

**T.C.
ISTANBUL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**Thesis Advisor
Prof. Dr. Nilüfer Pembeciođlu**

**MARRIAGE PROGRAMS IN TURKISH TV CHANNELS:
REPRODUCTION OF SEXIST DISCOURSE IN
*“KISMETSE OLUR”***

**INTERNATIONAL MEDIA STUDIES
TURKISH-GERMAN JOINT MASTER’S PROGRAM
Master’s Thesis**

MELİKE ZEYNEP KORKMAZ

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İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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ABSTRACT

MARRIAGE PROGRAMS IN TURKISH TV CHANNELS: REPRODUCTION OF SEXIST DISCOURSE IN “*KISMETSE OLUR*” MELİKE ZEYNEP KORKMAZ

Marriage programs were broadcasted since 2007 in daytime with high ratings with the participation of bride and groom candidates who want to marry, mediated the consolidation and reproduction of marriage-related traditions and gender roles in everyday life. These shows occupied the significant part of daytime television in Turkey until they were banned in April 29, 2017.

Since 2007 until 2017, it's seen that 12 different marriage shows were broadcasted in daytime in Turkish television. These programs are in reality show formats and they have the highest rating ranks in day-time. The pioneer of this recent 'marriage concept' stream was *Dest-i İzdivaç* which was broadcasted in 2007 on Flash TV. The program's ratings were so successful that one by one each TV channel started to broadcast its own marriage-show format.

This research is began with an effort to understand how masculine ideology orientations present in marriage programs and if patriarchy has undergone any transformation. The study is based on Foucault's concept of discourse to discuss "discourse and representation" in the media. The roles given to man and women in marriage shows, the signs of patriarchal ideology has shown itself and the stereotypes in the content were researched.

This study primarily aims to contribute to the literature of social sciences in the field of gender stereotyping. The marriage programs have been critically examined because they erode social norms (Yağbasan & Çiçek). This research is important in the context of the recognition of patriarchal mentality on marriage practices by examining *Kismetse Olur*, the most complained marriage show to RTUK in 2016. The show was analyzed using the studies on television and gender issues in the world and Turkey. The aim of this study is to explain how the roles of femininity and masculinity are established through television and how gender roles are consolidated. The research reveals the reflection of social practices to television while it provides important information about the quality of the correlation between gender roles and the institution of marriage. Discourse analysis method and qualitative content analysis method are used in order to explain how the customs and traditions become compatible with mass media.

KEYWORDS: Marriage shows, Turkish television, Gender, Matrimonial market, Patriarchy

ÖZ

**TÜRK TV KANALLARINDAKİ EVLİLİK PROGRAMLARI: KISMETSE OLUR'DA
CİNSİYETÇİ SÖYLEMİN YENİDEN ÜRETİLMESİ
MELİKE ZEYNEP KORKMAZ**

Evlenmek isteyen gelin ve damat adaylarının katılımıyla 2007'den beri gündüz kuşağında yayınlanan yüksek reytingli evlilik programları, evlilikle ilgili geleneklerin ve gündelik hayattaki cinsiyet rollerinin pekiştirilmesinde ve yeniden üretilmesine güçlü bir aracı olmuştur. Bu programlar 29 Nisan 2017'de meclis tarafından yasaklanana kadar Türk televizyonlarında gündüz kuşağının önemli bir bölümünü işgal etmiştir.

2007 ile 2017 yılları arasında Türk televizyon kanallarında 12 farklı evlilik programı yayınlanmıştır. Reality show formatındaki bu programlar gündüz kuşağının en yüksek izlenme oranlarına sahiptir. Bu yeni evlilik konseptli programların öncüsü olan Dest-i İzdivaç, 2007 yılında Flash Tv'de yayınlanmaya başladıktan sonra reytingleri o kadar başarılı oldu ki diğer televizyon kanalları da kendi evlilik programı formatlarını yayınlamaya başladı.

Bu çalışma öncelikli olarak toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri alanındaki sosyal bilimler literatürüne katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Evlilik programları, toplumsal normları aşındırdıkları (Yağbasan & Çiçek) için eleştirel bir şekilde incelenmiştir. Bu araştırma, 2016 yılında RTÜK'e en çok şikâyet edilen evlilik programı olan *Kismetse Olur*'u inceleyerek, evlilik uygulamalarına ataerkil zihniyetin tanınması bağlamında önem taşımaktadır.

Program, dünyada ve Türkiye'deki *televizyon ve cinsiyet* konularında yapılan çalışmalar kullanılarak analiz edildi. Bu çalışmanın amacı kadın ve erkek rollerinin televizyon aracılığıyla nasıl oluşturulduğunu ve cinsiyet rollerinin nasıl pekiştirildiğini açıklamaktır. Araştırma, toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri ile evlilik kurumu arasındaki bağlantıyı ortaya koyarken toplumsal pratiklerin televizyona nasıl yansıdığı hakkında da önemli bilgiler vermektedir. Gelenek, örf ve adetlerin kitle iletişim araçlarıyla nasıl uyumlu hale getirildiğini açıklamak için eleştirel söylem analizi ve nitel içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

ANAHTAR KELİMELELER: Evlilik programları, Türk Televizyonu, Cinsiyet, Evlilik Piyasası, Ataerkillik

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1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, marriages within the Turkish family structure are based on the belief that two people will be able to spend good time in the same environment and love each other with love and respect. People in the age of marriage meet each other or they get introduced by friends or family within a traditional frame. Since 2007, some marriage decisions are taken through television programs contrary to traditional forms and it has been legitimizing this way of marriages are usual and can be done as an alternative. (Polat & Karşlı, 2012, p.36)

Marriage is one of the basic concepts that people apply throughout their lives. The structure of marriage differs in correlation with the cultural structure and values of the society. Carrying the relationship within certain patterns allows marriage to be considered and examined as a social institution. In the emergence of different forms of marriage; regional factors, cultural differences, educational status, social and economic reasons play an important role. It should also be considered that the social changes as a consequence of rapid urbanization set ground for new forms of marriage. The most popular form of marriage today is to marry after a certain period of flirtation, yet young people in the age of marriage and their families search for different marriage forms mostly because of indecision and fear of disagreement with their partner (Kaya, 2013, p:89).

Popular culture started to be defined as a culture of the masses that started to live in urbans with the industrial revolution and popular culture started to be used to refer new habits of masses and to define an approach to consume everything (Güngör, 2011). Culture can be spread all over the world through media which can interact with the content and ideologies that it spreads (Taylan & Arklan, 2008). In the process of communication through media, culture can be reproduced and new cultural values can be published for the benefit of hegemony. According to Adorno (2003), the industry is able to both commoditize people on the screen to use and reproduce and commoditize important cultural values of the society. The television can increase ratings by using the attributes of the participants, and they can consume them as commodities. On the other hand, television can be used by participants as a platform of attracting attention and glamor at the same time (Tekinalp, 2011). Especially, it can be expressed that television broadcasts are shaped in the popular culture frame and turned into a consumption-oriented publisher. Today, television is seen as a transporter of popular culture. People can be exposed to hidden or open messages of popular culture through mass media. Also, popular culture products are the most essential source for media contents. In other words, the media use popular culture products to cultivate such values in order to ensure the

adoption of lifestyle patterns required by the system by individuals. In this process, television is more influential than other mass media in achieving this goal.

Marriage programs are first adapted to Turkish TV channels from match-making programs (Gökçearslan, 2008). They became one of the most popular TV programs in Turkey, considering the highest ratings of daytime in 2017 announced by RTUK. This adapted version of match-making programs both attracted high interest and sharp criticism of Turkish audience. These programs transform marriage institution into technical information by re-creating and adding new practices to the standard marriage patterns, so it causes the family institution, the smallest structural unit of society, to be created with the wrong reasons (Nüfusçu & Yılmaz, 2012). According to Belligüçük (2004), quiz shows such as *Millionaire* which offer money reward in exchange for information and liberal education, fulfill their duty to create the society we call 'information society'. But marriage shows which offer money reward in exchange for happiness, love, loyalty and similar emotions could cause extremely important cultural erosion. Materiality is featured in marriage shows. It seems that the material values of the marriage and the formation of the family institution are held in front by the contestants (Kanipek, 2017).

The interest shown to marriage programs is important to understand the social representation of marriage institution and to understand the reproduction mechanisms of gender roles depending on this. Just as marriage shows have caused a new structural transformation in marriage process, traditional marriage patterns have been incorporated into marriage programs in different ways. It can not be assumed that the gender representations in the media are independent of gender identifications in the society. In this context, this study also examined the televised marriage programs to understand gender identification and stereotyping in Turkish society.

Patriarchy is the expression of the male dominant family, which means the administration of the man, who is considered to be the father of the family. The male dominant family type considers women, children and slaves secondary and dependent. Today, patriarchy or male dominance is used as a term referring to the string of power relations that existed at the origin of man's domination of man (Bhasin, 1993, p:3).

How the stereotypes about women and men occur and which gender is dominant in the culture can be seen clearly in *language*. Gender stereotypes are constantly being reproduced in daily conversation and masculine hegemony is underlined everyday (Güven & Kanık, 2016). One of the most appropriate methods of examining this concrete construction is to expose these representations. So television is the optimum medium to examine the stereotypes and representations in society.

1.1 Marriage Types In Turkey

In the process of social change and development, urbanization and industrialization have an important place. In metropolitans in Turkey, it's seen that "meeting and marrying" is common while there are many different ways of getting married in the regions where the traditionalism is heavily repressed. According to Dr. Lutfi Sezen's research in 2005, there are 33 different marriage forms in Turkey.

1) Arranged Marriage:

It is a form of marriage that is intensely seen in traditional regions. The attempt to "choose a girl" in this form of marriage is initiated directly by the mother, the sister or the father of the groom to be married. It's not enough that the groom candidate likes the girl, also the girl should be approved by the other members of groom's family.

There are three basic elements in marriage that are defined as sighted. The most effective of these is the mediator who undertakes the task of introducing the family. Mediators who are usually elderly and female, find potential partners from two suitable families with similar socioeconomic status and recommend them to each other. The second element is the 'bride side' who evaluates the social and economic capital of the grooms's family and the potential to sustain this capital. The thirds element is the groom side who evaluates the bride's family's reputation for honor and dignity, girl's beauty, her ability to housework and child care.

According to 2016 report of Parliamentary Research Commission of Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM) arranged marriages are still common in Turkey with 51%. In arranged marriages, a high percent of individuals took the ultimate decision by themselves. However, it seems that 10% of the people were married with the decision of the family without individual's own consideration.

2) Abduction of the Bride (Marriage without Wedding):

In the case that the families disagree with the marriage, the abduction is on the agenda. This is most likely due to the socioeconomic and other obstacles of the girl's side. Among these obstacles, "bride wealth" has an important place or wedding costs are too high for the families' economic situations so the boy and the girl makes a deal and the boy abducts the girl. The other form of the abduction is to kidnap the girl without her consent. Once there is the abduction, the families give their consent to that marriage because it's thought they already had sexual intercourse.

3) Marriage for Bride Wealth:

In many regions of Anatolia, the cost that groom's family pay bride's side for the marriage is called "bride wealth". This payment is made in cash, as well as in gold, house, garden, field or live animals (horse, sheep, cattle, etc).

4) Seat Taking (*Otura Kalma*):

Besides "abduction of the bride", there's also "seat taking" situation which is the girl takes her dowry and moves to boy's house without asking. There marriage forms are found in Kütahya, Sivas, Kastamonu cities. The bride is often unacceptable to the boy's family because moves to boy's house ignoring her own dignity. This forms is also interpreted as "the abduction of the groom by the girl".

5) Abduction by Stealing the Headscarf:

In some parts of Hakkari, Van, Ağrı and Erzurum cities, "stealing a garment of the girl" is equated with abduction of the girl. According to this tradition; if a girl's headscarf is forcibly taken away by the young man, girl's chastity is considered impaired. The boy's family must agree on the girl's side. Otherwise, armed conflicts and bloodshed are inevitable.

6) Betrothed In the Cradle (*Beşik Kertmesi*):

It is known that this form of marriage has a long history. This type of marriage, in which socio-economic and psychological factors are prevalent, is also seen in India and Australia. Friends, neighbors or relatives who love each other very well, while the children are still in the cradle, hit one of the cribs (mark) to perform the engagement without the knowledge of the girl and the boy. If this marriage ceremony is broken, armed conflicts and bloodshed may occur in heavily traditional regions.

7) Foal-Comes Marriage (*Taygeldi Evlilik*):

A widowed woman brings her own children to a widowed man's house and they live together or vice-versa. The children brought with the bride or the groom are called "foal-comes". It is a form of marriage that is caused by socio-economic and psychological factors.

8) Second Wife Marriage (*Kuma Getirme Evliliği*):

Before the Republic, some men whose wife was infertile or couldn't give birth to a boy, remarried and had two wives at the same time. This tradition, which is almost lost in large cities today, still continues in the rural areas of our Eastern and Southeastern regions. In such marriages, the first woman falls from grace after second woman's arrival. To avoid this fall, sometimes first wife chooses this secondary co-wife, herself.

9) Berder (Cost) Marriage:

It is a form of marriage applied in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia. In this kind of marriage, which moves the "bride-wealth" problem and obligation away, the two

families with a daughter and a son match their children. One family takes the other family's daughter for their son and gives their own daughter for the other family's son.

10) Kepir (Wild Swap) Marriage:

Two single friends who can't marry because of the poverty, exchange their sisters. Without intimidating their family, they take their sisters to a desolate place. They force the girls and deliver them each other mutually. Thus an exchange marriage is occurred.

11) Marriage With Dead Brother's Wife:

This form of marriage originates from an understanding as "not letting honor to go others". The wife of the deceased brother gets married to the single brother. If there's not a brother, nephews or close relatives are preferred. The division of inheritance or the concerns about the future of orphaned children cause such marriages.

12) Sister-In-Law Marriage:

After his wives death, the widowed husband marries his sister-in-law. The idea of preferring their aunt as their stepmother to orphaned children is effective in this form of marriage.

13) 'İçgüveysi' Marriage:

Some families with good economic status prefers to welcome their groom to their house instead letting their daughter away. It is a form of marriage that has socio-economic and psychological reasons at its core and man's economic freedom is limited.

14) Orphanage Marriage:

Marriage of a girl or boy with a relative if she/he has not any family member left. It's based on the thought of he/she shall not be left alone in the future.

15) Consanguineous Marriage:

Nearly one-fourth of married couples in Turkey are close relatives according to TUIK (Turkish Statistical Institution) 2016 Family Structure Report (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr>, 09.12.2017). Southeast Anatolia (Gaziantep, Adiyaman, Kilis, Sanliurfa, Diyarbakir, Mardin, Batman, Sirnak, Siirt) was the most common region of consanguineous marriages with 42.6% according to Statistical Region Units Classification.

It is known that this marriage which is very common in the rural areas of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia is based on socio-economic and psychological reasons. This marriage style is preferred because of the division of inheritance or close relatives will be able to take better care of the father and mother during the old age.

16) Fait Accompli Marriage (Oldu-Bitti Evlilik):

It is the result of the girl catching the weak side of the man and having sexual intercourse with him. This type of marriage is also the result of a man's rape too.

17) Marriage for Money:

Children in the age of primary school are taken away from school and married for money. It is realized that the "daughters" are sold to elderly and disabled people as wives.

18) Marriage for Blood Money:

It is also seen that in the rural areas of the East and the South; money, gold, field or sometimes a girl is given in the exchange of a murdered person. It is a primitive marriage form which uneducation lies beneath. It's only positive aspect is to end the blood feuds.

19) Revenge Marriages:

Some feudal families with blood feud between them, prefer this way to hurt opponent family's honor and damaging their prestige. This marriage form occurs by abducting each other family's daughters and lead to armed conflicts and bloodshed.

20) Polygamy Marriages:

After the Republic, this marriage form is forbidden. Although it's not legal, rural areas with low levels of education still continues this tradition. There are socio-economic and psychological reasons in its base. It's a result of an understanding that ignores the rights and freedoms of women.

21) Agreed Marriage:

It is a form of marriage that widowed men or women perform in old age. For the health care of the old man, religious marriage is done with an indigent woman. When the old man dies, the woman gets what's left from her husband.

22) Fraudulent Marriage:

It is a form of marriage that is applied for keeping taking the old man's pension after his death. It's a marriage on paper. Sometimes, citizens who live abroad apply this marriage form with a citizen in order to take citizenship of that country.

23) Coincidental Marriage (Love At First Sight):

Because the couples decide on marriage without knowing each other well enough, they often result in divorce.

24) Marriage Through Ad:

In recent years, it has seen that newspapers, magazines, and internet are advertised for choosing a partner. Those who are united in common points can decide a marriage after they come together and talk with the support of the intermediary institution that carries out the ad.

25) Preferred Marriage

This type of marriage is common among families with the same economic power within the community. In the form of this marriage, the girl and the boy have given the authority

to "chose their partner" to the elders of the family. The difference between "arranged marriage" is that the girl and the boy must be in the same circle and knows each other before.

26) Marriage With a Foreigner:

It is a form of marriage that is carried out mostly by expats. Some Turkish workers don't bring their wife in Turkey with them and marry a foreign woman to prefer polygamy. Uneducation lies in the basis of this form.

27) Different Sectarian Marriage:

Religious and sectarian differences are the top obstacles between the couples. It is quite difficult for those who have not reached a certain level of education and economic freedom to make this marriage.

28) Mistress Marriage:

Among the uneducated rich who live in big cities, keeping a mistress is a way to show off their wealth. It is also based on socio-economic and psychological factors.

29) Muta Marriage:

A temporary, short-term marriage to avoid adultery in religion. This form of marriage is mostly practiced in Iran, yet it is seen in some circles in Turkey.

30) 'Dişgüveysi' Marriage:

Kuni Nakazon who came to Turkey to choose a husband through a Japanese Television's matchmaking program, showed the intense interest of Turkish man for marrying a foreign woman and move to her country.

31) Widow Marriage:

Its seen when a widowed man marries a widowed woman. Sometimes a 'spinster' marries a widowed man.

32) Love Marriage:

It is the most common form of marriage in the big cities and in the higher education levels. Young people who have found their personality and have high educational level with economic freedom prefer marriage in this way.

33) Television Marriage:

It is a type of marriage that is conducted by some television channels. Young and middle-aged people who want to marry, even the "mother-in-law candidates" are invited to a television show. They stay at a specific environment and meet each other under the surveillance of the production team.

According to Sezen (2005), a new form of marriage was emerged with matrimonial (also known as marriage) shows. Television marriage is a brand new concept after 2000's but it also includes various form of marriage's inside. In matrimonial shows at Turkish television, multiple marriage forms could be seen together. It is mostly based

on “arranged marriage” (*gözücü usûlü*) form but widow marriages, foal-comes marriages (*taygeldi evlilik*) and even coincidental marriages (*yıldırım evliliği*) happened in these programs. The contestants want to create a love story, show an eternal and strong love relationship to the audience and prove their enemies are defeated. So, they can marry anyway even they will probably get divorced in 1 year. Proponents of marriage programs defend that arranged marriages can only occur on the screen because there isn't any other environment or medium left for people who want to marry can meet or be introduced anymore.¹ Rapid urbanization after industrialization caused the neighborhood culture to disappear so that people started to live in big cities by communicating less with each other. Neighborhood concept is almost over, people now live in their core families, work-to-home, and now their most loyal friend is "television". Güler interprets this as, no one wants to take responsibility for mediating, nobody is a reference to anyone because people can't get to know each other well enough under these conditions. When there is no families, neighbors or elders to organize “arranged marriages”, people who want to marry started to show great interest to these matrimonial shows although they're not approved by some circles.

According to Batabyal, arranged marriages have been around for several centuries and they are the rule of society in many parts of Africa, Asia and Middle East rather than the exception. We can see arranged marriages mostly among pre-industrial societies in order to create and preserve alliances between the extended families. Nevertheless, love marriages are found more often in among the more modernized segments of the population. Hortaçsu states that romantic love marriages were first appeared in Turkish urban metropolis at the end of 19th century. Today, we can see a hybrid form of love marriage and arranged marriage in modern Turkey.

¹ Güler, 29.03.2011, *Evlilik programlarının analizi*, 11.02.2018,

Table-1: Percentage of Decision for Marriage

Decision for marriage by sex (2006)		
TURKEY	Female	Male
Arranged Marriage (Decision of my family)	36.2	24.8
Arranged Marriage (By decision)	28.0	31.9
My choice, family approval	27.4	35.2
Without approval and information of family	6.1	5.7
My decision, family not informed	1.5	1.8
Married in spite of my family's rejection	0.6	0.6
According to strict traditional rules	0.1	0.1
URBAN (TURKEY)	Female	Male
Arranged Marriage (Decision of my family)	31.9	22.5
Arranged Marriage (By decision)	31.5	39.3
My choice, family approval	28.8	30.9
Without approval and information of family	6.1	4.6
My decision, family not informed	1.7	1.9
Married in spite of my family's rejection	0.8	0.8
According to strict traditional rules	0.1	0.1
RURAL (TURKEY)	Female	Male
Arranged Marriage (Decision of my family)	43.5	28.6
Arranged Marriage (By decision)	26.6	33.3
My choice, family approval	20.5	28.6
Without approval and information of family	1.2	1.6
My decision, family not informed	7.8	7.4
Married in spite of my family's rejection	0.3	0.4
According to strict traditional rules	0.1	0.1

Table-1: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu Web Page, 2006

According to Family Structure Survey for married couples which was conducted in 2006 by Turkish Statistics Institute, in total 64.2% of women and 56.2% of men married by arranged marriage procedure, by their own decision or decision of their family. It can be inferred that majority needed to be introduced with the opposite sex. As it's seen clearly through the table, the rates of arranged marriage decrease for urban areas.

1.2 Emergence of Marriage Programs As Reality Shows

As a television format it is possible to consider marriage programs as a reality show. According to Annette Hill (2005), the reality show is an abstract description that can produce hundreds of different forms in the cultural context. The ancestor of reality shows is the famous *Big Brother* format which has been broadcasted in 78 countries for 16 years in total. *Big Brother* was first produced in the UK and then sold globally and reproduced in accordance with local tastes are the formats produced when ordinary people compete to get a certain reward. The situations in which the contestants are racing are fictionalized by a technique approaching the documentary. Later many different formats were produced with unlimited variety: *Survivor*, *Bachelor*, *American Idol*, *Dancing With The Stars*, *Top Chef*, *Tough Love*, *The Biggest Loser*, *Temptation Island*, etc.

On the other hand, various countries around the world for local tastes diversified reality shows just like USA's '*Oprah Winfrey Show*' which is a reality show & talk show format.

The diversity of samples and the localization of many makes it difficult to identify 'reality show'. However, it is possible to mention some common features. First, the participation of non-professional/amateur actors, which are 'ordinary people', is enriched with interactive elements. Another feature of 'reality show' is claiming to show the truth which brings a debate on credibility, reliability or fiction (Dovey, 1998). The 'reality claiming' of these shows is to expose the real life stories of ordinary people on the screen with the use of "realistic" fictional spaces just as *Kismetse Olur* used a home-like designed studio which actually has no roof or out walls.

In this framework, we can say that the marriage shows have 'reality show' features. In Turkish television, marriage shows had first evolved from matchmaking reality shows. The first matchmaking show in Turkey was broadcasted in a private-owned channel Show TV in 1994. It was called *Hide and Seek (Saklambaç)* and the format was simple. One man asking questions about relationship, life, and their hobbies to the three girls who were behind a curtain or vice versa. The candidates couldn't see each other. When he selects the girl by her "inner beauty", the host sends the couple to a romantic dinner with a limousine.

The format of marriage or *matrimonial* shows is not the same with the usual matchmaking shows. American style dating shows evolved to marriage shows in Turkey through the cultural context. A show is described as *successful* if it only mediated a couple to marry. If there are not any married couples left at that season, it

means the show is a failure.

Although there had been matchmaking shows already in Turkish channels, the first 'marriage concepted show' was broadcasted in 2003 on Show TV. It was right after *Biri Bizi Gözetliyor* - Turkish version of *Big Brother* - spree which started in 2001. The audience first met the reality show concept with *Biri Bizi Gözetliyor (BBG)* on Turkish television and they get addicted to watch ordinary people's relationships, fights and love stories in a close house full of hidden cameras. Yet the format of *BBG* couldn't satisfy the romance expectation of Turkish audience so in 2 years, *Ben Evleniyorum (I'm Getting Married)* was started on Show TV with the same concept of *BBG*. A group of men and women never met before started to compete in a closed house with hidden cameras. Yet, this time the aim and award was different. The ultimate victory was 'marriage'. After this first contest type marriage program appeared on screen in 2003, various versions were published for 2 following years. (Gökçeşlan, 2008)

Matchmaking shows aim to catalyze the flirting period of compatible couples. On the other hand, marriage shows aim to marry couples. If the winner couple doesn't get married at the end of the season, they can't get the grand award. For example, in *Kismetse Olur* season 1, Cansel and Eser - the favorite couple of the show - became the winners. The host asked them if they are ready to marry. The couple said they needed more time to know each other. So, the right of grand prize became the second runner couple's, Nur and Batu. The host again asked them if they are ready to marry. Nur and Batu said that it's too soon but they love each other and ready for that adventure. So they became the winners of the show, they took the grand prize instead of Cansel and Eser. It's said that the grand prize in this case is a house which worths 700 thousand Turkish Liras - which is a very high amount - and the costs of the wedding ceremony would be covered by the production company. Yet, the correct amount numbers has never been officially disclosed to public.²

After the intense interest to first matrimonial show in Turkey - *Ben Evleniyorum* - this has been followed by other producers and television channels. *Biz Evleniyoruz (We're Getting Married)* was the second show in 2003 and it created its own phenomenon contestants Tülin and Caner. This stormy relationship was very popular in Turkey in 2003 with Caner's breaking a tea cup on his own head. These two contestants never married each other. After 13 unmarried years, they both would be attended to marriage shows again. Two different rival programs hired each one. When

² *Kismetse Olur'un Birincisi Belli Oldu*, <https://www.haberler.com/kismetse-olur-un-birincisi-belli-oldu-8587463-haberi/> , 15.01.2018

Caner joined *Esra Erol'da* in 2017, Tülin joined *Evleneceksen Gel* in the meanwhile.

While the wind of marriage shows blowing at full speed, the marriage shows in Turkish television kept on evolving according to Turkish customs and traditions. One year later, *Size Anne Diyebilir miyim?* (May I Call You Mother?) was broadcasted on Kanal D. This time mother-in-laws were included to the process but the show only included the mothers of groom candidates. It aimed to be processed on bride vs. mother-in-law conflict cliché. This show also had its own phenomenon contestants, the twin brothers Volkan and Gürkan.

In the same year, Show TV saw the potential in bride vs. mother-in-law concept and started to broadcast its own show; *Gelinim Olur musun?* (Will You Be My Bride?) It created one of the unforgettable phenomenon contestants; the famous Semra Kaynana (Semra Mother-in-law). Semra Kaynana was known as a nasty old lady who rejected her son Ata's potential bride Sinem. Each episode Semra Kaynana made Sinem cry by insulting and shouting. Eventually, the show had such a rating that the final episode of *Gelinim Olur musun?* had 71% share on December 17, 2004.³ These contestants were not lucky to carry the temporary fame. Sinem and Ata never had united because of Semra Kaynana's dominance. 1 year later, Ata was found dead in a hotel room, the cause of death was drug overdose.⁴ Sinem joined a fashion show on TV 11 years later.

These reality show formatted marriage programs in *Big Brother* concept, kept the audience interested by "cliché conflicts in culture". The most popular conflict in traditional marriage structure is 'bride vs. mother-in-law' yet this was not enough for the audience. There was a need for a harder conflict and the production companies filled it with *Yabancı Gelin* (Foreign Bride). This was again a contest where the groom candidates entered 'a closed house' with their mothers but this time the bride candidates were foreign originated. There were also cultural conflicts frequently because bride candidates were not Turkish. The groom candidates were generally patriarchal and low educated, the mother-in-laws were usually dominant, critical but traditional and bride candidates were expected to make sacrifices for their loves; such as quitting their modeling jobs. Its phenomenon contestants were Halim and Gelusa; American girl and her Turkish footballer lover. This couple became the first runners of the show, Gelusa quitted modeling and they got married.

³ Ay, 2004, *Semra Hanım Reyting Rekoru Kırdırdı*, 12.02.2018, <http://www.internethaber.com/semra-hanim-reyting-rekoru-kirdirdi-1100822h.htm>

⁴ *Ata'nın Ölüm nedeni Aşırı Dozda Uyuşturucu*, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/ata-nin-olum-nedeni-asiri-dozda-uyusturucu-351451>, 30.02.2018

Each marriage program created its own long-term candidates which are actually the strongest contestants thanks to audience voting and they became phenomenal. It can be observed that the candidates who stayed in the shows for a long time are identified with the program and their individual stories are put in front of the marriage path. It is seen that this dramatization causes a new 'story flow' in the program and it can be interpreted that the private life of the candidates is frequently foregrounded in the program. Another issue that has been observed during the program is that long-term candidate characters mentioned above are often presented their unique characteristics such as singing, reading poetry and similar aspects in the program. It can be assumed that this is about changing the routine in the program.

During this trend, TV channels kept producing new marriage programs in the same 'closed house concept'. *Bir Prenses Aranıyor* (A Prince Wanted), *Hayaller Gerçek Oluyor* (Dreams Become True), the shows aiming to remarry elderly people; *Kalplerde İkinci Bahar* (Second Spring In The Hearts), *Sevda Masalı* (Love Tale) and *Hayat Yeniden Başlıyor* (Life Starts Over) were the following shows which were not so popular. The wind of marriage programs started to blow in the beginning of 2003 but could only last until the end of 2004. Once the audience got used to the concept, its peers couldn't take attention anymore so this trend faded away.

In brief, the first appearance of the marriage programs was at the beginning of 2000's. All these programs had 'closed house concept' just as *BBG (Big Brother)*. All contestants were living together in a house full of hidden cameras. Within 2 years, ratings have gradually decreased and this trend had come to an end. This first emerge of marriage programs had occupied the agenda for 2 years and were criticized strictly. But the actual marriage show trend resumed in 2007 with *Dest-i İzdibaç* on Flash TV which lasted for 10 whole years.

The types of marriage programs started in 2007 and after are similar to *Hide and Seek* in 1994, the first matchmaking show, introducing the candidates face-to-face or asking each other questions from behind a curtain to ensure that communication is done in a positive or negative way. *Dest-i İzdibaç*, *Esra Erol'da*, *Zuhal Topal'la İzdibaç*, *Su Gibi* and *Evleneceksen Gel* are in the same 'behind the curtain' concept. Among them, only *Kismetse Olur* had a revival of the 'Big Brother closed house concept' in the old marriage competitions and it caused massive effect to the audience; became the most complained show in 2016.⁵

⁵ 2016 Yılı Vatandaş Bildirimleri Raporu, RTÜK

It is seen that the programs usually take place in the time zone of the daytime until almost the main news bulletins. Marriage programs have been broadcasted for almost 5 days on weekdays at the most frequently watched national TV channels until prohibition.

1.3 Broadcasted Shows in Turkish Television Between 2007-2017

Table-2: Broadcasted Marriage Shows 2007-2017

MARRIAGE SHOWS IN TURKISH TELEVISION BETWEEN 2007-2017			
PROGRAM	HOST	CHANNEL	PUBLISHED YEARS
<i>Dest'i İzdivaç</i>	Esra Erol / Semra/ Hülya Bozkaya, Ebru	Flash TV	2007-2017
<i>Esra Erol'da Evlen Benimle</i>	Esra Erol	ATV	2009-2017
<i>Zuhal Topal'la İzdivaç</i>	Zuhal Topal	Fox TV, Star TV	2009-2017
<i>Su Gibi</i>	Songül Karlı & Uğur Arslan / Seda Sayan	Fox TV, TV8	2011-2015
<i>Evleneceksen Gel</i>	Seda Sayan & Uğur Arslan	Star TV	2015-2017
<i>Kismetse Olur</i>	Seda Akgün	Kanal D	2015-2017
<i>Dünya Evi</i>	Selvihan Madencioğlu	Ekin TV	2012-2014
<i>Ne Çıkarsa Bahtına</i>	Sinem Yıldız/ Hülya Bozkaya	Flash TV, A24TV	2010-2017
<i>Hayat Sevince Güzel</i>	Sinem Yıldız / Perihan Savaş	Star TV	2014-2015
<i>Gelinim Sensin</i>	Ebru Akel	Fox TV	2016-2016
<i>Zahide Yetiş'le</i>	Zahide Yetiş	Show TV	2015-2017
<i>Hande Ataizi İle</i>	Hande Ataizi	Sony Channel	11.2017- 11.2017

While men and women of all ages are observed, it's seen that they're hoping to find their prospective husband or wife and a significant number of the participants are well over their 40s, while many are divorced or widowed. Many are looking for a companion, rather than the pursuit of a romantic relationship, let alone fall in love. Older men are looking for younger women; women are looking for financial stability.

“İzdivaç” (an old-fashioned term for marriage), “Su Gibi” (Like Water), “Dünya Evi”

(another term for marriage), “*Ne Çıkarsa Bahtına*” (Luck of the Draw), “*Hayat Sevince Güzel*” (Life is Beautiful When in Love), “*Evleneceksel Gel*” (Come If You’ll Marry), “*En İyi Benim*” (I am The Best) and finally “*Kismetse Olur*” (If It’s In Our Destiny) are some of the names of these marriage shows, some cancelled, other continuing to generate sometimes as many as a million viewers.

Turkey’s matrimonial reality shows, which have long kept viewers glued to television⁶ screens and made celebrities out of their hosts, have led to more than 87 thousand complaints in 2016, spurring the Radio and television Supreme Council (RTUK) into action. But the complaints, of course, are in correlation with the ratings and shares. These matrimonial shows were such a trend that in 2016 and 2017, all the channels were broadcasting these programs in daytime. It had an amazing audience ratio and fans so the channel managers could not give up matrimonial shows despite of RTUK warnings. In fact, there were even 2 or 3 different marriage shows on one channel. For example, in 2017 broadcasting period, Show Tv had two matrimonial shows in day-time: *Zahide Yetiş’le* and *Evleneceksen Gel*. The new broadcasting period of 2016 started with 5 matrimonial shows in day-time. The number of audience following the marriage shows, which was 3 million 173 thousand in the first week of competition rose considerably in the second week and reached 4 million 500 thousand.⁷

In this study, 15 episodes in March of both seasons of *Kismetse Olur* examined as sample. Random 15 episodes of March 2016 and random 15 episodes of March 2017 are choosed to transcribed. So, to compare the ratings of matrimonial shows in Turkish channels, ratings and shares of 2017 March should be analyzed as an example.

⁶ www.reytingsonuclari.com, 11.12.2017

⁷ Eyüboğlu, A. (2016). İzdivaç'lardan En Çok İzlenen Esra Erol Oldu,

www.milliyet.com.tr/-izdivac-lardan-en-cok-izlenen/magazin/ydetay/2309873/

Table-3:

Total Ratings of March 2017	Order	Channel	Rating	Share
<i>Evleneceksen Gel</i>	8	ShowTV	4,69	18,86
<i>Esra Erol'da</i>	10	ATV	4,37	11,66
<i>Zuhal Topal'la</i>	11	Star TV	4,2	14,81
<i>Kismetse Olur</i>	39	Kanal D	1,75	9,19
<i>Zahide Yetiş'le</i>	78	Show TV	0,89	5,86

(www.reytingsonuclari.com, 05.01.2018)

The consolidation of the patriarchal ideology, the traditionalist and conservative attitude, and the gender roles shaped in such a way as to sustain them all makes the gender inequality in society invisible. In order to make the media's sexist approach visible, a greater number of studies questioning media and human relations need to be done and shared with the public. A new one is added every day to the madness of marriage programs on TV channels. Following the bride & mother-in-law format, "coupling" format has taken its place in the flow of the marriage game, which combines the latest marriage and life concept. Such programs, many of which have negative effects on attendees and followers, have been criticized for ruining the institution of marriage, Turkish family structure and community morality. Marriage programs continue to be watched despite of being the most complained broadcasts in RTUK (Radio and television Supreme Council) line.

1.4 'Is It' Our Destiny?⁸

The reason for choosing *Kismetse Olur (If It's Our Destiny)* in this research is the format of the show is very different than the other marriage shows. The format is "made in Turkey" hundred percent. But unlike other marriage shows, the candidates don't need to decide quickly about their potential lover after talking 5 minutes behind the paranave. In *İzdivaç*, *Su Gibi*, *Dünya Evi* and the other formats, the couple's evaluate the potential lover inside of the studio with the comments of the jury and the audience. Whereas in *Kismetse Olur*, the candidates live in a Big Brother concepted house for 12 hours a day. They are recorded all time and of course they have so much time to observe the candidates. First season of the show took 9 months in total.

Contestants of competing shows which are also broadcasted in daytime are

⁸ Referred to the name of the show *Kismetse Olur (If It's Our Destiny)*

ordinary people mostly who see that platform as their last hope for marriage. They have a lower socioeconomic and educational level and are more diversified than the competitors of *Kismetse Olur*. According to Nüfusçu and Yılmaz's observations, the most excluded ones from social marriage market, constitute the five main categories that participate most in the program: 'elders', 'widows', 'house girls', 'immigrants' and 'low-income earners'. Especially in *Esra Erol'da*, *Zuhal Topal'la*, in *İzdivaç* and in *Su Gibi*, participant profile is mostly comprised of pensioner men (age 50+), divorced women (age 35+) or young house girls whom never worked. According to the report of Parliamentary Research Commission of TBMM in 2016, the majority of marriages in Turkey (87%) are between the ages of 18-29. A significant proportion of married individuals (57%) had their first marriage between the ages of 18-24. Hereby it should be noted that marriage programs expand the matrimonial market and offer the possibility of marrying people who can not find spouses in social life.

However, in *Kismetse Olur*, the contestants seem to have been carefully selected by their physical appearance. Generally pretty girls and handsome men were taken to the competition, the majority is young aged and middle income earners unlike the competitor shows such as *Esra Erol'da* or *Zuhal Topal'la*. It is thought that sharper and memorable characters may have been chosen in order to broadcast in the *Big Brother* format. One season lasts 9 months and the winner couple will be married with the financial support of the production company. The winner couple can't get the reward unless they get married.

According to RTUK's Annual Report of Audience in 2016, *Kismetse Olur* in Kanal D became the most complained program with 38 thousand 153 applications. The high tension, women's hostility to women and men's rudeness at the show caused negative reaction of the audience.

1.5 Rules Of The Show

Kismetse Olur is a competition show aired 6 days a week at Kanal D, between 12:00 pm and 17:00 pm. It has a 'closed house concept' where 7 girls and 7 boys live in two neighbor houses; "brides' house" and "grooms' house". One person is eliminated from each house every week perfunctorily and new ones arrive instead. New bride and groom candidates come to both houses and meet all the contestants. The producers succeeded in attracting the audience to the new entrances to the house. Because newbies choose to be involved in the middle of a new start-up relationship as a black bush. A bride candidate consistently stays between two men; or between two girls who

are a groom candidate.

The show is broadcasted for 6 days of the week. On Saturdays there is always an elimination called “final of the week”. The winner is to be chosen by audience voting. The person to be eliminated is to be chosen by the opposite house. For example, the grooms’ house vote for the less favorite bride.

There are 3 different voting polls at the program:

1. Award Round: Each week, one person is selected from each team. The selected one girl and one male candidate both earn 10 Thousand Turkish Liras and can not be eliminated that week. They also have a special prize (dinner, entertainment, etc.) with a person they choose from the opposing house, someone they want to flirt with. Sometimes the contestants themselves vote for the opposite house, sometimes audience SMS is used.
2. Conservation Round: Every week a person is selected from both teams. One girl and one male candidate selected can not be eliminated that week, he/she would be conserved that week. The contestants themselves vote for the opposite house.
3. Elimination Round: Every week one person is selected from both houses by contestants. One female and one male candidate are saying goodbye to the competition. New competitors join the show instead of them. Usually audience SMS is used as a voting method.

Kismetse Olur house is like a boxing ring with indefinite rules. The votes are either made in between the houses themselves, cross-team or by audience SMS. It’s a surprise!

In *Kismetse Olur*, there are some strict rules. The candidates (potential brides and grooms) are prohibited to meet out of the house, even if they are not each other’s candidates too. “Every man is a potential groom for every women in this house” they claim. They can connect via telephone but they can’t be together outside. If they are seen together out of the house, any eyewitness should send a proof (such as a photo) to production team. Thus, the informer will be awarded 5 thousand Turkish Liras and the contestants will be disqualified from the show.

The show also has ethical rules. Physical quarrels and curses are not broadcasted. The contestants with these bad attitudes get warning by the host and 3 warnings in total mean disqualification. Yet, the rules are being stretched by the production team because of the rating concern. Eliminated or disqualified contestants can return to house after weeks. This application is also a shock for their rivals and the audience.

2. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

Aim: The study is based on the assumption that the marriage programs are consolidating traditional gender roles and reproducing patriarchal ideology through television. The show was analyzed using the studies on television and gender issues in the world and Turkey.

The aim of this study is to explain how the roles of femininity and masculinity are established through television and how gender conceptualization are consolidated. The research reveals the relationship between television and social practices while it provides important information about the quality of the correlation between gender roles and the institution of marriage. Discourse analysis method is used in order to explain how the customs and traditions become compatible with mass media. This research is important in the context of the recognition of patriarchal mentality on marriage practices by examining *Kismetse Olur*, the most complained marriage show to RTUK in 2016.

Methodology: In this research, it is examined that how the traditions and customs became compatible with mass media and how mass media and broadcasting strategies changed those traditions and customs. Critical discourse analysis and qualitative content analysis methods are used in order to examine the subject.

Qualitative research is not based on numerical data and statistics but on verbal and qualitative analysis. The subject investigated is interpreted in its natural environment. Qualitative research is one of the ways which we produce information that is developed to solve humankind's own secrets and explore the depths of social systems. (Neuman, 2012, p. 224) Qualitative content analysis has been a method of studying 'social reality' by making inferences about its non-obvious features through written and explicit content features of social reality. (Timisi & Dursun, 2003, p: 23)

Important differences between discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis should not be overlooked. The aim of critical discourse analysis is to reflect from a/ different perspective the effects of the discourse on masses. (Van Dijk, 2003:352) The reason to choose critical discourse analysis for this research is to analyze the effects of the discourse on the masses in the context of power and hegemony relations. According to critical discourse analysis' point of view, it is also important *how* people say as much as *what* they say because the hierarchy in society is established through discourses. There is a huge difference between 'the discourse by the dominant hegemony' and 'the discourse by the dominated'. Through these differences, various power positions are revealed or constructed. (Sözen, 1999)

In this study, qualitative content analysis and critical discourse analysis techniques are used in a way that supports each other.

Universe & Sample: The universe of the research is all broadcasted marriage programs

in Turkish television since 2007 until 2017 including *Esra Erol'da*, *Zulah Topal'la*, *Evleneceksen Gel*, *Dest- İzdivaç* etc. The sample of the research is *Kismetse Olur* program on Kanal D and 30 episodes in total are transcribed. The three reasons for choosing this program are:

- 1) It's '*Big Brother* concepted closed house' format which allows to observe content for longer time periods and more detailed, also the characters of the show accompanied the audience for a longer period.
- 2) It received the highest audience complaints to RTUK among the peers (Vatandaş Bildirimleri Yıllık Raporu 2016, RTUK)
- 3) At the competitor shows such as *Esra Erol'da* or *Zuhal Topal'la*, the candidates are usually the ones excluded from matrimonial market; the elders, foreigners, low incomers and widows. It is assumed that the audience found that contestant profile miserable, so the audience don't identify themselves with them. But the audience identified themselves with carefully selected *Kismetse Olur* contestants which are usually pretty girls and handsome men, young aged and middle income earners. This identification allows the ideologies cultivated to the audience more effectively.

Data: As for the data concerned, the two seasons (2015-2016 season and 2016-2017 season) of this show which was broadcasted on every weekdays and Saturdays were watched and examined. The show didn't need to be recorded because the episodes are available on its online webpage of Kanal D (www.kanald.com.tr/kismetse-olur/bolumler). Each season's 15 days period broadcasted in March (March 2016 & March 2017) are chosen as sample. In Turkey, annual broadcast season starts in September so March is considered as the maturity period. The show gained its own ossified audience mass until March, besides the phenomenon contestants had their own fan clubs. So, 15 days of period in March of both seasons, in total 30 episodes, are transcribed. The study on these transcriptions is based on the statements of bride and groom candidates and presenters, then the findings were interpreted with a feminist approach.

Technic: In the 30 episodes examined, the sexist speeches used by the competitors and the host were scanned, their body language, gestures and mimics especially during the fightings or elimination nights gave a lot of information about their attitudes.

Limitations: *Kismetse Olur* had only 2 seasons in the screen. First season was in 2016-2017, lasted 9 months. But second season couldn't last that long because of the government's ban for marriage shows in April 2017. Time of the show was a limitation for this study, examining the final of the 2nd season could be contributed to the research.

Criteria For Result: If there is heavy sexist discourse in 30 episodes transcribed in total, it can be interpreted that marriage programs continue consolidating and reproducing sexist discourse. As a cultural carrier the most common media tool, television, dictates certain

perceptions subconsciously so it will be understood that whether the gender stereotyping is dictated to the marriage structure in Turkey or not. The analysis resulted in the construction of masculinity and patriarchal discourse through the program, it will be compared with already existing studies in the literature.



3. FINDINGS

In general, it can be said that marriage shows correspond to a new formation in society in terms of content, genre, discourse, socioeconomic characteristics of the participants. In other words, although there is a socio-cultural frame of a public sphere which different individuals come together, it's seen that contestants usually have low levels of education and low intellectual potential. Therefore, a homogeneous mass is mentioned in the context of lifestyle, point of view, standart of judgment, intellectual depth and behavioral courtesy.

The remarkable results of "Women's Television Monitoring Trends Survey 2" conducted by RTÜK in August 2010 on marriage programs are as follows. Female audience was asked about their "most disliked TV programs" and it was observed that marriage programs were the least favorable programs. The top 3 disliked programs by women are determined as *Esra Erol'da*, *Su Gibi* and *Zuhal Topal'la İzdivaç* which. On the other hand, when their top favorite programs were asked in the same research, marriage programs are among the top seven favorite programs of women. This program format is said to be both the most popular and the most disliked by women as a result of differences between the values thought and the roles given in their lives.⁹

According to the report of Foundation of Turkish Women in Legal Professions, in the "marriage programs" broadcasted on Turkish TV, women are humiliated as follows (www.cumhuriyet.com.tr, 21.12.2017):

- 1) *Dest-i İzdivaç* (Flash TV): When the candidate calls the host "Siz" (You) as a show of respect, the host calls the candidates as "Sen" (you), positioning them beneath her. The host sometimes uses phrases such as "What do you say girl?" (Ne diyon kız), "my sister"(ablacım) or "my brother"(abicim).
- 2) *Kismetse Olur* (Kanal D): The programs rating hits the top when there is an aggressive behavior or violence. Also, women candidates are shown as unemployed, unqualified even they have their professions. The only thing matters is their housewifing skills such as cooking, cleaning and good keeping up with their mother-in-laws.
- 3) *Evleneceksen Gel* (Show TV): Seda Sayan, who runs the program, uses slang like "Girl, mama, ayol" abundantly, again humiliating the contestants.
- 4) *İzdivaç* (Star TV): 'Relationships with full of fights and debates' are legitimated as usual, normal to young audience. It is emphasized that the only problem of man is marriage and sexuality.
- 5) *En İyi Benim* (Fox TV): A program which is focused on man choose woman if he likes her appearance. That is why women lead cruel criticism to their fellows, the other women. No gender equality concerns.

⁹ Kadınların Televizyon İzleme Eğilimleri Araştırması-2, RTÜK, Kamuoyu, Yayın Araştırmaları ve Ölçme Dairesi Başkanlığı, Ankara, 2010, p.13.

- 6) *Böyle Çok Güzelsin* (TV8): Men who do not find their wives attractive anymore, criticize their wives mercilessly. This includes psychological violence. It's a program that is purely men-focussed and recognizes only men.
- 7) *Esra Erol'la* (ATV): Insults and megalomania are being brought to the forefront. The woman who has been sneered at first, is applauded after seeing appreciation from a man candidate.

3.1 How Sexism Was Reproduced At The Show?

Ideology is related not to the apparent face of the language but to the meanings in the discourses, and how the discourse is used to create certain effects needs to be examined (Eagleton, 2005). Therefore, ideology can be transferred to masses through discourses. It can be said that the problem about the representation of men and women on the screen is a remarkable issue at this point. The representations formed by discourses may become a problem of representation by the imposition of ideologies. Ideologies can be aimed at making an opinion wrong, misleading, correct, guiding, legitimizing or conscious. However, it can be said that as the ideology placed in popular culture as 'representations of cultural values' for various reasons, it can play a negative role on the cultural development in a free way. With reality show formatted marriage programs, a fictional "real life" is brought to the screens for Turkish people. This scenario, which is presented with this structured, certain rules, competition mode, can be transformed into an output in the direction of destroying the basic social structure of the people.

Values taught in the socio-economic and political processes and socialization can also affect gender representation. The fact that women are represented in this way by media, men are portrayed as being possessed of a certain status and certain possibilities. Therefore, there is a coding for gender stereotyping through discourses and the audience is sent by mass media to decode and analyse. Considering Gerbner's Cultivation Theory, cultural values can be transformed into attitudes as they are cultivated in the mind of the audience through television representations in time. As a cultural carrier, the media dictates certain truths subconsciously, together with a lifestyle for the audience it reaches. (Belligüçük, 2004, p:2)

Gender stereotyping is based on the assumption that gender roles are 'natural' and unchangeable, connected to our biological existence. In daily life, in television programs, in business life, in almost every sphere where women and men coexist, they are attributed to different values, roles and tasks.

In television programs, the representation of men and women is quite different with stereotypical patterns available. When it comes to discrimination on the basis of gender, it is the discrimination that women suffers because they are women (Bora, 2012). Gender-based discrimination and fight against this discrimination is a field that is constantly being

renewed, changing, adding new categories and forms of discrimination. The control mechanism, which starts with "What would others say?" continues with promises of love and happiness as soon as she becomes a "woman like a woman." We make eternal misery by trying to reach to an impossible ideal of femininity.

Looking at the female participants of the marriage programs it is seen that they are usually housewives or unemployed young girls without bachelor's degree so their educational and intellectual level are not high. They make superficial, depthless explanations of the issues. It's seen that the contestants discussions are based on not only based on their own subjective life stories but also their friends' and relatives' past experiences. Therefore, it is obvious that they do not hesitate to disclose the private sphere of both themselves and others on national channel. Sometimes contestants can be aggressive, strict, disrespectful, uncontrolled. It is observed that they are quickly angered, extremely judicial, critical, insulting. The mistakes are reproached and the suppressed feelings are expressed with anger.

In these marriage shows, inequality associations are reproduced. Not only women are in a tight corner because of gender discrimination but also men. The imposition of almost entire economic responsibilities on men proves that the patriarchal ideology does not create a paradise for men. Creating consent by spreading inequality associations of hegemonic powers through television programs is nothing but a partner in crime. The questions to groom candidates such as *What is your income?* or *Are you able to afford my lifestyle?* are the outcomes of this masculine ideology: a man should take care of his wife and children. Women's contribution to workshare and women's economic freedom are seen hazardous for patriarchal hegemony.

It's found that there are three basic questions that bride candidates ask men who aspire to them at matrimonial shows:

- Do you have a house?
- How much salary do you get?
- Do you have a car?

Most women asking these questions do not work, and they do not even think about working unless it is necessary. Also men do not favor their wives to work unless it's necessary but they can't avoid talking about difficulty of living conditions. Economical issues are often unbearable for both bride and groom candidates. According to Labor Force Participation Rate research of Parliamentary Research Commission in 2016, it is seen that women are more supportive with 91% ratio than men (%74) about female labor force participation. The reason for this thought is the perception that the woman's primary duty is child care and housework (56%). One out of every five (20%) think that the working environment is dangerous for women. The proportion of those who think that 'women should not work'

because it is contrary to our traditions and customs is 9% countrywide, it rises to 30% in the Northeast Anatolia region.¹⁰

In *Kismetse Olur*'s first episode of the first season, all contestants get introduced to each other and tell about their perfect mates. A bride candidate named Ayşenur says she's the boss of her own boutique and she wants a husband who is a boss. She repeatedly said that she doesn't want a salaried employee. Even though her economic situation is good enough to sustain itself, she says she needs a high level lifestyle.

Women perceive men as a kind of life insurance, while men are more concerned with their "housewifing skills" which refers two adjectives according to them; 'obedience' and 'faithfulness'. After the groom candidate's financial situation and the woman's housewifing skills are tested, they are passed to the second stage which is often undesirable; their past.

In first season, when Hazal, the future fiancé of Emre, first entered the *Kismetse Olur* house she announced that she was a candidate for Emre. In the meanwhile Emre and his obsessed ex-girlfriend Ayça was having a breakup. Two women started to a fight for macho Emre and their weapons were *domestic work abilities*. Hazal decided to cook mantı (a Turkish traditional food) for Emre and Ayça started to clean the house, to show their housewifing skills. Later, Emre was actually impressed with Hazal's mantı.

Since the woman is positioned as an object and not as an individual in the media's eyes, she can not find the necessary sensitivity (Pembecioğlu, 2014). The main instrument that facilitates the maintenance of discrimination is 'stereotypes'. When it comes to gender discrimination, the most common stereotypes are 'honorable' and 'dishonorable' women. This distinction shapes women according to patriarchal codes. At the same time, the uncertainty of separation also leads women to live under constant threats.

In the second season of *Kismetse Olur*, a macho and dominant groom candidate Semih was testing Hazal's honor, the girl he liked. While they were flirting he had sent Hazal anonymous gifts to see if she could be impressed by another man. When Hazal had returned all the gifts, Semih stated that he's now sure that she's an honorable woman. It can frequently be seen that groom candidates sometimes test their potential bride's honor yet this manipulating behaviour never condemned by any household.

In *Kismetse Olur*, there are so many underlined and consolidated gender discriminations by groom candidates, by bride candidates and even by the host. Discourses such as "The wife must serve her husband", "A woman shouldn't intervene any debate while her man is in the room", "It's not woman's place", "Because of hormones and testosterone man has no ability to empathize" serve and empower the patriarchal system. Once a week, contestants' parents visit *Kismetse Olur* house for 1 day. Especially potential

¹⁰ TBMM Meclis Araştırma Komisyonu Raporu, No: 399, p.270

mother-in-laws judge the bride candidates by their clothes or their relationships with other groom candidates. According to the statements in the program, the ideal bride candidate is evaluated in the following stereotypes:

Wife Material: First of all she should be well behaved which means she acts like a doll in public, fragile, elegant, proud, relatively conservative, respectful to parents-in-law, communicates the opposite sex distanced, pays attention to her clothing next to other men. When a candidate groom debates a woman, sometimes they warn her as "Behave yourself, you're talking to a man!" So everything must be under a control mechanism. Because a wife material supposed to show herself in the minute of the conversation starts with her future husband and future mother-in-law.

Must Serve: This girl to be married should look like a cleaning robot especially if there's a mother-in-law in the frame. , Expecting for help at home, not knowing how to cook and preparing a dinner to her lover without a fancy table are not proper behaviours in the show.

I Don't Know My Husband Knows: The husband should be the dominant one of course, he should lead and he should rule. In *Kismetse Olur* season 2, one of the favorite couples Adnan and Didem had a dialogue.

Adnan: Do you have male friends, will you keep meeting them after you get married?

Didem: Yes, but if my husband doesn't want me to, I won't keep my friendship with them.

Adnan: Will you live with your mother-in-law when you get married?

Didem: If my husband wants me to, yes I can.

The examples can be multiplied unfortunately. The bride candidates represent the women in traditional Turkish society, who devote themselves to the man called "husband", and who are proud of it, by reproducing mentality of "women's place" that is shaped by the society.

The macho contestant named Serhan, the troublemaker of grooms' house, the swagger, was the most popular groom candidate of the brides' house. His discourses were in the same line with his "I am from Adana, my plate code is 01 so I'm ahead of you all" statements and he keeps coming down on grooms like a ton of bricks. Serhan's dream is to find the "bride-to-be" who suits to his family. He frequently emphasizes that a woman should choose a man and not look at anyone but him, not dress sexy and not step forward on her man. In a very short period 3 bride candidates aspired for Serhan. One of the girls who's interested in Serhan, 21-year-old Ceyda, already came to the contest to find a macho, red-blooded, tough guy. Another girl who's interested in him, Cansel claims that if Serhan is interfering in her sexy clothes, than he is really into her. In patriarchal ideology, envy and violence of man is perceived as a sign of love.

Seeing Serhan's coarse behaviors made a splash and he was chosen as the favorite of the week, made Emre Ubeyli 'who was very calm and self-sufficient at the first week, imitate Serhan. Handsome Emre also started to make statements about love starting "My woman" and terrors in the house as a younger clone of Serhan. (Season 1, Week 3)

Contrary to these two macho and rude characters, there are 3 opposite characters at grooms' house. Tankut, a physiotherapist who came to Turkey from USA a while ago, the marginal English teacher Eser West who grew up in USA and a real gentlemen Murat who's a CEO. These men are gentle, open-minded and respectful to bride candidates. However, the popularity of these three candidates representing today's modern man is not high at all with their polite, humorous, cheerful, comfortable attitudes towards girls.

Another bride candidate Ayça, who's arms are full of tattoos is madly in love with wannabe macho Emre. He is 5 years younger than Ayça and she is a very marginal girl who got divorced once before the show. Ayça is exactly opposite of the 'bride profile' in Emre's dreams, yet they started their love. Even if Emre says words like "cut your voice off" or "when I'm here it's not your place to interfere", Ayça does not even care about the words. So this incompatible relationship was loved by audience so much that Ayça and Emre became the weekly winners in a row. Eventually this toxic relationship was ended by Emre because Ayça was playing dodeball with Eser in the house. Emre claimed that no other girls were playing the ball game except Ayça, so she is an attention addict. The weird thing was Ayça defends herself by saying "You know I am giddy (hoppa), I was just trying to make you jealous" (Season 1).

Whenever there is a blooming love between a potential couple, then comes a love triangle at the show. In season 1, Cansel who was a young, pretty girl involved with Erdem, first had come to *Kismetse Olur* house for Emre and she had tried to take Emre from 'giddy girl' Ayça's hands. But he wasn't interested in Cansel so she moved her carrier as an "unpreferred bride" for a long time. After she got involved with Erdem, one of the eliminated groom candidates, Eser West turned back to house. He got a second chance by the production team. Eser confessed that he's back for Cansel. Suddenly Cansel became the most popular bride candidate of the show with two men's interest on her and among the two men there started a war. Eser and Erdem, who entered into the girl struggle over Cansel, set the 'brotherhood theme of groom house' on fire. This was the greatest feature of the house: The rejected candidate suddenly could be an unshareable candidate as long as they are patient. The given message is that love is with the patient ones.

The main function of the marriage programs is to match those who want to marry, to legitimize their partnerships for approval by the community. On the other hand, marriage programs provide the expansion of the matrimonial market by letting the excluded characters find their place in society, such as unemployed men or divorced women with

children or foreigners. Since this mediation embraces the form of heterosexual relationship, homosexual relationships are excluded from the marriage market.

Gender discrimination not only prevents women from benefiting from social resources equally, but also leads to individuals who have different sexual orientations than heterosexuality (LGBT individuals) suffer from basic human rights violations, in particular to the right to life. Although there is no law prohibiting homosexuality in Turkey, same-sex marriage is not legally recognized in Turkey. So sexual orientation discrimination is widespread in traditional Turkish society¹¹. This discrimination creates a wide range of human rights violations ranging from homosexuality to being seen as a 'disease' and thus 'trying to be treated' to transgender and homosexuality murders. Sexual orientation discrimination aims to give a lesson to individuals who are out of the general pattern of masculinity and femininity. Even if the attitude towards homosexuality is relatively positive in modern, urbanized regions, society is prejudiced to them. (Kılıç, 2011)

In the first season of the show, while macho contestant Serhan and Eser who grew up in USA, arguing - literally two opposite characters - Serhan shows a homophobic attitude in front of the cameras.

Serhan: Do not sit there, it's my seat.

Eser West: I can sit anywhere I want.

Serhan: Do not dare!

Eser West: I can sit here, what's it to you, ayol! ('Ayol' is a phrase usually women use)

Serhan: Ayol? Hoop, this is Turkey! "Ayol, mayol" don't fit us. We are man! Our blood in our veins is red.

The patriarchal discourse can be seen widely in *Kismetse Olur* in various patterns. In the show it's always underlined that maternity is the most important duty of the woman and is a grace from God. When groom candidates asked Burçak, a 35 year-old contestant with carrier, about her future plans of having a family they were all shocked by her answer.

Murat: Don't you want to have a beautiful family after this show?

Burçak: Sure, I want to get married with a strong, loving man.

Murat: What about kids? It is ever a family without a kid.

Burçak: I don't want kids. I am here for a real husband.

Murat: Come on, being a mother is every women's right. What if your husband wants a child?

Burçak: Yes, but I don't want. I have carrier, I have age.

Murat: So, won't you marry him?

¹¹ Kocak Kurt, Ş. Medyada Görünmeyi Görmek Mümkün mü: LGBT?

It doesn't even considered that not being a mother may be a woman's conscious choice. Because according to masculine ideology that is contrary to nature. Structure of traditional Turkish society mythicize maternity which is based on a common condition which is the patriarchal system that measures the value of women with fertility. So the perception of "bride candidates should be motherly and a total lady, unless they don't deserve to marry" was kept created at the show. This ideology easily alienates women who choose a different path for various reasons, such as those who do not want to get married, those who never marry, those who are married without children on purpose, asexuals, lesbians and even foster-parents. Due to the biological structure of the woman, only fertility and child care are dedicated to women according to patriarchal system. So with this fiction, women is generated with only her sexuality in masculine ideology. This alienation is witnessed on reality shows, on TV serials or even in news. Today's media with its code, content and language is an important tool in shaping society by reinforcing the structure of the patriarchal mindset (Türkdoğan, 2013, p.35). The dominant sexist language, which was used during the reproduction of the patriarchal system through all elements of the media, attributes holiness on the motherhood.

Because of the socio-economic and educational level of the contestant profile of marriage shows, the intense usage of sexist discourse may seem usual until it's corrected by the host of the show. In the environment of the shows, the host has always the judge, the decision-authority and the guardian role. They are the contestant's protector, they intervene in case of injustice and in a way they are a representation of 'elders' at the arranged marriage scenario. All the hosts of marriage shows in Turkish television are women with one exception. He is Uğur Arslan, the co-host of *Su Gibi*. He hosted the show first with Songül Karlı and then with Seda Sayan. Common features of all women hosts are loud, bass toned, plainspoken, usually embonpoint shaped.

In *Kismetse Olur*, Seda Akgün, an ex-prime-time newscaster, became the host of the show. She is a dominant, raunchy and outspoken character which all male and female contestants show respect. It is also the host to decide what is right, what is wrong and what is morally appropriate. She manages the arguments, decides the one who to apologise and turns into a "hero" who gets applause from the audience when the problem is solved. Eventually the host has a very important role in the program as an authority figure. In *Elimination Nights* on Saturdays, Seda Akgün gives the speaking permission to the contestants so she actually sets the order of importance. The authority figure in this reality show should have prevent the unconscious and ignorant sexist discourse and attitudes yet the most famous motto of Seda Akgün is "The past of women, the future of men is

sought”¹². She used this motto very frequently for two seasons of the show and constantly consolidated the thinking of “woman must not be related to many ex-lovers and man must provide woman a more comfortable life”. Cheating behavior of both sexes is also negative but it seems to be less tolerant for woman’s cheating behavior. In the same way, when a male contestant is photographed by the audience in a nightclub and sent to production team, Seda Akgün asked “Who were you with?” but when the same happened to a female contestant, she asked “What were you doing at a nightclub?” The masculine perception lies beneath is that a potential groom can go to a nightclub *man to man* unless there are other women however a potential bride should never take a step into a nightclub. So, when the host who is the decision authority, the respected by all, the justice figure of the show, keep reproducing the patriarchal discourse this ideology is legitimized and cultivated directly to the audience.

3.2 Negative Critics Of The Show

On 01.12.2016, Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTUK) addressed marriage shows at the board meeting upon the high complaints. In 2016, RTUK got thousands of complaints from the citizens via its 444 1 178 call line, from its web page, its e-mail address and also Presidency Communication Center (CIMER) and the Prime Ministry Communication Center (BİMER). In this context, marriage shows which were complained for 7 thousand 297 times in total in 2015, is recorded to be complained 87 thousand in 2016.

According to ‘Annual Report of Audience, 2016’, *Kismetse Olur* in Kanal D became the most complained program with 38 thousand 153 applications. *Zuhal Topal’la İzdivaç* was the second most complained program with 19 thousand 887 applications. *Esra Erol’da* in ATV received 13 thousand 79 complaints, *Evleneceksen Gel* in Show TV got 3 thousand 678 complaints and *Dest-i İzdivaç* in Flash TV received 290 complaints (tr.sputniknews.com, 10.01.2018). RTUK fined marriage programs in Kanal D, Fox, Star, ATV, Show TV and Flash TV in this frame with very high amounts as an intimidation.

Foundation of Turkish Women in Legal Professions gave a report on the results of a research that shows in “which shows, how women are humiliated” to Press Council President Pınar Türeñç and asked for support from the Council.

The Foundation visited Press Council and propose to reduce "sexist approaches in the media." Press Council President Pınar Türeñç also made a call to the mass media to

¹² “Kadında geçmiş, erkekte gelecek aranır.”

take precaution by releasing the report to public. The following proposals were given at the report:

Proposals:

1. *In the light of current academic studies, the education system should be re-audited and new regulations should be made.*
2. *The male dominant language, which degrades the female sex, must be abandoned.*
3. *It should be taken as a preliminary acceptance that the problem of women is a problem of democracy.*
4. *The media language must be corrected. Victimized women should not be used as subjects.*
5. *In the news, sexist adjectives such as “female journalists, women deputies, female chauffeurs” should not be emphasized.*
6. *The ombudsman institution should be strengthened as an audit mechanism against negative representation of women in media.*
7. *Special work should be carried out in order to implement deterrent sanctions in line with the Press Profession Principles by Press Council.*
8. *Media sector employees should be given in-service training in women's rights and violence against women.*
9. *There should be courses such as women's rights, human rights and violence in universities' syllabus.*
10. *Educational and awareness raising content such as women's rights and gender equality should be included in the highest rating television programs.*

"Such programs have destroyed the perception of privacy in society," said Psychiatrist Professor Dr. Kemal Sayar, who pointed out that marriage programs threatened the family institution in the long run because secret intimate things between couples are now spoken in public. Discussing such a vital decision in front of people, on national channel, makes the person's life vulgar. "It is entirely satiety-oriented the audience's appetite. (www.aktuelpsikoloji.com, 10.10.2017)

President of Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) Dr. İlhan Yerlikaya criticized the marriage programs broadcasted on many television channels. Yerlikaya stated that they could give a shutdown penalty to the channels that broadcast these programs and said, "Especially the marriage programs have come out of the way. Horrible things are happening in these programs and very bad words are spoken which I can't even say here." (www.hurriyet.com.tr , 06.10.2017)

In August 2017, after the intense audience complaints to RTÜK, Deputy Head of Monitoring and Evaluation Department Murat Ellialtı made an important statement related to marriage shows. "There will be no marriage programs anymore, after the negotiations with publishing channels, the programs will be published in another format. (www.idealhaber.com, 06.10.2017) (Which lately became relationship therapy for couples who are about to divorce.)

On 22 February 2017, a sub commission was established in Grand National Assembly of Turkey to investigate and examine the negative effects of marriage programs on 'family institution'. Chairman of the Parliamentary Petition Commission, Belma Satır claimed that they had received numerous complaints about such programs. She said "We see young girls chosen and picked as if they were taken from a grocery store by a mother-in-law or a groom candidate and it's humiliating." (www.aljazeera.com.tr, 09.11.2017) Deputy Satır stated that despite the punishment given to the television channels by Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), these programs continue with commercial concerns.

In 2016, a total of 199 thousand 171 notifications were received. Audience reports are experiencing an increase of 93% between 2012 and 2016. The reason for this increase in 2016 is due to organized complaints about shows such as *Kismetse Olur*.¹³

According to RTÜK, *Kismetse Olur* is positioned separately from similar ones due to its format. While *Zuhal Topal'la*, *Esra Erol'da* and *Evleneceksen Gel* are classified as "thematic programs" *Kismetse Olur* is classified in "skill and resistance programs".

¹³ 2016 Yılı Vatandaş Bildirimleri Raporu, RTÜK

2016 Analysis of Audience Complaints By Program Type:

Table-4: **Skill and Resistance Programs**

Program	Channel	# of Complaints
<i>Kismetse Olur</i>	<i>Kanal D</i>	45439
<i>Survivor 2016</i>	<i>TV 8</i>	3896
<i>İşte Benim Stilim</i>	<i>TV 8</i>	1154

RTUK Annual Report of Audience in 2016

Table-5: **Thematic Programs**

Program	Channel	# of Complaints
<i>Zuhal Topal'la</i>	<i>Fox TV / Star TV</i>	21571
<i>Esra Erol'da</i>	<i>ATV</i>	15580
<i>Evleneceksen Gel</i>	<i>Star TV / Show TV</i>	12301

RTUK Annual Report of Audience in 2016

These programs are complained with these 4 examination criterions to RTUK¹⁴:

- 1) General Morality, Spiritual Values and Unfairness to the Protection of the Family
- 2) Sanction Practice
- 3) Behaviors That Can Negatively Affect the Development of Children and Young
- 4) Contradiction to National Values of Society

As a result of these complaints, “*Zuhal Topal'la*” was fined for 4 administrative fines, “*Esra Erol'da*” was fined for 4 administrative fines, “*Evleneceksen Gel*” was fined for 6 administrative fines and also *Kismetse Olur* was fined for 6 administrative fines.¹⁵

In consequence of intense complaints of the audience and reactions of the government, in April 29, 2017, the step to ban the marriage shows was taken by the Decree-Law. ‘Decree Law No 690 published under the State of Emergency’ was published in duplicate of the Official Gazette.¹⁶ Television channels that do not comply

¹⁴ RTÜK (2016). Vatandaş Bildirimleri Yıllık Raporu, Ankara.

¹⁵ İncelemeler/Müeyyideler, 2016 Yılı Vatandaş Bildirimleri Raporu p.47, Kamuoyu, Yayın Araştırmaları ve Ölçme Dairesi Başkanlığı

¹⁶ Official Gazette, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2017/04/20170429-M1-2.htm>, 20.01.2018

with sanctions decisions, will be suspended for up to five days in case of twenty violations in one year, which is a very heavy punishment for broadcasting. The fate of all 12 marriage programs were remained unknown because the production companies gave statements that the shows will re-start after the negotiation with RTUK. But in August 2017, it's announced that programs have been permanently banned and will never re-start.

3.3 Positive Critics About Marriage Shows

Family life is one of the main contents of the most common mass media; television. The family institution which is the smallest unit of social structure lay the foundations with marriage. Today, marriage institution has become a source of one of the main program formats of television. (Meclis Araştırma Komisyonu Raporu, 2016, p.298) Marriage programs broadcasted with the match-making mission, re-present the processes of marriage between a limited kith and kins and relatives, in front of the screens and thousands of spectators in a show format.

Critics on the positive side emphasize that these programs allow the discussion of the taboo subjects in traditional cultural structure so they have educational function because the target audience widened their point of view by matrimonial shows. (Meder & Çiçek, 2012, p.12) However, it has been suggested social relations, interactions and unity because the people in different characteristics, especially women, are gathering together.

On the other hand, marriage programs expand the marriage market and offer the possibility of marrying people who can not find spouses in social life. Elderly couples, those who have married and divorced many times, foreign nationals, those who have children, in short, those who are flirting in society and having difficulty in getting married, marry through these programs. It should be noted that these programs also have exclusion marriages such as same-sex marriage. Turkey doesn't recognise same-sex marriage legally so matrimonial shows don't include this concept. Also, social structure of Turkey doesn't accept same-sex relationships yet. Statistics prove that 59% of random internet users answered "no" to the question of "Should same-sex marriage be legal?"¹⁷

Another positive critic claims that since these marriage shows are the sample of traditional Turkish marriage patterns, it reveals the moral and ethical values of the marriage process. In this context marriage programs can be defined as a cultural format that allows local, national, religious and modern norms about the Turkish family structure to be negotiated publicly. So it provides an academic and sociological discussion on these norms

¹⁷ Opinion on The Legality of Same-Sex Marriage in Turkey in 2016, www.statista.com, 22.05.2018

and values. It also lets the audience to realize gender discrimination in traditional marriage system and helped the media literate audience to have this awareness in the society. The complaints about marriage programs to RTUK in 2016 are classified as 3 main topics; marriage shows destroy the society's morality, they devalued family institution and cause negative perceptions in society about marriage (Vatandaş Bildirimleri Raporu, 2016, p.20). So, it can be said that a significant ratio of audience complaints is a reaction to gender-based stereotypes at the show such as *women asking men about their salary* or *men insulting women by suppresing them*.

Besides of some audience opinions, also the participants of the shows highly support the benefits of matrimonial shows contrary to public opinion. Bride and groom candidates of these programs claim that they find these shows reliable and safe. They express the reason for their participation to show is that any information about a candidate they meet in the program will now become open to the public (Akınerdem, p.8). So there are no hidden secrets about the candidates and applicants. According to the participants, marriage shows are safer than the outside world thanks to the supervision mechanisms of the production team.

ATV General Manager Metin Ergen and the popular marriage show host Esra Erol attended *Research and Consultation Meeting of Parliamentary Research Commission* on April 9-10, 2016 as guests. Metin Ergen defended their popular show *Esra Erol'da* by saying that the community has changed, that past marriages are now in front of the screens. If there is a problem with any bride or groom candidates, their relatives and friends have called and informed the production team. In this sense, it is safer for couples to meet in marriage shows than to meet on the Internet, in this sense.¹⁸ Besides, Esra Erol has made a statement about she was a role model for the audience, she got married in her own program and had children in the most important period of his career. She underlined that she was trying to give the right messages to the audience by her conscious attitude.¹⁹

A large audience who see these programs as shameful and humiliating can interpret these shows as despair. But there is only privacy difference between searching for the spouse on the internet and seaching in the screen. In fact, marriage programs are more realistic and trustworthy than the internet. Yet, the process is still unhealthy for both.

Despite of all fair critisms, marriage programs revealed the lack of ability to get to know the opposite sex and the hunger of self-expression in bilateral relations in Turkish

¹⁸ Metin Ergen, 09.04.2016, Meclis Aratırma Komisyonu Tutanakları, p.114.

https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1595, 25.05.2018.

¹⁹ Esra Erol, 09.04.2016 tarihli Meclis Araştırma Komisyonu Tutanakları, p. 107-111.

https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/komisyon_tutanaklari.goruntule?pTutanakId=1595, 25.05.2018

society. Single people feel the need of attending these shows to meet the opposite sex and find some attention; also the audience feel the need of watching these shows to learn how to communicate opposite sex.

3.4 The Process After The Ban For Marriage Shows

Marriage shows which were subject to evening news or newspapers everyday during their broadcasting period were banned by decree law under the fourth paragraph added to Article 60 published on April 29, 2017 in the official gazette. Every marriage show in Turkish televisions were suspended for an indefinite period. However some competitor shows of *Kismetse Olur* which are *Esra Erol'da*, *Su Gibi* and *Zuhal Topal'la* continued to broadcast in the same name but they changed their formats to “searching for missing people”. After this intervention, there was a certain decline in audience ratio. With the change of the content of the marriage programs after April 2017 and the change of average ratings of the year 2017, these programs no longer exist in the top 25 programs of monthly rating results. (www.reytingsonuclari.com, 04.06.2018)

In Table-6, Monthly Ratings of February 2017 in Total Group was listed and 3 marriage shows took place in Top 25: *Esra Erol'da* at 21st, *Evleneceksen Gel* at 22nd and *Zuhal Topal'la* was 23rd.

Table-6: Monthly Ratings of February 2017 in Total Group

2017 Yılı Aylık Reyting Sonuçları 1-28 Şubat / Total Grubu

Sıra	Program Adı	Kanal Adı	Toplam Reyting	Yayın Sayısı	Bölüm Reytingi
1	Diriliş Ertuğrul	Trt 1	50,84	4	12,71
2	Eşkriya Dünyaya Hükümdar Olmaz	Atv	39,29	4	9,82
3	Arka Sokaklar	Kanal D	37,78	4	9,45
4	İçerde	Show Tv	37,10	4	9,28
5	Kırgın Çiçekler	Atv	36,71	4	9,18
6	Aşk Ve Mavi	Atv	33,46	4	8,37
7	Survivor	Tv8	162,74	21	7,75
8	Anne	Star Tv	30,82	4	7,70
9	Kalbimdeki Deniz	Fox Tv	25,91	4	6,48
10	Vatanım Sensin	Kanal D	19,42	3	6,47
11	Cesur Ve Güzel	Star Tv	22,99	4	5,75
12	Kara Sevda	Star Tv	22,81	4	5,70
13	No:309	Fox Tv	22,79	4	5,70
14	Müge Anlı İle Tatlı Sert	Atv	99,72	20	4,99
15	Adı Efsane	Kanal D	19,66	4	4,91
16	Umuda Keleğçe Vurulmaz	Fox Tv	9,47	2	4,73
17	O Hayat Benim	Fox Tv	17,40	4	4,35
18	Hayat Şarkısı	Kanal D	17,35	4	4,34
19	Hayat Bazen Tatlıdır	Star Tv	17,32	4	4,33
20	Cesur Yürek	Show Tv	12,94	3	4,31
21	Esra Erol'da	Atv	84,35	20	4,22
22	Evleneceksen Gel	Show Tv	83,86	20	4,19
23	Zuhal Topal'la	Star Tv	80,41	20	4,02
24	Güldür Güldür Show	Show Tv	15,61	4	3,90
25	Paramparça	Star Tv	15,55	4	3,89

After the government banned marriage concepted shows in April 2017, some matrimonial shows (except *Kismetse Olur*) changed their content to find the missing

people. In Table-7, Monthly Ratings of May 2017 in Total Group was listed and these programs couldn't take place in Top 25. Their new contents couldn't interest the audience as marriage concept.

Table-7: Monthly Ratings of May 2017 in Total Group

Aylık Reyting Sonuçları
1-31 Mayıs 2017 - Total Grubu

Sıra	Program Adı	Kanal Adı	Toplam Reyting	Yayın Sayısı	Bölüm Reytingi
1	Diriliş Ertuğrul	Trt 1	47,82	4	11,96
2	Eşkîya Dünyaya Hükümdar Olmaz	Atv	42,91	5	8,58
3	Söz	Star Tv	42,23	5	8,45
4	İçerde	Show Tv	39,02	5	7,80
5	Sav aşçı	Fox Tv	30,31	4	7,58
6	Aşk Ve Mavi	Atv	30,16	4	7,54
7	Türk Malı	Star Tv	7,24	1	7,24
8	Anne	Star Tv	34,80	5	6,96
9	Kırgın Çiçekler	Atv	33,54	5	6,71
10	Arka Sokaklar	Kanal D	25,95	4	6,49
11	Yeni Gelin	Show Tv	25,86	4	6,47
12	Survivor	Tv8	190,53	30	6,35
13	Vatanım Sensin	Kanal D	22,81	4	5,70
14	Prof. Dr. Nihat Hatipoğlu İle İftar	Atv	27,85	5	5,57
15	Kara Sev da	Star Tv	26,96	5	5,39
16	Kalbimdeki Deniz	Fox Tv	20,45	4	5,11
17	İstanbul Gelin	Star Tv	19,50	4	4,87
18	Çoban Yıldızı	Fox Tv	19,44	4	4,86
19	Şev kat Yerimdar	Fox Tv	4,85	1	4,85
20	No:309	Fox Tv	23,06	5	4,61
21	Müge Anlı İle Tatlı Sert	Atv	105,85	23	4,60
22	Berat Kandili Özel	Trt 1	4,53	1	4,53
23	İsimsizler	Kanal D	22,40	5	4,48
24	Cesur Ve Güzel	Star Tv	16,33	4	4,08
25	Fazilet Hanım Ve Kızları	Star Tv	15,69	4	3,92

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Kismetse Olur had been a very scandalous program for Turkish broadcasting in every aspect. After RTUK's ban of marriage programs broadcasting, *Kismetse Olur* was suspended for an indefinite period of time like other matrimonial shows. Eventually in April 29, 2017, the producer of the show made a statement that due to the new legislation the show has ended.²⁰

However, the producers could not stand the demand and found a cunning way of broadcasting far from RTUK control to reach the audience. In May 2017, the show was started online, on www.kanald.com.tr, the internet page of the channel.²¹ But the uncontrolled broadcast was far more aggressive and dangerous, this time for the contestants themselves. When it became online, it's no longer subject to RTUK. The production company made an aggressive attack to attract the attention and curiosity of the audience and started published completely all censored scenes so far, since episode 1. Thus, this made all contestants so angry, feel their personal rights were violated. All the

²⁰ Evlilik Programları kaldırıldı mı? İlk Açıklama *Kismetse Olur*'dan, www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/yasam/730892/Evlilik_programlari_yayindan_kaldirildi..._ilk_aciklama_Kismetse_Olur_un_yapimcisindan.html , 22.01.2018

²¹ *Kismetse Olur* Artık İnternette mi Yayınlanacak?, www.hurriyet.com.tr/merakla-bekleniyordu-kismetse-olur-programinin-akibeti-belli-oldu-40448560, 22.01.2018

curses, quarrels, the insults between the couples in two seasons suddenly were exposed.

According to the declarations of the contestants, they had to cover some cases on the warnings of the production team. Because the production company said “We won’t (can’t) broadcast these cases on TV so act like nothing happened.” Yet, when the show went online, the production company shared all these cases that show contestants really bad. So, all contestants rebelled against the production team by this incident. In the same week the show started to broadcast online, all contestants left the show despite of their compensation. In fact, the situation went on until the competitors sue for the production company.

In August 2017, not so long after the ban of marriage programs, Acun Medya, a media production company in Turkey, made an offer to *Kismetse Olur* contestants to sustain their presence at screen; a telenova named *Gençlik Başımda Duman* (Youth Fever). Most of the contestants accepted the offer and they started to act their own characters at the telenova. With this move, Acun Medya tried to catch *Kismetse Olur* audience which is idle after the ban. But the telenova was found insincere by the audience since it lost the ‘moments of truth’ of a reality show. The telenova was failed with the ratings and the production company finished it after 6 episodes.

INTERPRETATION & CONCLUSION

It can be said that marriage institution is the most important element that transmit the presence of society, continuity and culture to future generations. Marriage expresses that two equal people living together in terms of emotional, material and sexuality. The institution of marriage is norms and rules concerning the identification of socially accepted sexual relations (Tezcan, 1997). On the one hand, marriage institution is associated with legal norms, on the other hand it is a concept related to norms that constitute the cultural values of society. 'Family' that emerged in any form of marriage can be described as a part of the cult and as the basic unit of social organization. Family, the smallest unit that constitutes the society, consist of marriage (Balaman, 1982). Family institution can be seen as an element in which the duties and roles given by social organizations are carried out.

According to Dr. Lutfi Sezen's research in 2005, there are 33 different marriage forms in Turkey such as arranged marriage, consanguineous marriage, widow marriage, coincidental marriage, preferred marriage, love marriage, marriage for money etc. A new form of marriage was emerged in Turkey with matrimonial shows as 33rd form. It is seen that among these marriage types, television marriage did not take place before in the structure of Turkish society in terms of culture, lifestyle, traditions and customs but globalization of communication and spreading of television show formats in global market are liked by Turkish audience (Sungur, 2011, p.583). More than 250 couples got married in *Esra Erol'da* from 2007 to 2017 and in *Su Gibi* (Pure As Water) 275 couples were married on TV in 6 years. (Güven & Kanık, 2016, p.18)

Television marriage is a new form of marriage as well as multiple marriage forms within. Although the format is a representation of arranged marriage, widow marriages, foal-comes marriages (taygeldi evlilik), orphanage marriage, preferred marriage, coincidental marriage (love at the first sight) and even fraudulent marriage were seen frequently in Turkish marriage shows as a result of their benefits to matrimonial market. Marriage shows provided the expansion of the matrimonial market by letting the excluded characters find their place in society, such as unemployed men or divorced women with children. On the other hand, it is seen that marriage forms are transformed into each other at these shows. Although the marriage of a couple in the show seems to be their own decision, they have to settle for each other with the pressure of the audience votes and encouragement of production company. In other words, a marriage of a couple that seems like *love marriage* form actually works in the process of *preferred marriage*. On the contrary, the marriage of a divorced man and women which seems like *widow marriage* form actually works in the process of *coincidental marriage* (love at the first sight). Different marriage forms were transformed into each other on the screen and the term of 'television marriage' covers them all.

In this study, an analysis is conducted to reveal the representation and construction of patriarchy through sexist discourse in marriage shows which had been very popular since 2007 and finally banned by Turkish government in 2017. "*Kismetse Olur*" which is a marriage program broadcasted on a private television channel Kanal D, has been studied in the context of gender. It has been researched how signs for patriarchal ideology are presented in marriage programs and if patriarchalism has transformed or influenced by popular culture. What kind of roles were given to men and women in marriage programs, through which signs patriarchal ideology appeared in the show and which stereotypes are used were analyzed.

The research is based on the assumption that the marriage programs are consolidating traditional gender roles and reproducing patriarchal ideology through television. The universe of the research is all 12 broadcasted marriage programs in Turkish television since 2007 until 2017 including *Su Gibi*, *Zahide Yetiş'le*, *Esra Erol'da*, *Zuhal Topal'la*, *Evleneceksen Gel*, *Dest-İzdivaç* etc. The sample of the research is *Kismetse Olur Show Olur* which was broadcasted on Kanal D from 2015 to 2017. The show had two seasons and "15 days" period of both seasons (2015 - 2016 season and 2016 - 2017 season) are examined. The episodes are available on its online webpage of Kanal D (www.kanald.com.tr/kismetse-olur/bolumler), so the show was not needed to be recorded. These 30 random episodes are transcribed and analysed via discourse analysis and qualitative content analysis methods and interpreted with a feminist approach in order to explain how the roles of femininity and masculinity are established through television and how gender conceptualization are consolidated. In 30 episodes examined, usage of heavy sexist discourse by bride candidates, groom candidates, the host and semi-active guests is evaluated as a criteria for the result which proves the gender stereotyping is dictated by these shows to the marriage structure in Turkey. A critical reading of the media reveals that the family, which is the unit structure of the society is in a determined position by media rather than the determiner position.

Reality show format, is a type of publishing based on the construction of 'everyday lives' of ordinary people with various techniques. Marriage programs are taken as reality show format, so marriage or *matrimonial* shows allow the family structure in Turkey to be negotiated publicly of local, national, religious and modern norms publicly negotiated in this frame. Although the format of marriage shows in Turkish television is influenced by globalization, the production companies use the traditional values and norms such as family honor and religion in the show rather than temptation in order to be accepted by the Turkish audience. The main function of the marriage programs is to match those who want to marry, to legitimize their partnerships for approval by the community. Even though *television marriage* is a new concept which emerged with the matrimonial shows in Turkey, these shows were initially configured as a representation of *arranged marriage* form in order to introduce eligible spouses to each other.

Arranged marriage is still preferred by many people in Turkey in order to find a suitable partner, especially in rural areas and extended families. This kind of marriage is seen as a way to conserve the family honor because it means flirting with serious intention. By arranged marriages, bride or groom candidates are protected from 'unnecessary flirting'. Elders of the family and the parents of bride and groom mediate to introduce the couple and settle down. Since 2007, matrimonial shows became the representations of mediator elders in media.

Marriage programs are very important examples to put out the fact that television, a modern communication medium, reproduces the traditional one continuously. These shows attribute to 'work share' in the marriage and it is inevitable as long as they are fed from the social, cultural and individual significance of the marriage institution. The complementary definition of gender roles in Turkey causes marriages seen as a work sharing of duties and responsibilities based on cultural values. In democratic social organizations, although the woman-man relationships seem to be undergoing a libertarian transformation under the influence of television (Ehrenberg, 1995, p:27), they can not overcome the control mechanisms created through the reproduction of cultural and social norms. Although the idea of 'gender equality' in the field of gender roles seems to have been embraced in social organizations today, the marriage institution and the family are the boundary points in this democratization process. The truth underlying this 'work sharing' perception, which is considered natural, is the economic and sexual control of men over women. The woman is always presented as a subject who must support the man, obliged to do any domestic work. The emphasis on the fact that *a woman is a free individual* is almost impossible to find. The presentation of female identity in marriage shows serves the continuity of hegemony so gender roles are reproduced. Women's rights are either not mentioned or are mentioned quite superficially. It is observed that a conservative attitude prevails at marriage shows.

The women in reality shows, in prime-time competitions or in talk shows are generally uneducated or mixed educated, crooked urbanization products, with restricted personal time and space, stuck between traditional and modern. Media keeps these women types in front of the eye especially in reality shows such as *Kismetse Olur*, *Bu Tarz Benim* or *İzdivaç*. These women representations are socially incompatible, psychologically problematic or fixed-minded women. According to Pembecioglu (2014), it is assumed that prime time shows aim to educate and entertain women who are at home, bored all day and who are forced to do housework and who have low educational and income levels. The media misinterprets being a woman in general and misplaces women in society. Since the woman is positioned as an object rather than an individual in the eyes of the media, she does not have the necessary sensitivity to the nature of the subject.

The sexist discourse consistently used and reproduced by female and male participants, hosts and semi-active guests of the show. These characters were analysed through critical discourse analysis, which focuses primarily on social power relations and positioning of roles in these relationships. It is revealed that there is a consensus on the presentation of patriarchal hegemony. The marriage programs consolidate gender roles established by the society. Even if it is very limited, such discourse had been intervened by the host as a result of intense complaints of conscious audience to RTUK. Another noteworthy point is that the mentioned "patriarchal discourse" is so deeply internalized by all participants even by the female ones. From the results of critical content analysis, it can be said that the behaviors of the contestants, the quarrels between the couples and the sharp comments of the hosts play a big role on the ratings and shares of the marriage programs. Just as its peers, also in *Kismetse Olur* gender-based power and hegemony relations were consolidated quite clearly. The necessity for man to be superior in terms of age, material strength, education which are "power tools" is the key point that reveals power relations. It is understood that marriage programs emphasize and convince traditional representations of men and women, often through discourses and demanded criterias of spouse candidates.

When we look at the most comprehensive framework by analyzing the consolidation of patriarchal hegemony and examining the reproduction of sexist discourse in the show, it is necessary to compare it with the audience evaluation. The program, while on the one hand, reproduces the "traditional and patriarchal one" with rating concern; on the other hand, it has received thousands of audience complaints which finds the show "against the tradition of the society". So a strange dilemma is defined about the show's supply-demand balance.

In this sense, not only media organizations, but production companies should act with publishing ethics. First of all, media organizations should stop misrepresent women as dependent, vulnerable or demanding. Later, media should be sensitive to the sexist and homophobic discourse insulting a gender or a sexual orientation that is settled in the language. Media organizations should publicize their gender awareness by creating their own self-regulatory policies and in-house monitoring mechanisms, guiding national and international goals to ensure gender equality. These mechanisms should also include *advisory bodies* that can develop proposals when it comes to deviating from the objective of gender equality in the media context. The monitoring of any violation of gender and sexual orientation discrimination in society and the reflection of the collection through news and other contents should be a priority for all media organizations.

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