



Research Article

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Feminine Expectations from a Gender Perspective in Peruvian Television Fiction

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Abstract

The study addresses the view of women leaders of Peruvian civil society organizations (CSOs) on the representations of women in series/soap operas broadcast by national free-to-air television. From the naturalistic paradigm and a qualitative approach, following a phenomenological and grounded theory design, it covered three pre-categories: the concept of gender, gender relations, and gender system. Focus groups were used to talk to 39 women community leaders, educators, and cultural leaders in two Peruvian cities. It is concluded that they perceive in the series/ soap operas of national television fiction, that they only obey market demands, without innovations in showing women, structures of inequality in the representations and roles, unfair for them, not in line with reality, and that are reinforced by rules and norms of the traditional and religious social base; and, in their gender perspectives, still under construction, they do not yet integrate into the LGBTQ+ community. The evidence indicates a growing concern for increased female representation and inclusion in television. This presents a challenge for both the government and television companies. Peruvian feminism must align with modern perspectives on this trend, presenting an opportunity for activism.

Keywords: Gender, gender approach, feminism, television fiction

1. Introduction

1.1 Initial notes on gender

Gender is a category of analysis for understanding how culture has elaborated ideas about what it is to be male or female on sexed bodies. It allows us to understand what stereotypes or roles have been attributed per sex (Scott 1990, Butler 2018). Thus, in Western culture, women are associated with reproduction, nurturing, domestic space, and service of the husband; men, to the public sphere and city affairs. To him corresponds the intellect; to her, the affective. For Laqueur (1994), culture is responsible for this.

Historically and academically, in the 1970s, Anglo-Saxon feminists promoted the category of gender to distinguish the socio-cultural from the biological construct, aiming for "feminine" characteristics to be seen as acquired after a process of formation and not only as a result of the sex we are born (Lamas, 1999). For Coreas Martínez et al. (2010), the objective was to achieve equal rights for men and women and to break patterns and stereotypes that generated this inequality, to the detriment of women.

Today, women continue to lag and live in inferior conditions than men. According to figures by Serrano and Canales (2017), just in 2017, women were able to lead as heads of state in half of the world's countries, school attendance represented 52% of girls, 700 million girls under 18 years old were married, 120 million girls had suffered sexual violence, and 200 million women, genital mutilation.

This reality is not alien to Peru: in 2022, the country ranked 37th out of 155 in the world ranking of gender gaps (rate of 74.9%), an increase of 25 positions compared to 2021 (Expansión/Datosmacro.com, 2022). The education rate increased to 30.8% but is still lower than men. This is similar to labor, health, and political participation rates (El Peruano, 2021) (INEI, 2021). In addition, other gaps of exclusion, mistreatment, and violence are evident: by 2022, 133,436 cases of violence against women were reported, whether psychological, physical, or sexual (Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations, 2022).

1.2 Women in media, women on TV

Other forms of inequality appear, subliminally, through communication (verbal or non-verbal) in social representations and mass media that promote an unequal and aggressive social coexistence for women (Mantilla Falcón, 2018). According to Alarcón Llontop (2018), this unequal coexistence has been normalized by deconstructions and constructions projected through the media, mainly by television, specifically through national production, setting stereotypes, discrimination, a hypersexualization and dominant masculinity (Ardito Vega, 2014) (Barrientos Silva, 2015).

In recent decades, several studies have shown that women are underrepresented in the media and are relegated. For Arranz (2020), the characters, roles, and stereotypes shown fit the cliché of limited femininity. Calvo (2014) addresses the distorted representation of women not only in television fiction but also in real television: women are excluded from sports or are highlighted as sexual objects. Mass media such as TV are key in the social dynamics established: they justify and cement closed gender visions such as machismo and patriarchal structure (Ombudsman's Office, 2021) (Barrezueta 2018).

Analyses conducted by #MeToo and Time's UP have shown that women are more susceptible than men to face sexual objectification on TV (Garrido and Zaptasi, 2021). TV reflects the reality of its viewers and, therefore, that of society. As Aguaded-Gómez et al. (2015) point out, the media gives the public what is requested. For this reason, according to Guizzo et al. (2017), women are often used as objects or decorative instruments.

TV programs are a potential source of gender stereotypes for minors. The medium is a leader in popularity among them (Rideout, 2015) (Feierabend et al., 2017). The National Research Council

(2009) states that, in the USA, TV shows and trash programs experience a boom. For Feierabend et al. (2017), this conveys beliefs and stereotypes about gender roles in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), such as that women perform less well in science, something investigated by Collins (2011) and Wigfield et al. (2015).

In recent TV series, Hohenstein and Thalmann (2019) identified changes in the representation of roles: showing complex women, weakening traditional stereotypes, and pointing to make television more aware of the need for a discourse against sexist archetypes. According to the Peruvian Ombudsman's Office (2021), analyses of TV media discourses show attempts to achieve an egalitarian social representation of gender.

The media in general, by consensus, widen gender gaps and approach the division of masculinity and femininity as natural. Male supremacy must prevail there. This structure reinforces stereotyped behaviors, using the power of television. Television stereotypes do not disappear; they are only renewed and bring with them covert representations of female subordination and other groups with limited opportunities (Núñez, 2005).

1.3 *Analyzing from a gender perspective*

Gender refers to the economic, social, political, and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being female or male or people identified as non-binary (WHO, 2018). Social definitions of a woman or a man change over time and across cultures (Jhpiego, 2022). The definition of gender involves sociocultural characteristics and particular roles associated with certain groups of people concerning their sex and sexuality (Council of Europe, 2018). Gender, although related to biological sex, is not necessarily dependent on it (WHO, 2018). Thus, LGBTQ+ identities and their inclusion make sense.

The re-conception of the world without limiting it to biological or natural determinisms, the source of the historical backwardness of women, is the key to the gender approach (Jalisco Women's Institute, 2008). It seeks to expose inequalities in power relationships between men and women. Ruiz Bravo (1997) points out that the gender approach is committed to being aware of the existing inequality, recognizing the reasons that create it, and seeking solutions to confront it.

Currently, the use of the term "gender" has increased, generally referring to the inequalities mentioned above. The background is to make visible the differences that lead to issues arising from roles and stereotypes that negatively affect the conception of gender, especially the non-egalitarian conception of the female (Ladrón de Guevara et al., 2016; Palomar, 2016; Segarra-Saavedra et al., 2021).

1.4 *The grounds for feminism*

The Royal Spanish Academy defines feminism as the principle of equal rights for men and women, and the movement that fights for it (RAE, 2022), in a couple of laconic meanings that perhaps will continue receiving rejections from feminists as noted by Varela (2019-b) on other previous definitions. For Montero (2006), feminism essentially deals with equality in social, political, and cultural contexts, not with "equality" of capacities, in terms of the physical aspect. The light of equality is certainly at the end of the tunnel of feminism: Sood (2022) believes that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities, thus emerging the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes.

Varela (2019-b) addresses the history of feminism, comparing it to a tsunami, composed of waves. The first one is the struggle for women's suffrage and the very word and derivatives premiering, the admission of women to the university at the beginning of the 20th century, their reorganization after World War II, the attainment of their first political rights, their acceptance in full-time jobs, and access to divorce (Cobo, 2019).

In the second wave, each feminist sector addresses its urgencies from its thinking (García-Peña,

2016). Violence exercised by men against women, domestic violence, and rape are discussed; and socialist feminists will include capitalism as another ingredient of female oppression, women's studies become a discipline in universities, and books about their achievements in history are published as it had not been written before (Cobo, 2019) (Varela, 2019 - b).

The third wave is based on the American movement in the 1990s. Special attention is given to racial issues: global feminism begins. Feminist NGOs emerge focusing on specific topics (Bernárdez and Moreno, 2017) (Varela 2019-A). The media will be used and pop culture will be added to promote their ideas and to carry out activities: blogs and other digital media will be used (Varela, 2019-a).

For the fourth feminist wave, its advocates seek to confront oppression, discrimination, and gender violence, relying on the great reach of social networks and new generations, demanding their rights. But new doubts also arise, and different discourses, and contradictions emerge and, therefore, claims appear among the same main figures of the movement, women (Cobo, 2019) (Varela, 2019-a).

Even though some, like Bonavitta and De Garay (2019), are distrustful, TV is embracing feminist discourse and television fiction incorporates female empowerment into their speeches within the framework of the fourth wave. The strengthening of the movement has led to the birth of updated female television roles, with more diverse representations: the emancipated woman emerges (Bernárdez and Moreno, 2017) (Marín, 2019) (Picardo Barrientos, 2021).

1.5 This approach with a gender focus

To address the objective of this research, "to analyze the expectations of women leaders of civil society organizations in the representations of Peruvian national open signal television with a focus on series/ soap operas, from a gender approach", being a specific unpublished topic, whose results will enrich the dialogue, the variable is first defined conceptually. The theoretical basis of Ruiz Bravo (1997) is chosen for two reasons: 1) it is an excellent and valid synthesis of the most relevant aspects of the gender approach; and 2) the concept recognizes a quick, feasible, and reliable route toward its practical operationalization.

The conceptual definition, formed with articulating elements of the RAE (2022), is summarized as: "Hope to get from the series/soap operas of the Peruvian national open signal television a rethinking of the categories: 1) Concept of gender, 2) gender relations, and 3) gender system; and 10 grounded features of the Theory of gender approach analysis".

At the operational level, these three categories are deployed, following Ruiz Bravo (1997):

Concept of gender: It assumes the cultural constructs that define men and women historically, and often in opposition and more or less according to defined socio-geographical realities, on three traits: 1) Roles: performances, roles, functions of people depending on whether they are men or women. 2) Spaces: locations or scenarios where roles are played. 3) Personality attributes: distinctive characteristics associated with being a man or a woman.

Gender relations: According to Scott (1990), these cover the social and cultural dynamics established between the sexes. They include 1) Symbols: evocations of historical or cultural representations, and patterns of identification of men and women, as appropriate. 2) Normative concepts: frames coming from religious, legal, cultural, and other doctrines, which unilaterally affirm the meaning of masculine or feminine. 3) Institutional system: the institutions set up (family, work, school), which construct univocal gender identities. 4) Subjective identity: how each person internalizes the above concepts and synthesizes them innerly.

Gender system: the framework through which societies influence the way reproduction of the species is expressed: sexuality and procreation regulated by social mandates. It comprises: 1) Values, norms, guidelines: commonly accepted social dispositions in which the relationships between women and men are framed. 2) Social organization: how the social spectrums of the family, work, neighborhood, politics, and others, either horizontally or vertically, are positioned like men and women, establishing hierarchies. 3) Power structures: social articulations designed so that some (men) dominate others (women) or vice versa.

1.6 A framework from a phenomenological and grounded theory perspective

In order to fulfill the stated objective of the study, before entering specifically into its methodological framework, we provide a theoretical overview of the phenomenological and grounded theory perspectives that frame the research design. The phenomenological perspective constitutes a tradition of the study of communication, which assumes it as a dialogic experience, as typified by Craig in 1999 (Gómez-Diago, 2022). The phenomenological approach is based on how people understand events (Ortiz Ocaña, 2015).

Grounded theory encloses a research design that starting from observations, opinions, documents, ideas or characteristics aims to substantiate a conceptual unification that will connect resulting categories and subcategories (Benites & Villanueva, 2015). Systematic and rigorous with the observed data, as a method it must keep a close relationship between data collection, analysis and the theory that emerges from them (Trujillo et al., 2019).

Since this research is basically a perception study -where the voice of others is its foundation-, the phenomenological perspective will perfectly guide a part of its design. Grounded theory complements by providing a rigorous and systematic method to address analytical categories and subcategories that lead to new conceptualizations.

2. Material and Method

In terms of its purpose, this is a basic type of research: it will provide a theoretical basis for further studies; concerning the source, it is a field type since it was developed in the same factual time and space (Arias Gonzales & Covinos Gallardo, 2021). It is based on an interpretationist paradigm: the world results from the meanings given by the researchers, being both constructionist and relativist (Batthyány & Cabrera, 2011). It corresponds to the qualitative approach, in an observer-observed relationship considering elementary individual and structural differences when constructing a phenomenon (Trujillo et al., 2019). The design was phenomenological since the essence of the knowledge achieved is the lived world but always from the subject in full respect to the relationship of people - own experiences (Martínez Miguélez, 2004), and grounded theory, in which the resulting reality unites meanings, consensus, situations, and coincidences [Arispe Alburqueque, 2020].

The setting for the study was two cities in northern Peru where the informants were located: Cajamarca and Trujillo, one is Andean, and the other is coastal. Their populations are slightly more female (INEI, 2018-a) and, although the regions in which these cities are capitals are among the most important, they show worrying indicators. In the province, gender gaps are accentuated at the urban and rural peripheral levels, from exercising the right to education to accessing health care, employment, and entrepreneurial opportunities (INEI, 2018-b) (INEI, 2018-c). Different reports have consigned each of these cities as sites of violence against women in the last five years at least, attempts and consummation of femicides.

Regarding the participants: Peruvian women are leaders of certain civil organizations (soup kitchens, neighborhood committees, etc.). In the community sector, they hold managerial positions at the educational level (there is no systematized data). In several cases, they lead in the cultural sector (for which no formal data is available). The empirical evidence leads us to believe that they are in these three leadership positions in the cities focused on in the study: Trujillo and Cajamarca. Many of these leaders are heads of household and/or have their own gender experiences that are important for the study.

The sample was non-probabilistic, by convenience -of spontaneous people interested in participating- and by criteria -under specific choice guidelines- (Benites Romero & Villanueva López, 2015). The inclusion criteria for the informants were: a) to represent a social institution from a managerial position, b) to be fully active in their activism, and c) to be willing to collaborate with the research. The exclusion criteria were: a) to be on leave from their activism and b) to have family ties with a member of the research team. A total of 39 leaders participated as informants, corresponding

to the distribution by region: 22 women in Cajamarca (05 from the community sector, 07 from the cultural sector, and 08 from the educational sector), and 17 women in Trujillo (06 from the community sector, 05 from the cultural sector, and 06 from the educational sector).

The technique to collect information was focus group discussions since the experience was rewarding and stimulating for the participants (Martínez Miguélez, 2004). The instrument was the agenda of topics, facilitating dialogue at a moderated debate level through a series of questions and guided cross-examination (Benites Romero & Villanueva López, 2015). The instrument covered the 10 traits of the three pre-categories of the variable in the form of items. The instrument was validated in its content by the judgment of three expert university teachers. The application of the instrument, which was sealed in 20 open-ended questions, took the first two weeks of February 2022 and was carried out in person in Cajamarca and remotely (via the Zoom platform) in Trujillo, in three sessions per city, one per group of women leaders.

Table 1: Variable, pre-categories, and number of questions posed for focus groups

Variable	Pre-categories	Nº Questions
Expectations of women leaders of CSOs in the representations of Peruvian national open signal television with a focus on series/soap operas, from a gender perspective.	Concept of gender	06
	Gender relations	08
	Gender system	06
	Total	20

Source: Own Elaboration

To analyze the data, a thematic analysis route was followed, as indicated by Arispe (2020) since the responses of the informants were searched for themes that resulted in the form of codes due to coincidences or divergences in the logical sense of the questions, but any emerging elements that appeared by serendipity were also respected (Benites Romero & Villanueva López, 2015). Specifically, the conversations with the women leaders, via the focus groups, provided the basic information on their responses to the guiding questions of the instrument. This first raw input was filtered to find both commonalities and opposing positions. With this duality of responses, the resulting categories were arranged according to the thematic agenda set by the declared theoretical basis that supported the variable. The results, marking new conceptualizations on the sub aspects of the variable, were contrasted with the literature and the researchers' vision of the context for the respective scientific discussion. This facilitated the way towards conclusions and eventual recommendations.

In general, the data analysis followed Rubin & Rubin's model, concerning the phases for analyzing qualitative data as described by Fernández Núñez (2006): 1) Information gathering: with immersion in the field of study, after an inventory of documentary sources, and after reaching consensus with the participants, interviewing them in groups, and recording data systematically and meticulously, using the agenda of themes and the matrix of answer keys; 2) Capture, transcription, and ordering of the information: via audiovisual and written means, which focused on what was important, being later transcribed in a basic word processor (Microsoft Word), and classified, selectively and by relevance criteria, the data on the three pre-categories under study, ordering them; 3) Coding of the information: at two levels, a) from the pre-categories themselves and their features; and b) contrasted to grouping them by similarity, an operation done by hand, without the help of any specific software; and 4) Integration of the information: each emerging category identified was analyzed, compared, and related, if necessary, with others, to connect them with background information and the theoretical-conceptual framework, to discuss the main findings.

3. Results and Discussion

Before describing the results, serendipitous findings from the interviews are presented:

- Women leaders have a very different perception of the meaning of feminism, equality, and equity between the sexes. They use the concept but without fully embracing it, in the sense that for equity to exist, all the disempowered (children, women, the elderly, LGTBQI+) must be included in public policies.
- They advocate for a new and broader representation of women on TV, more real in series/telenovelas. Still, they link women to the role of mothers, which reaffirms the characteristics they should possess: to be worthy of being an example for viewers.
- Women leaders seek an exemplary representation of women on TV and, with this ideal, they confuse morals and ethics. They point out that representation should be based on morals (their morals) without considering that the country is a secular state based on ethics and progress, understood in terms of reason and science.

3.1 Concept of gender

Peruvian society is conservative, sexist, and patriarchal. For the women leaders, national television needs comprehensive reform due to the representation of the bodies. They agree that the sexes are represented under stereotypes: women should stay at home and take care of the family, while men are linked to power, work, and economics. This perception dates back to the 19th century. Western bourgeois society delimited private and public spaces in such a way as to turn them into stereotypes, and nineteenth-century Peruvian society was no exception. Women had to reign in the domestic sphere and show characteristics of purity, abnegation, and honor; men were responsible for the city affairs, and the public space (Denegri 1996, Sotomayor 2013). In this regard, an informant says:

"(...) women are presented with a submissive personality, they have - for example - to forgive infidelity... the young woman from the province who arrives (in Lima) has to go through adversities to obtain something. To the men: they are given hierarchical roles, the macho, all of it" (LCultTruj41).

Thus, they believe that TV reproduces stereotypes that circulate in Peruvian society and shows a false representation of women with which the participants do not identify. They are aware that today's women have broken with social patterns and have gone beyond the domestic sphere; therefore, they demand a more accurate representation in soap operas and on TV: "To see women empowered, to show a woman -for example- I am an engineer, I work in the municipality, I am divorced, I have three daughters, I get up at five in the morning" (LEduCaj4).

The above-mentioned strengthens the idea that national television, instead of fighting against the dominant stereotypes in traditional society, reinforces them, agreeing with Nuñez (2005) in the existence of subliminal and disguised representations that only renew the ideas of the roles played by women and men, limiting the power of the former and consigning them to roles that do not coincide with the current situation. The feelings of the participants and the search for real representation also coincide with characteristics of the "fourth feminist wave," where women seek their liberation from men through television portrayals to achieve a diversity in which they stand out (Bernárdez and Moreno, 2017) (Marín, 2019) (Picardo Barrientos, 2021).

What does a real woman mean to the interviewees? A representation that is closer to what a Peruvian woman is like today. A real woman can work, go beyond the private sphere, and participate in the political and social spheres. Women leaders see TV as a vehicle to reach the masses and overcome the social constructions and deconstructions attributed to media projections by Alarcón Llontop (2018).

"TV gets into the minds of the viewers. They take examples from TV and television programs. Of course, not all of them, but in most soap operas they do... so be very careful with what TV sells", a participant said (LEduTruj6).

Thus, television is perceived as relevant in education from an early age, so its characters should

be properly studied. For the participants, the TV should create awareness in children and young people, so it is necessary to transmit values in series and soap operas that are far from stereotyped roles imposed by gender.

Despite this, productions show the same type of content and plot in their fiction, even falling into extremes such as limited femininity, which affects society negatively, since it extends the creation and association of misleading meanings about the representation of women and widens inequalities between men and women, according to Arranz (2020).

These inadequate representations of the sexes would respond to the particular interests of producers or television companies: the main reason for typical, hackneyed stagings with distortions that do not educate would be to gain an audience.

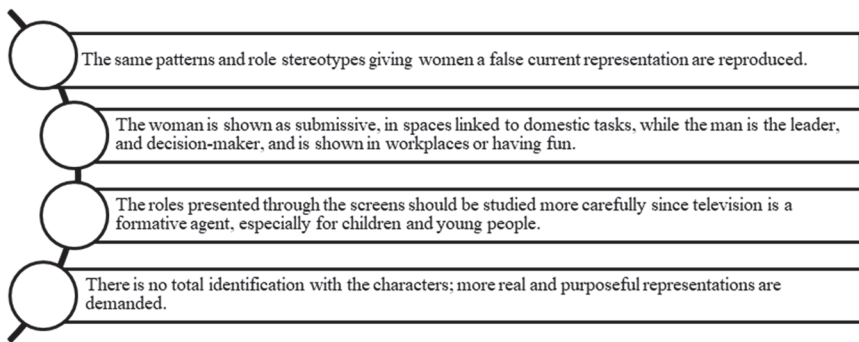


Figure 1: Synthesis of the concept of gender exposed by women leaders on TV fiction.

3.2 Gender relations

How do the interviewees understand women-men relationships based on TV fiction? Predominantly, they consider that the representations reflect the inequality existing in institutional systems such as family, work, and society, reflected in the assignment of tasks according to sex. "Men and women do not fulfill the same roles. We do not see a man in household chores unless he is a widower or in charge of the children" (LCultCaj2).

As it has already been pointed out, the roles of sexed bodies respond to a complex sociocultural construct, with social relations based on colonization and subordination, as well as the struggles to achieve independence. In this historical development of exclusion and subjugation, women have been placed aside in history.

On the other side of the story, women exist and are part of the events of Peruvian reality. One woman leader acknowledged: "Yes, there are norms and rules, but not all are focused on reality. If we expect them to comply with these norms - very close to religion or other ideals - then we are already distorting the whole reality. There are norms and rules, but always in favor of what the soap opera or series wants to sell" (LEduTruj3).

Normative aspects translated into the exclusion of roles. We agree with Calvo (2014): it is evident in television fiction that women are presented in limited scenarios. It is unlikely to see them in sports such as soccer; their sporting achievements will be those that "fit". And, hypersexualization: she is highlighted as an object within parameters established by men, making visible machismo and the male-dominant structure that reproduces the characteristics erroneously associated with both genders (Ombudsman's Office 2021) (Barrezueta 2018).

For the interviewees, national productions are subject to the demands of the public to ensure a consumer audience. For this reason, they believe that TV reproduces prejudices and repetitive patterns without proposing more. Therefore, it would be important to have programs offering

historical series, representing real symbolic women, such as Micaela Bastidas, María Parado de Bellido, María Elena Moyano, or community leaders like them.

Likewise, they consider that Peruvian television is rooted in traditional patterns -same characters, plot- without opting for novelty and current social dynamics. One woman claims: "We would have to represent those roles: an activist, working for her community; I would like the teacher to be represented, our political roles, social roles... That's how it should be. The life of a woman who has been a victim of rape and who can confront the system, the corruption, can also be presented" (LEduTruj5).

In this sense, more real stories, linked to today's demands, are requested. As stated by Ardito Vega (2014) and Barrientos Silva (2015): national productions continue projecting stereotyped stories, with high levels of discrimination against women - and showing a dominant masculinity - with men always holding the power.

A striking aspect is that the women leaders understand gender relations exclusively between men and women, and some of them consider that the LGBTQBI+ community should not have a place. "There cannot be so much homosexual propaganda; it is not possible. That means that a norm is violated. Is that right? The topic must include the ideals and values that can be transmitted to others, not only the language but" (LECTruj6).

Finally, women leaders consider television a vehicle for transmitting social ideals, although it continues repeating patterns. "They should do a little more research. They should not simply use stereotypes already known or heard. I wanted to make this observation: how religion and social classes are stereotyped" (LCultCaj7).

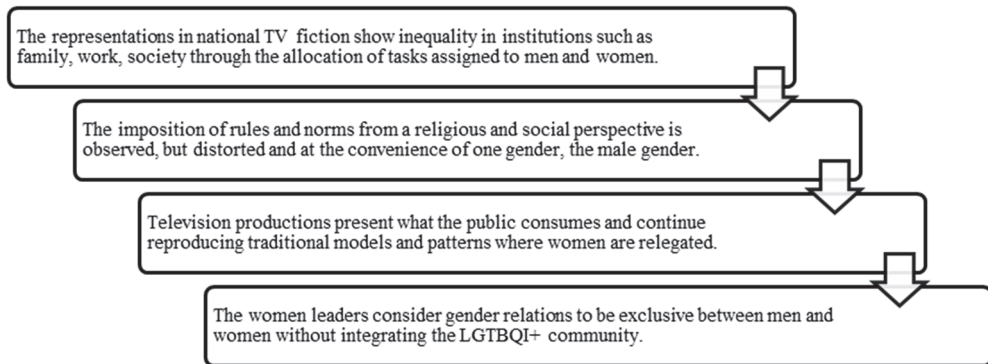


Figure 2: Synthesis of gender relations exposed by women leaders on TV fiction.

3.3 Gender system

An interviewee said: "The power relations are well marked: the male is more predominant; he is the one who makes the decisions; you have to wait for what he wants or decides. The whole plot revolves around that decision" (LEduTruj5). Thus, it is pointed out that stereotypes of the social constitution are repeated, and the representations of Peruvian series and soap operas reflect a reality that does not completely adjust to the current society.

Thus, what Hohenstein and Thalmann (2019) highlighted, that today women assume roles different from the traditional ones, breaking mandates of systems and structures of predominant power, is not perceived by the women leaders summoned about what is represented on TV.

Another interviewee added: "There should be a balance between the powers that can be set in male and female characters. In some series, if a woman stands out in some area for any reason, she is criticized and mocked to a certain extent" (LEduTruj7). Thus, the role of women in the family sphere

is perpetuated, while men are in the public sphere. The interviewees consider that these representations should be reformulated as soon as possible because young people follow the social patterns broadcast on television.

In a report by the Ombudsman's Office (2021), these representations observed by the participants are noted. It is noted that, although there are attempts toward equality, there are no achievements due to the limited understanding of the underlying social problems that produce gender inequality. For Bonavitta and De Garay Hernández (2019), these attempts lack empathy and become forced, not finding correct narratives to criticize the predominant structural system.

Meanwhile, this way of representing the system that covers the relationship between the sexes is complex for the interviewees, because, among other aspects, it reproduces distorted behavioral patterns in the youngest. Barreuzeta (2018) noted that identifying established roles and inequalities allows for adopting measures and actions to reduce the gaps. In this perspective, these women are interested in television reform because that redounds to the children and young people of the country.

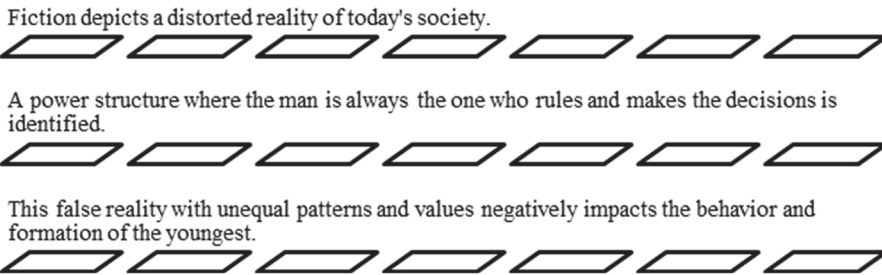


Figure 3: Synthesis of gender system exposed by women leaders on TV fiction.

4. Final Contextual Considerations

It is added to this discussion that in Peru, the concern for gender equity issues mark lines of action that range from the academic-cultural to the political and legal, to mention just two fields. As an example of the former, suffice it to cite the 26 studies on gender and women in Peruvian history edited a few years ago by Rosas Lauro (2019). With a look at periods of our history that go back to the pre-Hispanic, through the conquest and viceroyalty to reach the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it scrutinizes aspects of gender in women marked, among other points, by the urban and rural, ethnicity and urban belonging, the domestic and public spaces. There are differences by strata, but something is commonplace in the 26 studies: in all of them the lack of full enjoyment of the condition of being a woman of the portrayed women stands out, and in all cases there is a clamor for that enjoyment. Some or much of these differences by strata and of these two common elements are also seen in this research in which the women consulted are examined from the representation that the media, specifically television and its fiction series, make of them.

As a political-legal context, it is noted that Peru has had a Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations (MIMP) for some time now, with a declared action aimed at balancing gender relations: "We work to turn Peru into a country where all of us are equal, live without discrimination and with equal opportunities" (Ministerio de la Mujer y Poblaciones Vulnerables, n.d.). This governmental entity, aligned with the third millennium goal of the year 2000, "Promote gender equality and empower women", and other supranational initiatives, has led a pro-women social activism (including lobbying and direct assistance) as well as the progressive sanction of a more powerful legal framework to safeguard the gender rights of Peruvian women. Its results in practice still have a long way to go, however. In Peru, a reductionist vision of gender in favor of women continues to be

promoted from other spaces such as the media, especially the audiovisual media, as we have already pointed out by Ardito (2014) and Barrezueta (2018), among others.

5. Conclusions

After analyzing the expectations of women leaders of civil society organizations in the representations of Peruvian national open signal television focused on series/ soap operas, from a gender approach, it is found that, according to their perception, there are inequalities regarding the representations and roles assigned to women and men, relegating the former, who, in general, are confined to traditional spaces and situations, which are oppressive for them and do not give them justice, according to current real empowerment. For this reason, the interviewees urgently call for rethinking this television to help build a more egalitarian society for both men and women. If this clamor were heeded, they concluded that it would lead to more development opportunities for individuals and a fully integrated society.

This negative situation of female stereotyping, which is historic in a country as proven by the allusive theoretical basis, which in the vision of the interviewed leaders is reproduced by open signal television from its series/soap operas as well as from all of it, is perpetuated not only by the reproduction of limiting and unrealistic assigned roles from which women rarely escape, but is reinforced by social mandates that in the form of norms and rules of social and religious origin "remind" women to match certain expected values that always push them subliminally into a patriarchal power from which they cannot detach. This worries the participants because, besides showing them fallaciously as a gender, far from what they identify with, they know the power of the media and television in the formation of children and young people, especially in the conception they have of the world, and that without a more real, fair and prospective approach of what is shown about women, there is little awareness to overcome something that needs to be addressed according to the requirements of our times.

By showing women in traditional, repetitive characters, the women leaders of the study understand that Peruvian television, from its fiction productions, is governed exclusively by simplistic and reductionist market logic. It is not very innovative, risky, and even less transgressive. However, in what could be a contradiction, they demand that women in television fiction not move away from traditional morality and ethics, which have always limited them to motherhood, family, and marriage. Thus, they invite and challenge Peruvian television to explore more possibilities in historical characters, for example, what is embedded as a solution in the logic of the first demand is still subject to the limitations of the second. Perhaps, because those expected "feminine values" are fulfilled in those historical characters of women.

Although the women leaders of community, cultural, and educational civil organizations who participated belonged to feminist organizations or embraced feminist ideas, which were assumed to be more and better acquainted with the guiding principles of the gender approach, their dialogue for this research revealed an advance in these feminist and gender perspectives but still in a mid-level or even incipient state in many cases. This can be seen mainly in the leaders of community organizations: they understand gender issues from an insular viewpoint, in whose vision only men and women fit, not other possibilities such as those that are currently opening up the integration of the LGBTQ+ community in other latitudes. But what could be a weakness at first, opens some rich and immense possibilities to the activism of *aggiornamento*, a pending subject to be addressed through education and practice, led by the heads of the feminist movement or movements in the country.

Even with the limitations this study may have, such as the exclusively qualitative methodological approach assumed, its typology adjusted only from the phenomenological or the restriction of the selected sample, limiting the possibilities of scientific induction in statistical rigors - something that future research may overcome-, with the methodology developed on a powerful and current theoretical basis on the gender approach and the results obtained from the open consultation

to a group of activists in feminist practices, to dialogue on what an important means such as television does of female representation, an unpublished and valid academic and scientific experience is left which provides new lights on the topic. In this way, leading public institutions, such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Communications, or the Ministry of Education, and private entities, such as television stations, have important inputs to take on improvement plans regarding the treatment of gender in the media, especially in television.

In this sense, there is confidence in the practical implications derived from the study and its conclusions. For the television companies, the contributions left may help them to reorient their offer of productions not only of fiction, adjusting them to the rhythm of modernity and inclusion demanded by the new times and the interviewees. Civil society organizations in Peru have first-hand inputs in this study, in the voices of women leaders, which are also interpreted and organized, themes and guidelines for a more empathetic and synergic lobbying, in accordance with the challenges and gaps that feminism still presents. For policy makers in the sector, the work also opens up an agenda to be read live and between the lines regarding the complex but still unfinished image of women as perceived by women in the media. Addressing these conclusions together, in synergies involving various entities and actors (not only those mentioned), taking dialogic and progressive actions based on axiological and legal foundations, will promote greater inclusiveness and representation of women in the media. And by extension, it will be possible to radiate from the media greater respect, protection and promotion of Peruvian women in other social spheres.

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