

**Ramadan Drama and the Amplification of Deviance in Algerian
Society Between Production and Reproduction
A Critical Analytical Study of the Series “Al-Barani” Broadcast on
Echourouk TV During Ramadan 2024**

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Abstract: The current study aimed at highlighting the manifestations of deviance amplification in the Ramadan television drama of 2024 through a critical analytical study of the series Al-Barani, which was broadcast on the private Algerian channel Echourouk. The researcher explored the main aspects of violence depicted in this series and its relationship to reality, as well as the elements of amplification—whether in deviant behavior itself, through the characters who engage in such behavior, or through the values that arise from these practices. Through critical analysis, we were able to address the research problem and answer the questions raised within the methodological framework, ultimately emphasizing the manifestations of deviance amplification by comparing the processes of production and reproduction.

Keywords: television drama ; production ; reproduction ; deviance amplification

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1- Introduction

In his book *The Mind Managers*, Herbert Schiller mentions that the film industry, with its various arts and genres, does not merely reproduce reality but creates it according to representations that frame it within a form that often amplifies reality, enhanced by the aesthetic aspects of art and film production. This industry is not solely focused on providing entertainment for the sake of entertainment itself; its primary goal is financial profit, often at the expense of the values that uphold the social order. As is commonly stated in the media, familiar news does not contain the desired news values; it must include something unusual to attract the audience and satisfy their curiosity. The same characteristic can be found in cinema, where filmmakers strive to bring forth the exceptional, transforming representations of reality into an aesthetically appealing form that captures the audience's curiosity and fulfills their needs and desires.

From this perspective, elements such as imagination, drama, tragedy, and humor play a fundamental role in creating this exceptionality. In fact, they are strategies of the film industry, with a surface appearance of constructive social critique but a deeper intent of manipulating audiences' minds, pulling at the strings of human emotion to make them accept the product, achieve financial gain, and propagate ideologies.

It is worth noting that Pierre Bourdieu linked this idea to television, considering it a tool for creating ideologies and accusing it of amplifying representations of the social system and commodifying values. This phenomenon has grown in recent times with the advent of multimedia technologies, where the quality of production has become dependent on increasing viewership. To achieve this, those responsible for this industry are often compelled to cater to the audience's desires, even if the content falls within the realm of mass culture with poor taste.

This concept can be applied to the film and television production during Ramadan, where significant financial resources are allocated to producing numerous films and series that reach a competitive level between public and private television channels. Their common driving force is financial profit, achieved by attracting the largest possible number of advertisers who seek out audiences to ensure the effectiveness of their advertising campaigns. Consequently, money and financial gain become the primary motivators behind film production and television broadcasting, even if it comes at the expense of authentic representations of social reality.

If we closely examine many of the cinematic works broadcast on various Algerian television channels, both public and private, we notice that a significant number of them focus on depicting deviance in Algerian society by addressing numerous sensitive issues such as theft, drugs, money laundering, child abduction, violence against women, child labor, and gambling. However, this portrayal is often exaggerated, causing the desired critique to veer into undesirable territory. The production presents an inflated image of deviance compared to its actual presence in reality.

Although the high viewership achieved through various media outlets and social media platforms may seem like a success, this does not necessarily indicate that the intended message—addressing social ills and curbing their spread—has been effectively conveyed. On the contrary, these films and series can have a reverse effect by highlighting the darker aspects of society, promoting them, and turning taboos and forbidden behaviors into ordinary actions. Through repeated viewing, such behaviors may become socially acceptable, especially when accompanied by implicit human values used to fuel imagination and reinforce social aspects. As a result, this cinematic industry may market a negative image of Algerian society both nationally and

internationally, making deviant behavior seem like an everyday occurrence that citizens accept and live with as normal.

The main objective of this research paper is embodied, as we question the relationship between the lived reality in Algerian society and the imagined reality depicted in these films and series broadcast on Algerian satellite channels during this holy month. We aim to explore the deviance portrayed in these series, the levels of its amplification, and to reveal the contradictions used to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the viewing experience, the eloquence of style, and the message, all through specific scenes that embody this exaggeration at the expense of representing social reality. This can only be achieved by addressing a key research question, which is as follows:

What are the levels of deviance amplification in the series Al-Barani, broadcast on Echourouk TV during Ramadan 2024? This main research question branches into the following sub-questions:

1. What are the main themes of amplified deviance in the series Al-Barani during Ramadan 2024?
2. What are the main values conveyed in the scenes related to the reproduced deviance in the series Al-Barani during Ramadan 2024?
3. Who are the main characters portraying the reproduced deviant behavior in the series Al-Barani during Ramadan 2024?

1.1- Research Methodology:

Our study on Ramadan television drama and the amplification of deviance between production and reproduction requires a methodological framework with various procedures and steps. Based on the concepts of "deviance amplification" and "reproduction," we began with the fundamental hypotheses of these two approaches. Through them, we identified the key indicators relied upon in the field to critique and analyze the mechanisms of producing and reproducing deviance and its amplification in Algerian Ramadan television drama for 2024. This also allows us to uncover the hidden dimensions of this production, including its ideological levels and concealed aspects.

It is worth noting that we did not activate all the hypotheses related to these approaches; rather, we selected the most significant ones that serve the study's objectives, helping us arrive at solutions for the research problem and its questions. This methodological precision enables us to base our work on the idea that the media industry, with its strategies and artistic and aesthetic techniques, is capable of depicting social reality in a way that amplifies lived experiences. This amplified representation can transform into a stereotypical image that attracts attention, as it shifts from the concealed reality behind the television screen to the lived experience of the ordinary citizen. This leap beyond the boundaries of imagination and creativity contributes to amplifying social deviance, both in its representations and its real-life manifestations, leading to accusations against the media industry for spreading and exaggerating deviance in society.

The second hypothesis posits that the media industry reproduces what exists in social reality; however, the process of reproduction can be reciprocal, whereby it transforms from media production into social reality. This can lead to the amplification of social reality, even if that reality involves deviance.

To measure these hypotheses in Algerian television production for Ramadan 2024, we employed a critical descriptive study of a sample of film clips from the series Al-Barani, which was broadcast on the private channel Echourouk. We utilized a survey

method supported by critique and comparison, bolstered by essential scientific tools, including participatory observation and audiovisual content analysis techniques. Our focus was on the content aspect over form, and we defined our analysis categories as including themes, characters, and values. In this study, we relied on the idea as the unit of measurement, as it is deemed more suitable than the word or sentence.

Regarding the research population and analysis sample, the former encompasses all Algerian television series broadcast on Algerian channels during Ramadan 2024. The analysis sample consists of a purposive judgmental sample represented by the series Al-Barani, which contains content closely related to the studied topic. It is important to note that we did not analyze all episodes of the selected series as our analysis sample; instead, we chose a set of scenes that we deemed relevant to the nature of the topic and the study, as they contain a degree of exaggeration in the reproduction of deviance in Algerian society. We found it necessary to conduct a precise critical analysis of the clips and scenes related to the topic under investigation.

To further familiarize ourselves with the series, we have included the technical card and promotional poster as follows:

Table (1) : Technical Card for the Series Al-Barani (Topic of Analysis)

Series Name	Chanel	Author and Director	Duration	Serie category
El-Barani	Echourouk Tv	Yahia Mozahem	45 mns	Social drama

Source :designed by the researcher

1.2- Identifying The Study Concepts:

1.2.1. Amplifying Deviation:

This concept was introduced by Leslie Wilkins in his 1967 book titled Social Deviance, where he initially linked it to cybernetics and feedback loops. However, it soon found broader application in labeling theory, which explains deviance. By "deviance amplification," we refer to the escalation of initial and simple deviance through the association of connotations and meanings during the process of labeling and exaggeration in reaction (Waston, James; Hill, Anne, 2012, p. 77).

According to this perspective, deviance encompasses any behavior that is socially unacceptable, and it is a normative concept tied to societal standards that can change over time and space. What may be considered deviant behavior in one social group might not be so in another, and what is labeled as deviant behavior at one time may not hold the same classification in a different time period. Media plays a crucial role in amplifying deviance, as confirmed by numerous sociological studies. Media outlets consistently and exaggeratedly cover deviant behavior, bringing attention to it, even if it may be obscure among certain members of society. The media highlights and amplifies these behaviors, making them socially prevalent, which can influence community members and increase their dissemination until they become normalized (Waston, James; Hill, Anne, 2012, p. 78).

In this study, we refer to the amplification of deviance as the contribution of Ramadan television drama to exaggerating certain aspects of deviance in Algerian society through the series *Al-Barani*, broadcast on Echourouk TV.

1.2.2. Télévision Drama:

Television drama is defined as a media message and a tool for re-representing reality in a deceptive or illusory manner. It is a powerful mechanism where its events tend to have a more significant impact than those in cinema, as it is fresh and continuously evolving, creating a frequency that results in a stronger effect compared to cinematic drama, where events unfold in a single day (Al-Hamid, *Social Values in Television Drama*, 2017, p.45).

Drama is considered a means of conveying human experiences, presenting ideas, and offering a perspective on life in an impactful manner that resonates with human feelings and emotions. This approach draws from ancient arts, where the performers aim to transmit their emotions to the audience through tragedy and comedy. This can help in psychological and emotional catharsis on one hand and critique of lived reality on the other. Thus, television drama stands out as one of the artistic production forms that harness all artistic and aesthetic capabilities to convey experiences of daily life, whether through television plays, films, or series. The essence of this art form lies in the conflict between good and evil, human suffering, and the evocation of intense emotions capable of depicting and reinterpreting human anguish in a way that is comprehensible to the audience. The audience's feeling of being present at the represented event and experiencing its atmosphere is a fundamental criterion for the success of this artistic style in delivering the intended message.

In this study, we refer to television drama as the artistic approach adopted by the director in the series *Al-Barani* to convey the message to the audience. This approach fundamentally relies on the reproduction of reality, presenting it in a tragic manner that, in some aspects, diverges from the actual reality to create a sense of suspense for the viewer.

1.2.3. Reproduction:

This term was articulated by Pierre Bourdieu in his book *Reproduction*, published in 1970, where he refers to the idea that socialization institutions, primarily the family and school, operate within organized and systematic frameworks that reproduce what serves the social system in the long run. Consequently, this process leads to the reproduction of class structures and other socio-cultural traits (Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, 1970).

Bourdieu further developed this idea in his 1996 work '*Sur la télévision, suivi de l'emprise du journalisme*', where he indicated that television is a social institution that exercises a form of symbolic violence on society. It simultaneously works to reproduce representations of social reality through its in-depth analyses and various systematic mechanisms. More importantly, television does not merely reproduce reality; it also contributes to amplifying it and influencing the latter through a mechanism of symbolic violence. It emphasizes scenes of blood, sex, and drama to capture the viewer's attention (Bourdieu, 2004, p. 47).

In this study, we refer to reproduction as the representation of reality through the amplification of deviance in the drama series *Al-Barani*, illustrated through its various scenes.

1.2- Theoretical Framework of the Study:

The scientific treatment of this research issue necessitates relying on the scientific imagination of two fundamental approaches that are central to this topic: Leslie Wilkins' "Deviance Amplification Theory" and Pierre Bourdieu's "Reproduction Theory." The essence of the first theory, which arises from the critical school of sociology, is that the media is capable of amplifying deviance in society by highlighting it in coverage and intensifying its portrayal, making deviant behavior socially acceptable and widely circulated. According to this perspective, media—primarily television—not only contributes to the critique of social reality but also indirectly shapes behavior through stereotypes and systematic harassment, thus transforming minor deviance, through designed mechanisms to regulate it, into amplified deviance (Kahloun, 2021, p. 215).

The essence of the second approach posits that media, especially television, does not merely reproduce reality as other socialization institutions (such as family, school, and mosque) do; instead, it contributes through its effective techniques to reproducing representations of reality and imparting new values and representations that are unrelated to the values of the social system. Through mechanisms of imitation and cultural implanting, it generates new representations that shift from the imagined reality to actual reality. This process can lead to social change, which is not necessarily directed towards stabilizing the system but can destabilize the social order by instilling negative behaviors that may result in social and moral decay under the banner of consumer culture and cultural industries that support capitalist production. Here, a process of commodifying values, manufacturing them, and packaging them occurs at the expense of the legitimacy of social system institutions (Bourdieu, 2004).

3- Analysis of the Manifestations of Deviance Amplification in the Sample Series:

We previously noted the difficulty of comprehensively analyzing and critiquing all the series broadcast on Algerian television channels during Ramadan 2024. Therefore, we selected a sample for analysis that meets the criteria for the topic we intend to examine. It is essential to emphasize the challenge of addressing all episodes; thus, we chose the most significant scenes that illustrate manifestations of deviance. We analyzed the content of these selected scenes based on chosen units and categories. Our focus was not solely on counting these categories but rather on conducting an in-depth analysis and critique to highlight aspects of exaggeration in the re-presentation of reality, or what is referred to as reproduction. At the same time, we clarified the implications of this on the representations of reality and the specificity of the Algerian social system, relying on scientific imagination and the specific approaches of this study. The analysis was conducted as follows:

3.1. Category of Topics:

Through our analysis of the table related to topic categories, it became evident that the topic of drugs took the largest share among the subjects addressed, recording 15 occurrences, which accounts for 29.41% of the total occurrences estimated at 51. The second position was held by the topic of investment in illegal trade with 11 occurrences, representing approximately 21.56%. The topic of moral decay came in third place with a total of 8 occurrences, accounting for 15.68%.

In fourth place, the topics of conflict between good and evil, the permissible and the forbidden, as well as marriage and family, were tied, each with 4 occurrences, which

equals 7.41%. The topic of religion and combating social ills had a percentage of 5.88%, with 3 occurrences each. Finally, the last position was shared by embezzlement and murder, with percentages of 3.92% and 1.99%, corresponding to 2 occurrences and 1 occurrence, respectively.

If we closely examine this quantitative reading, we find that the topic of drugs serves as the backbone upon which the entire episode is constructed. According to the creators of this film, drug trafficking is seen as a source of immense wealth, as those who engage in it can achieve quick profits. Thus, the director aims to portray drug dealers as enjoying material and social comfort, living in luxurious mansions, benefiting from a high social status, acquiring expensive cars, and wielding social influence.

These individuals are depicted as being devoid of feelings and religious conscience on one hand, while leading a contradictory and unstable psychological life on the other. This dark representation has the potential to create a crisis of value identification within Algerian society.

As a direct consequence of drug trafficking, and due to the significant profits, it generates, traffickers seek to invest in various other economic sectors to launder their money. This includes owning factories, trading in luxury cars, operating beauty salons, hosting fashion shows, and establishing large commercial centers. Despite these investments spanning all fields, they do not cease their trade in illicit substances; rather, they continue in it due to their habituation to easy money and the difficulty of distancing themselves from it.

These individuals often lack even the most basic levels of moral conscience, as seen in the "Ghali" family, where most members engage in this profession, starting with their mother, her children, and her son's wife. The only exception to this practice is their father, who consistently warns them against earning money through unlawful means, and their sister, who is occupied with teaching as a university professor.

In this episode, the director emphasizes a theme that is no less important than the previous ones: the struggle between good and evil, and what is lawful versus what is forbidden. This family experiences a state of internal conflict, oscillating between religious conscience at times and indulging in drug trafficking and unethical practices at other times. This is exemplified in the behaviors of the eldest brother, "Omar," who is portrayed as a psychologically troubled and unstable character. He is dutiful to his parents and respects his promise not to bring illicit money into their home. He is also kind to his siblings, yet he cannot escape the realm of the forbidden.

The same dynamic applies to the topics of marriage and family formation, as the director illustrates that some characters desire marriage while others are deterred from it. The latter perceive this relationship as merely a descent into chaos, which is evident in the dialogue between the daughter and her mother. However, the emphasis on religious conscience and the fight against social vices is minimal in this film; the director dedicates only a few scenes in the first episode to parental advice given by the father to his children, who seem indifferent to his words. On the contrary, they continue down their path of deviance, with their mother encouraging such behavior.

This portrayal reflects a facet of the disintegration of the social system in Algerian society, as it highlights the deviation of the family institution from its functional role in healthy socialization. According to this episode, the mother is deemed responsible for this deviance, giving her a negative image within the narrative. The episode concludes with the dire consequences of engaging in illicit trade: the loss of lives, as the youngest son in this family ends up killing his girlfriend by forcing her to consume an overdose of drugs.

Through our exploration of the events of this episode and the central themes emphasized by the writer and director of this series, it becomes evident that there is an exaggeration in the reproduction of reality. The series magnifies the portrayal of a life of luxury, debauchery, and the trafficking of illicit substances, presenting it as an established norm. However, this situation is actually an exceptional and anomalous reality in Algerian society.

The immense wealth of most Algerian families does not necessarily stem from drug trafficking and illicit gains. In fact, many Algerian families possess a strong sense of religious conscience; for instance, housewives rarely accept money derived from illegal activities, particularly when they know that their children could end up incarcerated if caught. Algerian mothers refuse to engage in illicit earnings, especially from drug trafficking, for two main reasons: the first is religious conscience, as the profits from such activities are illegal both legally and morally; the second is the fear of their children falling prey to these networks and the tragic endings that often accompany involvement in this field.

From our viewing of the episode, the security forces are depicted as almost absent in public spaces, which presents an unrealistic portrayal of Algerian society. In reality, security measures are strict concerning such issues, and authorities do not take these matters lightly; they are present everywhere to combat this serious plague that has burdened society. This representation reinforces the notion that the director has inflated the deviance present in Algerian society and has gone too far in reproducing reality, likely to create suspense and attract viewers to follow the series.

It is worth noting that patriarchal authority is prominent in Algerian society, playing an important role; however, the director attempts to marginalize this authority, focusing instead on maternal authority. This results in an exaggeration of reality and the reproduction of fictional representations that do not align with the structure of Algerian social norms, which are characterized by male dominance, especially in critical situations. Furthermore, the director excessively highlights moral decay within Algerian society, where, in reality, such behaviors are typically rejected due to collective values, moral consciousness, and religious sentiments. This makes moral decay a taboo subject, and emphasizing it creates the false impression that these exceptional cases are representative of the entire society.

Such representation could tarnish the image of Algerian society and its various institutions, as it portrays the family—considered the central nucleus of society—as a source of deviance. It also negatively impacts the university and intellectuals, reducing them to a position where they are at the mercy of drug dealers. Here, the director sends a clear message: the value of a person is measured by their material wealth rather than their cultural or academic accomplishments. However, lawful earnings, even if meager, are preferable to billions earned through illicit means, a belief held by most Algerian thinkers.

The university student is also depicted as prey to drug dealers, suggesting that many female students are socially deviant. The portrayal of the student—who is expected to represent the cream of society—as foolish to the point of overdosing on drugs is exaggerated. While some cases do exist, they are not representative of the vast majority of university students, who are typically far removed from such unethical exploitation. The series clearly aims to generate suspense and intrigue to attract more viewers and increase profits through this exaggeration.

Despite the series showcasing these behaviors and inflating them to normalize them for the sake of viewership and financial gain, such portrayals can have long-term

and medium-term effects on real individuals, potentially leading to the normalization of these exaggerated behaviors. This raises a call for caution against such representations. The ultimate goal of cinematic production should not simply be to achieve viewership and financial gain by imitating Western representations, but rather to convey lived realities and critique them constructively, free from exaggeration and distortion.

3.2.Analyzing and Criticizing Values in the Serie:

Upon reflecting on the category of values, it became evident that negative values, such as contempt, illicit gain, moral decay, lack of respect for others, and disrespect for parents, dominate the content of the episode and the series. These negative values take the lion's share of the total values portrayed in the series, constituting 80.70% with a total of 46 occurrences out of 57. In contrast, positive values, such as brotherhood, filial piety, religious conscience, and respect for others, were recorded in this episode at only 19.29%, with a total of 11 occurrences.

From this perspective, and because of the previously discussed ideas, the dominance of these negative values did not happen by chance. Rather, it was intentional on the part of the producers of this series. Their goal was to criticize society and present a picture of the deviations that exist within it, particularly regarding the values of halal and haram. By reviewing the key negative values presented in the series, we find that the value of illicit gain overwhelmingly dominates the other negative values, constituting 65% with 30 repetitions out of the 46 recorded for all negative values. The director focused on the excessive wealth of the family portrayed in the series, which they acquired through illicit means. Here, we find that the projection employed by the producers is not objective and cannot be generalized to most Algerian families, as these cases are considered exceptional in Algerian society.

As for the value of moral decay, it ranks second with a total of eight repetitions, making up 17.39%. This indicates that illicit gain is a direct result of moral decay, as a person who accepts illicit money lacks morals. Other negative values, such as contempt for workers and employees, disrespect for others, particularly a wife's disrespect for her husband, and the disobedience of children toward their parents, were also recorded in various scenes of the series, though to a lesser extent.

Regarding positive values, the highest recorded was the value of brotherhood, constituting 36.36%, with a total of four repetitions out of the 11 positive values recorded. As for religious conscience, only three repetitions were recorded, and this value was solely attributed to the father, the only person who enjoyed good and forbidding evil. However, his advice had no effect on the rest of his family, who were immersed in a life of luxury and debauchery. The values of filial piety and respect for others were only mentioned twice each throughout the episode. This suggests a significant decline in positive values in the first episode of the series and likely in the subsequent episodes as well.

The focus on illicit gain by this family in various parts of the series highlights the director's intention to critique society by portraying illicit gain as a common and widespread behavior among Algerian families. However, this portrayal is not an objective reflection of how Algerian families earn their livelihood. While there are certainly some families who engage in illicit activities, it is not to such an exaggerated extent. In the process of reproducing reality, subjectivity can be detected, as most Algerian families are devout Muslims who strive to avoid illicit wealth, with religious conscience playing a crucial role in the social upbringing of family members. This was overlooked by the director, who deliberately marginalized the importance of religious

conscience to justify the other negative values. The proof of this is that the value of religious conscience was given only a small percentage of the total values in the series. Out of the eight family members portrayed in the series, only two possessed religious conscience. As a result of this lack of religious guidance, other negative values emerged, such as moral decay, contempt for workers and employees, disobedience toward parents, and lack of respect between spouses.

All these negative behaviors, which were portrayed in an exaggerated manner through the process of reproduction, could be interpreted as the director's attempt to make the audience recognize this moral decay in the virtual world of film production, as it does not exist to such an extreme degree in real life. If these scenes were common and present in society in such a way, the audience would not have been so eager to watch them in this series.

Human nature is inclined toward both good and evil, and there is often a balance or slight variation in behavior, especially when it comes to the values of good and evil. This balance was overlooked by the series when it focused on one value to the exclusion of others. Even the value of brotherhood, which should have been a positive value, took on a negative direction in this series, where the cooperation between siblings was more about collaborating in sin than in virtue. They worked together in theft, embezzlement, murder, covering up their crimes, and defending one another to continue committing more crimes and murders.

3.3. Analysis and Critique of the Actors:

The study of the actors — the film's characters — is crucial in determining the progression of the series' events, shaping interactions, and understanding the goal the director aims to achieve. Through the title of the series, *El Barrani* (which means “The Outsider” in Arabic), the central character driving the film's events becomes clear. The term “El Barrani” refers to a stranger, who in this case was adopted by the “Galaï” family after losing his own family when their house was set on fire. This character tried to adapt to this new family, considered them his own, and played a role in helping them rise from the poverty they were suffering from.

Figure 01: The adopted eldest son, “Omar”



Source: Echourouk TV from YouTube

The adopted son, “Omar,” grew up alongside his siblings, and together they worked to improve their living standards as they struggled with poverty. They eventually became prominent drug dealers, with Omar, the eldest, becoming the gang leader. He took on the role of commander, engaging in behaviors that he believed maintained the bond between his siblings and his good relationship with his adoptive

parents. However, despite this, he experienced a form of marginalization within his family, particularly from his adoptive mother, who treated him differently from her biological children. Omar sought to gain her approval at all costs, even through illicit means. His position as the leader was established through violence, not respect, in contrast to his brother "Sidi Ahmed."

Omar was entrusted with all the dirty tasks requiring violence and intimidation. For example, his brother Sidi Ahmed called on him to rescue their youngest brother, "Mohamed," from being implicated in the murder of the university student "Manal." Omar disposed of her body while she was still alive. He also intervened when "Mia," the daughter of Sidi Ahmed, was kidnapped by a rival drug-dealing gang, killing her kidnapper. Similarly, he disposed of "Tayouani," another wealthy figure involved in illicit gains, and saved the sister of their private driver, "Idriss," from being swindled out of her money by her boyfriend, whom Omar coldly murdered.

Unlike other characters in the series who dared not commit such criminal acts, Omar was the only one accustomed to these tasks, stemming from his childhood when he set fire to his family's house while his siblings screamed inside. This dark secret was only revealed in the final episode during a confrontation between Omar and Sidi Ahmed, where they exposed each other's secrets.

The director deliberately portrayed Omar's criminal character as normal, fearless, and even courageous, living an ordinary life in society. At the same time, he was occasionally shown as compassionate and kind, a contradiction typically seen in disturbed characters with psychological issues. It is impossible to present such a character as a model applicable to real life. Furthermore, many scenes involving Omar resembled action films, where he would effortlessly draw a weapon and kill someone in a disagreement. This scenario is far-fetched—could a criminal truly execute another so easily? Could one criminal outwit another of equal cunning? These exaggerated traits made Omar appear exceptional, fueling viewers' curiosity about him through the series.

As a result, Omar emerged as the main actor in the series and, alongside his brother "Sidi Ahmed," a drug trafficker. Omar dominated the screen, with a remarkable 60 appearances, accounting for 44.11% of all appearances, far surpassing other characters. Sidi Ahmed followed in importance, appearing 28 times, or 20.58%, taking on a secondary leading role.

Sidi Ahmed was portrayed as intelligent and shrewd in business, managing companies and commercial centers that laundered the drug money. He was seen as a strong character, a married man with a daughter he adored so much that he named his businesses after her. Respected by his family and society for being a successful businessman, Sidi Ahmed was willing to sacrifice everything for his family. However, when it came to criminal activities, he distanced himself from these dealings to preserve his image, leaving his brother Omar to handle the dirty work. For example, Sidi Ahmed sent Omar to dispose of the body of the university student who died from a drug overdose and to intimidate landowners into selling their properties under threat, for the purpose of illegal real estate investment deals.

The director did well in portraying Sidi Ahmed's character, as such individuals are indeed prevalent in society—educated people who exploit the less fortunate to carry out their plans. However, some scenes were exaggerated, particularly those involving murder over minor disputes. The director added arrogance and pride to Sidi Ahmed's character, but this cannot be generalized to all wealthy people. This depiction played

into societal stereotypes about the rich, portraying them as arrogant and exploitative to engage viewers in the storyline.

The third key character is the youngest son, "Mohamed," who owned a car dealership established by his brothers through money laundering. Mohamed was deeply entrenched in drug use, living a lavish lifestyle, and using women to his advantage. His drug addiction not only harmed himself but also had a negative impact on society, leading to the death of a university student he manipulated into taking an overdose.

Mohamed, the pampered youngest child, had significant screen time with 22 appearances in the first episode alone, accounting for 16.17%. Despite owning his own business, he remained dependent on his family, particularly his mother, who still treated him as her little boy. This special treatment led him to commit several crimes, relying on his brothers to bail him out each time. The director portrayed Mohamed as an immature, emotionally driven character, a stereotype often associated with the youngest child in Algerian families. However, this is not a universal truth; many youngest children are responsible and outshine their siblings in intelligence and capability.

Another important character is the mother, "Malika," depicted as domineering, greedy, and accepting illicit wealth. She encouraged her children to continue drug trafficking and blamed her husband for not participating in such immoral activities. She was also selective about her children's marriages, rejecting anyone who wasn't wealthy. Malika appeared 10 times in the first episode, accounting for 7.35% of total appearances.

The director portrayed her as a stubborn character, ignoring her husband's advice and portraying the mother as the family's leader and decision-maker. This portrayal is exaggerated, as the typical Algerian household dynamic sees the wife respecting and following her husband's guidance. Furthermore, Algerian mothers generally reject illicit earnings, especially from drugs, contrary to Malika's character, who accepted Omar's dirty money and even helped him hide the drugs. This portrayal of the mother is exceptional and not representative of the majority of Algerian society.

Lastly, the father, "Lakhdar," appeared 8 times in the first episode, representing 5.88% of appearances. He was the only character who refused to live off illicit earnings, standing in contrast to his wife and children involved in drug trafficking. Portrayed as a powerless figure, Lakhdar was unable to control his family, left to simply pray for their repentance. This portrayal of the father, as a passive and submissive figure, is rare in Algerian society, where men generally exert authority over their households.

In summary, we have examined the prominent characters in the series, who played leading roles. Secondary characters such as police officers, the university student, the professor, the middle brother's wife, and their daughter "Mia," as well as the driver "Idriss," his mother, and his siblings, and salon workers, also contributed to the unfolding of events.

4- Conclusion

Based on the discussion in this study, we can conclude that Algerian drama during Ramadan attempted to recreate reality through various television series broadcast after iftar on both public and private television channels. Through these series, messages were conveyed, which were not always innocent. The creators of these shows understand these post-iftar times are peak viewing hours, as Algerian families gather around the television to watch these programs. As a result, they strive to achieve the highest possible viewership ratings. With the recent expansion of the media

landscape allowing for the establishment of numerous television channels, competition has intensified among these channels to capture the largest share of the audience.

To this end, all channels employ psychological, artistic, and narrative techniques to create intrigue and novelty, aiming to attract more viewers to follow these various series. This, in turn, generates considerable profits for both the producers of these series and the channels that purchase these cultural products. It is well known that marketing these contents in the consumer market does not always adhere to ethical standards, especially if there is no strict oversight from the authorities regulating this market.

It is important to note that the cultural market has distinct characteristics compared to other types of products, as it carries ideological messages and has implications for the value system and social structure. Therefore, it must be handled with caution. Failing to present these cultural products in a rational manner—through content exaggeration—can lead to serious consequences for society, particularly in the long run, with the entire community bearing the cost. Hence, producers and directors should consider the relationship between production and reproduction, especially when dealing with content that embodies elements of deviance and violence.

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