriarchy including the inequalities between men themselves. Connell (1987, p.269) describes hegemonic masculinity as a structure that rules within private life and cultural field. According to Connell, hegemonic masculinity doesn't only happen through physical violence, such as when a group of men force other groups to obey them with a forceful method such as gun power. Examples of hegemonic masculinity might be ways of domination through religious practice, faith, mass media content, aid, state-related tax methods etc. As the two concepts are not the same hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal violence can exist simultaneously. Hegemonic masculinity is not about domination based on superiority however hegemony and superiority are concepts that align (Connell, 1987, p.269). Physical or economic violence cultivates hegemonic masculinity and ideologies uphold those with power. Patriarchy, as a social structure that conquers daily life, upholds the men and designates the men as the superior in a society. Ironically, academic literature about

masculinity is a recently developing field in social sciences in comparison to female studies. This can be explained by patriarchy's deeply rooted existence in modern societies. For this reason, studies of patriarchy through masculine domination are valuable because they will expose the hidden patriarchal norms in daily life. The studies are beneficial but difficult because men are both the product and the producer of the male dominant culture as they are both owners and slaves of patriarchal ideology (Wetherell & Edley, 2014).

As intertwined as the two concepts are, Connell argues that they are not the same. According to Connell, in societies there are no absolute cultural hegemonies and that is why there is always a constant battle for balance to maintain the preexisting system. Hegemonic masculinity is closer in definition to ideals of male gender than the reality of it. Especially through the usage of mass media, symbolic features reproduce hegemonic masculinity and hegemonic masculinity is a public structure and not a private one (Connell, 1987, p.270). According to Connell, a small group of men have the idealized qualities that hegemonic masculinity upholds whereas most of the men cooperate to sustain these values for the privileges it grants them.

Hegemonic masculinity is institutionalized through the structure that all members of modern society are accustomed to and by these structures women themselves become a part of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987, p.273). Women are identified in ways that are related to the male dominance of the society, which leads to a non-existence of a social form of women relationships similar to hegemonic masculinity. As it might be a limiting and condescending approach, Connell argues that the social existence of womanhood can't escape the global hegemony of heterosexual men.

2.2.2 Gender inequalities and gender roles

Gender is, by the simplest definition, constructed by cultural and social patterns in relation to the biological sexes. Gender is formed by the social and symbolic implications that construct it, which influences the individual's definition of self, life and social relations (Özer, 2019). Bourdieu argues that symbolic violence reproduces gender relations to ensure the conditions for masculine domination (Özer, 2019, P.25).

Gender roles are discussed as a part of a very large literature on sex roles that accumulated over the last ninety years thus it is difficult to understand which theories shape the concept (Connell, 1987, p.34). Connell discusses the common rational distinctions of the theory of sex roles on five levels in her book. The first two levels are about the actor and the script of the game that required the roles: the analytical distinction between the individual and the societal position that they occupy, the totality of actions and behaviors that are appropriate for that specific position. The rest are about the tools of presenting the game such as: the expectations and norms that determine the appropriate actions, the expectations that are determined by people who occupy the opposed positions and the awards or punishments that push people to act in the expected way.

From Connell's united perspective of different theories of sex roles, she concludes that social structure coexists with the formation of an individual's personality. The individuals either learn the appropriate roles or internalize them through socialization. The determinants of the socialization process of the individuals happen through mothers, families, teachers, friend groups and the media. Some social scientists such as Talcott Parsons, agree with Freud in the sense that the

socialization occurs in the subconscious. The theory of sex roles contributed greatly to gender discussions however it is not enough because they are based on a hetero-normative nuclear understanding of a family that is not inclusive.

Inequalities exist beyond the definition of gender. Gender inequalities create more societal inequalities as a power dynamic manipulated by the government. Serpil Sancar (2008, p.305) discusses gender inequalities as a result of the patriarchal structures in modern societies. Many see the gender inequalities as a biological fact and an inevitable life path however this approach is merely a way to strengthen the patriarchy that feeds the inequalities. The superiority of men is a structure accepted beyond religion, conservatism or class. Sancar argues that in Turkey mothers are romanticized and upheld however male-dominated values forbid learning from the mother as an experience.

Sancar presents data related to male dominance in Turkey by interviewing different men. Many men uphold being a family father, being able to provide for their family and being self-sufficient in terms of money and success. Some reflections are: “The marriage is good if you have money”, “You must work and your wife must handle house chores”, “The father has all the saying in a home; you can’t object to him” etc… Being a family father is a performance that requires a sexually and morally loyal, moneymaking father figure (Sancar, 2008, p.66). The men as family fathers require women who fulfill a complementary role within the family. An ideal woman must be a good servant to the guests, handy, a good cook, respectful to the husband’s family, cheerful, and not demanding. Working wives and businessmen are two specialized categories. Working wives are conflicting because they are expected to undertake the responsibilities of homemaking all by themselves whereas they share the same working hours with their husbands (Sancar, 2008, p.70).

This dynamic hurts the authority of the family fathers and thus many men objects to their wives' career or get involved in choosing a suitable career for her such as teaching or banking. Businessmen on the other hand hold many qualities of male dominance because they hold the capital. Sancar calls this as the maleness of capital and defines these men as a representation of authority, socially conservative, heterosexual, believers in the biological and consequently social differences between men and women, participants to an understanding of work division based on gender etc. The ideal men are successful, loyal and compassionate towards their wives and family.

2.3 Reproduction of social values through the media

2.3.1 Habitus and the internalization of social values

Habitus is a key concept that is analyzed in a detailed manner by Pierre Bourdieu and is mainly used to understand and make sense of the argument of dualism within the context of social sciences. This argument of dualism mainly refers to the opposition of objectivity and subjectivity in social sciences (Çeğin, 2010, p.307). Pierre Bourdieu tries to overcome the previously called conflict between the individual action and the social structure; instead he reunites them under his discussions related to the concept of habitus. In order to explain habitus, Swartz (2012, p.9) asks the following questions: *"*What motivates human action? Do individuals act in response to external causes as much mainstream academic sociology tends to assume? Is individual action determined by "culture", "social structure," or "mode of production"*?* Swartz sees habitus as an answer to this specific question and rephrases

habitus, the key concept of Bourdieu, as a "structural theory of practice that connects action to culture, structure and power."

As habitus is a very complex concept that has been restructured by many academics over time, the concept refers to many dimensions of social structures and individual action; however, habitus is usually used as a concept to explain the unseen cloud that affects the individual to act or think in a certain way. Swartz (2012, p.104) define habitus as "a sort of deep-structuring cultural matrix that generates self-fulfilling prophecies according to different class opportunities." According to his analysis of the concept, individuals internalize certain objective norms that are common to a certain class or group that they feel like they belong to. The internalization of this knowledge of the self is not discussed as an objective or a subjective truth but rather a combination of both due to the fact that it derives from the social structure but it flourishes in the mind of an individual affecting their actions.

The habitus happens as an end result of primary socialization and it directs the perception of the individual by making them believe that certain aspects of life will function in predetermined ways due to their social positioning within a group or the society. The belonging of an individual to a social, economic or another type of class shapes their habitus and their habitus shapes their personality, their approach to life, their actions as an individual and thus their whole existence. The internalization of the external is not always observable from the outside; especially for the individuals themselves. The habitus may affect an individual's course of actions and their life story however as Swartz (2012, p.107) explains this as:

> Habitus is fairly resistant to change, since primary socialization in Bourdieu's view is more formative of internal dispositions than subsequent socialization experiences. There is an ongoing adaptation process as habitus encounters new situations.

As the dispositions of the individual from the primary socialization can't be changed easily Bourdieu discusses that middle-class families are more prone to change of habitus through secondary socialization in life than working-class families, meaning that the inequality reproduces itself due to the difference in social, economical and other classes. To escape or to change the habitus, as it may be hard, have the meaning of changing the actions of the individuals.

Habitus is also accepted as inadequate to explain all behaviors of an individual because there are always other factors in motion and other modes of domination; however, as Calhoun discusses, "habitus works best in situations that lack rituals and established protocol" (Swartz, 2012, p.113) which makes the daily actions of everyday life a favorable foundation for the domination.

2.3.2 Family and conservatism as the core social values in Turkey

According to the findings of the research on conservatism in Turkey by Yilmaz (2012) the most important social institution that must be preserved is the family according to participants. In 2006, %45,6 of the participants chose the family as the most important institution whereas in 2012 this percentage increased to %50,4 proving that the preservation of the family as a social institution became even more important over the years. This research also shows that conservatism in Turkey has somewhat grown as a middle ground considering the fact that the number of those who think they are strictly conservative and those who think they are not conservative at all decreased. Nevertheless the number of those who think they are mildly conservative increased. Especially the preservation of the family as a social institution became more important for those who define themselves as mildly conservative.

One of the questions of the research is if the participants agree with the idea that "…people are weak and if they have no authority over them, they will make wrong decisions…" In 2006 %70 agreed to this idea whereas %60 agreed in 2012 concluding that still a very high percentage of the participants feel they need an authority in order to be protected. On the other hand, the researchers propose that individualization in Turkey has accelerated from 2006 to 2012. The participants were asked which one of three political values; liberty, equality and solidarity must be conserved most importantly. In 2006 the value that was chosen as the most important value to be conserved was equality with a percentage of %41,6 however in 2012 the most popular answer was liberty with a percentage of %42,5. The shift happened because the participants who chose solidarity in 2006 changed their minds and chose liberty in 2012. The researchers evaluate this data as a conclusion of individualization in Turkish society.

The data shows that the individualization process in Turkish society has accelerated because the majority chose liberty as the most important political value to be conserved. This research proves that the Turkish society has become more individualistic and liberal but family-oriented over time.

The data from Hakan Yılmaz's research also concludes that in Turkey conservatism is shaped around the women as the core of the family regarding their roles as wives and mothers because the family is the social institution that must be preserved primarily. According to the evaluation, in Turkey, the ideal women are seen as:

> Equals to men in the eyes of the law, people who can gain money if necessary with the condition that they do not neglect their responsibilities within the family as the wife and the mother and if they do they quit their job, and people who should not affect their husband badly by harming their codes of honor.

As this data proves, women take center place within the unit of family, as they have to balance their husbands and their children.

Ersin Kalaycıoğlu (2007, p.241) defines conservatism as the core values of the right-wing belief system in Turkey as a part of "traditionalism, religiosity, and localism…" Family, religion and nationalism are also in relation to conservatism's core values however conservatism in Turkey is about the protection of the traditions, customs, and institutions.

Hikmet Kocamaner emphasizes the term "New Turkey" to explain the current positioning of family and conservatism in Turkey as the term signals "the replacement of the ancient regime and the construction of a new political system". In his article, he refers to the AKP party program where the party is not focused on Islamism but on conservatism and family-oriented policies. Kocamaner analyzes that the whole regime that the AKP forms as "New Turkey", revolves around the emphasis on family and protecting the family. The restatement of the family institution and the fact that it requires strengthening has been a long priority of the AKP government. The family crisis discourse has been at the center of the party's agenda. Kocamaner explains the political purpose of this discourse as strengthening the family not only through policies but also through certain socio-economical projects. The belief in power is that if the family values were saved from deteriorating many problems in the society would be fixed due to the control and discipline of the individuals within the family. The Islamic televisions prior to AKP, for example, were more focused on religion however for the last 15 years they have developed content on family and the solution of the disputes within a family (Kocamaner, 2017, p.692). AKP situate the family as the source of socio-economical instabilities, poverty, unemployment, crime and even terrorism. Kocamaner

describes this approach of the party in power toward the family institution, as "people wouldn't be prone to crime if their family was not deteriorating."

Minister of Religious Affairs had only jurisdiction restricted to context related to religion however since 2003 they have opened family guidance offices in order to solve the familial disputes by religious advice. This shift is not about secularism or Islamism but the government's heterogeneous project to bring different disciplines and institutions to strengthen the family. Hikmet Kocamaner (2017, p.678) argues this motivation behind strengthening the family as "…rationalities and techniques of governance aiming to cultivate responsibilized citizen-subjects for the sake of alleviating the state's responsibility for provisioning social and welfare services."

The family-oriented policies exist in the field of media too. Besides the religious programs that participate in family-oriented television programming, there are reality shows and daily shows for women where family crises and values are discussed through the show. Kocamaner (2017, p.676) discusses the aim of these shows as strengthening the family values and stopping the corrosion of the moral fabric of the family.

Kocamaner (2017, p.678) discusses the AKP's motivation towards prioritizing family values with the AKP government's neoconservative identity as the weakened social systems by the neoliberal policies are being replaced within the family. From a critical perspective of these neoliberal social policies, Kocamaner (2017, p.679) presents Donzelot's argument, which is even though the state doesn't intervene with the family in a direct way, families become responsible for their own welfare mentally, physically, economically through expert guidance from certain authorities in their field. This "government through family" mentality needs a strong

family with deeply protected family values where the family members care for the elderly, the children and each other. To protect the structural integrity of the family, one must have the traditional family values defined by Kocamaner as selflessness, self-sacrifice, devotion, caring, motherly love, and compassion.

The roles within the family are not the same because the men are the leaders of the household whereas the women carry childbearing responsibilities. Men as the breadwinners and women as the homemakers maintain the well-being of a family which allows an effective governance through the family since governmental institutions are not primarily responsible when the family themselves are fully responsible for their well-being. Kocamaner (2017, p.700) calls AKP's government a neo-conservative and a pronatalist one:

> While securing men's roles as heads of household, recent family-related government policies rely on women's traditional reproductive, childbearing, caregiver roles and encourage them to stay at home as homemakers rather than seeking employment (thereby rendering them financially dependent on their husbands and/or other family members).

Faith based groups outside of Turkey, in classically defined secular societies, such as USA, also portray a similar characteristic in terms of acting as the protector of the family unit. Nevertheless the protection of the family is a value and priority that exceed the field of religion. The family emerges as a key concept of religion and governance even in debates of secularism in the contemporary structure of globalization.

2.3.3 Reproduction of habitus in media

In media, the power may seem like it is in the hands of the owners of the channels, journals, companies however in an authoritarian country such as Turkey, the power of the media is heavily influenced by the government and the companies that support

the government (Akser & Baybars-Hawks, 2012). Kaya and Çakmur (2011) argue that, "rooted in the world of politics from the outset, Turkish media has always been marked by a high degree of political parallelism. As regulator and funder, the state, making up the political majority, exerted strong control over the media." The power and the influence of the state on Turkish media result in a like-minded media in accordance to the state. As Bourdieu sees television as a direct tool of symbolic violence and a tool for power, the maintenance of the social order is considered very important in media as in other fields. He states on television (1996, p.18), "Television enjoys a de facto monopoly on what goes into the heads of a significant part of the population and what they think." Bourdieu believes that economical and political pressures dominate the media. During his speech on television, he focuses mostly on journalistic field however he refers to the control of the media by those in power. He continues (1996, p.69), "…The authorities, the government in particular, influence the media not only through the economic pressure that they bring to bear but also through their monopoly on legitimate information."

To understand the complex dynamics of media control the most useful approach would be to analyze from a perspective of the political economy of the media. David W. Park, units this perspective of political economy and Bourdieu's habitus to develop a critical analysis about the media production. From a solely Marxist perspective, the names of the corporations and the institutions that affect the economic welfare of the media and production companies might be enough to analyze the media from a political economic perspective however according to Park (2009, p.1), the incorporation of the habitus might add value to the processes of understanding the domination within the media. He argues that apart from the institutions the audiences and the producers of the media embody the dynamics of

the domination, creating the practice. The macro-level details help researchers understand the structure of the media but the micro-level details such as the small decisions, the ordinary details within the productions also present strong data about the habitus that influence the practice. The macro and the micro are parallel to each other in the sense that the whole process of the media production and the media reception exist under the influence of the same social, political and economical environment in a country. Park, in his research, tries to link habitus to the emergence of the media product. He explains that as the media does not appear out of nowhere, the media comes from a set of social structures but not a specific institution or a company. Park (2009, p.3) analyzes the production of the media content as:

> It comes from practices that have emerged from past experience, are simultaneously constrained and enabled by structural arrangements (including legal, technical, and market concerns), and owe their existence to the strategic orientation of those whose labor is directly tied up with making media content.

He emphasizes that concepts such as domination, hegemony and reproduction can be analyzed within the influence of the key concept habitus, which enlightens the conceptualization of an individual's behavior resulting in the examination of the institutional and social power structures that shape the behavior. Thus, the media production is not merely the result of economical, social, political or individual decisions but it is a formation of a more general perspective that can be better explained as the habitus. The habitus functions as a key concept within the context of the product of the media as it functions within the larger scheme of social, economical and political influences. The media product, as a result of all that is above, reflects the same habitus.

Park (2009, p.4) units Marx's approach and discusses it with the involvement of the habitus as a social concept that shapes the collective decision-making processes;

> On the face of it, Bourdieu gives us with habitus a model for social reproduction and domination, a model that incorporates the focus on praxis that Marx's base-superstructure account leads to, while broadening the scope of analysis beyond economics. It would be difficult to find a social theory that more fully addresses what Marx meant when he stated that people do not make history "as they please," but only "under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.

The reproduction of the media is simply not accidental but a series of consequences that unit as an end result of many social dimensions. The reproduction as the practice consists of habitus and the field. In this case, the field is the media, to be specific, the television series, which is shaped by the habitus of certain societal values that is embodied through the actions and the practices of those who produce and consume the media. The reproduction of the media is a "structurally-embedded social practice" as through habitus; one can explain the way of the audiences give consent to domination by confirming the views of the world. The habitus within the media field is proof of the semi-conscious decision-making that constitutes the media product. This approach enlightens what might be referred to as "common sense" into a clearer concept of habitus and social structures.

The control of the reproduction of habitus within the field of media as in any other field is possible through the control of what is outside the habitus. As Bourdieu (1997, p.47) doesn't discuss the reproduction of habitus in a detailed manner, he discusses the reproduction and the three states of the field in his book "The Rules of Art". The three phases are the conquest of autonomy, the emergence of a dualist structure and the market for symbolic goods. The conquest of autonomy is simply resilience to the current dynamics of the field, whereas the opposition of two

different views, the clash of them, can explain the emergence of a dualist structure. The market for symbolic goods is the third state of the field in reproduction as it explains the formation of symbolic capital, which is defined as “a kind of ‘economic’ capital denied but recognized, and hence legitimate – a veritable credit, and capable of assuring, under certain conditions and in the long term, ‘economic’ profits” (Bourdieu, 1997, p.142). At the end of these three states, as a result of the clash of the opposites, a new form of capital emerges resulting in the reproduction of habitus and the field. Symbolic violence is the necessary means for those in power to control the symbolic capital, thus the third state and the end result of the reproduction of the habitus and the field.

CHAPTER 3

THE RISE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DRAMAS IN TURKEY

3.1 Recent history of TV series in Turkey and the portrayal of women and violence on TV

TV series have been made since the 1990s in Turkey; however, in the last ten years they became extremely popular with high budgets and ratings. In addition to the rising national interest and commitment to watching TV series over the years, there has been strong international demand to successfully made Turkish TV shows.

The success of these TV shows and the television production industry in Turkey increased over the years. Their influence exceeded beyond Turkey thanks to the high rates of Turkish TV series exports to Middle Eastern and Latin American countries (Yalçın, 2019). In 2018 only, Turkey earned 500 million dollars from the export of TV series (Yalçın, 2019).

Despite all their success, it is also important to point out that the series, which became popular, contained many violent aspects, especially towards women. The trend of violent TV series started with “Kurtlar Vadisi” and its protagonist “Polat Alemdar”, who was idolized by many of the show’s viewers. The show was first broadcasted on 2003 as a TV series and then continued as a movie franchise and TV series until 2017 (Bulut, 2017). It was mainly about organized crime in Turkey, depicting stories supposedly based on real events; hence the series had an immense archive full of violent scenes. The series was adored to the extent that when one of the characters, “Süleyman Çakır” head of the mob died, a group of viewers of the series performed a funeral prayer and mourned the character as if he was a real person (“Çakır’ı Unutmadık, Acımız Büyük”, 2008). The series became extremely

popular and caused long debate in the media when it was launched. Many people were worried about the extremely violent scenes, including the scene where the protagonist beheaded one of his rivals. The president of the Association of Turkish Psychologists and other experts gave interviews related to the effects of the violent scenes on children and adults at the time (“Kurtlar Vadisi Şiddeti Yayıyor”, 2007). The psychologists said that especially the young viewers idolized “Polat Alemdar” as a protector of the nation and a real hero, which led to the conclusion that young people considered the protagonist, TV series and the violent acts depicted in the show as a way to model their own behavior. RTÜK gave certain penalties to the channels that broadcasted the show, however the series continued in many different forms with ever increasing violence in the upcoming years ("Kurtlar Vadisi’ne RTÜK Şoku", 2013). There were many cases where viewers of the series acted violently, even murdered other people, after role-modeling the characters on the series ("Kurtlar Vadisi'ne özendi, katil oldu", 2005).

“Kurtlar Vadisi” was the first of many violent TV series. These days, TV series such as “Sen Anlat Karadeniz”, “Eşkıya Dünyaya Hükümdar Olmaz”, “Çukur” became very popular despite the complaints about extremely violent scenes demonstrated on TV. “Çukur”, a TV series where many illegal and violent events occur in the name of protection of the people and justice, have a fan base that are almost as dedicated as the viewers of “Kurtlar Vadisi”. There are many cases where the fans of the series copied the actions of the characters in the series. One example to these events happened in September 2019 where a group of attackers on motorcycles wounded two people right after the night two characters did the same kind of assault on “Çukur” ("Çukur Dizisine Özenen Motorlu Saldırganlar Dehşet Saçtı", 2019). In other words, it is possible to conclude that the trend of violent TV

series may have started with “Kurtlar Vadisi” but it continued and blossomed to many other new forms of TV. Watching violence on Turkish television became more common and even normalized with every new TV series which followed the trend as well as new genres, such as Müge Anlı’s extremely popular show that made her a household name, where they find missing people as well as criminals, including murderers.

The Supreme Board of Radio and Television (RTÜK) conducted a routine research about the Board’s hotline in 2018, however the results were unexpectedly high which led to a more detailed research about the complaints (RTÜK, 2019, p. 54). During 2018, a total of 124,234 complaints were made by the citizens, of which 39% were related to TV series (RTÜK, 2019, p. 55). The reasons of complaints were recorded such as damaging the society and the norm of a family, the footage of extreme violence, especially towards women. Most of the complaints were made with the request to cancel and fine the aforementioned TV series due to their violent content (RTÜK, 2019, p. 57). The latest yearly report by RTÜK was prepared for the year of 2019, and was published in 2020. In that report, certain principles that the broadcasters must obey to are mentioned as legal requirements ("RTÜK | Kararlar", 2011). One of those principles was being agreeable with the national and moral values of the society, as well as ethics and the concept of protection of the family. There were also two other clauses to discourage violently motivating scenes and programs that promote violence and suppression towards women ("RTÜK | Kararlar", 2011). In 2020, RTÜK published a study about violence and television based on the data that was collected in 2019. According to this study, 94% of the participants agree that the violence is demonstrated on TV very often. The survey participants within the 36-50-age group agreed that the violence in TV series

increased while the participants within the 15-25-age group stated there are not many violent scenes on TV, which showed that young people normalized violence (RTÜK, 2020).

On the other hand, it is necessary to declare that the original reports of RTÜK are not easy to reach since not all of them can be found on their website. From other sources and press clips it is possible to reach to some part of the findings of the researches that have been made by RTÜK in 2006, 2016 and 2020 related to violence on TV but the original reports are not publicly available. Despite the alarming results of research as well as complaint from the public, RTÜK has not fined or banned "Sen Anlat Karadeniz", a TV series broadcasted on ATV for a long time despite the citizens (Taşçıer, 2019, p. 3). The names of the TV series that the most complaints were made about are not declared in the reports. İlhan Taşçı, one of RTÜK's members, declared via his Twitter account that "Sen Anlat Karadeniz" received a lot of complaints but these were not shared with the people in public researches or press releases by RTÜK (Taşçı, 2019). In his tweet series on June 10 2019, Taşçı declared that "Sen Anlat Karadeniz" was ranked second in terms of complaints from the public due to its common violent scenes. He also shared an anecdote via Twitter about a child who called RTÜK because his father was beating his mother the same way he saw on the series. Taşçı also stated that RTÜK fined neither "Sen Anlat Karadeniz" nor the broadcast network ATV, even though the institution's mission is to discourage violence in society through limitation and supervision.

In the light of these events, Gamze Taşçıer, a member of parliament from Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP), conducted a research about the violent scenes in popular Turkish TV series (Taşçıer, 2019). The researchers randomly chose one episode from eight popular TV series. The TV series that are analyzed were "Sen

Anlat Karadeniz" (episode 52, ATV), "Kuzgun" (episode 16, Star TV), "Eşkıya Dünyaya Hükümdar Olmaz" (episode 139, ATV), "Çukur" (episode 66, Show TV), "Hercai" (episode 11, ATV), "Kardeş Çocukları" (episode 17, Star TV), "Bir Zamanlar Çukurova" (episode 34, ATV), "Söz" (episode 61, Star TV). The research showed that there are twenty-three scenes in eight episodes of these eight series containing violence towards women (Taşçıer, 2019). In four of them there are scenes where a father beats his daughter and in the other scenes the violence is usually from the husband towards the wife including torture, rape, kidnapping and violence with a gun (Taşçıer, 2019).

The researchers also analyzed the scenes where women cry and found thirty-five scenes in eight episodes in which women are portrayed as weak and powerless. In addition to the physical violence, TV series contain many scenes, of which fifty-two with psychological violence and thirty-two, which include death threats (Taşçıer, 2019).

The screenwriter of "Sen Anlat Karadeniz", Erkan Birgören, gave an interview regarding the complaints about the violent scenes to Filiz Gazi, a journalist, on September 2019 and the interview was published on an online newspaper platform named Gazete Duvar (Gazi, 2019). In that interview, Birgören said the episodes in which violence is portrayed receive much higher ratings and that violence has a pornographic effect on the viewers as it attracts more viewers and rating (Gazi, 2019). In the same interview, Birgören explained violence as "…delightful to watch for the viewers, as long as we are not a part of it…" (Gazi, 2019). The screenwriter stated that he created two characters, which are exact opposites of each other. According to Birgören, Vedat is an evil character who portrays very wrong qualities and thus it is okay for him to resort to violence, to even

beat women and chain them as a way to imprison them (Gazi, 2019). Nonethless, his other character, Tahir, is portrayed as a good man hence Birgören said that it would be wrong for him to write a scene where Tahir resorts to violence (Gazi, 2019). The screenwriter doesn't take any responsibility towards the use of violence in the TV series as he thinks that it is natural to watch violence between violent characters and believes that if the viewers copy the violent actions made by such a character, they should see a psychologist instead of blaming the screenwriter (Gazi, 2019).

The screenwriter of "Çukur", another popular TV series with problematic violent scenes, Gökhan Horzum, also gave an interview to journalist Filiz Gazi (Gazi, 2019). He portrayed the complaints about the violent scenes in the TV series as overly sensitive, adding that the society became overly sensitive about these topics because there is no solution to these problems in our daily lives (Gazi, 2019).

Despite the screenwriters' attempt avoid responsibility about the increased violent actions on TV, there are certain researches that prove TV series affect the society in Turkey. In Kayseri, psychologist Mehtap Karakaya Yörük completed a local survey with 250 people where she found out that 86% of the participants often watch TV series with violent scenes of gun violence and murder (CNN Turk, 2017). According to Yörük, the TV series helped normalize the notion of murder amongst the local participants (CNN Turk, 2017).

These popular Turkish TV series often contain many violent scenes without any censorship whereas other aspects of TV series, such as alcohol, tobacco and sexuality are always censored under the ruling of RTÜK. Even the screenwriter of "Çukur", Gökhan Horzum, said that while writing the script he avoids writing scenes where the characters drink alcohol even though it is one of their characteristics (Gazi, 2019). Nonetheless, he also stated that he is not afraid of RTÜK and does not have

an impulse to censor his writing when it comes to violent scenes. The writers' tendency towards writing violent scenes is due to the fact that RTÜK does not punish violent scenes as much as scenes with sexual behavior or alcohol consumption. The writers clearly indicate that they take RTÜK's rules into consideration due to the high fines, which the broadcasters might have to pay whereas they do not refrain from writing violent scenes even though RTÜK has relevant policies in place to prevent the increase of violence in society by decreasing violent scenes in TV series. The inconsistency of RTÜK's standards while imposing a penalty on the TV channels has been a point of debate for a long time. The screenwriters' attitude and the series' ongoing success despite the increase of violent scenes show the fact that RTÜK's penalties and its written policies are not compatible with each other and does not serve well into the intentions for the well-being of the society.

Nowadays, if the TV channels broadcast scenes where the characters use alcohol, smoke or have sexual relationships they would be strictly punished by RTÜK. Nevertheless, due to RTÜK's inconsistent reports and insufficient penalties towards the TV series that promote violence and the high ratings of these TV series, the screenwriters and the producers are encouraged to write more violent scenes and shows, which promote violent male characters. The research, the data of RTÜK and the anecdote that İlhan Taşçı shared about a man beating his wife the same way he saw on TV portrays a very dramatic situation about the influence of the series in terms of the demonstration of violence. Linking the popularization of the violent TV series with the societal violence is not enough to explain the phenomenon of violence in Turkish society and the increasing number of violent murders of women by men. It is also insufficient to explain the injustice behind the court rulings and the punishments, however the high tolerance of RTÜK towards psychological and

physical violence in TV series exposes the tolerance of the government's mentality towards violence in society.

3.2 Transformation of violence in Turkish TV series from external spaces to internal spaces

Despite the high rates of complaints about the intense demonstration of violence on TV, the ratings of such TV series have increased steadily over the years. Nonetheless, it is widely criticized that there are still many Turkish TV series, which portray violent characters and scenes. Nevertheless, for the last few years, new trends started to emerge in Turkey's media sector and, after the pandemic one specific type of TV series, psychological dramas, gained influence over the others. The transformation of the demonstration of violence in Turkish TV series moved from outdoor to indoors. The violence on the streets is still a popular subject for TV but the violence within the family and among individuals has drawn more attraction in terms of the context of the TV series.

Nowadays, seeing psychologists treating a patient on TV has become very familiar for the viewers in Turkey. This trend had its precedents in the foreign countries within TV series such as *The Sopranos and In Treatment* but there aren't many studies related to this area of research. The Sopranos created a new genre for TV in the sense that the producers used a closer perspective to the characters. Analyzing a strong mafia character through the lens of psychotherapy brought a new depth to television. Journalist Zoe Williams (2017) of the Guardian has explained this expansion; "as if someone invented a new kind of camera". In Williams's interview with psychotherapist Martha Crawford, she claims that the only way to treat a mafia character such as Tony Soprano is not to treat him. The series, The

Sopranos, mainly revolve around the mafia Tony Soprano and his relationship with his psychiatrist Dr. Melfi. During the series, the audiences watch a brutal murderer, a mafia man receiving a deep, complicated sometimes even dysfunctional psychotherapy to heal his panic attacks and his depression. Even with its complicated plot, the Sopranos had a long running of seasons with high ratings and a deep love from the audiences. On the other hand Gabriel Bryne, the lead actor and one of the producers of the show In Treatment, which was also a hugely successful TV series based on a psychotherapist's sometimes over the line relationships with his patients, gave an interview to the Guardian in 2012 regarding the success of the show where he said:

> I always thought the success of the show was symptomatic of something bigger; the more disenfranchised and placeless people feel, the more they need to be listened to. People have a tremendous need to be heard, and that's true in their emotional lives, but it's also true in the world of politics. You hear it in America especially, but here as well, this feeling that nobody is being heard.

Both In Treatment and The Sopranos have been found problematic by many psychotherapists in the sense that it represents conflicted situations in a normalized manner. Nevertheless the series have succeeded greatly especially the Sopranos became a TV masterpiece with extremely high ratings and its sub-merchandise, the TV series made a fortune for its creators (Franklin, 2002). Many psychotherapists have appreciated The Sopranos due to a realistic portrayal of a therapist on TV for the first time (Gabbard, 2002). The therapist, Dr. Melfi is shown as an eligible, intellectual and efficient psychotherapist who is dealing with her own troubles as well, leading to transference and counter-transference between the patients. In his book, The Psychology of the Sopranos: Love, Death, Desire and Betrayal in America's Favorite Gangster Family, psychoanalyst Glen Gabbard (2002) describes this successful approach to TV making as:

> One reason, though, that the psychotherapy in The Sopranos is so f ascinating is that the writers make no attempt to idealize Dr. Melfi as an oracular source of truth. They have wisely chosen to show her as a professional and competent practitioner who is nevertheless troubled with conflicts of her own and with specific countertransference reactions to Tony.

In Turkey, this trend has started to gain influence with the psychotherapy scenes of a popular TV show called *Istanbullu Gelin (the Bride of Istanbul)*, which is based on a popular psychological book named *Hayata Dön (Come Back to Life), authored* by the psychiatrist Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu. The series *Istanbullu Gelin* was already very popular at the time but at its twenty-eight episode, one of the main characters, Adem, the villain of the show started visiting a therapist due to his violent behaviors towards his wife (Tan, 2017). Fırat Tanış received immense recognition and appreciation after his portrayal of the character Adem due to the lack of violent characters with depth in Turkish TV series in general. Due to the high ratings of the scenes of Adem and his psychotherapist, played by Tilbe Saran, the storyline continued to expand until the end of the series. Adem accepted to receive psychological treatment since he had anger issues and hurt his wife constantly. In a regular TV series, the audience would watch violent scenes and the violent act of the character as a scene; however, in this new kind of psychological shows the audience is welcomed to meet the inner world of the character. As an example, in the scene where Adem meets his psychotherapist for the first time, he slowly begins to unfold as an emotional character who used to be abused violently by his father. The show and the psychotherapy scenes revolve around the idea that violence within the family continues within the next generation of the families unless it is cured.

The high ratings of the show and the psychological scenes turned out to be a huge success in the TV industry in Turkey. After the success of the show, another story written by Budayıcıoğlu was turned into a TV series called *Doğduğun Ev*

Kaderindir (The house you were born to is your destiny) in 2019, which was aired on the very popular TV channel *TV8,* owned by the Turkish media mogul Acun Ilıcalı. *Doğduğun Ev Kaderindir* was a show about a woman, Zeynep, who is split between the family she was born into and the family that raised her. The two families have different socio-cultural and economical standards and Zeynep feels guilty towards her biological family since they do not have the same wealth and possibilities that she has. This dynamic is portrayed through the mothers of the family and Zeynep's eagerness to please them to the length that she would marry someone her mother chose for her, which later leads to her emotional breakdown. Towards the end of the show, Zeynep visited the psychiatrist in another TV series *Kırmızı Oda (the Red Room)*, the most successful show based on the books of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu. In September 2020, the psychiatrist Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu had written three series that aired simultaneously on TV including *Kırmızı Oda* and *Doğduğun Ev Kaderindir*.

Kırmızı Oda, which is also broadcasted on *TV8,* is a drama series that only examines the stories told inside the red room of a psychiatrist. The storylines in *Kırmızı Oda* change every week or so and there are more than one storyline in each episode. The stories are based on many different books of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu and the psychiatrist in the series is a portrayal of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu herself played by famous actress Binnur Kaya.

Before analyzing *Kırmızı Oda* as the main focus of this research to understand certain social dynamics that shape the show and our society, one should examine the trend of psychiatry in TV series in Turkey more thoroughly. Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu is the leading writer and producer in this area of production on TV amongst her producing partner firm OGM. All of her TV series is produced by OGM, which is a production company founded and direct by the businessman Onur

Güvenatam. OGM, has many other successful, high-budget series on TV at the moment, however the TV series they produced based on the books of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu had an immense success.

After the success of the psychological aspects of *Istanbullu Gelin* and *Doğduğun Ev Kaderindir*, Budayıcıoğlu's success received attention and her other books were also adapted to TV. *Kırmızı Oda, Masumlar Apartmanı* (*The building of the Innocents*) and *Camdaki Kız* (*Girl at the Window*) are broadcasted on different TV channels each week and all of them have extremely high ratings. All of these series are based on different books of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu but they all have main characters with severe psychological issues. For instance, in Masumlar Apartmanı the series revolve around a family of three sisters and their brother,whom have different psychological diseases. In the example of Masumlar Apartmanı, Safiye Derenoğlu has extreme OCD, Gülben Derenoğlu cannot control her bladder every night due to her extreme fears, Neriman Derenoğlu has a skin disease due to high stress and the brother, Han Derenoğlu collects trash from the streets during the nighttime. The Derenoğlu siblings had to deal with an extremely violent mother and an indifferent father throughout their childhood. At the start of the series the eldest sister Safiye maintains the chain of violence within the family by engaging in violent behaviors towards her siblings. She copies her mom's outfits, violent behaviors and the role of the caregiver in the house however; she never leaves the house and doesn't allow other people inside their house due to her thought that the outer world is dark and dirty.

Although there are no mafia, guns, knives and bloody fights on the streets in this show there is still a very high amount of violence portrayed through the psychological diseases of the characters. The violence can appear in many different

forms within the series. For example in the seventh episode Safiye is touched by Han's wife İnci whom she hates and thinks she is dirty, and becomes instantly traumatized to the extent that she washes her hand with toxic chemicals such as bleach and hydrochloric acid ("Safiye bir hareket yaptı, dillere düştü!", 2021). As in this example violence is usually self-inflicted as a consequence of childhood traumas in Budayıcıoğlu's series. The violence grows towards other people due to their inability to heal themselves.

Camdaki Kız portrays the life of an innocent girl, Nalan, who has been raised with extreme caution and has been subjected to the violence of her mother throughout her entire life. Nalan's mother Feride forces her to wear a corset until she is married to prevent any possibilities of sexual behaviors. In the third episode of the series the scene where Feride takes Nalan to a gynecologist to check her virginity, caused many reactions ("Bitsin Dedikçe Normalleştirilmeye Çalışılıyor!", 2021). The viewers criticized the normalization of this kind of an examination as an example of violence towards women. The main character Nalan is a constant victim of her mother's violence in the name of honor and the violence revolves around the possibility of her sexuality. The series have many other abusers as main characters and the type of the violence is psychological however none of the characters receive psychological help.

Other than Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu's series, there are a number of TV series that tackle psychological violence as a subject. *Bir Başkadır (Ethos)* is a Turkish TV series written and directed by Berkun Oya, produced by Netflix. The show is comprised of eight episodes and tells the stories of many socially, economically and psychologically different characters within Turkish society. The diversity of the characters and the director's ability to capture a profile of Turkey, which includes the

secular and the conservative, received a lot of praise whereas some criticized the show as superficial, one-sided (Genç, 2020). The main character of the show, Meryem, a woman who works as a housekeeper to make a living is a conservative character who lives with her brother's family. Meryem is advised to meet a psychologist due to her inexplicable fainting and she starts to see a secular psychologist named Peri, who feels uncomfortable near Meryem due to her bias. Peri talks about her annoyance to her supervisor and tells her that she has counter-transference towards her patient and she is planning to end their meetings. The psychotherapy scenes of Meryem and Peri that take place in the therapy room both gained a lot of attention and praise from the audience. In *Bir Başkadır* the only characters that receive therapy are Meryem and Peri however they are not the only ones who struggle with psychological discomfort. Meryem's brother is dealing with anger issues and her brother's wife is struggling with major depression due to being target of sexual assault while she was young, as well as her husband's indifferent behavior towards her. The other characters also have storylines that underline their traumas and their way of being in a psychological manner. *Bir Başkadır* is mostly accepted as a very realistic show in terms of its psychotherapy scenes. Even though psychiatrists criticize some of the characters' behaviors in the therapy room they think the show represents the reality of the psychotherapy room rightfully, which constitute the right expectation about therapy for the viewers (Öz, 2020).

When compared to *Kırmızı Oda, Bir Başkadır*'s understanding of therapy is more realistic in the sense of the relationship dynamics between the patient and the doctor (Öz, 2020). *Kırmızı Oda* is usually criticized because of the main character, the psychotherapist Manolya's highly involved behavior towards her patients due to the fact that this dynamic between the patient and the psychotherapist might create

an unrealistic expectation of therapy in the minds of the viewers (Özdemir, 2020). Despite the arguable portrayal of the psychologists, these shows have had extremely high ratings and received a lot of attention from the viewers in Turkey, paving the way for other psychological series.

One of those following series was *İlk ve Son (First and Last),* a series about the struggles and the love of a couple during their ten years together, which aired on a digital platform called BluTV. Two main characters of the show, Deniz and Barış, have both psychological problems and violent behavior throughout the show. This show also received a lot of praise and attention but the main difference of this show from all the others was that viewers could watch while listening to a therapist's commentary about each action of the characters and the detailed analyze of their traumas. The therapist's voice is dubbed over the series and the viewers can choose to watch the series with or without it. This specific feature is the first of its kind and therefore is considered very important in the industry (Özdemir, 2020).

Despite their differences, these series have all one thing in common: the psychological aspect is very evident in all of them. The viewers' interest isn't only towards psychological dramas; it is about the psychiatry aspect of these shows. The viewers are interested in seeing the inside of a psychotherapy room and in hearing the voice of a psychiatrist explaining the complicated nature of humans to them. This interest has showed itself in form of high ratings and now it is shaping the TV industry in Turkey. The reason of this drift towards psychotherapy on TV might be explained by analyzing the psychology of a nation, the effects of Covid-19 and the turbulent nature of Turkey's economical and political affairs on individuals however besides analyzing the reasons of the popularity of this trend it is important to

understand the social, economical, cultural and political dynamics that caused the trend to flourish into its success today in Turkey.

3.3 Watching psychotherapy on TV: The case of the Red Room

TV series with psychological subtexts have become extremely popular in Turkey for the last few years. This popularity increased with the productions of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu, a psychiatrist and a writer, who offered her books and years of experience as a psychiatrist as script material to the TV sector. OGM Production Company produces all five of the TV series; *İstanbullu Gelin* (2017-2019), *Doğduğun Ev Kaderindir* (2019-2021), *Kırmızı Oda (2020-2022), Masumlar Apartmanı (2020-2022) and Camdaki Kız (2021-)* based on Budayıcıoğlu's books and many other series are expected to be adapted from Budayıcıoğlu's books

All of these five series have had immense success stories with their high ratings, however Kırmızı Oda stands on its own as a different example of this trend ("Dizi dünyasının yeni yıldızı Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu kimdir", 2020). Other series that are based on Budayıcıoğlu's books are all mentioning certain characters and certain stories from her books but Kırmızı Oda is a representative series based on Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu's years of experience within the psychotherapy room. Throughout the series the viewers meet different characters that come and go through the psychotherapy room. The series takes place in the psychotherapy room of psychiatrist Dr. Manolya who is a certain representation of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu and the room itself has red walls and objects as in the name of the series.

In the first episodes of the series there used to be other therapists as well however as the series continued to get higher ratings the producers made the choice to solely tell the stories of Dr. Manolya's patients within the Red Room. In each

episode, patients come to their appointments with Dr. Manolya and the viewers watch flashbacks to the characters' past as they tell their stories. Every episode tells the story of three or four patients each week and a character's story usually lasts four or five episodes with the exception to some characters, such as Alya, Boncuk etc With this representation of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu herself as Dr. Manolya in Kırmızı Oda, the series also aim to have a therapeutic relationship with the viewers. Many of the viewers consider Dr. Manolya, portrayed by actress Binnur Kaya, as an authoritative figure, a moral compass as well as a compassionate helper. This deduction can be verified through following the public dialogue about the show on social media. The production team posts visuals of Dr. Manolya within different frames that are relatable to the viewers as shown in Figure 1.

Fig. 1 Dr. Manolya's place in the audience's lives [Kırmızı Oda Twitter account, 2021]

In this visual Dr. Manolya is portrayed as a trustworthy figure and the viewers are asked, “How would you like to see Dr. Manolya in your own life?” The options are “as your mother, as your friend, as your sister, as your wife” which all are figures of compassion and familiarity in one’s life pointing the relatable relationship that is established between the viewers and the character. In the second visual, the production team presents Dr. Manolya on the phone screen as if she is calling the viewers from their phone through video call. The visual is presented with the following question, “What would you tell Dr. Manolya if she was calling you?” This visual is also a very definite way of approving the intimate relationship that the viewers have developed with the character Dr. Manolya as a compassionate, familiar figure with which they can share their deepest troubles.

This compassionate and relatable portrayal of the main character, psychiatrist Dr. Manolya, is not a coincidence; on the contrary it is a purposeful approach that shapes the series. *Kırmızı Oda* is a TV series that owns up to the task of healing its viewers psychologically and claims to do so through the healing relationship of its mentally challenged characters and Dr. Manolya.

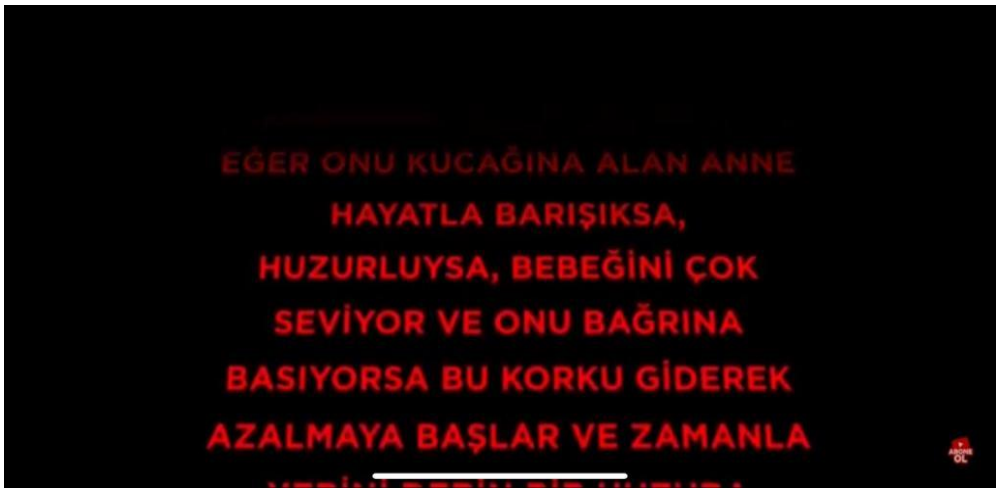

Fig. 2 The introductory statement of the Red Room [Karcı, 2021]

The show starts with a statement about mental health and violence within the family and how the hard feelings can only be healed through true love. This statement is broadcasted at the beginning of each episode since the first one and it is written in bold, capital letters in red on black background as shown in Figure 2.

This statement has changed throughout the seasons however the statements can still be analyzed as a marketing decision that increased the popularity of the series by focusing on its main message which is presented as “stopping the violence within the families”. This message is strongly and directly pointed throughout the series however it stays one-sided. Throughout the series’ many characters, the violence is portrayed as if it only exists within the small formation of family. The show solely focuses on the violence within the family, except minor examples of mentioning the societal violence generally, thus ignoring the institutionalized violence of the government and public authorities that shape and feed these violent actions within the society and the family unit.

The first episode starts with a voiceover of a man reading the following statement. After the second episode the statement changes slightly and the writer of the books, Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu herself, records the voiceover. First episode’s statement clearly defends the notion that the law or the punishments cannot prevent violence and none of the governments of the world have succeeded to prevent violence through law in their own countries. Psychological violence is defined as a person not being loved by their close ones and being belittled by them. According to this statement, violent people act in these because they are simply unloved and disapproved during their childhood. Despite the fact that this statement might be proven as a true theory from a psychological perspective, it is simply not enough to explain the social phenomenon that is violence.

In Turkey during the year of 2021, 280 women were murdered and 217 women were found dead with great doubt that a man murdered them (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu, 2022). The male members of their families committed most of these murders, and more than half of them took place at their own homes. These murderers are mostly husbands, boyfriends, ex-husbands, ex-boyfriends, fathers, sons, brothers and relatives to these women. Against all the data and the evidence proving that femicide is an urgent matter in Turkey, the government withdrew from the Istanbul Convention in March 2021 in line the direct order of the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu, 2022). The official name of this convention is The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence however, it is mostly known by the name of Istanbul Convention due to the fact that Turkey was the first country that signed the agreement on 11 May 2011. Withdrawal from this convention drew significant attention from non-governmental organizations and the public; however, the government continued with the decision and ignored the necessity of the convention in the name of protection of women in Turkey against male violence.

As a country where male violence occurs so publicly, Turkey fights a battle in terms of civil rights due to the cancellation of the Istanbul Convention. During sensitive times such as now, the media significantly contributes to the discussions related to these material topics. Thus, the content of one of the most popular TV series must be taken into account while trying to understand the social and political atmosphere of Turkey today.

The show, Kırmızı Oda, was cancelled on 18th February 2022 due to its decreased ratings. Nevertheless, the show was immensely successful. At the time

when the last episode prior to the announcement of cancellation decision was announced, on 4th February 2022, it was ranked as the 7th most watched show in the AB rating group and the 10th most watched in the ABC rating group ("Reyting Sonuçları", 2022). While these numbers might point out to a success story for other shows, these are considerably low for Kırmızı Oda. This show started its screen journey on 4th September 2020 as the most watched TV series of that day in the AB group and as the 3rd most watched series in the Total group, which was a huge success ("Reyting Sonuçları", 2020). Then it moved to the top of the list as the most watched show of the day in all of the lists and maintained this status as can be seen in Appendix A.[2] Considering these impressive results, it is safe to say that the producers were used to these high ratings and the show's cancellation decision on its 61th episode was not due to a failure but an expectancy of higher ratings.

Kırmızı Oda was in the top ten lists in all groups for the majority of its screen journey and most of the time it came as the most watched show of that day. Besides the high ratings on TV, the producers released all the episodes on YouTube for free and these online releases also received extremely high viewing records as can be seen in the table below.

On the table below the first episodes' viewing numbers are shown. Kırmızı Oda was the first of its genre because throughout the show the viewers followed the inside of a psychiatry room. The other Turkish popular shows used violence as a rating tool, creating mostly mafia stories, however Kırmızı Oda focused on violence within the family as the main subject with a different perspective.

[2] see Appendix A (Ratings)

Table 1. Youtube Viewing Record of the Red Room [Youtube, 2022]

1st episode	2 Million views
2nd episode	10 Million views
3rd episode	9,3 Million views
4th episode	8,1 Million views
5th episode	7,8 Million views
6th episode	6,9 Million views
7th episode	7,4 Million views
8th episode	6,6 Million views

On other TV series the viewers watched violence as an act between two people or two groups, however Kırmızı Oda turned the demonstration of violence in television to personal and individual. Throughout the series, violence is analyzed as an act of the individual and the traces are followed through the trail of thoughts of the patients and their conversations with the psychiatrist. Kırmızı Oda is the first of its genre that in the sense of demonstrating violence from an internal space instead of an external one. The violence is no longer seeable and the consequences of violence are deeply analyzed through the telling of the stories of the patients. The effects of psychological and physical violence on the individual's mental health are demonstrated instead of the action scenes. On the contrary the violent events are vaguely implied rather than showed on the screen. In this sense, Kırmızı Oda changed the concept of violence in Turkish series by shifting the demonstration of violence from an external space to internal.

Another novelty of the series is the fact that the show is based on real patients of psychiatrist Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu, however Budayıcıoğlu claims that she does

not expose the identities of her patients while telling their stories (Arman, 2020). In an interview with the Turkish journalist Ayşe Arman, Budayıcıoğlu explains that her patients want their stories to be told; she claims that some of her patients that she did not write about want her to tell their stories in her books and series (Arman, 2020). In the same interview, the journalist asked Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu what she thinks of those who blame her as an invader of her patients' privacy by sharing their private stories, hence disrespecting the ethics of medicine" (Arman, 2020). Budayıcıoğlu denies all allegations by promising she would never expose the identities of these patients and explains that she perceives these allegations as means to hurt her.

Kırmızı Oda has been a sensational show starting from the first episode due to the fact that the show promised true stories to its viewers. The show is mostly based on one of Budayıcıoğlu's books, where she shares her memories of her patients *Madalyonun İçi: Bir Psikiyatristin Not Defterinden (Inside the Medallion: From the Notebook of a Psychiatrist)* but also based on her memories and several other stories from her books. Many reactions occurred regarding the violence of the privacy of the patients on social media. Some viewers and psychologists expressed a sense of worry for these patients. One of the psychologists, Elvan Çevik, gave an interview to TRT World regarding the topic. She pointed out that due to the Turkish Psychological Association's Ethics Code, "psychologists are obliged to receive consent from those whom they provide services before recording their voice/or image" (Tekingündüz, 2021). Psychologist Çevik defines the series as an ethical violation due to a psychiatrist's obligation to not reveal the information regarding the patient and the possibility of exposing the identities of the patients by causing curiosity around their stories (Tekingündüz, 2021). Elvan Çevik is not the only psychologist who expressed a worry regarding the phenomenal series. A month after

the first episode of the series, journalist Özge Özdemir gathered perspectives from different psychologists and psychiatrists regarding the content of the series *Kırmızı Oda* for BBC Turkish. The article's title is "*The Red Room: Why psychologists are criticizing the show?"* pointing out the problematic content of the show. The series emphasizes that the stories are based on real people making it easy for the viewers to connect to the characters. Apart from the argument that this might be considered as an invasion of privacy for the patients, the show is also criticized in the sense that it creates an unrealistic expectation of therapy. Psychiatrist Dr. Arif Verimli (2020) showed his reaction by sending the following tweet:

> My assistant of 20 years refused to book a session for a patient who asked if I could do the therapy the same way they do on the show… She is right… Why would I hug anyone considering that I am not a panda?[3]

The relationship between the psychiatrist and the patients are described as intimate where in reality according to the professionals there have to be boundaries and distance between the two parties. Budayıcıoğlu's representative character on the show, Dr. Manolya, crosses this line in terms of hugging the patients physically, showing clear emotions and reactions to the patients. Clinic psychologist Ece Oral Albayrak also criticizes the show because of the main character's tendency to show clear affection to her patients by hugging and saying "I love you". Albayrak states that this might cause a boundary issue between the parties and might cause the patient to develop a form of dependency on the psychologist (Özdemir, 2020). On the other hand, there are some psychologists like Prof. Dr. Kemal Sayar who claims that these kinds of series with images of psychiatrists that tell stories of real people with deep sufferings can make the viewers empathize with the characters and promote mental health awareness in the public.

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[3] "Yirmi yıllık asistanım geçenlerde ısrarla arayarak o dizideki gibi görüşme yaparsam randevu alacağını söyleyen birine; -"Yok efendim, Hocamızın odası turuncu. Siz burada hayal kırıklığı yaşarsınız" deyip randevu vermemiş... Kız haklı. Ben panda mıyım önüme gelene sarılayım?"

While the psychologists and the psychiatrists criticize the show from a different perspective, academicians, researchers and journalists analyze the show based on different aspects. Prof. Dr. Nükhet Sirman, a sociologist, analyzes the effects of using psychotherapy as TV material as dualistic in the sense that it promotes the discussions of violence on women while demolishing the portrayal of violence as a political subject (Sevgi, 2020). Sirman explains the portrayal of violence as individualistic instead of societal because the series demonstrate violence as a consequence of family conflicts instead of patriarchy. Journalist Zehra İpşiroğlu discusses the portrayal of male violence as biological instead of a socially constructed system (2021). She describes this tendency as a way to empower the male toxicity that is already present. Sociologist Ekinsu Devrim Danış (2020) explains that the show emphasizes the concepts of trauma, violence, unaffectionate behaviors and consequently psychological diseases based on the positioning of the mother to strengthen the family.

Kırmızı Oda and the show's creator psychiatrist Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu occupies a large place in the public discussion. In another article about the show, TV journalist Oya Doğan explains that this phenomenon of psychology in TV series starts with the psychotherapy scenes in Istanbullu Gelin, another show based on Budayıcıoğlu's books (Sarova, 2021). She continues, "Those scenes were loved by the viewers so much that even the producers and the writers of the show were surprised. The viewers loved learning about their own psychology and how their childhood might have affected their adult lives."[4] Oya Doğan explains "…This success led to the increase of the psychotherapy scenes on TV, including the Red

[4] "O terapi sahneleri o kadar sevildi ki, yapımcısı hatta senaristleri bile şaşırdı. İzleyici kendi psikolojisine dair bir şeyler öğrenmeye, çocukken yaşadıklarının kendi hayatını nasıl etkilediğini izlemeyi sevdi."

Room where the viewers go inside the therapy room with the characters and take their share of lessons from other people's lives…"[5]

All of these real stories come from Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu's patients whom she treated in different hospitals and then in her own clinic *Medallion Psychiatry Center (Madalyon Psikiyatri Merkezi).* The clinic, which was founded by Budayıcıoğlu herself in Ankara in 2005, now accepts almost 750 patients every day with a staff of 80 psychiatrist and psychologists. The clinic also has a corporate department where they train the workers in an institution or a company. Medallion Psychiatry Clinic is also the first psychiatry clinic in Turkey, which obtained a license from the Ministry of Health and signed an agreement with the Social Security Institution ("Hakkımızda - Madalyon Kurumsal", 2022). The clinic has also direct contracts with a number of governmental institutions and banks including Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the Court of Cassation, Turk Telekom, Halkbank, İş Bankası, Yapı Kredi Bankası etc… The agreements with governmental institutions and the clinic's growth alone show that Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu was an effective figure in her sector before her success on TV.

Dr. Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu was born in Ankara in 1947 as the oldest sister of three siblings. She describes her mother as "a sacrificing woman as all Turkish mothers are" and her father as "a very handsome, chic, loving and authoritarian man". She explains her family dynamic, "My mother was always very respectful of my father. She warned us every night that our dad would come home tired so we should not run around and we should wear decent clothes and help her prepare the

[5] "Kendi hayatıyla empati yaptı. Bugüne kadar bakmaya çekindikleri o pencerenin perdesini de araladılar. Bunu fark eden televizyoncular bu sezon Kırmızı Oda, Doğduğun Ev Kaderindir ve Masumlar Apartmanı'yla dozu artırdı. Kırmızı Oda'da terapi odasına girip başkasının hayatından kendi yaşamına düşen payı alıyorlar."

dinner table. Then she would put her make up on and we would all wait for my father to come home in front of the window. Whenever he would come home late, the waiting would be very long and we would go to bed hungry." Budayıcıoğlu studied at a college named TED Ankara, which is known as a very prestigious school, during most of her education life. As she mentioned; "…all of the bureaucrats' kids went to my school; everyday after school there was black cars and chauffeurs waiting for the children in front of the school building." After college she studied Medicine at Ankara University, which she described as "… a difficult place to adapt to after my time in private school…" Because of her dissatisfaction with her school life she applied to TRT, the state's television channel, to be a news presenter and she was accepted. During her studies, she continued to present the news and many other shows at TRT but after finishing her studies she quit her job as a news presenter to continue her career as a psychiatrist. She got married to her husband of 34 years and had two children. After many years of working as an academic at Hacettepe University and then as a psychiatrist, she wrote her first book, Inside the Medallion, as a gathering of her memories as a psychiatrist, which was published by a prestigious Turkish publishing house, Remzi Kitabevi, in 2004. She then founded her own psychiatry clinic *Medallion Psychiatry Center (Madalyon Psikiyatri Merkezi) in 2005* started writing more intensely after the loss of her husband in 2007. *The Red Room*'s inspiration was her first book *Inside the Madallion: From the Notebook of a Psychiatrist (Madalyonun İçi: Bir Psikiyatristin Not Defterinden).* Her second book, *Three Colours of Sin: The Other Side of the Madallion (Günahın Üç Rengi: Madalyonun Öteki Yüzü)* was published in 2008, her third book *Come Back To Life (Hayata Dön)* in 2011 and her last books *Kral Kaybederse (If the King Loses)* and *Camdaki Kız (the Girl in the Window)* in 2019 ("Hakkımızda - Madalyon Kurumsal",

2022). All of these books inspired TV series that are already produced or are about to be produced.

Beyond her success throughout her career, Budayıcıoğlu thrived in terms of popularity after her books were turned into TV series. This public attention also raised many questions towards the psychiatrist. Turkish journalist Cüneyt Özdemir tweeted on April 2021, "Is it ethically appropriate for a psychiatrist to write their patients' private stories as a book and sell these books to TV channels as scripts? Besides the violation of privacy and doctor-patient relationship, I wonder if they give any royalties to these patients."[6] Another journalist Ayşe Arman (2020) asked Budayıcıoğlu, "People blame you for filling your pockets with money by being near to the government and those in power. What do you think about this?"[7] The writer/psychiatrist denied these allegations and said that she worked hard to write the books and didn't get rich from them. Another question that is frequently asked to Budayıcıoğlu is about Acun Ilıcalı, the Turkish media mogul, owner of the TV channel TV8, which aired two of Budayıcıoğlu's TV series. Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu went to the Dominic Republic on Acun Ilıcalı's private plane to visit his game show "Survivor" on the island ("Acun Ilıcalı'dan heyecanlandıran paylaşım: Dominik'e büyük transfer!", 2021). She then shared a photo of both of them having breakfast at home with a note "Few slices of bread, some eggs are enough for him (Acun Ilıcalı)… He doesn't even want tea…"[8] ("Acun Ilıcalı, Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu'na kahvaltıya gitti - Takvim", 2020). This close relationship between the two received

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[6] "Bir psikiyatr'ın hastalarının mahrem hikayelerini dinleyip bunları kitaplaştırıp bir de para karşılığı dizi olarak kanallara satmasında 'etik' bir mesele yok mu? Özel hayatın, hasta-doktor ilişkisinin ihlalini bir kenara koydum, zavallı hastalara bir telif veriyorlar mıdır?"

[7] "İktidara ve güce yakın olup kesesini doldurmakla suçluyorlar sizi. Siz, ne diyorsunuz?"

[8] "Birkaç dilim ekmek, biraz omlet yetiyor ona. Yanında çay bile istemiyor."

attention considering that Ilıcalı himself is known as a powerful businessman with close ties to the government.

Budayıcıoğlu's another series *Building of Innocents (Masumlar Apartmanı)* aires on TRT, Turkey's state-funded TV channel. Building of Innocents and The Red Room has definitely received support from the government considering that the Ministry of Family and Social Services, at that time it was named Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, sponsored a public service ad, following a mission to stop the violence within the family, with the actors of these two series (T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı, 2020). The ad was released on 25 November 2020, International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, showing the childhoods of the main characters on the screen telling their own perspectives of the violence within the family. Building of Innocents' three main characters Gülben, Safiye and Han, respectively played by Merve Dizdar, Ezgi Mola and Birkan Sokullu, and the actors who played their childhood took place in the ad. Famous actress Melisa Sözen plays one of the most popular characters in The Red Room, Alya, a woman who was abused violently by her mother for many years. On the ad, the actor who reenacts Alya's childhood looks into the camera and says, "What did I do to you? Why does no one love me? Will you kill me?" Then Han's child self from the Building of Innocents looks at the camera and says, "Why my mom is different from all the other mothers?" The ad shows different characters, children and adults, from the series based on Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu's books and then ends with Dr. Manolya, the representation of Budayıcıoğlu herself, in the Red Room. The character Dr. Manolya address from her red room in the series, "Violence contaminates like a virus, it is inherited from generation to generation, learned by seeing, watching. When it is spread, it does not only hurt the bodies but the souls,

darkens lives. Let's get together to break the chain of violence and let compassion and love be our vaccines." The public service ad combines keywords about the Covid-19 pandemic such as virus, vaccine, contamination and spread with popular characters from current TV series about the human psychology. Ministry's interest and support in these series also show the success of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu as the writer, producer and counselor of all of these series. The ad clearly aims to influence the viewers of the show to not act violently within the family however as all of the series of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu, the ad limits the root and the solution of violence within the family unit whereas violence occurs and grows publicly. The decision of the Ministry to use these characters from Budayıcıoğlu's show projects the fact that their perspective about violence is similar to the portrayal of the violence in Budayıcıoğlu's series. As much as it fulfills the duty to create mindfulness around the concept of violence within the family, the ad fails because it blames the individual as the only root of violence, denying the systemically present patriarchy within the government, the law-enforcement, other societal institutions and the society in general.

As a TV series that raised a lot of public questions, received different kinds of support from government institutions and incredibly high ratings, the Red Room mirrors the society's understanding of violence and the limits around its discussion. During the series, most of the characters that were abused violently were women and some of the abusers were also mother figures. The Red Room puts women in the center of violence and discusses the dangers of violence within the family with each story, however its portrayal of women, which sometimes borders a problematic line, limits women into their role within the family. Thus, an analysis of the portrayal of

women and violence within the context of the show might give parallel results to the familial view of a woman and the acceptable definition of the society.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The psychotherapists and psychiatrists have criticized the series, the Red Room, due to its wrong portrayal of psychiatry, whereas some audiences reacted to the show for telling violent stories. To understand the audiences' reaction to the show, one can use a quantitative method to analyze the influence of the show on its viewers, however, this thesis aims to analyze the social codes of the show that are carefully crafted to give out a certain message. The show offers a crafted healing journey for each character in each episode. The characters transform from certain social conditionings to only have new social conditionings. This transformation is emphasized under the mission to stop the violence in society. The show's codes regarding the causes and the solutions of violence are portrayed throughout the storytelling of the series. The positioning of violence is crafted through the positioning of other social norms such as gender, mental health, family, motherhood etc. In order to explore how the normative framework regarding health, functionality, love, family, gender and motherhood is constructed in the show, the episodes have been examined through interpretive text analysis.

4.1 Sample selection

The Red Room has released 61 episodes, each with an average duration of 2 hours, which followed more than 46 individuals' stories within the therapy room. The series starts with four therapists including Dr. Manolya who is portrayed by the actress Binnur Kaya however only 8 of the 46 individuals are patients of the other three doctors. The production team solely focused on Dr. Manolya and her patients within

the Red Room to the point where the other three doctors were cut from the show completely. Thus, to analyze the codes that are hidden under the storylines I have decided to analyze the segments of Dr. Manolya's patients. The ratings of the first season were extremely high and the show was mostly ranked as the most watched show of the day therefore I have decided to analyze the stories from the first season. Since each episode consists of three or four different characters' stories and the length of the storyline of each character is told over many episodes I have decided to focus on the characters rather than the episodes.

Through my research, I have watched and analyzed every episode of the series repetitively however I have decided to only pick three characters' stories to analyze in detail. According to the videos of each character's full storyline, which were posted on Youtube by the production team, the most watched characters are Boncuk, Sadi, Meliha, Nazlı and Alya. Besides the high Youtube viewing record the episodes in that these characters took place have also received extremely high ratings.[9] Almost all of the actors and actresses who took place in the show are very famous however Burcu Biricik and Pınar Deniz, the actresses who play the characters Boncuk and Nazlı are extremely popular actresses with millions of followers who follow the series just to watch them. Considering the fact that this might contribute to the ratings of their parts, I have decided to only analyze the storyline of Boncuk's character as it is more emphasized. I have chosen to analyze Sadi's character because he is the only male character who received high ratings and I wanted to analyze a male character to better understand the dynamics of the series. Lastly, I have chosen to analyze Meliha's character because it is one of the longest and in depth storylines of the series and she is the first character introduced on the show. I have analyzed

[9] see Appendix

almost six hours of footage of Meliha's scene, ten hours of footage of Boncuk and almost twenty-five hours of footage for the character Sadi. I have also analyzed the storylines of series' all the other characters however I have watched these three character's episodes multiple times. Boncuk's storyline starts at the 14th episode and ends at the 23rd episode. Meliha's storyline begins with the first episode and continues until the 7th episode. Sadi's storyline is one of the longest ones as it continues through the 22nd and 42nd episodes of the first season and the character rejoins the cast between episode 58 and episode 61 of season 2.

4.2 Text analysis method

To better understand the social codes used by Red Room to fulfill the mission to stop domestic violence, I have decided to analyze the content under five main categories.

The first category involves the *Introduction of the Character*. The introduction of every character into the series describes specific details that the production team wants the audience to understand. The basic concepts are emphasized in the first introductive segments of the characters more than in the rest of their stories, such as their physical appearance, the way they talk and move, their families, their social and economical status, their careers and most importantly the state of their mental health. With the introduction of the character, the problem within the individual and the dysfunction of the individual within the society are shown to the audience. Under this first category, I tried to analyze the characters' introduction but also the relationship that the main authority of the series, Dr. Manolya, has developed with them. During the therapy sessions, Dr. Manolya's thoughts about the patient are heard through a voiceover, which also influences the audience's perception of that character. These voiceovers match the general physical and characteristic description

of the character. The character's introduction determines how they are not fit to function in a society at that moment, what the dysfunctional part of their character is and how they became mentally unstable. In the first part, "Introduction of the Character", I have tried to analyze the relation between the functionality of the individual in a society (or in their family) and their mental situation.

As the show states a clear mission in their promotional videos, posts and also on the introductory credit of each episode where a text in bold red letters flows on the screen, claiming that this show has a mission to stop the violence within a family; to better understand the conceptualization of violence within the series I tried to analyze the *Framing of Violence* within the series. The social or political dimensions of violence itself or collective discourse about it is dismissed; violence exists as if it only happens within families without any connection to outside reality. Considering the fact that the main creator of the series, Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu, has even a saying that named one of her other TV series, which is "The House You Were Born To Is Your Destiny" (Doğduğun Ev Kaderindir); I have decided to analyze the codes of the series under the title "Framing Violence" to further understand how violence is presented as a result of destiny instead of a social issue.

During the 61 episodes of the show, most of the characters who deal with mental issues are women. The show claims to have a mission to stop the violence in general, however the introductory text used between the episodes 20 and 43 consists of a claim that a mother is solely responsible for the healthy development of a child.[10] Women as mothers are expected to have the most important duty of curating a family

[10] "Bir çocuk dünyaya geldiğinde onun en iyi tanıdığı duygu korkudur, ölüm korkusu… Eğer onu kucağına alan anne hayatla barışıksa, huzurluysa, bebeğini çok seviyor ve onu bağrına basıyorsa bu korku giderek azalmaya başlar ve zamanla yerini derin bir huzura bırakır. Dünyadan ve yaşamaktan korkmayan, sevildiğini ve onaylandığını bilen insanlar, hayatları boyunca şiddetten uzak dururlar."[10]

with non-violent individuals and the violence is only linked to a mother's love whereas a father, other relatives and most importantly social conditions, such as poverty and deprivation, patriarchal forms of violence, discrimination, etc are not mentioned in relation to the violence. Thus I have decided to analyze the positioning of the female roles as the core of a healthy family to decode the social perspective underneath this approach. I have analyzed this segment under the title, "The Positioning of Woman / Mother".

In order to provide the route to healing, the series builds an exchange of the authority to reestablish the social norms within the therapy room. In each episode, Dr. Manolya builds a certain relationship with the patients however this relationship can have very different range from a compassionate one to a tough one depending on the authority she has to acquire in order to treat the patient. This exchange of the authority is quite remarkable because it reflects the societal positioning of the character. Depending on their gender, social and economic resources, their looks, their religion the balance of the authority in the patients' lives and in their relationship with Dr. Manolya differ. The establishment of authority is crucial to understand the social norms that give and take the power from the characters. Thus, as a fourth category I have decided to analyze "Authority and Norms" in the series.

In the fifth category, I have decided to analyze "Healing and Reintegration to Society". The treatment processes and the characters' behavioral changes shed light on the social norms and what is expected as the ideal in a society. Dr. Manolya as an authority guides the patients toward their new selves as reintegrated and happier people in a society. Instead of creating outer change the series always direct the characters to inner change which might also be a psychologically correct approach however as the core reason of many of the characters' problems are based on

violence and social pressure, it is interesting that the only necessary solutions to their problems are individual solutions. Thus, I have tried to analyze how the series portray the healing and the reintegration of the characters.

Apart from these five categories I have also analyzed recurring themes of the series and deliberate decisions that form an approach to further understand the societal perspective that the series the Red Room feed from and also contribute to.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Results

5.1.1 Introduction of the character: The clash of mental illness and being a functional family / society member

The Red Room offers a descriptive introduction for each character that enters the therapy room in their first episode. This description is detailed in a way that emphasizes specific characteristics about the patients, which determines the perception of the audience towards a character. These choices are shown through flashbacks, behaviors, mimics, physical appearance, the dialogues and the thoughts of *Dr. Manolya*, the therapist. Patients come to visit the doctor with a specific problem that blocks them from living their life as a functioning individuals in the society and sometimes they are forced to come with members of their families. For example, *Boncuk Kaynak*, a young and married Turkish woman living an isolated life in Netherlands, is forced to come to visit the doctor because her husband can't deal with her increasing detachedness from the world and more importantly because of her hallucinations. Nevertheless, the audience watches the clues about Boncuk's situation even before she enters the therapy room, through the flashback scenes in her house in Netherlands. The first scene of Boncuk is about how she loses her mental health. The scene starts within an extremely clean, tidy and a typical Turkish house in the Netherlands. The decoration of the house reflects the stereotypical Turkish cultural codes for the interior such as a simply decorated, clean and orderly house with traditional objects. Boncuk's detached life from the outer reality in the

country she lives in can be understood from her actions. Boncuk's clothes, the decoration of her house, the photo of her and her husband from their wedding day all signal a conservative and an isolated life from the first scene. Boncuk sees three old, religious men with white beards, whom she calls *Ermiş Dedeler*, which translates as *Saint Ancestors*, as a part of her delusions. Within the first scene, the Saint Ancestors tell Boncuk that soon others will come to take her and marry her to a new husband because her current husband is not good enough for her.[11] Afterwards Boncuk dresses up nicely, puts her make up on and prepares a suitcase for herself in a very delighted manner.[12] She draws a black mole on her cheek, which can be considered as a foreshadowing to her storyline since her father's lover has the same mole on her cheek.

The first clue about her mental illness is given through her outfit change to a more flamboyant one and her dialogue with the mysterious Saint Ancestors. At the beginning of the episode, as she stands by the window, Boncuk wears a conservative, traditional outfit with her hair tied and no make up on her face. Her transition from a conservative outfit to a fancy mini dress with accessories is shown very distinctly within the first minutes of the series. As she loses control of her mind, her actions change but at the same time her outfit changes drastically. The codes behind her dressing are easy to define since the transition is from a very conservative one to a very flamboyant one. As a result of her transition she starts to act in a more obviously feminine manner; playing with her hair, putting on make up including red lip stick, laughing almost flirtatiously. This change is significant in the sense that she acts sanely when she dresses conservatively and her feminine, sexual representation of the self appears a result of her mental illness.

[11] Episode 14, time code 03.50
[12] Episode 14, time code 04.00-06.00

The amount of information that is shown through these descriptive introductory scenes creates the foundation for the specific perspective that the show aims to establish in the eyes of the audience. Another important signal to define a character is shown through the actions of the doctor versus the patient. For example, during her first minutes in the therapy room Boncuk acts joyfully, she laughs, sings to herself and looks at everything. Dr. Manolya welcomes them and asks her husband, Sadık, the reason they came instead of asking Boncuk directly, ensuring the audience that she knows Boncuk is not responsible for herself at the moment. Right after the first episode, Sadık brings Boncuk back to the clinic. He complains to Dr. Manolya for not being able to go back to his work in Netherlands due to the fact that there will be no one there to give him water or food at their home.[13]

After the introductory scenes, the audience doesn't know the specific diagnosis of Boncuk's illness, however they know that she is a conservative, married woman with responsibilities to her husband and at the moment she is absent from the reality she lives in. The audience is also informed that Boncuk transforms from a conservative woman to a more feminine looking, sexual woman when her delusions of marrying to another man increases. Because of the fact that she trashes her whole house during her mental breakdown, the audiences are informed that Boncuk can't function as a responsible wife with responsibilities to her husband as a cleaner and a cook within the house.

Another character, Meliha Kınık, is forced to come to the therapy room because she almost committed suicide. Like other characters of the series, Meliha doesn't articulate any social issues such as economic problems, societal pressure, and unemployment. She became suicidal due to her individual life story, which caused

[13] Episode 15, time code 06.50

her suffer greatly throughout her life. From the first scene, Meliha is portrayed as an extremely religious and conservative woman, wearing a headscarf. Meliha's daughter, also wearing a headscarf, brings her to the doctor because she caught her right before Meliha tried to commit suicide with a rope hanging from the ceiling.[14] When she came to the clinic, Meliha looked immensely depressed, wearing her headscarf over her very short hair and all black outfits.[15] Meliha's strong personality as a religious woman is displayed within the first scene where she doesn't speak to the doctor but she performs Mevlid, a composed version of an Islamic text, at the beginning of her therapy session, impressing everyone at the clinic.[16]

This detailed portrayal of her religious side shows that the character can still be in tune with the society through religion and her suicide attempt is portrayed as a choice to stay outside of life and the society. In the first scene where she talks to her daughter in a detached manner, it is understandable that she isolates herself from other people including her family. She stands as a character who choses to not function in anyway within the society because of her decision to end her life. Her suicide decision is understandable from Dr. Manolya's perspective because Meliha has suffered all her life through other people's mistakes. Thus, she is deeply respected by the therapist, Dr. Manolya who constantly praises Meliha due to her resilience to the painful events in her life. Meliha's portrayal as a religious woman is focused to foreshadow how she can still integrate with life, her family and the society at the end of her healing journey.

While Boncuk is solely the victim of violence, Meliha is both the victim and the perpetuator of violence at some moments of her life however, Sadi Mertoğlu, as the most watched male character of the series and also one of the most loved

[14] Episode 1, time code 07.50
[15] Episode 1, time code 10.00
[16] Episode 1, time code 20.50

characters of the show in general, is the symbol of violence in a society as the mafia leader that he is. Sadi enters the therapy room with a gun and thus he is conflicted and challenged by Dr. Manolya from the first second they meet. Sadi is extremely violent, rude and angry on the outside whereas next to Dr. Manolya, he becomes extremely soft, polite, compassionate and childish. His obedience to Dr. Manolya is portrayed on the show with great care and his violent life is justified through the fact that he used to be a homeless kid living in the streets.

The reason that Sadi comes to the Red Room is solely his panic attacks. Although Dr. Manolya worries about his work as a mafia leader she normalizes the violence within his work and easily accepts the aspect of violence as an inevitable life path for Sadi. The normalization of a mafia man who carries a gun to every place he goes and who openly murders and injures people, is acknowledged through Sadi's childhood stories. Sadi grew up as a street kid and had to survive all by himself. Dr. Manolya justifies his violent life through the injustice fate that he faced as a child.

In his introductory scene, Dr. Manolya describes him as a dark person and the audiences immediately see the violent scars of gun and knife on his body as he takes his shirt off. Sadi is portrayed as an extremely courageous man. When Dr. Manolya explains that his health is fine but he is having fears, Sadi refuses this by declaring how he can fearlessly fight an army by himself and he gets angry with Dr. Manolya because he believes that she sees him as a mad man. Dr. Manolya responds to him by saying that he is not a mad man but a very smart man who acts fearless and courageous even when doesn't need to do so.[17] This immediate praise to violence as courageousness actually foreshadows the approach of the character Dr. Manolya and the approach of the series in general towards the portrayal of the character Sadi. He

[17]Episode 1, time code 17:27

calls himself Delikanlı Sadi, meaning the lad, and the doctor returns the saying by referring to his nickname many times.

Sadi enters the therapy room in the first scene as a mafia but exits it as a family man who tries to survive for his three daughters. Sadi, his mafia business and his guns are humanized in the eyes of Dr. Manolya and the audience at the end of the first episode. This approach to define Sadi not as a violent mafia leader and a murderer becomes an effort to portray him as a courageous family man and a hero. At the beginning of his second episode, Sadi sees a couple fighting near the entrance of the clinic. The man yells at the woman saying that she can't go anywhere and that he won't allow it. Sadi beats him and presumably saves the woman who thanks him deeply. He gives their number to the woman, telling her to call his men if she ever gets threatened again. Sadi is portrayed as a superhero that uses his powers to help the women and to protect them from the violence of other men.

Sadi's character is presented in a comedic way and the character is portrayed as a funny one. Dr. Manolya often laughs at his jokes. During the series, Sadi is also shown as a considerate, kind and cheerful character to women and other vulnerable people he meets in general. Sadi's understanding of violence is portrayed as limited to other men and especially other mafia members. He repeatedly positions himself as a man opposed to violence against women and children even though he runs a mafia operation. He also refers to the religious text quite often and prays to God during his conversations with Dr. Manolya.

At first, Dr. Manolya acts toughly and even rudely against Sadi to strengthen her authority inside the room and to help Sadi get distracted to ease his panic attack. The tough manner of Dr. Manolya changes quickly to a more compassionate approach at the end of the first episode. Later, Dr. Manolya always hugs the

character and talks to him as an extremely compassionate sisterly, motherly figure. The portrayal of Dr. Manolya's relationship with Sadi and the positive description of his character are deliberately shown to the audiences from the first episode.

All three characters, just like other characters that are presented on the series, are described with certain qualifications from the beginning to possibly influence the audience. The introductions of the characters are a representation for the way the show portrays the characters, the stories and the social values. Thus Boncuk's story is told in a way that emphasizes the lack of love and appreciation she feels, her loneliness and her relationship to her husband as a wife whereas Meliha's story focuses on her as an extremely religious woman who suffered greatly. Sadi, as a male character, is portrayed as a fearless mafia leader whose panic attacks are an obstacle against his business, however the series or the doctor doesn't focus on the violence that he causes as a consequence of his mafia business but his sad childhood story.

5.1.2 Family and destiny: Violence as an individual's problem

One of the most recurring themes of the series is the positioning of violence as an individual issue and not a social one. The fact that every episode of the series starts with a statement about the mission of the show to stop the violence, written in bold, red letters prove this point; especially the first two statements which declare that none of the countries on earth have been able to prevent violence with severe punishments because violence is a behavioral model that is learned through childhood.

This perspective of the Red Room appears throughout the storylines of the characters as well. None of the characters are stressed or vocal about economical

inequalities, unemployment issues, legal complications or any problem about any institution of the society including the governmental institutions, family, business, any kind of system. All of the characters' sufferings and traumas are portrayed as consequences of other individuals such as their family members but never a societal system or even a group.

Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu's theory, the Pattern of Fate, is placed as a core theme of the TV series as well. The Pattern of Fate is the belief that people's life experiences are in alignment with the homes and families they were born into. Although, early childhood experiences and family home have an undeniable influence in shaping one's psychology, placing all responsibility for the traumatic events such as violence or abuse on the individuals, this pattern is restrictive in the sense that it portrays violence as fate whereas responsibility also falls on social justice and welfare policies.

Boncuk, Meliha and Sadi all live their lives under the influence of their Patterns of Fate according to Dr. Manolya. Boncuk's pattern of fate is feeling invaluable and being psychologically abused because her mother was treated that way by her father. Whereas Meliha leads a life where she tries to handle the shame that she feels because her daughter became a prostitute just like her mother. According to Dr. Manolya, feeling shameful and guilty and being excluded from the society because of this pattern in her family are what defined Meliha's character and her receptiveness of violence. From Dr. Manolya's perspective, Sadi is the victim of his Pattern of Fate because he was born into violence and a life on the streets, thus the mafia life was inevitable for him.

To emphasize the Pattern of Fate of the characters' storylines, the series choose to use flashbacks to the childhood of the characters. The length of the scenes

of Sadi's unfortunate childhood is longer than any other character's. He misses his mom who was killed by his father. After the death of his mother and the imprisonment of his father, he has to live with his father's other family and then he joins a street gang to survive as a child forced to live on the streets. Sadi's childhood story and his suffering in life are emphasized through the story. Dr. Manolya repeatedly focuses on Sadi's panic attacks and his violent life as a result of his childhood and his family life. She often declares that fate didn't give him any other choice except living a violent life.

Dr. Manolya doesn't criticize Sadi's work as a mafia leader, however she worries for his survival. The doctor only tries to treat his panic attacks and accepts his violent work habits such as murdering and injuring other men as a side effect of his line of work. Dr. Manolya doesn't state an opinion about the legitimacy of mafia leaders in a society or the existence of kids living on the street in a systemic manner. She rather explains these as inevitable and unfortunate realities whereas they are often systemic societal issues caused by lack of governmental intervention instead of individual problems.

The series sets norms about what is health / illness, what is good / bad, functional / dysfunctional, right / wrong through the eyes of Dr. Manolya. Dr. Manolya's approach towards Sadi's mafia business as "a line of work" is a sign that she, thus the series, approves violence within the society as long as it is not between family members. The legitimized violence of Sadi is not defined as wrong but only as a consequence of his Pattern of Fate due to his days as a kid living on the streets.

Meliha's husband beats her regularly and the doctor asks her why she allowed this to continue as if domestic violence is stoppable according to the wish of the victim.[18] She explains her tendency to be abused as:

> You have never experienced security and happiness, which are feelings that we experience in the house we were born to. The feelings that we learn there are the mother language of our mind. Unfortunately, I can see that you are still using that mother language that humiliates you.[19]

Dr. Manolya portrays this violence as a result of Meliha's childhood whereas this situation is also a result of the patriarchal system and male dominance.

In Boncuk's case, her husband Sadık and her childhood memories are the sources of the psychological violence she faces. The flashbacks to Netherlands explain the relationship dynamic of Sadık and Boncuk as a wife and a husband. Sadık expects to be served by his wife all the time including the first time he brought her to his apartment in Netherlands where he immediately asked her to make some tea for him.[20] Boncuk asks him if she can take a course to learn Dutch but Sadık refuses by instantly saying that she doesn't need it.[21] Then she asks if Sadık has any friends so that she can meet their wives and they can socialize and Sadık instantly refuses by saying that he hates socializing.[22] Sadık treats Boncuk as a servant and doesn't even talk to Boncuk except the times he asks for something.

Dr. Manolya defines Boncuk as a victim of psychological violence. At the end of the first episode in which she meets Dr. Manolya , the audience hears Dr. Manolya's trail of thoughts regarding Boncuk and Sadık. Dr. Manolya summarizes

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[18] Episode 1, time code 23.50
[19] Episode 1, time code 2:05:35 "Doğduğumuz evde öğrendiğimiz huzur güven mutluluk gibi duyguları siz hiç tatmamışsınız. Oysa orada öğrendiğimiz duygular bizim zihnimizin ana dili gibidir. Ve maalesef bugün görüyorum ki sen hala seni sürekli aşağılayan o ana dili kullanıyorsun."
[20] Episode 15, time code 23:20
[21] Episode 15, time code 28:26
[22] Episode 15, time code 29:35

the situation and explains her perception towards the characters and their relationship:

> He doesn't even care about what is wrong with her, his wish is to return to the order he was used to whereas Boncuk's only hope is for that order to be destroyed. Violence against women is not forced only by beating, swearing, hitting or killing; Boncuk is also a victim of violence. She is exposed to psychological violence. For 7 years, she was captured in her home without even learning the language of the country she lives in. Lack of love and attention brought her to this state and her cure for this despair is illness. She lost her mental balance and leaned on the help of the Saint Ancestors but if she could only receive a bit of love, attention and value, would she become this way?[23]

Doctor's commentary on how lack of love, attention and value caused the illness shapes violence again not as a societal problem but an individual one. Boncuk's psychological imprisonment in the house in a foreign country is not an unfamiliar concept considering the realities of Turkish society. Women inside the house and men on the outside are common concepts within the family and the society. Boncuk's example is an extreme case however the root cause of this situation is the societal positioning of women within the family. The doctor explains this as this certain character's fault whereas this is considered the norm because of the societal codes and conditioning behind the formation of the family.

All three characters go through a healing journey with a professional psychiatrist, to deal with their mental issues and this may be a great example for the audiences in the sense that they get to normalize psychotherapy, asking for help and the show certainly creates awareness on mental illnesses. Similarly, the emphasis on family, primary caregiver as significant influences on one's life and psychology are

[23] Episode 14, time code 2:30:22 "Kızcağızın nesi olduğu (kocasının) umrunda bile değil. Derdi alıştığı düzene dönmek bir an önce… Oysa ki Boncuk'un tüm umudu o alıştığı düzenin yıkılması… Kadına şiddet sadece döverek, söverek, vurarak, öldürerek yapılmıyor. İşte Boncuk da şiddet mağdurlarından biri; o psikolojik şiddete maruz kalmış. Yedi yıldır yaşadığı ülkenin dilini öğrenemeden eve kapatılmış. Sevgisizlik, ilgisizlik işte bu hale getirmiş kadını… Çaresizliğin ilacı hastalık olmuş. Akli dengesini yitirmiş; ermişlerden medet umar olmuş. Oysa biraz sevgi, biraz ilgi, biraz değer görebilseydi acaba bu hale gelir miydi?"

important. However, these issues are suggested without the integration of the larger socio-political context and presented as problems to be resolved through submitting to conventional gender roles, family values and social norms.

This TV series is a highly profitable media product designed with an aim to receive high ratings and a social mission to stop the violence. For a TV series that aims to stop the violence and claims to own it as a mission; this series does not capture the social and structural reasons that lead to violence within families. Sadi and Meliha both lived on the streets or under harsh conditions with no adult supervision during their childhoods. Dr. Manolya or the series don't focus on the lack of support that these children should have received from the government and other institutions after their parents' death or absence.

5.1.3 The positioning of the female roles: Blaming the women / mother

The series nurture a perspective where mothers are the ones to be blamed for the violence in a society. The introductory statement that was broadcasted between the episodes 20 and 43 puts the blame of raising violent individuals directly on mothers by stating that mothers who don't love their children enough will cause a tendency towards violence in the children. Blaming violence on a lack of love and affection from the mother reflects the show's patriarchal and male dominant perspective.

All of the stories of the Red Room revolve around the functional, healthy family image. Being a part of a family is praised many times throughout the series and according to this point of view, mothers and women are at the center of every family, thus they are responsible for the healthy functioning of a family. For characters like Boncuk and Meliha, divorce is never even discussed as an option. Sadi is constantly praised for his devotion to his family and is defined as a family

man. Dr. Manolya constantly praises Sadi's kindness and compassion, which she thinks that he gets from his short time with his mother. Dr. Manolya emphasizes even though she died at an early time, Sadi is a good person because of his mother's love and affection. From the show's perspective, the fact that Sadi is a loyal, loving husband to his wife and a caring, cheerful father to his three daughters is enough to portray him as a hero, an idol. Sadi, as a male character, can get away with being a mafia leader, murdering and injuring people on a daily basis, just by the fact that he has a functioning family. Whereas the evaluation of good and bad isn't as simple for the female characters as it is for Sadi.

During Sadi's storyline, the series focuses on a mother's responsibility to raise a functioning individual many times through other characters. Miço, another street kid who is like a brother to Sadi, has a mother who left him when he was small and who works in a nightclub. Sadi is very angry with Miço's mother and Dr. Manolya agrees with him by saying:

> Everything that happens to a human being happens because of their mother. The seed of goodness and evil both come from the mother and whatever you do it eventually finds you…[24]

Dr. Manolya blames the mothers again when talking about the street kids by saying:

> There comes a day when the children whose hands are not held by their mother hold guns instead. The children who didn't feel the warmth of their mother warm themselves with the heat of a fight.[25]

The positioning of female characters is built in relation to feelings such as shame, guilt and fear. In Meliha's life there are painful stories that happened to her but never one certain criminal. Instead the women in her life are in the center of what is called a "dishonorable" fate. Her mother, her sister and her daughter are all prostitutes in

[24] Sadi's storyline part 1. [Youtube, 2021], time code 4.13.00, "Ne güzel dedin Sadi. Hayatta iyiliği de kötülüğü de annelerden görüyoruz. Sonra hayat boyu o iyiliği ve kötülüğü arıyoruz."
[25] Sadi's storyline part 2. [Youtube, 2021], time code 3.07.00, "Eli annesi tarafından tutulmayan çocuklar gün geliyor silahları tutuyor. Annesinin sıcaklığını hissetmeyen çocuklar gün geliyor kavganın sıcaklığı ile ısınıyor."

some part of their lives and Meliha feels certain blame and describes her fate as dark because of it. Meliha admits that she can't flirt with her husband because she is the daughter of her mother who used to be a prostitute before she was married to her father. She speaks of her mother as if she despises her however when she speaks about her father she laughs and talks about him as a grandiose man.[26]

Meliha blames her mom about their horrible fate, because men who raped her mother murdered his father.[27] She feels shame because of her memories in childhood. Meliha tells stories about how her parents were deeply in love and whatever happened to her father happened because of her mother.[28] The doctor asks Meliha if she was afraid to resemble her mother and Meliha says that she was very afraid.[29] The doctor reciprocates the blame on the mother by using an approving language:

> Your mom has never really been a mom to you… You children have never felt the love, compassion and support you needed.[30]

Meliha feels the greatest blame because she loved her husband's son as this situation violates the rules of morality and familial codes. Meliha falls in love with Necdet who is her violent husband's kind son. This love story resembles the one Boncuk experiences with her imaginary lover, Can, who is a Dutch-Turkish musician she meets at the park in Netherlands. Both of these love stories are innocent but impossible stories for women who experience violent marriages with older, more traditional men whereas Necdet and Can are both young and modern characters. Meliha's mom, a sexual, beautiful, cheerful woman, resembles Boncuk's father's lover in many ways. They dress up, put their make up on and laugh almost

[26] Episode 1, time code 46.58
[27] Episode 1, time code 49.38
[28] Episode 1, time code 49.25
[29] Episode 1, time code 1.05.00
[30] Episode 1, time code 2:04:53 "Annen pek annelik etmemiş size. İhtiyacınız olan sevgiyi, şefkati, sahiplenmeyi görememişsiniz."

flirtatiously. Boncuk mimics this behavior when she loses her mental balance. As the flashbacks of her childhood unfold, the audiences learn that Boncuk's father forced his wife and children to serve to his lover, whom they refer to as the guest, that he brought to their home many nights. The food on the table was specially made for the two of them whereas the young children, Boncuk and her older sister starved and ate the remains.[31] Her father also forced his wife to dance to entertain his lover and the children saw their mother dancing as she cried.[32] Then, a man named Kenan, who is the guest's old lover, came to the house and beat up their father and his lover.[33] He raped their mother and forcefully held all of them as hostages in their own home.[34] He pointed his finger to Boncuk and told her that soon he will take her.[35]

During the scenes Boncuk loses her mental balance, she physically looks likes the guest, the lover of her father as she draws a mole on her face, puts red lip stick and dresses flamboyantly, mostly in red. The feminine and the sexual are defined through her father's lover and whenever she loses her sanity she acts like the guest. In other times, Boncuk acts like her mother, who served to her husband her whole life. Sadık constantly waits for service from Boncuk, forcing her to cook, clean and act as her husband tells her. Sadık, as a worker who lives in the Netherlands, moved Boncuk to his home after marrying her, however he isolated her from the outside by not allowing her to have any friends. He expects Boncuk to act like his personal servant and he isn't the only one as Boncuk's sister is grateful to Sadık because he married Boncuk. Even when she receives heavy treatments for her

[31] Episode 15, time code 19.30
[32] Episode 15, time code 55.40
[33] Episode 18, time code 1:16:48
[34] Episode 19, time code 38.11
[35] Episode 19, time code 44:00

delusions, her family still expects service from her within the house.[36] Throughout her storyline, Boncuk either fulfills the role of her mother or the role of the mistress. When she dreams of Can, her illusionary boyfriend, she becomes more like the mistress whereas when she is mentally stable she tries to serve to her husband and her family. Dr. Manolya emphasizes her tendency to copy the behaviors of the two female characters from her childhood; her mother and the mistress. Dr. Manolya thinks that Boncuk learned two behavioral models from her father who treated his lover with affection and who treated his wife as a servant, a slave. Dr. Manolya claims that Boncuk has her troubles because Sadık neither beat her nor loved her. She explains this situation as:

> Your husband didn't do both; he didn't beat you but he wouldn't know how to love you. He ignored you except the times you served him. He made you forget your existence. You are left all alone.[37]

Women are portrayed as objects of attention to be loved and appreciated for their services and Dr. Manolya only emphasizes the lack of love and support however the housework that is given Boncuk as a responsibility shouldn't be her responsibility alone. In another sense, Boncuk has also the rights to work, to socialize and to spend her times as she pleases even though she might be married. Nevertheless, the series reproduces gender inequality by legitimizing the female roles as a cook, cleaner, servant and child bearing wives. Boncuk doesn't really complain about these roles she was forced to play; however in one scene she complains to Dr. Manolya about Sadık. Boncuk explains how Sadık forces her to serve, cook and clean as a dutiful wife. She also explains her role as an obeying wife to her husband and she expresses

[36] Episode 20, time code 34:03

[37] Episode 16, time code 1.59.00 "Erkek dediğin işte bunlardan birini yapar di mi böyle öğrenmişsin doğduğun evde. Senin kocan ikisini de yapmamış. Seni dövmemiş ama sevmeyi de bilememiş. Ona yaptığın hizmetler dışında yoksaymış seni... Varlığını sana bile unutturmuş. Çok ama çok yalnız kaldın sen."

her frustration over her loneliness without any family support from her husband or her sister:

> He tells me 'if you are my wife, you will act like my wife'. He never wants me to be happy. Boncuk prepares tea, Boncuk cooks dinner, Boncuk cleans the house, Boncuk makes the dessert. He wants me to walk like I am dead so that I won't bother anyone again.[38]

Right after her cry for help, the audiences hear Dr. Manolya's thoughts through a voiceover where she says:

> Being forced to live the real life means death to her. In the world that she builds for herself, there are people who listen to her, who understand her and who worry for her. Now she has nothing to hold on to, real world forces her even more than I thought so.[39]

Dr. Manolya's reference to the illusion world and the real world is about the mental illness Boncuk experiences however the real world is actually the world where patriarchal rules are in power and where women are expected to act a certain way. The possibility that Boncuk is devastated because of the oppression of her husband and her family based on patriarchal values is not even discussed by Dr. Manolya. This ignorance towards systemic problems strengthens the position of the series as a tool of reinforcement of certain social values including gender roles.

Apart from expecting constant service inside the house, Sadık also expects Boncuk to have sex with him even if she doesn't want to. In a scene in episode 21, Boncuk refuses to get close with Sadık while they were about to sleep and he yells:

> Aren't you my wedded wife? To what extent will you run this way? You are just lying next to me, doing nothing… If you're a woman then act like a woman.[40]

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[38] Episode 21, time code 1:44:26 "Karımsan karılığını bilicen diyor. Hiç gün yüzü görmeyeyim, hiç mutlu olmayayım istiyor. Çayımı koyayım, yemek yapayım, evi temizlesin, sütlaç yapsın istiyor. Rahatsız etmesin istiyor."

[39]Episode 21, time code 1:45:50 "Gerçek hayata mecbur bırakılmak öldürülmek demek onun için… Oysa kendi kurduğu dünyada onu dinleyenler, anlayanlar, onun için endişelenenler vardı. Şimdi tutunacağı hiçbir şey kalmadı. Gerçek dünya onu sandığımdan da çok zorluyor."

[40] Episode 21, time code 1.43.53 "Sen benim nikahlı karım değil misin? Nereye kadar daha kaçacaksın böyle artık? Yanımda kütük gibi yatıyon böyle ya... Sabır diyorum ama yetti artık ya ne olacak bu iş?"

Dr. Manolya doesn't openly warn or inform Sadık or Boncuk about the fact that even in marriage a forced sexual interaction is rape, instead she focuses on the love, appreciation and support Boncuk doesn't receive from Sadık. The female roles are once reproduced in the show through concepts such as sexuality, femininity and family. According to the Red Room, familial values should be protected at all costs and love only can heal all the violence.

5.1.4 Authority and norms

The Red Room reproduces traditional gender norms by also positioning men as authority figures with patriarchal values. Only men can stand up against violence and hold an authority over the rest of the society however the character of Dr. Manolya proves that the concept of authority is not limited to gender roles. Female characters sometimes borrow that authority from men under the condition that they use it to influence others with patriarchal values. Dr. Manolya builds a different relationship with patients to heal them. For example, with Meliha and Boncuk she builds compassionate, respectful relationships. She believes Boncuk's delusions and talks to her as if everything she believes is real. With Meliha, she is respectful and sees her as a peer, a friend. On the contrary, with Sadi, she forces her authority over him to calm his panic attacks. Dr. Manolya is a different kind of authority for Sadi in the sense that he is an authority himself as a mafia leader who does not listen to anyone. Dr. Manolya as an authoritative figure makes him follow her rules as not carrying a gun to her office and forces him to act like a more easy going person. Sadi becomes childish over time to be able to receive the authority of Dr. Manolya because Sadi as an adult is himself an authority who doesn't accept orders from anyone else.

Sadi enters the clinic with more than five bodyguards and two black, expensive cars. He is a mafia head with men under his rule and he is described as the ultimate authority figure, however this changes when he meets Dr. Manolya. Sadi forcefully enters the clinic even though he doesn't have an appointment with Dr. Manolya as he is a man of authority in his surroundings who is used to getting everything he wants. His authority clashes with the authority of Dr. Manolya and she overrules him by screaming at him and calling him disrespectful because he carries his gun into her Red Room. Sadi apologizes and gives up the gun as he becomes more vulnerable in the face of Dr. Manolya. Dr. Manolya acts as a tough figure, speaking rudely in a condescending manner and Sadi takes the role of a vulnerable child in front of her. Dr. Manolya then develops a more compassionate relationship with him. Throughout the episodes they always hug each other and they develop a more compassionate relationship than a normal psychiatrist patient relationship. Dr. Manolya becomes more of a mother figure for Sadi but she also is an extreme authority for him.

Sadi spent his childhood living in the streets. He first entered a gang where the man in charge, Apo, tortured and forced the children to gain money. Sadi hated Apo and ran from his authority. He then started working with a presumably kinder man, Hamdi Baba, who also makes children work but also care for them. Sadi calls this man as his own father and later marries his sister ending up as the new leader of his mafia business. These men are also authoritative figures in his life.

Meliha's healing process only begins after she respects Dr. Manolya enough to replace her as the new authority in her life. In Meliha's case Dr. Manolya was an authoritative figure amongst the men in her life. Her father didn't let her mother or the children go to the town because he felt it was not safe for them. Her husband, an

older man who married her because he wanted a young woman to serve him, became the sole authority of her life by manipulating and physically being violent with her.

Meliha later became an authoritative figure herself for her children. One of her children, the one who brought her to the clinic, is a conservative woman wearing a headscarf however her other daughter, whom she thought was dead, is a prostitute as her mother was. During the flashback scenes, Meliha used violence herself to control and limit the actions of her child. She didn't let her put up posters of popular artists on her walls or put some make up on in the fear that she will follow an immoral path like her grandmother. This fear of immorality turned Meliha into the protector of family and ethical values against her children.

Meliha gives a lot of power to the perception of the society in her dialogues with the doctor. She defines the perception of their family as an immoral one due to her mother's previous occupancy and she believes that this perception followed the family even when they left the town. This societal perception that punishes Meliha and her family is the strongest authority for Meliha. This concept of authority throughout the show acts as a symbolism of a guardian of morals and ethics. Meliha made decisions due to the voice of the guardianship and felt invaluable because of it. The guardians were always men until she became the guardian and the authority to protect the morality with her own children.

In Boncuk's case, Dr. Manolya has to have approval from the Saint Ancestors in order to talk to Boncuk. Sadık, her husband, is the authority in her life that forced to visit Dr. Manolya however the other authorities in Boncuk's life, the ones she sees in her delusions, the Saint Ancestors, are also present in the therapy room. Dr. Manolya says that she will listen to her but Boncuk insists to ask the Saint Ancestors

if she can talk to Dr. Manolya when she gets her approval she becomes very happy. The Saint Ancestors allow Boncuk to tell Dr. Manolya everything.[41]

Boncuk stands as a desperate character with a sad look in her eyes until she talks to the Saint Ancestors; after the talk, she trusts and listens to them. Boncuk doesn't make any kind of a decision or doesn't even take an action until she hears the commands of the Ancestors, who are three old men. This scene reinforces Boncuk as a powerless character in her own life, guided by the three men to make a decision. Her loneliness saddens her but she doesn't take an action until the voices inside her head take the shape of the three Saint Ancestors and tell her what she will do.

Boncuk refers to the situation with sentences such as "I will be taken by the Ancestors", "I will be given to another husband", "What if my husband gets mad" etc.… This type of reference to herself weakens her power as an individual and reinforces her position within the society as an obeying character waiting for the men to give an order.

5.1.5 Healing and reintegration to society

Every character that enters the therapy room exits the room healed and ready to be reintegrated to social life. The solution to violence is love and the solution, as the problem is, never social but always individual. The individuals' responsibility is to love each other, to build a healthy family and function in accordance to the norms of the society so that the society won't have violence as an issue. The characters are prescribed medicine and they participate to therapy sessions to heal. All of the patients of Dr. Manolya experience an almost cathartic process of healing through their therapy sessions where they usually discuss familial issues, shameful secrets,

[41] Episode 15, time code 1.00.00

stories that have never been shared with anyone other than Dr. Manolya. This cathartic healing process also defines the meaning of healing in accordance to the social rules and values. The series show the audience the route to healing and what choices to make as an individual to get to that point.

Sadi calls the sessions “surgeries” and comes to the sessions willingly to talk about his past, especially his childhood memories as a street kid. The show focuses on Sadi’s adventures as a street kid instead of focusing on his life as a mafia leader. This justifies Sadi as a non-violent, childish and innocent character even though he is an active mafia leader. Dr. Manolya treats Sadi’s panic attacks with medicine and breathing techniques. She explains that the long term healing will come from facing and accepting that he may also feel fear.

At the end of his episodes, Sadi decides to legalize his business under the name of a corporate security company and thanks Dr. Manolya for the idea. Sadi changes the shape and the name of his business by using his power and his money that he gained through the mafia business for many years. Dr. Manolya is very appreciative about this decision and even Sadi’s wife comes to thank her for this change. At the end of his last episode his beautiful wife and his three beautiful, cheerful daughters come to visit the Red Room. The daughters and the wife, who are extremely modern and delightful, come to the Red Room wearing colorful dresses.

Sadi’s violent side is controlled through the narration and his more cheerful side is put forward. Dr. Manolya encourages Sadi toward the end by saying “The Sadi that I know is never the man of that kind of businesses. Life forced him to many things and never gave him a better option but now you are strong enough to make your own way.” Sadi’s healing comes from legalizing his business however he is not expected to give up his ways completely.

Meliha reintegrates to the society through the authority and kindness of Dr. Manolya. As she mentions many times throughout the episodes Meliha told Dr. Manolya everything about her life even though she never talked about her past with anyone. This close relationship redefines Meliha's perception of the events that occurred throughout her life and her perception of the self. Meliha blames herself for whatever happened to her, including her non-sexual affair with her husband's son, Dr. Manolya tells her that she and all the other female characters in her life have the right to feel something in life as they are also human. She also tells her "Do not rush to go to the other side" to make her give up the decision to take her own life. Dr. Manolya also tells her to taste a clean, peaceful and honorable life now. This emphasis on cleanness and honor is about the healing from the positioning of the women in her family as immoral women.

At the last episode, Meliha performs Mevlid one more time and she tells Dr. Manolya that she can only be her true self when she performs Mevlid. In other times she says that she is never herself because she always has to hide things from people. The things that she hides are about the women in her life whereas her true religious self is her reality. This transition to her religious self is her salvation from the immorality in her life and her difference from the women in her life. Dr. Manolya once again encourages Meliha to own her religious self as she praises her honesty when telling the events of her life.The episode ends as Dr. Manolya tells her that they will have other sessions in the future and welcomes her to perform Mevlid once more. Meliha's healing comes through her religious exploration of the self and her release of the guilt.

Boncuk's healing process is slower because she refused to take the medicines that would make her delusions stop. She wanted to stay in her delusions with her

imaginary lover, friend Can and the Saint Ancestors. She lived in the hopes of marrying another man, Can, who is chosen by the three Saint Ancestors. Boncuk's healing meant the non-existence of these characters in her life and she fooled everyone by lying about taking the medicines. This process really affected her illness and a bus on the street hit her as accidentally.

At her last episode, Dr. Manolya visits Boncuk at a mental hospital where she received a successful treatment and is now free of her delusions. She instantly hugs Dr. Manolya and tells her about how Sadık returned from the Netherlands after abandoning because he couldn't stand the failure of her healing process. Boncuk explains to Dr. Manolya that she figured out the reason she became ill and it is her loneliness. Both Boncuk and Dr. Manolya praise Sadık for coming back to visit Boncuk. Sadık's behaviors are legitimized by his inability to show love and affection. Sadık tells Boncuk:

> We will register you to a language course like you always wanted, we will meet friends from my workplace, they will come to us and we will visit them, I will take you to the park during the week-ends so you can breath fresh air.[42]

Dr. Manolya tells her that she is extremely happy to hear this and suggests her to maybe take other courses so that she can even have an occupation one day. Boncuk's healing happens through medication and a successful treatment at a hospital, as her mental illness is severe. Boncuk's reintegration to society is described through improving her marriage and being more active socially to build a community in Netherlands, where she suffered from loneliness. Lack of community support and her husband's inability to love and appreciate her are shown as the reasons of her mental illness, whereas societal pressure of the patriarchal system is never mentioned even though it shapes the actions of the individuals directly. Thus, the possibility that

[42] Episode 23, time code 25:09 "Seni hep istediğin gibi dil kursuna da yazdırırız. Fabrikadan arkadaşlarla da görüşürüz. Onlar bize gelir, biz onlara gideriz. Hafta sonu seni parka götürürüm; temiz hava alırsın."

there are social structures that need healing is not even discussed throughout the series; instead the healing process is always defined through individual change.

5.2 Discussion

The Red Room is a TV series that claim to have a specific mission, which is to stop the violence in the society. The series try to realize its mission by focusing on individuals and families instead of emphasizing the social structural reasons behind violence. Thus, the series formalize a portrait of violence and claim that violence exists on an individualistic level. From the show's perspective, some people have a challenging Pattern of Fate and they experience violence because of it. Through the individualization of violence, the responsibility to change it is given to individuals instead of governments.

The show reproduces gender inequality by projecting certain female roles as normal and necessary. The show positions women as those who need appreciation, love, attention, respect and it emphasizes that men should never hit women. Nevertheless women should serve to their families and if they don't fulfill their role as a mother, they will cause violent individuals in society.

The Red Room focuses on the protection of the family. The show's approach to family is aligned with the current government's approach as AKP situate the family as the source of socio-economical instabilities, poverty, unemployment, crime and even terrorism (Kocamaner, 2017, p.692). Researcher Hikmet Kocamaner studies Islamist television series and he states that there are certain reality shows and daily shows for women where family crisis and values are discussed through the show. The aim of these shows is, "strengthening the family values and stopping the corrosion of the moral fabric of the family" (Kocamaner, 2017, p.676). Kırmızı Oda

might be referred as a newer version of these series covered in modernity. As the psychotherapy room is a revolution for Turkish TV series, the content guards certain social norms and values such as family and gender roles. The show acts as a guide for the audience to face their traumas and feel their emotions however it carefully reproduces a certain social coding that upholds and protects the family and the gender roles.

Each character comes to the therapy room with a certain conditioning from their previous life and Dr. Manolya calls this as Pattern of Fate, however this conditioning might also be called as their *habitus*. Swartz (2012) define habitus as;

> a sort of deep-structuring cultural matrix that generates self-fulfilling prophecies according to different class opportunities.

At the end of their healing journey each character is reintegrated to the society in different ways however the habitus that is reproduced as the result of their healing journey with their therapist always consist of believing and prioritizing family.

As Park (2009, p.12) emphasized in his research, there are no clear ways to measure habitus in a direct manner however, besides the general approach of the political economy to the media, which is mainly about analyzing major political, economical and social institutions that determine the field of power, habitus enables the researcher to give importance to the practice of everyday action. Apart from the media owners, all of the participants to the production process such as the writers, the producers, the actors, the directors and the audiences, generate the *habitus*. The understanding of this habitus might lead the researcher back to the roots of the habitus, which might be considered as the values of the society and the authority that reproduce the product. In this case, the TV series, *the Red Room*, is the product of the habitus within the field of media. Understanding the social values, precisely the habitus of the series, paves the way to decoding the social dynamics of the producers

of the series and in this specific example the social values of the government and mentality in power. From this perspective, it is valuable to analyze the choices that have been made by the team that produced *the Red Room*, to understand the habitus of it.

The term habitus refers to the semi-conscious choices that have been made to produce the series, as it is within this research however it might be used to understand the characters' journey throughout the show. As the series' main creator, producer and writer Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu mentions in many of her writings, the characters experience certain patterns within their life times because of their "Pattern of Fate". This concept is a recurring theme for the show and the representative character of Budayıcıoğlu, Dr. Manolya who is played by actress Binnur Kaya, repeats this motif to explain the events that happened to the patients. For example, violence as a key theme of the series is repeatedly explained as an end result of this pattern of fate. The violence is described as inevitable due to life's offerings and a result of an individual life. The effects of the family members, especially the influence of the mother are emphasized however the whole social dimension to violence is ignored and denied with the usage of the concept "Pattern of Fate". The series have a somewhat similar approach to habitus in the sense that the show focuses on a repetitive pattern in an individual's life that shapes their mentality towards life however the social, economical and political dimensions to habitus are excluded from the series' understanding of a pattern in mentality.

The reproduction of the habitus of each character happens simultaneously with the audiences because the series show what happens inside a therapy room. Bourdieu briefly discussed the reproduction process in his book "The Rules of Art". The three phases of reproduction are the conquest of autonomy, the emergence of a

dualist structure and the market for symbolic goods. In the Red Room, the characters experience the conquest of autonomy as liberation from their childhood traumas. During this first process, they start feeling emotions that they have denied for a long time by remembering the memories they have been forcing themselves to forget such as childhood traumas. Dr. Manolya carefully guides each character through their childhood and helps them face their fears and feel all of their feelings. Their lives are the field for their habitus and the rules of their field start to break down. Nevertheless they don't acquire autonomy over every part of their lives. Mostly, characters analyze and try to reframe their pasts and people from their childhoods such as their parents. The break down of their childhood traumas gives them the autonomy. As the characters start their healing journey through the conquest of the autonomy, they face a resistance in the field, which are their lives. This resistance usually comes from themselves as they remember the traumas and the fears of their past as a part of their current reality. Sometimes it can also come from people who are currently in their lives such as family members. As they become torn between two opposite thought processes, Dr. Manolya guides them through the dualist structure of the reproduction process and helps them to acquire symbolic capital to complete the reproduction of their habitus. In another sense the therapist guides them to create new individual values and thoughts with more compassion and understanding towards themselves. They acquire their symbolic capital through the affirmations and the encouragement of Dr. Manolya. At the end of their healing process, each character is transformed in one way or another. From Bourdieu's perspective, the characters reproduce their habitus by reproducing the meanings coded in their lives. The characters are always extremely content and peaceful with the result and they are transformed into a better version of themselves in terms of familial and social values as well.

This transformation surely affects the audiences who experience the cathartic healing process of each character from an insider's point of view. The audiences hear the thoughts of the characters, their dialogues with Dr. Manolya inside the therapy room and watch their most intimate memories. As this might be beneficial from a psychological perspective, which is not the aim of this thesis, the reproduction of habitus is deeply restricted from a sociological perspective. Every character is transformed in a way that upholds familial values. The strengthening of family is provided through the new habitus because even though the characters face their greatest fears and heal from their mental illnesses they mostly don't divorce from their spouses even when they are the source of the violence, they fulfill their familial duties and they function within the society. The series and the character Dr. Manolya show the audiences a way to heal from violence without breaking up the family. Within the therapy room, the patients complete their healing journey individually and as they heal their Pattern of Fate, as Dr. Manolya says it, they have a chance to live within a new reality. At the end of their healing journey, the characters experience a change in this pattern and thus in their habitus.

The healing journey and the series might be referred as inspiring, informing and beneficial for the audiences, especially for those who refuse therapy, however as this series have a strong social mission to stop the violence and it is supported by certain ministries and administrations, it fails to reflect the reality of violence and the roots of violent behaviors within the society by refusing to focus on social and governmental structures.

In a wider review of the show, the reproduction of the habitus occurs for the audiences through the field of media. It is remarkable that the characters change within a limited sphere. At the end of their healing processes none of the characters

start questioning the social, economical, political injustices, gender inequality or the patriarchal system even though they clearly present the foundation of their individual problems. This normalization of gender inequality or other social injustices might be seen as the habitus of the show itself and of the mentality that makes this show.

From a psychological perspective, the series carries deep layers and even subconscious references such as the symbolization of the red color, to tell the stories of the characters. The series is embedded with these subconscious motifs of red, psychotherapy as birthing to a new individual and the portrayal of the therapist as a mother. The mother figure is a constant theme throughout the show however with the emphasis on Dr. Manolya, the therapist as an omnipotent mother figure who can truly transform the individual in the ways needed according to what is defined as norms within the perspective of the series, the mother figure's duties are extended to an extreme capacity. This expectancy towards an almighty mother figure that can stop the violence and transform the individual is shown through other female characters as well.

The patients in the Red Room are mostly women whereas the mothers are almost always held responsible for the violent events that occurred within the families. Since the mothers are shown as responsible to be omnipotent in order to build and protect the notion of family and thus the security of all of the individuals, they are to be blamed. Mothers and women are shown as the only caregivers within the family while relieving the men from their caregiver duties.

Dr. Manolya, is a motherly figure for all of her patients including the extremely violent mafia man Sadi. The mafia character Sadi may be considered the most problematic character of the series because his attendance to therapy is balanced by his immensely masculine behaviors. The other male characters'

masculine behaviors also support the perspective that limits the series within the boundaries of a certain approach as the show doesn't have male characters who are not in line with these values.

The Red Room has been criticized by many psychologists for many different reasons however the show's most visible psychological theme, the Pattern of Fate, is described as outdated due to the reference it makes to Freudian concepts. Relating violence with fate or simply family history without calculating the effects of the government, the media, the education system, other people etc. the explanation doesn't fully respond to the question. The Pattern of Fate portrays the individual as a close circuit system with no influence other than family, which might be considered a problematically conservative approach to modern psychology. The other problematic of the series is that the characters of the show are either fully empowered or victimized. The series reinforces authoritarian hierarchies by offering the dual model for every individual, which makes an individual either a victim or a winner. The aggressor of the series and the violence stories are also extreme examples. The series ignore regular violent behaviors and show only the extremely violent, rare stories.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The reproduction of the habitus happens through the field of media. The show, with its clearly stated mission to stop the violence, aims to change the habitus in a sense to change the practice of violence in the everyday life. As it might be considered a noble cause to produce a certain project with the aim to stop the violence, this approach to change the habitus, the common sense, the social perception around violence is made of deliberately crafted series of decisions according to a habitus that aligns with the mentality of those in power.

The series act as a guardian who uses symbolic violence in order to acquire a certain symbolic capital. The symbolic capital, the outcome wanted is the strengthening of familial values. The way to enforce that outcome is paved through the protection and reproduction of gender inequality in a non-violent way; however gender inequality isn't only about physical violence. Besides physical and psychological violence, symbolic violence reinforces gender inequalities as well. The social change that is powerful enough to stop the violence in a society can only come through the remodeling of families based on gender equality instead of reproducing the familial structures based on patriarchal values.

The acceptance of symbolic violence can happen through television where the reproduction of certain values happen through programming policy. Bourdieu (1996, p.19) argues that the reproduction happens through hiding things and showing something different on television. In the Red Room, the audiences watch the transformation of the individuals while the real foundation of violence in society is ignored. From Bourdieu's perspective, this choice to portray violence in a certain

way can be explained as a way to control the reproduction process and to influence the minds of the audiences.

In this example, media – knowingly or not – contributes to the reproduction of the truth as a power tool. The Red Room as a psychological TV series that takes place in a therapy room has the power to influence its audiences on a subconscious level due to its psychological content. To focus on patriarchy, male domination, poverty, social and economic inequalities, inadequacies of the juridical system etc. would contribute to the fight against violence; thus it must be a deliberate, political choice of the team that produced the Red Room to not include the social aspects of violence to the series.

Considering the fact that violence became a pandemic in the world, is it enough to call it a Pattern of Fate? Violence is more of a pattern of social systems and not a Pattern of Fate. The individuals might act violently by themselves, however it is the government's responsibility to ensure the securities and well being of the citizens in their country. Violence isn't a result of an individualistic decision but a result of the lack of the systems that are obliged to prevent it. The series' idealistic goal to stop the violence and to strengthen the families can't be realized without facing the real issues behind violence that the governments have the responsibility to solve.

Even though this thesis shows the clear social structures and approaches toward violence, gender roles and healing of an individual through the eyes of the series, The Red Room, there are still many other aspects that can be fully researched. One of the most limiting aspects of this study is the fact that the series contain more than three characters that all contribute to the narration of the story and the ideas behind it. The limitation of time restricted the area of research in the sense that a

detailed analysis of the characters is only present for three characters in this research. This thesis only focuses on the final product which the content of the series however with a research that includes the audiences' reactions to the episodes, greater answers can be found to the same questions. Analyzing how the audiences respond to certain subconscious symbols and narrations of certain stories would contribute greatly to calculate the exact impact of the show's certain codes. Another greater contribution to this thesis would have come from interviewing the producers and the contributors of this show because it would reflect the true aims and motivations behind the production. Interviewing the producers and the other contributors of the series would have also made an impact on the analysis of the reproduction of certain values through TV making.

Beyond its limitations, this thesis might contribute to an understanding of the process of reproduction of values through media content both from a societal and a psychological perspective. To further understand the dynamics behind the popularization of psychological themes in popular TV content and the transformation of the demonstration of external violence to internal violence through the TV series, one can research the different TV series with the same psychological themes with a comparative method. Many TV series of Gülseren Budayıcıoğlu, the creator of the Red Room, are examples to this new trend of psychological themes on TV. Through a comparative analysis, one can calculate the demonstration of social codes and structures through TV series in a more detailed manner. Another research topic to elevate this thesis might include the male characters of the Red Room in a wider sense; centered on the maybe most popular character on the Red Room, Sadi. The character Sadi has almost a similar storyline to Tony Soprano, one of the most loved problematic, violent characters of global television history. The resemblance comes

from the fact that both characters are mafia leaders who go through vulnerable sessions of therapy without giving up his violent ways of living. The grey area of treating a male murderer through psychotherapy is proven to be a center of attention for the audiences and a popular topic for TV. This tendency of the productions to narrate the stories of masculine, violent men through a psychological perspective and the audiences' great reactions toward it, might reflect a deeper ground to be researched to further understand the certain social codes and values that are embedded both in these series and in societies.

APPENDIX A

THE RATINGS OF THE RED ROOM

Episode	Date	Total Audience		AB Group		ABC Group	
		Rating	Ranking	Rating	Ranking	Rating	Ranking
1	04.09.2020	4,25	3	6,10	1	5,85	1
2	11.09.2020	6,31	1	7,49	1	8,37	1
3	18.09.2020	6,75	1	9,03	1	8,98	1
4	25.09.2020	7,21	1	10,65	1	9,48	1
5	02.10.2020	7,67	1	10,94	1	10,29	1
6	09.10.2020	7,28	1	9,93	1	9,11	1
7	16.10.2020	7,57	1	11,02	1	9,57	1
8	23.10.2020	5,92	2	7,41	1	6,96	1
9	30.10.2020	7,12	1	10,30	1	8,97	1
10	06.11.2020	7,62	1	8,63	1	8,62	1
11	13.11.2020	7,48	1	10,06	1	9,10	1
12	20.11.2020	7,72	2	9,85	1	8,73	1
13	27.11.2020	9,05	1	11,78	1	11,43	1
14	04.12.2020	9,00	1	11,45	1	10,93	1
15	11.12.2020	8,48	1	11,86	1	10,45	1
16	18.12.2020	8,33	1	12,00	1	10,73	1
17	25.12.2020	8,38	2	11,99	1	10,10	1
18	01.01.2021	7,97	2	11,09	1	10,08	1
19	08.01.2021	8,20	2	12,13	1	11,06	1
20	15.01.2021	7,84	2	10,44	1	9,62	1
21	22.01.2021	7,59	2	9,87	1	9,43	1
22	29.01.2021	7,82	3	10,03	1	9,34	1
23	05.02.2021	8,71	1	11,36	1	10,04	1
24	12.02.2021	8,84	1	11,80	1	10,85	1
25	19.02.2021	8,81	1	11,16	1	11,01	1
26	26.02.2021	8,25	2	10,91	1	9,76	1
27	05.03.2021	8,27	2	10,26	1	9,85	1
28	12.03.2021	9,58	1	11,16	1	11,21	1
29	19.03.2021	9,10	1	12,74	1	10,89	1
30	26.03.2021	8,67	2	11,62	1	10,71	1
31	02.04.2021	8,71	2	11,89	1	10,57	1
32	09.04.2021	8,76	2	11,04	1	10,31	1
33	16.04.2021	9,02	1	12,19	1	10,91	1
34	23.04.2021	7,98	2	10,44	1	9,74	1
35	30.04.2021	8,19	2	12,44	1	10,67	1
36	07.05.2021	8,12	2	11,64	1	10,74	1
37	14.05.2021	7,87	1	10,11	1	9,67	1
38	21.05.2021	7,38	1	9,77	1	8,72	1
39	28.05.2021	6,43	2	8,02	1	7,26	1
40	04.06.2021	6,17	2	7,86	1	6,94	1
41	11.06.2021	3,85	5	4,69	2	4,65	2

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