

**T.R.
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES M.A PROGRAMME**

MASTER’S THESIS

**CULTURAL PROXIMITY IN THE ADAPTATION
OF FOREIGN TV DRAMAS IN TURKEY:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON *ANNE* AND *BİR
AİLE HİKAYESİ***

**ASİYE ÖZTÜRK
15735007**

**THESIS ADVISOR
Assoc. Prof. Dr. NALAN TURNA**

**İSTANBUL
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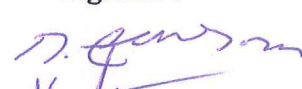


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ASIYE ÖZTÜRK
15735007

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Thesis is approved unanimously.

	Title Name Surname	Signature
Thesis Advisor	: Assoc. Prof. Nalan Turna	
List of Referees	: Assoc. Prof. Kerem Karaosmanoğlu	
	Assoc. Prof. Pınar Şenışık Özdebak	

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ABSTRACT

CULTURAL PROXIMITY IN THE ADAPTATION OF FOREIGN DRAMAS IN TURKEY: A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON *ANNE* AND *THIS IS US*

Asiye Öztürk

July, 2019

Following the phenomenal success of a number of European reality shows known as format programmes in late 1990s, a mania to locally adapt them began in many different parts of the world. A format which is created and broadcast in a specific location is a template of a programme that can be reproduced in new territories for new audiences. This led to a tremendous growth in the format trade industry. The growth of international format business heralded a new phase triggered by some early technological and structural transformations in the TV industry. However, the trend to adapt scripted TV formats such as comedy or drama TV series began much later due to a number of reasons. Most importantly, scripted TV series prove more challenging to adapt as they are culturally more sensitive. When a TV series is adapted for a new market, it is crucial that the adapted version find resonance with home audiences in order to be successful. The success of adapted TV series depends on whether audiences find cultural proximity in what they watch or not. This thesis will take cultural proximity which is a complex concept with diverse components as the main theory to analyse two TV series that are adapted for Turkish TV; *Anne (Mother)* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi (This is Us)*. While cultural proximity focuses on certain aspects that make an adapted TV series more relevant and proximate to home audiences, some other aspects ignored by the proponents of cultural proximity come into play. Therefore, factors that cultural proximity is built upon and some other factors that cultural proximity overlooks will be analysed regarding two adapted TV series: *Anne (Mother)* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi (This is Us)*.

Keywords: TV Series, TV Audiences, Adaptation, Cultural Proximity, *Anne (Mother)*, *Bir Aile Hikayesi (This is Us)*

ÖZ

YABANCI DİZİLERİN TÜRKİYE'YE UYARLANMASINDA KÜLTÜREL YAKINLIK: ANNE VE BİR AİLE DİZİSİNİN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI İNCELEMESİ

Asiye Öztürk

Temmuz, 2019

90'lı yılların sonlarında tüm dünyayı etkisi altına alan Avrupa çıkışlı format programlar olarak bilinen reality programlar küresel düzeyde bir uyarlama furiasına sebep oldu. Format belli bir ülkede üretilip yayınlanan başka ülkelerde yeniden üretilebilecek program şablonudur. Bu doğrultuda, bu programların alım satımı muazzam bir ticari boyuta ulaştı. Bu büyüme aslında televizyon endüstrisinin teknolojik ve yapısal değişimlerinin de sonucu olan yepyeni bir dönemin kapılarını açtı. Öte yandan, çeşitli sebeplerden dolayı uyarlama modası televizyon dizileri özelinde çok daha sonra başladı. Bunun en önemli sebebi olarak komedi ve drama gibi televizyon dizilerinin kültürel anlamda hassas sayılabilecek öğeler içermesi ve uyarlanma sürecinin reality programlara göre çok daha zor olması gösterilebilir. Bir televizyon dizisinin yeni bir ülkeye uyarlandığında, başarılı olabilmesi için seyircide bir olumlu karşılık bulması gerekmektedir. Uyarlanan dizinin başarılı olabilmesi seyircinin bu yeni versiyonda kültürel yakınlık bulabilmesine bağlıdır. Bu tezin temel teorik çerçevesi, Türkiye televizyonlarına uyarlanan *Anne (Mother)* ve *Bir Aile Hikayesi (This is Us)* dizilerinin incelenmesinde pek çok kavramı da içinde barındıran kompleks bir kavram olan kültürel yakınlığa dayanmaktadır. Kültürel yakınlık uyarlama bir diziyi seyircinin gözünde daha anlamlı ve daha yakın hale getiren belli başlı öğelere odaklanırken, gözden kaçan ya da odaklanılmayan başka etkenler de dizinin uyarlanış sürecinde belirleyici olabilmektedir. Bu tez kültürel yakınlık kavramının dayandığı noktaları ve ayrıca göz ardı ettiği öğeleri bütüncül olarak hesaba katarak Japon dizisi *Mother*'dan uyarlanan *Anne* ve Amerikan dizisi *This is Us*'tan uyarlanan *Bir Aile Hikayesi* isimli dizileri analiz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Televizyon Dizileri, Televizyon Seyircisi, Uyarlama, Kültürel Yakınlık, Anne (Mother), Bir Aile Hikayesi (This is Us)

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Istanbul, July, 2019

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ABBREVIATIONS

BTK	: Information and Communication Technologies Authority
RTUK	: Radio and Television Supreme Council
TIAK	: TV Audience Research Company
TRT	: Turkish Radio & Television Corporation

1.INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, where TV-watching figures remain as one of the highest in the world, the most popular programming types are TV series which exclusively fill primetime slot of mainstream channels on Turkish TV. The popularity of TV series makes Turkish TV broadcasting industry hugely dependent upon them. In addition to the series developed and created in Turkey, broadcasters and producers have also started adapting TV series from other parts of the world to meet growing demand for new programming content. Foreign TV series are being adapted in growing numbers for Turkish TV as audiences quickly consume every TV series broadcasted and start to look for brand new TV series.

In the 1980s, television broadcasting networks spread rapidly in most parts of the world as the state hegemony over TV was declining and a substantial economic and technological progress was taking place. This period was marked by the rise of private channels and therefore, TV broadcasting markets got more competitive than ever. Meanwhile, TV industries in developing world became self-competent to produce domestically-made programmes in different genres.

Dependency upon foreign shows that came from developed countries started to diminish as audiences preferred local programmes to foreign ones. The spread of new broadcasting networks not only increased competition but also the need for new programming content. International broadcasting industry turned to foreign programmes to meet content programming demand.

A new period in the global when international remakes became all the rage in the late 90s with a number of reality shows. *Survivor*, *Big Brother* and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*. A mania surrounding these programmes began on a worldwide basis. Consequently, these programmes have been remade and broadcast nearly in all parts of the world in a frantic manner. Later, the attention of international broadcasting industry has shifted towards TV series. Foreign TV series that are produced in certain locations have been adapted in different parts of the world.

The way reality shows and TV series are adapted vary dramatically. TV programmes can be divided into two types: scripted formats and unscripted formats. TV series are filled with culturally sensitive elements unlike unscripted format programmes which can be remade in a mechanical manner easily. Unscripted formats refer to reality, talent, quiz and game shows. As a result, TV series can be trickier to adapt. Thus, the number of adapted TV series has been much lower than that of adapted unscripted shows until lately.

The success of an adapted TV series is contingent upon one crucial factor as the growth of domestic TV broadcasting industries historically demonstrated about preferences and TV consumption tendencies of audiences. Audiences look for a type of proximity that can enable them to relate to the programmes that they watch on TV; therefore, they tend to prefer domestic programmes to foreign programmes. How proximity is achieved in adapted TV series is highly essential so adaptation can be viewed as a process that transforms a foreign TV series into a more proximate one to local audiences. A careful analysis of adapted TV series can manifest the way an adaptation can create cultural proximity.

Within that regard, this thesis will analyse two adapted Turkish dramas, *Anne* based upon the adaptation of Japanese drama, *Mother* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, a remake of award-winning American drama, *This is Us* within the scope of cultural proximity. Adapted versions will be compared to the original TV series with a focus on differences that make *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* culturally closer and more authentic to Turkish audiences. The analysis of *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* is conducted within a larger context that also takes aspects that may be overlooked by cultural proximity into account.

1.1. Methodology

Cultural proximity is argued to play an important role in choices that people make regarding TV. Adapted TV series in that regard are invaluable sources that provide concrete examples of cultural proximity and its impact on audience reception. A comparison between the original shows and their Turkish versions can offer insights into how proximity is created for Turkish audiences by creative and production team and how it is received by the audiences.

In this thesis, two adapted TV series, *Anne (Mother)* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi (This is Us)* were examined within the context of cultural proximity, the detailed and careful comparative analysis between original shows and the adaptations was conducted via a comparative mode of watching with a view to identify changes, omissions and additions that are done in the adapted versions in order to create cultural proximity for audiences. Transcripts of the original versions and Turkish versions were written down and any deviations from the original series were studied. Original TV series were watched with subtitles. *Mother* is watched with Turkish and English subtitles and *This is Us* watched in its original language with original subtitles. However, the original language of *Mother* turned out to be a limitation for the thesis as I had no proficiency in Japanese. To what degree, the translation from Japanese to Turkish or English cause a semantic loss was impossible to spot on my behalf.

The most reliable data on audience reception can be obtained through ratings in Turkey; via ratings it was easy to track down how well *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* did. Their ratings were also carefully examined. The fluctuations, that is rises and falls in ratings of the shows were also taken into consideration. However, Turkish rating measurement system provides limited information on the demographic features of Turkish audiences. Audiences are divided into three different categories based on their socioeconomic status and level of education, other factors such as age, gender, ethnic background and so on are ignored; however, these factors may help to analyse the reception of Turkish audiences more thoroughly.

As for the sources in the thesis, mostly primary sources are used. There are plenty of sources on the development and history of TV in Turkey and TV series. Sources on format shows and their adaptations, which are explained in the third chapter are rich as this topic has been studied for almost two decades. But on the other hand, sources on the adaptation of TV series which is also introduced in the same chapter are limited. Cultural proximity is a specific concept and most of the existing literature is written by a number of authors who have specialised in the topic.

One significant point concerning the resources is that media coverage of both original shows *Mother* and *This is US* and the adaptations *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* is an invaluable source for the thesis. Data about *Mother* is collected from international media sources but still its media coverage is more limited compared to *This is Us*, which is an American hit show. *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikaye* has a lot of coverage in

Turkish media. In addition, there are plenty of sources in international media on Turkish broadcasting sector as a result of recent international success across the world.

1.2. Literature Review

This thesis builds its theoretical framework upon cultural proximity and it will benefit from Joseph Straubhaar, who is currently one of the most prolific scholars in the studies concerning cultural proximity. He gradually developed the concept with the articles and books he wrote in different years by expanding the scope of the concept and including parts that he may have overlooked in his earlier studies. His earliest article *Beyond Media Imperialism* that he published in 1996 tried to demonstrate the relevance of cultural proximity. He made use of the comprehensive research he conducted in Latin American countries as to why better-quality American TV shows lost their popularity in the region against Latin American programmes usually produced in economically more developed nations such as Mexico and Brazil. Mexican and Brazilian shows were well liked and preferred to American shows by the audiences in the less developed countries in the region. Straubhaar concluded that the audiences preferred the programmes from Latin America because they were produced in a similar culture to their own and therefore, they found them culturally more immediate and understandable.

In his later articles, he added more dimensions that broadened the concept of cultural proximity. The article *Multiple Proximities Between Television Genres and Audiences* that Joseph Straubhaar cowrote with Antonio La Pastina added some new aspects such as cultural capital, cultural shareability to the concept of cultural proximity. In the article, they analysed why Mexican telenovelas were preferred in some parts of Brazil rather than high-quality Brazilian shows. The study revealed that cultural proximity is complex due to the multi-layered identities of audiences so specific dimensions of their identities could play a bigger role in their media preferences.

Koichi Iwabuchi (2002) elaborated upon cultural proximity by focusing on the positive reception of Japanese dramas in Asia, especially in Taiwan. Through interviews with audiences, Iwabuchi concluded that cultural proximity is not predetermined quality of a TV show, audiences' preferences for culturally proximate programmes depend upon a specific context shaped by different factors that make the popularity of the show possible.

Enric Castello (2010) incorporated the production level and creative team behind a TV show into cultural proximity. He argues that cultural proximity is in that sense constructed by a group of professionals and later interpreted by audiences.

Andrea Esser (2016) challenged the cultural proximity and other concepts that explain audiences' media preferences through a nation-centric mindset in her article "*Defining the Local in Localization or Adapting for Whom?*" She points out that adaptations are determined by a wide range of factors rather than just creating a sense of creating for audiences. She refers to a number of audience researches to demonstrate that media preferences are never uniform and predictable.

While cultural proximity is concerned with reception of the audiences, some scholars study the role markets and producers play on the shows that are adapted. All the important decisions as regards to Denise D. Bielby and Lee C. Harrington (2008) underline the importance of dynamics of each broadcasting market and its impact on the shows to be adapted with their book "Global TV". Kuipers (2011) also emphasises producers are the most influential actors.

Cultural proximity that explains audiences' preferences plays an important role in format adaptation studies. To adapt or remake a show means creating a local version that is culturally close and meaningful to audiences in a new territory. The increase in adapted formats has also prompted considerable academic interest in adaptation studies in Turkey like in the rest of the world. Studies that examine transnational versions of foreign TV series remade for Turkish TV have increased.

Studies regarding transnational adaptations of TV programmes proliferated after the boom in the unscripted formats such as reality shows, game shows and quiz shows that began in late 1990s. Therefore, the literature written on transnational remakes of television formats can be considered to be recent. While the transnational adaptations of unscripted formats have been examined both theoretically and empirically, the theory of scripted formats or TV series remains weak. The literature regarding the adaptation of TV series is generally based upon the comparative analysis of original formats and their remakes within a specific theoretical framework.

In his article *Drama without Drama: The Late Rise of Scripted TV Formats*, Jean Chalaby (2016) analyses what distinguishes the adaptation of unscripted formats from

scripted formats and why TV series as scripted formats rose to the popularity in television adaptation business much later than unscripted formats.

The increase in adapted formats has also prompted considerable academic interest in adaptation studies in Turkey like in the rest of the world. Studies that examine transnational versions of foreign TV series remade for Turkish TV have increased. Ayşegül Kesirli Unur (2015) examines *Kuzey Güney*. As she highlights even though it was never officially acknowledged as an adaptation, *Kuzey Güney* can be safely said to be the domesticated version of an American miniseries *Rich Man, Poor Man* bearing striking resemblance in terms of storyline and characters. Through an analysis built upon Albert's Moran's tripartite scheme for adaptation, Kesirli Unur examines how *Kuzey Güney* is reinterpreted by implementing familiar motifs for Turkish audiences whereby it successfully achieves proximity for Turkish viewers.

Another study by İbrahim Er (2016) carries out a cross-cultural study on Turkish remake, *Galip Derviş* and the original version, *Monk* through multimodal approach to differences in semiotic choices in both series. Er (2016) points out the fact that culturally specific meanings that can make adapted formats more proximate to home audiences can be created through multimodal means that televisual narratives employ such as camera angles, dialogues, music. He analyses how *Galip Derviş* distinguishes from *Monk* in terms of the representation of power relations and subversion of hierarchical power through these multimodal means that not only construct meanings but convey the desired meanings to Turkish audiences as well.

Seza Esin Erdoğan (2015) in her unpublished thesis *A Case Study of American to Turkish Transnational Television Adaptations* investigates how American TV series; *The OC* and *Grey's Anatomy* are recreated into Turkish context through a theoretical framework based upon the adaptation theories. Erdoğan underlines the fact that Turkish remakes, *Medcezir* and *Doktorlar* are able to reinterpret the original shows with locally specific and relevant configurations and come out as hybrid products that still carry the imprints of the original shows.

The literature on transnational TV remakes also focuses on the adaptation of telenovelas, which are considered to be the most popular and common TV programming genres in South America. The Columbian telenovela called *Betty La Fea* (*Ugly Betty*), which is arguably one of the most famous telenovelas has been sold to

almost 70 countries either as finished program or a format. Jade M. Miller (2010) explains what makes it easy to adapt in new territories. *Betty La Fea (Ugly Betty)* as canned (finished programme) is able merge the global and local elements successfully; thus, it is able to address to audiences at local and global levels. It is thematised around universally recognized subjects such as “rags-to-riches story” and the well-known story of a humble girl winning the heart of an attractive yet lady-killer boss and taming him with other locally adaptable or modifiable parts. As the flows of telenovelas very much like format programmes are global and transnational partnerships involved in producing and distributing telenovelas making it a global industry so they can be easily adapted for new cultural contexts.

The content flows and format exchange have historically high between the USA and the UK. In recent years, there is also a growing body of studies written on American remakes of hugely successful British TV shows including *The Office* and *Coupling*.

The Office, which is arguably one of the most successful British comedies to date has attracted attention of foreign producers and has been remade in several local versions. The American version, which overshadowed its original version has been studied by several different scholars. Jeffrey Griffin (2008), Alexandra Beeden & Joost de Bruin (2010) carry out a comparative analysis between the original British comedy and its remake. Lothar Mikos (2015) analyses German remake of *The Office*.

The American adaptation of *The Office* succeeds because it is painstakingly Americanised while adopting the original’s documentary-style narrative original story (Jeffrey Griffin, 2008). The setting which reflects a typical white-collar environment with the choice of cast members as staff epitomising America’s demographic diversity, the realistic and dynamic portrayal of the workplace where seminars take place about the issues common in American workplaces such as sexual harassment. American version of *The Office* encompasses American sense of humour, modified dialogues and characterization that make them more relatable to American audiences, cultural sensitivities, frequent references to American popular culture making it uniquely American and make it easier for audiences to identify with.

Alexandra Beeden & Joost de Bruin (2010) argue the success of the American *Office* has to do with incorporation of culturally recognizable and nationalized references,

characterizations, setting and narrative structure and codes that characterizes the American sitcom genre.

Lothar Mikos (2015) analyses the similarities and differences between *The Office* and its German adaptation, *Stromberg*. Mikos highlights how new genre conventions are integrated into the German TV with the adaptation of the British comedy, *The Office*.

Jeffrey Griffin (2008) also focuses on a failure story unlike most studies carried out on adaptation TV series. Griffin (2008) tries to ascertain what caused the critically successful and fan favourite, *Coupling* when it was remade for American audiences. Griffin underlines the fact that American version of *Coupling* remained too loyal to the original show, which played an important part in its flop. What made the original *Coupling* successful was its Britishness in terms of sense of humour, characterisation. Unable to erase the British of the show, the American remake did not resonate with American audiences.

Scandinavian television crimes stories which are called Nordic noir or Scandi-noir have not only achieved a considerable global fandom but also attracted from broadcasters and producers in need of quality TV content. Some successful examples of Nordic noir have been adapted in several countries and these adaptations have been studied.

Isadora Garcia Avis examines how setting affects the narrative of *Bron/Broen*, a Swedish and Danish coproduction and its American remake *The Bridge* and British remake *The Tunnel*. Scandinavian setting which gives Nordic noir series their uniqueness remains an integral part of narrative of Nordic crime series. The original and the remakes focus on bilateral conflicts and relations between two countries that diverge from one another: Denmark and Sweden in the case of *Bron/Broen*, America and Mexico in the case of *The Bridge*, England and France in the case of *The Tunnel*. Different settings where these three series take place establishes geographical background to the stories of the series. Setting contributes to the better depiction of themes, storyline of each series. Setting plays another role as a narrative tool that reveals inner world of the characters.

Kim Akass (2015) looks into *The Killing*, the American adaptation of Denmark's *Forbrydelsen*. This adaptation is analysed in terms of changing and dynamic conditions of the industry that is on a constant hunt for new and original content.

Despite critical claim, the remake was first cancelled by the broadcaster, AMC after two seasons only to be bought by Netflix. It was cancelled for the third time by Netflix; however, Netflix decided to buy and rerun it as an original content. Reviving a show that has been cancelled several times is worth more deliberation than why it failed to appeal to audiences or lost ratings.

The literature on adapted TV series enriches the perspectives that can be employed to analyse the transnational remakes. Studies not only investigate what makes an adaptation find resonance in a market or causes it to flop but also how the adaptation practices transform the markets while being transformed by the ever-changing paradigms of the industry. In order to find their own voice, the remakes incorporate national and cultural norms, everyday practices and sensitivities, use settings that audiences identify with.

With my own study, I hope to contribute further to the newly-emerging literature of scripted formats by analysing two recent Turkish adaptations. My thesis examines the Turkish remakes focusing on plotlines, characterisation, and dialogues. It makes it clear that Turkish versions are created in a fashion that feel proximate, realistic and appealing to home audiences by Turkifying the political, social, cultural and everyday themes that the originals deal with. The reason behind that is to create a sense of proximity as audiences want to see things or characters that they can relate to. After my study what transpires is that the difficulty of adapting a TV series does not have solely to do with the discrepancy between the cultures. What also matters, though not equally, is how the differences between institutional and structural practices and patterns of broadcasting industries affect how the story proceeds.

1.3. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of six different chapters. The first chapter is the introductory chapter where background information about the thesis, methodology and existing literature are presented. The second chapter mainly focuses on Turkish TV and Turkish TV series. In the second chapter, Turkish TV series are examined by taking their historical development, their current characteristics and transnational popularity into account. Third chapter deals with the reasons and developments that led to the global increase in the number of adapted programmes and the chapter offers perspectives on whether the global formats erode national configurations of TV production and

broadcasting. Chapter 4 gives an overall discussion of the concept, cultural proximity that the thesis is theoretically built upon in detail through use of the existing literature; in other words, the theoretical background of the thesis is presented in this chapter. Chapter 4 aims to prove the relevance of cultural proximity through a discussion of other existing theories and concepts that are related to media studies and an overall description of cultural proximity will be given in chapter 4. Chapter 5 studies two adapted Turkish dramas, *Anne (Mother)* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi (This is Us)* in terms of characterization, themes and narration within the scope of cultural proximity; the similarities and differences between Turkish remakes and original versions are addressed. Finally, the thesis ends with the conclusion chapter where the findings of comparative studies on TV series are summarised along with final comments and new perspectives on the topic.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF TURKISH AND TURKISH TV SERIES

2.1. Historical Background and Current Context of Turkish TV

In Turkey Akşam, a popular newspaper introduced TV to its readers with the news dated 8th May 1935. The news roughly read as follows (Geçmiş Gazete, [15.02.2019]):

“In most European countries TV broadcasting got underway. Those who turn on their radios in the evenings and listen to the voices that come from all over the world can now watch people who make the voices with small additions... However, it should be noted that TV is not a machine that shows the parts of the world with just one touch on a button”. One can only watch what is centrally broadcast.

The news manifests how extraordinary the invention of TV seemed to people of the time in Turkey and how remote the features televisions are now equipped with seemed to them.

One of the most important inventions in the history of the world, TV has single-handedly been one of the most important entertainment, news and information source for such a long time. People’s TV consumption has certainly changed especially in the last decade with the advent of technology all around the world. There are now online alternatives which affect the current and future trajectory of television. Television is still able to retain its appeal despite these ground-breaking inventions such as computers, tablets and smart phones which enable people to follow the stream of programmes or reruns on digital platform. As online broadcasting gets more widespread, broadcasting services such as Netflix will continue to have their negative impact on the number of audiences and figures TV channels were once able to reach. To what degree TV will be influenced by such transformations in technology that have altered the way people consume media remains to be seen.

This chapter looks into the historical development of TV in Turkey briefly. TRT had a pivotal role in the history and development of Turkish TV broadcasting until the launch of private channels. TRT functioned in line with public service ideology like European countries so it aimed at informing the public and at the same time

consolidating national values. Like TV itself, the production of domestic TV series started a while after the foundation of TRT. TRT started producing domestic TV series which were mostly adapted from famous literary works. More and more TV series started appearing on Turkish TV due to the rise in the number of private channels. As studies reveal, TV-viewing takes up a large amount of time in daily lives of people in Turkey. As for what Turkish people like to watch, TV series remain the most popular programming type after the news bulletins. Every year, among dozens of new TV series broadcast on different channels, only some find resonance with Turkish audiences. There is a tendency to copy whichever TV series are successful in Turkish TV industry so a number of thematically similar TV series can be found at around the same time periods. Yet with changing times, some genres or themes go out of fashion. In recent years, Turkish TV series have achieved a transnational success and they have been broadcast in many parts of the world. Despite their domestic and overseas success, Turkish TV series are characterised by certain shortcomings that affect their overall quality. Turkish broadcasters and producers heavily depend on TV series for their revenues as they are the most popular programme types in Turkey and they are well liked overseas. To meet the growing demand, broadcasters and producers have started to look for content in foreign lands and a quite good number of TV series have been adapted.

TV had an interesting and bittersweet journey in Turkey. Having started its journey in 1950s, it had yet to wait for several decades to reach a larger part of the country. Turkey trailed behind developed Western countries where TV was becoming a part of everyday life. By the time the world started watching coloured TV, the majority of Turkish society had just had their first black and white TV.

On 9 July 1951 the first ever TV broadcast took place in Istanbul Technical University studios. Following the 1960 military coup, The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, TRT, was founded and given sole authority to broadcast; the law barred any private corporates from attempting to found TV or radio stations and TRT finally started its broadcast on January 31 January 1968 (Serim, 2007, 41). In short, Turkish laws regarding the launch of new channels prohibited any new channels to come up against TRT so it took a long time for private TV channels to start broadcasting in Turkey.

TRT monopolised TV industry for so long. Since the day it started broadcasting, it had been over 30 years. It was long overdue for new TV channels to emerge. Although TRT was still the only TV channel in Turkey, people started to watch foreign TV channels from the satellite. Despite the legal stumbling block, the first ever Turkish private TV channel, Magic Box- Star 1 was launched and started broadcasting through signals sent from satellite in Germany (Serim, 2007, 227-233). New pirate TV channels soon appeared out of nowhere and Show TV and Cine5 followed Magic Box's lead and started broadcasting through satellites installed abroad (Serim, 2007, 215-344). Private TV channels were founded semi-illegally considering that the existing law did not allow any private Turkish channel apart from TRT.

After the launch of private TV channels, things took a bad turn for TRT having gradually lost its viewers to private TV channels which did not shy from broadcasting explicit, cringeworthy and controversial programmes just to attract the viewers (Serim, 2007, 236). The strategies adopted by new TV channels seemed to be working as they kept rising their ratings. TRT had to stick to moral and ethical principles as the only state channel representing the country; however, TRT was losing its advertisement revenues. TRT had to compromise some of its broadcasting policies to keep up with private channels (Serim, 2007, 237).

TRT has always been a source of controversy in the country since it was founded and it still is. In a country which is deeply polarised by myriad political and social groups, it was inevitable for then-TRT not to come under any criticism whatsoever. Perhaps the most serious controversy about TRT was centred around the general directors, which stemmed from the dynamics of Turkish politics. From the day it was founded until today, 16 different general directors along with a few deputy general directors have served for TRT. Yet each one of them was affiliated with a particular political party and tended to favour that party; therefore, every general director offended some parts of the society (Serim, 2007, 43-211). Every general director adopted or to put it more precisely had to adopt a broadcasting policy that conformed to the ideologies of the political party or parties and pleased political figures who appointed them (Serim, 2007, 43-211). This clear violation of objective journalism became a vicious circle every TRT general-director fell into (Serim, 2007, 43-211).

Another political point that needs to be taken into consideration is that Turkey is a country which has been hit by military coups multiple times. Turkey's democratic

institutions and laws have been undermined as a result of the coups (Serim, 2007, 43-211). In short, military coups eroding Turkey's democratic institutions took its toll on TRT. Over time TRT turned into an institution heavily dependent on ruling political party after gradually losing its status as an autonomous institution due to the changes in laws regarding TRT following the military coups.

In a country where TRT was the only TV channel to watch for such a long time, TV habits and perception of TV of the whole society were shaped by TRT. In a country where economic or political instability reared its ugly head and most people had very low living standards, TV became the sole source of entertainment.

Today the landscape of Turkish TV industry has dramatically changed from a TV industry with one channel to a multi-channelled one where audiences access to limitless programming choices not only from Turkey but also from around the world.

Since the launch of the first private TV channel, a number of TV channels have established themselves as leading players in Turkish TV market along with the state channel, TRT. Within the current context, leading Turkish channels can be listed as Star TV, Kanal D, ATV, Fox TV, TV8 and Show TV due to the percentage of viewers they manage to draw (TIAK, [20.03.2019]). Vast majority of Turkish people have free access to these mainstream channels through a terrestrial or satellite receiver. Pay TV, a system in which TV channels can be accessed through a certain amount of subscription fee is also available in Turkey. According to the official figures obtained from BTK (Information and Communications Technologies Authority) about 2.5 million people have Pay TV in Turkey, a country with a population of over 80.000.000 million. People with pay TV such as Bein, D-smart and Tivibu constitutes only about 2,5% of the whole population. (BTK, [23.02.2019]). In Turkey the channels that only broadcast on pay TV are excluded when ratings are measured. Whereas free channels depend upon advertising revenues of the shows they broadcast, subscription-based essentially rely on the number of subscribers to get advertising revenues. Therefore, free satellite channels and subscription-based TV have different broadcasting policies, which affect the overall choices of the programmes they prefer to produce and broadcast.

TV has been a tool that is able to cater to different needs such as entertainment, information; therefore, TV consumption has remained high across the globe since its

early days of TV. As official numbers and figures presented by TIAK (TV Audience Research Company) seem to suggest, Turkey can be regarded as a TV-loving country. Turkish TV viewers spend more than four hours watching TV. In Turkey, TV viewers are classified into three different groups based on their socioeconomic backgrounds: TOTAL, AB and 20+ABC1. According to the figures released by TIAK for 2018, people in TOTAL category watch 4 hours 18 minutes of TV while the figure slightly goes down to 3 hours 47 minutes in AB category and as for ABC1, the figure remains 4 hours 10 minutes, an average Turkish household watches over 7 hours of TV on a daily basis (TIAK, [10.02.2019]).

Furthermore, in a 2017-study carried out in 94 countries regarding TV watching figures Turkey was ranked 13th. The findings of the study conducted by RTUK (Radio and Television Supreme Council) in 2018 might offer some insights into the programming content and genres that Turkish audiences prefer. Most-watched programmes stated by the informants of the study are 1. news bulletins (24,2 %), 2. local TV series (15, 6 %), 3. sports programmes (13,5), 4. day-time shows (12,8), 5. debate shows (10,6), 6. arts and culture programmes, 7. game and quiz shows (9,6), 8. music shows (9,6) 9. religious TV shows 10. foreign TV shows (8,9) 11. Turkish films (8,9) 12. foreign films (8,3) 13. comedy and talk shows (7,7) 14. celebrity news & gossip programmes (7,2) respectively (RTUK, [10.02.2019]). A RTUK research dated 2018 concerning TV-viewing habits of Turkish public was carried out in all seven regions of Turkey. Data was collected via interviews with 2600 individuals aged between 15 and 65 and over with varying personal incomes and levels of education. Men constituted 50, 8 % of the informants whereas 49,2 % of the informants was made up of women.

The findings of the research reveal that Turkish audiences enjoy both foreign and Turkish TV series. Domestic TV series are one of the most important players of Turkish broadcasting industry. They are becoming more and more irreplaceable for the industry because today, Turkish TV sector has turned into a million-dollar industry thanks to the TV series it exports to many parts of the world. As the Turkish TV grew and evolved, so did domestic TV series.

2.2. History and Evolution of TV Series in Turkey

Today, TV series still manage to appeal to great masses irrespective of their genres by attracting millions of people all over the world. TV series remain a popular genre among Turkish public and they constitute the bulk of primetime programming content and they are by and large produced by certain companies. Since the early days of TV in Turkey when TRT started broadcasting Hollywood and BBC series and domestic ones, the degree of the interest that audiences showed in them has steadily risen and TV series have; therefore, managed to constitute the major part of the programming produced on Turkish TV all along.

Though most current Turkish TV series are cliché love stories with one-dimensional characters, their total number is surprisingly high. On average, there are six TV series every day on most-watched mainstream channels -Kanal D, Show TV, ATV, Star TV, Fox TV along with the state channel TRT, which adds up to almost forty TV series a week. When compared with American and European counterparts, Turkish TV series are timewise too long since an average TV series lasts over two hours. Whereas primetime slot can make space for more than one TV series in America and Europe, prime-time slot on Turkish TV channels is only reserved for one TV series, which runs nearly two hours. Despite their shortcomings in terms of their predictable scenarios and their long durations, Turkish viewers react positively to TV series enabling them to get high ratings.

The active production companies are TimS Productions, Ay Production, Limon Production, Gold Production, O3 Media, Med Production, TMC, Bi Production, Ortaks Production, BSK Production, MinT Production, Pastel Film, Endemol, MF Production, Süreç Film, Fark Film, Most Production, Tekden Film, Film House, NTC Media (episodedergi [15.11.2019]). Currently, the most prominent companies among these are Ay Production, which has achieved both local and international success with TV series such as *What's Fatmagül's Fault* (*Fatmagülün Suçu Ne*), *Ezel*, *Forbidden Love* (*Aşk-ı Memnu*), *Yaprak Dökümü*, TimS Productions, which produced *Magnificent Century* (*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*) and O3 Media, which has produced the likes of *The Bride of Istanbul* (*İstanbul Gelin*) and *Wounded Love* (*Vatanım Sensin*).

Turkish audiences were introduced to the fictional world of TV series via TRT where both Turkish and fine examples of foreign TV series were aired. The first TV series

which was broadcasted on TRT was *Mother-in-laws* (*Kaynanalar*, 1974), which dealt with urban immigration; (Tanrıöver, 2015, 60-80). *Forbidden Love* (*Aşk-ı Memnu*), a milestone in the history of Turkish TV soon followed *Kaynanalar*. When the late politician İsmail Cem was the general director, TRT collaborated with famous Turkish directors who would shoot mini-series adapted from Turkish famous novels (Serim, 2007, 76). The first of many collaborations started with “*Aşk-ı Memnu*” by Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil, which was made into miniseries in late 1970s. Directed by Halit Refiğ, *Aşk-ı Memnu* was shown in 6 episodes with each running 33 minutes (Tanrıöver, 2015, 60-80). These series were baby steps for Turkish TV industry, which was just beginning to flourish.

Especially following the broadcast of *Aşk-ı Memnu*, Turkish audiences became fascinated with domestic TV series that they saw on TRT, the audiences demanded more of them via letters they sent to TRT and they also demanded that the duration of TV series be extended to 40-45 minutes from 20-25 minutes (Yağcı, 2011, 4-5).

The mindset that influenced the early years of TRT and their programme-making policy can be found in Halit Refiğ’s own words. Halit Refiğ described the series as a work that he created without any pressure or apprehension whatsoever as TRT was working under the principles of public service ideology unlike profit-oriented, commercialised Turkish cinema (Çelenk, 2010, 20). Today it is hard to imagine how the world of TV could function without taking the costs of producing a programme and the possible profits generated from the programme into account. That TV series which fail to receive expected ratings get cancelled within no time has become a reality of Turkish TV broadcasting industry.

This tradition of literary adaptations continued after İsmail Cem. Famous literary works *Small Agha* (*Küçük Ağa*, 1984) by Tarık Buğra, *Eagles Fly Alone* (*Kartallar Yalnız Uçar*, 1984) written by famous poet, Attila İlhan, *The Ninth External Ward* (*Dokuzuncu Hariciye Koğuşu*, 1986) by Peyami Safa and *Scrubbird* (*Çalikuşu*, 1986) by Reşat Nuri Güntekin were all adapted for TRT (Çelenk, 2010, 20).

Besides domestic TV series, foreign TV series which were shown on TRT were watched enthusiastically by Turkish public. In particular, American TV series which became international sensations such as *Dallas*, *The Fugitive* attracted Turkish audiences, as well. Musa Ögün, general director of TRT can be credited with the

broadcast of foreign TV series; it was during his tenure that TRT started showing famous American TV series such as the *Fugitive*, *Star Trek*, *Shirley's World* and so on which caught on with Turkish audiences (Serim, 2007, 67). Turkey's weakening economy in the 1970s affected TRT negatively, TRT had to reduce its daily broadcast to three hours (Serim, 2007, 106) and similarly in early 1980s daily broadcast had to be reduced. At different times, those foreign TV series and reruns of old Turkish TV series turned out to be a remedy for TRT, which were unable to produce new programmes in times of economic distress.

Many more foreign TV series in subsequent years were shown on TRT and they successfully attracted viewers. In 1985 TRT aired a soap opera, *Escrava Isaura* translated as *Köle Isaura* into Turkish, it was for the first time TRT aired a soap opera and *Escrava Isaura* was to be followed by new soap operas in Turkey after it enjoyed a huge popularity (Serim, 2007, 136). Especially in early 2000s, Latin American soap operas were broadcast before primetime news on private channels, too. Latin soap operas known as telenovelas became a popular genre among Turkish audiences.

Private channels that were launched one after the other in the 1990s started to produce their own series and broadcasting foreign TV series, as well. Turkish audiences had more viewing alternatives to pick from, which facilitated the expansion and growth of TV series sector due to the growing competition. TRT, which was unrivalled for too long was gradually losing its dominance and audiences to private channels. The first adapted TV series coincided with this period when TRT adapted a famous Hollywood movie, *Top Gun* into a mini-series, *Barişta Savaşanlar* (Yağcı, 2011, 11). Meanwhile, Turkish TV series started running longer, 25-minute-long episodes were extended to 45 minutes first and later to 60 minutes (Yağcı, 2011, 11). Turkish cinema sector was shaken by the enormous popularity of foreign TV series that TRT broadcast; therefore, earlier in the 1970s domesticated versions of foreign TV series one including *Star Trek*, *Pink Panther* and *Bewitched* were made into films to attract audiences (Yağcı, 2011, 3). In a sense, Turkish cinema did the groundwork for the domestically-produced TV series setting example on TRT and Turkish industry (Yağcı, 2011, 3).

Domestic TV series industry expanded dramatically in the late 1990s and 2000s developing into a public phenomenon (Çelenk, 2010, 21). That is, Turkish broadcasting sector was now able to produce more and more fully-fledged TV series ordered by both TRT and private channels. Although Turkish industry is not long-

established compared to some parts of the world, it has been marked by constantly changing trends. The trends do not last very long and this creates unpredictability in the industry. Trends usually start with the success of a specific TV series which encourage others to produce similar ones. However, the appeal of these series diminishes for audiences; as a result, the industry always has to produce the shows that can reach the widest audiences.

In the 1990s, TV series which focus on mundane and everyday lives of people in close-knit neighbourhoods of İstanbul were popular such as *Second Spring* (*İkinci Bahar*, 1998-2001), *Super Dad* (*Süper Baba*, 1993-1997), *The Mukhtars of the Neighbourhood* (*Mahallenin Muhtarları*, 1992-2002), *Our Folks* (*Bizimkiler*, 1989-2002), *Sister Perihan* (*Perihan Abla*, 1986), *Father's House* (*Baba Evi*, 1997-2001). The proliferation of these types of TV series had to do with economic conditions which made it difficult to create high-budget series and these TV series centring around the themes of family and friendship in small neighbourhoods were not expensive to produce and were consequently preferred by TRT and private channels alike (Yağcı, 2011, 9). Looking at the number of the seasons these TV series ran, it can be argued that they were well received by the audiences. However, within the current context of Turkish TV market, it is questionable if broadcasters and producers may dare to produce these kinds of series as they are not sought after anymore. Comedies such as *Baskule Family* (*Baskül Ailesi*, 1997), *Sıdika* (1997), *The Reckless* (*Kaygızılar*, 1994-1998), *A Bunch of Theatre* (*Bir Demet Tiyatro*, 1995), original comedies in terms of plotlines and genre were being broadcast on private channels within that period again. In recent years, the industry has never produced these types of comedies with the exception of *Leyla and Mecnun* (*Leyla ile Mecnun*, 2011-2013). In fact, the industry seems to lose the interest in comedies as they have been produced less and less. These two trends that go out of fashion can be used to explain the unpredictability of the industry.

Another trend that began in mid-2000s was the TV series adapted from famous Turkish novels. *Çemberimde Gül Oya* and *Hatırla Sevgili* which dealt with turbulent political events of recent Turkish history encouraged the producers to adapt literary works into TV (Çelenk, 2010, 22). Desiring to capitalise upon the audiences' interest in the past, producers resorted to Turkish classics (Çelenk, 2010, 22). *Yaprak Dökümü* by Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Hanım'ın Çiftliği* by Orhan Kemal and *Aşk-ı Memnu* by Halit Ziya

Uşaklıgil were successful examples of the literary adaptation trend that dominated the industry (Çelenk, 2010, 22).

Other literary adaptations including *Fatih Harbiye* by Peyami Safa, *Dudaktan Kalbe* and *Çalikuşu* by Reşat Nuri Güntekin can be added. However, the trend of literary adaptations also seems to have faded especially after two high budget dramas, *Çalikuşu* (2014) and *Kurt Seyit ve Şura*, which were produced with lots of expectations flopped.

Asmalı Konak (2002-2003), *Sıla* (2006-2008), *Zerda* (2002-2004), *Kınalı Kar* (2002-2004) were some of the examples of another trend. These TV series which were usually set in Eastern parts of Turkey revolved around a love story between a man raised with patriarchal values and a modern woman who tried to challenge those values.

As a genre beginning with the broadcast of *İz Peşinde* in 1988, police TV dramas multiplied in 2000s with series such as *Sıcak Saatler* (1998), *Yılan Hikayesi* (1999), *Hırsız Polis* (2006), *Arka Sokaklar* (2007), *Adanalı* (2008), *Behzat Ç.* (2010), *Kanıt* (2010) (Yağcı, 2011, 2015).

All in all, Turkish industry prefer to produce or copy shows that are similar to the ones with a success record so the simultaneous emergence of lookalike dramas that tell similar stories should be analysed in that sense. Instead of thinking outside the box and coming up with new programming ideas, producers and broadcasters choose to produce shows that resemble popular series to prevent any potential flops.

2.2.1. An Analysis of Characteristics of Turkish TV Series

One theme that is increasingly becoming an integral characteristic of Turkish TV series is vice. Acts of wrongdoing pervade Turkish TV series with an underlying message that wrongdoing can be tolerated as long as characters have a solid reason (Tunç, 2010, 45). However, audiences' internalization of wrongdoing should be regarded as a cause for concern. What makes evil acts acceptable and tolerable to audiences lie in the fact that they may not have faith in real justice system in practice; therefore, audiences may not take the TV series where things progress in compliance with law seriously (Tunç, 2010, 45). That means, positive reception of series where characters resort to illegal ways may have to do with Turkish audiences' actual practice of law in real life (Tunç, 2010, 45).

If a character who is provoked by an act of rape, violence, murder, infidelity and so on seeks justice by illegal means in Turkish TV series, audiences tend to regard it as a heroic act (Tunç, 2010, 46). Turkish audiences have been exposed and therefore accustomed to all kinds of stories and their variations since the launch of private channels. Therefore, growing presence of themes related to evil, vice and wrongdoing is seen a way to attract Turkish audiences to stories that repeat themselves (Tunç, 2010, 46). Producers and broadcasters prefer to make TV series more sensational to save the day under the so-called pressure of competition in Turkish TV markets though it is originality that is lacking on Turkish TV series (Tunç, 2010, 46). Turkish TV series are not concerned with being realistic (Tunç, 2010, 46).

It is safe to say that the industry has come has a long way in terms of technical quality since the early examples of domestic TV series such as *Aşk-ı Memnu*. But Turkish TV series still suffer from a number of common shortcomings. Most of them are not based on realistic representations of societal, everyday realities and practices. For instance, wealth is superficially represented through material things such as clothes and cars, so differentiation between the rich upper classes and lower classes is reduced to these material possessions (Çelenk, 2010, 24). Characters do not represent societal values and conflicts or existential problems reflective of their social stratification (Çelenk, 2010, 24). Social class and social stratification are never represented in its full reality on Turkish TV series.

Another shortcoming of Turkish TV series is that their most central theme is *impossible love*. As problems that originate from *impossible love* occupy characters' lives and thoughts, the other themes and problems pertaining to the public and political spheres never seem to matter in the fictional world of Turkish TV series. The setting and social milieu where TV series takes place changes but the theme never represents any issues or problems about that geography. In cases of TV series such as *Zerda* or *Berivan* which take place in Southeast Turkey, their representations differ from TV series in Istanbul only in terms of the accent and costumes of the characters (Çelenk, 2010, 25). The impossible love, the main conflict is narrated in an epic manner decontextualized from political and social realities (Çelenk, 2010, 26). Therefore, Turkish TV series do not offer new perspectives concerning the ingrained perceptions of the good and the bad; on the contrary, they just reproduce them. (Çelenk, 2010, 26).

What Çelenk (2010) points out seems to explain the reason behind poor characterization in Turkish TV series. It is hard to see realistic portrayals of characters due to superficial representations. Characters are depicted either good or bad, characters seem to share a number of similar traits irrespective of age and gender. Most characters are stripped of qualities that can individualise them; therefore, they have to join either the armies of the good or bad. Besides, love limits Turkish TV series thematically and the most stories are very repetitive on TV.

2.2.2. Transnational Popularity of Turkish TV Series

There always have been popular and successful TV series on Turkish TV; however, the interest in them has remained locally-bound until lately. In recent years, Turkish TV sector has been having its heyday due to the huge interest in them from the Middle East, Eastern European, Latin American and Balkan countries. It seems that Turkish TV series have found resonance with people in these parts of the world. The turning point for Turkish TV industry was 2006 when A Dubai-based broadcasting network bought two Turkish series *Silver* (*Gümüş*, 2005-2007) and *Under Linden Trees* (*Ihlamurlar Altında*, 2005), this started a new period for Turkish broadcasting industry, which started exporting Turkish series following the success of these two series. (Çelenk, 2010, 22)

Turkish TV series such as *The Magnificent Century* (*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*), *What's Fatmagül's Fault?* (*Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne?*), *Gümüş* (*Silver*) and so on have enjoyed tremendous popularity overseas. The most recent example is *The Bride of Istanbul* (*İstanbul Gelin*), which has risen to levels of mania among Israelis (Melamed, [06.02.2019]). Turkish shows have managed to become among the most-watched programmes in Latin America; over 12 million Argentinians watch each episode of *What's Fatmagül's Fault?* (Tali, [10.11.2019]) and it has also achieved a considerable success in Spain (Koloğlu, [15.10.2018]). In 2014, *One Thousand and One Nights* (*Binbir Gece*), another Turkish TV series, was a big sensation becoming the most-watched programme in Chile (Tali, [10.11.2019]). *The Magnificent Century* (*Muhteşem Yüzyıl*), one of the most well-known and successful Turkish TV series worldwide has been broadcast nearly in 70 countries around the world (dramaquartley, [20.15.2018]). Turkish TV dramas are now watched by more than 400 million people in more than 140 countries (Tali, [10.11.2019]).

The transnational popularity of Turkish TV series started from the Middle East but in a completely coincidental way (Yanardağoglu & Karam, 2013, 4). Dubai-based TV MBC started importing Turkish TV series after one of the executives of the channel was impressed with how culturally close Turkish TV series were to Middle Eastern culture while staying in Turkey. The transnational journey of Turkish TV series that began in 2006 grew into a huge sector. Though the popularity of Turkish TV series is not confined to the Middle East, Yanardağoglu and Karam (2013, 8) analysed what attracts the Middle Easterners to Turkish TV series. Turkish TV series brought controversy, some accused the series of posing a threat to Arab culture. In particular, the non-conservative portrayal of lifestyles or daily practices on Turkish TV series was argued to be in conflict with Islamic values (Yanardağoglu and Karam, 2013, 8).

Audiences cite several different reasons why they tend to watch Turkish TV series. Arab audiences find Turkish TV series technically high quality with spectacular settings and intriguing love stories and Turkish ruling party's aims to improve its relations with the Middle East has a positive effect on the spread of Turkish TV series (Yanardağoglu and Karam, 2013, 13-14). In addition, they like watching Turkish TV series due to cultural similarities and differences with. Though Arab and Turkish cultures have many things in common, more modern and Westernised life styles and gender roles based upon equality women and men reflected Turkish TV helps Arab audiences, especially women to question gender roles, mainstream values within their own society (Yanardağoglu and Karam, 2013, 13-14).

Latin American audiences are attracted to Turkish TV series as they find them alternatives against Hollywood productions which are too explicit in content and violent. Audiences find Turkish productions high quality and love the traditional love stories that are thematised (Tali, [10.11.2018]).

But on the other hand, the rising transnational popularity of Turkish TV may have adversely affected the Turkish TV industry as mainstream TV channels have become heavily dependent on TV series and therefore reserve primetime slot for them. As a result, Turkish TV suffers from the lack of content variety. Having lost its variety confining its primetime solely to TV series, right now Turkish TV has trouble sparing time for reality shows, talk shows, quiz shows, current affair programmes, talent shows, music and movie programmes on mainstream channels due to the number and

the length of TV series. Hence, the lack of variety is obviously undermining the quality the Turkish TV has to offer.

A growing number of foreign TV series have been adapted in Turkey and the trend seems likely to go on as Turkish broadcasters have started to turn to foreign TV series looking for new content. The trend that started with the adaptation of quiz and reality shows in Turkey seems to have turned into adapting TV series as well.

2.3. The Proliferation of Adapted TV Series on Turkish TV

The composition of programmes aired in Turkey might not be considered diverse owing to the fact that the most-watched channels overwhelmingly broadcast domestic productions. Free-to-access mainstream TV channels with higher percentage of viewers do not broadcast foreign programmes on primetime or during day-time slots except for dubbed foreign films. Only people who have access to a subscription-based TV can watch foreign TV programmes in their original language or with Turkish subtitles on relatively less popular channels, besides audiences with pay TV subscription have access to transnational foreign TV channels such as CNN, BBC, France 24 and so on. Free-to-access TV channels seem to have adopted a policy of adapting foreign dramas and formatted shows in a localised version instead of broadcasting the original versions. As Turkish people tend to consume domestic programmes, domestically-produced or adapted programmes fill up programming reserved on national TV channels.

To what level the scarcity of foreign shows in Turkish broadcasting industry has an impact on audiences' choices remains to be investigated. However, one plausible explanation for the reluctance of producers and broadcasters to air foreign shows may be the recent popularity of Turkish TV series in certain locations worldwide. Turkish TV series have been watched all over the world except Western Europe, North America. Turkish ranks as the second biggest exporter of TV shows after the USA. The huge revenues that come with the sales prompt producers and broadcasters to produce domestic TV shows.

To meet the growing demand from local and overseas markets, Turkish broadcasters have started to gravitate towards foreign markets in line with global trends. As a result of this, the number of shows and dramas that are adapted is increasing. Two markets,

Korea and the USA seem to be leading choices for Turkish production companies along with a recent interest in Japanese dramas, as well.

This was not always the case. The state channel TRT in its founding years and newly-launched private channels were dependent upon foreign movies and TV series. To illustrate, the Latin American telenovelas aired before prime-time were positively received by Turkish audiences and similarly American dramas such as *Dallas* became a nationwide sensation. Like the most of developing countries, Turkey became self-sufficient to produce local programmes for audiences in Turkey, thus the dependency upon foreign programmes diminished. But on the other hand, the growth of production capacity and the expansion of the TV market with new TV channels increased competition and the demand.

In the period that preceded the launch of TV sector, Hollywood cinema and has been a source of inspiration for Turkish market. Turkish cinema is full of adaptations from Hollywood. *Dünyayı Kurtaran Adam* (1982) is an absurd remake of *Star Wars*; *Şeytan* (1974) is based upon the adaptation of *The Exorcist*. Even there are foreign literary adaptations into movies such as *Sonbahar Rüzgarları* (1969), which was adapted from *Jane Eyre*. However, the copyright issues were not taken seriously back then, there were no legal sanctions against unauthorised adaptations.

Some Turkish programmes can be said to draw their inspiration from foreign programmes though they are not directly adapted, hence not infringing upon any copyrights. To illustrate, *Nasıl Evde Kaldım* (2001) can be regarded as a Turkish equivalent of *Ally McBeal*; *Yedi Numara* (2000) can be likened to *Friends*. The only similarity these Turkish TV series have in common with the American shows can be considered to be the central themes, that is not Turkish broadcasters and producers copied from these shows while producing *Nasıl Evde Kaldım* or *Yedi Numara*. It can be claimed that they chose to develop programmes similar to the ones that were thematically trendy in the USA. This still goes on in the industry. One clear example is *Ufak Tefek Cinayetler* (2017-2018), which thematically bears close resemblance hit HBO show *Big Little Lies*.

While foreign shows inspire Turkish industry with new programming ideas, some producers prefer to import and remake the foreign TV series that are popular with local audiences in their own countries. Every season, the remakes of foreign TV series make

their debut on Turkish channels as the interest in adaptation has been intensifying. Some of the adapted shows have surpassed the original Turkish TV series in the ratings they received. The success of the adapted shows seems to encourage the producers for new adaptations.

The interest in adaptation did not start with TV series. The format programmes that have been proven successful in different parts of the world initiated the trend to remake foreign shows in Turkey. The first of many adaptations to come was *Biri Bizi Gözetliyor*, Turkish version of *Big Brother*. The shows which were globally successfully were remade one by one in Turkey by different broadcasters and producers. As short cut to success, whatever programme caught on overseas was reproduced for audiences in Turkey and formatted shows in a local version instead of broadcasting the original versions. And now Turkish broadcasters seem to favour TV series as in line with global trend in international broadcasting industry.

In summary, TV series which have been an important part of Turkish TV sector since TRT are becoming more and more crucial for the industry. Turkey is now the second biggest TV content exporter after the USA. They are popular not only in national markets but in international markets, as well. Hindsight the first TV series were produced for TRT with a view to introduce public to Turkish literature and enlighten them without economic concerns. TRT and private channels kept producing their own series, yet the evolution of TV series started in early 2000. As the number of TV series produced kept rising, the variety in themes and genres seems to diminish with each passing year. The dynamics of the industry show change so the trends that bring success keep changing. The priority of broadcasters and producers ssto find the right content that can attract audiences hence foreign TV series provide Turkish industry with a rich source of content.

3.THE ERA OF ADAPTATIONS

This chapter explains the boom in global adaptation trade by analysing its historical background. Certain developments paved the way for the growth of adaptation trade. Following the spread of national broadcasting networks, the need to find new programming content became urgent for national broadcasters. As a result, foreign programmes, in particular American shows were copied. However, the concern of national networks in Europe was to inform and educate the public so American shows were regarded in a negative light. Unlike the public service ideology in Europe, American broadcasting industry was a commercial and more independent system. However, the state's monopoly on TV broadcasting in many of parts of the world weakened in the 1980s, which facilitated the international flow of TV content and paved the way for global format trade.

International business of adaptation activities boomed towards the turn of century through format programmes, that is reality and game and quiz shows. Formats are flexible templates that can be remade in new territories for new audiences easily, that is why, they are likely to attract audiences. Therefore, the global mania for *Big Brother*, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* and *Survivor* ended in countless remakes of these programmes all over the world and they all became nationwide sensations wherever they were adapted. The mania later continued with newly designed and developed format programmes. Unlike unscripted format programmes such as reality and quiz shows, scripted format programmes, that is TV series such as dramas and comedies have not been preferred for adaptation until recently owing to a number of reasons.

Now, hundreds of same formats have been adapted all over the world. Unscripted formats such as *Survivor*, *Idols* and *Dancing with the Stars* and scripted formats such as *Ugly Betty* have many different local versions. It is important to define adaptation to get a clear picture of what adaptation process involves and how it proceeds and most importantly how the different versions of the same show never fail in different territories.

Moran (2009) divides adapted formats into two types: closed and open adaptations. Open format emerges out of the compromise between licensor and a licensee who engage in an interactive collaboration (Moran, 2009, 118-119). What matters in the case of closed adapted format is that the show should closely resemble the original show like the translation of a literary work, the premise of a closed adaptation is that the format show should remain loyal to the original one hence it seems to suggest that the interests and preferences of new viewers are mostly overlooked (Moran, 2009, 119). The new format is not expected to be a replica of the original version or other preceding versions in case of an open adaptation so local production team, which is in a position to enjoy creative freedom has a say in the remaking of format (Moran, 2009, 119).

Linguistic codes, intertextual codes and cultural codes are the factors that influence the adaptation process of a TV format (Moran, 2009). Linguistic codes do not apply to a TV programme, as far as TV programme is concerned style and form replace the linguistic codes (as cited in Moran, 2009). “Staging, shooting, editing and sound” constitute the style of a TV programme while form is connected to “elements of extended organization and sequencing such as storytelling and magazine-type arrangements”.

Intertextual elements first of all include the production companies. The production companies that originally create and produce a format leave their marks on the show, hence the adapted version will have to be significantly modified within the context of the local TV production industry (Moran, 2009, 120). The second intertextual element involves the genres of the adapted formats (Moran, 2009, 121). Moran (2009, 107) remarks that “The adaptation of a drama series format offers more opportunities for creative improvisation than does a game show format”. Third impact of intertextual elements on the TV industry is that with the adaptation of a format show, a brand-new programming genre can be introduced into the local TV industries; to illustrate, the reality formats were launched in many parts of the world for the first time after 2000 (Moran, 2009, 121).

The third level involves a myriad of factors that cause societal and national differences. Known as cultural codes; language, ethnicity, history, religion, geography and culture account for the factors that create differences (Moran, 2009, 121). Three levels of adaptation are intertwined with one another, all the decisions made regarding the

adaptation and production of a format show in a new territory are influenced by all these three levels (Moran, 2009, 122).

3.1. Historical Background

Successful adaptation of a TV format for new audiences plays a pivotal role in attracting viewers. Tailoring a format programme- whether a reality show or a TV series- for local audience is a must since cultural codes vary dramatically from one society to another. By its dictionary definition, adaptation means “a film, a book, a play etc. that has been made from another film, movie, play, etc...” The scope of adaptation goes beyond cinema, literature as adaptation is a broad term that applies to many sectors. Considering that TV has become one of the biggest industries in the world, there are more and more adaptations as it is under increasing pressure to provide viewers with brand new content.

An increasing number of foreign TV shows are remade for local audiences all around the globe, every year different formats are chosen and adapted in new territories. The international boom in the remakes of TV programmes can be attributed to three TV phenomena; *Survivor*, *Who Wants to Be A Millionaire?* and *The Big Brother*; it would not be bold to claim that these three programmes singlehandedly changed the course of TV industry in late 1990s (Bourdon, 2012; Chalaby, 2016; Moran, 2013). These formatted programmes have been sold to many parts of the world and have been adapted hundreds of times in different parts of the world. The adaptation of TV programmes gained momentum as these shows proved to be international hits.

Formats can be categorised as scripted formats and unscripted formats; the former includes TV series such as dramas, comedies, soap operas whereas the later refers to the programmes such as reality, quiz and talent shows (Chalaby, 2016). From the late 1990s on, formatted shows became the frontrunners of the industry; the global TV industry stuck to the unscripted formats by reproducing and localizing every new quiz, reality or talent show that popped up immediately but on the other hand the number of adapted TV series has remained so low by comparison due to certain reasons (Chalaby, 2016).

Now both format programmes and canned (finished) programmes make up the bulk of global TV broadcasting industries (Moran, 2009, 117). A canned programme is a type of programme that is produced and shown in a particular country but it can be

broadcast in new territories where it is sent via cans and containers. A format programme developed, produced and aired like a canned programme in a specific country can be adapted and aired in a new territory (Moran, 2009, 17). Canned programming produced within a specific national environment can partially be tailored for home viewers through dubbing and subtitling; however, format programmes can be considered to be limitless and global in contrast to nationalised canned programmes. That is because foreign broadcasters can easily adapt and reproduce for home audiences as the format of a programme is mainly made up of “as a set of services or franchised knowledges” (Moran, 2009, 117). As Moran (2009, 117) puts it “The format programme constitutes a flexible template or empty mould awaiting particular social inflexion and accent in other territories to appeal to home audiences in that place” and therefore, the format programme can be easily adapted in a way that enables it to sound and look local. Overall, the increase in format programmes has to do with the fact that the format programme is adaptable for new social contexts with relative ease. However, within a wider historical context, the popularity of adapted shows can be fully grasped.

To start with, American and British broadcasting models were dominant over the rest of the world in the 20th century. Whereas American broadcasting model was a more independent and profit-oriented system which government supervised via a regulatory body, British model was based on public service mentality, which walked between independence and government control (Moran, 2013,3). There were gradual developments regarding the traffic of content and programming at different periods, especially post Second World War. Despite the Second World War that interrupted the growth of TV, national TV networks were either already launched or about to be launched in in most parts of the world including less during mid-1950s so there was a global need to find programmes to fill the increasing broadcasting hours of TV networks (Moran, 2013, 5). Consequently, American and British programme ideas were copied all around the world (Moran, 2013, 5).

Between 1955 and 1980 a new era in content exchange business was witnessed in TV sector, the TV industry grew tremendously, which generated demands among TV broadcasters all over the world to find programme content and they therefore began to look for programme content both in local and imported programmes (Moran, 2013, 6).

“Public service ideology” dictated European TV broadcasting so broadcasters in Europe were concerned informing and educating the public service. As broadcasting put national ideology at its centre and broadcasting was regarded as a way to cement and instil “national culture through literary adaptations and historical programmes (Bourdon, 2012, 113-114). There was a negative view of foreign shows, especially American entertainment shows in Europe (Bourdon, 2013, 114). Despite the hegemony of public service ideology and prejudice against American TV shows, European TVs turned to American formats because television shows were consumed so fast and broadcasting hours increased, producing new content became a must; entertainment shows in that sense proved to be saviours as their content could be renewed every week (Bourdon, 2012, 115).

In short, Jerome Bourdon (2012) attributes the rise of format adaptation to Europe’s conflicting relation with USA and TV’s gradual break with its public service status. The adaptations were not systematic; therefore, Bourdon calls this period in the history of European TV “discrete adaptations” but a more organized manner to programme adaptations was also taking shape in some parts of the world (Moran, 2013, 7). Surprisingly, the exchange of programming ideas began to take place in an a complex and asymmetrical fashion as American broadcasters ,too, started remaking British sitcoms whereas British TV networks used to borrow programme ideas from America in the early phase of content borrowing, which heralded a “a two-way flow” (Moran, 2013, 7).The formats were frequently borrowed in an undocumented and unacknowledged manner but there was no legal protection against illegal or unauthorised use of formats (Moran, 2013, 8) Concerning the copyright issues, there was not much of a development actually as Bourdon (2012, 114) puts it “a license fee system emerged only in the 1970s and was systematised in the 1980s”.

The transformation in the economic dynamics of TV industry started “the age of formats” from the 1980s onward, as more and more commercial private channels appeared; the phase of discrete adaptations faded (Bourdon, 2012, 116). From 80s onward a chase for new yet cheap programme content began so as to meet the demands of the growing programme capacity of multi-channel TV stations and this new phase in the format adaptation was prompted by the growth of TV industry, which was due to the technological developments in the distribution forms of TV (Moran, 2013, 9).

Entertainment shows that aired live were preferred rather than the likes of dramas, sitcoms and current affair programmes that were costly to produce (Moran, 2013, 9).

The formats, as Bourdon emphasizes (2012, 117) “were not imposed on European television culture but rather a “self-inflicted imperialism”. European producers looked for formats that could ensure the success and therefore had to turn to old American formats once they brushed aside to fill their broadcasting schedules with (Bourdon, 2012, 117). In the 1980s and 1990s, format trade turned into an important component of TV broadcasting industry (Bourdon, 2012, 117).

Waisbord (2004, 360) remarks that “the popularity of formats is more than just another trend in an industry perennially hungry for hit shows and eager to follow them” as he explains the spread of formats in terms of structural and technological transformations that TV industry went through. Waisbord (2004) explains the rise of formats in similar lines with Bourdon. As the TV industry was confined to a national identity, the regulations made in line with national character of TV inhibited a possibility of international trade of programmes (Waisbord, 2004, 360). What changed the TV industry were certain developments such as “privatization, liberalization, and the deregulation”, which helped to eliminate the restrictions on money and programming (Waisbord, 2004, 360).

Moran (2013, 10) argues that the current or the latest stage of TV format got underway with three games shows, namely “*Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, *Survivor* and *Big Brother*” and Bourdon similarly states that the adaptation business boomed with the success of *Expedition Robinson*; namely *Survivor*, which was a Swedish reality game show and first format programme to achieve a global success and *Big Brother*, which was aired for the first time in 1999 on a channel in the Netherlands (Bourdon, 2012, 120-121). The current stage is characterised by the transformation of programme format sector into a global and transnational one and also transition of TV production industry into global or transnational system as a whole (Moran, 2013, 11).

In the two decades between 1980 and 2000, format adaptation sector was gradually getting systematized as Moran (2013, 9) states “A large-scale business with a visible set of arrangements, practitioners and dominant institutional players was coming into being”. The emergence of television trade fairs in the USA, Western Europe and some other territories where television producers and distributors convened from all over the

world was a consequence of the systematization (Moran, 2013, 9) By and large illegal adaptations still existed but on the other hand copyright issues were regulated as Moran (2013, 10) notes “licensing and fee payments became more regular, normalised and customary in the cross-border exchange of television programme know-how”.

Waisbord (2004) elucidates the global popularity of formats and put forwards several distinct factors. One factor is unexpected consequence of the protectionist laws that prohibit adding subtitles on foreign programmes that are aired on national TVs in certain countries; the shows are instead shown in local languages or English (Waisbord, 2004, 363). TV channels are forced to buy the scripts of the foreign shows that they were no longer able to be broadcast with subtitles and instead began remaking them in a domestic version.

In addition, the phenomenal success *Survivor* and *Big Brother* has brought formats into the spotlight (Waisbord,363). As Waisbord (2004, 363) “Because there is no certainty about the prospects of specific programs and genres, hit shows inevitably engender trends that are followed until exhaustion”. All along, TV industry has been characterised by “copying and imitating” whatever has been successful (2004, 363) and the tendency towards imitation has intensified lately as the industry is under immense pressure to gain bigger profits within a shorter span of time (Waisbord, 2004, 363).

Waisbord (2004) focuses on the role that globalization plays on the transformation TV industry has gone through. There was no question of incorporating a trend or programme into a public TV station from a private station or the other way around as principles guiding the management of state-run channels and private channels were different; therefore, a successful American or European format broadcast on a commercial channel was unlikely to be adapted (Waisbord, 2004, 363). He (2004) notes that with the grip of globalization on TV industry, the perception of programming had to change because successful globalization of TV formats entails TV systems to be arranged along the same lines (363). Globalization led to the systemization of the TV structure, which in turn fostered the inclination towards imitation and avoidance of innovation in programming as required by commercial TV broadcasting (Waisbord, 2004, 364).

Globalization of television trends is another reason as to why TV formats have gained popularity (Waisbord, 2004, 365); the commercialised TV industry favours formats

due to the fact that formats stand a bigger chance of success. Formats come in handy for private TV industry the way Waisbord (2004, 365) puts it “..., then, formats satisfy the double demand of finding a low-cost programming with a track record”. Cost of importing and producing a fiction programme far exceeds that of a game and reality show, and in addition the future performance of formats can be predicted to a large extent depending on how well they previously performed in some countries and formats as already tried and tested in some countries reduce the risks of uncertainty (Waisbord, 2004, 365). In short, since success of a TV programme or genre is hard to foresee, formatted reality and game shows of the early 2000s seem to have stood out as safe havens for producers -when a programme proves its success in a couple of different locations, the tendency to reproduce them in new territories outweighs, which can be argued to help the format programmes gain international popularity.

Like the rest of world, domesticated versions of format shows that began to be localised with *Big Brother*, *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* and a few other shows proliferated on Turkish TV channels. The success of a particular format show on one of mainstream channels prompted other TV channels to find and adapt similar formats to attract viewers. *En Zayıf Halka* (*Weakest Link*), *Pop Star* (remake of *Idols*), *Fear Factor*, *Akademi Türkiye* (*Star Academy*), *Pop Star Alaturka*, *O Ses Türkiye* (*The Voice*), *Yetenek Sizsiniz* (remake of *Got Talent* shows), *Buzda Dans* (*Dancing On Ice*), *Yok Böyle Dans* (*Dancing with the Stars*), *Benimle Dans Eder Misin* (*So You Think You Can Dance*), along with some older format shows such as *Wheel of Fortune* (*Çarkıfelek*), *Turnike*, *Passaparola*, *Şans Kapıyı Çalınca* (*Happy Family Plan*), *Aileler Yarışıyor* (*Family Feud*) are the examples of formats adapted for Turkish audiences. The formats mostly constituting of talent and game shows were watched enthusiastically by audiences in Turkey.

3.2. The Increase in Adaptation of Scripted Formats

Chalaby (2016) puts forward a number of reasons as to why scripted shows did not achieve international popularity as early as unscripted formats.

The first reason has to do with “the complexity of knowledge transfer” for scripted shows. In case of an unscripted format, format buyers are provided with information on the original show via “consulting packages” that detail every step of production process” and these consulting packages enable broadcasters to reproduce the show

efficiently (Chalaby, 2016, 6). The knowledge transfer has also bettered for scripted shows in recent years; however, the knowledge transfer about the original show alone may not be enough to produce a successful adaptation of a scripted show (Chalaby, 2016, 6). The scripted adaptation must be more than a replica of the original show and recreate the script (Chalaby, 2016, 6). Foreign remakes of game shows are highly likely to become successful whereas it is hard to foresee if a drama will catch on or not in a new territory despite its previous high ratings (Chalaby, 2016, 7). The complexity of adapting a scripted format arises from the fact dramas and comedies are culturally sensitive, which makes it hard to reproduce them in the simple mechanical way unlike unscripted shows; therefore, adaptation plays a bigger role in scripted shows than in unscripted shows (Chalaby, 2016, 15). “While only the structures of unscripted shows travel, every word and sound of a drama needs to sound right to a local audience” (Chalaby, 2016, 15).

The second reason is that finished programmes produced by big Hollywood companies have traditionally constituted the core of format trade sector. Due to the concern that selling their scripted shows to other countries might adversely affect the overall sales of their finished programmes, American production companies unwillingly started engaging in format trade business (Chalaby, 2016, 11). American production companies were forced to change their policy towards selling the rights of their finished programs as countries like Australia and Turkey have started to dominate the regional markets threatening the hegemony of the USA and the overall number of locally-produced TV shows go up around the world (Chalaby, 2016, 11).

The newly-emerged TV channels and the subscription-based online platforms such as Lovefilm.com and Netflix have also needed scripted TV genres; as a result, the demand for scripted shows has grown (Chalaby, 2016, 8). With competition getting fierce with new players, the USA channels felt obliged to boost their investment in scripted content; foreign scripts turn out to be a remedy for the producers who need high quality scripts (Chalaby, 2016, 8). Some of the most eminent American TV channels, ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, and The CW are adapting more and more scripted shows from overseas and year by year the number of scripted formats piloted and picked is rising regularly on American networks (Chalaby, 2016, 8-9). The successful American adaptations include *Ugly Betty*, a Columbian telenovela originally titled *Yo Soy Betty, la fea*, and *In Treatment*, an adaptation of a Israeli psychological drama

called *BeTipul* prompted US producers begin to look beyond familiar lands and adapt from a wide range of different countries; in addition to Israel, Latin America and Scandinavia from which the USA has already bought scripted formats to adapt, American broadcasters have adapted scripts from some countries such as Austria, Croatia, Spain, Norway and Turkey for the first time (Chalaby, 2016, 10).

As the recent interest that has awakened for dramas and comedies in global broadcasting sector as Chalaby (2016) points out, Turkish broadcasting sector has turned to TV series to adapt for Turkish audiences. Therefore, foreign TV series have been adapted in increasing numbers in Turkey. Turkish producers seem to be picking specific TV genres from specific locations; two countries stand out as the main content exporters to Turkey: America and South Korea. While some remakes manage to resonate with the audiences, some other TV series get cancelled after a few episodes.

TV series that are adapted from the USA can be listed as *This is Us* (*Bir Aile Hikayesi*), *Desperate Housewives* (*Umutsuz Ev Kadınları*), *The OC* (*Medcezir*), *Shameless* (*Bizim Hikaye*), *The Jeffersons* (*Tatlı Hayat*), *Nanny* (*Dadı*), *Gossip Girl* (*Küçük Sırlar*), *Monk* (*Galip Derviş*), *Dawson's Creek* (*Kavak Yelleri*), *Grey's Anatomy* (*Doktorlar*), *Revenge* (*İntikam*), *Rich Man, Poor Man* (*Kuzey Güney*); *Pretty Little Liars* (*Tatlı Küçük Yalancılar*), *According to Jim* (*Cuma'ya Kalsa*), *My Name is Earl* (*Hakkını Helal Et*), *Sleepers* (*Suskunlar*), *Ugly Betty* (*Sensiz Olmuyor*), *Sabrina* (*Acemi Cadı*), *Glee* (*Muck*).

South Korean remakes include *A Gentleman's Dignity* (*Kiraz Mevsimi*), *Flames of Desire* (*Hayat Şarkısı*), *Secret Love* (*Meryem*), *Seviyor Sevmiyor* (*She Was Pretty*) *Yüksek Sosyete* (*High Society*), *İlişki Durumu Karışık* (*Full House*), *Paramparça* (*Autumn In My Heart*), *Can Love Become Money* (*Kiralık Aşk*), *Smile, You* (*Gülümse Yeter*), *No: 309* (*Fated To Love You*), *Summer Scent* (*Rüzgarın Kalbi*), *Boys Over Flowers* (*Güneşi Beklerken*), *My Husband Got A Family* (*Kocamın Ailesi*), *Doctors* (*Kalp Atışı*), *Çilek Kokusu* (*The Heirs*), *Baba Candır* (*What Happens To My Family*), *I'm Sorry, I Love You* (*Bir Aşk Hikayesi*), *Get Karl Oh Soo Jung* (*Tatlı İntikam*) and many more. Here, English translations of the original titles into are used instead of titles directly translated from Turkish versions for practical reasons. The number of Korean series that are adapted for Turkish TV are interestingly high.

TV series that are adapted from Japan are *Mother (Anne)* and *Woman-My Life For My Children (Kadın)*. And there are one-time adaptations from different parts of the world. *Avlu* is adapted from an Australian drama, *Wentworth*, *Bir Kadın and Bir Erkek* is an adaptation of a French romantic comedy, *Un Gars Une Fille* and *Emret Bakanım* is an adaptation of the British comedy, *Yes Minister*.

To put in a nutshell, the international adaptation trend that started with unscripted programmes, in particular reality and quiz shows has penetrated into TV sector. Later on, the attention of the sector has shifted towards scripted formats, that is sitcoms and dramas. Turkey has had its share of the mania these format shows have triggered. From *Big Brother and Survivor*, *Deal or No deal* to *Pop Idol* and *Dancing with Stars* have all been adapted for Turkish televisions. Local versions of the shows resonated well with the Turkish audiences as the shows managed to become the most-watched shows on primetime Turkish television during their run. Meanwhile remakes of the foreign TV series have begun to fill Turkish TV. Although there have been always occasional examples of adaptations, adaptation of foreign TV series has never been this popular until lately, especially those of Korean and American series.

To summarise, the content exchange traffic and trade expanded across the globe due to the technological and certain political and economic developments. The liberalization of broadcasting industry pushed states from the world of broadcasting industry and allowed the emergence of private channels. Technology enabled developing countries to initiate domestic TV production, which increased the need for new programmes as many of them were consumed so quickly. The need led to the global traffic of programming content. Like the rest of the world, Turkey began to resort to successful foreign formats in early 2000 and since then both scripted and unscripted formats have been remade with varying degrees of success.

3.3. The Implications of Globalised Formats on The National TV Networks

Television format flows across the globe can be viewed as a result that globalization and transnationalism created on TV broadcasting industries. As a theoretical concept, globalisation was foreseen for the first time in the 1960s. Marshall McLuhan (1964) hailed a new world order divorced from the impact of space and time as *global village* where people remained linked to one another thanks to electronic and technological

revolutions making the world one giant imaginary interconnected village (Gibson & Murray, 2012, 3012). Tomlison (1999) describes globalisation as complex interactivity that defines the modern world order. Many things including money, goods, information, people, crime, beliefs, fashions transcend where they originate and flow across borders (Tomlison, 1999). Ulrich Beck (2002, 17) notes that one of the profound effects of the globalisation is the cosmopolitanism of the nations. With the cosmopolitanism of nation-states, integration into the globalised order of everyday life intensifies chipping away at nationalism and cosmopolitanism has impact on daily aspects of life ranging from TV to food (Beck, 2002, 28).

Transnationalism; on the other hand, indicates a variety of social, cultural and political practices that result from the proliferation of cross-border interconnectivity between different countries (Robertson, 2007, 136). Though transnationalism has become one of the most crucial concepts in immigration studies, transnationalism now encompasses broad disciplines including media studies. Actually, the current phase of TV industries is characterised by transnationalism. In the transnational era of broadcasting media, the monopoly that media corporations from America and other First World countries enjoyed in global media markets has begun to wane as smaller media corporates in other parts of the world have started to spread around the world (Chalaby, 2015, 30). Another characteristic of transnational era is the expansion in the global trade formats and scripts and the adaption of the formats and scripts for new home markets (Sinclair, 64, 2014).

The growing number of transnational audiences due to the increase in worldwide migratory flows and the desire of media companies to reach larger parts of the world prompted transnationalism in media (Chalaby, 2015, 31-32). Two distinct types of transnational networks emerged. The first one refers to the licensed transnational branches of giant networks such as CNN and MTV while the second one refers to the networks that target immigrant communities or diasporas (Aksoy, 2000, 63). The likes of CNN and MTV aim to appeal to international audiences who share similar tastes and interests across different parts of the world, the other transnational networks target immigrant communities that share the same language, ethnicity, religion across different territories (Aksoy, 2000, 63).

Diasporic transnational media is believed to help immigrants to maintain their national and cultural identities and strengthen their ties with their country of origin (Aksoy &

Robins, 2002, 7). With his seminal book, *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson argued that nationalism spread as a result of communicative and technological advancements such as the printing press enabling people to gain more awareness about the other members of their community and to develop a sense of unity with them. Since then, media and the nationalism or national imaginings have been closely interrelated. Media is believed to contribute to the formation of national identities and create a feeling of national solidarity and unity among people. However, the studies carried out by Aksoy, Robins (2002) and Aksoy (2000) show that the nation-centric assumptions may not be so relevant to audiences' consumption tendencies. The case of Turkish immigrants in England demonstrate that when exposed to the banal and day-to-day realities of their country of origin, the sense of idealisation or longing towards their home country seem to diminish (Aksoy & Robins, 2002, 10). Like national audiences, migrant audiences watch transnational TV for no other purposes than ordinary uses and gratifications, not out of diaspora-related or etho-cultural reasons (Aksoy, Robins, 14, 2002). As Appadurai (1996, 37) maintains, the role of nation-state is reinterpreted by immigrant groups who either grow closer or more detached to home politics, hence they reconsider their identity to the "imagined community" that they are assumed to be a part of.

Globalisation and transnationalism caused a deep concern for homogenisation of media products and cultures and the erosion of the national characteristic of TV broadcasting. Despite the concern, the expansion of format sector strengthened the position and role of national broadcasting markets.

The growth of international format trade coincided with the commercialization and liberalisation of TV networks. Commercial TV channels may be profit-oriented, yet formats still show the importance of national imagining in the industry. The rising popularity and the rapid proliferation of format programmes undermined the dominance of the finished programmes that were imported from the USA and some other countries somewhat subverting power relations in the economic realm (Darling-Wolf ,2015, 23). With the rise of format programmes, the edge America and other developed nations economically had over the rest of the world due the exports of the finished programmes weakened (Darling-Wolf ,2015, 23). The relatively lower costs of producing formats enabled small production companies to emerge and become key players in the markets.

The global American TV hits such as *Dallas* that can be considered to be national cultural products were replaced by game and quiz shows that are adaptable for local versions for audiences in different territories (Darling-Wolf, 2015, 23).

Waisbord (2004) and Moran (2009) argue that format adaptations occur at national level. At the heart of TV broadcasting industry, the national still persists as regards to production of TV programmes. “International flows of standardized, delocalized formats prove that audiences cling to local and national consciousness” (Waisbord, 367, 2004). The new order of broadcasting industry marked with the expansion of formats denotes perseverance of the national as it reasserts its position and role in media against the globalism and localism (Moran, 2009, 123). Waisbord (2004, 368) underlines how formats conceal a national character under its globalised coat saying:

“Formats are culturally specific but nationally neutral. The DNA of formats is rooted in cultural values that transcend the national. Formats reflect the globalization of the economics of the television industry and the persistence of national cultures in a networked world. They make it possible to adapt successful programs to national cultures”

Cultural codes at local and national level never cease to impact audiences’ reception of a show. Formats programmes such as quiz shows, reality shows or game shows are easier to adapt. Even if that is the case, localised versions of *Weakest Link*, a quiz show received backlash because of the harsh attitudes of the female presenter towards contestants in Asia and they did not continue for a long time (Moran, 2009, 121). *Big Brother*’s version in the Middle East, which was broadcast in several different countries was received very negatively in the region (Moran, 2009, 121).

Though there is a strong concern for homogenising impact of globalisation and transnationalism, the adapted formats, which are created through the interaction of different media cultures seem to contradict the homogeneity fears. Not all scholars who write on globalisation regard it as a hegemonic force. Ritzer (2003) argues that globalisation works in a way that creates two polarising effects. The glocalisation, which can be regarded as the positive impact of globalisation denotes a process where the global and the local merge producing distinctive results depending on where the local culture exists and it stands in contrast to the claims of homogenisation (Ritzer, 2003, 193-194).

Many things end up being indigenised rather globalised including music, housing designs, science and many more (Appadurai, 1996, 32). Kraidy (2002, 361) stresses

that globalisation is widely associated with the homogenisation of world cultures and in a similar vein, the globalisation of the media is believed to foster a uniformity within world cultures. As globalisation increases the interaction across nations, the interplay between the local and the global creates cultural hybridization, which does not have a homogenising impact on cultures or it does not stand in opposition to local cultures (Kraidy, 2002, 362). Hybridization increases the adaptability of a culture to new contexts by deterritorializing them from local or national boundaries (Kraidy, 2002, 362).

Format adaptations can be argued to demonstrate how the national maintains its position and role in the face of escalating globalisation and transnationalism. However, national does not suffice to express today's media landscape, especially when it comes to the adapted formats. Adaptations of TV programmes, irrespective of their genres, remain a pathway where globalisation, transnationalisation and localisation converge. How adapted shows converge global, transnational and local together successfully depends on creating a remake that is culturally proximate despite embracing these three seemingly contrasting elements. Audiences gravitate towards what is culturally close to them because they seek proximity in what they watch. The allure of nationally produced programmes stays stronger in some parts of the world.

Merging the local, national and global can be seen a part of the new media order in the case of adaptation of formats. In that regard, format adaptations demonstrate how the complex connection between the local, national and global lead to successful TV productions. Hence, adapted format programmes can be linked with hybridization, glocalisation or indigenisation that globalization seems to create in media industries. To a certain degree, the spread of look-alike formats can be attributed to the homogenization or grobalisation or even Mcdonaldisation of media industries. However, one thing that gets in the way of homogenisation is the denationalised character of formats. Formats as Moran (2009) states are empty templates that can be reproduced and rearranged with a national makeup.

4. CULTURAL PROXIMITY

The success of an adapted TV series depends upon how it will be received by the audiences. Positive reception of audiences lies in the fact that the adaptation is culturally close to them as much possible as argued by cultural proximity. This thesis analyses adaptation of two TV series, *Anne* adapted from Japanese drama, *Mother* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, a remake of American drama *This is Us* within the context of cultural proximity. As the following two chapters focus on the analysis of these two adapted series, Turkish versions and original version will be compared through cultural proximity. Therefore, this chapter elaborates on cultural proximity.

Adaptations have become a defining feature of today's media landscape. Adaptation allows for the reproduction of a story in a new type of medium, a new temporal setting or a new context (Wells-Lasagne, 2017). TV series are arguably the most popular programming types so the idea of adapting TV series is appealing for producers and broadcasters who are on a constant search for sources of new content. TV series are adapted based upon transmedia and transnational original sources (Wells-Lasagne, 2017). While transmedia adaptations refer to TV series that are based upon the remake of the stories in other mediums in media, transnational adaptations are the remakes of the original foreign TV series for new audiences in new territories (Wells-Lasagne, 2017). In that respect, this thesis examines two transnational examples of adapted TV series.

Cultural proximity basically argues audiences like to watch things that belong to their own culture because they want to find a sense of proximity in what they watch. A similar theory that claims audiences are likely to prefer domestic programmes is cultural discount. Cultural discount maintains that audiences may not prefer foreign programmes as they do not have the necessary cultural capital to understand them. Cultural proximity is a broad concept that includes many different components. While language seems to be the most crucial component, it can impact audience choices differently in multicultural societies where more than one language is spoken. In

multicultural societies, two opposing concepts, cultural polarization and multicultural fluency may come out. Cultural polarization means that people can continue to engage in their native language and this can cause cultural polarization within different groups in multicultural societies. Cultural proximity is multi-layered because identities of audiences are multi-layered and specific programme genres, geographic proximities and historical ties between nations and cultural capital of audiences are important parts of cultural proximity. Universal themes and concepts referred as cultural shareability affect cultural proximity of a programme for audiences. Cultural is a dynamic process not dependent upon not pre-given conditions but rather a convergence of specific and interrelated circumstances. Cultural proximity is criticised for having an essentialist and nation-centric approach as other factors come into play in the adaptation of TV series.

The way audiences interpret a local or a foreign TV show changes dramatically especially if the foreign one belongs to a very different culture from the home culture. The adaptations of foreign TV series be made in a way that can attract local audiences. When a foreign TV series whether a drama or comedy is adapted, it should be modified in a way that enables it to look culturally proximate to local audiences so that it can appeal to the audiences. In order to establish the proximity between a TV series and audiences, some parts and characters in the original shows can be modified or excluded from the local version while some new parts can be added.

It is highly crucial that the remake should invoke a sense of familiarity as audiences “seek cultural proximity” in what they watch (Straubhaar, 1991). As regards to cultural proximity, La Pastina & Straubhaar (2005, 272) note that “audience preferences are indeed formed within the overall trend toward cultural proximity within both national and cultural-linguistic boundaries”. So, audiences prioritise their own culture and language when they choose a programme to watch.

Cultural proximity is based on the premise that audiences are more likely to watch TV programmes that they find culturally and linguistically “closest, most proximate or most directly relevant” and TV shows created within their own language and national or local culture will be their first choice (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). When the national TV market is not self-sufficient to produce local programmes; however, as a second choice the audience generally prefer programmes that are made in a culture parallel “most similar” to their own (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005).

Cultural proximity emerged as a counter-argument to cultural imperialism and cultural dependency theories, which came to the fore in media studies in the 1960s. The idea or presupposition behind cultural imperialism was that TV products produced within a few developed states, especially America dominated programming content of national broadcasting services in less developed parts of the world (Schiller, 1971). Tapio Varis' studies (1974, 1984) became point of reference for scholars who advocated the cultural imperialism. Varis (1974, 1984) demonstrated that America's power remained unmatched against the rest of the world in the 1960's and 1970's TV broadcasting markets in terms of production. Most developing and even Western European countries imported the majority of television programmes that were broadcast on TV national networks from the USA and a number of countries which had the power to produce TV programmes and to distribute the programmes they domestically produced (1974, 1984).

Consequently, there was a growing concern over America's cultural imperialism over the rest of the world. As American programmes were all the rage and were sold and broadcast on national TV channels in many different parts of the world, there was an unequal one-way flow of culture in the media. However, cultural imperialism lost its credibility and became outdated in subsequent decades as they were no longer enough to explain the global cultural flows (Straubhaar, 1991, 39-43).

Cultural imperialism was not so influential as argued by its advocates. In early 80s, when *Dallas*, an American melodrama made its debut in international broadcasting markets, it became synonymous with American cultural imperialism for some. Richard Collins (1986) notes that cultural imperialism may be so clear-cut as it is argued to be despite American melodrama *Dallas* caused a strong alarm within Europe (67). Collins looks at media flow as a bilateral and symbiotic process.

Collins notes that American hegemony remained at a low level when it came to television production and distribution unlike cinema. In Europe, there were governmental regulations that curbed American hegemony in media. *Dallas*' popularity may have caused alarm but economic gains European broadcasting networks obtained from *Dallas* and other American shows were disregarded in the discussions of American cultural imperialism (Collins, 1986). Broadcasting programmes made in America was more profitable than producing a domestic programme when the cost of shooting a TV series and the amount paid for each episode

of are to be taken into consideration (Collins, 1986, 72). The criticism centred around American cultural imperialism overlooks America's positive influence as role model on the development of art and cinema movements in the remaining part of the world (Collins, 1986, 71). Ang (2007, 25) also stresses how European countries began to produce melodramatic soap operas by adapting the format and conventions of the genre for home audiences after *Dallas*.

The shift in the global paradigms also undermined cultural imperialism as the order of world dramatically altered. Concerns over American cultural imperialism in the 1980s were to be replaced with discussions of globalisation as Ien Eng (2007, 22) states:

“But while in the 1980s all the talk was of American cultural imperialism, associated with fears of a wholesale colonisation of local and national television cultures by the US product, today we know that what actually happened was much more complex and contradictory. To put it simply, US popular TV became both more powerful and less hegemonic, both more influential and less popular. The conceptual shift from cultural imperialism to globalisation serves to capture this contradictory complexity”.

The transition from cultural imperialism to globalisation in media studies is interwoven with changing paradigms of international politics (Kraidy, 2002, 360). The Cold War came to an end, the world was no longer divided into two poles. A complicated network of political, economic and relations emerged transcending the physical and symbolic boundaries of nation-state as the engagements between countries range from “subnational, national, and supranational” (Kraidy, 2002, 360). Globalisation is a theory that can better capture the zeitgeist of post-Cold War (Kraidy, 2002, 361).

Globalisation was also taken with a pinch of salt by the proponents of cultural imperialism. Globalisation which is commonly accepted as the zeitgeist in the 1980s is argued to be the global spread of profit-oriented transnational corporates based in America, Japan, Germany, Korea, Brazil and England (Schiller, 1991). Schiller (1991, 15) argued that the existing cultural domination happened in the form “transnational corporate cultural domination”. These corporations function with the same mentality of American capitalist media system. They seek to increase their revenues and profits in constantly changing dynamics of world markets (Schiller, 1991, 21). Media is under the influence of cultural hegemony of big transnational corporations which are based in developed countries, they monopolize local broadcasting industries and get hold of

local markets via privatization or implementation of the strategies formerly followed by American media companies (Schiller, 1991, 22).

Besides impact of the globalisation, comprehensive studies conducted by Straubhaar (1991) and La Pastina & Straubhaar (2005) in Latin American countries seemed to contradict the claims of one-way flows of culture. Regional programming flows across the geographic regions such as Latin America, Middle East accelerated. Smaller and economically less-developed countries prefer to import from Mexico and Brazil. American programmes become less popular in the whole regional after the self-competence of national broadcasting sectors to produce domestic programmes. The case of Japanese dramas in 1990s shows audiences prefer to watch programmes from similar cultures rather than foreign ones. The fact that Japanese dramas are very popular in East and Southeast Asia seem to undermine the claims of hegemony of developed Western countries in media (Iwachubi, 2002, 135).

The growth of TV industries facilitated by developing technology enabled Latin American states to produce their own domestic TV shows and develop diverse TV programme genres (Straubhaar, 1991, 49). The Latin American shows, in particular *telenovelas* caught on in national, regional and even international markets (Straubhaar, 1991, 49). As a result of positive reception of the domestic programmes, local producers filled prime-time with more and more nationally-produced programmes causing American imports to lose their popularity and visibility on TV channels (Straubhaar, 1991, 50). The reason behind domestic and regional popularity of Latin American TV shows had to do with the fact that audiences seek proximity and therefore they showed preferences for the local or regional over imported American shows (Straubhaar, 1991, 50). The case in Latin America as in most parts of the world seems to consolidate the role that cultural proximity plays in media choices of local viewers, audiences tend to favour domestic TV productions or intraregional TV shows.

Another theory that argues foreign TV shows are less likely to be preferred by local audiences in global markets is cultural discount. A locally-produced programme is bound to lose its appeal for the audiences in other parts of the world as audiences can not relate to these shows that are culturally too specific to them (Hoskins & Mirus, 1988, 500). Consequently, foreign programmes will not generate revenue as their value diminishes in new markets owing to the cultural discount (Hoskins & Mirus, 1988, 500).

Cultural discount accounts for the dominance of American TV programmes in global markets. As the biggest TV market with more programmes to sell, American TV industry will be less adversely affected by cultural discount when compared with the rest of markets in the world (Hoskins & Mirus, 1988, 503). For a long time, Hollywood stood alone as the content provider for international markets; the experience of Hollywood in international markets and the cosmopolitan composition of US population endowed Hollywood with the consciousness to produce programmes that could appeal to the widest range of audiences (Hoskins & Mirus, 1988, 506). International audiences have been long familiar with “American entertainment values because of the exposure of Hollywood movies”; therefore, currently there is a growing interest in American cultural products (Hoskins & Mirus, 1988, 506).

In that regard, the USA remains as an exceptional case within the context of cultural proximity as revealed by cultural discount theory. Both Straubhaar (2005) and Iwabuchi (2002), who elaborate upon the notion of cultural proximity highlight the familiarity of world audiences with American programmes. Straubhaar the long-presence of Hollywood invokes a sense of proximity in the world for certain genres such as action and animated movies (2005, 276). Iwabuchi; on the other hand, notes that this proximity has to do with fact that American culture is globally associated with modernity and therefore, American programmes tend to be associated with a sense of modernity, too (2002).

Cultural proximity is a multi-layered concept made up of wide range of components. All in all, the most significant component of cultural proximity is language but cultural elements such as “dress, ethnic types, gestures, body language, definitions of humour, ideas about story pacing, music traditions, religious elements can contribute to the sense of proximity (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005, 274).

While the language is considered to be the most important component of cultural proximity, the role of language may not be so clear-cut as some studies reveal. Ksiazek and Webster (2008, 488) analysed cultural proximity in a broader context by taking both macro-level factors such as audience availability and the structure of the media environment and micro-level factors such as individual needs and preferences into account. Ksiazek and Webster conducted a study in Houston, Texas where three different linguistic groups; English-speaking non-Hispanics, English-speaking Hispanics and Spanish-speaking Hispanics were observed as regards to their media

consumption. Houston is a good example of multiculturalism where audiences from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are exposed to an abundance of media alternatives from different cultures. They find that within a larger context where audiences have constant access to programmes made in different languages, the assumptions regarding cultural proximity are likely to change. (Ksiazek and Webster, 2008, 489).

The media choices of monolingual groups justified what cultural proximity argues concerning language as these audiences preferred to consume programmes in their own language (Ksiazek and Webster, 2008, 498). However, audiences fluent in both languages, that is English-speaking Hispanics possessed multicultural fluency to a certain degree so that they were able to watch programmes produced in both English and Spanish (Ksiazek and Webster, 2008, 498). The monolingual audiences in the study, who made media their choices based solely on language were restricted in their media preferences, which can be explained with the notion *cultural polarization*. Cultural polarization may occur in multicultural societies where monolingualism can interfere with the media choices of audiences.

Cultural proximity gets more complicated as cultural polarization and multicultural fluency come into play in multicultural societies (Ksiazek and Webster, 2008, 498). Furthermore, the assumption that cultural proximity should be regarded as the triumph of domestic media in developing countries over the foreign media products that are produced in developed countries becomes a cautionary tale (Ksiazek and Webster, 2008, 488-498). Cultural polarization may come out in multicultural societies where ethnicity and language seem to determine people's media preferences (Ksiazek and Webster, 2008, 498).

Ksiazek and Webster (2008, 500) remark that "cultural proximity should not be regarded not only as a contest between indigenous and foreign media, but also as a determinant of media consumption within multicultural populations". In certain parts of the world such as Latin America, East and South Asia, the Middle East and Africa some countries have risen as regional media centres and have exported TV programmes to the other nations in the region and these regional media centres and Western countries with demographically-diversifying population may even prompt further cultural polarization in multicultural societies (Ksiazek and Webster, 2008, 498-499).

Apart from the complexity of language, audiences' identities also remain complex. Cultural proximity exists at various levels because cultural identities are diversified and complicated as a person's cultural identity is shaped by geographical or spatial, cultural or linguistic, religious, ethnic or diasporic and gender-related dimensions of a specific culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005, 274). The spatial identities range from local, regional to national and global (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005, 276).

Genres are important elements that also affect people's media preferences. Certain genres are recognised across many different cultures and therefore, they are able to appeal to audiences from diverse locations easily. Melodrama as a genre has the power to transcend national boundaries (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005, 275). As La Pastina & Straubhaar (2005, 275) stress, "melodrama builds on underlying oral structures, formulas and archetypes that can be shared by cultures".

Shared histories and geographic proximities also create a sense of proximity between different countries; audiences may prefer to consume programmes from the countries that are geographically and historically linked with their own (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005, 277-278). Some other factors related to proximity can be explained with the notion *cultural shareability* put forward by Singhal and Svenkerud (1994). La Pastina & Straubhaar (2005, 278) maintain that "shareability refers to common values, images, archetypes and themes across cultures that permit programs to flow across cultural boundaries".

As regards to cultural proximity, another significant factor that comes into play is cultural capital, a concept coined by Bourdieu (1984). The cultural capital one possesses also influence influences media choices and interpretation of cultural texts. La Pastina and Straubharr (2005) define cultural proximity as follows:

"Cultural capital involves specific things like humour, gender images, dress, style, lifestyle, knowledge about other life- styles, ethnic types, religion and values. Cultural capital also builds on politicization, degree of consciousness about social issues, membership in socially aware groups, religion and some even more basic issues, like gender types and socially constructed gender-related interests, what men and women are commonly 'supposed' to be interested in (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005,279)"

Iwabuchi (2002) challenges obviousness of cultural proximity as a significant determinant in audiences' preferences. Regarding the popularity of Japanese programmes in Asia, Iwabuchi stresses that when positive reception of Japanese

dramas or programmes is attributed mainly to cultural proximity, it is mistakenly taken as an inherent quality that comes with a cultural text (2002, 131). When cultural proximity focuses only on viewers' interests in local programmes or programmes from similar cultures, there is a danger of representing culture in an historical and totalising way (Iwabuchi, 2002, 131).

Instead, Iwabuchi (2002, 133) argues that cultural proximity should be accepted as a dynamic process and it should be studied within a comprehensive context. Iwabuchi, (2002, 133) adds that "the experience of cultural similarity perceived as such by audiences through the consumption of a particular program is not a given but depends upon specific historical and social conditions" and "cultural proximity should not be regarded as a predetermined attribute of the text; "such a belief reduces the viewer's active input in constructing the pleasure of the text". That's because the study of cultural proximity may not be taking enough cognizance of the agency of the audience and the study of regional flow of TV programmes similarly suffers from the lack of audience research (Iwabuchi, 2002, 133). In short, Iwabuchi underlines that cultural proximity cannot be regarded as a priori but it should be accepted as posteriori(2002, 134).

The cases of two broadcasting markets, Turkey and South Korea seem to reinforce Iwabuchi's claims about cultural proximity. In Turkish case, Turkish dramas became internationally popular coincidentally as the expansion of Turkish dramas was not a government-supported incentive or they were not produced for international audiences (Yanardağoglu & Karam, 2013). However, some specific conditions such as Turkey's improving relations with the Middle East and the fascinating love stories that are narrated in the series made them popular in Arab countries and other countries later started exporting them (Yanardağoglu & Karam, 2013).

The phenomena known as Korean Wave that swept across Asia and other parts of the world started as a result of a number of interconnected factors. Korean's government's encouraging policies to revitalise cultural industry had a partial part to play in this (Shim, 2008, 25). Besides government's role, liberalization of Asian media markets, which were formerly state-controlled and not open to television imports, the declining popularity of Japanese dramas in the region paved the way for the rising popularity of cheaper Korean dramas across Asia (Shim, 2008, 25).

Cultural proximity offers an explanation why audiences tend to favour programmes from their own culture or from a similar culture. But on the other hand, nation-centric approaches to the study of adapted programmes with the emphasis on the national culture and national audiences are challenged by some as they are regarded to be too essentialist and reductive. As a result of qualitative researches and interviews with producers, Esser (2016) notes that audience identities and broadcasters' motives might contradict with the assumption that a TV programme is adapted with a national audience in mind. While cultural proximity and cultural discount account remain relevant in certain some "supported by empirical evidence", there are other cases where they do not account for audiences' preferences because the identity of audiences is far more complex and multi-layered; which cannot be reduced to space and language (Esser, 2016, 28).

There are different factors that have an impact on the adaptation of a show. Esser (2016, 25) primarily underlines the importance of target audiences in determining the way a programme is adapted as she notes "adaptation includes considerations to modify content in ways that take into account the specific audiences targeted by the broadcasters with the programs in question". Time slot a programme is produced for can have an impact on the local adaptation as every time slot is aimed at a certain segment of audience and also, the identity of TV channel where the adapted programme is broadcast matters, too. Channel's identity determines the target audience that it wants to reach so alterations to the original show is also adapted in line with that. (Esser, 2016, 25).

Fragmented and fluid make-up of actual national audiences can challenge the assumptions regarding how national audiences receive and consume TV programmes (Esser, 2015, 25). As revealed by audience studies, audiences may not prefer the local version when presented with different versions of the same show. There is an issue of quality which may turn audiences away from the localised version. In some cases, audiences may turn to original shows due to the high production quality even though the local version is closely similar to the original (Esser, 2015, 29). Esser (2016, 27) underlines the importance of globalization and its effect on national TV consumption as follows:

"...accelerating globalization processes seem to lead to a growing pool of globally shared cultural products and this in turn transforms cultures from within, including the mythological

national cultures. It transforms expectations, tastes, and discourses concerning television content, and with this it may also evoke changes in adaptation practices”.

Technology in particular facilitates cross-border television consumption, especially among followers of formatted talent shows. Developing technology enables viewers to develop a transnational identity in their TV consumption tendencies as they can interact with different versions of the same programmes and the other audiences who follow the same programmes. There are fan and gossip communities who follow the same talents shows or TV series interact with each other through networks which are not place and space-bound and these communities may construct the local meaning regarding TV shows.

Cultural proximity takes fragmented composition of national audiences into account. Straubhaar emphasises that the affinity for the domestically-produced programmes is stronger among popular classes and upper classes show a transnational taste for TV shows. Cultural proximity does not argue that TV consumption is homogenous across a nation. However, mainly focusing on the reception of the audiences, cultural proximity may be overlooking some factors that affect the way a programme is adapted. For example, the conditions of markets and the power and impact of broadcasters and producers in decision-making process may be ignored because cultural proximity is more interested in finished TV products and their reception by the audiences.

Enric Castello (2010, 209) broadens cultural proximity by including the entire communicative circuit, that is *creation, text and reception* in the analysis of proximity. Proximity is something that is constructed by both the creators at the production level and audiences at the reception level depending on how they perceive daily cultural practices of the society (Castello, 2010, 209).

Cultural proximity is not confined to cultural and linguistic elements in a TV programme that are proximate and relevant to the audiences (Enric Castello, 2010, 220). Castello (2010, 220) broadens the concept of cultural proximity and asserts that “cultural proximity is something that begins during the creative process, that is expressed in a certain audio-visual text and that, ultimately, is interpreted by the viewers”.

How audiences interpret a TV programme might be at variance with what is envisioned by the creative team of a TV programme; audiences’ interpretations of a programme

might show differences from the discourse constructed at the production level depending on what language audiences speak, where they live, their cultural and educational background, their media consumption habits (Castello, 2010, 220). Audiences can develop a sense of proximity by relating to characters and also their own feelings and personal problems come into play while interpreting a TV programme (Castello, 2010, 220).

In short, Castello (2010, 221) notes that during each step of the story from production to text and text to reception, both producers and audience construct meanings regarding the story through a common framework, which can be accepted as cultural proximity. Proximity that audiences and creators share is assumed to share is based on shared meanings; however, proximity may be constructed through a myriad of social, economic and cultural factors intertwined with one another in addition to individual and specific characteristics of audiences (Castello, 2010, 221).

Cultural proximity is a broad concept that takes into consideration what makes TV flows and adaptations successful within domestic, regional and global contexts. As Castello (2010) points out, proximity is something that is interpreted by audiences so agency of audiences is crucial in cultural proximity. Audiences are assumed to be active and conscious in their choices but they can be limited by the degree of cultural capital they have. Cultural proximity puts audiences into an active position who can make a sense of what they watch. Cultural proximity that explains audiences' preferences plays an important role in format adaptation studies. To adapt or remake a show means creating a local version that is culturally close and meaningful to audiences in a new territory.

What Castello argues above consolidates the notion of audience agency. Stuart Hall (1973) analysed the reception and production of messages in mass media and concluded that audiences actively make meaning of mass media messages. As signifiers and messages are always negotiated and reinterpreted by audiences, they never remain fixed (Stuart Hall, 1973). While a programme is produced to awaken certain feelings, sensations on audiences, the result might be completely unexpected or opposite (Stuart Hall, 1973). Therefore, the reception of a show is not uniform. Even in the case of very popular shows, audiences have different motives and they watch it with a different mode. Ang (2007) states that her own research reveals that audiences who watched *Dallas* at the peak of its popularity in 1980s received the show on

different levels. While some liked to engage emotionally with *Dallas*, some others watched with an ironic mode knowing that it was an overexaggerating melodrama.

While cultural proximity focuses on the reception of a TV programme, proximity starts with the creation of programme as Castello points out. In that regard, the actors of the decision-making process need to be examined more carefully. There are scholars who highlight the importance of producers and broadcasters. Kuipers (2011, 549) states that “buyers are the gatekeepers of national television, making all crucial decisions and conducting all negotiations about television imports”. Bielby and Harrington (2008) note that producers benefit from tangible resources such as audience ratings, producers are influenced by the aesthetics and quality of programmes. Producers are guided by their own knowledge and experience in the markets; however, their own interpretations and feelings have impact on their decisions. All in all, producers and broadcasters are the ones who pick and choose the programme to be adapted and they direct the course the programme will pursue.

Even though audience identities remain multidimensional across nations, mainstream TV may not be representative of all segments of a society. The extensive ethnographic research in Brazil (La Pastina, Straubhaar, Sifuentes, 2014) reveals that some groups feel alienated as mainstream TV excludes or misrepresents them intentionally due to their race, social class, geographical location in telenovelas, the most popular primetime programmes in Latin America. Exclusionary representation of these groups from mainstream media negatively affects sense of national belonging and cause them to distance themselves from TV because peripheral groups in terms of income, social class, race and geographical region may feel misrepresented and rejected (La Pastina, Straubhaar, Sifuentes, 2014).

In that regard, local culture may play a bigger role than national culture with regard to how audiences receive television programmes and audiences may not relate to the mainstream national culture on TV (La Pastina and Straubhaar, 2005, 274). As La Pastina and Straubhaar (2005, 276) state “Much of the knowledge or cultural capital that people use in interpreting media, such as television, comes from the very local experience of daily life in a very specific culture shaped by their immediate environment, place and time”.

All in all, rather than having a unifying effect, TV can cause polarization within nations. Therefore, if the original drama to be adapted involves themes and characters that are excluded or misrepresented on local mainstream networks, this may affect the way the original drama is adapted. In that sense, while adapting a TV series, some groups and themes that may be excluded intentionally not because they are not culturally proximate but because they conflict with mainstream values represented on national TV networks. The decision-makers will be the creative and production as to themes and characters that is to be excluded and the way they are represented. Proximity is not solely related how audiences receive. Stereotyping and negative representations concerning ethnicity, gender, geographical regions and marginalised groups is common on Turkish TV, thus Turkish TV cannot be said to be inclusive of all parts of the society

To conclude, within the light of existing literature on cultural proximity, what it becomes clear is that the relevance of cultural proximity can vary from nation to nation. Cultural proximity plays an important role in audiences' choices for media. As a broad concept, it depends on diverse elements. While some scholars are concerned with the reception of shows, some other scholars broaden the concept taking into other factors that can affect the way a show is adapted into account. Proximity cannot be limited to how audiences identify with a programme via elements that are immediate and relevant to their own world, proximity is something that is constructed by producers and scriptwriters. What cultural proximity might be overlooking structural and narrative conventions that are prevalent in each TV market. These conventions that create unique dynamics within the broadcasting markets have an impact on the production and the adaptation of TV formats because the creative team of a remake may be limited by these very conventions. Who actually constitutes TV audiences may be hard to answer; however, it can be argued that as each society consists of different segments that can defy all sorts of overgeneralizations.

On the one hand, in an ever-changing world, reductionist approaches to audiences and TV consumptions habits are problematic as technology eliminates boundaries as Esser stresses. People's media consumption tendencies are being reshaped with technology as more and more people have access to shows from all around the world through Internet. People who consume the original shows can end up in disappointment when they watch the local reversion and may move away from national TV. But on the other

hand, another important point to be considered is the existing power of domestically-produced shows against foreign shows. This can demonstrate why cultural proximity is relevant.

No work of art is free of the preferences, desires, tendencies, perspectives and ambitions of its creator, which is important to bear in mind. Though it may seem bold to claim that a TV series can be called a work of art, as a part of popular culture which appeal to large parts of a society, they are the product of a big creative team from the director to the set designer. All other factors influence the making of a TV series.

Adapted TV series can look inauthentic and unnatural to audiences unless they are modified in a way that can communicate a sense of familiarity. In an ever changing and globalising world cultural proximity can account for audience tendencies to a certain level, cultural proximity is still relevant when certain demographic and socio-economic realities that make up societies are taken into consideration.

5. AN ANALYSIS OF ANNE AND BİR AİLE HİKAYESİ WITHIN THE SCOPE OF CULTURAL PROXIMITY

This chapter examines two transnational adaptations *Anne (Mother)* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi (This is Us)* taking cultural proximity as the theoretical basis. The adapted TV series, *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* are compared to their original versions, *Mother* and *This is Us*. First, the plotlines of both original shows and Turkish versions are introduced and compared. Secondly, the characters and their characterization are analysed. Finally, the themes both Turkish versions and original versions deal with are analysed, focusing on the differences and similarities how *Anne* and *Mother*, *Bir Aile Hikayesi* and *This is Us*.

5.1. Plot Synopsis of *Anne* and *Mother*

Mother is a Japanese drama broadcast on NTV from April 14, 2010 to June 23, 2010. It is a one-season drama with eleven episodes, each one running 45 minutes with the exception of the first episode and finale. The main characters are Nao Suzuhara played by Yasuko Matsuyuki and Reina Michiki/Tsugumi Suzuhara played by Mana Ashida. It is directed by Nobuo Mizuta and Makoto Naganuma and written by Yuji Sakamoto. The average rating it got was over 12 % in Japan (Asianwiki, [15.05.2019]) indicating the success of the series.

Mother tells of the story of a woman in her thirties, Nao Suzuhara. Nao takes a decision, which would forever change her life while working as a substitute teacher. Nao is a distant and aloof person, who has apparently cut ties with her mother and her two sisters. One of her students; Reina Michiki excluded by her friends manages to endear herself to Nao. She develops a special bond with her over time. Nao realises that Reina may be suffering from abuse at home after spotting bruises on her body on several different occasions. Reina really is a victim of physical, emotional and even sexual abuse-which is subtly implied in a scene where Masato makes Reina try a dress on and forcibly puts lipstick on her lips- at the hands of her neglectful mother and her

weird boyfriend. On a cold night, Nao sees Reina alone on the street and takes her home. She cooks for Reina, that night Reina forgets her notebook where she notes down her favourite things at Nao's. Meanwhile, upon being invited by an academic research group that observes birds, Nao resigns from her substitute-teaching post as she is professionally interested in bird observation. Before leaving, she decides to give the notebook back to Reina. To her shock, she finds Reina in a big black garbage bag outside her house; Reina is left to die by her mother and her mother's boyfriend, Masato. That's when Nao decides to take an action. After successfully staging a plan that would lead people to believe that Reina died drowning in the sea, Nao kidnaps Reina and they escape to Tokyo by train where she renames Reina as Tsugumi.

Desperate to start a new life with Reina and provide a good life for her, Nao starts working in jobs beneath her qualifications. By some chance encounter, Nao crosses paths with her biological mother who left her to an orphanage when she was a child. She was adopted and raised by a well-off lawyer with her own daughters who have no clue about the adoption. After a while, Nao reluctantly returns to her adoptive mother, whom she distanced herself from. Meanwhile, a journalist whom she met back in Muroran discovers that Reina has been kidnapped by Nao. He threatens to report her to police unless she pays him a huge sum of money. Over time, the journalist realizes Nao's real motive for kidnapping, he regrets his inhumane attitude towards Nao and starts helping her.

Reina's mother, Hitomi Michiki finds out that her daughter is still alive. She finds Reina and tries to convince her to come back to her. Reina says "Reina has gone to heaven... My name is Tsugumi and I live here with my mother." Feeling desperate and bitter after her daughter's rejection, she reports Nao to the inspectors who come to question her. The police catch and arrest Nao for kidnapping a child. Nao is sent to prison and Reina is sent to a nursery. Meanwhile the police also arrest Hitomi Michika, Reina's mother and her boyfriend, Masato Miura for child abuse. Nao Suzuhara is released on parole but a restraining order is issued against her. She will be put in jail if she contacts Reina so she has to give her up. Left with no other choice, Nao and Reina wait for 12 years to reunite and finally come together when Reina turns twenty. In the finale, Nao and Tsugumi are together for the first time in a café holding hands 12 years after their separation.

In each episode, details unfold about Nao and people involved in her life. Nao as an adopted child has been never able to come to terms with the fact that her biological mother abandoned her. She carries a life-long heartbreak which caused her to withdraw into herself. She ended up being a distant person restraining her real emotions. She figures out the real reason why her mother had to leave her at an orphanage. The journey that begins for Nao with Reina coming into her life helps Nao reconnect with her real mother and redeem their relationship. She gets her restrained relationship with adoptive mother back on track. Also, her sisters finally learn Nao is not their biological sister. As she starts to forgive, she starts to heal.

The Turkish version, *Anne* adapted from *Mother* was broadcast on Star TV one season between October 25, 2016 and June 20, 2017. It was coproduced by Med Yapım and MF Yapım. Med Yapım has remade a considerable number of shows including CBS's *Nanny*, which was the first foreign comedy show to be adapted in Turkey. *Mother* is the first Japanese TV series to be adapted in Turkey. Following the success of *Anne*, the same production company adapted *Kadın* from another Japanese drama, *My Life for My Children* for Fox Turkey.

Anne continued longer than the original show with 33 episodes with each one running nearly three times longer as the original one. An average episode ran almost two hours. It achieved to become one of the top primetime programmes on Tuesdays with the high ratings it got. The premiere of *Anne* made a good start with ratings over 7 points and following the premiere the ratings remained at around 9 or 10 points for ten consecutive episodes. The ratings of first twelve episodes can be considered to be a substantial figure. However, the ratings fell to 6 to 7 points for the following a few episodes; the ratings remained around 7 to 8 points with the finale approaching. It received its lowest ratings in the 31st episode and the finale got 7 points of rating (Diziler, [15.04.2019]).

In Turkish rating measurement system 1 point of rating equals to 572.790 viewers. Considering this, *Anne* can be said to have over 5 to 6 million viewers with first twelve episodes; the number of audiences later fell to 4 to 3 million (Semercioğlu, [15.04.2019]). So, it can be clearly said that the more *Anne* diverged from the original storyline, the lower ratings it got.

Like other Turkish TV series *Anne* found success outside Turkey and it became the top-watched programme during daytime slot in Chile. Global Agency, which bought *Anne* as finished programme has sold it to other countries in Latin America. In addition, *Mother* has been sold to countries in Balkans, Asia and Middle East (Ttnews, [16.04.2019]). In total, Turkish remake, *Anne* has been broadcast in 32 different and Japanese version has been remade in several countries apart from Turkey (Multichannel News, [16.04.2019]).

The main characters in *Anne* are Zeynep Güneş (Cansu Dere) as Nao Suzuhara, Melek/Turna (Beren Gökıldız) as Reina/Tsugumi and Gönül Aslan (Vahide Perçin) as Hana Mochizuki. It was written by Berfu Ergenekon (until episode 9), Merve Gür (from episode 10 to 21) Deniz Gürlek, Uygur Şahin, Melek Seven ve Melih Özyılmaz (from episode 22 to 33) and directed by Merve Girgin Aytekin (from episode 1 to 14) and Nadim Güç (from episode 12 to 33).

Turkish version, *Anne* follows the original story with new characters and plotlines added. Nonetheless, the drama takes a new direction as of episode 21. Zeynep has a fatal crash, which leaves her paralysed from neck down; she is told that she has two options: either to undergo a risky surgery or spend the rest of her life bedridden from neck down. She accepts the surgery and her future remains uncertain. Thus, she tells Turna she is going abroad for good fearing that she may not survive the surgery. The drama flashes forward to 18 months later where everything goes back to the beginning. Zeynep is seen to have tied the knot with a young police superintendent named Sinan, who was introduced as a new character in episode 11. Melek/Turna is seen in her old gloomy and gruesome life where she has to put up with abuse, malnutrition and so on. She now has an extra responsibility, a brother to take care of. After her miraculous recovery, Zeynep who was told by her adoptive mother that Melek/Turna died in a crash mourns the death of Melek/Turna whom she loved dearly for a long time.

5.2. Characters and Characterisation

Characters are generally depicted in line with the original characters. The successful characterization of the original show is transferred to Turkish version. However, characters in Turkish version differ from the original characters to varying degrees depending on the changes in the plotline that affect their characterization.

Zeynep-Nao: Zeynep is the main character of the drama. Zeynep was abandoned by her real mother as a child. The traumatic pain she suffered made her introverted and detached. Zeynep feels overwhelmed with gratitude towards her adoptive mother for the things she has done; therefore, she also puts boundaries between herself and her adoptive mother. She feels as if she is a burden. Characterization is quite similar between Zeynep and Nao.

Melek (Turna)-Reina (Tsugumi): Melek/Turna is Zeynep's student whom she kidnaps in order to put an end to her suffering in a dysfunctional family. After her father dies, Melek's/Turna's mother cannot take care of her alone. When she moves in with Cengiz, a man she meets at a bar, her life and more importantly Melek's/ Turna's life become miserable. Melek suffers from child abuse as both her mother and Cengiz abuse her. Melek/Turna is depicted as witty just like Reina, who strikes the audience as wise beyond her years. Melek's/ Turna's characterisation is successful as it is exactly based on the characterization of Reina. Reina is a realistic character with carefully designed details about her such as her favourite notebook where she notes down her favourite things and her favourite colour.

Gönül- Hana: Gönül is Zeynep's biological mother. Gönül was a victim of domestic abuse in her marriage, her husband was a ruthless man who constantly beat her. She was arrested linked to her husband's death. She stayed in prison for 24 years. The day Zeynep escapes to Istanbul with Melek/Turna, Gönül is released from prison. Zeynep believes that her mother left her at orphanage to get rid of her. Gönül is depicted as more aggressive and assertive, especially when it comes to Zeynep and Melek/ Turna whereas the biological mother in *Mother* is really apologetic and she seems somewhat intimidated by the adoptive mother.

Şule- Hitomi: Şule is overdependent on her boyfriend and she does not want him to leave her. Therefore, she puts up with Cengiz's violence towards her daughter and herself. Şule feels sorry for her daughter deep down but still she turns a blind eye. Whereas Hitomi is an ordinary-looking woman, dressing style becomes an important tool for Şule's characterization. Şule is made to look a bit sleazy with her high heels, fake fur coat and the red lipstick she wears. Dressing style becomes an important indicator of characterization in the Turkish version as she works in a *pavyon*, which is a kind of night club in Turkey generally male customers frequent to both drink and

pay women who chat with them and entertain them. So Şule is portrayed differently than the original character Hitomi who works at a market.

Cengiz- Masato: Cengiz becomes a more central character in the Turkish version as he becomes the antagonist in *Anne*. He is a violent and brutal man with drinking and gambling habits. He is seen doing things that can be more expected from the likes of him within Turkish context; for instance, he plays bets on football matches and follows horse races. The original character, Masato is portrayed more of a weirdo or junkie, which would not create the evil stepfather image for Turkish audiences. As *Anne* progresses, the characterization of Cengiz becomes more reflective of this image. He makes Şule work in *payyon* and lives on the money she makes. The way Cengiz is dressed is a good manifestation of his character with his shoes, shirts and the beads he carries; a complete macho.

Cahide- Toko Suzuhara: Cahide is Zeynep's adoptive mother, she adopted Zeynep before her own daughters were born. She is a widowed woman who puts her kids first representing the protective mother figure. She is a successful lawyer but she even engages in illegal acts for the sake of Zeynep. She feels intimidated by the presence of Zeynep's biological mother, yet in time they bury the hatchet.

Ali- Shunsuke Fujiyoshi: At first, the journalist seems to be a bit of villain in both series. However, they later do their best to help Zeynep. In Turkish version, Ali falls in love with Zeynep but he dates her younger sister, Duru.

Gamze-Mei: Gamze is the younger sister of Zeynep. Gamze is more outspoken, judgemental and rational than her sisters. She seems to be jealous of Zeynep. She is engaged to be married to a filthy rich young man. She is having an unplanned pregnancy. Her fiancé, Mert wants her to have an abortion because the baby may be born with a heart problem, saying he does not want to have a disabled baby. Gamze loses her baby and following that she breaks up with Mert.

Duru-Kaho: Duru is the youngest sister of Zeynep, she is feisty and impatient to a fault. She is very supportive of Zeynep. Duru falls in love with Ali, the journalist, which does not exist in the original plotline. She even breaks up with her boyfriend, Sarp to be with him. Ali and Duru embark on a romantic relationship upon Duru's insistence.

Sinan is a character that does exist in original series. Sinan is introduced as a police inspector who examines the shooting that occurs in Rıfat's, who is a friend of Cengiz. Şule and Cengiz stay with him after coming to İstanbul to get away from haunting memories of Melek's/Turna's death. A mafia leader called Necmi is attacked by Şule in the *pavyon* and sends some of his men to threaten Şule and Cengiz. Things get out of control and his men start shooting. They are all shot except Melek/Turna, who saves herself hiding under the kitchen table. Zeynep comes into the house as she had arranged to meet Cengiz and saves Melek/Turna. Sinan investigates into the shooting and the missing of Melek/Turna whereby he meets Zeynep. Over time, Sinan falls in love with Zeynep and they tie the knot. He is a courageous and very successful police inspector.

There are some additional characters such as grandma Zeynep, who is Zeynep's paternal grandmother, Saniye, who is Cengiz's mother, and some other characters such as Mert, Sarp, Mr. Arif, Birsen, Tahir, Necmi and Caner who have recurring roles. However, the female doctor who treats Hana is excluded from the Turkish version. There are more characters and the length of the Turkish remake enables characters to be portrayed in-depth.

5.3. The Comparative Analysis of *Anne of* and *Mother* Within the Context of Cultural Proximity

Mother deals with motherhood as the central theme. Motherhood is a universal theme which can find resonance with audiences from all over the world. Some themes are universal that create a sense of proximity across the world as predicted by cultural shareability. Universality of the theme in *Mother* makes it easier to adapt for Turkish audiences. As the ratings of the show can demonstrate, it also facilitated the positive reception of the adaptation among Turkish audiences.

In *Mother* five different women, Nao, Hana, Mei, Toko and Hitomi are portrayed in their struggles as mothers. Nao, who is not affectionate towards kids grows to be affectionate and understanding as her love for Reina/Tsugumi helps her overcome her barriers. She starts relating to her biological and adoptive mother. *Mother* does not let audiences be judgemental towards them including Reina's abusive and neglectful mother, Hitomi.

Motherhood is depicted as a never-ending struggle; therefore, mothers make mistakes intentionally or unintentionally in their struggles. Each mother goes through a unique struggle shaped by specific circumstances. Hitomi ends up with a man she should never have after being left alone with a child with no one to help. Poverty and difficulty of raising a child alone becomes too much a burden to endure after her husband's death. Hana was constantly abused by her husband and Nao who witnessed her mother's suffering set fire to the room where his father was sleeping. Hana has to give up her daughter Nao for Nao's sake as she was left with no other choice. Not to turn in her daughter, Hana was on the run for six months. Finally, she turns herself in taking the whole blame and puts her daughter at an orphanage where she thinks she would be safe. Too young to remember all that happened, Nao has felt resentful towards her own mother. Through each mother figure audiences construct a meaning as regards to what it takes to be a mother, what sacrifices a mother can make for the sake of her kids.

While *Anne* tries to stay faithful to different perspectives on motherhood, it presents a biased portrayal of motherhood as well in the case of Şule who prioritises her boyfriend Cengiz over her daughter Melek/Turna. In Turkish version, Şule's choices and decisions disgraces motherhood. Painting Şule in a biased manner, *Anne* aims at lowering the chances of the audiences to sympathize with her. Therefore, *Anne* creates a saintly picture of Zeynep in the eyes of the audience when compared to Şule. Both versions successfully subvert the perception of motherhood by creating a dichotomy between biological and adoptive mothering particularly in the case of Melek/Turna.

Alongside mothering, another theme that stands out in *Anne* is female rivalry. The feelings of jealousy and rivalry awaken in Şule as her daughter chooses Zeynep over her. Şule and Zeynep are pitted against each other, to put it more precisely, jealousy gets the better of Şule at times. In *Mother*, Reina's mother is also jealous of Nao over her daughter to some extent but it is not a recurring theme. Şule claims Zeynep fools her daughter with her money which brings another theme: poverty and the gap between social classes. Şule develops an inferiority complex due to the wealth Zeynep seems to possess. Although Cengiz is a very evil character, he is under the delusion that he has been mistreated and oppressed all his life by the authorities and he leads such a life as he is poor and tries to get rich. He keeps demanding ransom from Zeynep in order to give Melek/Turna back to her.

Şule's perspective on Zeynep's wealth and Cengiz's perspective on authorities and money indeed give clues about cultural codes of Turkish society as regards with wealth and justice. People internalize the societal norms of equality of the society that they are a part of. An important dimension of every national culture is power distance which shapes people's perception regarding equality and justice. The concept put forward by Dutch scholar Geert Hofstede (2001) refers to "the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally".

While power distance remains low in developed Western countries, it scores high in the remaining parts of the world such Asia, Africa, Middle East. Turkey is one of the high-scoring countries with a 66 index of power distance. Organizations and institutions built upon different hierarchical structures constitute a society, yet within the hierarchical structure of each organization or institution some individuals may have superior and subordinate roles. In high power distance societies, individuals with higher positions are considered to be not equal but superior to people in subordinate positions. The power they hold enables them to have better rights and privileges and they are respected by the others in the society for the sake of positions. In summary, inequality between individuals is culturally accepted in high power distance as hierarchical structure is believed to maintain societal order through this inequality. One's power and wealth decide how the rest of the society will treat him or her in high power societies.

High power distance in Turkey happens to be reflected in *Anne*. To that end, Cengiz's encounters with a figure of authority and the dialogues that they have will be analysed. The fact that Cengiz is crime-prone makes him a usual suspect in many cases so he so often has brush with the law throughout *Anne*. His brush with law causes Cengiz to come to face with authorities of justice and police in particular and as part of his job, Cengiz often interacts with wealthy pavyon owners. In their presence of these figures of authority, he conducts himself so properly and addresses them so politely. For instance, Cengiz is seen to be acting politely and respectfully towards the police, the owners of pavyon he works with. Nevertheless, Cengiz in particular is very often seen accusing people in higher positions of mistreating him and acting biased against him, he is extremely resentful towards these people who represent power. Cengiz's frequent

complaints also have to do with the social class that he comes from and belongs to. Cengiz's emphasis on the bias and injustice of the authorities can be accepted to be indicative of high-power distance that exists in Turkey and of the fact that injustice is accepted and normalised in Turkish society.

In episode 3, when the superintendent is first introduced, he summons Cengiz to the police station. Cengiz says "Chief you summoned me to the station and I came running here upon your call ...". The superintendent seems indifferent to Cengiz's remarks saying "I have taken over the case and will be investigating whether Melek's death is crime or accident ...". He makes it clear that he has suspicions about Cengiz and expresses inconsistencies in Melek's/Turna's death. The superintendent rises from his chair and walks to Cengiz and stands over him Cengiz. With a photo of Atatürk in the background he continues to talk towering over Cengiz who looks very small sitting on the chair against superintendent's imposing figure. When the superintendent finishes what he has to say, he orders Cengiz to leave. And Cengiz buttons up his leather jacket as he leaves the superintendent's office as a gesture of respect. In episode 6, the superintendent appears again. After an eventful night at the pavyon where Şule works, Cengiz is in custody. Cengiz rages inside for seeing the superintendent who questions why he left Bandırma. However, he manages to stay calm knowing that the authority is not to be disrespected.

In episode 29, the heated debate between Cengiz and Zeynep can be regarded as an example reflecting deeply-rooted high-power distance in the society. In the episode, Cengiz kidnaps Zeynep. Zeynep is petrified and she begs Cengiz not to do anything crazy. When Zeynep says "have pity on yourself if you can't have any on me", Cengiz despises her saying "you have had a life of a princess so would I have pity on myself when life has always been cruel to me?". When Zeynep starts telling Cengiz about her own sorrows like how her biological mother abandoned her and spent 24 years in jail, Cengiz completely loses his cool. In a fit of rage, he blatantly tells Zeynep that his mother is a prostitute and how he had to endure and deal with its consequences as a child. Then he turns to Zeynep and explains why he has been horrible to Melek/Turna though he himself had an unhappy and terrible childhood saying there are two types of people: those who oppress and those who are oppressed. He finalises his remarks saying "Not to be oppressed, you have to oppress". What Cengiz recounts about his

life and his life philosophy that he developed because of what he went through as a child point to a society where power is favoured and inequality exists.

As a character who is likely to commit a crime, Cengiz is confronted with the authorities so he epitomizes the power distance in Turkey more successfully than the other characters in *Anne*. High power distance can be seen in the relationships of other characters in *Anne*, too. For instance, the relationship Zeynep's biological mother, Gönül and adoptive mother, Cahide is not equal.

As the most important institution of Turkish society is family, inequality is bound to exist within family members. In high power societies, kids are not considered to be equal to their parents. Cengiz is well aware of the fact that his abusive acts Şule and Melek/Turna are unlikely to get him into any trouble as he represents higher hierarchy in the institution of family based on his gender. He is able to exert power and authority on his wife, Şule and Melek/Turna. He abuses both Şule and Melek/Turna verbally, emotionally and physically. Several times he is put into jail and custody but he is released each time thanks to Şule and even Melek/Turna. On the other hand, he is also aware of his own weakness against figure of authorities. Therefore, he acts differently with people of authority and power and he always fawns over them.

Anne is a drama which is a genre that Turkish audiences are familiar with. Turkish dramas tend to be quite melodramatic, so *Anne* is spiced with more melodramatic effects than the original drama. The Japanese version is more slow-paced, each episode ends with a climax, yet none of the episodes involve severe violence or profanity. On the other hand, Turkish version is brimming with violent and distressing scenes such as kidnapping, shooting, blood shedding, blackmailing, sexual assault.

Dramas are well-liked domestic genres in Turkey and as for the adapted shows dramas and romantic comedies are the most preferred genres by Turkish producers. Producers act upon an inkling that Turkish viewers may feel culturally distant to some genres. If people from a specific culture are familiar with the genre of TV show, the audiences may feel proximate to the TV show without any difficulty. As Straubhaar (2005) points out, some genres are universally recognized and accepted. In that regard, melodrama is a genre that most cultures are familiar with. Melodrama helps to establish a cultural proximity between a show and the local audiences easily. Turkish audiences are, too,

quite familiar with melodramatic shows as melodramatic elements constitute the backbone of Turkish TV series.

In contrast to the peripheral positions or roles of Reina's biological mother and her boyfriend in the original version, *Mother*, Şule and Cengiz become much more central characters. Their presence; however, enables *Anne* to play the sympathy card as Melek/Turna is depicted in all suffering inflicted upon her by Cengiz and Şule. Melek's/Turna's suffering is expected to move audiences emotionally. Therefore, melodramatic scenes seem to be extended thanks to the central roles of Şule and Cengiz in Turkish version. The notorious garbage bag scene in first episode got a lot of media coverage and attention in Turkey. Media coverage focuses on how the scene reduced audiences to tears (Türer, [10.05.2019]).

Domestic violence and child abuse are other main themes that are depicted in both series but female rivalry damages the delicate topic that Anne deals with: *child abuse*. That is because Zeynep and Melek/Turna are separated and reunited for several times unlike the original version. In *Mother*, Reina is put to a nursery permanently and never returned to her mother as her mother is sentenced for abusing her daughter. However, Melek/Turna is put to a nursery temporarily, Şule and Cengiz manage to get away with the charges against them. Due to on and off separation and reunion, Zeynep and her family have to communicate with Şule and Cengiz throughout the series. It seems as Turna goes back and forth between the chaotic life with her family and the peaceful life with Zeynep several times, Turkish remake ignores the fact that Melek/Turna, who has already been traumatised cannot cope with all that's happening around her. Melek/Turna is victim of domestic violence; at times she is beaten, locked up but Turkish version does not want to end her suffering.

In addition to physical and emotional abuse, there is a scene where sexual abuse is implied. There is a clear difference in the way sexual abuse scene is narrated in *Anne* and *Mother*. In the original version, *Mother*, Reina/Tsugimi is asked to wear a dress by her mother's boyfriend who grabs her and puts lipstick on her lips. As he is about to kiss her, Reina's/Tsugimi's mother comes in and has a nervous breakdown. Nonetheless, in *Anne* as Cengiz asks Melek/Turna pick things scattered around up in the living room, he sees a lipstick and tells her to put it on without any physical contact with her. Even though sexual abuse is a theme that is frequently represented in Turkish TV series, any explicit narration of sexual abuse to a child of Melek's/Turna's age

would definitely cause an uproar in society given that another scandalous scene in *Anne* where Melek/Turna is left to die in black garbage bag caused a public outrage as reported on Turkish media. Turkish audiences may react too sensitively to such delicate issues on TV, even if they are fictional.

Although love as a theme is not represented in *Mother*, it is highly crucial to the storyline in Turkish dramas. As Çelenk (2010) points out, love, in particular *impossible love* remains the primary source of conflict in Turkish series. Love manages to sneak into a drama like *Anne* with a universal and serious message. Sinan and Zeynep are tested in their love, Sinan spends days waiting by Zeynep's side while she is in coma. However, not betraying the original characterization, Zeynep says to her husband she cannot love him back the way he loves him and she stresses she learnt how to love with Melek/Turna. According to Castello (2010) the proximity is first constructed at the production level. Thus, producers and scriptwriters create room for love in the script as they know love stories are well received by Turkish audiences. In *Anne*, Sinan's presence betrays an important narrative part of the story in Japanese version, that is exclusion of male figures from a world of mothers. In *Mother*, male characters are in secondary position in the women's world; for instance, Nao's sisters have boyfriends but they are very peripheral characters.

Another theme related to love is the love triangle between Ali, Zeynep and Sinan, which does not exist in the original. Even though Ali seems attracted to Zeynep in the early episodes and asks her to sleep with her to test her sincerity about Melek/Turna, he does not display any romantic emotions towards her. When Sinan comes into Zeynep's life, Ali's feelings for Zeynep come to surface. Such love triangles are very common in Turkish TV series, so Turkish viewers would relate to the story more.

When it comes to everyday and immediate aspects of culture, some parts remain too specific or local not to be changed. As audiences interpret a show through their immediate surrounding, locality becomes an important factor in their interpretations (Straubhaar, 2005). The parts that have no cultural equivalents are modified and omitted naturally. In *Mother*, there are instances of things pertaining to Japanese way of life and culture that do not exist in Turkish culture so they are replaced by things that can be culturally accepted by the audiences in Turkey. To illustrate, Nao Suzuhara is professionally interested in birds and birdwatching and she is shown to be taking photos of birds. Furthermore, she has a thesis written on the topic. She renames Reina

as Michika after the bird, thrush due to her fascination with birds. As thrush is a small and lovely bird, the name choice can be regarded to be representative of Reina's both physical and emotional fragility. All in all, thrush is a good choice. Thrush means Ardiç in Turkish; however, it is not a name that is culturally recognised. A child carrying that name will sound strange to most people within Turkish context. Instead, Zeynep renames Melek as Turna after another bird, crane. Crane, which means Turna in Turkish is a culturally accepted woman's name. The modification regarding the name can be attributed to the lack of proximity that audiences might feel towards the name, Ardiç.

To give another example, Reina's favourite drink which she argues it to be food is cream soda. Cream soda, which is a popular soft drink in Japan is non-existent in Turkish cuisine. Cream soda is melon-favoured soda with scoop of ice cream floating on top. Cream soda in *Mother* is changed into melted ice-cream in *Anne*. Melek/Turna likes having ice cream when it is melted and she calls a drink. Ice cream on top of the cream soda drinks may have inspired the choice for ice-cream. Cream soda will not ring a bell for Turkish audiences, yet a kid loving melted ice cream will sound quite reasonable to them.

Places and settings can create a sense of proximity for audiences. In *Mother*, Nao often comes across Reina alone out in the streets. However, Melek/Turna keeps a piece of newspaper which tells about a child who is left in a mosque yard and adopted by a family to lead a happy life. Zeynep sees Melek/Turna in a mosque yard where she waits for hours and hours hoping to find someone to adopt her. Mosque yard where unwanted kids are left is a culturally relevant motif that Turkish audiences are familiar with.

Setting also causes some modifications. Zeynep and Melek/Turna travel by coach to escape from Bandırma to İstanbul whereas Reina and Nao travel by train. As there is not railway network from Bandırma to Istanbul; this is a realistic choice forced by the setting the drama takes place in. Travelling by coach is more widespread in small towns and cities of Turkey because railway network is limited to a number of locations. In *Mother* in episode 5, Mother's Day is celebrated in Japan, free carnations are given to people on streets; carnations and roses are the most significant symbols of Mother's Day (Japancentre, [16, 04, 2019]). In *Anne*, in episode 4, Şule reminisces the Mother's

Day when Melek/Turna brought her a pot of roses as a gift. Carnations are well liked flowers in Turkey, yet they are not used as a symbol of Mother's Day in Turkey.

In episode 10, Nao's adoptive mother visits the biological mother at the hospital. As they are having an awkward moment not knowing what to say to each other, they start talking about Chinese Zodiac. They realise they were both born in 1954, which coincides with Horse Year. Chinese Zodiac is culturally irrelevant to Turkish audiences, this scene is completely omitted from Turkish version. Horoscopes are popular topics in Turkey yet no discussion of horoscopes that can be culturally proximate to Turkish audiences is added in *Anne*.

When Zeynep first starts teaching, she is told that the dog that students feed at school yard died and she can make kids write a letter to the dog. In *Mother* the animal is a duck. Students are more likely to feed dogs as there are lots of street cats and dogs that are fed by people in Turkey. Melek/Turna has a pet rabbit while Riena feeds a pet hamster, within Turkish context, a rabbit may be thought to be a more appropriate pet for a small girl.

On the other hand, some modifications seem to be based on arbitrary decisions. Before Cahide cooks a vegetable soup, she asks Zeynep if there is anything Turna does not like and Zeynep says nothing in particular. Turna does not eat leek in the soup, which Cahide finds strange. In the original version, it is mushroom that Reina does not like eating. Leek and mushroom are both the kind of food kids tend to dislike; therefore, the change does not have any cultural significations.

Along with everyday details and practices that give a sense of everyday life in a specific culture, gestures, mimics and expressions of feelings show variations across cultures. Adaptation requires replacing them with culturally-acceptable gestures, mimics or verbal or nonverbal expressions of emotions. For instance, bowing gesture that is specific to Japanese culture is seen repeatedly in the *Mother* is replaced by hand-kissing as a gesture of respect in *Anne*. This is a change that happens naturally much without further elaboration.

One thing that defines Japanese dramas is subtlety. Iwabuchi (2002,149) found that one of things foreign audiences like about Japanese dramas in Taiwan is the subtlety with which feelings are narrated. Emotions, in particular love are expressed more delicately and elegantly in Japanese dramas. Besides implicit expressions of feelings

there is a subtlety in the storylines as Iwabucgi (2002, 149) states: “The subtlety is associated with ways of directing as well as the story lines” Although outbursts of angers, weepy scenes can be seen in *Mother*, it is overall less intense when compared with the Turkish version. *Anne* lacks the art of subtlety the original show has so Turkish characters are much more demonstrative of their emotions. There are fine examples of the subtlety related to directing in *Mother*. For example, in episode 7 of *Mother*, there is a good symbol of a small family. After Nao and Tsugumi settle in Hana’s house, there is one scene where the camera focuses on three toothbrushes in a glass in the bathroom. Three toothbrushes communicate a sense of togetherness and family to the audiences. Again, in the opening scene of episode 9, a sweet family moment is communicated as Nao wakes up Tsugumi and start chatting with Hana seen cooking at the background. Steam is seen coming out of teapot as Hana is silently cooking.

The way *Mother* deals with theme of death is delicate and highly symbolic. In the original version, it is Nao’s mother who dies in the end whereas in Turkish version, it is the adoptive mother who dies. Hana’s death is depicted as subtly and delicately as possible unlike three death scenes in the Turkish version. Unaware that Hana is dead, Tsugumi tries to wake her up. The camera focuses on different objects in the living room: the withering flower in the vase, a pair of upside-down glasses and still birds sitting in the cage. Stillness of the images may be regarded to be foreboding Hana’s dead body. Hana’s death is set against the birth of Mei’s child; the day Hana dies Mei’s son comes to the world. Toko, Nao’s adoptive mother calls Nao to deliver the news of her sister’s birth and she learns about Hana’s death. Toko looks up at the skies with tears in her eyes and sees a plane leaving a puffy line behind. The plane can be interpreted as a symbol that represents Hana’s departure from the world. As she tells Mei about Hana’s death, she remarks “life is amazing, that’s how the life circles”. Death versus birth is a good metaphor that demonstrates the power of nonverbal communication in *Mother*.

In *Anne*, more characters die. In addition to Zeynep’s adoptive mother, her husband, Sinan dies and, in the finale, Cengiz, Melek’s/Turna’s stepfather is shot to death by Şule. The way the characters die in *Anne* tend to be more dramatic. The first main character to die is Sinan. In episode 29, Cengiz kidnaps Zeynep to take revenge upon Sinan, whom he falsely accuses of costing him his job. Sinan comes to save Zeynep

and Cengiz take both of them as hostages. In the next episode, Şule comes with the kids and pleads him to let go of Zeynep and Sinan. Finally convinced, Cengiz leaves the old factory building telling Sinan not to follow him. Nevertheless, Sinan tries to chase Cengiz, who is running away with Şule and their son. Tired of chase, Cengiz pulls over the car and starts running towards a forest across the road. Şule with the baby in her arms tries to catch Cengiz and falls in the middle of the road while crossing the road. Sinan runs to the road to save Şule and her baby from getting hit upon seeing them in the middle of the road. He manages to push Şule and her baby away but he is hit by the truck approaching at full speed and he dies. He loses his life in a heroic, but tragic way. The dramatic effect is aimed to be augmented as audiences clearly see how Sinan dies.

The second death befalls upon Cahide, Zeynep's adoptive mother. She once has a heart attack and following the heart attack she develops health problems. She is told by her doctor that she can die unexpectedly. She suddenly dies in the hospital where she is taken following her second heart attack and her daughters start crying loudly upon her death. Final death is Cengiz's death. His life ends in a pathetic way as he is shot by Şule. As seen from the deaths that occur in *Anne*, the delicacy and subtlety of the theme of death in the Japanese version presents sharp contrast to overdramatic death scenes in Turkish version.

To conclude, the modifications regarding cultural aspects are no doubt done with deliberation by creative team behind the drama; however, that does not apply to every modification made. Some of these modifications tend to happen naturally as they have no equivalents in Turkish culture.

Gender is not represented separately from social class, of course in Turkish version. For example, the gender representations of Cengiz and Şule are closely intertwined with their socio-economic backgrounds. They represent the marginalised segment of society with low income, so they act accordingly. Gender roles in domestic sphere are more clear-cut in Turkish version than in Japanese version. Cengiz expects to be served by Şule and even Melek/Turna always telling them to prepare food, clean the house. However, Sinan is seen cooking for Zeynep. Here a contrast is presented between traditional roles of man versus modern expectations from man, which is also a matter of class. Two men from different social classes are depicted to highlight different manners and approaches.

The discourse that women uses on gender tends to be male-oriented as female characters rationalize the behaviours and attitudes of men in their lives. For example, Şule defends Cengiz against the whole world even though he abuses Şule physically, emotionally and forces her to work in pavyon. Şule is the one who makes money; however, she glorifies Cengiz saying “You are the breadwinner, you are the father and backbone of the family, without you what would happen to me”. Gamze’s fiancé, Mert also forces Gamze to have an abortion against her own will, yet Gamze is the one who is accused by Mert’s mother. At times even Cahide rationalises Mert’s attitudes towards Gamze saying that “a man cannot fully grasp what it means to be a parent whereas a woman becomes a mother the moment she finds out she is pregnant”.

Gender stereotypes are at play when chastity and sexuality are concerned. What the journalists ask for in return for keeping silent and not covering the news is completely different in two versions. In the original version, the journalist threatens to report Nao to police unless she pays him a huge sum of money. Ali says he will report Zeynep unless she accepts to sleep with him. How a woman’s chastity is held in high regard by the society by the discourse Ali uses. He wants to spend a night with Zeynep, which suggests the most important thing for a woman is supposed to be her chastity. If she can sacrifice the most valuable thing, that means she really deserves to be the mother to Melek/Turna.

Negative discourse surrounding premarital sex and in particular pregnancy can be witnessed in several occasions. Zeynep’s adoptive family represents a well-educated, modern and upper-class part of the society; however, conservative values are still dominant even in their case. To illustrate, Gamze is seen trying on her wedding dress with a tailor who is making some touches to the dress. She turns to her mother, Cahide and asks her if her baby bump is visible. Cahide tries to silence Gamze with a hushing gesture as she does not want the tailor to know about the pregnancy. To Cahide, her daughter’s pregnancy is something that should be kept secret from others as a woman’s pregnancy before marriage is a source of embarrassment. This scene is an addition which does not exist in the original version.

When Zeynep comes back to İstanbul, she starts staying at a hotel with Melek/Turna. After Duru, the younger sister finds out the address, she and elder sister, Gamze go there only to discover that Zeynep is with a girl whom she introduces as her own daughter. When Zeynep avoids answering their questions concerning the father of the

child, they assume that she had her daughter out of wedlock. Gamze though she is also pregnant with her own child, judges Zeynep for having a child out of wedlock angrily. When Duru intervenes and says that she should be concerned with her own pregnancy, Gamze says she is getting married soon and tries to prove moral superiority. This dialogue is non-existent in the original. Upon seeing Turna, Cahide says to Zeynep expressing her disappointment in her: “Please, don’t say I’m not married”, this line is also non-existent in the original version, *Mother*.

In Japanese version, the pregnant sister is also concerned about how her fiancé’s mother will react to her pregnancy. However, what she is concerned about has nothing to do with the concepts of chastity or virtue. Mei is only concerned about whether her boyfriend’s mother will consider her pregnancy as a strategy to corner her son into marriage. In Turkish version, Mert’s mother, Serap appears in episode 12 and her discourse about Gamze’s pregnancy reveals a traditional mindset. Serap says she does not know how Gönül makes of the pregnancy as the mother of a girl. She stresses that she was quite taken aback when she first found out the pregnancy, she believes they must get married and they can get divorced later if they want. Pre-marital pregnancy is not something that is accepted so easily in Turkish society. Discourse regarding pre-marital pregnancy remains negative and the discourse is accompanied by shaming and judging people concerned and the matter is closely linked with a woman’s dignity and virtue.

Two versions deal the theme of pre-marital sex because the norms within Turkish and Japanese differ regarding the issue. Gender-related issues and sexuality are not generally narrated in negative terms in love stories in Japan. Mamuro (2004) attributes this to large-scale transformations that happened in Japan a few decades ago. Owing to the developments and transformations that took place in the 1980s and 1990s, the norms that directed everyday life within Japanese society began to change and TV series made in 1980s started to reflect these changes in societal norms (Mamuro, 2004, 26). In the dramas from 1980s, extramarital affairs and intricate sides of romantic relationships of the youngsters were not represented negatively or not reduced to a case of morality or ethic unlike former Japanese dramas. They were narrated as a part of personal lives that resulted from complicated nature of relationships (Mamuro, 2004, 27).

The established norms regarding gender and gender roles changed, as well. TV dramas, that is love dramas of the 1990s tried to portray the changing discourse about women. The woman image as “good wife and intelligent mother”, who is responsible for domestic realm developed into a woman who can handle her love life and career as she tries to live her life independently (Mamuro, 2004, 27).

Another point regarding the virtue or chastity of a woman is constructed through Şule’s employment. While Reina’s mother works at a market as a cashier in *Mother*, Şule works as a hostess in a pavyon, which is a type of nightclub where male customers drink, and eat and chat and flirt with hostess at the same time. Şule sits with customers at tables and serves them food and drinks with them. The image of pavyon as a workplace can connote moral corruption to an ordinary audience in Turkey and a mother who works in a pavyon will definitely ruffle feathers among Turkish audiences.

Castello (2010) states “proximity is something that begins during the creative process and later audiences interpret the proximity through their own lenses”. Here the creative team creates a source of proximity for audiences which will make question whether Şule deserves to keep Melek/Turna with her. Being a cashier and working as hostess can create different perceptions in audiences towards the characters. Castello (2010) notes that audiences can find a TV programme proximate if there are characters that they can relate to. Şule is a character whom the audiences are unlikely to relate to. Besides being neglectful and ruthless, one thing that can consolidate Şule’s image of an undeserving mother in the eyes of the audiences is the job she does. Şule’s job can reinforce the idea why Zeynep should be the mother instead of Şule. Şule and Cengiz are shamed by their neighbours for not being married even though they live under the same roof. Later Şule and Cengiz tie the knot, yet Cengiz has an important motive in marrying Şule: to convince Şule to give Melek/Turna to from Zeynep in return for money.

Anne ends differently from the original version, *Mother*. Nao’s long-suffering biological mother dies whereas Zeynep’s adoptive mother, Gönül dies from a heart-related problem which develops following her heart attack in *Anne*. The death of Cahide should not be viewed as an arbitrary decision. Gönül’s death could mean that Gönül and Zeynep would never make up for the loss time. Gönül sacrificed her twenty-

four years of her life to protect her daughter. The one that will be rewarded should be Gönül.

The death of beloved characters can cause great agony and outrage among fans in Turkey; therefore, most TV series end with happy endings. To illustrate, when a very popular character called Süleyman Çakır died in a long-running mafia drama called *Kurtlar Vadisi*, fans all over Turkey mourned his death and even performed funeral prayer and recited Quran on behalf of him.

Another well-liked character Hüsnü Çoban in *Arka Sokaklar* was shot in the finale of 12th season, his fans opened a page for his funeral prayer on Facebook which attracted 160.000 participants (Özcan, [17, 04, 2019]); however, it should be noted that the page was probably opened for a laughter. Yet, it does not change the fact that identification with characters is highly common among audiences in Turkey. An interesting example worth mentioning is one of the lowest ratings *Anne* received was in the episode that came after Sinan's death. The low ratings can be linked to audiences' discontent with Sinan's death. When a central character dies, audiences tend to develop negative feelings for TV series.

Another diversion from original story in *Anne* is the ending. Most importantly, Zeynep and Turna are united in the finale unlike the Japanese finale. The verdict that is given by the court is not violated or bent in *Mother*, so *Mother* remains more realistic. Law loopholes typical in Turkish TV series make sure that an unhappy ending remains out of the question. Unexpected or unhappy endings may not be well received by the Turkish audiences; therefore, *Anne* creates a different plotline to unite Zeynep and Melek/Turna earlier than the original one where Nao and Reina/Tsugumi have to wait for 12 years to come together under the Japanese law.

It should be noted that not all changes made in *Anne* are to make it culturally more proximate to Turkish audiences, some of the changes have to do with the structural differences of Turkish broadcasting industry with Japanese industry. For one thing, the duration of Turkish TV has an enormous impact. One of the things that differentiates Turkish TV sector from Western or Asian markets is that Turkish TV series run nearly two hours each episode. In contrast, American dramas usually run 45 minutes with 22 episodes in one season and Japanese dramas like American dramas run 45 minutes on average and end in 11 or 12 episodes. Turkish TV series can continue for a few seasons

if they are able to maintain high ratings. The number of episodes in one season can range from 30 to 35 on average.

Nevertheless, the long duration of TV series enabled *Anne* to depict some characters in depth and give more background information about both characters and events. For example, escape plan Zeynep makes in order to kidnap is explained in detail in *Anne* whereas things are seen as they happen so audiences themselves figure out the escape plan in Japanese person. Or Cengiz's mother, Saniye is introduced which helps audiences what makes Cengiz such an evil character. All in all, each local TV market can constrain or facilitate the adaptation process due to unique dynamics.

In *Anne*, the story drags on and on creating more and more sensational and melodramatic effect on the viewers. Some changes or omissions are made as some aspects are not culturally adaptable. Some themes or motifs are culturally sensitive or can be regarded as taboos in the eyes of the audiences, which necessitates the remaking or omission. As *Anne* progresses, the plotline diverges from the original. As Chalaby (2016) points out, "an adaptation should remain loyal to the original story or it will crumble", the divergence from the original hurts *Anne*. It drags on and on with overdramatic scenes; therefore, its ratings started to fall with episodes that differ from the original.

5.4. Plot Synopsis of *This is Us* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi*

This is Us is an awarding-winning American drama created by Dan Fogelman which debuted on NBC on September 2016. Having continued for three consecutive seasons since then, it has reached a total of 54 episodes. It has been ordered for three more seasons as its strong ratings cement its position as one of the most popular shows in American broadcasting market, the world's biggest broadcasting market (Turchiano, Danielle, [12.05.2019]).

It should be noted that each episode of American TV series is directed by a different director. Therefore, it cannot be associated with one single director. Main characters are Jack Pearson played by Milo Ventimiglia, Rebecca Pearson played by Mandy Moore with their three kids, Randall played by Sterling K. Brown, Kevin played by Justin Hartley and Kate played by Chrissy Metz.

This is Us has become one of the most-watched programmes in America and it ranks as the fifth in the list of the overall audience number with an average of 16.6 audiences

with each episode (USA Today [17.05.2019]). In addition, *This is Us* is a critically-claimed drama with accolades.

This is Us starts as the story of a young couple, Jack and Rebecca Pearson. The couple who is expecting triplets lose one of their babies at birthing. Meanwhile, a black baby abandoned at a fire station by his father is brought to the hospital where Rebecca delivers her babies. The elderly and experienced doctor called Katowski who delivers the Pearson babies tries to console the heartbroken Jack by telling very personal things such as the recent death of his wife and the death of his first baby. He tells Jack “Take the sourest lemon that life has to offer and turn it into something resembling lemonade”.

Jack is so moved the things the doctors tells and perhaps by taking the doctor’s words as a godly sign he decides they should adopt the abandoned baby brought to hospital by a fireman. With two newly-born babies and a black baby that comes out of the blue, the young couple has to rebalance their lives. Jack and Rebecca have to deal with kids’ problems that seem to get more complicated as they grow up. Randall, the adopted black kid feels the odd out one and Kate, the daughter is overweight and Kevin feels ignored by his parents who are always concerned with the other two.

This is Us flashes forward and back depicting the characters in the present and in the past. As each episode exposes some parts about the past, the events building up to current circumstances in the lives of the characters come out. Kids as grown-ups have their issues. Kate is an obese having negative body image and self-confidence issues and Kevin is in an existentialist crisis wanting to quit his job. Randall is the only one who seems to have a stable life. He is married with two daughters. However, he is prone to have nervous breakdown. Jack is dead, yet why he died is never revealed in the first season. Rebecca is married to Jack’s best friend, Miguel how and why they got married is not revealed, either.

Turkish remake, *Bir Aile Hikayesi* has been recently adapted for Fox Turkey. It has wrapped up its first season with 12 episodes. Though it has not received exceptionally high ratings, it has maintained a steady and secure position on primetime on Saturday evenings since its debut. This has to do with the fact that that ratings tend to be lower at weekends in Turkey as people spend more time out. It is produced by MED Yapım, the same production company that produced *Anne*. It is directed by Merve Girgin. Main characters are Reyhan (Songül Öden) as Rebecca, Cem (Celil Nalçakan) as Jack,

Mahur (Olgun Toker) as Randall, Berk (Birkan Sokullu) as, Beste (Elçin Afacan) as Kate.

5.5. Characters and Characterization

Cem- Jack: Cem's characterization is very similar to Jack Pearson's. Cem is a trustworthy, decent, hardworking man who does his best for his family like Jack. They do jobs they do not particularly like for the sake of their families. Both characters are portrayed to come from troubled families with strict fathers who have drinking and anger management problems. In their early 30s, both become a father to triplets. Both Cem and Jack start drinking heavily and coming home very late while the kids are at primary school. Their wives want them to put an end to drinking and they give up because they do not want to end up like their alcoholic fathers. So, both characters' only vice can be said to be their drinking problems.

Reyhan- Rebecca: Rebecca is a strong-willed and free-spirited woman while Reyhan is easy-going and mild-natured. Like Rebecca, Reyhan comes from a relatively rich family and marries a man below her station that's why she has strained relationship with her family. Career-wise, Rebecca has bigger aspirations and dreams. Rebecca is an aspiring singer who sings with an old friend's band at a bar whereas Reyhan just sings in a local singing society. But she does not have such big dreams like Rebecca at least in first season of *Bir Aile Hikayesi*. Reyhan is depicted as a more submissive and caring mother figure compared to Rebecca. Rebecca can be considered to be more individualistic than Reyhan. Both mothers keep it from everyone else that they found the biological father of their adopted sons and met them a few times. Their sons discover the secret years later when they reunite with their fathers. Upon learning the truth, they feel so offended towards their mothers.

Beste-Kate: Beste, who is one of the triplets is overweight like Kate. However, it is difficult to categorize her as an obese while Kate definitely falls into the category of obese. Of the three kids, Kate has the worst relationship with her mother. As the only daughter in the family, she looks up to her mother for her beauty and she compares herself to her. Her weight and the presence of overly attractive mother causes her to develop a negative body image and low self-esteem. She cannot fit in her mother's clothes in even her childhood years. Rebecca keeps track of what Kate eats and tells her what to eat or not, Kate feels guilty about her appetite. Kate is so fond of her father

and her mother's marriage to Miguel, who was her father's best friend adds salt to the injury. However, Kate is so negative and grumpy about her weight.

She feels as if her weight problem is the biggest barrier to her relationships, hence her happiness in life. She lacks empathy and she is self-focused. Beste is also resentful to her mother, Reyhan, but her resentment is mostly because she feels her mother's positive reinforcement about her body image and encouraging words about how she will end up with a man who truly loves. She feels deluded by her mother and also like Kate, Beste compares herself to a mother figure who is above the society's beauty standards.

Berk-Kevin: Berk and Kevin are depicted as the only child in their families who do not have serious problems like their brothers and sisters. First of all, they are good-looking and attractive. Their looks are actually what make Berk and Kevin popular and rich unlike Beste or Kate who have always struggled with their excessive weight. Thanks to his looks, Berk lands a role in commercials but Kevin in *This is Us* acts in a popular, but cheesy TV show called *The Manny*.

Secondly, both Berk and Kevin are popular at school with lots of friends unlike Mahur and Randall who are bullied and ridiculed by their friends at school. Berk and Kevin are both promising athletes at high school years. As they witness his parents channelling their energy and time into their brothers and sisters, they always feel neglected. Like Kevin, Berk hates his job and suffers from an existential crisis. He is offered a role by a critically acclaimed director and he asks the producer to let him appear in the movie. The producer turns down his request reminding Berk his contract with the company, Berk loses his cool and picks a fight with the producer shouting curses at him. He is sacked. Kevin similarly makes a scene during shooting of his show, *The Manny* in Los Angeles, he explodes at the director and audiences who watch the shooting of the show at the studio. Then, he goes to New York to do theatre as he aspires for a challenging and meaningful role. However, the theatre experience does not start the way he pictures it. Berk also starts doing theatre but his decision regarding theatre happens in a rather spontaneous and unplanned manner.

Mahur-Randall: Mahur is a child abandoned by his father immediately after his birth. The main difference between him and Randall which creates one of the driving forces in plotline of *This is Us* is that Randall is racially different. While as an adopted child

Mahur always feels under pressure to be deserving of the family who adopted him, he also suffers from a certain degree of isolation and loneliness like Randall. For instance, his brother, Berk always gives him the cold shoulder as the way Kevin chooses to ignore Randall. Mahur is depicted to be very intelligent and exceptionally good at math and his teachers tell Reyhan and Cem to send him to a private school. Randall's story also follows a similar line as he is sent to a private school for kids with high IQs. Randall and Mahur both suffer from anxiety disorder from early ages and it even gets worse in their adulthood.

William-Şakir: Şakir is Mahur's biological father who leaves him. *Bir Aile Hikayesi* pays special attention so as to represent him as a destitute man from the first episode. In first episode, Mahur finds Şakir and takes him home. As they get out of the car, he makes sure that he shuts the door very gently. He tidies his clothes upon seeing the house. He carefully cleans his shoes on the doormat before stepping into the house. He obviously seems very intimidated by the lush lifestyle Mahur and his family lead. *Bir Aile Hikayesi* makes use of class gap in Şakir's characterization. William, Randall's biological father is, on the other hand, a cool and straightforward man. Not feeling out of place in Randall's house, he adapts to their life more easily than Şakir.

The reason why they give up on their sons is that they are both crack addicts when their sons are born. Years later, they come clean in both versions and wish to reunite their sons regretting abandoning them. However, both Rebecca and Reyhan tell them to stay away. Neither Rebecca nor Reyhan want to give up their sons even though they get to know the real father by chance encounter but they keep this secret from everyone else. Both men are gifted. William is a poet and musician. Şakir is also a musician. They never live up to their potentials as artists because of their addiction.

Müjde-Beth: Müjde is Mahur's wife and they have two daughters. She is a lawyer. She is good-natured and very supportive of Mahur. Müjde is the exact replica of the original character, Beth. Müjde comes from a very crowded family like Beth and her father, like Beth's died of cancer. Both characters develop a special bond with the biological father of their husbands over time as they can relate to their suffering although they are prejudiced against him at first.

Erdem- Toby: Erdem is Beste's boyfriend. Most characters in *Bir Aile Hikayesi* are quite similar to the original characters in terms of characterization and physical appearance. However, Erdem and Toby are completely different in terms of their

appearance. While Erdem is thin and fit, Toby is obese. That is why, the nature of the relationships in both versions are different from each other. Kate and Toby try to overcome their weight problem together even if Kate does not want to “fall for a fat person”. Over time, Toby turns into the rock she leans on. However, in *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, the fact Erdem is an attractive guy with a fit body puts pressure on Beste. Also, Erdem is a divorcee like Toby. Erdem is depicted as high-spirited and witty and humorous person and romantic like Toby.

Dr Adem Yılmazkaya- Dr Nathan Katowski: Both characters appear only in a few episodes after delivering the babies in the first season. The doctors have a central role in the storyline as their words encourage Cem/Jack to adopt the abandoned baby.

Nil-Sophie: Nil/Sophie, the ex-wife and childhood love of Berk/Kevin. They appear nearing the end in the first season. As Berk and Kevin start to question the real love in an emotional conflict regarding two different women, they come to realize that their feelings for their childhood sweethearts and ex-wives whom they divorced a decade ago are not over yet.

Derya-Olivia: Derya is Berk’s co-actor in the play and Oliva plays alongside Kevin. At first, both women despise Berk and Kevin telling them that they are not cut out for theatre. They both come from dysfunctional families, which causes them to hide their true feelings and not to confront them so they will not feel vulnerable and weak. The lack of loving parents made them cold and manipulative towards other people. Both Berk and Kevin have crush on them. Derya and Olivia run away before the premiere of the show as they realise they have feelings for their co-star feeling unable to cope with their feelings yet again.

Hülya-Sloane: Hülya and Sloane are the scriptwriters of the play Berk and Kevin act in. Both girls are talented, yet timid. They also develop a crush for Berk/Kevin. Following the escape of leading actress of the play, they substitute for them and act in the play. Both Derya/Olivia and Hülya/Sloane create the emotional conflict whereby Berk/Kevin are led to their ex-wives whom they have unresolved issues with.

5.6. The Comparative Analysis of *Bir Aile Hikayesi* and *This is Us* Within the Context of Cultural Proximity

This is Us deals with a common theme, the concept of family. Therefore, family values, the loss of an important family member, sibling rivalry, parenting are central themes.

However, it touches upon some other major themes such as sexual identity, addiction and psychological problems.

It is important to note *This is Us* has completed its third season but on the other hand *Bir Aile Hikayesi* has a total of just 12 episodes and completed just the first season. That is why some themes and characters may not be totally developed in *Bir Aile Hikayesi*.

Family is a theme that is often used in TV series; however, the depiction of family tends to vary across the world. Family structures and values differ in Turkish culture and American culture. In both versions, the families are traditional with a working father and stay-at-home mother. However, perception about the gender roles and gender stereotypes are narrated differently. As La Pastina and Straubhaar underline, cultural capital that viewers have, a crucial concept cultural proximity rests upon is highly decisive in what they tend to watch and how they interpret media. One's cultural capital is based on the level of his /her political awareness, which is also related to gender issues. Audiences' awareness about gender-related issues such as socially constructed gender norms, socially accepted assumptions about what men and women should be concerned with in line with their gender also affect their media preferences and their understanding of a TV programme (La Pastina and Straubhaar, 2005, 280).

Therefore, differences in gender-related narrative in *Bir Aile Hikayesi* and *This is Us* have to do with the fact that notions regarding gender related issues should be reflective of socially accepted norms, values and expectations of American and Turkish societies. Scenes analysed in the Turkish version and the original version successfully materialise the impact of this. In a flashback scene in season finale, a younger and single Rebecca talks to her friends and tells them how she dreams of singing professionally. She pursues her dreams yet she is rejected by record label companies that she sends her demos. She starts singing in a bar as the lead singer with an old friend's band once again while kids are at high school and the band is offered to do five-city tour across East coast. In the finale again, Jessica sets out the journey with the band. In *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, Reyhan does not express any desire to pursue a musical career though she is talented at singing like Rebecca.

Gender stereotypes are challenged in various episodes in *This is Us*. Jack and Rebecca marry in the 70s when women are expected to conform to traditional gender

stereotypes. Genz (2009, 37-38) mentions these stereotypes imposed on women to control them: “To be feminine in appearance, behaviour and activity is described as an “essential” component of both woman’s sense of self and the sexual and material subjugation that she encounters in many parts of her life”. Women were subordinated and made to act “feminine”. *This is Us* challenges these feminine ideals in the case of Rebecca. In episode 5, Rebecca asks Jack to teach her about football saying “I do not want to be like my mom” as she remembers how her mother only served food and drinks silently while her father was watching football. It’s Jack who wants to have babies and this causes a big friction between them. Rebecca says “when I married you, I did not want to be one of those women whose sole purpose is to be a mother. I’m only 29”.

Rebecca intends to defy gender stereotypes about women and motherhood. Jack on the other hand tries to convince Rebecca to start a family and says “you are almost 30”. It can be said that *This is Us* just challenges traditional gender roles rather than subverting them as Rebecca agrees to have babies fairly quickly. This conversation does not take place in the Turkish version, *Bir Aile Hikayesi*. A married woman almost 30 and not wanting babies in 1980s is not a very familiar image for Turkish audiences. Konda, a Turkish esteemed research company conducted a comprehensive survey on marriage in 2016 and the results of the survey reveal what age should be considered as the minimum for marriage by Turkish society. In line with the results of survey, majority of Turkish society think that the minimum age for marriage should be 21 and 23 for a woman and a man respectively. In Turkey where most people think a woman can get married at the age of 21, almost 40 decades later than the time period *Bir Aile Hikayesi* is set in, a married woman who opposes having babies may not look culturally acceptable.

Perception of gender roles and individualism is a recurrent theme mostly in *This is Us*. The time period; the 70s when Jack-Rebecca and Cem-Reyhan are young historically coincides with the feminist activism of the 70s in Western societies. As pointed out in *Postfeminisms* by Genz and Brabon (2009, 20) “In this period, feminism was more visible as a vibrant social and political movement engaged in struggles over a range of issues related to women’s unequal position in society.” Women’s Liberation Movement encouraged women to stand up for themselves, create their own sense of self, make their own choices, delay marriage and motherhood, use birth control and so

on not fitting in the traditional female roles prompted by the patriarchy. Even though Rebecca is not seen protesting or campaigning actively for women rights, she is a strong woman who is always critical of traditional gender roles. However, Reyhan is a more domestic woman dedicated to her family.

Feminist movements do not follow the same historical path in Turkey when compared with Western societies, the awakening, therefore awareness on gender equality may not be expected to occur for Reyhan. Rebecca has personal dreams and ambitions to follow. Reyhan, on the hand hand, does not question her role as a woman and mother. In that sense, she is depicted as more obedient and sacrificing whereas Rebecca is more non-conformist and individualistic. Rebecca fights for her rights challenging the expectations of the society from a married woman with 3 kids.

Another example regarding the perception of gender roles in the family can be seen in the attitudes of Berk towards his sister, Beste in Turkish version. Berk is depicted as an overprotective brother who interferes in Beste's decisions about boys and even intimidates her boyfriend. Erdem takes Beste to dinner at a fish restaurant and at the end of the night, he drives Beste home. He has a sudden stomachache and he needs to use Beste's bathroom immediately. While Erdem is in bathroom, Berk comes. First, he asks Beste why she is dressed so smartly and he says "who is this man at this time of the night?" upon seeing Erdem.

Although they are twins, Berk acts as Beste's guardian when it comes to her boyfriend. Kate's boyfriend, Toby and Kevin seem to hit it off from the very beginning. Once Kevin joins Kate and Toby as they have breakfast. He tastes the diet pancakes Kate made and says "she makes you eat this?" and Toby jokingly says "I'm trying to have sex". In that regard, the Turkish brother is culturally expected to be responsible for his sister's honour and protection; however, the American brother seems comfortable about hearing intimate details about her sister's private life.

Another central theme *This is Us* deals with is race and racism issues. Randall's adoption by all-white family raises the issues of race. This is an issue that can make sense within American context as America had and still has racial tensions and conflicts. American history is rife with stories and examples of racial segregation, institutional racism. Racial tensions and issues may not resonate with Turkish audiences as Turkey do not have conflicts that do no result from issues of race but ethnicity and religious identity. This race issue should be transformed into a context that can make sense to Turkish audiences. Therefore, issues related to race are

modified in Turkish version as race has been an issue within Turkish context with *Bir Aile Hikayesi* replacing the parts where racism is tackled in *This is Us* with other issues.

While *Bir Aile Hikayesi* transforms racial issues into some other relevant and proximate issues, it avoids touching upon existing or historical conflicts related to ethnic or religious minorities that can correspond to the problems related to race and racism within Turkish context.

Mahur's biological father, Şakir hails from a city named Kars, a province in Eastern Turkey. At first glance, most cities in Eastern Turkey can be associated with a specific ethnicity as Kurds constitute the majority in that part of the country. In contrast, Kars is one of those Eastern cities where groups from different ethnic backgrounds live and where the majority is not comprised of Kurds. Kars is far and exotic, which puts Şakir in the position of an outsider but he cannot be clearly associated with any particular ethnicity. Şakir could be belonging to any of these ethnic groups in Kars as Şakir's ethnic background remains ambiguous. Thus, Kars eliminates any possibilities of stirring up controversies regarding ethnic conflicts that have dominated political sphere in Turkey for quite a long time.

To what extent racism exists is hard to tell in America. Since the days racism and segregation were widespread, America has come a long way but discrimination and injustice against blacks seem to take place. For example, a recent political movement "Black Livers Matter" in 2013 started as a reaction to what is perceived to be a racist verdict in the acquittal of George Zimmerman who killed a black guy at the age of seventeen (Chase, 2018). "Black Lives Matter" started as a movement on social media turning into a nationwide movement and the motto was used along with some other words at the rallies (Chase, 2018).

In 2014, the killings of two more black men by police and juries' acquittal verdict on both police officers in two different parts of USA transformed "Black Lives Matter" into a massive civil rights movement via protests that occurred across the USA (Chase, 2018). Racial conflicts and tensions that have seemed more settled since 1990s have emerged again and this has been used to address deep-rooted issues such as racism, racial inequality and systematic police violence against blacks in America (Chase, 2018). The events that triggered "Black Lives Matter" movement are recent gruesome examples of concerns for racism in America.

Besides civil right movements such as “Black Lives Matter” that aim to raise awareness about racism, Hollywood also gives weight to representations of blacks. In Hollywood cinema and TV industry there is a strong trend to diversify themes and characters; therefore, Hollywood has adopted more welcoming and inclusive attitude towards women, minorities and other marginalised groups especially blacks in recent decades. *This is Us* is reflective of the recent progressive mindset in Hollywood. Turkish TV has not started dealing with its recent past realistically. Kurdish issue has been at the centre of Turkish politics for a long time or Turkey has an ongoing Armenian controversy dating back to 1915. Mahur could have been depicted as a Kurd or an Armenian so his reunion with his father could have been used as an opportunity to address the issues concerning Kurds and Armenians.

Randall is really curious about his roots and the lifestyles of blacks because as a black man he has always lived in almost all-white environment. Turkish version could have benefitted from the diversity that exists in Turkey and could have compared the traditions and lifestyles of ethnic minorities to a traditional Turkish family. But on the other hand, given the uproar movies or books that deal with these historical issues cause, it would be too risky and bold for a mainstream TV channel which aims at average Turkish audiences to address them within current context in Turkey. To name a few, *Salkım Hanım’ın Taneleri*, which is about a controversial tax law imposed upon non-Muslim minorities in Turkey and *The Bastard of Istanbul (Baba ve Piç)*, which touches upon Armenian controversy enraged Turkish community. Elif Şafak was put on trial for violating article 301 in Turkish constitution (insulting Atatürk and Turkishness).

One theme that Turkish TV audiences can identify with and a theme very commonly narrated on Turkish TV is class gap. For instance, class discrimination becomes the source of conflict instead of racism in *Bir Aile Hikayesi*. A comparison of the same scenes can reveal how the Turkish version change the narrative upon racism into a class issue. The scene takes place in Episode 4 in both Turkish and original version. In *This is Us* it is early morning, Randall and Beth do the girls’ hair, the younger girl wants her grandpa to do her hair. The older girl realises the scar on William’s arm and asks him about that. William tells he got the scar while he was helping people who were fighting against bussing. Bussing is a practice related to segregation of black and white kids at schools. The dialogue is used as a prelude to issue of racism that is

addressed in the episode. William leaves home to take a walk and he is reported to the security for loitering by an elderly white couple who possibly take him as a thief. Security comes and asks William to show his ID, which William refuses to do so angrily. Out of the kitchen window Randall sees William talking to security and Randall tells security William is staying with him. The couple genuinely apologizes for their misjudgement saying “we did not know William”. William accepts the apology of the couple and the security; he lets the whole incident drop there. Following this Randall says “We’re going to get you some clothes” and he takes him shopping. Randall’s apologetic and meek attitude towards security and neighbours lets William down. He is hurt that he was taken as a potential criminal because of the colour of his skin and cheap-looking clothes.

The conversation that ensues the incident at the shop focuses on the issue of racism from experiences and perspectives of two black men; William and Randall:

“Randall: We’ve got to talk about this morning. Would you have been happier If I made a scene? You did not like me apologizing for you, I get it. You know if I got up in Tony’s face, had the cops roll up and turn the hoses on us?

William: You ever had a hose turned on you?

Randall: Can’t say I have, I’m very sorry.

William: Don’t be. It hurts.

Randall: Your face says I have a scar on my arm from integrating schools and probably blisters on your feet from marching for freedom. Just because I grew up in white man’s world, you think I don’t live a black man’s world. That salesman over there has been eyerolling ever since we came in here and that security guard has moved just a little off his mark so he can keep us in his sight. When I go to pay, they will ask for an ID with my credit card even though they haven’t asked for anyone else’s. Plus, a million of things every day I have to choose to let go so I’m not pissed off all the time. Like I did this morning, like I have done every day of my life”.

Randall emphasizes the fact that he also has been prone to racial bias just like William. Even if he has led a successful life in wealth in his adulthood following his dreams of becoming a successful businessman, Randall has always been made to feel self-conscious because of his colour. Yet, Randall seems to find a way to deal with racism by turning a blind to it as much as he can. On the other hand, being really offended by the racist and biased attitude of the neighbours and security, William thinks Randall underestimates this racist encounter as he is not in a position to relate to racial prejudice or police violence like himself. Though William suffered from harsher racial

discrimination in his time, racial prejudice is a part of Randall's life as it is evident from the things he tells.

The race issue in the abovementioned scene in *This is Us* is altered in *Bir Aile Hikayesi* being reduced to an issue of class. Şakir is similarly reported by an elderly couple who see him giving food to their dog and they take him as a potential thief judging from his clothing. The security is summoned and he calls Mahur to confirm if Şakir is really staying with him as Şakir claims. Şakir is asked to show his ID. Meanwhile the neighbour, Mr. Cihat is suspicious of Şakir possibly trying to sedate their dog to break into their house afterwards. Mahur comes and says Şakir is a "guest" staying with them not being able to say that he is his father. The neighbours apologize upon hearing this. Mr. Cihat defends himself saying that they got the wrong impression "Looking at his clothes..." The neighbours' attitude has to do with the fact that he does not belong to the same class with them as they do not hesitate to accuse Şakir of a potential theft based on his appearance. Mahur tries to settle the incident by apologizing, but his attitude distresses Şakir deeply as he believes that he "has not done anything to apologize for" so Şakir feels offended and let down.

Mahur feels he needs to explain himself seeing Şakir is downcast and heartbroken over the incident as he was treated as if he was a thief. Mahur, though, tries to justify the attitude of his neighbours stating that people are scared of possible break-ins, so they have taken security precautions. Mahur believes the neighbours can be forgiven for feeling biased against Şakir. In return, Şakir utters "But it was me they did not like judging from my clothing and they took me as a thief, what's worse you apologised to them". Being conscious of the class gap between him and his son, Şakir is concerned that Mahur is embarrassed because of him.

When two scenes are compared, the reason why neighbours perceive William and Şakir as potential suspects varies. The racial conflict in the original version changes into an issue of class discrimination as racial conflicts are not relevant in Turkish context. In *This is Us*, the neighbours have an obvious racial prejudice so they call security upon seeing a poor-looking black man they have not seen before. But on the other hand, prejudice against Şakir is the result of class discrimination as the neighbours find Şakir too poor to live in their premises.

Apart from this specific scene, there are different occasions where racism is tackled throughout first season of *This is Us*. Randall's adoption is primarily intertwined with the theme of race which has been at the centre of internal conflicts in the USA. The adopted child is not just some baby abandoned by his parents but a black baby welcomed into a white family in the early 80s. Sibling rivalry between Kevin and Randall is particularly rooted in this. Kevin starts turning his back on Randall because Kevin is jeered by his schoolmates because of Randall. Kevin says they are called *Webster* at school referring to an American comedy where a black kid is adopted by his father's white friend when both his parents die in a car crash. Kevin is obviously disturbed to have a black brother because his friends find it odd.

Another fact that fuels the tension between Randall and Kevin is his parents', especially Rebecca's special treatment towards Randall. Conducting a research on sibling rivalry Brody, Stoneman, McCoy, & Forehand, (1992, 397-398) found a positive link between the equality in how parents treat their children and lower levels of discord among siblings. Kevin always thinks that he is mistreated, ignored by especially Rebecca, which indicates the way parental behaviour affects the relationship among children.

To illustrate, in episode 4, the Pearsons go to pool. Even though Kevin almost drowns in the pool, no one from the family realises that. He goes to his parents and say "I almost drowned, did you even care? You are too busy making sure that Kate's not eating too much, Randall's not too adopted. Meanwhile, where's Kevin? Dead." As he points out, his parents are busy consoling Kate, who is mocked by her friends for wearing bikini despite her weight and Randall, who disappears trying to find his biological parents among the people by the pool. Kevin seems to represent white supremacy in the eyes of his parents as he is the good-looking and popular kid of the family with no apparent problems. He is ignored by his parents while the other two get all the attention due to their issues.

The scene is altered in the Turkish version, *Bir Aile Hikayesi* using a different setting. There is a charity sale known as *kermes* at kids' school. Early on, Berk overhears the conversation between her mother and grandmother unfolding the truth about the adoption of one of the kids. Before learning the truth, Berk always questions why Mahur looks different and he says his friends do not believe that they are brothers. His parents', especially his mother's special treatment towards Mahur makes him

suspicious. Upon hearing that one of them is adopted, he concludes that he must be the one and asks his mother if that's the reason she has always mistreated and ignored him. After calming Berk down Reyhan tells him the truth and makes him promise not to tell anything to Mahur. Later, Reyhan and Cem tell Mahur they adopted him but they insist that they adopted him not because he was abandoned or they wanted him as a replacement for their dead son but because they truly loved him. Similar to pool scene in *This is Us*, at charity sale, Beste is derided by her friends and Mahur, who now knows he is adopted looks around to find men who could potentially be his real father. Berk climbs the rope at the playground, calls his father to watch him. His father does not mind his calls as he is too busy taking their care of the other two. Berk climbs so high that he loses his balance and almost falls down. When he finally manages to get down, he says angrily to his parents:

"I climbed at the top of the rope but I got dizzy and my hands got slippery, I almost fell down. You do not care in the slightest; I called you repeatedly. You are only concerned about Beste and Mahur making sure that Beste does not eat too much so nobody will call her fat and your adopted son does not feel unhappy. I could have died, I wish I had died. You have an adopted son that can replace me".

Berk feels ignored and lonely by the way his parents care about the other two. People around hear what Berk says and they are shocked by his revelation. Unlike *This is Us*, in *Bir Aile Hikayesi* Reyhan and Cem are concerned about the reactions of people around them if they know that one of their kids is adopted. Part of the reason why they hide the truth from Mahur is related to what others might say or think about them.

Another motif that differs in Turkish and American versions of the same story occurs in both shows related to sibling rivalry. During their high school years, the boys separate their rooms after they fight one night. They cannot meet the halfway because Kevin wants to sleep early because he plays football but Randall he stays up studying. Kevin starts sleeping in the basement. Similarly, Berk and Mahur separate their rooms and Berk starts sleeping in living room. American detached houses have basement where families put their extra furniture and some other stuff; however, most Turkish houses are not designed with a basement. Therefore, in crowded Turkish families when there is not enough space in bedrooms, some kids have to sleep in living rooms. The basement is a very American image that would not relate to Turkish audiences as there is no basement in most houses in Turkey, which is another cultural difference.

How sibling rivalry and racial prejudice are merged appears in Kevin's attitude towards Randall in another scene. As Kevin and Randall grow older, they start to drift apart even more until Kevin moves to New York to do theatre. And he starts to stay with Randall and his family as he feels alone. Once, Kevin and Randall decide to spend the night together out on a dinner while Kevin stays with them in New York. At dinner it turns out that Randall has never watched Kevin's show *Manny* and Kevin feels so offended and leaves the restaurant. Randall follows him and tries to calm him down. However, Kevin sees the new the *Manny* on billboards in Times Square, Randall burst into laughter upon seeing the billboards. The new *Manny* is black and Kevin says "That's great. I have been replaced by another black man". Randall is really hurt by Kevin's remark and tells Kevin to explain what he means. Kevin lets it all out and says their mother always treated Randall specially. Randall in return says she had to because of you and says all he wanted was Kevin's respect and he always pushed him away.

In Turkish version, Berk and Mahur go to a restaurant together. Berk realises Mahur does not know anything about the play he is due to act in although he has been staying in Mahur's house for a while and has been rehearsing the play. Berk gets angry and storms out of the restaurant. Mahur follows him apologizing and they see the new face of *Mon Reve* on billboards on the street. Mahur makes a joke and says "They've found an upgraded version of you". Berk in return says "just like you, an upgraded child better than the lousy me they have". The narrative shifts from the black man to the better man in Turkish version. Berk sounds only jealous and disappointed whereas Kevin sounds racist alongside being jealous. *Bir Aile Hikayesi* intentionally excludes any talk of ethnicity that could be narrated within Turkish context.

Another theme that can resonate with American audiences more than Turks is obesity. According to 2017 OECD obesity report, obesity rate is almost 15% higher in the USA than Turkey among adults (OECD, Obesity Update 2017,2017). Kate is obese and so is her boyfriend Toby. In contrast, Beste is plainly overweight. From the first episode, her weight problem is at the centre of Kate's life. Kate is introduced for the first time in the series as she opens the fridge door. The fridge is full of high calorie food with warning tags on them.

Kate's weight loss struggle is depicted more realistically and comprehensively than Beste's endeavour in *Bir Aile Hikayesi*. First, she joins a weight loss group where she meets her boyfriend, Toby. Kate loses weight slower than Toby and the others in the

group, which leads to self-pity and disappointment. Secondly, after her failed attempts to lose weight, she decides to have weight loss surgery, which is highly risky to the protest of her family. She gives up on the idea after her boyfriend Toby's heart attack. In the end, she checks into a weight loss facility but she does not stay there for too long, either. On the other hand, Beste's efforts to lose weight remain more nominal. Kate is depicted to be trying and grieving during her weight loss process unlike Beste. Though Beste expresses her desire to lose weight, she is not strictly on a diet. Then she wants to have the surgery as she believes people may believe that she is not a good match for Erdem who is fit and handsome.

Weight loss group and facility represent the differences in the approaches to weight loss in Turkish and American societies. Obesity being a widespread and urgent problem, the way it is dealt with is more institutionalised. In Turkey, though, most people individually go to dieticians to lose weight, weight loss facilities are not very popular or not very well known in Turkish context.

This is Us also tries to portray Americanness with the values that makes it unique. First of all, American multiculturalism with a stress upon immigration since America is a country built by immigrants. At the end of episode 4, Kevin tells the story of his great grandfather to his nieces. The narrative underscores the multicultural roots of America. In several different cases, multicultural composition of the US is highlighted. Some minor characters such as Randall's colleague, Sanjai and Doctor Lee, Randall's psychiatrist who are from Asian origin represent the multiculturalism. These characters can be interpreted as a means to portray America as a magnet which attracts immigrants because of better job and education opportunities. In Turkish version, there is no such emphasis on diversity as Turkey is not so multicultural as America.

In This Us, there are a lot of references to American popular culture. The Turkish version similarly refers to the popular figures or trends that are popular in present Turkey and the ones that were popular in then-Turkey in flashback scenes. Apart from the discussion about the power of cinema and broadcasting industry on the public and its penetration into everyday life, one way to look at the incorporation of popular culture is how it helps to contextualise flashback scenes. The popular figures of entertainment, trends, political figures remind audiences of the time context *This is Us* or *Bir Aile Hikayesi* is set in. For instance, *Bir Aile Hikayesi* refers to famous Turkish pop songs in the 1990s and the decade was associated with the birth of original Turkish

pop with emergence of new and talented singers. Reference to pop music contextualises the shift in music and its impact on preferences of Turkish society.

Political issues specific to each country are briefly represented as a kind of small talk that characters are engaged in. Both the original version and Turkish version of the series add subtle political narratives. There is a very brief talk of Jack's time in Vietnam. Eurovision, a transnational singing competition where European countries compete against each other is watched in *Bir Aile Hikayesi*. While they are speculating on who can win the competition this year, they say "England, as usual" and they stress how Turkey is snubbed by European jury every year. In Episode 1, the camera briefly focuses on Iran-related on TV at hospital at the end of the first episode of *This is Us*. Again, in the first episode Dr. Katowski jokingly tells Jack that he is a good man although he once voted for Robert Nixon. In the first episode of *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, there is a reference to a popular motto spread during Gezi Park protests, which is altered as "kahrolsun bağzı kaloriler".

Another motif that is culturally modified for Turkish audiences is the setting where the baby (Randall/Mahur) is abandoned. In *This is Us* William leaves his baby at a fire station whereas Şakir leaves his son at a mosque yard. Mosque yard is a cliché motif that has been so often used since early days of Turkish cinema. Turkish audiences would expect a parent who wants to abandon his or her baby to go to a mosque of all places. In one episode in *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, Mahur escapes home and goes to a mosque to find his parents. In America, abandoning babies at fire stations has been a very old practise. Since late 1990s, 50 states have passed the Safe Haven Law which decriminalise the abandonment of babies if they are left outside safe places such as fire stations, police departments and hospitals (Baker, [05.06.2019]). In light of all this, a father leaving his new-born at fire station in 1980s would be a familiar image. *This is Us* is self-reflexive about this as Randall once says his father left him at the fire station, that is probably most cliché place one can think of.

Religion is arguably one of the most important parts of culture that shape societies. Turkish society is predominantly Muslim while there are non-Muslim minorities. Though the USA is multicultural also in terms of religions practised, Christianity and Judaism are mainstream religions that people follow. Therefore, religious images and motifs naturally change in the Turkish version.

This is Us highlights important religious occasions in American and Christian culture. Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukkah are depicted with an emphasis on the traditions and rituals. For example, Episode 8 is thematically structured around Thanksgiving in *This is Us* and the episode gives a taste of how these occasions are celebrated. The Pearsons are seen getting ready for their visit to Rebecca's parents on Thanksgiving. Rebecca makes cranberry sauce to take to her parents, kids are dressed in their Sunday best clothes, Kate wears the jumper her grandma knitted for her. Similarly, the all family get together at Randall's house for Thanksgiving and they eat stuffed turkey, pumpkin pie, which are specific to Thanksgiving. They practise certain rituals in Thanksgiving derived from an accident they had on their way to Rebecca's parents'. They go for a long hike as they had to that night.

Episode 10 is similarly structured around another occasion, Christmas. Christmas tree is being decorated. Kids are excited about Christmas as they will get money and presents. Rebecca and Jack try to raise kids' awareness on the true meaning of Christmas with Jack emphasizing the spirituality of Christmas: "Christmas is not getting money and presents" and decide to take kids to church as they realise how little kids know about Christmas. However, Kate's appendix burst and they take her to hospital where they spend Christmas Eve. Kate has to undergo a surgery. Rebecca tells the kids "nothing bad happens on Christmas Eve". They run into Dr Katowski who is in a critical condition in the hospital, they spend time at his bedside cheering him up. This time it is Randall who says "nothing bad happens on Christmas Eve". Kevin is intrigued by religious figures that he sees: Jesus statue, Mary statue and Jewish chandelier and menorah on sale and wants to buy one of them to pray for Kate who is having an operation at the time. Kevin wants to buy the one that works best, the nurses tell him that "in the end, they all get the job done just fine".

Christmas is depicted not only as a time for celebration but also as a time to focus on spirituality and the power of prayer. In one of the flashforward scenes, Randall convinces a colleague named Andy, who has been left by his wife and is in debt not to commit suicide saying to himself "nothing bad happens on Christmas Eve". Also, Sloane, the scriptwriter of the play Kevin is acting tells the story of Hanukkah in another scene. The episode ends on Christmas eve when everyone comes together including Sloane, Toby and Jessie at Randall's house.

In *Bir Aile Hikayesi* Ramadan, one of the two religious occasions in Turkey replaces both Thanksgiving and Christmas depicted in *This is Us*. In *Bir Aile Hikayesi* kids are so happy because Ramadan is approaching and talk about all the food such as Turkish flatbread and g  lla   they will eat at iftar. Cem underlines the spirituality and true meaning of Ramadan “Ramadan is not about eating too much food, it is about empathising with the economically disadvantaged people, and share what you have with them and it is a time to feed the souls rather than the bodies.

Just like in *This is Us*, Beste suffers from stomachache which turns out to be related to her burst appendix when they take her to hospital and she has to undergo a surgery. Cem and Reyhan run into doctor, Adem Y  lmazkaya, who is in hospital after a car accident he had. Cem and Reyhan introduce Mahur to him. Mahur tries to console doctor Adem saying “Bad things do not happen during Ramadan”. Berk donates all the money he has saved at the charity box at the hospital probably being moved by the things his father told about Ramadan and he prays for Beste. Mahur is curious about praying asking Cem questions and though Cem is not sure if all the prayers are returned, he says that the ones that come from within hearts are definitely returned. Later, doctor Adem Y  lmazkaya is seen visiting G  ne   family at iftar ten days after their encounter at the hospital. He is fully recovered and discharged from the hospital. Like *This is Us*, *Bir Aile Hikayesi* also ends with iftar where everyone gets together including Erdem, H  lya, Behiye.

Themes centring around sexuality, sex and sexual identity portrayed in *This is Us* are omitted in *Bir Aile Hikayesi*. The one that could be the most controversial and scandalous would be William’s bisexuality. William is bisexual, admitting openly “I have always liked both men and women”. He reconnects with his boyfriend, Jessie, who is an outspoken and caring partner. Whereas the legalization of same-sex marriages across different states in the USA is an evidence of tolerance, this is definitely not the case in Turkey. Let alone same-sex relationships or marriages, even pride marches cause great controversy in Turkey, either they are banned or participants clash with the police. That is why, William’s bisexuality is completely omitted in   akir’s portrayal in *Bir Aile Hikayesi* as the image of a bisexual grandfather is not acceptable for Turkish audiences. Instead, a girlfriend called Behiye is introduced for   akir. However, Behiye’s characterization as a sleazy and outspoken woman makes her not a great match for   akir, who is mild-natured. Behiye is a woman with her

clothes and etiquette-defying attitudes. One evening, she comes unannounced and makes a scene at Mahur's house. Bold and unabashed portrayal of her character is the only negative aspect of her.

Audiences expect to see similarity between their own sexual relationship values and the ones that are depicted on TV (La Pastina and Straubhaar, 2005, 274). Conservatism is a strong dynamic that prevails everyday lives of Turkish people as indicated by studies. Yılmaz (2008) found that 67 % of Turkish people identify themselves conservative whereas people who have low or no conservative values make up 33% of the society. Yılmaz (2008, 60) notes:

“It is apparent that religious conservatism –a person's relying on religious norms and values in making his/her personal, social, and political decisions– was by far the most widespread dimension of conservatism in Turkey. Religious conservatism was followed by what can be called “sexual conservatism”, which designated an attempt to regulate sexuality and in particular women's values and behavior in the intimacy of family and personal life. “

Yılmaz carried out a research with 1644 participants over eighteen in urban and rural parts of fifteen different cities in Turkey in 2006 and Yılmaz (2006) concludes Turkish conservatism puts family at centre regarding women as the core of family, sustainability of the family is contingent upon women. The conservative mindset concerning woman expects a number of qualities which Yılmaz (2008) puts as follows:

“Hence, social conservatism emerged to be the more influential realm of Turkish conservatism, centered upon an idealized “holy family”, which itself was revolving around an idealized “woman” who was supposed to be equal with men, but at the same time honourable (namuslu) and hard-working (hamarat). Religion appeared to be an ideology which legitimized and upheld that “holy family”, particularly as regards the “equal, honourable and hardworking” position of women in that family structure”.

Bir Aile Hikayesi avoids sexual intimacy and explicit sexual portrayals. Also, nudity that can be seen in *This is Us* is also omitted in Turkish version. In *This is Us*, characters can be seen naked in several different episodes. Nevertheless, in *This is Us*, characters who are romantically involved with each other are portrayed to engage in mild sexual acts. The physical contact remains very limited in *Bir Aile Hikayesi* as Turkish characters are only seen to be kissing each other. Unlike Reyhan and Cem, Jack and Rebecca are shown in their intimate moments. Kevin sleeps with both Olivia and Sloane, Berk only kisses Derya and Hülya. Toby and Kate also have sex but Erdem and Beste do not get physical. Purity of romantic relationships, especially chastity is

maintained in Turkish version as purity and chastity are significant for Turkish audiences.

One point that is a cause for concern regarding sexuality in the USA is teenage pregnancy. This is a reality that concerns American parents as the USA is one of the countries where the teenage pregnancy is statically high, especially when compared with developed Western countries. Therefore, teenage sex is also tackled in *This is Us*. Rebecca and Jack find out that Kevin and his childhood sweetheart, Sophie start engaging in sex. His parents have an adult talk with him about the importance of safe sex. Rebecca and Jack are concerned about the possible negative consequences, which is an unwanted teenage pregnancy. In *Bir Aile Hikayesi* Berk and Nil are not represented as getting physical, so their relationship causes another kind of concern for the family. Berk talks to Nil on the phone hours and hours; therefore, phone bills end up being gigantic. Therefore, Berk's relationship with Nil causes a financial problem to his parents who are already struggling with finances.

One motif that is completely omitted from *Bir Aile Hikayesi* is the recreational use of drugs that is seen in *This is Us*. Apart from the depiction of Şakir as a drug addict like William, there is no further talk or representation of drugs in *Bir Aile Hikayesi* due to the negative associations of taking illegal drugs. Main characters doing drugs would come as a shock to Turkish audiences. In Turkey, drugs are illegal; there is a strict ban on the use of weeds and drugs. This is in that respect something that Turkish audiences might find the use of drugs extremely inappropriate. A Turkish rap singer was put into jail for using the exact words cannabis/marijuana in his lyrics on the grounds that he encourages the use of drugs. The use of cannabis, especially marijuana has been legalised in certain states in the USA.

In two different episodes in *This is Us*, characters use weed with its aftermath results. In episode 7, Beth recommends William to try weed to help with the nausea he is feeling due to chemotherapy based her experience with her father's. Beth and William eat the pot brownies she makes after her daughters go to sleep. As the two get high, William lets it slip that he met and knew Rebecca in the past. In *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, this scene is omitted. Müjde and Şakir just drink coffee and eat chocolate chatting. In another episode, Randall drinks a smoothie that contains magic mushrooms by

mistake, he gets dazed. He daydreams that he talks to his late father Jack under the effect.

Male nudity and sex-sells approach are recurring themes in both versions in the first season alongside the criticism on the inhumane conditions in the entertainment industry. Berk and Kevin are both in the entertainment industry. While Kevin has a low-quality sitcom called *The Manny* and Berk appears in the commercials as the face of a chocolate brand called Mon Reve. Kevin appears topless in the show displaying his abdominal muscles. Over time, he gets tired of acting such a meaningless part in such a stupid show paving the way for his existentialist crisis.

In Turkish version, Berk is made to use his sex appeal in the commercials. Turkish audiences are familiar with the image of half-naked men in TV commercials. The most notable example is a series of commercials of chocolate brand named Şölen, which used half-naked good-looking male models to promote its biscuits and chocolates. What came to be known as “Biscolata Man” following these commercials was a hot topic in Turkey for a while. Berk’s attractive image in the commercials might remind Turkish audiences of “Biscolata Man”.

As for inhumane conditions, both Berk and Kevin are made to sign binding contracts for the roles they play. When they appeal to terminate the contracts, the producers threaten them. In *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, Berk’s house and possessions are impounded as he violates the contract. Even Berk’s calorie intake is monitored by the producers and he is made to work out before the commercials to make sure that he looks muscular. In *This is Us*, Kevin is made to take off his shirt even if he is unwilling to do so. Thus, both men have no say on their own bodies as their freewill is disregarded.

Sports plays an important part in the storyline of both versions. Different types of sports are popular in Turkey and America. While baseball, ice hockey, basketball, American football as known as rugby are the most popular sports in USA, the most popular sports in Turkey is football. In *This is Us*, Jack watches American football and supports Pittsburgh Steelers. Kate tells Toby how important football is in her life and she has a football watching ritual. She actually watches the football matches with her father’s ashes beside her. *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, football which is called soccer by Americans replaces American football as the most watched sports in Turkey, football would appeal to Turkish audiences. Cem is a fan of Beşiktaş, the oldest and one of the

biggest three Turkish teams so the kids are like him. Berk shows a great potential at school's football team just like Kevin in *This is Us*. Both kids are expected to have professional careers as they are followed by football scouts.

Everyday details are also modified and the food is one of the most important aspects of everyday culture. Rebecca keeps tabs on what Kate eats so as to prevent her from gaining extra pounds. At breakfast Kate wants to have typical American food; cereal rather than the low-calorie food her mother prepares for her but Rebecca stops her. In *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, Beste wants to eat scrambled eggs fried with butter at breakfast. But Reyhan forces her to eat low-calorie boiled eggs instead. Cereals, which are important part of American breakfast culture have only become a part of Turkish breakfast culture recently so a typical Turkish family having breakfast with cereals in early nineties may not look very proximate to Turkish audiences.

Music is a significant cultural code that shows variations across the globe. America and Turkey differ in the types of music they produce as each has specific local genres that can only resonate within their societies. In America, blacks helped to create certain musical genres such as jazz, soul, blues, and recently hip-hop and rap so they have a strong musical culture that differentiates them culturally from whites. William, as a black man from Memphis is born into a musical culture and environment that is shaped by the blacks. He performs with his cousin's local band and writes lyrics. Classical Turkish music replaces jazz and soul in *Bir Aile Hikayesi*. Jazz and soul are considered to be universal and elite types of music which appeal to a small segment of society in Turkey. Şakir tells he came to İstanbul from Kars to study at conservatory. Being unable to study for financial reasons, Şakir performs classical Turkish music which is popular in Turkey in the 70s at shabby places.

All in all, *Bir Aile Hikayesi* remains loyal to the original story, even by using exact scenes from *This is Us* at times. However, there are many examples of modifications, additions and exclusions as some themes and characters are at odds with or nonexistent in Turkish culture. The mainstream values in American society consist of elements that can be considered taboos within Turkish context.

6. CONCLUSION

This thesis studied *Anne* based upon the adaptation of Japanese drama, *Mother* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi*, which is adapted from American drama, *This is Us* with cultural proximity taken as the basis of theoretical framework. Cultural proximity argues that the most important expectation of the audiences is to get a sense of proximity in what they see on TV so once a foreign TV series is chosen for a local adaptation, it goes through a process which can bring it in line with the tastes, expectations of home audiences. Though cultural proximity is not without its limitations, it is a dynamic process dependent upon a great number of intertwined and complex components and involving multiple players from the producers, scriptwriters, TV channels to audiences. Cultural proximity focuses on how audiences receive the shows but it eschews an essentialist approach to audience identities. Cultural proximity maintains that audience identities show great variations so their TV consumption habits change due to these variations.

Cultural proximity is a prerequisite for the realistic depictions of the themes and characters. Whether a drama is domestically-produced or adapted from a foreign show may not matter that much since audiences will regard it as a domestic drama and some audiences may not even be aware of the fact that the drama is an adaptation. To them, it will be one of the thousand TV dramas that are produced in the country. That is why, locality needs to be carefully incorporated into dramas that are being adapted.

Turkey, Japan and America do not share any linguistic, geographic similarities or historical ties that can connect them to one another and different religions are practised in these countries so they have cultures that are completely distinct from each other. Socio-demographic characteristics of the home audiences also differ in each of these countries as Turkey is not as economically developed as Japan and the USA and the efficiency and quality of education system and level of education in Turkey remain lower when compared to Japan and the USA.

Furthermore, these three countries also differ in terms of the way they produce dramas, which has to do with the institutional and structural differences of their broadcasting markets that cultural proximity does not take into consideration. Both America and Japan produce dramas that run 45-60 minutes. In contrast, Turkish dramas run over 100-130 minutes, and with the addition of commercial breaks audiences spend nearly 4 hours. Despite all these cultural and social differences between Turkey, Japan and America, it is important to note Turkish remakes *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* were received well by Turkish audiences as they received high ratings on the days they were shown. That can be attributed to the level of proximity that was created in the Turkish versions.

In this thesis, the way *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* create the sense of proximity for Turkish audiences was examined in detail. Even though *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* remain loyal to the original themes, the way themes are narrated, the way characters are portrayed show differences. The parts that do not have any cultural connotations for Turkish audiences are replaced whereas some other parts that are culturally non-existent are completely omitted. Nevertheless, apart from culturally non-existent parts, parts that conflict mainstream values of Turkish society are deliberately excluded from the Turkish versions, as well. To summarize, the differences that are witnessed between Turkish versions and original dramas arise out of the attempt to recreate and reinterpret the Turkish remakes with a local touch.

As mentioned above, the adapted versions of *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* were successful in Turkey despite the fact that Turkey do not share many commonalities with Japan and the USA. First of all, the success of both shows lies in the proximity of themes the original shows, *Mother* and *This is Us* deal with. *Mother* mainly depicts motherhood, family, family values and domestic abuse. *This is Us* focuses on the similar themes such family, family values, adoption, sibling rivalry along with obesity and addiction among some others. These are themes that can resonate with audiences in many parts of the world. Besides, both *Mother* and *This is Us* are dramas which are the most popular types of TV series in Turkey. In summary, cultural proximity underlines the relevance of themes and genres in the success of a TV programme and therefore, Turkish audiences' familiarity with the themes and genres of the original shows played a part in the good reception of the Turkish versions.

Modifications and omissions that are made in the Turkish versions in order to create a sense of proximity for Turkish audiences. Turkish society can be said to politically and socially conservative with a strong nationalistic mindset. Therefore, the way Turkish people perceive the world is shaped by their immediate environment through their lifestyles and political views. This familiarity is taken into consideration as the parts that are at odds with the conservative values are omitted from Turkish versions.

Political conservatism makes its presence felt in different fields of art so dealing with a controversial theme can negatively influence the audiences' feelings about the show. *Mother* does not deal with any political themes so *Anne* does not depict any political themes in line with original version. *This is Us* is built upon racism, an important political problem in the USA and addresses it. Nonetheless, *Bir Aile Hikayesi* intentionally does not introduce a storyline that can replace or correspond to the theme of racism in *This is Us*. Racism is a reality America has been dealing with for a long time whereas in Turkey historical conflicts regarding ethnic minorities are shunned or presented from the Turkish perspective on the issue.

Conservatism in Turkey prevails in the perception of gender. Patriarchal discourse remains stronger in *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* when compared with *Mother* and *This is Us*. Gender roles and dominant discourse concerning gender are more traditional and non-progressive especially among lower classes represented in Turkish versions. *Anne* is mostly comprised of female characters like the original version, *Mother*; however, female discourse regarding motherhood is gender-biased, that is expecting a bigger role from women and the discourse of female certain characters, especially mothers with sons is by comparison more overprotective and defensive towards men in *Anne*.

American states have very flexible laws regarding the use of drugs and more and more states have been legalising cannabis whereas in Turkey even cigarettes and alcoholic drinks are blurred on TV, which is the result of Turkish ruling party's policy to discourage the consumption of alcohol and tobacco. Turkish audiences can not relate to a protagonist doing drugs as average Turkish audiences will not regard using drugs as personal freedom or as a new experience, but rather as a source of evil.

Heterosexuality is accepted as the norm by the overwhelming majority of Turkish society, and Turkish government policies are restrictive towards the LGBT

communities unlike the USA, where same-sex marriages have been allowed in an increasing number of states. Any sexual identity that diverges from the heterosexuality can conflict with audiences' perceptions in Turkey. Therefore, the bisexuality in *This is Us* is completely excluded. Similarly, sex and nudity in *This is Us* are also left out in *Bir Aile Hikayesi*; however, Anne has more intimate scenes than *Mother*.

While certain aspects remain universal that can do with mild modifications or no changes at all, some parts are too specific not to intervene. For example, food and music which are also an important part of culture are tend to be culturally too specific as the level of difference can be quite striking between the world cuisines. In both *Mother* and *This is Us* there are types of food that are non-existent in Turkey. Food is replaced with local ones in Turkish remakes. As *Mother* and *This is Us* depict everyday lives, food becomes an important part of narrative particularly in *Mother*.

The power distance that constitutes the perceptions of the individuals regarding power and authority varies across nations. Turkey and Japan have higher power distance whereas the power distance remains much lower in the USA. The power distance is a concept related to family dynamics, the sense of individualism and collectivism. So American characters are portrayed using their freewill, pursuing personal aspirations while Turkish and Japanese characters are more altruistic for the good of others even if that means they end up compromising.

Organizational differences between TV broadcasting industries affect the adaptation process. The dynamics and structures of Turkish, Japanese and American TV broadcasting industries also vary from one another so Turkish adaptations were analysed by taking that into consideration. The long duration of Turkish dramas also affect the way *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* were adapted. More storylines and more characters are added in order to fill the time in Turkish versions. Additional characters are created out of the concern to fill the extra time gap. Some minor characters have a bigger part in Turkish versions. Both *Anne* and *Bir Aile Hikayesi* extend the role of bad or unlikable characters in order to increase tension as antagonists are not moderate in their acts of evil. Turkish dramas are extremely melodramatic with weepy scenes so characters are presented as more pitiable than the original characters. As the dose of evil is very high in most Turkish dramas, *Anne*; for instance, turns slow-paced *Mother* into a more violent and bloodier version.

It should be noted that who constitutes TV audiences in Turkey is really important in the reception of an adaptation. However, audiences are not uniform in their TV consumption habits. To a great extent, though, demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Turkish society can account for the popularity of nationally-produced programmes and why they are seeking proximity in their media choices.

Therefore, in light of all the modifications, exclusions and additions in the Turkish remakes, it is obvious that cultural sensitivities, societal norms, mainstream perception of gender, power relations, family values prevalent among Turkish viewers direct the adaptation process as the positive reception of the adaptation depends on how the viewers will react based on their values, mindset, cultural capital among so many others. To this end, the power of the local and national norms and values being clear in the success of the remakes of foreign TV series makes cultural proximity relevant to the studies of scripted adaptations.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Asiye ÖZTÜRK

Birthplace: Gümüşhane

E-mail: asiyozturk@gmail.com

EDUCATION

2015- present: Yıldız Technical University Master's Programme
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

2006-2010 : Samsun Ondokuz Mayıs University
Faculty of Education
English Language Teaching

2002-2006: Tirebolu Lisesi

EXPERIENCE

2010- present : Kocaeli Üniversitesi
Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu