

Soap Opera Diplomacy as an Element of Soft Power: Comparison of Soap Operas “The Magnificent Century” and “Jewel in the Palace”

Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi

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ABSTRACT

With soft power, which is one of the methods they use in their foreign policies, states can be effective on other societies and therefore other states by activating their cultural and historical elements through various instruments. In this context, cultural diplomacy, as an element of soft power, has emerged as a method of highlighting cultural elements, especially through mass media, and with the proliferation of new social media channels that provide content to the audience over the internet in the 2000s, soap operas have come to the fore as a cultural diplomacy tool. The production of soap operas involving states and the soft power benefits of this process have shown that there is a gap in the literature on this subject. This article aims to compare the methods and capacities of Türkiye's soap opera diplomacy through Qatar, a country with which Türkiye has a cultural affinity, and similarly, South Korea's process through China, a country with which South Korea has a cultural affinity.

Keywords : *Soap opera diplomacy ; soft power ; cultural diplomacy ; Türkiye ; South Korea*

1. INTRODUCTION

Diplomacy has maintained its importance in all systems and levels and among all actors from the past to the present, renewing, developing and transforming in line with needs. In this context, at the current phase of the international system, states, as always, are in great need of diplomacy. Along with globalization, which is perhaps a cause and consequence of making the world smaller and more accessible, states also build soft power – sometimes giving more importance – alongside their hard powers. Again with this process, the expression "people of the world" has become frequently used in different scientific disciplines, and intercultural interaction is increasing day by day. In this context, various elements such as culture, language, religion and history are used as instruments by states.

The process of soft power building proceeds on the state side through public diplomacy institutions on the one hand, and on the private sector side through cultural elements such as movies, soap operas and music etc. A new element that is becoming increasingly powerful at this stage is the soap operas that are spreading all over the world. The effects of soap operas on different target audiences have put them in a special position. For this reason, the fact that soap operas are supported by the state in various ways and have clearly become an element of soft power has led to the need to analyze the issue within the framework of the concept of "soap opera diplomacy", which can be mentioned under cultural diplomacy.

In recent years, Türkiye and South Korea have become prominent in the soap opera sector and have been able to increase their soft power capacities in this way. Türkiye's soap opera sector has experienced a serious leap forward, especially after 2010. Turkish soap operas have reached a significant audience capacity at home and abroad, and have been exported to dozens of countries on different continents. One of the best examples of this is undoubtedly the "Muhteşem Yüzyıl (the Magnificent Century)". The soap opera, which conveyed Türkiye's historical and cultural elements

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to the audience in a remarkably successful way, made significant contributions to the country in terms of both financial and soft power capacity.

With the support of the government, Korean soap operas have made a leap in a different way and have become demanded first in Asia and then almost all over the world. The "Jewel in the Palace", which successfully brings historical and cultural elements to the forefront as in the "Magnificent Century", is one of the best examples of the contribution of Korean soap operas to the soft power of the country. The soap opera, which attracted great interest primarily in Korea's neighboring geography with a common history and culture, was exported to nearly a hundred countries in the following years and brought great benefits for Korea in many fields.

The impact of Türkiye and Korea, two countries that have successfully practiced soap opera diplomacy, is worth examining, despite the differences in the processes of soap opera production. The article takes Qatar, a country with a partial cultural affinity for Türkiye, and China, a country with a cultural and historical affinity for Korea, as the area of study and aims to reveal the effects of the soap operas of these countries. These effects will be analyzed through the soap operas "the Magnificent Century" for Türkiye and "Jewel in the Palace" for Korea. Thus, it will be tried to reach a conclusion by revealing both the position and capacities of the two countries in soap opera diplomacy.

2. SOAP OPERA DIPLOMACY WITH CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS

2.1. A new diplomacy from the perspective of new understandings and approaches of international relations: Soap opera diplomacy

The changing concepts of global power and security with the end of the Cold War made it difficult for states to succeed by conducting only hard power policies. In this period, when new nation-states gained their independence and joined the global system, the distribution of power among states changed and non-state international actors increased their influence on the structure of the system.

With the prominence of the neoliberal paradigm, the development of communication, interaction and relations between states in economic, political, social and cultural dimensions has been addressed in Keohane and Nye's "Interdependence Theory" (Nye J. S., 2011). The mutual trade and cooperation between states via free global markets has ushered in a new era in which the insecure competitive environment between states -that we are familiar with from the realist school- has been replaced by increasing interdependencies, the transformation of the "traditional military-state, strong-state" concept into the "merchant-strong-states concept" (Wiltse Çelik, 2018: 142), and the establishment of increasingly stronger economic ties between states.

Emphasizing soft power elements in foreign policy has been a favored strategy for states adopting a liberal approach. In line with pragmatism and a result-oriented approach, states have started to follow the concept of 'smart power' by combining soft power elements such as diplomacy, emphasis on common identity and values, and the power of influence and persuasion with hard power elements. With this concept, which was introduced to the literature by Nye in 2003, it was emphasized that hard power alone was insufficient to solve problems and showed how the two concepts together could provide states with success in their foreign policies. Explaining power as the ability to influence the behavior of others to get what one wants, Nye mentions three elements for the realization of this concept; coercion, retribution and attraction which he defines as 'soft power'. (Nye J., 2009).

Cultural diplomacy includes the use of conventional diplomacy with soft power elements in state policies. Cultural diplomacy is a concept comprised of education, dance, sports, cinema, language training, archaeology, internet and similar areas (Yağmurlu, 2019). States using this diplomacy act on the idea that the mutual interaction

and sharing of ideas, ideology, knowledge, art and education among nations will have a positive impact on their foreign policies and economies (Bound, 2007).

Communication systems are of vital importance in soft power and cultural diplomacy. The mass media, which has increased its influence on social life, has made new media channels an indispensable part of daily life with the expansion of the internet's access network in the 2000s, and has become the most effective way to reach different societies from different nations without intermediaries. Fiske discusses the relationship between television and society in terms of 'popular cultural capital' as an intermediary that promotes common values and tastes to attract public attention (Fiske, 1989). Fiske particularly emphasizes the capacity of television to create a common social group by offering various elements of interest and taste to the demands of heterogeneous cultures (Fiske, 1989). This concept shows us how soap operas used as soft power elements bring different societies closer by creating common values, perceptions and identities among nations.

Many scholars such as Schiller and McChesney underline that the global media network, which became stronger with the rise of neoliberalism, gained international popularity, but despite the media's many social achievements, the cultural outputs it produces are used as a propaganda tool (Schiller & McChesney, 2003). The common point of these different discussions is that the media has become more powerful than ever with new technological infrastructures and that the propaganda that was carried out by radio during the Second World War has now been integrated into more colorful and entertaining formats. Propaganda, which is defined as the processes used by individuals/groups to manipulate the perceptions and opinions of the target audience in line with certain objectives, has gained a negative connotation, especially since it was used by totalitarian regimes after the First World War. After the 20th century, propaganda has become more systematic with technological advancements, and the development of manipulative, propagandistic action models for individuals in terms of consumption, economic influences, cultural acceptances and increasing social belonging has emerged (Belmonte, 2013; Cheng & Schweitzer, 1996; Çetin 2014; Kruckeberg & Vujnovic, 2005).

Branding is another innovation that we encounter in different fields in today's world. While mass media offers states opportunities for branding, perception and image restoration in foreign publics, and soft power enhancement, states can also benefit directly or indirectly through soap operas to strengthen their political influence over societies and increase the volume of mutual trade. Branding, defined as the element that leads to awareness, reputation and prominence in the market, is a concept that nations also target (Keller, 2012). In this context, soap operas have an important place in the branding of nations, cultures and places. In recent years, many states such as Türkiye, the USA, South Korea, Japan, the UK, France, Israel, Belgium, India, China, Ireland, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, have been using cultural diplomacy through soap operas to introduce their history and culture to the world.

The interest of audiences in different parts of the world has enabled states to explore a new soft power instrument, which we will call "soap opera diplomacy". Soap opera diplomacy plays an important role in the branding of countries, cities and cultures. The branding process aims to create public perception, create markets, and so to build soft power through cultural elements, thereby raising awareness and reputation (Keller, 2012). The direct or indirect presence and support of the states that benefit in these processes, even though it takes place in different ways in different countries, reveals the necessity for the concept of soap opera diplomacy to be included in the literature.

Soap opera diplomacy, which is used in line with soft power, is expected to provide first cultural, and then a certain level of diplomatic and strategic benefits on the targeted regions. Target regions are the places where countries intend to build soft power capacity, attract tourists, market products and to create spheres of influence. The positive interaction brought about by soap operas is therefore not only in cultural dimension, but also reflects on the economic, commercial and political indicators of the related state.

With these new tools of cultural diplomacy, states aim to strengthen diplomatic relations between governments, while the cultural, historical and religious symbols used in soap operas aim to create a common sphere of influence and sharing between societies. By conveying their history and cultural heritage in a spectacular way through soap operas, states aim to strengthen their political influence, first among the audience, and then in society, through promotion, narration, instruction and awareness and thus by eliminating prejudices and creating sympathy.

2.2. The position of the soap opera industry in the world in the context of cultural diplomacy

Diplomacy, in its simplest terms, is the art and practice of negotiation between nations (Kissinger, 1994). Diplomacy, which regulates relations between state and non-state actors in the international system, offers actors the opportunity to achieve their goals in a peaceful way. The post-modern era includes a process in which new non-state actors come to the fore as well as new values gain importance in public diplomacy. Public diplomacy plays a central role for emerging middle powers who seek to gain international prominence and political importance, relying on less material resources than great powers (Cooper & Flames, 2013).

Cultural diplomacy, on the other hand, consists of activities that aim to increase cultural interaction with other states, either directly or through their diplomatic representatives, in order to achieve their foreign policy interests. With the use of culture through diplomacy, the values, identity and cultural structures of one community are transferred to another one, and states can gain political, economic and security benefits from this exchange (Donelli, 2019; Finn, 2003; Gripenrog, 2015).

Cultural diplomacy is used for not only consensus, alliance or problem solving between states and political decision-makers, but also as an emotional bridge between different societies, creating feelings of cultural interest, tolerance, sympathy and affinity. While diplomacy takes place in the hands of political elites, cultural diplomacy is in fact directed towards and for societies. Ryan, who served as an assistant secretary of state for education and culture under President Obama, wrote in the Harvard International Review that "when you first meet a country, the first thing that comes to mind is not political figures. Most of us get to know a country through its music, movies, sports, gastronomy, or language. This is why cultural diplomacy can serve as a common bridge between different nations", emphasizing the important role of cultural diplomacy in the foreign policies of states (Ryan, 2016: 28). Cultural diplomacy, which enables states to export their cultures to other countries, can be examined under different activities such as culture, art, sports, education, historiography, tourism, and exchange programs. The fact that mass media and especially new media are now an inseparable part of social life has made it one of the most preferred methods for states in transferring their cultural values to other societies. The access power of the media, the rich content it can offer through different formats and the opportunity to reach individuals from various platforms at any time have made it a frequently preferred instrument in cultural diplomacy.

The soap opera industry has made a significant leap forward in recent years with the introduction of systems such as IP TV and VoD (video on demand) and the transformation of content consumption from traditional channels to digital platforms. Digital streaming service provider platforms such as Netflix, Apple TV, Amazon prime video, BluTV offer a service based on an online purchase or subscription model. Before digitalization, soap operas could only be watched on television, but with the proliferation of digital platforms, content consumption habits in the soap opera industry have completely changed. With this widespread use of digital platforms, audiences have gained more control over the soap operas, transforming them into an autonomous structure where they can watch the same content more than once, pause and restart it whenever they want, wherever they want. The emergence of these platforms has had the

most positive impact on the soap opera industry. Thanks to the wide global reach of digital platforms, local soap operas have been able to interact with completely different cultures in different geographies, reaching large audiences. This transformation of soap operas has enabled new players to enter the sector, and the international soap opera sector, which is dominated by Anglo-Saxon culture, has been enriched by the adaptations of local soap operas from different geographies. Players such as the USA, the UK, the Netherlands, France, Australia and Germany, which had dominated the soap opera market for many years, lost their monopoly after the significant successes achieved by countries such as Türkiye, Mexico, Egypt, South Korea, India and China in the sector.

Türkiye has been one of the most successful examples in this regard and has been the subject of many academic studies¹ and discussions, changing the balance of the sector as the country that exported the most soap operas after the USA in 2019 (Bhutto, *The Guardian*, 2019; Tali, 2016; Göksu & Okmen, 2019; Ağırseven & Örki, 2017; Çevik, 2014; Zubkova, 2015). Turkish soap operas, which first attracted attention in the nearby geography in the 2010s with *Magnificent Century*, *Gümüş* and *1001 Nights*, have brought together more than 150 soap operas with audiences in 146 countries in Latin America, Europe, North America, Central Asia and the Middle East in recent years (Uştuk, *Anadolu Ajansı*, 2019). This success has also had a positive impact on Türkiye's economic indicators, and the increased interest in Turkish culture and life has led to the creation of a "soap opera tourism sector". The soap operas, which enabled the promotion of Türkiye's cultural and historical values in many different parts of the world, also served as a useful method for the state's cultural diplomacy activities.

Like Türkiye, another country that has come to the forefront in soap opera exports in recent years is South Korea. South Korea, one of the prominent states of East Asia, has managed to increase its power faster than its neighboring states by going through a political and financial reform after the major financial crisis in Asia in 1997. In achieving this goal, South Korea utilized soft power elements and recognized the importance of cultural elements first among the countries of the continent and then in the international arena. South Korean soap operas have also created an important cultural interaction in the region, known as the Korean Wave². The East Asian peoples' fascination with Western culture and the related concern that it did not conform to the norms and values of their own societies was replaced by the South Korean culture, which shared a common historical background and cultural values. This rapprochement, which started as a cultural interaction through soap operas, has enabled the successful continuation of public diplomacy between the states of the region. The importance given by the South Korean state to cultural diplomacy has increased, especially with the financial and political support it has provided, and the interaction that started on Korean soap operas has spread to public diplomacy, especially in countries such as the People's Republic of China, Japan, Taiwan and Malaysia.

¹ A few examples of related studies: Deniz, A. Ç. (2010). Gümüş dizisinin Arap kamuoyuna etkileri bir sosyal medya incelemesi. *Uşak Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 3(1), 50-67; Öztürk, M., & Abdulkadir, A. T. İ. K. (2016). Ulusal pazardan küresel pazarlara uzanan süreçte Türk dizilerinin gelişimi. *Maltepe Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3(2), 66-82; Bilis, P. Ö., Bilis, A. E., & Sydygalieva, M. (2018). Türkiye-Türk Cumhuriyetleri Kültürel İlişkilerinde Televizyon Dizileri Faktörü: Kırgızistan Örneği. *MANAS Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 7(1), 403-425.

² For detailed reading on the Korean Wave: Jonghoe Yang. (2012). The Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) in East Asia: A Comparison of Chinese, Japanese, and Taiwanese Audiences Who Watch Korean TV Dramas. *Development and Society*, 41(1), 103-147; Jang, Soo Hyun. (2012). The Korean Wave and Its Implications for the Korea-China Relationship. *Journal of International and Area Studies*, 19(2), 97-113; Nam, Siho. (2013). The Cultural Political Economy of the Korean Wave in East Asia: Implications for Cultural Globalization Theories. *Asian Perspective*, 37(2), 209-231.

Soap opera diplomacy, which we will discuss in detail in the second section with a comparative analysis through the examples of Türkiye and South Korea, enables the formation of new relationship structures in line with strengthening of existing relations between states in the socio-cultural context, or societies getting to know each other in the context of common culture or interest in a new culture conveyed through soap operas. As Edward Said puts it, "all cultures are intertwined; none of them is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated" (Said, 1993: 25). Therefore, even though societies have been taught by states in line with nation-state building that their essence is different and unique, the inclusion of foreign soap operas in their lives has given them the opportunity to get to know cultures and societies that they have never known or thought to be very different. This interaction, which sometimes takes place from the ruling elite to the public, and sometimes from the public to political decision-makers, enables states to gain influence in the international arena.

From public diplomacy perspective, states carry out cultural diplomacy through local elements, cultural values and phenomena conveyed through soap operas. The perception, identity and historical values that are intended to be constructed through the scenarios of the soap operas are also used as an important soft power instrument for the public relations activities carried out by states in the international arena. For this reason, the introduction of the term " soap opera diplomacy" to the literature has emerged as a necessity.

3. TWO MODEL SOAP OPERAS: THE MAGNIFICENT CENTURY AND JEWEL IN THE PALACE

3.1. Perception and branding effects of "The Magnificent Century"

The 2000s was a period in which Türkiye came to the forefront in the international system in foreign policy as well as in domestic politics. During the first term of the AK Party government, a new era was initiated with a series of reforms in Türkiye's negotiations with the European Union, and the steps taken in economic growth and democratization created a new perception of Türkiye in the international arena. With Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who positioned Türkiye as a bridge between cultures with his "Alliance of Civilizations" discourse against Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, and Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who aimed to transform the status quoist Turkish Foreign Policy into a multilateral and proactive structure with his "Zero Problems with Neighbors" policy, Türkiye started to have a voice in the international system with a new vision. The "center country Türkiye" approach, which is the product of a multifaceted policy approach with the goal of becoming an important power in its region, has manifested itself not only in politics but also in Türkiye's cultural outputs.

With this understanding, Türkiye has focused on public diplomacy after 2010 and has turned towards increasing its soft power through different institutions. In this context, institutions such as TİKA³, DEİK⁴, Kızılay, TRT, which have been conducting Türkiye's public diplomacy for many years, have expanded their sphere of influence,

³ The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye, organizes Türkiye's foreign aid through its offices abroad. TİKA works with the understanding of "cooperation partnership" and sharing Türkiye's development experience with other countries. For detailed information <https://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/sayfa/hakimizda-14649>

⁴ Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK), established in 1985, is an organization tasked with coordinating the foreign economic relations of the Turkish private sector, especially foreign trade, international investments, services, contracting and logistics; researching investment opportunities in Türkiye and abroad; contributing to increasing Türkiye's exports and similar business development activities. For detailed information <https://www.deik.org.tr/kurumsal-hakimizda>

while cultural diplomacy-oriented organizations such as YTB⁵ and Yunus Emre Institute have been put into practice. Türkiye's national channel TRT has also changed its broadcasting policy with a new vision in line with this understanding and increased its scope with new channels. In this direction, TRT has created a wide range of broadcasts for different audiences and geographies, and new channels such as TRT World, TRT Arabi and TRT Avaz have been presented to the audience. This important expansion of TRT has been an important step for Turkish soap operas to reach different geographies and societies.

The global media and broadcasting sector has entered a new era with digitalization, and soap operas have become an indispensable habit of daily life. This great interest in soap operas has pushed broadcasters to search for different content, and increased competition has paved the way for new productions. In this direction, broadcasting organizations purchased the broadcasting rights of new soap operas from different geographies and brought them to the audience. This new trend has enabled Turkish soap operas to stand out in the international arena, and these soap operas have created a new alternative in the global market with their production, script and acting quality. In the 2000s, Turkish soap operas attracted attention in many countries in the Balkans, the Middle East, Central Asia, South America, Europe and particularly in Arab countries, and the Turkish soap opera sector increased its popularity (Sayın, 2021). Therefore, it is very important to understand and analyze the soap opera sector, which constitutes one of Türkiye's largest export revenues in recent years.

As of 2010, soap operas such as the Magnificent Century, Ezel, Kuzey Güney, Aşk-ı Memnu, Emir'in Yolu began to attract the attention of foreign television broadcasters, and Turkish soap operas gained great success in the international arena. Deloitte's report on the Turkish soap opera sector is an important reference to understand the success of the soap operas. According to the report, the revenue generated from the export of Turkish soap operas to foreign markets increased 15-fold between 2009 and 2014⁶ (Deloitte Türkiye, 2014). Considering the wide geographical reach of the soap operas, which make significant contributions not only in terms of export revenues but also as Türkiye's cultural, trade and tourism ambassadors in the countries where they are broadcast, it has been proven that they are preferred not only for their historical and cultural ties with neighboring countries but also for their content, production and script quality.

Another detail that stands out in this report is the research on Türkiye conducted by the travel search engine Skyscanner. Based on the data that there is a significant correlation between flight searches and foreign soap operas, the study showed that the number of people searching for Türkiye doubled when comparing 2011, 2012 and 2013. According to this report, since 2012, searches for flights to Türkiye from Kuwait, Qatar, Jordan, Yemen and Lebanon, where Turkish soap operas are widely shown, have increased by more than 100%, while searches from Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have increased by more than 200% (Deloitte Türkiye, 2014).

The first step in the international success of Turkish soap operas was "Aşk-ı Memnu", which TRT sold to France in 1981. In 1999, "Deli Yürek" was sold by Calinos Holding to Kazakhstan, the second soap opera to be exported abroad (Melek Öztürk, 2016). The expansion of Turkish soap operas to the Middle East and the Balkans began with the sale of the "Gümüş" to the region in 2007 (Melek Öztürk, 2016: 74). "Gümüş" attracted great interest in Arab countries and the final episode of the soap operas reached 85 million audience (Uştuk, Anadolu Ajansı, 2019). Another Turkish soap opera that followed this important success was "Binbir Gece" (A Thousand and One Nights), which

⁵ Established on April 6, 2010, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) has undertaken the task of coordinating the activities for citizens abroad, brother communities and international scholarship students studying in Türkiye and developing the services and activities in these fields. For detailed information <https://www.ytb.gov.tr/kurumsal/baskanligimiz-2>

⁶ To access Deloitte Turkey's "The World's Most Colorful Screen, Turkey's TV Series Sector" report: <https://www2.deloitte.com/tr/tr/pages/technology-media-and-telecommunications/articles/turkish-tv-series-industry.html#>

was broadcast in nearly 80 countries, making Turkish soap operas one of the most watched productions in the international arena. The "Magnificent Century", which maximized this success and made Türkiye the second largest exporter of soap operas after the USA, reached more than 500 million audiences in nearly 100 countries (Uştuk, Anadolu Ajansı, 2019). The success of Turkish soap operas in the Middle East and the Balkans has been followed by significant demand from North Africa, Western Europe and Latin America. Turkish soap operas have risen to second place, overtaking Mexico and Brazil, which had been close behind the US for years. This has played a leading role in boosting Türkiye's popularity in Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa. The success of Turkish soap operas has not only contributed positively to cultural diplomacy, but has also generated significant export revenues. As can be seen in Chart 1, Turkish soap operas have reached an export volume of 350 million dollars as of 2017. In direct proportion to the rise of Turkish productions in the international market, export revenues increased from \$1 million in 2007 to \$60 million in 2011. The increase in the number of soap operas marketed abroad and the success they have achieved have been effective in this great momentum⁷.

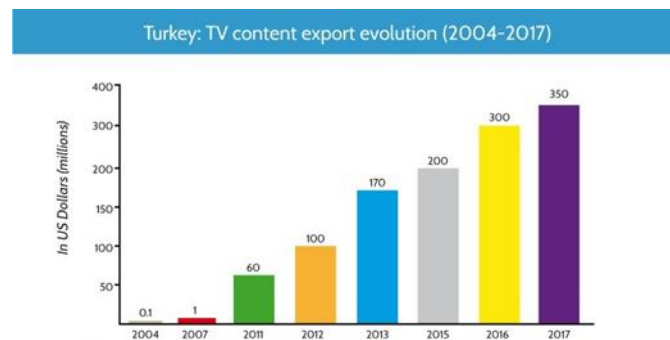


Figure 1. Export data of Turkish soap operas

Source: Prensario TV: <https://www.prensario.tv/novedades/1088-turkish-drama-is-expanding-around-the-world-how>

While Turkish soap operas are an important source of Turkish exports, they also provide a significant cultural transfer of Turkish society, lifestyle and history to the audience. Cultural diplomacy, which has an important role in increasing Türkiye's soft power, has gained significant outputs from this success of the soap operas. This is why it is important to add the concept of soap opera diplomacy to the literature. Likewise, Turkish soap operas marketed abroad have played an important role in conveying Turkish culture to different societies and increasing Türkiye's soft power.

One of the most important soap operas to be analyzed in the field of soap opera diplomacy is the Magnificent Century. The soap opera, which aired on Turkish television for 4 seasons and 139 episodes between January 2011 and June 2014, depicts the reign of Suleiman I of the Ottoman Empire. This period corresponds to the most brilliant years of the Ottoman Empire and is known as the peak of its borders and glory. The soap opera tells the story of Hürrem Sultan, who was brought to the Ottoman Palace as a slave and became the wife of Sultan Süleyman I (known in the west as Süleyman the Magnificent) (Ortaylı, 2020) through the relations between the palace and the harem. In addition to Sultan Süleyman and Hürrem Sultan, the Magnificent Century provides the audience with information about the Ottoman Empire by portraying historical characters such as the palace, harem life and sultans, Pargalı İbrahim Pasha and statesmen, and the princes Mustafa, Cihangir and Beyazıt (Veyisoğlu, 2019). It shows

⁷ Along with the Magnificent Century, Kara Para Aşk, Kuzey Güney, Karadayı, Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman ki, Adını Feriha Koydum, Gümüş, Fatmagül'ün Suçu Ne, Ezel, Aşk-ı Memnu and Kara Sevda soap operas played the biggest role in this export success. To reach the relevant source <https://mediacat.com/turk-dizilerinin-ihracat-karnesi/> Access Date 22.12.2020.

the daily palace life and the background of known events of the Ottoman Empire from different perspectives, which is mainly known for its political and military history.

After the first broadcast of the *Magnificent Century* in Türkiye and Northern Cyprus, its international exports began. It has been shown in more than 70 countries such as the USA, Japan, Russia, Egypt, Pakistan, Spain⁸ (Khan, 2020). It received high ratings in many countries around the world and became one of the most watched productions. The fact that producers and the soap opera industry in Bangladesh took a serious stance against the *Magnificent Century* because that it negatively affected local actors and the local soap opera industry is a good example of the position the *Magnificent Century* has reached in the world.

The *Magnificent Century* contains many historical and cultural elements from the Ottoman period. These elements are outside the historical process that focuses only on sultans, soldiers and conquerors, as it focuses on a field that deals with social relations rather than a state-centered understanding of history. In this context, the soap opera creates an environment that includes cultural elements and creates an Ottoman image in the minds of the audience through these elements. Thus, the audience sees an Ottoman State that is rendered with cultural elements that belong to life itself, and therefore to the individual and society, instead of elements of the Ottoman period that they do not feel they belong to, such as conquests and wars. Through the Ottoman Empire, a Turkish culture is reflected with elements such as cities, cuisine and clothes, and this is how the viewer perceives historical culture. These perceptions have contributed significantly to the branding of Türkiye with cultural elements.

The *Magnificent Century* depicts a glorious period of the Ottoman Empire and thus the Islamic world. In this sense, the soap opera creates a social point of departure by emphasizing a "golden age" through history, especially for the societies of the Islamic world. Hommos, vice president of Orbit Showtime Network, which operates in regions such as the Middle East, Africa, France, Spain and the UK, said, "It's a story that blends romance with history, but it also has a political significance. In the Arab world, where people are frustrated with the political situation, Muslim history provides a source of pride. It portrays Muslim leaders as fair and just", referring to the perception that the soap opera creates, especially in Muslim-majority countries. On the other hand, by emphasizing "reconciliation with history" with the *Magnificent Century*, he also states that it can create a bridge between Turkish and Arab societies in this sense. The fact that the Ottoman Empire and thus Turkish history/culture is at the center of all these perceptions provides Türkiye with a significant soft power capacity in the context of soap opera diplomacy (Hurriyet Dailynews, 2023).

In the Balkans, especially in North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the *Magnificent Century* topped the charts in a period. Cultural and linguistic similarities and values on the verge of disappearing are at the heart of these societies' interest in the soap opera. On the other hand, the highlighting of the multinational structure of the Ottoman Empire, the *devshirme* system, the figure of a woman, Hürrem Sultan, who was brought as a slave from a different nation and region and became a sultan in the Ottoman palace, allowed the soap opera to attract attention in the Balkans and the north of the Black Sea, which were the sphere of influence of the Ottoman Empire, and the societies in these regions were able to find something of themselves in the soap operas.

⁸ Other countries are Poland, Mexico, Greece, Georgia, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Arab League, Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Kosovo, Lithuania, Latvia, North Macedonia, Morocco, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Vietnam and Tanzania. In 2020, South Korea was the last country to export the soap opera.

3.2. *Perception and branding effects of “Jewel in the Palace”*

In its industrialized cultural productions, Korea is pursuing a strategy to enrich its multidimensional public diplomacy. In this approach, Korean music such as K-Pop (Korean Pop) and television products such as K-Drama (Korean Drama) are particularly prominent. Korea is successfully spreading Korean culture to the region and the world through its products in these sectors (Khan, 2020).

The term "Hallyu" or "Korean Wave", which emerged as Korea developed diplomatic relations with China after 1992, is used to refer to the popularity of Korean entertainment and culture around the world. Since 1992, cultural products such as Korean music, movies and soap operas have been widely popularized in China. These terms were actually first used by Chinese newspapers in 1999 to refer to the success of Korean singers. Hallyu symbolizes the rapid growth of Korea's cultural industries and the export of its cultural output, including television programs, popular music, animation and digital games (Yoon & Jin, 2017).

One of Korea's most successful cultural products, the Korean soap opera "What Is Love", was broadcast by CCTV in China in 1997 with an audience rating of 4.2% (over 150 million Chinese audiences) (KoreaNet, 2023). Following this soap opera, "Winter Sonata" and "Dae Jang Geum (The Jewel in the Palace)", Korean soap operas gradually gained more and more fans (KoreaNet, 2023). Korean productions have experienced a surge in exports, with a particularly significant breakout after 2000 (Hwang, 2010).

One of K-drama's most influential content is Jewel in the Palace. The Jewel in the Palace, which began airing in 2003, became one of Korea's most watched soap operas and its subsequent popularity led to its export to 87 countries. The soap opera portrayed traditional Korean culture, such as the cuisine of the Royal Palace, traditional costumes and medical knowledge, painting a portrait of Korea in the minds of the audience. It was exported all over the world, including Asia, North America, Europe and the Middle East, generating \$11.8 billion in revenue. With the impact of the soap opera, interest in Korean cuisine, medicine and medical sectors has increased, and with the growth of production, revenues of \$101 billion have been generated (KoreaNet, 2023).

The Jewel in the Palace is based on the historical figure depicted in the Chronicle of the Joseon Dynasty. It focuses on Jang Geum, Korea's first female court physician of the Joseon Dynasty. The chain of events revolving around the palace and the kitchen brings Korean cuisine, the magnificence of the palace, and Korean medical products come to the forefront due to the presence of medical issues in the content. Thus, the soap opera both creates soft power through cultural elements and creates a market for Korean products by emphasizing these elements. The soap opera has helped Korea become a prominent international player in the sector (Ju, 2019).

4. TÜRKİYE-QATAR AND SOUTH KOREA-CHINA RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOAP OPERA DIPLOMACY

4.1. *The effects of the “The Magnificent Century” on Türkiye’s soap opera diplomacy towards Qatar*

It is possible to examine the effects of "The Magnificent Century", which brought the Turkish soap opera sector to international platforms, contributed greatly to Türkiye's promotion and cultural diplomacy activities, and provided significant gains to the national economy by being exported to nearly 100 countries, under commercial, social and political headings. Before evaluating the positive contributions of the soap opera to Turkish-Qatari relations, it would be useful to touch upon the common history of the two states. When we examine today's relations between Türkiye and Qatar, we can observe that the two states have a common approach in many political, cultural and economic fields, from regional partnership to strategic cooperation, from deep-rooted friendship and brotherhood ties to commercial agreements and investments. However,

Turkish-Qatari relations, which President Erdoğan addressed with the words "Our brother Qatar, with which we are inseparable with strong ties of heart", did not follow a significant course until 1979, and relations between the two states started to rise with the period when the AK Party came to power. 2011 can be considered as the beginning of the strong relations for Türkiye with Qatar.

Qatar, which gained its independence from the British protectorate in 1971, was once part of the Ottoman territory. The invitation of the Emir of Qatar, Muhammad al-Sani in 1871 marked the beginning of a new era for the Ottoman presence in the region. After World War I, the Ottomans withdrew from the region, and with the agreement signed between Qatar and the United Kingdom in 1916, the defense and foreign affairs of the Emirate of Qatar passed under the responsibility of the UK (Kayaoğlu, 2020) (Kurşun, 2019). The first diplomatic step of Turkish-Qatari relations, which can be evaluated under many political, cultural, economic and commercial dimensions today, was taken with the "Cultural Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Türkiye and the Government of the State of Qatar"⁹ in 1985 during the first Özal government.

One of the most important steps taken during the AK Party period, when relations between the two states gained a new dimension and momentum, was the establishment of the "Türkiye - Qatar Business Council". Bilateral relations entered a new era with the "Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement" signed between the Turkish Ministry of Economy and the Emirate of Qatar in 2014. As shown in the "Qatar Country Profile" report published by the Türkiye-Qatar Business Council, Türkiye's exports to Qatar amounted to \$1.2 trillion in 2019, which corresponds to a 4 percent share in Qatar's total import volume. Türkiye's import volume from Qatar totaled around \$213 million in 2019 (T.C. Ticaret Bakanlığı, 2020). One of the most important steps taken during the AK Party period, when relations between the two states gained a new dimension and momentum, was the establishment of the "Türkiye - Qatar Business Council". Bilateral relations entered a new era with the "Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement" signed between the Turkish Ministry of Economy and the Emirate of Qatar in 2014. As shown in the "Qatar Country Profile" report published by the Türkiye-Qatar Business Council, Türkiye's exports to Qatar amounted to \$1.2 trillion in 2019, which corresponds to a 4 percent share in Qatar's total import volume. Türkiye's import volume from Qatar totaled around \$213 million in 2019 (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade, 2020). In line with strong political, diplomatic, economic and cultural relations, the bilateral trade volume between Türkiye and Qatar has been increasing rapidly in recent years. As indicated in Chart 2, the volume of trade between the states has increased by nearly 1,000 points in the last 15 years, leading to an export surplus for Türkiye.

⁹ To access the text of the agreement:

https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/tutanaklar/KANUNLAR_KARARLAR/kanuntbmmc070/kanuntbmmc070/kanuntbmmc07003342.pdf

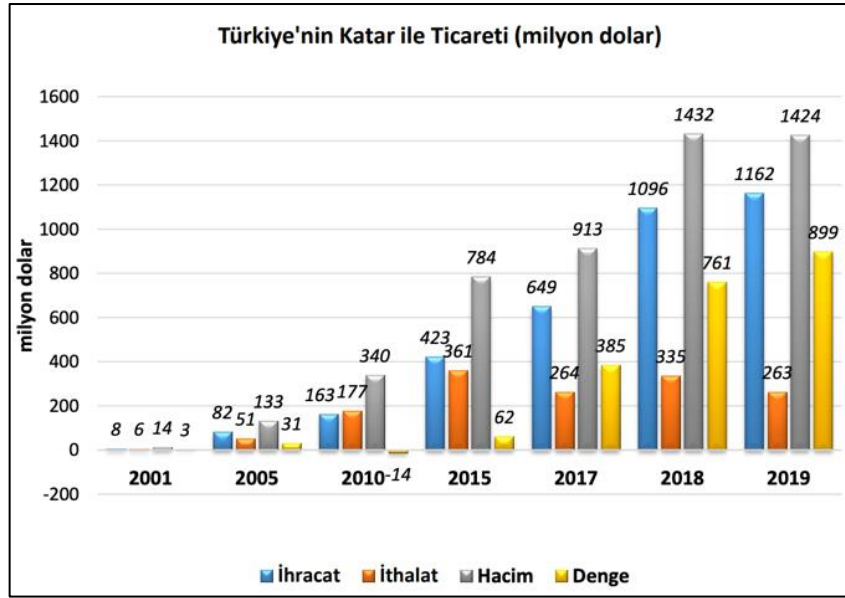


Figure 2. Türkiye's trade with Qatar (million dollars)

Source: TurkStat

These macroeconomic data show that Turkish-Qatari relations have a significant trade volume and that this relationship has developed especially in favor of Türkiye. Qatar is a country where investments are quite high, especially in the construction sector. For this reason, although Qatar is a country where assertive contracting countries such as Türkiye carry out intensive trade activities, the economic and political embargoes imposed under the leadership of Saudi Arabia have enabled Qatar to increase its export share with Türkiye in recent years.

After discussing the Türkiye-Qatar relationship in line with the diplomatic and political common history of the states, three important issues stand out in the context of the soap opera diplomacy of "The Magnificent Century". The first of these is the impact of the soap opera on tourism, while the others are the positive contributions it has made to Türkiye's popularity and, accordingly, its image. On the other hand, factors such as the interest of the actors of the soap opera in Qatar and brand collaborations are also important to understand the impact of the soap opera. Türkiye, which increased its export revenues through the sale of "The Magnificent Century" to foreign countries, achieved its own promotion without incurring additional costs, and the cultural values and lifestyle conveyed through the soap opera attracted great interest in neighboring geographies (Nuroğlu, 2013). When examining the impact of "The Magnificent Century" on Qatar in the context of soap opera diplomacy, the first factor that comes to mind is tourism. The historical locations used in the soap opera, such as Topkapı Palace and Harem, have increased interest in cities such as Istanbul, Trabzon and other places that were part of the Ottoman Empire, and significant increases have been observed in the number of visitors to these places. In 2014, Dünya newspaper investigated the impact of the soap opera sector on Turkish tourism and reported that 170,000 Arab tourists visited the Eastern Black Sea region in 2013, compared to 35,000 Arab tourists visiting the region annually before the Magnificent Century was aired. In the same article, it was stated that foreign tour companies organized 3-day Istanbul tours in line with the demand for soap opera tours and visited the locations where the soap operas were filmed (Dünya, 2022). On the other hand, according to the "Türkiye Museums 2013 Report"¹⁰ prepared by the Association of Turkish Travel Agencies (TÜRSAB), Topkapı Palace Museum, the main location of the soap opera, surpassed Hagia Sophia Museum in the ranking of the most visited museums in 2011-2012, and the highest increase was realized in Harem, which reached 1 million visitors for the first time (TÜRSAB, 2014). Another noteworthy

¹⁰ To access TÜRSAB's detailed report: http://www.tursab.org.tr/dosya/12194/tursab-turkiye-muzeleri-2013-raporu_12194_5662488.pdf

element in the same report is that the 428.8% increase in the number of visitors to museums and archaeological sites is significantly higher than the 335% increase in the number of foreign tourists between 2000 and 2013. Therefore, the impact of the soap opera sector and especially the Magnificent Century can be observed in this great success.

Another study that provides information on the importance and contribution of Turkish soap operas in tourism marketing is a qualitative study conducted with a group of Middle Eastern tourists who watched "The Magnificent Century" and visited Türkiye. The impact of the soap opera on destination preferences was measured among 10 tourists (4 from Saudi Arabia, 3 from the United Arab Emirates, 1 from Oman, 1 from Bahrain and 1 from Qatar) who watched "The Magnificent Century" and volunteered to share their opinions and experiences. It was observed that the soap operas had a positive impact on the image of Türkiye and played a major role in the audience's choice of Türkiye as a tourism destination (Boukari et al., 2018).

Table 1. Comparison of the number of tourists arriving in Türkiye in August 2011-2013 by countries

Milliyet	YILLAR			Milliyet Payı (%)			% Değişim Oranı	
	2011	2012	2013*	2011	2012	2013*	2012/2011	2013/2012
KARADAĞ	1 318	1 456	1 614	0,03	0,03	0,03	10,47	10,85
KOSOVA	6 120	9 422	10 499	0,15	0,21	0,21	53,95	11,43
BOSNA HERSEK	5 170	6 904	10 092	0,13	0,15	0,20	33,54	46,18
HIRVATİSTAN	3 583	3 783	3 605	0,09	0,08	0,07	5,58	-4,71
SİRBİSTAN	20 966	23 628	24 686	0,51	0,53	0,50	12,70	4,48
MAKEDONYA	11 118	13 762	16 489	0,27	0,31	0,33	23,78	19,82
ROMANYA	65 626	62 377	58 914	1,61	1,40	1,19	-4,95	-5,55
LİBYA	1 345	17 633	32 118	0,03	0,39	0,65	1211,00	82,15
MİSİR	3 984	12 690	9 792	0,10	0,28	0,20	218,52	-22,84
B.A.EMİRLİĞİ	1 546	7 317	11 132	0,04	0,16	0,23	373,29	52,14
KATAR	464	3 228	5 148	0,01	0,07	0,10	595,69	59,48
İRAK	32 758	67 852	117 640	0,80	1,52	2,38	107,13	73,38
LÜBNAN	19 057	25 793	26 955	0,47	0,58	0,54	35,35	4,51
ÜRDÜN	7 974	15 454	20 703	0,20	0,35	0,42	93,80	33,97
S.ARABİSTAN	8 320	21 619	46 470	0,20	0,48	0,94	159,84	114,95
İRAN	160 990	172 084	151 704	3,95	3,85	3,07	6,89	-11,84
Yabancı Toplam	4 076 783	4 470 202	4 945 999					

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, August 2013 Bulletin

Another benefit of the "Magnificent Century" to the national economy is the income generated by the branding of the soap opera's products. Books about Hürrem Sultan, precious jewelry and different products such as "Hürrem Sultan Colognes", inspired by the colognes brought by the Sultan to his wife on her return from war, have seen a great increase in sales in international markets with the soap opera (Cumhuriyet, 2023; T. Ateşalp & Şen, 2014).

The success of the soap opera and the interest it attracted among the locals led to significant changes in Qatar's museum culture. In the exhibition opened for the first time in Doha under the patronage of Qatari Princess Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani within the framework of the "Qatar-Türkiye 2015 Year of Culture" activities, the sets used in the filming of the soap opera, silicon sculptures of the actors who took part in the production, costumes, jewelry and sections prepared in the form of rooms in the palace were presented to the visitors (AA, 2023). The intense interest of the visitors made the exhibition a tradition and the Qatar Museum reopened the 'Harem and Sultan' exhibition every year. The state of Qatar has redesigned the exhibition to be particularly relevant to the national education system, placing great importance on

students learning Ottoman history and enriching it with post-exhibition workshops¹¹. This cultural interaction between the two states provides an important reference point for understanding the success of the soap opera.

Miriam Berg's qualitative study "The Importance of Cultural Proximity in the Success of Turkish Dramas in Qatar" provides an important reference for understanding the social and cultural factors in the success of Turkish television dramas popular among Arab audiences in Qatar. The research was conducted in 2017 by dividing 202 university students studying in Qatar into 10 focus groups. In this research, a mixed structure consisting of 34 multiple-choice, open-ended and Likert-scale questions was used. The main findings of the focus group research indicated that ethnic and racial similarities play an important role in the success of Turkish soap operas (Berg, 2017). The importance of Ottoman-Arab history and the fact that the two nations (Turkish-Qatari) have similar physical characteristics in terms of ethnicity and race, social habits, traditions, religion, food and music culture were cited as contributing to the success of the soap opera. Many of the participants stated that "Turks are very similar to us, we thought of them as completely different before" and that the negative image of Turks from the time of the Ottoman rule and the perception of the gap between cultures changed with "The Magnificent Century" (Berg, 2017). Participants stated that they found in this soap opera a sense of common life and cultural affinity that they could not find in Western productions. Another prominent finding of the research is the belief that universally defined modernity and modern life can also be possible in Muslim countries. In line with this approach, Türkiye was shown as the most successful example of this with its secular, modern state structure.

In an interview with the Guardian newspaper in 2019, Fadi Ismail, the general manager of MBC Broadcasting (Middle East Broadcasting Center), one of the most important names in the export of Turkish soap operas to the Middle East, stated that the common cultural and ethnic background between Turks and Arabs is the most important factor in the success of Turkish soap operas. Describing his surprise when he first viewed the Turkish soap operas at an expo for broadcasting rights, Ismail said: "I stopped and watched it, I didn't understand anything. But I could immediately visualize it as Arabic content. I replaced it in my mind with the Arabic voice and everything else looked the same culturally, socially - the food, the clothes, for me everything looked like us" (Bhutto, The Guardian, 2019). Coinciding with the beginning of significant changes and transformations in Turkish Foreign Policy, "The Magnificent Century" has shown its impact in the field of politics and diplomacy and played an important role in creating a common cultural perception.

4.2. The effects of the "Jewel in the Palace" on South Korea's soap opera diplomacy towards China

Following an isolated approach to the outside world for many years, China adopted an open door policy in the late 1970s, which led to the development of diplomatic cooperation with other countries. These limited relations were enhanced after the Cold War. After this period, China's economic relations with countries in its region also deepened, and East Asian countries in particular became the main import suppliers for China (Nicolas, 2009).

August 24, 1992 marks the first step towards normalization in China's relations with the Republic of Korea, ending more than forty years of conflict. In this process, as a reflection of the "region first" idea adopted by China in the post-Cold War era, steps were taken to improve relations. The relationship between these two countries is of utmost importance for both countries in particular and for the future of the Northeast Asian region in general. In the context of China's new security policies in the second half of the 1990s, China's strategy of improving its relations and ties with the states in the region in order to reduce the US influence in Asia had a positive impact on Korea-

¹¹ For Qatar Museum's announcement about the exhibition: <https://www.qm.org.qa/en/school-visits-harem-al-sultan-exhibition>

China relations (YI, 2020). With normalization and China's regional priority policies, Korea-China trade volume, which was 8.1 billion dollars in 1992, reached 35.9 billion dollars in 2001 and 100 billion dollars in 2010. The trade volume, which fluctuated between a minimum of 86 billion dollars and a maximum of 147 billion dollars between 2010-2020, is seen to be 120 billion dollars in 2020. With this data, China is the number one country in Korea's foreign trade¹².

One of the most important dimensions of Korea-China relations, which also contributes to economic data, is cultural diplomacy. In this context, Korean soap operas have an important place in the relations. The entry of Hallyu, which is defined as the Korean cultural wave into China started in 1993 with the export of the soap operas *Jealousy (Jiltu)* and *Eyes at Daybreak (Yeomyeongui Nundongja)* to China. This was followed by the arrival of the Korean soap opera *What is Love? (Sarangi Mwo-gillae)* in 1997, which led to a boom in Korean soap operas in China. "Sarangi Mwo-gillae", which was the second most watched foreign soap opera up to that time, was one of the factors that paved the way for the demand for Korean soap operas in China. In 2005, "Jewel in the Palace" marked the peak of Korean soap operas in China. However, following the Chinese government's restrictions on foreign TV content in 2006, imports of Korean dramas began to decline. During this period, Chinese audiences continued to watch Korean soap operas through piracy websites. Subsequently, the inflow of Korean soap operas into China began to rise again and has continued to do so (Jang, 2012).

In 2001, the Korean soap operas that were sold to China totaled 2482 episodes for all soap operas, with a total revenue of \$2,700,000. In 2005, the same year that *Jewel in the Palace* was aired, the number of soap opera episodes increased to 4099 and the revenue of the soap operas increased to \$9 million. As mentioned above, since Korean soap operas were subjected to restrictions in China, the growth rate dropped for a while and then increased again, so that by 2011, the number of episodes reached 5578 and the soap operas revenue reached \$17 million (Park, 2014).

Jewel in the Palace has been followed with interest by the Chinese public since 2005 when it was broadcast in China. The soap opera had a nationwide rating of 3.2% via Honam Satellite TV in China, which is a good rating compared to the average of other programs. According to this figure, approximately 160 million audiences in China followed the soap operas on television. In daily life, the popularity of *Jewel in the Palace* is also visible in China, with the theme song of *Jewel in the Palace* heard while walking down the street or in a store, and even small stores selling music CDs, movie VCDs and DVDs have stands dedicated to the soap opera. For a long time, the show's products remained on the stands with high sales (Hani21, 2020; namu.wiki, 2020).

The *Jewel in the Palace* has also attracted the attention of the Chinese government, and some have even expressed this interest. In an interview with a Korean reporter in 2005, Hu Jintao, the Chinese president at the time the soap opera was aired, said: "I like 'Jewel in the Palace', but because I was very busy with state affairs, I was not able to watch all the episodes on a regular basis, so I was only able to keep up with the flow of the soap opera as much as I could", which shows how far the soap opera has come in China. It is also known that Wu Bangguo, who was the president of China's National People's Congress at the same time as Hu Jintao, was also a fan of *Jewel in the Palace* (Yu, 2020). On the other hand, Peng Liyuan, the wife of China's current president Xi Jinping, expressed her feelings towards Korean culture by talking about popular Korean soap operas during her visit to Seoul in 2014. Liyuan, who also saw Changdeok Palace during her visit, stated that *Jewel in the Palace* reflected the beauty of the Joseon dynasty palace very well and said that the youth of both countries could better understand each other through soap operas (Yonhap, 2020; namu.wiki, 2020).

In addition to export revenues, the *Jewel in the Palace* has also provided tourism resources for Korea. In particular, "Dae Jang Geum Park", a historically important place where the "Jewel in the Palace" was filmed and which was designed in 2011 as a set area

¹² To access the relevant data: <https://tradingeconomics.com/south-korea/exports-to-china>

for the soap operas as well as a place for tourists to visit, has become an interesting place for Chinese tourists as well as tourists from other countries. Dae Jang Geum Park, where frequent programs are held, has also received visits from the state level from time to time. In 2015, 4 years after its establishment, 18 diplomats from countries such as China, Türkiye and Indonesia, which broadcast *Jewel in the Palace*, visited the park and participated in the cultural program held here. Chinese Ambassador Qiu Guohong said, "I believe that MBC will continue to create good content like 'Jewel in the Palace' and do more important and new things for the development of Korean society and culture, as well as to promote friendship with others" (MBC, 2023).

When we look at the number of Chinese tourists visiting Korea, it is seen that the number of tourists, which was 44 thousand in 2004, reached 52 thousand in 2005, 56 thousand in 2006 and 80 thousand in 2007 (KTO, 2023). On the other hand, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Dae Jang Geum Park increased from 15 thousand in 2005, when the soap opera was broadcast in China, to 18 thousand in 2006 (KTO, 2023). One of the reasons why *Jewel in the Palace* attracted great interest in China is that the soap opera also contains elements of Chinese culture. With these elements, Chinese viewers both see pieces of their own history and witness the intertwining of Korean and Chinese culture. Throughout the soap opera, the richness of Chinese culture, including Chinese calligraphy, medicine, food, clothing and ancient systems of governance, is conveyed alongside Korean culture. In this way, the soap opera emphasizes the common history of the two countries and is a great example of cultural diplomacy (Yu, 2020).

5. CONCLUSION

In line with the paradigm created by neo-liberal policies and thus globalization in international relations, states have started to use soft power elements such as diplomacy, emphasis on common identity and values, and the power of influence and persuasion more. States have re-experienced the power of culture in the interaction between societies through different elements, and soap operas have emerged as an important factor in this direction. The history, geography, identity and traditions conveyed to the audience through soap operas have made significant contributions to the cultural diplomacy of states. The export of national soap operas to foreign markets has played a key role in transferring these values to different geographies, cultures and societies. This rapprochement between societies through soap operas has also contributed positively to the cultural diplomacy activities of states, and the concept of soap opera diplomacy needs to be included in the literature.

Thanks to soap operas, which play an important role in the promotion of states, distant geographies and cultures have gotten to know each other and interacted. The history, geography, identity and traditions conveyed through soap operas have enabled audiences to discover and perhaps feel close to a culture they have never known or misunderstood. This cultural interaction between societies has enabled states to increase their export revenues through soap operas, offering a new economic field. This article examines how Türkiye and South Korea, two of the most important representatives of soap opera diplomacy in the world, have achieved soft power through this type of diplomacy with different processes and focuses on the outcomes of the states.

From the perspective of soap opera diplomacy, the comparison between Türkiye and South Korea has revealed serious similarities. In fact, a similar Korean wave was experienced in Europe between the 16th and 18th centuries through Ottoman life, art and culture under the name of *Turquerie*. Today, soap operas seem to have started such a trend again. The *Magnificent Century* may have revived the *Turquerie* movement of the past. Current soap operas seem to be creating a second wave of *Turquerie*.

When the examples of Türkiye and South Korea are analyzed, the successful results of soap opera diplomacy are clear. With this new instrument, Türkiye and South Korea have succeeded in increasing their global popularity, enhancing the brand value of their countries, and improving their economic and political relations. The analysis of the two target markets China and Qatar, which are under special scrutiny, reveals a very

striking picture, and it is seen how a positive environment has been rapidly created and relations between states have developed in different dimensions through soap opera diplomacy, especially the erasure of negative perceptions and thoughts from the past. The fact that Türkiye and Korea, which have completely different histories, cultures and values, have found a common ground and contributed to themselves through soap opera diplomacy has created an important alternative for other states that want to increase their soft power.

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