



## Sexism and the Commodification of Women in Media: A Critical Analysis<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

*This study aims to investigate the pervasive issue of sexism within media and its role in the commodification of women. Through a critical lens, we seek to unravel the underlying mechanisms that perpetuate harmful stereotypes and objectification of women in media products, ultimately shedding light on the implications for societal perceptions and gender equality. Utilizing a comprehensive research approach, we systematically analyzed various media content, including advertisements, films, and television shows. Content analysis was employed to identify patterns, representations, and messaging surrounding women in media products. The study reveals a disturbing prevalence of sexism and the commodification of women in various forms of TV programs and to ensure the quality of our analysis, we tried to define clear parameters for collecting data. Our sample size is 30 TV programs from 3 TV broadcasters. We used random sampling on rating and share results. Prime time is chosen for the time frame. Three researchers do data collection by following the coding scheme. We found that women are frequently objectified, reduced to superficial attributes, and often portrayed in subordinate roles. These depictions not only reinforce harmful stereotypes but also contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequality and discrimination. The study underscores the urgent need for media producers, consumers, and policymakers to recognize the detrimental impact of such portrayals and work collaboratively to promote more diverse, empowering, and equitable representations of women in media. Doing so can contribute to a more inclusive and just society.*

**Keywords:** sexism; commodification; objectification; gender equality; representation

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## **1. Introduction**

Sexism in media profoundly impacts the perpetuation of harmful gender norms and behaviors. The portrayal of toxic masculinity and the objectification of women contribute to a culture where gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination are normalized (Viki et al., 2003). These harmful depictions affect how individuals perceive themselves and influence how they interact with others and form relationships.

Studies have shown that exposure to sexist media content can increase acceptance of sexist attitudes and behaviors (Lanis & Covell, 1995). This acceptance, in turn, can perpetuate a cycle of sexism, leading to unequal opportunities, violence, and discrimination against women.

Sexism in media remains a significant societal issue perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes, norms, and behaviors. The consequences of this sexism are far-reaching, affecting individuals' self-esteem, opportunities, and overall well-being while reinforcing unequal power dynamics between genders. Addressing sexism in media is essential for achieving gender equality and creating a more inclusive and equitable society.

To combat sexism in media, stakeholders must work together to challenge and change the harmful narratives and representations perpetuated by the industry. Media organizations, advertisers, content creators, and consumers all have a role to play in promoting more diverse and respectful portrayals of gender. Efforts to improve women's representation on television must extend beyond on-screen images. The industry must focus on increasing diversity among writers, directors, and producers to create more equitable and inclusive media. Initiatives that support women in these behind-the-scenes roles are crucial (Lauzen, 2020).

While progress has been made in recent decades, gender disparities persist in both on-screen and off-screen roles. The media industry plays a pivotal role in shaping societal perceptions and norms, making it imperative to address these disparities. Efforts to promote equitable representation should involve increasing diversity in the industry, supporting the development of multidimensional female characters, and challenging harmful stereotypes. By doing so, television can become a more powerful tool for promoting gender equality and social change.

The representation of women in television has long been a subject of academic and public interest. This paper explores the historical context, current state, and implications of women's representation on television, focusing on the portrayal of women in diverse roles. Drawing on existing literature and empirical evidence, this paper examines the impact of television on societal perceptions of gender roles and identities. Furthermore, it discusses the potential consequences of underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women on television and highlights the importance of fostering more inclusive and accurate portrayals.

## **2. Literature Review and Highlights**

This literature review examines the interconnected themes of sexism, commodification, objectification, gender equality, and representation in contemporary society. These concepts are crucial in understanding the complex dynamics of gender-related issues and their implications for various aspects of human life. This review aims to provide insights into the ongoing discourse surrounding these topics by synthesizing existing research. Gender equality is a fundamental principle of human rights, advocating for equal rights, opportunities, and treatment for people of all genders. Research in this area spans various disciplines and has focused on policy interventions, workplace dynamics, and cultural shifts needed to achieve gender equality (Duflo, 2012). By further examining and addressing these issues, researchers and advocates can contribute to the ongoing pursuit of gender equity and social justice.

Sexism is a pervasive issue that persists in various aspects of society, including the media. This paper explores the manifestations of sexism in media, focusing on its impact on gender stereotypes, representation, and the perpetuation of harmful gender norms.

Through a comprehensive analysis of academic research, empirical studies, and real-world examples, this paper aims to shed light on the role of media in perpetuating sexism and its consequences on individuals and society. By examining the various forms of sexism in media, from advertising and entertainment to news reporting and social media, this paper highlights the importance of addressing this issue and working towards a more inclusive and equitable media landscape.

Sexism is a societal issue encompassing prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping based on an individual's sex or gender. It manifests in various forms, ranging from subtle biases to overt discrimination. Researchers have extensively explored the manifestations and consequences of sexism, highlighting its negative impact on women's opportunities, mental health, and overall well-being (Swim & Hyers, 2009). Sexism, defined as discrimination or prejudice based on an individual's sex or gender, is a deeply ingrained issue that has persisted in societies worldwide for centuries. The media is one of the most influential platforms where sexism is perpetuated. Media plays a pivotal role in shaping cultural attitudes, norms, and values, making it crucial to analyze its contributions to perpetuating sexism.

Representation is a critical aspect of gender studies, as it pertains to how individuals and groups are portrayed in media, politics, and other cultural contexts. Scholars have explored the significance of diverse and positive representations for challenging stereotypes and promoting social change (Jhally, 2019). Media plays a significant role in perpetuating gender stereotypes, which are oversimplified, often inaccurate beliefs about the roles and attributes of men and women. These stereotypes are reinforced through various forms of media content, including advertisements, television shows, films, and print media. For instance, advertisements often depict women as passive, submissive, and focused on their appearance, reinforcing that a woman's primary value lies in her physical attractiveness. Conversely, men are frequently portrayed as dominant, assertive, and focused on career success. Such depictions limit individuals' choices and aspirations and contribute to unequal power dynamics between genders (Eisend, 2010).

The study discusses how television viewers' definitions of beauty are affected by advertisements; it is mentioned that the power dynamics within that society shape the knowledge accepted as accurate within a given community and are often used to reinforce and maintain existing power relations. This concept can be particularly illuminating when applied to the analysis of advertisements and other TV genres, as TV programs play a significant role in shaping our understanding of the world, as they often present a selective and distorted view of reality to promote a particular product or service (Gürkan and Serttaş, 2023). The phenomenon of gender is structured in social organizations that regulate daily life, such as family, economy, law, politics, and mass media, and these organizations define the roles attributed to men and women in the way society wants to see them and in line with the existing ideology.

The fact that social expectations regarding men and women vary from society to society but remain essentially the same underlines that the phenomenon of gender is also an ideological structure. Characteristics such as the roles attributed to both genders being internalized and established through the primary institutions of the system such as family, school, and media, repeating specific patterns, and being based on hegemony are indicators of this (Serttaş and Gürkan, 2015).

In the study titled *Transformation of Privacy in Daytime TV Shows Broadcasted on Turkish TV Channels*, the author states that affection, love, beauty, virginity, family, and many similar emotions, concepts, and institutions have been turned into commodities, especially in live television programs with guests broadcast during the daytime. The common point in the narratives of such programs is that, regardless of the subject, human stories are dramatized and brought to the fore, thus legitimizing the telling of details that are considered private (Serttaş, 2017).

According to another study investigating sexism in commercials, advertising conveys value to the audience while selling abstract emotions and lifestyle as well as concrete products and services.

These values may be related to the roles of various institutions and individuals. Shaping women's identity and seeing women as sexual objects through sexist advertisements, portraying women as constantly at home and without economic sufficiency, and aestheticizing violence against women are the leading negative judgments conveyed to the audience (Serttaş and Luşoğlu, 2014).

Furthermore, the underrepresentation of women in media, especially in leadership roles, reinforces the notion that women are less capable and influential than men (Smith, Choueiti, & Pieper, 2019). This lack of representation sends a powerful message that certain roles and positions are reserved for specific genders, limiting opportunities for both women and men.

When recent publications on sexism and media are examined, it is observed that social media-oriented studies and, therefore, digital sexism are popular topics. In the present investigation, the researchers posit a conceptualization of moderation through a dual lens of visibility, specifically focusing on the discernibility of sexist content and the presence of counter-speech. An online experiment was conducted to operationalize this framework, wherein the researchers manipulated the visibility of sexist content and counter-speech. The ensuing analysis aimed to elucidate these manipulations' impact on forming social norms, perceptions of safety, intent to participate, and evaluations of fairness, trustworthiness, and efficacy. As anticipated, the concealment of sexist content, rendering it invisible, and the visibility of (public) counter-speech against overtly sexist content concomitantly contributed to creating a secure online environment (Sassa & Grossklags, 2023).

The portrayal of women in stereotypically male professions, mainly through the *Woman Boss* series and related social media posts, has garnered scholarly attention. Yet, the longitudinal effects on adolescents remain ambiguous. Vranken et al. (2023) addressed this lacuna by investigating the reciprocal relations between exposure to such content and adolescents' beliefs regarding traditional gender stereotypes in professional tasks. Termed "experienced sexism," the study explored the mediating role of perceived content utility alongside moderating influences such as hyper-gender identity and personal acquaintance with women in counter-stereotypical professions offline.

Redondo et al. (2023) demonstrated that a proficiently trained algorithm can discern violent language, thereby preemptively identifying and flagging potentially harmful content. The authors posit that major social network corporations, as proprietors of these platforms, bear the onus of implementing "AI for good" to mitigate online violence, particularly given its disproportionate impact on women.

Ortiz's (2023) exploration, based on interviews with 33 young women in the United States, identifies covert sexism manifesting as derogatory comments about feminist issues from friends and family and manipulation by men. The paper underscores the ramifications of covert sexism on the disclosure of sexual assault, revealing how dismissive attitudes toward feminist issues contribute to heightened perceived costs of exposure. The interplay between offline and online interactions, as well as overt and covert forms of sexism, is illuminated to underscore the rationale behind women opting for silence as a strategic response to evade further mistreatment.

### **3. Historical Overview and Current State of Women's Representation**

Television plays a significant role in shaping cultural norms and perceptions, making it a critical medium for understanding how women are represented in the media. The portrayal of women on television has evolved over the years, reflecting changes in societal attitudes and norms. However, questions about these representations' accuracy, diversity, and impact persist. This paper aims to explore the historical and contemporary aspects of women's representation on television, analyze the implications of these portrayals, and provide insights into the need for more equitable and inclusive media representations. Historically, women's roles on television were often limited to stereotypical characters, such as homemakers or love interests. These early portrayals reinforced traditional gender roles and perpetuated harmful stereotypes. The "angel in the house" archetype, described by Gilman (1892), was commonly depicted on television, emphasizing women's domesticity and subservience.

The 1970s marked a turning point with the emergence of more complex female characters. Shows like “The Mary Tyler Moore Show” and “Maude” challenged traditional gender norms by featuring independent, career-oriented women. Nevertheless, significant gender disparities in television persisted in front of and behind the camera. Despite progress in portraying women on television, gender disparities remain a concern. A content analysis of prime-time television shows conducted by Smith (2019) found that women still occupy fewer speaking roles than men, and their characters are often younger and less powerful. Moreover, women of color, LGBTQ+ women, and women with disabilities continue to be underrepresented. One key factor contributing to these disparities is the need for more diversity among television writers, directors, and producers. A study by Lauzen (2020) revealed that women make up only a tiny fraction of these roles in the industry. This underrepresentation has a direct impact on the portrayal of women on television. The underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women on television have far-reaching consequences. First and foremost, media plays a significant role in shaping societal perceptions and attitudes. When women are consistently portrayed in limited or stereotypical roles, it reinforces harmful stereotypes and restricts the aspirations of young girls and women (APA, 2017).

Furthermore, a lack of diverse and accurate representations can perpetuate sexism and gender-based violence (Lanis, 2018). Women in the media are often subjected to objectification and hypersexualization, which can harm body image and self-esteem (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

#### **4. Methodology and Data Coding Scheme**

In this research, we developed a comprehensive coding scheme to analyze each media product systematically. This scheme includes categories and subcategories for sexism, gender stereotypes, and commodification of women:

<b>A. Sexism:</b>
<b>1. Verbal Sexism</b>
1.1 Derogatory language or slurs
1.2 Offensive jokes or remarks
1.3 Disparaging comments about women
<b>2. Visual Sexism:</b>
2.1 Objectification of women’s bodies
2.2 Sexualized clothing or poses
2.3 Demeaning or degrading imagery
<b>B. Gender Stereotypes:</b>
3. Traditional Gender Roles:
3.1 Portrayal of women in domestic roles (e.g., cooking, cleaning)
3.2 Men are shown in positions of authority or expertise
3.3 Reinforcement of gender-specific activities (e.g., boys playing with trucks, girls with dolls)
<b>4. Gendered Product Associations:</b>
4.1 Products associated with traditional male or female interests (e.g., tools for men, beauty products for women)
4.2 Stereotypical product use based on gender (e.g., men using cleaning products incompetently)
<b>C. Commodification of Women:</b>
<b>5. Sexualization:</b>
5.1 Depiction of women as primarily sexual objects

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5.2 Emphasis on body parts in a sexual manner
5.3 Use of seductive or suggestive imagery
<b>6. Objectification:</b>
6.1 Reducing women to their physical appearance
6.2 Treating women as commodities to sell products
6.3 Portrayal of women as interchangeable or replaceable
<b>7. Duration:</b>
7.1 Length of the program
<b>8. Narrative Elements:</b>
8.1 Storyline or narrative structure used in the program.
<b>9. Casting:</b>
9.1 Demographics of the actors or models featured in the program (e.g., age, ethnicity).
<b>D. Contextual Information:</b>
<b>10. Airing Time:</b>
10.1 Date and time of day the program was aired.
<b>11. TV Channel/Network:</b>
11.1 Name of the channel or network where the program was seen.
E. Additional Notes:
<b>12. Comments and Observations:</b>
12.1 Any additional comments or observations not covered by the above categories.

**Table 1:** Coding Scheme

Conducting a content analysis to analyze sexism, gender stereotypes, and the commodification of women in TV programs is a valuable research endeavor. To ensure the quality and rigor of our analysis, we tried to define clear parameters for collecting data. Our sample size is 30 TV programs from 3 TV broadcasters. We used random sampling on rating and share results. Prime time is chosen for the time frame. Three researchers do data collection by following the coding scheme. We presented the findings with quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. It's essential to balance the desire for a large, representative sample and the practical constraints of our research. We're conducting exploratory research; we started with a smaller model and decided to expand it if we discover significant trends or patterns.

TIAK (Television Monitoring Research Company) data was used to select the sample for this study. Accordingly, the three most-watched mainstream national television channels in Turkey were identified, and the prime-time programs of these channels were analyzed as a random sample for a week<sup>(1)</sup>.

## 5. Data and Analysis

### 5.1. Programs on TV 8

There is no news on TV 8, and it is an entertainment-focused broadcaster with national and international program formats. Ten programs were watched and analyzed weekly on 18-24 September.

Date	Program Title	Program Format
September 18th	Tuzak	Soap Opera
19th	Müge ve Gülşen'le 2. Sayfa	Magazine
20th	8'de Sağlık	Health

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21st	Zuhal Topal'la Yemekteyiz	Competition
22nd	Emre Dorman ile Aklımdaki Sorular	Religious
23rd	Ariel Ad	Advert
24th	Süper Bir Takım	Cartoon Series
25th	%100 Futbol	Sports
26th	Dankek Ad	Advert
27th	Gençlik Rüzgarı	Health

Table 2: Program data for TV8

When these formats are analyzed in the context of social gender stereotypes, these results have been reached:

Program	Woman	Man
TV Series	11	19
Magazine	3	1
Health	11	9
Competition	4	2
Religious	0	2
Sport	0	2
Advertisement (Ariel)	25	19
Advertisement (Dankek )	2	2
Total	Min. 56	Min. 56

Table 3: Program types according to gender

When we look at the gender-based distribution among the programs on the channel, the results are close to each other. No women were included in the programs, only *Emre Dorman ile Aklımdaki Sorular (Questions in My Mind with Emre Dorman - Religious)* and *%100 Futbol (100 Percent Football - Sports)*.

The guest in the analyzed section of the *Emre Dorman ile Aklımdaki Sorular (Questions in My Mind with Emre Dorman)* is male. However, it is seen that there is also a female presenter (Birün Aktaş) in the Ramadan special episodes of the program. In the sections by Birün Aktaş, the presenter announces the program's name as *Aklımdaki Sorular (Questions in My Mind)*, and Emre Dorman participates in the program as a commentator. Therefore, the absence of female representation in the analyzed section is not meaningful data.

The reason why women are invisible in the *%100 Futbol* program is that the number of women working as commentators and presenters in the sports industry is less than the number of men. The problem with needing a character representing women in the program in question is the gender-based categorization of the sports field (especially football) before the issue of representation. However, this scarcity does not mean absence. Women working in the area, such as Deniz Satar, Ceyla Büyükcuzun, and Sinem Ökten, are female sports announcers/commentators who can be preferred as an alternative to Murat Kosova and Ridvan Dilmen. However, it was not selected in the *%100 Futbol* program. Since there will be different reasons for this, no definitive conclusion that will affect the analysis should be drawn. However, the low number of women working in the sector points to a social-cultural problem.

On the other hand, the fact that the presenters in the health, magazine, and cooking competition programs are preferred as women and that these areas overlap with the sites attributed to women shows that women are coded through traditional gender roles in the media representation. The woman is shown as the person who gossips both at home and in the magazine program and as the person who takes care of the kitchen work both at home and in the competition program. In the first health program (8'de Sağlık), gender-based roles are created as a female beautician and a male representative of the rational mind. In the second health program, which presents the participant's beautification journey, the presenter and the beautician are women. The expert team of doctors is entirely male.

There are clues about the binary gender hierarchy in television advertisements in Turkey. In general, commodities such as cleaning materials and kitchen utensils target women. In such advertisements, women are shown in the kitchen, cleaning or cooking, and men are either absent or do not help women. However, this situation has changed recently, especially with the increase in the women's movement in Turkey. It would not be wrong to say that the campaign, which speaks out against negative situations such as the increase in femicides and the withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, has indirectly spread to daily life and different business lines and that brands also make positive discrimination against women in line with their social responsibility and awareness activities. Although the number of women occupying managerial positions in companies is small, sectoral dynamics and purchasing behaviors may also change. While Ariel's advertisement is a positive example of gender equality, the Danke advertisement reinforces gender stereotypes.

### **5.2.Emphasis on female beauty**

Although the stock images used in the programs are related to the subject, women and the female body are used more frequently in these contents. If the topics are related to beauty and care regardless of gender, the image of the woman is chosen, and if it is related to sports and muscle strength, the idea of the man is determined.

There is much emphasis on women's physical characteristics, independent of news and content. This emphasis is seen in magazines, health, and competition programs. The focus on women's beauty is also related to internalized gender roles. The theme of the Gençlik Rüzgarı (Youth Wind) program is based on the idea that women must be beautiful and presentable. Masculine appearance is considered harmful for women. This characterization shows that women are commodified in TV content.

### **5.3.Internalized traditional gender roles**

The most striking issue regarding gender among the programs analyzed is the internalization of these codes. The pre-acceptance of the binary gender system of men and women is seen in program contents in every field, from health to magazines. The gendering of professions is especially noticeable in the health program. In the magazine program, this distinction does not appear.

The internalization of masculinity is not a remarkable situation in terms of formats. The fluidity between genders is not widely accepted, especially in show business. Another striking element in TV8 content, where masculinity is also exhibited, is that status may vary depending on the format. For example, the status indicator is being able to cook in the Zuhâl Topal'la Yemekteyiz (Dinner with Zuhâl Topal) program. The number of women in the program is twice that of men (4 women, two men). The voice-over, named Gürbüz, is male and talks to the contestants while they cook. The dominant position of women in the kitchen and the acceptance of this position without seeming strange is one of the internalized roles. In this sense, the programs emphasize not only the beauty of women but also their characteristics associated with motherhood as the person who nourishes the child and the family. In the soap opera Tuzak (the Trap), status depends on gender and economic status. The dominant characters are rich men. The rate among wealthy people is measured by adherence to traditional masculinity norms.



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The presupposition that men and women have certain character traits based on gender is generally seen in the content. While traditional codes continue in “modern” celebrities, such a clear-cut conservatism is not evident in people whose work is dominated by conventional codes.

Although TV8 varies in format, its broadcast flow is similar every day. Competition formats are filled with polemics and discussions to increase ratings. Magazines and health programs, on the other hand, are content in which women are commodified, and their physical characteristics come to the fore. Sports content, on the other hand, is generally presented as masculine content where masculinity comes to the fore. This inference made about sports programs, specifically on TV8, is that in the versions with female announcers and commentators, women are commodified and presented as sexualized objects for rating purposes.

### 5.4. Programs on Show TV

Show TV is a national television channel. Within the scope of the study, ten contents consisting of a morning program, 2 TV series, one entertainment, one magazine, three advertisements, and two other genres were watched between 18.09.2023 and 24.09.2023. These contents were analyzed and evaluated according to the prepared coding scheme.

Date	Program Title	Program Format
September 18th	Bu sabah	Other
19th	Yeşil Vadinin Kızı	Soap opera
20th	Asli Hünel ile Gelin Evi	Other
21st	Didem Arslan Yılmaz'la Vazgeçme	Other
22nd	Kızılıcak Şerbeti	Soap opera
22nd	Güldür Güldür	Entertainment
23rd	Pazar Sürprizi	Magazine
23rd	Bebelac	Advert
24th	Nissan	Advert
24th	Biscolata	Advert
24th	Hypo	Advert

Table 4: Program data for Show TV

The gender-based distribution among the programs on the channel is as follows:

Program	Woman	Man
TV Series	11	10
Magazine	23	12
Others	15	10
Entertainment	13	31
Advertisement (Bebelac)	1	0
Advertisement (Nissan)	1	1
Advertisement (Biscolata)	1	5
Advertisement (Hypo)	4	2
Total	69	71

Table 5: Program types according to gender

When looking at the programs in general, similar situations were observed regarding gender roles. The presenters of the *Aslı Hünel ile Gelin Evi* (Bride House with Aslı Hünel) program with Aslı Hünel, the *Didem Arslan Yılmaz'la Vazgeçme* (Don't Give Up with Didem Arslan Yılmaz) program, and the *Pazar Sürprizi* (Sunday Surprise) are women. *Bu Sabah* (This Morning) program has a man and a woman as presenters. Issues such as arranging the house, furnishing the home, and cooking are shown as women's domain, showing that women are coded through traditional gender roles. In these programs, women are shown as the ones who choose the house's furniture, cook the best meals, host the guests, and gossip. In the magazine program, the perception was created that only women were interested in the lives of celebrities. *Güldür Güldür* program is an entertainment program in the style of socio-political criticism. For this reason, not much content would contribute to the study regarding both female representation and sexism. In other programs, female models from the public are exemplary (*Aslı Hünel ile Gelin Evi*, *Didem Arslan Yılmaz'la Vazgeçme*, *Bu Sabah*), sections from the lives of celebrities are presented (*Pazar Sürprizi*) or female representations are given with fictional content (*Kızılıcak Şerbeti - Cranberry Sherbet*).

When the advertisement contents are examined, it is observed that women are left alone in housework and childcare, while men are not involved in such work. Among the commercials watched, it was observed that gender roles were shown in an equal distribution only in the Hypo commercial. In this sense, it sets a positive example.

### 5.5. Women's appearance (Visual sexism)

Generally, women's bodies and clothing come to the fore. Women's clothes seem to be praised because "women have to pay attention to their appearance, but men do not!" perception has been created. It has been observed that women are not included in some types of advertisements. For example, men are especially preferred in car advertisements (for example, having men at the wheel, having a male voice as the voice-over, etc.), indicating that traditional stereotypes still limit specific gender roles.

In magazine programs and TV series, women's bodies and clothes are shown as perfect. It has been observed that thin, well-groomed, and stylishly dressed women are shown as examples of what women should be and are presented as patterns suitable for the ideal body size. Similarly, well-shaped, always fit, and smiling women are at the forefront of commercials. For example, mothers are never fat, sleepless, or neglected. This situation is identified with the product. A portrait has been drawn far from the daily lives of women and outside of reality.

### 5.6. Gender Stereotypes

It was observed that gender roles widely adopted in Turkish society were dominant in the programs watched. It has been observed that the classical structure (such as father, mother, and homemaker roles) is conveyed as a typical situation in the parts of men and women in the TV series examined. It has been observed that women with different preferences are implicitly or explicitly mocked or excluded. In the programs watched (*Aslı Hünel ile Gelin Evi*), situations such as being able to cook well, keeping the house clean, having a good dowry, and preparing a stylish dinner table are presented as ideal, and those who can achieve these situations are accepted and approved. Another noteworthy element in such programs is that the voice-over is male.

The broadcast stream of this channel consists of similar content. There needs to be more diversity, such as broadcasting documentaries, sports, science, art, etc. It should be considered to what extent the programs examined reflect the structure of society. It has been observed that many programs made for rating concerns include women. Although women are not explicitly presented as sexual objects, attention is drawn to these situations implicitly through some physical characteristics. It has been observed that this situation is more prominent in advertising content, and it is implicitly emphasized in TV series or magazine programs.

It is thought that it is essential to research the negative example-setting and guiding effects of the examples presented as women's roles, to organize programs to reduce or eliminate these effects, and to focus on educational publications. Precautions should be taken against the possibility of normalization of such content, and it would be beneficial to disseminate content highlighting women's rights and freedoms. Although gender codes are reinforced in magazine programs, women are not directly exhibited as sexual objects in the analyzed section; this is done indirectly by emphasizing their physical features. Although sexualization is seen in advertisements and TV series, its absence in magazine programs suggests this is done consciously. Since magazine programs, due to their format, focus on the private lives of real and famous people, people have the chance to file a lawsuit against the program and the channel. Although positive/negative comments are made about the physical characteristics of a natural person, showing them primarily as a sexual object may be a situation that the program producers want to avoid since it is not within the scope of freedom of thought.

The dominance of women in the cooking competition draws attention. The relative authority of women in this format is a situation that implicitly reinforces gender stereotypes. Although gender-based domination changes direction, it continues to exist. Authority is not directed from man to woman but from woman to man or woman to woman. However, when the order of masculine domination is read independently of gender, that is, when it is seen as the other class from the powerful, it can be said that there is no change. The fact that traditional women, who define their identity through domestic work, are included in the program in this way shows that, in addition to the problem of representation, the relationship between identity and gender has a sociological dimension.

The socioeconomic and cultural dimensions of intelligence or acquired skills (English) are ignored throughout the program. As a result, it is noteworthy that there is a pre-acceptance that everyone has equal access to opportunities, and domination is desired to be established due to this pre-acceptance. However, the underlying problem of this situation is not only a representation problem but also a sociological one, as mentioned in the paragraph above. Therefore, the following can be suggested for future studies: How is the discourse of media representation accepted in the social field? The answer to this question offers the opportunity to analyze the determined relationship between media and society in an up-to-date way in a traditional society like Turkey.

### **5.7. Programs on Fox TV**

Fox TV, which does not have much entertainment content, generally includes news, daytime television, and TV series productions. This evaluation examined the displays shown on the channel between 18-24 September. A total of 10 programs were selected, and seven were analyzed in this evaluation. The distribution of the surveyed programs is as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Program Title</b>	<b>Program Format</b>
September 18th, 19th, 20th	En Hamarat Benim	Competition
19th	Yabani	Soap opera
20th, 21st, 22nd	Bu Tabak Kimin?	Competition
21st	Hudutsuz Sevda	Soap Opera
22nd	Kirli Sepeti	Soap Opera

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23rd	Kefaret	Film
23rd	Ruhun Duymaz	Soap Opera
22nd	Çağla ile Yeni Bir Gün	Woman Generation Program
24th	Falım Gum Advertisement	Advert
24th	Biscolata Advertisement	Advert

Table 6: Program data for Fox TV

Program	Woman	Man
Soap opera	16	20
Competition	13	2
Woman Generation Program	1	1
Advert	2	9
Total	32	32

Table 7: Program types according to gender

As seen in the table, the proportion of women is higher than that of men in almost all productions. It is seen that the density of women is high on television channels in Türkiye because the programs analyzed are TV series, competition programs, and women's generation programs. In the TV series productions discussed, female characters were given more priority. Almost all the main characters of the *Kirli Sepeti (Dirty Basket)* series are women. One of the main ideas of the series is the situations experienced by women who are cleaning workers. This story, taken from a fundamental part of life, tried to raise awareness among women.

No male characters are in one of the competition programs (*Bu Tabak Kimin? - Whose Plate is This?*). While the contestants compete with the dishes they cook, no male contestant is in the program. The subtext of this is that cooking is a duty for women, and they must complete this duty by making the best meals.

In our other competition program, *En Hamarat Benim (I am the Most Diligent)*, apart from the presenter Kadir Ezildi, one more contestant is male. When the general broadcast history of the program was investigated, it was observed that there could only be one male contestant in some weeks. One of the contestants between September 18-24 is male, and this issue has been a matter of discussion throughout the week. The main character in our women's generation program is Çağla Şikel. The program continues to broadcast with guests. When the program of September 22 was examined, Face Analyst Murat Kaplan was the guest. During the program, facial analyses of celebrities and viewers were made, as Murat Kaplan is an expert.

In commercials, *Biscolata Commercial* is a program with the most male characters. Although the advertisement is a chocolate advertisement, the main idea wanted to be emphasized is to show the dominant roles of men and women. In this advertisement, where there are seven men and one woman, the female character is dressed very attractively, and the men around her try to impress her. In the *Falım Gum Commercial*, the main character, the woman, talks about marriage while having fun in bumper cars and complains about being a 'leftover.' Although the two events are unrelated, the issue comes down to the notion that women 'stay at home' when unmarried.

### 5.8. Stereotyped female roles

Especially in the TV series examined, it is seen that women are always given responsibility. All the main characters in *Kirli Sepeti* are women and cleaning workers.

However, when we look at the subtext, we can see that rich women do not do any of their work, but poor women only do the work of wealthy people. Although having a helper at home is expected under normal circumstances, it is reflected differently in this production. In another of our series, *Hudutsuz Sevda*, a man with two wives and their communication with each other are shown. Here, too, cheating on women is legitimized, and women are molded into accepting it. In the competition programs examined, women always cook and say to the female contestants whose food is unliked, 'You are not a good housewife. 'You cannot take care of your children either.' Accusations are made. However, she is put into this mold because of the other female characters. The most striking issue regarding gender among the programs analyzed is the internalization of these codes. The pre-acceptance of the binary gender system of men and women is seen in program contents in every field, from health to magazines. The gendering of professions is especially noticeable in the health program. In the magazine program, this distinction does not appear.

### **5.9. Reflecting women's hostility towards their fellow men**

Misogyny has been tried to be brought to the fore in at least one issue in all TV series and productions. On the one hand, the hostility of women deceived under the name of 'sand' is shown, while on the other hand, the female contestants competing constantly insult the other party. Especially in game shows, female characters try to create chaos by making derogatory comments to each other. As can be seen from the discussions that occur for no reason, the producers of the programs want these discussions. Because all the productions that want to be watched in Turkey give the audience controversy, fights, and chaos. The producers think that the audience requests these. For this reason, the issue of misogyny appears very frequently on Fox TV.

Fox TV could be more developed in terms of program diversity. While news programs are shown on the channel in the morning, two competition programs are conducted at noon, followed by news and TV series. The main subject of these two competition programs is cooking. Fox TV only offers cooking competition programs, information, and TV series. When we look at Fox TV's general productions, women are stereotyped and tried to be reflected differently in society. Since it is a local and national channel, this awareness should be reflected in culture, but doing the opposite negatively affects the Turkish people. Adding different productions to the track and increasing its diversity is necessary. It should be considered not only for women but also for male characters. Instead of misogyny, solidarity needs to be created, and a channel structure should be made where women are shown to be strong instead of creating many situations where women remain silent and intimidated.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the intricate interplay between media representation and gender roles in Turkish society. It reveals a persistent alignment of media content with traditional gender norms and stereotypes, which have deep-seated roots in cultural perceptions. From cooking competitions to magazine program advertisements to TV series, these gender codes permeate various facets of media content, shaping and reinforcing societal expectations.

The study highlights a few encouraging signs of change, primarily linked to Turkey's growing women's movement and the resulting increased corporate social responsibility efforts. However, the transformation is still in its infancy, and a long road remains ahead toward achieving true gender equality in media representation. One significant finding is the internalization of these gender codes, not only in media but also in society. This internalization is particularly evident in professions, with specific roles deemed inherently masculine or feminine. The program formats contribute to this, with distinctions between genders persisting, often without question.

Moreover, the portrayal of women's bodies and their emphasis on beauty, regardless of content, underscores the deep-seated and unrealistic expectations of women.

While not always explicit, this pervasive objectification remains an underlying issue in media representation.

It is evident that the media plays a substantial role in perpetuating traditional gender roles, but it is equally clear that it reflects the broader societal dynamics in Turkey. As such, future research should delve deeper into the discourse of media representation and its acceptance within the social fabric, providing a nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between media and society. In moving forward, it is imperative to consider the impact of media representation on shaping gender norms and roles and to advocate for change through education and awareness campaigns. While there are positive examples of progress, it is vital to continue challenging and transforming the gender codes deeply ingrained in Turkish media to foster a more inclusive and equitable society where stereotypes and traditional roles do not confine individuals.

**Conflicts of Interest:** The author declare no conflict of interest.

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### Notes:

<https://tiak.com.tr/tablolari> Date of Access (16.9.2023)

Monthly report is a report that is published at the end of every month and indicates the consolidated viewing performance of channels for the relevant month. In addition to live viewing on the broadcasting date, consolidated viewing (Live + 7) includes ratings within seven days following broadcasting. Monthly reports are published on the first business day following the seven days after the last date of the month. The bottom part of the tables explains the value applying to the dates for channels included in the measurement system in the relevant month. If no time slot is specified for a track, the discounts in the report will apply to the entire month mentioned.

The viewing performance of channels is reported based on timebands defined as Total Day, Prime Time, and Off-Prime Time.

Total day covers the 24-hour timeband defined as the period between 02:00 and 26:00, where the measurement day starts at 02:00 AM and continues until the same hour next day.

Prime time is (20:00-23:00) defined as the time between 20:00 and 23:00, the three hours of viewing activity at its highest.

OPT (07:00-20:00) is defined as the time between 07:00 and 20:00, it is the thirteen-hour period when viewing activity is at the lowest (OPT stands for “Off Prime Time”).

OPT (07:00-18:00) - The period between 07:00 and 18:00 PT (18:00-25:00) - The period between 18:00 and 25:00 (PT stands for “Prime Time”).

PT (18:00-24:00) - The period between 18:00 and 24:00 PT

(19:00-29:00) - The period between 7:00 PM and 24:00

Measurement Results

RTG% (Rating %) is the average audience rate per minute for programs or commercials for a certain period. It is calculated by the ratio of the average number of audience (people in the relevant target audience) per minute at a certain timeband (e.g., 13:00 - 13:45) to the target audience universe selected.

The share received from total viewing. It is the ratio of the average number of viewers per minute at a particular time slot to the average number of viewers per minute associated with Total TV in that same time slot.

In other words, it indicates the percentage of a channel’s audience across the entire population of viewers.