

THE IMPACT OF ARMENIAN SOAP OPERAS ON THE SOCIAL BEHAVIOR OF YOUNG
ADULTS

by

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1. Introduction

Armenian soap operas are a prevalent part of Armenian television programming. Most Armenians will have heard about at least one of the titles “Vorogayt,” “Vervaratsnery yntanikum,” or “Dzhabakht Erjankutyun.” The term “soap opera” came into existence in the United States in the beginning of the 20th century. Radio was the most widely used entertainment medium and daytime radio serials were immensely popular among women. To make a profit, radio networks allowed companies to sponsor these serials. As the majority of listeners were women, the major sponsors were soap manufacturers such as Lever Brothers and Colgate-Palmolive. As a consequence, the media created the term “soap operas” for these serials. “Soap,” because of the overwhelming sponsorship by soap companies and “opera” because the serials were essentially highly dramatic and emotional. The first visual soap opera, Faraway Hill, aired on American television on October 2, 1946. Since then, the amount of soap operas on television has increased greatly.

In Armenia, telenovelas, Latin-American soap operas, were the most watched soap operas up until 2005, when the first Armenian soap opera “Vervaratsnery yntanikum” made its debut on Shant TV. This was a turning point in Armenian television as it allowed Armenians to divert from telenovelas.

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines “Soap Opera” as “a serial drama performed originally on a daytime radio or television program and chiefly characterized by tangled interpersonal situations and melodramatic or sentimental treatment” and the Oxford Dictionary defines it as “A television or radio drama serial dealing typically with daily events in the lives of

the same group of characters.” Thereby, soap operas are characterized by the dramatization of the daily life of others, with their melodramatic and emotional life situations. These situations could be a close representation of the viewers’ real-life experiences, albeit overdramatized. In popular Armenian soap operas such as Armenia TV’s “arajnordner” (the leaders) and ATV’s “ete gtnem qez” (if I find you), domestic violence and violence among men have a strong presence. In these cases, the perpetrators of violence are almost exclusively men, while women have a role as victims. A 2011 survey conducted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), found that around 60% of Armenians had been a victim of domestic violence in the past two years. If continuous and frequent exposure to soap operas can affect the viewer’s mentality and/or behavior, then that can have consequences on the way Armenian culture and society - and ultimately the way in which the Armenian nation gets shaped over time.

The purpose of this paper is to identify the influences that soap operas in Armenia have on Armenian society while at the same time assessing the perceptions of young Armenians toward soap operas.

2. Literature Review

According to television ratings obtained from Armenia TV, soap operas occupy a majority share of the programming broadcasted on television. It is safe to say that zipping through Armenian television channels will very likely result in you stumbling upon a channel that is broadcasting a soap opera. A study by Miraqyan (2011) revealed that around 81% of Armenia’s population watches soap operas; 36% of the population reported watching it every single day while another 35% watches soap operas from time to time. The name ‘Soap Opera’

made its appearance in 1930. Back then, they were a means of advertising health and beauty products – mostly appealing to women. Even today, soap operas are primarily watched by women. (Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, 2009). The first daytime soap opera, Faraway Hill, aired on October 2, 1946, in the United States. Nowadays, 70 years after the first televised soap opera aired, a wide variety of soap operas have become available to the masses. They have made a shift from being a means of advertising to focusing on relationships and melodrama, often featuring stereotypes and representing society and social roles.

Much of the knowledge we gain comes from various media, with the key player being television. The long-term effects of television watching are examined by a theory called ‘the cultivation theory’ (Mbithe, 2014). The cultivation theory states that “the more time people spend ‘living’ in the television world, the more likely they are to believe social reality portrayed on television ... people are eventually left with a misperception of what is true in our world.” So watching soap operas can have lasting behavioral effects. According to Yeghiazaryan (1999), many Armenian parents don’t want their children to watch soap operas to prevent a slowdown on intellectual development. The parents are quoted as saying that soap operas are “very simple and primitive,” and that they “make children interested in sex.” Another mother was quoted as saying that “children can obtain distorted, bad taste due to soap operas.” (Yeghiazaryan, 1999). This shows us that at the time of Yeghiazaryan’s study, in 1999, there was a general perception of soap operas negatively influencing children. 17 years have passed since this study and with the emergence of Armenian soap operas in 2005 and their strong presence on Armenian TV nowadays there is a need for a reevaluation of this perception - that is to say - to find out if the same perception is still existent among Armenians nowadays.

Miraqyan (2011) assessed the role television plays in actually shaping aggression. He found that while watching aggressive behavior of others on TV, viewers learn new forms of verbal and physically aggressive behavior. Moreover, when viewers see that the TV characters are not punished for their aggressive behavior, then they too might engage in the same aggressive behavior. Furthermore, viewers become less sensitive to aggression and permanent exposure to aggression on TV can change the viewer's' perspective on reality – therefore, according to Miraqyan, being exposed to aggressive behavior in Armenian soap operas can lead to constant aggressive tension and perceiving their environment as more aggressive than it really is.

In Armenian soap operas, men are displayed as strong and often violent. They are the dominant figure that provides for the family. A study conducted by Caucasus Barometer on gender attitudes in Armenian society shows that this coincides with the general perception of the audience. The study shows that 89.7% of women and 91.9% of men agree that “a man should do any work in order to guarantee his family’s well-being” and that over 70% of households in Armenia have men as head of their household (Matosyan et al, 2013). Armenian soap operas mostly show exaggerated and melodramatic male-female and family relationships, where men are head of the household and women are mostly full-time mothers or working in the kitchen. Following the cultivation theory, this exaggeration and melodrama causes people to believe what they see and to think that this is normal behavior.

The culture of machismo and patriarchy among men in Armenia, as confirmed by the Caucasus Barometer study, is largely amplified by Armenian television according to a study on the image of women on Armenian TV conducted by Shakaryan (2015). The study illustrates that there is a distortion on the display of men and women on TV. It was found that women are

mostly shown in women's programs (62%) while in news programs women are underrepresented with a representation rate of only 25%. This confirms that Armenian television amplifies the notion of expert opinion belonging to men. The distortion can further be seen in soap operas where women are only represented by 30-40% in comedy shows and soap operas in which they mostly take the role of housewife, often found in the kitchen and taking care of children. It is rare for an Armenian soap opera to not feature men fighting each other over internal conflicts caused by women or business. Men are often seen fighting while women are shown as helpless bystanders. There's a culture of male dominance; males being the experts and having more say in society.

Domestic violence became a hot topic in Armenia in 2010, when the 20-year-old Zaruhi Petrosyan, a mother of an infant girl, died after repeated beatings by her husband. Her death brought about calls for the adoption of domestic violence laws in Armenia. Worrying is that in Armenia, the Criminal Code does not specifically forbid domestic violence, providing a free pass for domestic violence and making it difficult to hold perpetrators accountable for committing violence against their partners.

In Armenia, a country where a large portion of the population follows traditional and conservative beliefs, people are generally not driven to making any changes to this traditional status quo. Unfortunately, this leaves certain groups of people neglected and issues not dealt with. Armenian soap operas can bring change in this matter, but such issues are never addressed in them. Instead, the current status quo is being maintained and amplified. Moreover, aggressive behavior and patriarchal structure have such a central role in Armenian soap operas that it potentially negatively affects Armenian society. It is important to assess the effects of violent

soap operas on the behavior and mentality of Armenian youth so we can start addressing the changes that will need to take place in this sphere.

3. Research Questions and Methodology

Research questions

This paper answers the following questions:

Research Question: Do Armenian soap operas perpetuate violence among Armenian young adults (ages 18-25)?

Sub-question: What role does gender violence in Armenian soap operas play in the reinforcement of gender stereotypes?

Methodology

The findings of this paper are the results of content analysis, which includes watching and analyzing soap operas, critically reading existing research papers, holding in-depth interviews, and conducting surveys. Data obtained from the surveys have been analyzed using SPSS statistics software. The aforementioned methods provided me with qualitative as well as quantitative data.

Content Analysis

Firstly, popular Armenian soap operas were watched and analyzed in order to find out about verbal and nonverbal communication aspects that are directly and indirectly present in the episodes. The way in which and to what extent violence, both regular as well as domestic,

are represented was analyzed to get a clear view of trends and similarities among the different soap operas. One soap opera, Arajnordnery (The Leaders), was analyzed. According to TV ratings obtained from Armenia TV, this was the most popular Armenian soap operas during 2016 and the first two months of 2017 while at the same time being high in violent content. With each episode that was watched, a record was kept on how many times violence - physical and verbal - was shown. Close attention was also paid to the setting of the violence, that is to say, if the violence took place in a family setting, between men only, or between men and women.

Existing researches and works on the effects of television and soap operas on viewer violence were also studied.

In order to find out which soap operas are the most popular among the Armenian public, TV ratings containing ratings for all soap operas broadcasted in Armenia from 2007 to February 2017 were obtained from Armenia TV and thoroughly analyzed.

Survey

After gaining a full understanding of Armenian soap operas, a questionnaire was prepared which measures different data: The first part asks what kind of TV series or soap operas the respondent watches and to what extent. This is important as we need to make a clear distinction between violent and nonviolent soap operas. The second part of the questionnaire recorded the participants' opinions on the use of violence in soap operas and their perceptions thereof. In order to find out if there is a correlation between the respondents' perceptions and

their own lives and reality, the third part aimed to assess the respondent's' own personality - that is to say, how they behave in various situations.

The answers that were obtained from the different parts of the questionnaire will be compared together to find out if there's any correlation between the soap operas that the respondents watch, their views on violence, and the perception they have of soap operas. The answers from respondents that do not watch soap operas provided an opportunity to see the differences in knowledge and perceptions between those that do and do not watch soap operas - and again, if there is any correlation at all.

The survey consisted of close-ended questions, open-ended questions, multiple choice questions and questions with a likert scale. It was aimed at people in the capital city of Yerevan between the ages of 18 and 25. The survey was also distributed online.

The questions were well prepared and well thought out. The way in which the survey was presented was well practiced in order to not come over negatively with the potential respondents. Before conducting the survey, a pretest was carried out with a small amount of random people to clear up any mistakes. Questions that were considered too personal or too intimidating were adjusted.

Ultimately, the survey was distributed to 97 people, including 38 randomly chosen on the streets of downtown Yerevan and 59 online responses. For the street survey, before requesting to have the surveys filled out, each potential respondent's age was guessed in order to limit the amount of respondents outside of the 18-25 age group. The respondents were explained the topic and purpose of the project and they were promised full anonymity and

confidentiality. The majority of those asked agreed to participate in the survey were willing to participate.

After the completion of the survey process, all collected survey data was added into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software which allowed for different statistical tests to be carried out. This helped in proving and disproving any assumed outcomes and in confirming whether the correlated information is statistically significant.

In-depth interviews

Two in-depth interviews were held. One with Ruben Mkhitarian, general producer at Armenia TV and another with David Babakhanyan, general director at Armenia TV.

The interviews were taken in order to get an understanding of the thoughts and ideas that core representatives of TV channels, Armenia TV in this case, have when it comes to violence in Armenian soap operas.

A list of questions was prepared which was planned to be asked in an orderly manner. With each question asked, the interviewees provided longer than expected answers, while often shifting the subject from the original question. The interviews took on around 15 minutes each.

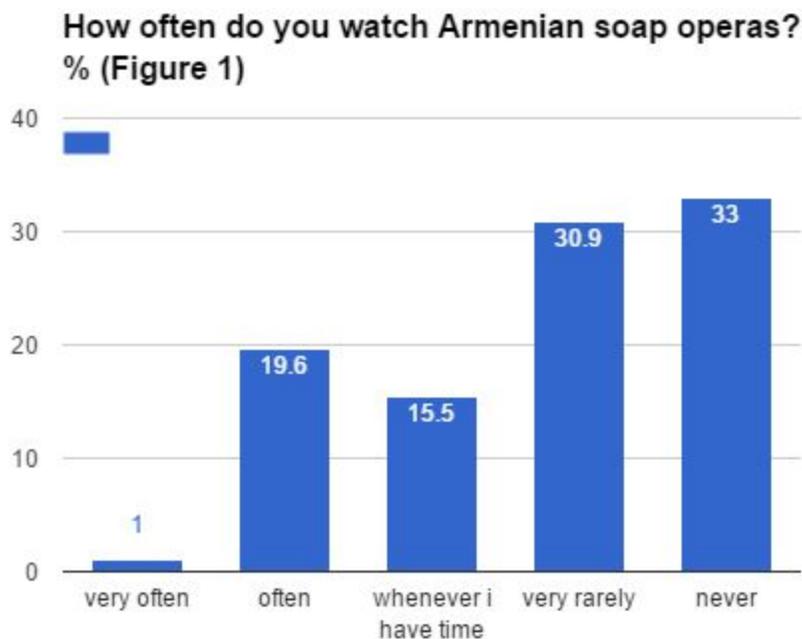
4. Research Findings and Analysis

Survey analysis: Knowledge/Perceptions

The majority of the survey participants were between the ages of 18 and 21, with an

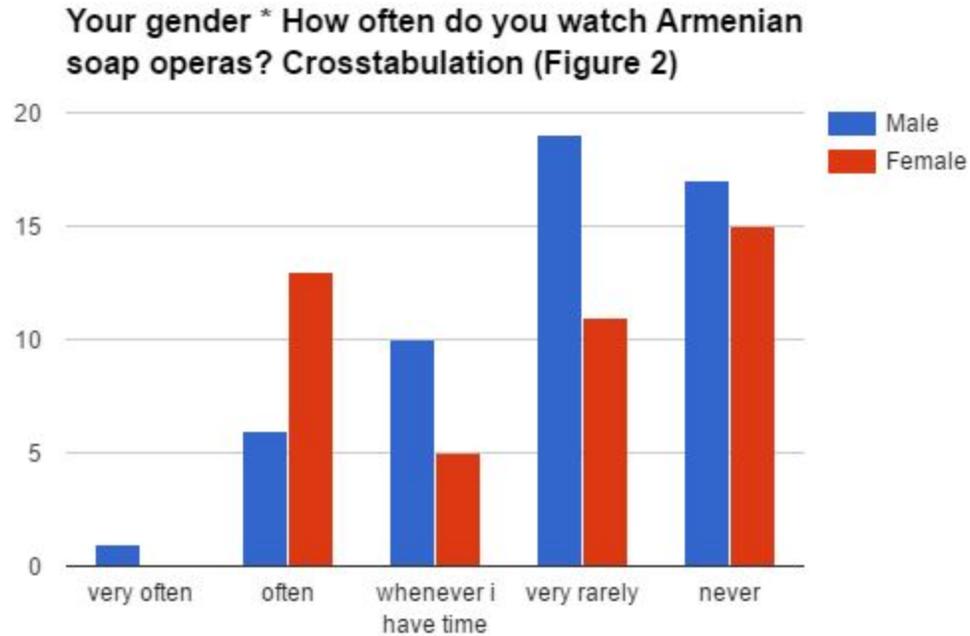
average age of 20. The gender distribution of the participants was fairly equal (54% males and 46% females). Even though the research was not targeted specifically on either of the genders, during the further data analysis, occasionally female and male participants are analyzed in two separate groups in order to reveal any possible correlations between the gender of the participants and the opinion and inclination to violence, taking into consideration the culturally accepted standards of behavior.

Firstly, the participants were asked whether or not they watch Armenian TV series. According to the data analysis, more than the half of participants, 67%, said that they do watch TV series, while the rest answered that they never do (See Figure 1). Breaking down the results by the gender of the participants, both males and females had fairly equal answers to the question (the majority of both genders saying that they do watch TV series).



When asked about how often they watched Armenian soap operas, 30.9% of those who

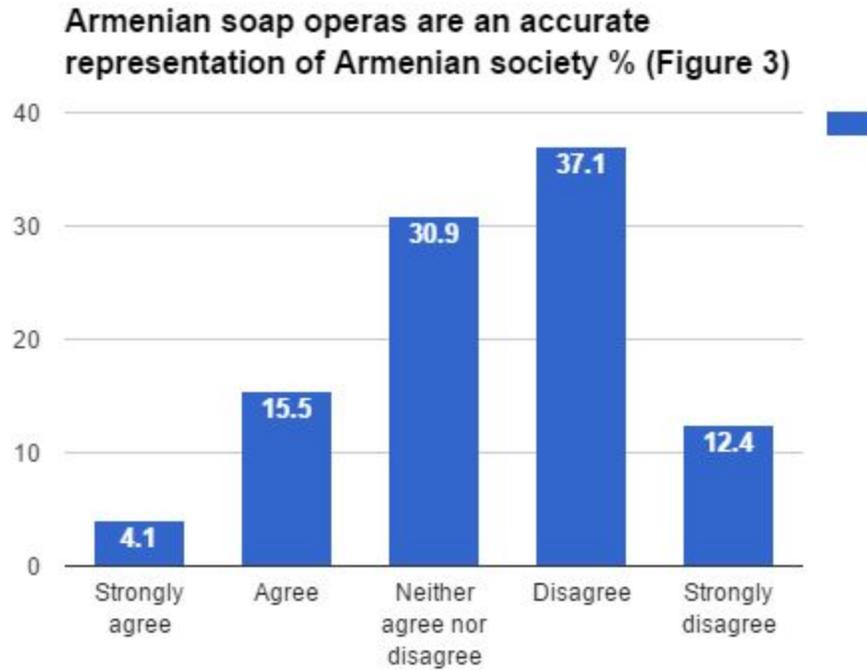
answered that they do watch, said that they watch them very rarely. While 19.6% said that they watch often, the rest of the participants responded that they only watch Armenian soap operas whenever they have time.



A chi-square analysis between the gender of the participants and how often they watch Armenian soap operas resulted in a statistically insignificant result ($P=0.151$). Hence, judging from the sample, there is no existing relationship between the gender of the participants and the frequency of watching Armenian soap operas. We do see however that from the respondents that said they watch often, 13 were female while only 6 were male (See figure 2). Surprisingly, males more often watch Armenian soap operas whenever they have the time as compared to females. The fact that the majority of participants do not watch soap operas can be explained by the average age of the participants, which was 20.

Despite the high number of respondents who say they do not or rarely watch Armenian soap

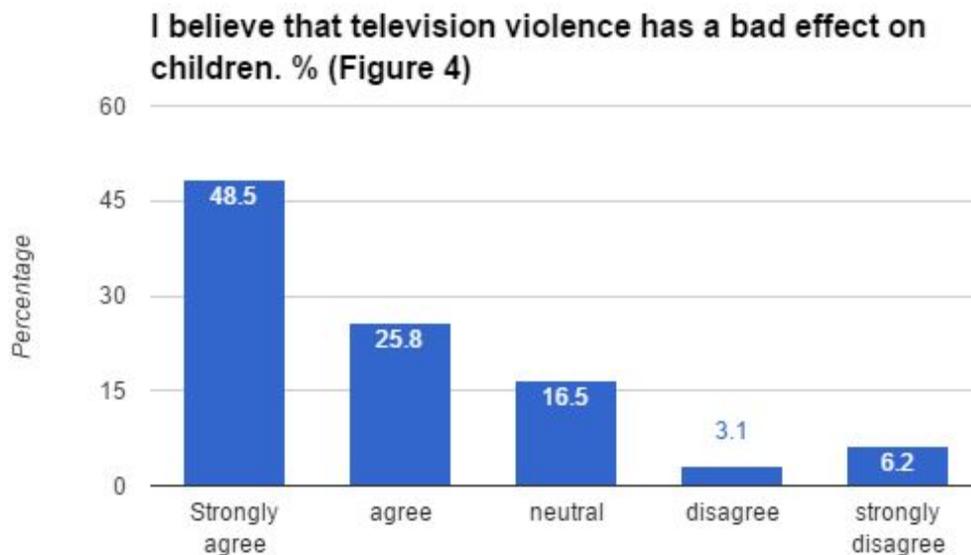
operas, all of them were, to their own knowledge, fairly familiar with the broadcasted content.



When answering whether or not Armenian soap operas accurately represent the Armenian society, 37.1% of the respondents disagreed, believing that a lot of what they see on TV do not correspond to Armenian reality, while 30.9% were fairly neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Only a small 15.5% agreed, and 4.1% strongly agreed with the statement (see Figure 3).

According to the survey data, of those who watch Armenian soap operas, the majority (35%) watch violent productions, 26.3% watches both violent as well as non-violent soap operas. The minority – 21.1%, watches non-violent soap operas. As the most commonly watched Armenian soap operas contain violent behavior in them, it was surprising to see that the biggest part of respondents who watch violent soap operas considered that violence on TV is harmful (very harmful and fairly harmful, 35.1% and 51.5% respectively). A chi-square analysis between the

two data proved the correlation to be statistically significant ($P=0.000$). So despite being of the opinion that violence on television is harmful, people continue watching violent content (see Appendix A. Table 8).



When asked if television violence has a bad effect on children, the vast majority of respondents agreed (See figure 4). Thus, the general perception that television violence negatively affects children that was found by Yeghiazaryan in their 1999 study, can still be considered valid today.

Self-assessment results

In order to find out the survey respondents' personal tendencies toward violent behavior, the following questions were asked:

- If I'm mad at someone, I just ignore them
- It's OK for me to hit someone to get them to do what I want

- Sometimes a person has no choice but to fight
- When my friends fight, I try to get them to stop
- There are better ways to solve problems than fighting
- I try to talk out a problem instead of fighting
- If I get crazy with anger, it's OK to hit someone

When asked for their opinion on “it’s okay for me to hit someone to get them to do what I want ” 10 percent of the respondents responded with “strongly agree”. 11.3% were neutral in their answers and (78.4%) responded with “disagree” and “strongly disagree” (Appendix A. Table 1). Similarly, 68% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that it’s OK to hit someone when they get crazy with anger (Appendix A. Table 7).

Furthermore, the collected data shows that 82.4% of respondents would rather talk out a problem instead of fighting. 17.5% were neutral and only 4% would rather fight. This matches with the respondents’ answers to “when my friends fight, I try to get them to stop”, to which 82.5% answered with either “agree” or “disagree” (Appendix A. Table 4).

In short, all data obtained from the self-assessment questions lead to the conclusion that the vast majority of the respondents are not violent in nature.

Link between self-assessment, knowledge, and perceptions

Bringing together the data from self-assessment, knowledge, and perceptions resulted in interesting statistics.

In this section, we will look at 25 respondents who watch violent soap operas and also

think that violent soap operas make you more violent. That information will, in turn, be correlated with their self-assessment responses in order to gain information on whether or not watching violent soap operas has affected their social behavior.

Three-way cross tabulations showed the following:

If I'm mad at someone, I just ignore them

(Appendix B. Table 1)

- 32% Agree/Strongly agree
- 40% Neutral
- 28% Disagree/Strongly disagree

It's OK for me to hit someone to get them to do what I want

(Appendix B. Table 2)

- 72% Disagree/Strongly disagree
- 28% Neutral
- 0% Agree/Strongly agree

Sometimes a person doesn't have any choice but to fight

(Appendix B. Table 3)

- 20% Agree/Strongly agree
- 68% Neutral
- 12% Disagree/Strongly disagree

When my friends fight, I try to get them to stop.

(Appendix B. Table 4)

- 60% Agree/Strongly agree
- 40% Neutral
- 0% Disagree/Strongly disagree

There are better ways to solve problems than fighting.

(Appendix B. Table 5)

- 72% Agree/Strongly agree
- 28% Neutral
- 0% Disagree/Strongly disagree

If I get crazy with anger, it's O.K. to hit someone.

(Appendix B. Table 6)

- 0% Agree/Strongly agree
- 48% Neutral
- 52% Disagree/Strongly disagree

As can be seen in the results, the majority of respondents can be considered as non-violent. The majority will most likely refrain from using violence when possible.

Surprisingly, it is these very respondents who said that in their opinion watching violent soap operas makes for more violent behavior. This shows us that there is a gap between perception of reality and reality itself.

When my friends fight, I try to get them to stop.					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Watches violent soap operas	35%	30%	35%	0%	100%
Watches both violent/non-violent	20%	60%	20%	0%	100%
Watches non-violent soap operas	8%	33%	42%	17%	100%
Unspecified	40%	60%	0%	0%	100%

In the table above we can even see that 35% of respondents who watch violent soap operas strongly agree to get their friends to stop fighting as opposed to 8% of those who watch exclusively non-violent soap operas. There is a statistically significant ($P=.000$) connection between the variables: those who watch non-violent soap operas are more likely to stop fighting/violence, among their friends.

These findings seriously contradict the findings by Miraqyan (2011), whose study showed evidence that those who watch violent content become less sensitive to aggression and risk constant aggressive tension. One reason why this data could be contradictory to Miraqyan's study can be the limited sample size used in this study (97 out of which only 25 qualified for this three-way correlation) combined with different approaches to getting the data. This drastic difference in results can mean that throughout the years, there has taken place a shift in the way people experience and deal with violent content.

Soap Opera monitoring

According to ratings from obtained from Armenia TV, one of the most popular Armenian soap opera in 2016 and 2017 has been Arajnordnery (The Leaders). PanArmenian group, the

producing company and parent of Armenia TV, on its website, states that the TV series are “based on true stories”.

Analyzing ten episodes provided showed us how gender stereotypes are present in the series. What was immediately clear was that men had a leading role. While the series is called “The Leaders” and included female characters, the “leaders” were exclusively men.

In episode 326, the family father was about to go out to check on their uncle, on who there was an assassination attempt. When the son tells his father that he is coming with him, the father replied: “Your mom and the kid are alone at home, you’re staying here”. This amplifies the idea that men are more independent than women, who apparently can not stay at home alone and need a male peer to look after them.

In the same episode, a woman finds out she is pregnant and calls the future father to tell him the news. The man is not amused and does not want to keep the child, to which the woman replies that she will, in that case, raise the child herself without him. He replies: “this is what you will do now: first, you will shut your mouth and listen to me. You will tell no one about this, especially your mother ... I did not want to become a father this early in my life, but you ruined it all for me.” The man is dominating the woman in this case. She has to do what he says and can not decide on her actions herself. Moreover, he blames her for getting pregnant - as if she has control on whether to become pregnant or not.

In episode 327, during a conflict between a man and his girlfriend, the girl raises her voice to his boyfriend. In a desperate attempt to get him to listen to her, she slaps him softly on his arm. This could be perceived as female dominance, where the woman tries to show dominance. However, the man immediately responds by aggressively grabbing her and throwing

her on the bed, after which he holds her by the neck and later arms, prompting her to shout that she is in pain. So, because the woman tried raising her voice and establish dominance, the man reinforces the idea that the man should be dominant by retaliating in a much tougher way than the woman did.

According to David Babakhanyan, General Director of Armenia TV, they are simply showing the viewer what they want to see. (Appendix C. Interview 1). “All soap operas are created for the audience. The audience themselves decide what they want to watch. If we see that he is tuned in and watching the soap opera, then that means that he likes it.” (Ruben Mkhitaryan, Appendix C. Interview 2).

Trends in soap opera viewing among Armenians

Looking at raw data on ratings obtained from Armenia TV’s department of Planning and Broadcasting, we can see that the average rating of the top 5 TV series in Armenia has been decreasing steadily from 2009 until 2016. Whereas in 2009 the average rating, which means the average percentage of people tuned into the serial over the total amount of households with televisions, was 18.8%, up from 16.7% in 2008, that figure has decreased every consequent year up until 2016 - when it reached 8.7%. An increase can be seen for 2017, which however should be taken with a grain of salt as it only includes figures from the first two months of the year.



Nevertheless, that increase came with a major shift in soap opera programming in Armenia. While up to 2015, the top 5 serials with highest ratings consisted exclusively of Armenian productions with exceptions in 2008, 2009 and 2015 (4 out of 5 were Armenian), in 2016, 2 from the top 5 were Indian productions. In 2017, the top 3 serials with the highest ratings were Indian productions. These figures show us that Armenian soap operas are losing popularity. This can be an indicator that the Armenian audience is slowly getting tired of the traditional Armenian soap opera plots and opens up routes for producers to change their productions for the better.

5. Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

Due to time restraints, I only managed to have the survey taken by 97 respondents of which the majority consists of people from Yerevan. The research findings were often off from findings in earlier studies, and while there can be different causes for that, a larger sample size is

of high importance in order to get more accurate data. Data from the different regions of Armenia is also something that would be important to include so that the entire Armenian population can be represented instead of a small group from Yerevan and data will be more accurate.

Moreover, it was hard to find respondents within the 18-25 age groups that often or very often watch Armenian TV series. The fact that the majority of the survey respondents for this study watch TV series either never, very rarely or whenever they have time makes for less accurate and less effective analysis and ultimately conclusion. Throughout the study, all who replied with an answer other than “never” under the question “Do you watch Armenia soap operas?” are considered to watch soap operas regardless of frequency.

In addition, my limited knowledge of Armenian severely reduced my ability to dive into extensive Armenian-language research papers and articles and forced me to read only a limited amount of Armenian articles and made me opt for translated versions when available. During the in-depth interviews this also very much limited me to simple questions and shallow interviews. I was unable to come up with proper counter questions and had a hard time understanding them directly.

A planned interview with Diana Grigoryan, actress, screenwriter, and producer of the highly popular serial “Arajnordnere” (The Leaders), was canceled on the day of the interview due to unforeseen circumstances. An in-depth interview with a scriptwriter and actress like Ms. Grigoryan would provide with more accurate information from within. As a female scriptwriter of a violent series, her views and observations could be valuable in understanding the whys and hows when it comes to violence and gender stereotypes.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A. Table 1.

If I'm mad at someone, I just ignore them

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	13	13.4	13.4	13.4
agree	29	29.9	29.9	43.3
neutral	27	27.8	27.8	71.1
disagree	28	28.9	28.9	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Appendix A. Table 2.

It's ok for me to hit someone to get them to do what i want

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	10	10.3	10.3	10.3
neutral	11	11.3	11.3	21.6
disagree	18	18.6	18.6	40.2
strongly disagree	58	59.8	59.8	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Appendix A. Table 3.

Sometimes a person doesn't have any choice but to fight

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	7	7.2	7.2	7.2
	agree	22	22.7	22.7	29.9
	neutral	45	46.4	46.4	76.3
	disagree	13	13.4	13.4	89.7
	strongly disagree	10	10.3	10.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Appendix A. Table 4.

When my friends fight, I try to get them to stop.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	29	29.9	29.9	29.9
	agree	51	52.6	52.6	82.5
	neutral	15	15.5	15.5	97.9
	disagree	2	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Appendix A. Table 5.

There are better ways to solve problems than fighting

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	56	57.7	57.7	57.7
	agree	24	24.7	24.7	82.5
	neutral	8	8.2	8.2	90.7
	strongly disagree	9	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Appendix A. Table 6.

I try to talk out a problem instead of fighting.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	46	47.4	47.4	47.4
agree	30	30.9	30.9	78.4
neutral	17	17.5	17.5	95.9
strongly disagree	4	4.1	4.1	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Appendix A. Table 7.

If I get crazy with anger, it's O.K. to hit someone.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid agree	12	12.4	12.4	12.4
neutral	19	19.6	19.6	32.0
disagree	25	25.8	25.8	57.7
strongly disagree	41	42.3	42.3	100.0
Total	97	100.0	100.0	

Appendix A. Table 8.

Watch violent TV series or Non-violent ^ Television shows with a lot of hitting and shooting are Crosstabulation

Count

		Television shows with a lot of hitting and shooting are			Total
		very harmful	fairly harmful	very harmless	
Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Violent	14	6	0	20
	Both	0	15	0	15
	Not violent	5	5	2	12
	Unspecified	2	8	0	10
Total		21	34	2	57

Appendix B. Table 1.

Watch violent TV series or Non-violent ^ If I'm mad at someone, I just ignore them ^ Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent Crosstabulation

Count

Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent			If I'm mad at someone, I just ignore them				Total
			Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	
Strongly agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Violent		5	7	7	19
		Both		0	3	0	3
		Not violent		0	5	0	5
	Total			5	15	7	27
agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Both	3		0	0	3
		Not violent	1		0	0	1
		Unspecified	0		1	5	6
	Total		4		1	5	10

Appendix B. Table 2.

Watch violent TV series or Non-violent ^ It's ok for me to hit someone to get them to do what i want ^ Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent Crosstabulation

Count

Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent			It's ok for me to hit someone to get them to do what i want				Total
			Strongly agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	
Strongly agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Violent		7	5	7	19
		Both		0	0	3	3
		Not violent		0	0	5	5
	Total			7	5	15	27
agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Both		0		3	3
		Not violent		0		1	1
		Unspecified		3		3	6
	Total			3		7	10

Appendix B. Table 3.

Watch violent TV series or Non-violent ^ Sometimes a person doesn't have any choice but to fight ^ Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent Crosstabulation

Count

Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent			Sometimes a person doesn't have any choice but to fight					Total
			Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	
Strongly agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Violent		5	14	0	0	19
		Both		0	0	0	3	3
		Not violent		0	0	2	3	5
	Total			5	14	2	6	27
agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Both			3	0		3
		Not violent			1	0		1
		Unspecified			3	3		6
	Total				7	3		10

Appendix B. Table 4.

Watch violent TV series or Non-violent ^ When my friends fight, I try to get them to stop. ^ Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent Crosstabulation

Count

Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent			When my friends fight, I try to get them to stop.				Total
			Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	
Strongly agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Violent	7	5	7		19
		Both	0	0	3		3
		Not violent	0	0	5		5
Total			7	5	15		27
agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Both	3	0			3
		Not violent	1	0			1
		Unspecified	3	3			6
Total			7	3			10

Appendix B. Table 5.

Watch violent TV series or Non-violent ^ There are better ways to solve problems than fighting ^ Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent Crosstabulation

Count

Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent			There are better ways to solve problems than fighting				Total
			Strongly agree	agree	neutral	strongly disagree	
Strongly agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Violent	7	5	7	0	19
		Both	3	0	0	0	3
		Not violent	0	0	0	5	5
Total			10	5	7	5	27
agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Both	3				3
		Not violent	1				1
		Unspecified	6				6
Total			10				10

Appendix B. Table 6.

Watch violent TV series or Non-violent ^ If I get crazy with anger, it's O.K. to hit someone. ^ Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent Crosstabulation

Count

			If I get crazy with anger, it's O.K. to hit someone.			Total
			neutral	disagree	strongly disagree	
Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent						
Strongly agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Violent	12		7	19
		Both	0		3	3
		Not violent	0		5	5
		Total	12		15	27
agree	Watch violent TV series or Non-violent	Both	0	0	3	3
		Not violent	0	0	1	1
		Unspecified	3	1	2	6
		Total	3	1	6	10

Appendix C. Interview 1. David Babakhanyan, general director at Armenia TV.

What tendency is there in Armenian Soap Operas when it comes to violence?

“Cases of violence [in Armenian Serials], when compared with American serials – are not more or less. But what is violence? – Violence is an occurrence that draws viewers. No matter how much we soften the violence and try being following good goals, in the end the serials have one goal: viewership - commerce. And experience shows us that violence is the drawing factor to those who watch the serials – that’s definitely true. I can give you lots of examples about famous serials which would not have been famous without the use of violence. There are many serials that I like and in each and every one of them there is violence involved. That is part of the serial’s success – without violence it would not work.”

So you are showing the viewers what they want to see?

“Absolutely – when, for example, an ambulance enters our yard, everyone rushes outside to see what is happening. Or we have for example a TV show which also has a part about car

crashes; that part is the most watched part. People love this kind of action. Regardless of the country, regardless of people's nationality, everyone loves that. And that is part of the commerce. “

On age ratings / broadcast times

“And then there comes of course the issue of how to keep kids from watching such content. Because each production is required to note the age requirement, and corresponding with the age requirement there is a specific timeframe the show will be broadcasted in. If it is rated for ages 16-18 and up, it should be broadcasted after 10 pm. There exists a law that dictates this and there is a committee (HRAH - ՀԵՐՈՍՏԱՄԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ և ՔԱՂԻՈՅԻ ԱԳՁԱՅԻՆ ԽԱՆՃՆԱԺՈՂՈՎ) that oversees the productions and sends out messages to the television company when something is wrong and put punishments in place when ignored. We are in daily contact with the committee and every violation that they notice they will give us a warning about after which they will impose punishments.

One needs to follow and make sure – both the television company as well as the parents/relatives – that such productions are not watched by kids because they absolutely have an effect on their psychology. However it is impossible to totally steer clear from such productions - in the modern world, in modern production - such productions are unfortunately required: without which is impossible to be successful. But that does not mean that one should just throw in random violence in the serials to fulfill that requirement, no. It needs to be dramatically and correctly shaped – so that people won't get confused.”

Appendix C. Interview 2. Ruben Mkhitaryan, General Producer at Armenia TV.

In Armenian soap operas, violence seems to be very prevalent. Are there regulations which dictate what you can and what you cannot show in Armenian soap operas in terms of violence?

“In Armenian serials, violence is much less prevalent when comparing to American serials, especially modern American serials. In each and every American serial, no matter the genre, love and violence are the prevalent themes. In no Armenian serial is violence an end in itself. If for example one character has a conflict with another character, then he cannot just say “move from here, you idiot” If for the dramaturgy he has to punch the guy, he will have to punch him. In this field, you need to pass the emotions to the viewer in the most effective way possible. If comparing with European or American serials, then the cases of violence in Armenian serials are comparatively little.”

I was actually not comparing Armenian soap operas with those from abroad –

“- No, it is all about the drama. If the dramaturgy requires a character to kill another character, then he will kill him. But that does not happen in every episode and it is not an end in itself.”

So the serial has to be interesting to the local Armenian audience?

“All soap operas are created for the audience. The audience themselves decide what they want to watch. If we see that he is tuned in and watching the soap opera, then that means that he likes it.”

Have you noticed any changes in content in Armenian serials over the years?

“There was a time when Armenian serials were exclusively focused on the criminal world. That was the demand at the time, because at that time, the criminal world was much more interesting to the audience. You will need to know what stages Armenia went through since independence. Just after independence, people received freedom, and with freedom lots of information was suddenly available to people. During the Soviet times you could not watch serials about the criminal world as there were restrictions and it was a closed country.

After independence this became an interesting topic, exactly because it was so unknown to many. At the same time, many people were interested in the way Americans lived their lives – America was an unknown world to most. So during the first couple of years, criminal topics were the dominant ones in soap operas. However, that demand slowly but surely dropped as people started getting access to the internet, which provided with all information they needed in a very fast and easy way – and they were able to decide for themselves whether the criminal world was interesting to them or not. And it turned out that it wasn’t. As the majority of people who watch serials are either 40+ years old or housewives, it was figured that to them the most interesting topic is melodrama.”

So, the main topics were slowly shifted toward a focus on family-related issues, is that right?

“Families are a breathing organism - there are no ideal or perfectly happy families and unfortunately there are a lot of unhappy and unlucky families. But a regular, average family, throughout the years goes through different stages of ups and down. This is the case with my family, I’m sure also with yours. We have happy moments, sad moments, and angry moments. It is these kinds of moments that we feature in our serials.”

Survey questions - Armenian version

1. Ձեր տարիքը _____
2. ձեր սեռը
 - արական
 - իգական
3. Որքանով կրոնական եք?
 - Շատ կրոնական
 - Կրոնական
 - Ոչ այդքան կրոնական
 - Ոչ կրոնական
4. Որքա՞ն հաճախ եք նաայում հայկական հեռուստատեսիալներ:
 - Շատ հաճախ
 - Հաճախ
 - Երբ ժամանակ եմ ունենում
 - Շատ հազվադեպ
 - Երբեք
5. Ի՞նչ հայկական հեռուստատեսիալներ եք դիտում: _____
6. Հեռուստատեսությամբ ձեր տեսածի որքա՞նն է կեղծ:
 - Համարյա ամենը
 - Ամենը
 - Որոշ մասը
 - Միայն շատ փոքր մասը
 - Ոչինչը
7. Բռնություն և հրաձգություն պարունակող հեռուստատեսիալները՝
 - Շատ վնասակար են
 - Բավականին վնասակար են
 - Բավականին անվնաս են
 - Լիովին անվնաս են
8. Հայկական հեռուստատեսիալները հստակ ներկայացնում են հայկական իրականությունը:
 - Լիովին համաձայն եմ

- Համաձայն են
- Չեզոք
- Համաձայն չեն
- Կտրականապես համաձայն չեն

9. Որքանո՞վ եք համաձայն հետևյալ պնդումների հետ:

	Լիովին համաձայն են	Համաձայն են	Չեզոք	Համաձայն չեն	Կտրականապես համաձայն չեն
Եթե մեկի վրա զայրացած են, պարզապես անտեսում են նրանց					
Ինձ համար սովորական է հարվածել մեկին իմ ուզածը ստանալու համար					
Երբեմն կռվելուց այլ որոշում չկա					
Երբ ընկերներս կռվում են, փորձում են նրանց կանգնեցնել:					
Կան խնդիրներ լուծելու ավելի լավ եղանակներ, քան կռիվը:					
Կռվելու փոխարեն փորձում են համաձայնության գալ					
Եթե չափազանց զայրացած են, սովորական է մեկին խփելը					

10. Տանը`

	Լիովին համաձայն եմ	Համաձայն եմ	Չեզոք	Համաձայն չեմ	Կտրականապես համաձայն չեմ
Ծնողներս հպարտանում են ինձանով					
Ոչ ոք իմ վրա ուշադրություն չի դարձնում					
Հաճախ ինձ անցանկալի եմ զգում					
Ծնողներս կարծում են ապագայում հաջողության կհասնեմ					

11. Ես կարծում եմ բռնություն պարունակող հեռուստատերիալները բացասական ազդեցություն ունեն ենեն երեխաների վրա:

- Լիովին համաձայն եմ
- Համաձայն եմ
- Չեզոք
- Համաձայն չեմ
- Կտրականապես համաձայն չեմ

12. Բռնություն պարունակող հեռուստատերիալներ դիտելը ձեզ բռնի է դարձնում:

- Լիովին համաձայն եմ
- Համաձայն եմ
- Չեզոք
- Համաձայն չեմ
- Կտրականապես համաձայն չեմ

13. Ձեր ընտանիքում բռնության ականատես եղե՞լ եք:

- Այո

- Աջ
- Այլ _____

Survey - English Version

1. Your Age _____
2. Your gender
 - Male
 - Female
3. How religious would you say you are?
 - Very religious
 - Religious
 - Not so religious
 - Not religious at all
4. How often do you watch Armenian Soap Operas?
 - Very often
 - Often
 - Whenever I have the time
 - Very rarely
 - Never
5. What Armenian Soap Operas do you watch?

6. How much of what you see on TV is fake?
 - Almost all of it
 - A lot lot of it
 - Some of it
 - Only a little of it
 - None of it
7. Television shows with a lot of hitting and shooting are
 - Very harmful
 - Fairly harmful
 - Fairly harmless

- Very harmless

8. Armenian soap operas are an accurate representation of Armenian society

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

9. How much do you agree with the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
If I'm mad at someone, I just ignore them					
It's OK for me to hit someone to get them to do what I want					
Sometimes a person has no choice but to fight					
When my friends fight, I try to get them to stop					
There are better ways to solve problems than fighting					
I try to talk out a problem instead of fighting					
If I get crazy with anger, it's OK to hit someone.					

10. At home

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
My parents are proud of the kind of person I am					
No one pays much attention to me at home					
I often feel unwanted at home					
My parents believe that I					

will be a success in the future					
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11. I believe that television violence has a bad effect on children

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. Watching violent soap operas will make you more violent

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

13. Have you witnessed violence in your family?

- Yes
- No
- Other (Please specify) ____