



The Representation of Minority Women in Turkish Streaming Media: The Case Study of Kulüp¹

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Abstract

The discussion on representation, from individual perspective to societal one, has experienced a huge jump in media and cultural studies recently. Throughout this process, the meaning of “representation” has reconstructed, and it is considered not only as an individual issue but also with its relation to the society or a specific group. This study aims to illustrate representations of women who come from minority ethnic and religious communities in Turkey. In this study, the representations of Sephardic Jewish women and Rum women in Turkish media are analyzed through a TV series broadcasted on Netflix. The case study of Netflix’s Kulüp (The Club) is chosen for this study to be qualitatively examined by focusing on the conceptualization of representation of minority women. Theoretically, the episodes of the series are analyzed within the framework of feminist critical theory by the help of critical discourse analysis.

Keywords: minority representation; representation of women; feminist critical theory; streaming media

1. Introduction

While a nation state emerges, ethnic, linguistic, religious, or cultural groups standing outside the “nation” which is defined by the state as its existence. According to this definition, those groups continue living within the borders but do not comply with the standards of the “nation” and they become “minorities”. Factors like “race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship, gender and so on” categorize people and this brings “otherization” together.

This creates “us and others”, “local and stranger” and “majority and minority” in a society. All minority protection agreements made after the First World War were based on the criteria of “race, religion and language minorities”, complying with the standard of the period. However, The Treaty of Lausanne, which was signed during the process of construction of new Turkish Republic in 1923, forms the legal basis of minority rights in Turkey and uses the term “non-Muslims” while defining minorities, ignoring other standards. That’s why the official minority definition in Turkey includes only “non-Muslim citizens”, which includes Armenians, Jews, and Rums (Orthodox Greeks living in Turkey) (Oran, 2005: 61-63).

Here in this study, minority women, especially Jewish and Rum women, are the subjects because the series mainly includes them.

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The representations of minority women in mainstream media of Turkey are generally reviewed and with the existence of new media/streaming platforms, whether there is a difference or not is observed with the case study of Netflix's Kulüp.

2. Historical and Cultural Background

Representation is not a term which can be evaluated apart from cultural, historical, and social basis. Therefore, to analyze the representations of minority women in Turkish streaming media properly, it is important to understand the historical and cultural background of these groups in the country.

There are basically a few important cases evolving minorities to be evaluated. An important development came on the scene with the Treaty of Lausanne, the Turkish-Greek Population Exchange. In accordance with the agreement, approximately 1,200,000 Anatolian Greeks left the country, while 500,000 Muslim Greek Turks were immigrated to Turkey instead. During the construction of new republic, another important event took place in the 1934 called Thracian Pogrom, which was affected by the rising anti-Semitism in Europe, and, in which the properties of the Jewish citizens of the country were plundered in Thrace Region. As a result of some racist articles against Jews in the newspapers, the public was influenced and started violent incidents against the Jewish minority. In Thracian provinces such as Tekirdağ, Edirne, Kırklareli and Çanakkale, shops and houses belonging to Jews were looted and women were raped. Approximately 15000 Thracian Jews left the cities they were living. Another vital development affected minorities was "the Wealth Tax". During the construction of the new Turkish Republic, based on national identity, minorities and majority continued to live together, and they were equal under the constitution. Nevertheless, the majority, Turkish people, wished to be richer than the others and to be leader of every market. But it was impossible when Jewish people were successful at trade and craft, or Rums were the leader of entertainment world or Armenians were the main craftspeople in the country. Therefore, politics decided to solve this "problem" by a new regulation called "wealth tax" in 1941 and started to gather tax from rich people within the context of "mobilization plan" to protect the country from the Second World War's bad economic effects. This tax could not be executed to just minorities, because it was illegal according to the constitution. The government constitute commissions which would decide who got more properties and goods in the country. According to the results of the commissions' examinations, mostly minorities like Jewish, Rum, and Armenian people had the wealthiest companies or businesses followed by some Turkish businesses. This tax needed to be gathered in on month, otherwise people had to be sent to the working camps (in Aşkale, Erzurum). This tax was taken out of one year later but one year was enough for minorities to suffer from becoming poorer. That was the first attempt of making the capital Turkish. This was a component of the strategy, which would get "clear" of minorities from the capital and making the capital Turkish and making Turkish people richer.

And the other important incident for minorities is 6-7 September Events, or in other words İstanbul Pogrom, appeared in 1955. These events got started after Turkish people were systematically influenced by mass media (mainly newspapers) against minorities. Newspapers then, tried to create a hostile atmosphere by publishing some fake news related to Jewish people who were reflected like the only people holding the leadership of every market and Rums were shown like traitors making plans to conquer İstanbul. By then, there had been a political issue concerned Cyprus, where Turkish and Greek people had been living together. Greeks and Turkish had some disagreements and as a result, there had been armed conflict between some groups there. In İstanbul, media provoked Turkish people against Rums as if they were the same groups in Cyprus and trying to start riots against the Turkish Republic. On 6th of September 1955, a newspaper wrote a fake news about some Greek people attacking Atatürk's House in Thessalonica by using a language full of hate and hostility. Some groups of people collected by the help of some organizations were released to Pera (currently Beyoğlu, Taksim in İstanbul) to start disorder, to attack shops belonging to minorities and sacred places like churches, synagogues, and cemeteries and to lead a chaos.

Even though these events lasted for 2 days, police force did not intervene or just took intervention slow. As a result, according to Turkish resources 11 people were killed, according to Greek resources 15 people were killed. According to unofficial numbers, there were more than 300 injured. Many houses and shops of minorities were destroyed, and material damage was so high. After these days, thousands of minorities immigrated from Turkey to Greece, Israel, and the USA.

And back in 60's and 70's, there was a Cyprus issue. In Cyprus, after a problematic period between Greek and Turkish people lasting about ten years, in 1974, after the military junta in power in Greece staged a military coup against Makarios through the Greek National Guard Organization and declared "Enosis", Turkey intervened militarily in Cyprus, and as a result, in 1983 The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was declared on the northern side of the island. Developments before and during the division of Cyprus caused the relations between Turkey and Greece to be damaged. Rums living in Turkey were also negatively affected.

Sephardic Jews included in this study are Jewish people who had to immigrate to Iberia after Jewish-Roman war. Indeed, Sephardic means "Spain" in Hebrew. Jewish call those Jewish people who live in Spain, Sephardic. They had been living in Spain for so many years until they were expelled from Spain with Alhambra Decree in 1492. After this regulation, they had to immigrate to many parts of the world like France, Holland, England, Portugal. Some of those Sephardic Jews came to Turkey (then it was called Ottoman Empire) and started a new life here. For over 500 years, Sephardic Jews have lived in Turkey, mainly in Istanbul. They deal with trade and jewelry business. They speak a language called Ladino. The language is basically medieval Spanish spoken by Jewish people. It is a mixture of Spanish and Hebrew and influenced by Turkish somehow. There are still a few Jewish people speaking Ladino in Turkey, but their population has been decreased because of the oppression they have met from time to time. Most of the young generation of Sephardic Jews in Turkey do not know the language their ancestors could speak. Rum people included in this study are Greek Orthodox people living in Turkey. They have been living in Turkey for ages because there had been a Pontus Rum Empire in the North of Turkey before Ottoman Empire conquered the land. Therefore, there are still Rum villages in Turkey and Rum neighborhoods in Istanbul. They either speak Greek or Turkish in a Greek accent. Since tragic events like Exchange agreement, Pogroms or Wealth Tax, the population of this group has been decreased as well.

3.Theoretical Framework and Methodology

While creating the theoretical framework of the study, media theories examining the dominant social discourse and the relationship between state discourse and media are referred and the nature of the relationship between hegemonic ideology and media discourse is tried to be examined.

The hegemony of the dominant groups or classes in society operates culturally and ideologically through institutions, including the media, and is internalized by the society with the help and leadership of these institutions. In this process, the media supports the necessary cultural infrastructure for the dominant ideology to be internalized by the society (Hall, 1982). In this sense, it is possible to evaluate media as a tool that disseminates and reinforces the dominant ideology.

Mass media, which operate in parallel with the discourses of the dominant groups, not only provide information and news to individuals in society, but also play an active role in directing and regulating the thoughts and tendencies of individuals according to the interests and priorities of the dominant classes (Wright, 1974). Media has a very important position in the representation of unequal social relations and the cultural power game. Through these representations, the target mass is invited to construct "us" through its relationship with "not us". Dominant ideology creates an "us" through representations and identities in the media, but also "others" are constructed by misrepresentation or under-representation.

An important dimension of the issue of representation that finds a place in feminist research is the visual content of the texts about women in the media, as well as the language and the discursive

and discursive structure of the texts. The feminist perspective underlines that the media is one of the parties to the political struggle and that it must have a responsible stance towards the production of content in the context of gender. Otherwise, it is inevitable that this reproduction process will render invisible the structural problems based on gender that critical feminist theory draws attention to. According to Lazar (2007), the purpose of feminist critical discourse studies, is to reveal the complex, subtle (sometimes not that subtle) ways in which gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different contexts and communities (Lazar, 2007: 142).

This study benefits from Critical Discourse Analysis as methodology because CDA offers a considered theorization of the relationship between social practices and discourse structures, and a wide range of tools and strategies for detailed analyses of contextualized uses of language in texts and talk (Lazar, 2007:144). While trying to depend the study on feminist theory, it should be considered that the interconnections between and the particularities of discursive strategies employed in various forms of social inequality and oppression that can feed back into critical feminist analysis and strategies for social change. Therefore, the combination of feminist theory and CDA can be a rich and powerful political critique for action. As Lazar points out (2007), in CDA there is a realization of social practices as reflected as well as constituted by discourse, while a feminist perspective highlights that most of the social practices, far from being neutral, are in fact gendered in this way (Lazar, 2007: 145). In terms of a critical view, ideologies are representations of practices constructed by certain perspectives to maintain unequal power relations and dominance. In media, education, government, and various professional and organizational setting, gender inequality is discursively revealed in different ways. As Lazar (2007) argues that even though there is a diversity of forms which gender and sexism are theorized in different cultures and across time, the structure of gender has been remarkably persistent over time and place. Therefore, a CDA depending on feminist theory needs to undertake contingent analyses of the oppression of women and in its 'endless variety and monotonous similarity' (Lazar, 2007: 148)

The purpose of this study is to examine how power and dominance are discursively produced and/or (counter-)resisted in a variety of ways through textual representations of gendered social relations, and through interactional strategies of language. In the patriarchal gender order, feminist theory points out that women are subordinated to men structurally. However, in terms of other forms of power based on race/ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, age, culture, and geography, gender oppression is not same for every woman everywhere (Locke, 2004). Therefore, an CDA depending on feminist theory is benefited by leaning on the cultural, historical, and institutional frameworks, and contextualized in terms of constructed social identities of women. Here in this study, CDA depending on feminist approach is benefited from to emphasize that some factors like cultural and historical might be distinctive in the context of representation of women. The discursive construction of a social being can be analyzed broadly in terms of representations, relationships, and identities (Fairclough, 1995). CDA for feminist studies is used to find out how gender ideology and gendered relations of power (re)produced, negotiated, and contested in representations of social practices and in social relationships between people, and their social and personal identities.

As Hall (2009) states, meaning is constructed by using representation systems (concepts and signs) with the rules that determine social process in society, culture, traditions, common cultural codes, and language system (Hall, 2009: 25-34). Therefore, examining the representation in TV series signifies examining the social process that constructs representation.

According to Fulcher (2010: 7), discourse analysis can be seen as a way of understanding social interactions. Furthermore, Fulcher (2010: 4) states that a discourse is a particular theme in the text, especially those that relate to identities. The investigator will attempt to identify categories, themes, ideas, views, and roles within the text itself.

The aim is to identify commonly shared discursive resources, that is, shared patterns of text. Thematic analysis tries to identify meaningful categories or themes in a body of given text (Fulcher 2010: 5). In thematic analysis, a limited number of themes which reflect the textual data properly is determined. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within data (Braun & Clarke 2006: 79). A theme is a cluster of linked categories conveying similar meanings.

Major themes and subthemes in the texts are identified through established qualitative coding methods (as coded by Gürkan and Biga, 2023). Themes are presented along with a meaningful description and representative quotations from the texts. Here in this study, the themes to be analyzed depending on CDA in terms of feminist approach are “marital status”, “costume”, “language (accent)”, “religious signs” and “occupation” of the minority women in Netflix’s *Kulüp*.

4.A Literature Review on the Representations of Minority Women in Turkish Cinema and Television Series

Like in all other forms of representation, in cinema and TV series, meanings are created related to the minority identity it represents. Therefore, in mainstream media like cinema and series in Turkey, the representation of minorities positioned as “others” also carries meanings regarding how the audience should position itself and defines the ideal individual.

The main problem encountered when representing minorities in the media is generalizations. Generalizations are established in two ways: Attributing stereotypical personal or behavioral characteristics to all members of a group (which often includes negative stereotyping) and transforming the specific behavior of an event or individual into the general characteristic of that event or group (Kuhar, 2006: 135).

“Symbolic annihilation” was first used as a concept by Gerbner and Gross (1976) to describe the absence of representation, or underrepresentation, of a group of people in the media. This absence is mainly related to sex, race, or sexual orientation, which refers social inequalities. This term is used to refer to how the media represents women because representation is so hidden or none and it becomes difficult to perceive. In gender representations, women tend to be portrayed as vulnerable, fragile, powerless, submissive, unaware of anything and sex objects. Those stereotypes are misrepresentation of women in mainstream media. Or they are represented as only mother, wife, daughter, and helper, which can be examples of underrepresentation and in some contents, they are not represented at all, which can be an example of symbolically annihilation. In studies on representation, the question of what is represented is not independent of the question of who represents it. The production companies and television channel managers, in line with the feedback received from the audience and the opinion of the advertiser in the context of the rating system decides who will be represented and how they will be represented. Therefore, it turns out that the representation in TV series, like other television representations, is an artificially shaped/reproduced by “representatives”.

With the help of a literature review of studies on minority representations on cinema or TV series, it can be said that there are some stereotypes used for minority characters. For example, according to Balcı’s book (2013) on non-Muslims in Turkish cinema, stereotypical representations of Rum women are as prostitute, tavern keeper, boarding house owner, etiquette teacher, doctor, singer, kanto performer and theater performer, shopkeeper-merchant, and industrialist. While Rum women are represented as vamp characters in Turkish films, men are presented as gangsters/smugglers as an example of the enemy Greek image. While Armenian men are seen as tradesmen, Armenian women are portrayed as money-grubbing boarding house keepers. Jews, on the other hand, appeared as stingy, malicious, coward, and selfish men (Balcı, 2013: 232-233). Balcı also explains that these minority characters are marginalized in terms of their family structure, and that these characters are generally reflected as lonely people who belong to broken families (2013: 168). Çam’s study (2010) show that Rum women are represented more in number than men, and that women who are not in a marriage or in a great love relationship with a Turkish man are marginalized by being reflected in the seductive/disappointing position.

According to findings of another study on minority representation in TV series (Önk and Selçuk, 2014), it is revealed that female Rum characters are visually presented differently from Turkish women in all the series examined. In addition to their jewelry, which emphasizes that they belong to different religions, the differences of Greek women are visually emphasized by the hats they wear or by the well-groomed and made-up looks. While the differences of minority men are not visually marked and constructed in the discourse of the series, Greek women are visually marked with various symbols. This form of representation makes visible the difference established between “us” and “them”, like the contrast of the majority Turkish women and the minority Rum women, thus reconstructing the Rum woman identity through these evident differences.

The 1990s were a period in which different identities gained more positive visibility in Turkish cinema (Gürkan, 2020). Examples of films in these years are Tunç Başaran’s film *Sen De Gitme* (1995); Mustafa Altıoklar’s films *İstanbul Kanatlerim Altında* (1995) and *Ağır Roman* (1997), and Tomris Giritlioğlu’s film *Salkım Hanım Taneleri* (1999). In these movies, it is appeared that minorities are more represented. However, they are still misrepresented somehow. Still stereotypical representations of minority women like being vamp or being different with jewelry or wealthiness were highlighted. In terms of minority characters in Turkish cinema after 1990, it is observed that Armenian characters increased, but Rum characters still predominated. There is no longer that much symbolic annihilation anymore but still the misrepresentation continues in those films. (Yaşartürk, 2012: 77). 2000’s is an era when minorities are visible but again not enough (underrepresentation) and not parallel with the reality.

5.The Representations of Minority Women in *Kulüp*

5.1.The Plot of *Kulüp*

A Netflix Turkey’s series *Kulüp* (The Club) was released in November 2021 in Turkey. It was directed by Seren Yüce and Zeynep Günay Tan. It includes 20 episodes in two seasons. The plot is surrounded by a Sephardic Jewish woman called Matilda, who just got out of prison after a long sentence. She had been living a normal life with her family in İstanbul before she was jailed. Bad things had happened to the family, and she had to pay the price by prison sentence and by being left up stone broke. The series started with Matilda’s getting out of the jail. She has a daughter (Raşel) living in an orphanage because of Matilda’s sentence. Matilda decides to find a job and take Raşel out of orphanage to live together. She gets a job as a tailor/designer/assistant in a night club, where is the main stage all the things happen in the series. *Kulüp* is named after this club. This club is located in Pera (Beyoğlu/Taksim), and events take place in 1950s, when Pera was still the center of entertainment, where people from different cultures (Turkish, Jews, Armenians, Greeks and so on) were living, working, and enjoying life together in peace. The series includes everyday lives of ordinary people coming from different origins and the night life of Pera until an unfortunate event happens (Events of 6-7 September, or in other words, İstanbul Pogrom). The last episode of the first season finishes with the start of these events. In between, everyday lives of people who work in this club and their happiness, thoughts, sadness, joy in life can be viewed in the episodes. Like most drama series, this one includes a love story as well, which seems to be impossible because one of the lovers is Turkish and the other, Raşel, is a Sephardic Jew. Their love, breaking ups, and reunions are part of the scenario. There are other minorities working in this club like Rums and Armenians. The general atmosphere of the series is like all these people coming from different origins living and working in peace in this club until İstanbul Pogrom starts.

The minority women characters in the series to be analyzed are Matilda, Raşel, Mevhibe Şahin (Orhan’s mother) and Tasula. Mathilda and Raşel are Sephardic Jewish people and Mevhibe and Tasula are Rum people. One important detail should be given that Mevhibe Şahin is an Orthodox Rum woman, but she must hide her identity because she pretends to be a Turkish Muslim woman not to damage her son’s success in entertainment business.

5.3. Findings and Evaluations

5.3.1. Marital Status

The first theme will be discussed is “marital status”. In mainstream media (in cinema or television series), women coming from minority groups are generally not married. They are represented as bad women who want to damage the relationship of married couples. However, in the series, although the leading role, Matilda, coming from a Sephardic origin, is not married, she does not have any emotional relationship with anyone. Matilda is not represented as a bad woman in this term. She never makes eye contact to men, especially if there is a potential there to be seen like “available”. She tries to escape any misunderstandings. This representation is not related to the woman coming from a minority group. It refers to most women living here in Turkey, especially if she works in night life. The representation of this moral life of this woman is familiar to the viewers because any slight attractive look or behavior of a minority woman is open to misunderstanding for the society. Since, she needs to pay attention to her behaviors or appearance more than any other women coming from the majority. Even though these characteristics of Matilda are given, she is still an unmarried woman who has a daughter outside of marriage. This is a stereotypical representation of minority women in mainstream media of Turkey and in this streaming content, it maintains this misrepresentation of minority women.

Raşel, as being the supporting character, has an important role in this series. She is not married even if she has an emotional relationship with a Turkish man called Fıstık İsmet. Here, there is an emphasis of the freedom of a minority woman, who can choose freely the partner she wants to be with. However, the era is 50s in Turkey, when there were still so much conservative thoughts existed, the majority of the society thought that having an intercourse before marriage was something that could only be done by minority women because majority (Muslim women) was considered too moral (ethical) to behave like that. Raşel gets pregnant from İsmet outside of marriage like her mother Matilda. This representation shows parallelism with the misrepresentation of minority women as in mainstream media. Generally, they tend to be represented like “corrupt” women, deciding everything on their own without thinking any rules of the society. Throughout 2 seasons of the series, although Raşel wants to get marry to İsmet so much, Ahmet does not marry her because their religions are different. At the end, they start to live together, but still outside of marriage. Marital status of a minority woman defines the position of the woman in the society like it happens in mainstream media all the time.

Mevhibe Şahin, who is originally a Rum woman but assimilated over the years, has a very small role in the series. She is a widow living with her son. She is a character who has some mental issues. After some episodes, viewers can understand why she has some psychological problems. The assimilation occurs like even though she is an Orthodox Rum, but she must behave like a Muslim, just to live a more peaceful life in a society where the majority is Muslim. However, after a while, some issues appear due to this repression of the belief and origin. As marital status, the representation is still problematic because she seems like an old Muslim woman, so no one doubts that she is divorced or not married. Since according to dominant patriarchal ideology if a woman is old and Muslim, and if there is no husband visible, then the husband must have been died, there cannot be any other explanation according to this representation.

Tasula, is an unmarried Rum woman who had to have a sexual intercourse with the manager (Çelebi) of the club to get hired as a dancer in the club. This is a stereotypical representation of a Rum woman as a “corrupt” woman in mainstream Turkish media. Dominant patriarchal ideology imposes that a woman must behave accordingly with patriarchal rules in a Muslim society such as not having an intercourse before marriage or not deciding anything on her own without permission from a man “superior” like a father or brother or husband. If a woman who behaves outside the rules, dominant ideology immediately declares her as “corrupt”. In the series, it is reflected that Tasula, as a Rum woman, does not have any other chance to survive on her own.

An empathy can be developed against to this woman in contradistinction to mainstream contents. In one episode, Tasula kills a Turkish man who is trying to rape her. After that, another Turkish man helps her, and they fall in love and get married. In later episodes, Tasula is a married Rum (Orthodox) woman, whose husband is a Muslim Turkish man. In the series, it can be evaluated that at first the representation of this Rum woman shows parallelism with the mainstream representation. Nevertheless, getting married to a Muslim man is breaking the stereotypical patterns. However, after getting married to a Turkish Muslim man, she starts to behave like a “decent” woman instead of a “corrupt” one, which has an implication that marriage to a Turkish man “rescues” a woman’s “chastity”, especially if this woman is from a minority group.

5.3.2. Costume

Matilda wears smart dresses all the time without any striking details. She prefers wearing not colorful clothes. It seems as if Matilda deliberately pays attention to what she wears because any appealing costume would cause trouble for her. The society feels ready to spread rumors or attack her because she is an unmarried minority woman who works in a night club. Therefore, she always looks “restrained” on clothing. This is not like a stereotypical representation of clothing of a minority woman. Raşel’s dresses at first very childish because she is a teenager at the beginning of the series. Then she starts to wear normal young woman clothes when she falls in love with a man, but her clothes are still standard young woman clothes without any exaggeration. This is not like a stereotypical representation of clothing of a minority woman.

Mevhibe Şahin, as an assimilated Orthodox, she wears like any other Muslim older age woman. She wears expensive jewelry; has her hair done and wears high-heeled shoes all the time. These are signs of being rich and coming from royal roots. With these details, she is shown as if she is different from the majority. This is like stereotypical representation of minority women because somehow it needs to be appeared that they are different even if it is a secret. Tasula, at the beginning of the series, wears low cut tops while she lives alone. Later, when she meets a Turkish man, she starts to wear neatly. Since the dominant patriarchal ideology implies that a majority woman living in a society in which Muslim people live mostly should wear accordingly with the religious and cultural codes. This is another stereotypical representation of minority women. Through these misrepresentations, minority women are reflected like they are ready for anything if they are not married to a man from a majority group. It is observed by looking at her clothing. However, when she marries to a man (especially to a Muslim Turkish man), then she becomes a “decent” woman as the ideology aims to see.

5.3.3. Language (Accent)

Even though Matilda is a Sephardic Jew, whose native language is Ladino, she speaks Turkish with a clear Turkish accent. She does not have any Jewish accent. This is different from other mainstream representations of minority. She prefers speaking her native language when she speaks to her family or her neighbors. However, she can speak both Turkish and Ladino fluently and purely without any accent. Although Raşel’s native language is Ladino, and she is grown up in a Jewish orphanage, she does not have any Ladino accent while she speaks Turkish. She can speak both Ladino and Turkish fluently and purely without any accent. It is another difference in representation of minority women than mainstream. Mevhibe Şahin, as being an assimilated Rum woman, when she speaks Turkish in a crowd, she never has a Rum accent. However, when she is alone with her son or when she prays for God in her secret chapel in the house, she starts to speak Greek or a Turkish with Rum accent, which is very familiar for Turkish viewers. This representation is a cliché for Turkish cinema and series. Having accent is a stereotypical representation of minority women in Turkish media. Tasula, as being a non-secret Rum Orthodox in the series, speaks Turkish with a very dominant Rum accent, which is a stereotypical representation of Rum minorities in Turkish cinema and television series.

5.3.4. Religious Signs

As a Sephardic Jew, Matilda lives her religion freely. She prays like every other Jewish person. She does rituals for Shabbat for example. It is ushered by lighting and reciting blessings over wine and bread. This representation of Jewish religion is not familiar for Turkish viewers. After the series was released, people started to search for Shabbat in research engines because most of the majority in Turkey hadn't heard about this religious ritual until this series. The unawareness of this religious ritual is the consequence of symbolic annihilation of this minority group in Turkish mainstream media because their religious signs were ignored in cinema and television series, and they had been represented as if they are just rich and stingy people who are good at only trade and jewelry business until this one. Raşel, as being a Sephardic Jew, is not represented as a religious character because she doesn't carry any religious signs, or she isn't shown when she prays in the series. Even she decides to change her name into a Turkish name and goes to the authorities and makes her name Aysel instead of Raşel. Although this is not a religious sign, it shows that if she could change her religion, she could do that for her love. From the beginning, Tasula has not hid that she is an Orthodox Christian. She shows it by wearing a crucifix necklace. Even after getting married to a Muslim Turkish man, she continues doing rituals for her religion like crossing herself or following Easter traditions. This representation of minorities is different from the mainstream representation because stereotypical representation for a Rum woman is generally to change her religion into Muslim after getting married to a Muslim man. Mevhibe Şahin, as an assimilated Orthodox, lives her religion in secret. She can only pray in a secret chapel in her house. This points out how hard minority women lived their own religions back then. It is a valid representation depending on the reality.

5.3.5. Occupation

Matilda works as a tailor and a designer at a night club. Even though being a tailor is not an "immoral" job, performing it at a night club makes this "decent" job not suitable for a Muslim woman. Just a minority woman can have a job at nights. So, this is an example of misrepresentation of minority women like in mainstream media. Raşel does not work throughout all episodes of the series. After falling in love with a Muslim Turkish man, she does not want to work at a night club because she wants to get married with this man and deserve him by behaving appropriate like a Muslim woman by not working at nights and being a housewife who takes care of her child. Another example of dominant patriarchal ideology takes place because it is acceptable for a Muslim woman to be a housewife and take care of children instead of working outside. Tasula works at a night club as a dancer and singer like any other minority woman can do, so this is an example of stereotypical misrepresentation. The minority women are generally represented as workers in entertainment business unlike "decent" Muslim women. Also, after getting married, she quits dancing and starts to work as an assistant in the club. Getting married to a Turkish Muslim man "rescues" a minority woman from working in an "unwelcome" job and makes her a "decent" one again. This is another example of stereotypical misrepresentation of minority women in Turkish media. Mevhibe Şahin, as being the mother of a successful businessman, does not work. She is represented as a housewife like many older Muslim women back then. The stereotypical representation of that aged minority woman in the mainstream media would be a boarding house owner. Mevhibe Şahin isn't represented likewise because she pretends as if she is a Muslim woman.

Conclusion

The misrepresentation, underrepresentation, and symbolical annihilation of women coming from minority take place in mainstream media so that the dominant patriarchal capitalist ideology maintains its authority on the society. Dominant ideology is against diversity and could not allow any different idea, thought or existence apart from itself to be visible in order not to lose power. However, developments in technology, information, and telecommunications have caused

significant changes in every aspect of human life. Advances in technology, information, and communication have changed the democratic patterns of society so that they can move in digital spaces (Blühdorn and Butzlaff, 2020). With the help of new media (digital media, streaming media), “others” might have some places to be represented near the reality, still not enough but it is promising.

Because of virtualization, digitalization, globalization and convergence culture, people’s social, cultural, economic, political, and religious environments have been affected. There has been a change in the media system and its relationship with the public. Until the existence of streaming media in Turkey, the habits of television viewers were designated in the direction of dominant ideology. As a result of studies evolving minority characters represented in mainstream media, it can be observed that stereotypical misrepresentations are mostly included. In traditional media like the TV series and movies, misrepresentation and underrepresentation of minority women are issues to be examined. On the contrary, with the help of streaming platforms, the contents have started to change, and “others” might have some places to be represented accurately. The contents can include alternative voices, too. There has been a change in the media system and its relationship with the public. Therefore, the contents in streaming media start to be more inclusive compared to mainstream media contents consisting of more diversity.

It can be suggested that Kulüp is the first example, which includes several women coming from different minority origins and even the leading character of a series is a minority woman for the first time.

In this study, some important themes related to minority women like “marital status”, “costume”, “language”, “religious signs” and “occupation” are evaluated. When “marital status” is examined, there are still misrepresentations of minority women because they are represented as if they are different from the rest of the society by the decisions they make, such as having child outside of marriage or becoming a “decent” woman who does not work as a dancer in a night club anymore and wears more neatly after getting married to a man from the majority. In terms of “costume”, there are representations depending on the reality like Matilda and Raşel’s clothing but also there are still some misrepresentations regarding Tasula’s clothes before marriage and after marriage and Mevhibe Şahin’s wealthy and distinctive clothes. As to “language”, there are representations depending on the reality. For example, it is important to hear Ladino for the first time in a series. In terms of “religious signs”, there are so many signs regarding different religions like Jewish, Orthodox Christian, and Islam, and the representations of religious signs depend on the reality. Shabbat rituals and Easter are included in the series as religious signs of the minority women characters. The theme of “occupation” can be evaluated as misrepresentation in some cases because after getting marriage to a Muslim man, quitting dancing at a night club is a stereotypical representation of an assimilated Rum woman or having a job in a night club, no matter the job is, is still misrepresentation of minority women. On the other hand, some minority women characters have “decent” jobs like being a tailor or an assistant instead of being a prostitute or a tavern holder as in stereotypical misrepresentation in mainstream media.

As a result, although there are still some stereotypical misrepresentations of these minority women in the series, there are also some representations depending on the reality. Therefore, it can be a cornerstone which creates an awareness towards minority women and breaks prejudice against them by representing them as normal individuals like the rest of the majority by having everyday concerns, praying in their own religions, speaking in their native language, falling in love, trying to survive in those harsh conditions of the patriarchal capitalistic system. By the help of democratic and inclusive atmosphere of streaming platforms, even there are still some misrepresentations, it can be interpreted as a starting point for accurate representation of minority women in some cases. Hopefully, the number of those kind of representations and diversity will increase in Turkish media.

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