

## **Netflix, the key to drama series worldwide**

A study into the consumption of drama series on Netflix by Dutch audiences

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### ABSTRACT

In today's digital television era, Netflix can be seen as the world's leading streaming service. Ever since globalization and digitization, media content can be spread very rapidly from national markets to global markets. As a result of this transnational flow of media, audiences now have access to content from all over the world that they would otherwise never have access to. Especially on Netflix, there seems to be an ever-increasing amount of both international and national content. These developments automatically changed audiences' consumption behavior. Although there is an increasing diversity of series on Netflix, this still doesn't tell us anything about how audiences exactly make a choice from these diverse offerings and what series they are actually watching. Some researchers claim that audiences prefer international, and mostly American series, whereas other researchers emphasize the preference for local content. In this context, the genre of drama in particular appears to be in demand worldwide. Therefore, in order to obtain a deeper understanding of audiences' consumption practices regarding this increasing diversity on Netflix, the research question of this study states: *How do young adult Dutch audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix?* For this purpose, a qualitative approach has been chosen, in order to uncover underlying perceptions and experiences of Dutch audiences. The data for this study was collected by means of in-depth and semi-structured interviews that were analyzed by using a thematic analysis. The sample of this research consisted of Dutch young adults, aged between 20 and 30 years old. From the analysis, it became clear that young adult Dutch audiences perceive the drama catalog on Netflix as very diverse, but mostly very American. Therefore, they mainly consume American drama series, but they are also open to drama series from other international countries. Interestingly, young adult Dutch audiences do not appear to have a preference for local drama series. When selecting drama series, the narrative and high quality of a series turned out to be two very important factors. The language spoken in a drama series appears to be of less importance. Additionally, recommendations by the social environment of young adult Dutch audiences can be the deciding factor for watching a drama series. Finally, the findings of this study contribute to the existing relevance of theories about cosmopolitanism and cultural imperialism, whereas this study presents a shift by diminishing the relevance of the cultural proximity theory. As a result, this study provides new valuable insights into flow studies regarding the changing dynamics of transnational television distribution and audience consumption behaviors in this new television era.

**KEYWORDS:** *Netflix, transnational television, diversity, international drama series, consumption behavior*

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## 1. Introduction

Globalization and the digital media revolution have changed the television industry rapidly in terms of production, distribution and consumption (Schauerte, Feiereisen, & Malter, 2020).

Digitization simplified the production and distribution of television, causing the internet to become a distributor for streaming platforms, such as Netflix, that rely on a technology that is intrinsically international (Chalaby, 2019; Mikos, 2020). As a result, television content can now travel very well beyond national borders, blurring the lines between countries (Iordache, Van Audenhove & Loisen, 2018). This means that media borders became more porous, which expanded the transnational flow of television (Chalaby, 2019).

In this new television era, especially video-on-demand platforms significantly changed the dynamics of transnational television distribution (Lotz, 2021). Netflix, an American streaming service and production company, is prominently cited as one of the most notable actors in leading and accelerating these transformations across the globe (Jenner, 2018). With over 167 million paid memberships in more than 190 countries, Netflix can be seen as the world's leading internet entertainment service (Lotz, 2021). Netflix offers their subscribers a variety of series and movies from all over the world, and thus accelerate the consumption of transnational television (Ju, 2019; Lotz, 2021). Because of this transnational flow of media, especially the supply of international content, but also national content on Netflix will be ever-increasing (Lobato, 2017). This means that the level of content diversity on this platforms is only expanding. Ultimately, this also changed the consumption of television. Netflix users now have access to an almost unlimited choice in television content from various countries around the world, that matches their personal tastes (Iordache et al., 2018).

In this digital era where transnational television flows have grown exponentially and streaming platforms have changed audience consumption patterns, the discussion on global media flows has been brought back into focus (Iordache et al., 2018; Iordache & Livémont, 2018). These discussions are about the cultural implications of media globalization, which can be divided into the: (1) the cultural imperialism perspective that emphasizes domination and hegemony of international media, and (2) the cultural globalization approach that highlights cultural change, interconnection and diversity (Banerjee, 2002). Because of the streaming technology, audiences' preference for foreign television content notably increased, especially since streaming platforms offer predominantly international content (Ju, 2019; Lobato, 2017). When watching international media, the dominant position of the United States is still clearly acknowledged (Iordache et al., 2018). In the case of Netflix, American productions typically account for more than two-thirds of all titles offered, whereas local content varies between 0 and 10 percent, depending on the market (Lobato, 2017). This might imply that also on Netflix, audiences have the tendency to watch international series, with possibly a slight preference for American content. However, the concept of cultural proximity contrasts the preference for international content, as it emphasizes that audiences prefer series from their own culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). Since these theories contradict each other, there is no clear

understanding of how audiences exactly make a choice. Therefore, this discussion about transnational media flows, calls the consumption behavior of audiences into question in terms of how they make a selection from this growing diverse range of content on Netflix, and what the national origin is of that content (Lobato, 2017). In preferring international or national content, the genre of drama appears to be the most competitive, as there is a global attraction for drama and audiences worldwide are familiar with this genre (Chang, Khang, Jeong, Chung & Nam, 2013; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005).

However, little is known about what attracts and motivates audiences to watch a drama series, and how they choose from the supposedly diverse catalog on Netflix, which provides an interesting starting point for this study. Although the degree of content diversity on Netflix can be understood by investigating the catalog, this still doesn't tell us anything about what audiences are actually watching (Lobato, 2017). The transnational viewership, along with the globalized television catalogs distributed by Netflix, call for new inquiries about how audiences consume and receive foreign television (Ju, 2019). Therefore, it is important to focus on audience reception and gain more insight in actual preferences of audiences (Lobato, 2017). In order to understand how audiences choose from this supposedly diverse catalog on Netflix, and what their preferences are regarding the offerings of drama series, the following research question has been formulated:

*RQ: How do young adult Dutch audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix?*

However, it is important to note that, although international content seems to be dominant on Netflix, there is also national content available on this platform (Lobato, 2017). Therefore, the research question includes the offerings of all drama series on Netflix, both international and national. This way, it can be examined how young adult Dutch audiences perceive and select from the diverse offerings, and whether they indeed select international drama series or tend to choose Dutch drama series. The reason young adults are chosen, is because this group is the most accustomed to using SVOD services, which might make them more open to diverse content (Kuipers & De Kloet, 2009; Schauerte et al., 2020). This will be further justified in the methodology chapter.

### **1.1. Scientific relevance**

Although online television viewing of foreign media content has increased over the last couple of years, there is still little research on the reception of foreign drama series (Ju, 2019). However, it is especially relevant to examine how audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix (Bondebjerg et al., 2018). This way, wider dynamics of media diversity, choice and access in digital distribution can be better understood (Iordache et al., 2018; Lobato, 2017). Additionally, most media flow studies focus on theoretical perspectives about the effects of video-of-demand services and case studies about the globalization of television, rather than the audience's perspective (Stehling, 2013). However, the meanings and consequences of transnational media content rely on the understandings and experiences of local audiences with this media content (Kim, 2009). Therefore, audience-based reception studies

are needed, which is why this research aims to explore how audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix. Hence, this research will demonstrate whether audiences are open to this diversity or still make a one-sided selection, despite the diverse offerings on Netflix. Furthermore, Netflix is especially relevant to examine opposed to other SVOD platforms, as this platform has internationalized very quickly and is now dominant in many countries (Lobato, 2019). According to Lobato (2019), investigating Netflix contributes to current questions surrounding the globalization and diversification of television in the context of digital distribution. Therefore, Netflix has a larger relevance to ongoing debates in media studies about convergence, disruption, globalization, and cultural imperialism (Lobato, 2019).

## **1.2. Societal relevance**

In terms of societal relevance, this study shines a light on cultural diversity and changing media consumption practices in today's globalized digital world (Iordache, et al., 2018). This might contribute to the comprehension of young adult Dutch audiences regarding international cultures and diversity in this world through television. Ultimately this might expand their worldview. Furthermore, this study might be relevant for production companies and distributors, as they become aware of how Dutch audiences perceive international content. If they know what content from which countries attracts audiences and whether cultural factors play a role, they can respond to this in the future by producing or buying more appealing TV content for video-on-demand platforms. The same applies to the availability of national content. If it turns out that audiences have a strong preference for local series, production companies can also increase their share in national series that they offer.

## **1.3. Thesis outline**

This paragraph presents an overview of how all chapters for this thesis will be organized. The following chapter is the theoretical framework, where main theories and previous research findings will be discussed. In this chapter, theories on globalization, transnationalization, cultural imperialism, cultural proximity and cosmopolitanism will be elaborated. The role of Netflix in transnationalization processes and audience consumption behaviors will also be discussed. These theories serve as the basic framework for the conduction of this research. In the third chapter, the methodology of the study will be discussed and justified. The data was collected by using in-depth interviews, for examining how audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix. The interview transcripts were analyzed through a thematic analysis. After the methodology chapter, the result chapter begins. The main themes that emerged from analyzing the interviews, will be structurally presented. Interesting results will be linked to theories from the theoretical framework. This already initiates the process of answering the research question, which will be done in the conclusion chapter. The conclusion and discussion chapter also consists of theoretical and societal implications, as well as limitations and recommendations for future research. This is the end of the thesis, which is followed by the appendix.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

This study aims to uncover how young adult Dutch audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix. This question originated from the debate about the globalization of media and the increasing availability of international drama series on video-on-demand platforms. Although it can be believed that the offerings on Netflix are indeed increasingly diverse, this research specifically focuses on how audiences choose from this supposedly diverse selection of drama series and how they perceive this content. For this purpose, theories on globalization, transnationalization, cultural imperialism, cultural proximity and cosmopolitanism are very relevant for this study and will be discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, in order to understand the consumption patterns of Dutch audiences, the end of the theoretical framework elaborates more on the transnationalization of Netflix and audience consumption behaviors. In this theoretical framework, all of the concepts mentioned above, will be described more in-depth through literature review and it will be discussed how they are useful for the conduct of this study.

### **2.1. Globalization and transnational media culture**

Before discussing concepts that help to understand how young adult Dutch audiences choose from the diverse offerings on Netflix, some background information must be given on the development of globalization and the transnationalization of television content. First of all, over the last decades, our world has become more globalized, as goods, services, technology, information and cultural features flow across international borders (Tomlinson, 2007). In addition, globalization has led to social change and an increasing connectivity among people and countries worldwide (Robinson, 2007). Globalization can be divided into economic, political, cultural and social processes (Robertson & White, 2007). Especially the cultural aspect seems to occupy the most dominant position in the debate about globalization of media, which is why we can also speak of cultural globalization (Tomlinson, 2007). Cultural globalization implies that global market processes have a significant impact on people's cultural experiences. However, this development can more preferably be referred to as transnationalization (Hardy, 2014). Transnationalism can be explained as "the multiple ties and interactions – economic, political, social and cultural – that link people, communities and institutions across the borders of nation-states" (Robinson, 2007, p. 136). Thus, this means that young adult Dutch audiences are interconnected to other cultures, as they have access to content on Netflix from all over the world. Additionally, this international content might impact their cultural experiences. Therefore, media flows are also studied in order to understand these processes (Iordache, et al., 2018). The transnationalization of media will be explained in the next paragraph.

Due to globalization, media can flow across borders, which expanded the international flow of media (Chalaby, 2019). The digital media revolution caused the internet to become a distributor for streaming platforms, such as Netflix, that rely on a technology that is intrinsically international (Chalaby, 2019). As a result, video-on-demand platforms can cross different borders very quickly and

be operative in various countries around the world (Lobato, 2019). Lobato (2019) argues that we live in a global television culture, as television services can now operate in a number of international markets simultaneously. This can be referred to as ‘transnational television’, implying the propensity for television distribution systems that cross one or more national borders (Lobato, 2019). Also on video-on-demand platforms, there will be an ever-increasing supply of both international and national productions (Lobato, 2017). This transnationalization of media has resulted in a diverse and almost unlimited choice in media content on video-on-demand platforms, where international media still seem dominant (Iordache et al., 2018). In addition, global distribution platforms, such as Netflix, take the idea of a transnational audience to a higher level, as they distribute television content to their consumers all across the globe (Mikos, 2020). According to Mikos (2020), Netflix serves niche audiences of specific genres in several countries, and thus promotes transnationality.

Although these theories suggest that the diversity on video-on-demand platforms is only increasing, it is still important to examine how audiences perceive this diversity and how they make a selection, which is the purpose of this study. This way, it can be understood what roles video-on-demand platforms play in globalization and diversification processes. The transnationalization of media also involves other concepts that might explain whether this flow of transnational media across borders creates cultural dominance of certain countries, and theories that focus on how people receive foreign content. These concepts will be further addressed in the next paragraphs.

### **2.1.1. Cultural imperialism**

As described in the previous section, the transnationalization of media seems to ensure that international content is especially dominant on video-on-demand platforms (Iordache et al., 2018). As a result, international content may overshadow national content. In this context, the concept of cultural imperialism is strongly related (Iordache et al., 2018). This concept implies that media from one country will invade and colonize another, as its culture is seeping into the receiving nation (Gray, 2014). The cultural imperialism theory mostly predicts the flows of culture from richer to poorer countries, that are based on superior production quality of media (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008). Therefore, quality is highly correlated with the budget invested in media productions, which is an important indicator for commercial success (Iordache et al., 2018). Cultural imperialism is usually conceived as Americanization or Westernization, as those ideologies and values have a significant impact on a local audience (Hardy, 2014). Their culture is being spread to every part of the world, and could, according to this theory, threaten the loss of distinct non-Western or non-American cultural traditions (Tomlinson, 2007). This means that media products from America and the West are dominant in other nations and cultures as well, which may overshadow media products from the nation itself. Therefore, Iordache et al. (2018) warn against cultural hegemony, implying the dominance of media from the US and the West. This domination of cultures, can also be explained by the concept of homogenization. Homogenization refers to “the trend towards sameness and the reduction in diversity

of cultures around the world” (Goodman, 2007, p. 336). Within the media industry, this could mean that we move more towards a global culture of standardized tastes and desires. This might imply that audiences all over the world prefer certain genres, such as dramas, or popular series that are produced in specific dominant countries. However, it must be taken into account that not only the US or the West spread this homogenized culture, but that transnational companies can also be seen as a driving force behind homogenization (Goodman, 2007). For example, media companies from multiple countries can collaborate and create large transnational productions, which can also be dominant in receiving cultures. Therefore, hegemony is not limited to one country. However, it should be kept in mind that Netflix doesn’t portray itself as a homogenizing force, as Netflix offers a variety of international content that greatly differs between each country or national market (Jenner, 2018). This increasing diversity on Netflix opposes the cultural imperialism theory. Nonetheless, for this study, cultural imperialism and homogenization can provide an indication of whether Dutch audiences indeed find American or Western drama series dominant on Netflix. Although this is not directly relevant for how they perceive drama series, it does give a good indication to what extent they are used to content from these dominant countries and, therefore, consume more of it.

Since the cultural imperialism theory receives quite some criticism, it may be questioned whether the cultural imperialism theory can be seen as outdated. In fact, this theory can be criticized, as it emphasizes a unidirectional impact between media and receiving cultures, and neglects the interpretation, agency and meaning making processes of audiences (Hardy, 2014). Moreover, receiving cultures might show signs of resistance of media from dominant cultures, as they filter media content according to their own values and cultural backgrounds (Iordache & Livémont, 2018). Therefore, as the role of the receiver becomes increasingly important, a bidirectional approach can be seen as more appropriate. A bidirectional approach emphasizes the audiences agency, as it gives more weight to media consumption and audience reception (Iordache & Livémont, 2018). This aligns well with the purpose of this study, which emphasizes how Dutch audiences exactly consume and select drama series, in order to understand whether they prefer international drama series or national ones. For example, the cultural imperialism theory implies that America is very dominant, but maybe Dutch audiences don't even choose content from this country as they prefer to watch something else, such as local media. Therefore, this research will also focus on audiences' agency when it comes to consuming drama series on Netflix. The fact that audiences might even prefer national media over international, and interpret media according to their cultural context, is consistent with notions of cultural proximity and the importance of local cultures (Iordache & Livémont, 2018; Ksiazek & Webster, 2008). These concepts will be further explained in the next paragraphs.

## **2.2. Importance of the local culture**

As mentioned in the previous section, unlike a unidirectional approach, a bidirectional approach is much more relevant in studying the internationalization of media content, as it pays more

attention to the interpretation and reception of media by audiences. From here, the debate on global media flows is becoming more complex. According to Iordache and Livémont (2018), this is caused by global flows becoming multilayered, and technological developments in the global economy that are disrupting media distribution and consumption patterns. From this bidirectional approach, the concept of cultural globalization is becoming more relevant. This is because cultural globalization supports processes of modernization and increasing diversity in media, that contradict the previous mentioned concepts of cultural imperialism and cultural homogenization (Iordache & Livémont, 2018). In fact, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the shift to a bidirectional approach has led to the existence of critical audiences that filter content through their own cultural values and background (Iordache & Livémont, 2018). Therefore, in order for media to be best received by the audience, local culture is of increasing importance (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008). As Hardy (2014) also indicates, when we talk about media globalization, it is still important to acknowledge the nation-state. This means that, rather than spread media around the world in a homogenous way, media should be adapted or adjusted to the culture and local circumstances of the receiving nation (Robertson & White, 2007). The next paragraph will describe how Netflix adapts to a local culture.

When investigating globalization processes, it is important to acknowledge the increasing diversity of media and the impact on a local culture. Especially on Netflix, the level of content diversity is only increasing, as audiences have access to a wide range of international content (Lobato, 2017). Because Netflix is a global player, they have to meet the demands of the market in which they operate. Video-on-demand platforms adapt to a particular culture, by providing language and content preferences or interface localization in the countries in which they operate (Chalaby, 2019). However, the amount of local content on these platforms differ in each country. Since Netflix's global expansion, the company attempts to serve their international subscribers by implementing original content that is tailored to the local tastes of these audiences (Lobato, 2019). This can be seen as an important strategy of localization, as they must localize themselves in order to compete on a global scale. This way, Netflix's catalog, language options and other platform features, differ in each country. As a result, Netflix is becoming more differentiated in its offerings, as they move into and through all these different markets (Lobato, 2019). Lobato (2019) argues that while there is a high demand for English-language television content in many nations, audiences still want television in their own language, including familiar faces and relevant narratives or genres. This is related to the cultural proximity theory, which will be further described in the next section.

### **2.2.1. Cultural proximity**

Although transnational media seem to blur national media, media reception still depends on the receiving nation-state (Hardy, 2014). This means that audiences interpret media content according to their cultural context and available resources in their nation (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). A concept that is frequently used to explain media preferences across national boundaries, is that of

cultural proximity (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008). The cultural proximity theory implies the attraction that audiences feel for media products that are from one's own culture or the most similar possible culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). Especially in a world where audiences have access to a wide range of media, this concept is relevant for explaining audiences' media consumption behavior (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008). For this study, cultural proximity might be relevant for explaining the drawing power of foreign and domestic media, and whether Dutch audiences prefer to watch drama series that are most proximate to their own culture and values.

Cultural proximity can be seen as a very dynamic concept, as it evolves with both national and transnational developments (Straubhaar, 2021). This concept consists of multiple dimensions, that are grounded in notions of national, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and geographical proximity (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). When determining audiences' preferences for different media products, the language dimension of cultural proximity seems to play the most prominent role (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008). In fact, audiences' first preference would be for media that are produced in their own language and within their local or national culture, rather than media with subtitles or even media that is dubbed (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). One reason why language seems to be of most importance, is because audiences have the ability to speak or at least understand the language, which is an important indicator in audiences' selection of a program and their enjoyment of it (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008). In addition, English is considered to be a global language, as it is known by many cultures (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). Therefore, it is possible that young adult Dutch audiences are familiar with this language in addition to their own Dutch language, allowing them to understand and enjoy an English spoken drama series just as well. As opposed to the English language, it appears that if series are produced in smaller languages they are often considered to have inherent linguistic barriers, that restrain their entry into new markets where other languages dominate (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). For this research, this could mean that Dutch audiences are less likely to watch drama series in an unfamiliar language, which should be taken into account.

Besides language proximity, genre proximity can also influence audience preferences for media (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008). Genre proximity refers to a shared familiarity or a sense of accessibility to a genre and their structure of storytelling (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020; Stehling, 2013). La Pastina and Straubhaar (2005) examined the attraction or proximity for different television genres, and found that there is a global attraction for drama. This genre seems to have the ability to be shared across very diverse cultures, as drama builds on underlying oral structures, formulas and archetypes that can be shared by cultures (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). For this study, this could mean that Dutch audiences are attracted to the genre of drama, regardless of whether it is an international or local drama series. Therefore, drama series can reach past cultural differences, as audiences are more able to identify themselves with several aspects from the genre of drama. As La Pastina and Straubhaar (2005) indicate, many cultures have experienced some form of storytelling like drama, even before television became available to them. When talking about the genre of drama in general, the genre

formats, types of narratives, themes and characters are very much alike (Bondebjerg et al., 2018). This means that, no matter what nationality audiences have, they can easily recognize the genre of drama. Yet, drama can be divided into three sub-genres, which are contemporary dramas, crime dramas and historical dramas (Bondebjerg et al., 2018). Firstly, the sub-genre of contemporary drama can be defined as drama that often triggers debates in the national sphere (Bondebjerg et al., 2018). This can be drama's about family life, political intrigue and larger social and cultural issues. Secondly, the sub-genre of crime drama fascinates people, as it represents storylines that transcend everyday reality, as well that it reveals the darkest side of society and family life (Bondebjerg et al., 2018). Therefore, crime drama can be seen as the most popular sub-genre of drama. Thirdly, historical dramas give rise to debate and discussion about the past and the relation to our present reality (Bondebjerg et al., 2018). This sub-genre is, compared to the other two sub-genres, less popular and less transnational.

However, linguistic proximity and genre proximity are not the only determinants for cultural proximity, as other forces also apply that influence the perception of the audience. These other forces are linked to the broader concept of cultural capital (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008). Cultural capital focuses on a person's education (knowledge and intellectual skills), and is used to sum up a series of identifiable factors that audiences use when deciding what they want to watch and how they interpret the media they watch (Berg, 2017; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). These can be factors such as definitions of humor, gender images, dress, lifestyle, ethnic types, gestures, body language, ideas about story pacing, music traditions and knowledge about other religions and values (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008; Straubhaar, 2021). When talking about cultural values, ethics, or topics that permeate many societies, this can be divided into value proximity and thematic proximity (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). Value proximity is about shared values, to which many people who are in seemingly very different cultures may identify with (Stehling, 2013). This can be certain principles and ethics related to religion, work ethics or moral codes for example (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). Thematic proximity, on the other hand, refers to the appeal of themes across cultures (Stehling, 2013). This can be topics about gender inequality, organized crime and migration (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). In general, cultural capital is established through understanding and internalizing the dominant culture, norms, and social language in a society (Straubhaar, 2021). This is why the degree of cultural capital may vary for each social class. Therefore, the preference for local media is not a fact, as cultural proximity is limited by social class stratification and education (Berg, 2017). In terms of social class stratification, this means that audience groups are united through their language and their culture. In terms of education, it appears that audiences with basic education tend to prefer local media over globalized and American media, whereas audiences with higher education seem to be interested in a more global view (Berg, 2017). These different classes and levels of education can be taken into account while conducting this research.

Although the cultural proximity theory implies that audiences mainly identify themselves with local content, international content can also be well received if there are characteristics involved that

fit in an audience's culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). It is likely that English spoken series fit well in non-English countries, as it can be seen as a global language that significantly influenced the flow of media content (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). This could explain the global media dominance of the US around the world. Although audiences might prefer culturally proximate content which is close to their nationality, their second choice will most likely be American (Iordache et al., 2018). This may suggest that Dutch audiences still prefer to watch American or English spoken drama series, regardless of the diverse offerings of national and international drama series on Netflix. This is because of the wide availability of US content, their easy recognition or the lack of strong cultural identity (Iordache et al., 2018). Furthermore, considering America's dominant position as a television exporter, audiences are more likely to accept this type of content (Jenner, 2018). Programs from the United States are assumed to be more attractive to audiences, because of their high production values, quality of acting and writing, and the appeal of their depictions of the American lifestyle (Straubhaar, 2021). As described earlier in the cultural imperialism paragraph, a high quality can also be associated with the budget that is being invested in media productions (Iordache et al., 2018). For this research, this might imply that drama series that are produced in the US overall have a higher budget, which is why they appeal more to young adult Dutch audiences. Due to the high production quality, it is understandable that American content is also emerging majorly in global television markets. Since Netflix has been available in America for the longest time, it is conceivable that this platform contains a lot of American content (Jenner, 2018). Therefore, it is important for this research to investigate whether Dutch audiences are indeed attracted to American drama series and how they identify with this content. Nevertheless, in addition to American drama series, there are other international drama series available on Netflix. Hence, rather than only watching American drama series, young adult Dutch audiences might also be attracted to other international drama series if there are characteristics involved that match their own culture or if they are attracted to them in some other way, based on the various dimensions of cultural proximity that are described above.

In terms of television reception, it is important to look at a local culture instead of a national culture, in order to see the level of proximity between a variety of television texts and the local viewers (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). This means that audiences may not perceive media the same way or identify equally with the elements of the national culture that is being projected in the media, even though they live in the same country. In addition, cultural proximity adds another dimension of localization, as media producers follow commercial imperatives but tend to follow the demands of the domestic market and audience (Hardy, 2014). Therefore, it is important to take the local culture into account when it comes to media reception (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). Therefore, all of the above mentioned components of cultural proximity must be taken into account for this study, as well as the fact that perceptions of drama series and how Dutch audiences identify with them vary from person to person.

Nonetheless, if we take a closer look at the debate around global television flows, it is more

relevant to use both/and thinking, instead of either/or thinking (Lobato, 2019). This means that the debate around global media flows often tries to identify whether audiences prefer international (mostly American content) or local content, while audiences may also prefer both. In fact, audiences often tend to combine both local and global media in their daily lives, as they watch local media primarily for news, sports, comedy, and reality tv, while they watch American content for high-end drama, thrills, spectacle, etc. (Lobato, 2019). For this study, this perspective may indicate that young adult Dutch audiences prefer both Dutch and international media, especially from America, for different purposes. This may make Dutch audiences more open to international content, which will be discussed in the next section.

### **2.3. Cosmopolitanism**

One theory that indicates that the cultural proximity theory becomes less important, is the cosmopolitanism theory (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). Cosmopolitanism can be seen as the belonging to the world as a whole, which is larger than our own locality (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). In addition, cosmopolitanization describes the growing interconnection of the whole world beyond national and other boundaries (Calhoun, 2008). As a result, cosmopolitanism causes great diversity in countries and cities. Therefore, we are shifting more towards a globalized identity, as people's lives revolve around global interconnectedness, rather than their local commonalities (Kuipers & De Kloet, 2009). Especially since the twentieth century, globalization has stimulated processes of modernization, leading to a global society (Robinson, 2007). This can be seen as the global spread of modern values and practices, that is adopted by people on a global scale. There are several ways in which cosmopolitanism, in other words 'globality', can be integrated into everyday life. For example, cosmopolitanism can be seen as a comprising set of capacities and orientations (Calhoun, 2008). Firstly, with the stylistic capacity, Calhoun (2008) emphasizes the desire for individuals to embrace diverse cultural influences from other parts of the world, rather than their locality or what they are familiar with. Secondly, he states that the psychological capacity refers to the feeling and appreciation that individuals have towards cultural and social differences. Thirdly, the ethical orientation emphasizes a way of thinking and acting in the world, with a strong concern for other people (Calhoun, 2008). Therefore, these capacities and orientations can be used for understanding how audiences are attracted to foreign drama series on Netflix, and whether audiences exhibit characteristics of a globalized identity.

For this research, the cosmopolitanism theory might indicate that Dutch audiences are open to more diverse content, from cultures all over the world. In fact, the consumption of international drama series, outside of America and the West, only increases. First of all, Korean dramas have become one of the most popular cultural products in Asia (Yong Jin, 2007). Korean dramas were mainly popular in Asian countries, such as Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and China (Kim, 2009). However, Korean dramas seem to have an increasing success in other parts of the world as well (Yong Jin, 2007). This also

means that Korean drama series can now be seen on Netflix in the Netherlands. In addition to Korean series, Netflix also offers television content from China, Japan, India, Latin America, and European countries such as Spain, Germany, Scandinavia, France and Italy (Ju, 2019). According to Waade, Redvall and Jensen (2020), Danish drama series have also become increasingly popular on Netflix. This is partly due to the popularity of the Nordic culture, architecture, landscapes, fashion, etcetera, which makes it easier to sell Danish drama to international markets (Waade et al., 2020). This also applies to the rest of the countries mentioned. Therefore, it is relevant for this research to find out whether Dutch audiences prefer to watch drama series from these rather unknown countries, opposed to American content or Dutch content, as a better understanding of their cosmopolitan media consumption behavior can be obtained.

#### **2.4. Netflix and audience consumption behaviors**

This paragraph will address other factors that help to explain the consumption behavior of young adult Dutch audiences and the diversification of drama series on Netflix. Especially since the digital revolution, video-on-demand platforms have significantly changed the dynamics of transnational television distribution and audience consumption behaviors (Lotz, 2021). Therefore, for this study it is relevant to get a deeper understanding of Netflix as a transnational company and Netflix consumption behaviors, in order to examine how Dutch audiences perceive and select drama series from the diverse catalog.

Today, Netflix can be seen as the world's leading steaming platform, as they operate in over 190 countries around the world with more than 167 million subscribers, where users can enjoy a wide variety of TV series and films in different genres and languages (Lotz, 2021). Netflix in particular represents the exponential growth and maturity of internet media companies. This is why streaming services are the latest interaction of our digital media industry (Burroughs, 2018). In 2007, Netflix first offered their streaming service in the United States (Lobato, 2019). However, it was Netflix's priority to attract more non-US subscribers, as well as to distinguish themselves by diversifying their libraries of content (Lotz, 2021). This is where the internationalization process of Netflix began. In 2010, Netflix began its first international rollout in Canada, followed by Latin America in 2011, Europe in 2012, and in 2015 to Australia, New Zealand, and Japan (Lobato, 2019). From this moment, Netflix could be seen as a globally focused media company, with content almost available everywhere around the world (Lobato, 2019). Because Netflix became international and operated in different cultures other than just the US, the audiences' expectations automatically changed (Burroughs, 2018). In this era of digital streaming services, audiences are able to watch the content they desire wherever and whenever they want. Viewers can choose among programs that are produced in any country or decade, and watch this programming on demand on televisions, computers and other portable devices (Burroughs, 2018).

One central characteristic of new audience behaviors, is the amount of control audiences have.

Consumers of Netflix can be seen as an active audience, in a sense that they are able to make deliberate choices about the content they want to watch, design their own stories to explain gaps in narratives, as well as that they are cognitively active (Jenner, 2018). This means that audiences decide for themselves what content they watch on Netflix and how much they want to pay attention to this content and engage with this content. It appears that some viewers like to turn on Netflix as a background noise, where they don't really engage with that content, whereas other users really want to engage strongly with content and exhibit forms of binge-watching behaviors (Jenner, 2018). This is why, in this new digital era, Netflix audiences are more in control of their own viewing habits. Therefore, where we used to examine the level of content diversity by investigating catalogs, it is now more relevant to focus on what audiences are actually watching and what their content preferences are (Lobato, 2017). For this research, this means that Dutch audiences decide for themselves which drama series exactly they want to watch from the offerings on Netflix. They can search through the Netflix catalog until they find a drama series that catches their interest. Subsequently, they can decide for themselves whether they only watch the beginning of a drama series, before committing to watching it entirely.

The way in which audiences engage with series, can arise from different motivations. First of all, binge-watching is mostly associated with attentive viewing, that arises from the motivation to be entertained, educated or the need to feel narratively immersed (Jenner, 2018). This implies that when viewers like a series, they get totally drawn into the story and want to know how the series ends as soon as possible, which is why they watch multiple episodes of the series in a row. Additionally, quality dramas are explicitly made for binge-watching, as these series have a powerful storyline (Lobato, 2019). Therefore, binge-watching is a strong factor to ensure viewer attention, as viewers heavily engage with content in order to binge-watch (Jenner, 2018). Opposed to attentive viewing, Netflix audiences may also exhibit characteristics of less attentive viewing. This means that they are less engaged with the content, which is usually triggered by the motivation to relax or as a distraction (Jenner, 2018). For this research, it is relevant to explore the motivations of Dutch audiences for watching drama series on Netflix. This will be helpful to understand how much attention they pay to a drama series and how engaged they are with it. The more engaged they are, the more they can explain how they perceive a series and what they find important about a drama series.

Furthermore, the change in viewers' expectations and behaviors can also be explained by the conception of the algorithmic culture of Netflix. Netflix collects big data from their users, concerning what their content preferences are and how and when they watch tv (Burroughs, 2018). This big data provides insight into content suggestions, popular genres, and likes. Therefore, Netflix is not tied to specific audience demographics, as they rather function as general portals where viewers can find a wide range of content that matches with their personal preferences (Wayne, 2017). These personal recommendations make it easier for viewers to find content on Netflix (Jenner, 2018). For this research this might imply that, because audiences get to see personalized offerings on Netflix, it may

play a role in how they perceive and select drama series from the catalog. This will, therefore, be taken into account during this research. However, recommendations on Netflix still vary for each viewer. This is mainly because the algorithm also depends on the content that is being offered on Netflix in different countries, as well as consumers' viewing histories (Jenner, 2018). Therefore, algorithms play an important role in predicting viewing habits and selecting what information is considered most relevant for audiences (Burroughs, 2018). Thus, this allows Netflix to provide their viewers personalized recommendations on the platform, in order to fulfill their needs and influence their decision making (Jenner, 2018). Therefore, Jenner (2018) argues that the recommendation algorithm on Netflix is influenced by cultural assumptions, which is why it is important to focus on content diversity, due to Netflix's transnational audience reach and its precise niche marketing. For this research, it should be taken into account that national identities are no longer dominant when it comes to the preference and reception of drama series, but that audiences draw upon their national and transnational identities (Jenner, 2018).

## **2.5. Conclusion**

As the literature indicates, there are several concepts that are important for examining the way in which young adult Dutch audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix. First of all, although Netflix offers a wide range of both international and national content, international content, and especially that from the United States, appears to be dominant (Iordache et al., 2018; Lobato, 2017). In this context, the concept of cultural imperialism emerges, implying the dominant position of the US or the West on a receiving nation (Hardy, 2014). For this research, the cultural imperialism theory might give an indication of whether young adult Dutch audiences are used to the large amount of American content and if they have developed a preference for it. Additionally, this might also cause young adult Dutch audiences to automatically consume more American content, simply because there is more of it available. Furthermore, the cosmopolitanism theory describes the growing interconnection of the world, as people's lives revolve around global interconnectedness rather than their local commonalities (Calhoun, 2008; Kuipers & De Kloet, 2009). For this research, this theory might imply that Dutch audiences are open to more diverse content from cultures all over the world, rather than just America. This way it can be examined whether young adult Dutch audiences exhibit characteristics of a globalized identity and cosmopolitan consumption behavior.

However, these concepts can be criticized as we have moved towards a bidirectional perspective of media on receiving cultures, which emphasizes the audiences interpretation and reception (Iordache & Livémont, 2018). In this context, cultural proximity is an important theory, as this theory explains the attraction that audiences feel for media that is from their own culture or close to their culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). This concept consists of multiple dimensions, which are linguistic proximity, genre proximity, cultural capital, value proximity and thematic proximity (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020; Ksiazek & Webster, 2008; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). This concept is

relevant for understanding how young adult Dutch audiences are attracted to drama series and whether they prefer local drama series over international ones.

When it comes to selecting a drama series on Netflix, young adult Dutch audiences might have several motivations. They might have the motivation to be entertained, educated or the need to feel narratively immersed, which are forms of attentive viewing (Jenner, 2018). However, Jenner (2018) states that audiences may also exhibit characteristics of less attentive viewing, triggered by the motivation to relax or as a distraction. Audiences' choice for a drama series might be influenced by their personal recommendations on Netflix. For this research, this is helpful for understanding what motivation Dutch audiences feel when selecting a drama series, and whether their choice is influenced by their personal offerings on Netflix.

In conclusion, all of the concepts listed above are relevant for answering the research question and will, therefore, be taken into account during the conduct of this study. In addition, this research is an audience reception study and not merely a way to investigate the effects of drama series on audiences. Young adult Dutch audiences can be seen as an active audience, as they are actively involved in deciding which drama series they want to watch and how they want to engage with these drama series on Netflix (Jenner, 2018). Therefore, the focus needs to be on perceptions and consumption behaviors of young adult Dutch audiences, rather than characteristics or effects of drama series.

### **3. Method**

As posed earlier in this study, due to globalization and the transnational flow of television, the level of content diversity on Netflix only seems to increase, as they offer their users content from various countries. It is the aim of this research to examine how young adult Dutch audiences perceive this diversity of drama series on Netflix and how exactly they select from the supposedly diverse catalog. For this purpose, a qualitative research method was used.

One strength of qualitative research is that it can be used to find meanings and practices in naturally occurring data (Silverman, 2015). Opposed to quantitative research, a qualitative research method provides a thorough and comprehensive understanding of different attitudes and behaviors (Babbie, 2014). Therefore, a qualitative research method is most suitable for this research, as it can be examined how young adult Dutch audiences perceive and select international or national drama series on Netflix. As Dutch audiences can share their experiences, underlying thoughts and meanings, rich and detailed data can be obtained (Boeije, 2012). For this purpose, in-depth interviews were conducted for the data collection, as this method is particularly useful for accessing participants' attitudes and values (Silverman, 2015). Subsequently, the collected data from the interviews was analyzed using a thematic analysis, as this method allows perceptions to be explored through key patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this chapter the data collection and data-analysis methods will be further explained and elaborated.

#### **3.1. Data collection**

For examining how young adult Dutch audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix, in-depth interviews were conducted. Through in-depth interviews, underlying thoughts, perceptions and motivations can be discovered (Babbie, 2014). This allowed Dutch audiences to open up about their perceptions, attitudes and beliefs regarding drama series on Netflix, and to speak freely about how they exactly select drama series. Babbie (2014) indicates that less-structured interviews are suitable for a qualitative study, as this makes the research more flexible and iterative. Therefore, the interviews were semi-structured. This means that some topics and questions were made in advance, that must be covered during the interviews (Boeije, 2012). However, some flexibility remained to pose other questions during the interview, that allowed the researcher and the interviewee to change direction or to add additional comments. By using open-ended and flexible questions, more considered answers could be obtained as opposed to closed questions. This is why semi-structured interviews can provide better insights into the perceptions, experiences, interpretations and understandings of respondents (Silverman, 2015). During the interviews, it was important that both the interviewee and interviewer actively engaged, in order to construct meaning. This means that the interview responses were produced through the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee, without losing sight of the conditions that determine the meaning-making process (Silverman, 2015). All questions and topics that were covered during the interview, are derived from the theoretical framework. The

operationalization of these topics will be further explained in paragraph 3.2. In addition, during the interviews the respondents were asked to take a look at his or her own Dutch Netflix account, via the Netflix app on their mobile phone. Together with the respondent, the catalog of drama series on Netflix was reviewed. Hence, it could be examined what the personal recommendations were for each respondent, whether this was more international or national, as well as how they would make a selection from the diverse catalog of drama series. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding could be obtained about how Dutch audiences experienced the diversity on Netflix, whether they were open to more diverse content and whether they made more diverse content selections. This part of the interview can be seen as an additional component next to the topics that were covered during the interview.

In order to provide the best possible answer to the research question, all respondents that were selected for the interviews must meet the same profile. Therefore, a purposive sampling method was used for recruiting interviewees. A purposive sampling method allows the researcher to select respondents with similar characteristics that correspond the most with the needs of the study (Babbie, 2014). This means that Dutch young adults were chosen, aged between 20 and 30, along with the requirement that they have a subscription based account on Netflix. This age group is chosen, because young people in particular use SVOD services (Schauerte et al., 2020). They are also familiar with a more globalized identity, which creates openness to diverse content (Kuipers & De Kloet, 2009). The aim was to select respondents of different educational levels, as the literature indicates that higher educated audiences seem to be more interested in global media, whereas lower educated audiences tend to prefer local media over globalized and American media (Berg, 2017). While recruiting respondents, it was mentioned to them that their participation is anonymous and that information will be treated confidentially.

For this study, the goal was to conduct between 10 and 15 interviews. Since qualitative research is an iterative process, it was taken into account that the sample could still be adjusted in the meantime. However, after conducting 11 interviews, the saturation point was reached. This means that no new information was obtained from the interviews (Boeije, 2012). All 11 interviews lasted on average 47 minutes, with the shortest interview lasting 45 minutes and the longest interview 55 minutes. In total, 7 females were interviewed and 4 males, who all met the sampling criteria. An overview of the respondents can be found in appendix A. Because of restrictions due to the Coronavirus, the interviews could not take place face-to-face. Therefore, all interviews were held digitally through a video call on WhatsApp or Skype. Since it is more difficult to see body language and non-verbal signs through a video call, extra attention was paid to the intonation and facial expressions of each respondent. Furthermore, each interview was recorded and safely stored, to ensure that no important information could be lost.

Considering the ethics of this study, there were a number of goals that needed to be achieved. First of all, every respondent must voluntarily agree to participate in this study before the interview

took place. Therefore, one essential ethical guideline is the idea of informed consent (Silverman, 2015). Prior to the interview, each respondent filled out a consent form in which they declared that they are voluntarily cooperating in this study and that during the interview they will provide correct information. Additionally, this consent form also states that if respondents have any trouble with answering one of the questions, they are not obligated to respond and will be given the opportunity to refuse a question. However, since the topic of this study was not seen as highly problematic or controversial and the respondents were all adults, no problems were encountered here. Furthermore, it was ensured that comments and behavior of the respondents was treated confidentially, as well that there was a mutual trust between the researcher and the respondents during the interview (Silverman, 2015).

### **3.2. Operationalization**

As described in the theoretical framework, theories regarding cultural imperialism, cultural proximity and cosmopolitanism are helpful for understanding how audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix. In this paragraph it will be explained and justified how these concepts were translated into topics for the interview and how they guided the data analysis. An overview of the topic list can be found in Appendix B.

#### *Cultural imperialism*

The theory of cultural imperialism implies the dominant position of a country on a receiving nation (Hardy, 2014). Although the offerings on Netflix are becoming very differentiated, the majority still turn out to be American centered (Lobato, 2019). For this research, this theory might help to understand whether young adult Dutch audiences are used to the large amount of American content, and whether they consume more of this content, because there is a greater supply. Therefore, during the interviews, respondents were asked if they could show their Netflix account. This way, it was possible to examine whether their personal recommendations were predominantly American and if that is why they watch these series more often as opposed to series from other countries. Therefore, during the analysis process, extra attention was paid to whether Dutch audiences indeed prefer drama series on Netflix from the United States, and why they are more attracted to drama series from this country. Ultimately, this way it could be uncovered whether the ideologies and values of this dominant country have a significant impact on the Dutch audiences when it comes to their consumption of drama series (Hardy, 2014).

#### *Cultural proximity*

The sensitizing concept about cultural proximity is used to analyze whether respondents prefer local drama series over international ones. Cultural proximity emphasizes the attraction audiences feel for media products that are from their own culture or the most similar possible culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). This concept consists of multiple dimensions that were translated into the topic list.

These dimensions are: linguistic proximity, genre proximity, cultural capital, value proximity and thematic proximity (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020; Ksiazek & Webster, 2008; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005).

Linguistic proximity indicates that audiences prefer media that are in their own language or a familiar language (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). Therefore, during the interviews, questions were asked about whether language plays an important role in selecting drama series on Netflix and whether respondents feel more attracted to series in a language they recognize. Additionally, it was asked if drama series in an unfamiliar language were a barrier for the respondents to start watching the series. Here, it was also important to consider that respondents use extra language options, such as Dutch subtitles. With the language proximity dimension it could be measured whether the language in a drama series is an indicator for audiences' selection and enjoyment of it (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008).

The dimension of genre proximity measures in what way Dutch audiences feel an attraction to the genre of drama that might influence their selection, since this genre builds on underlying oral structures, formulas and archetypes that can be shared by cultures (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). This way, it could be examined whether Dutch audiences were able to identify themselves with a drama series on Netflix. Therefore, questions were asked about how drama exactly attracts respondents and what kind of narratives, themes and characters they associate with drama. These different narratives and themes can be divided into three sub-genres of drama, which are contemporary dramas, crime dramas and historical dramas (Bondebjerg et al., 2018). Therefore, while analyzing the interviews, attention was paid to whether respondents mention their preference for narratives regarding current debates in society, a dark side of life or topics about the past (Bondebjerg et al., 2018).

Cultural capital is linked to a person's education and intellectual skills, which is an important indicator for examining which factors play a role for audiences in deciding what they want to watch and how they interpret media (Berg, 2017; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). These factors are use of humor, gender images, dress, lifestyle, ethnic types, gestures, body language, ideas about story pacing, music traditions and knowledge about other religions and values (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008; Straubhaar, 2021). Therefore, during the interview questions were asked regarding if these factors play a role in deciding what drama series respondents want to watch on Netflix.

When talking about cultural values, ethics, or topics that permeate many societies, this can be divided into value proximity and thematic proximity (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). Value proximity can be measured when respondents talk about shared values, to which many people who are in seemingly very different cultures may identify with (Stehling, 2013). This can be certain principles and ethics related to religion, work ethics or moral codes for example (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). Thematic proximity refers to the appeal of themes across cultures (Stehling, 2013). This includes topics about gender inequality, organized crime and migration (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). Therefore, during the

interviews, questions were asked about which values and themes respondents find most interesting in drama series, that help to uncover their preference for drama series.

### *Cosmopolitanism*

Cosmopolitanism implies the growing interconnection of the world across borders, which goes beyond people's nation and locality (Calhoun, 2008). Because of cosmopolitanism, we shift towards a globalized identity, as people's lives revolve around global interconnectedness, rather than their local commonalities (Kuipers & De Kloet, 2009). People can adopt a cosmopolitan attitude by integrating three types of capacities and orientations. Firstly, the stylistic capacity is the desire for people to embrace diverse cultural influences from other parts of the world, rather than their locality or what they are familiar with (Calhoun, 2008). Secondly, Calhoun (2008) mentions the psychological capacity, that emphasizes the feeling and appreciation that people have towards cultural and social differences. Lastly, the ethical orientation emphasizes a way of thinking and acting in the world, with a strong concern for other people (Calhoun, 2008). Therefore, questions were included in the topic list that must uncover whether respondents are open to drama series from more unknown cultures, in what way this culture differs from their own culture, and how they feel about the practices of these cultures. In addition, it was asked what they associate with drama series from these different cultures. This way, during the analysis process it could be uncovered if respondents embrace cultural differences and whether they exhibit characteristics of a globalized identity and cosmopolitan consumption behavior.

### **3.3. Data-analysis**

The conducted interviews were analyzed by using a thematic analysis. This method is most suitable for analyzing interview data, as feelings and perceptions of respondents can be explored through key patterns that emerge from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). From these patterns, different categories can be created, which together will provide an answer to the research question.

The data analysis process consisted of a few stages. First, the interviews were manually transcribed. This means that every spoken word was written out verbatim, by using the interview recordings. Subsequently, this raw data must be analyzed and correctly interpreted (Boeije, 2012). For this purpose, the transcripts were coded. Coding can be seen as a key process in the analysis of qualitative research, as it is very useful for classifying and categorizing individual pieces of data in a systematic way (Babbie, 2014). During the coding process, the three coding phases of Babbie (2014) were used. Firstly, he states that the obtained data must be segmented into initial codes, which is the open coding stage. Here, the obtained data was scanned roughly and initial codes were suggested and labeled. Secondly, the axial coding stage was used for discovering and developing patterns and categories from the initial codes (Babbie, 2014). This coding stage involves regrouping of the data, where important and general concepts can be identified. Thirdly, the selective coding stage began, this coding stage involves looking for connections between categories and reassembling the data (Babbie, 2014; Boeije, 2012). This last coding phase brought all formed codes together from the previous

coding phases, where different themes and patterns emerged that explain how Dutch audiences perceive international drama series and how they select these drama series on Netflix. For the data analysis process, the software Atlas.ti was used: a well-organized program in which codes can be constructed. This way, a clear overview of the different codes and categories could be obtained. An overview of the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis can be found in Appendix C. This is an excerpt of the coding process.

Furthermore, the aim was to explore whether the obtained data corresponds to the insights from the theoretical framework. Therefore, the coding process mostly emphasizes a deductive approach (Babbie, 2014). This means that there is already some theoretical knowledge available in advance, whereby it can be examined whether the theory from the literature corresponds with the collected data from the interviews. However, it must be taken into account that during the thematic analysis also new insights may emerge. Therefore, an inductive approach was not completely excluded (Babbie, 2014). When comparing the collected data with the theory, several sensitizing concepts were taken into account. Sensitizing concepts can be seen as analytic frameworks that provide guidelines for the analysis process (Bowen, 2006). The sensitizing concepts of this study include the theory of cultural imperialism, cultural proximity and cosmopolitanism (see paragraph 3.2), and explain whether respondents are open to international content, if their locality plays an important role, and what cultural aspects are involved when choosing drama series.

### **3.4. Quality criteria**

For the credibility and trustworthiness of this research, it is important to take the validity and reliability into account. The most common criteria that are used to evaluate qualitative research and develop trustworthiness, are that of Lincoln and Guba (1985), who identified: credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. First of all, validity must be assured. Qualitative research seems to provide measures with greater validity, opposed to quantitative research (Babbie, 2014). Validity is about the research accurately measuring the phenomena to which it refers (Silverman, 2015). To measure what actually needs to be measured, all concepts were operationalized and justified in advance, and translated into the topic list. This relates to improving the credibility of this study, as there is a strong internal validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, a strong external validity can be assured, synonymous for transferability, as the topic of drama series on Netflix is relevant for a large group of people. Almost everyone has seen drama series, and Netflix is a worldwide used SVOD platform (Jenner, 2018). Therefore, results of this study have meaning for individuals that are not involved in this study, and can be applied to other settings or groups (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). However, qualitative research seems to have more problems with ensuring reliability, also called dependability (Babbie, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reliability refers to how findings of a study are independent of accidental circumstances of their production (Silverman, 2015). Reliability depends on replicability, which means that the study must give the same results if it is conducted

multiple times or is conducted by other researchers (Babbie, 2014). In order to ensure reliability for this study, the research design is described in a detailed manner and it is justified how the sensitizing concepts guided the analysis. Lastly, the criterion of confirmability refers to an accurate reflection of respondents' responses, excluding the researcher's bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to ensure confirmability, the results chapter consists of rich quotes that represent each found theme in the collected data.

## 4. Results

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the conducted in-depth interviews. From the thematic analysis, the following five main themes emerged: (1) language, (2) narrative, (3) high quality, (4) openness cultures, and (5) contextual factors. Each theme consists of multiple sub-themes, which will be presented in detail in this chapter. Together, all five themes will demonstrate how Dutch audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix, which is the purpose of this study.

### 4.1. Language

When choosing drama series from the catalog on Netflix, language plays an important role. From the data, three ways emerged in which language in drama series influences the preference for drama series, both international and national. Firstly, respondents appeared to select a drama series in a certain language, in order to learn this language or maintain their knowledge about it. Secondly, respondents have certain perceptions of languages when it comes to languages they like to hear and language they prefer to avoid in drama series. Thirdly, language is an important factor for whether respondents are able to follow a drama series easily or whether this is more difficult in a foreign language. Therefore, the sub-themes are: (1) learning a language, (2) perception of language (3) ability to follow a language.

The first sub-theme of learning a language indicates that respondents watch a drama series, in order to broaden their knowledge of a specific language. Therefore, they watch the drama series to learn new words or because they want to maintain the knowledge they already have about a certain language. Sometimes respondents consciously choose a drama series, in order to learn more about a language, whereas sometimes learning a language also happens unconsciously when they watch a drama series. Respondent 4 (Female, 22) indicates that she purposely chooses a Spanish drama series to keep up with her Spanish. She has taken a Spanish course and a Spanish drama series helps her maintain her knowledge. For example, she says: “I do consciously watch drama series on Netflix in Spanish sometimes, because this allows me to maintain a bit of my Spanish”. The same applies to respondent 9 (Female, 25), who is also quite good at the Spanish language. She indicates that she watches Spanish series with Spanish subtitles, so she can read and listen at the same time. In addition, a few respondents indicate that they learned to speak English partly because of watching English series. A good example of this is respondent 11 (Female, 24). She says “I prefer series in English, because then I have the feeling that you still learn a little bit from what they say. I also started watching a lot of movies in English without subtitles, just to learn English”. In general respondents are able to follow an English series well. If there is a certain word that they don't recognize, they see this as a moment to brush up on their English. This way, they learn a language more unconsciously.

The second sub-theme is about the perception of a language. Overall, most respondents indicate that they don't like the sound of the Dutch language in a series. This is partly because the language sounds very harsh and because they are not used to watching many drama series in Dutch.

For respondent 5 (Male, 24) this even means that he is not starting a Dutch drama series for that reason. In addition, respondents also indicate that the Dutch language is very harsh and can come across as unreal and fake while acting. Something that also plays a role here is that the respondents know the Dutch language so well, that they immediately notice if there is a mistake in the series. Like respondent 7 (Male, 27) says: “Imagine they would imitate an Amsterdam accent in a Dutch series and it’s wrong, then you’ll realize it right away. And suppose they imitate a New York accent, I’m just saying something, then I don’t notice if it’s wrong”. This evokes a form of irritation in this respondent. This contradicts the argument of Ksiazek and Webster (2008), who mentioned that familiar languages are an important indicator for audiences’ selection for a program and their enjoyment of it. In fact, the analysis shows that respondents don’t experience more joy when it comes to watching a drama series in Dutch, as well as that they might not even watch a drama series that is Dutch spoken. Furthermore, all respondents agreed on the fact that Spanish is a pleasant language to listen to. For example, they immediately think a Spanish series sounds a lot cooler opposed to other languages, because it sounds different than what they are used to. Like respondent 6 (Female, 25) describes: “It’s such a nice language, it is pleasant to listen to and it has such a different character”. This gives them an additional experience while watching drama series. Furthermore, respondents mentioned that they would watch a drama series that is Scandinavian, Italian, and sometimes French, Belgian or South African spoken. Languages they are less willing to listen to are Korean, Japanese, Chinese, German, and Russian spoken series. This is because they do not like the harsh sound of these languages and because these languages are too unfamiliar to them. Thus, they find it more pleasant to hear a foreign language with which they are reasonably familiar, as opposed to a completely unfamiliar language.

Another important sub-theme that belongs to the theme of language, is the ability to follow a language. This involves both the Dutch language and international languages. The respondents admitted that it is easier to follow a series that is in a familiar language, whether this is their own language or a widely spoken language, such as English. In this regard, all respondents indicate that they prefer watching a series in English. Respondent 8 (Female, 25) clarifies:

“With an English series I have the tendency to grab my phone and scroll through Instagram, because I understand it anyway. But if it’s Spanish, if I have no clue what is happening, because I don’t understand it. So you really have to pay attention, and I think that’s kind of an advantage because it really forces you to do nothing and just watch that series.”

Thus, with this statement, this respondent indicates that she must watch a drama series with focus if it is in an unfamiliar language. This insight has a strong relationship to the attentive viewing theory that implies a strong viewer attention, as respondents must actively engage with drama series (Jenner, 2018). In order to follow the series more easily, most respondents turn on subtitles when they watch a series, especially with series in unfamiliar languages. Whether they choose Dutch subtitles, English subtitles or even Spanish subtitles, varied for each respondent. Most respondents prefer Dutch

subtitles, since it makes it less difficult for them to follow a series, as they can read along in their own language. Some respondents also indicated that they prefer English subtitles. For example, respondent 11 (Female, 24), mentioned that she always turns on English subtitles, because she gets irritated when what is said doesn't match the Dutch subtitles. This shows that the subtitles don't necessarily have to be in Dutch for respondents to be able to follow a series. However, subtitles are always used with lesser known languages such as French, German and Scandinavian languages. Furthermore, all respondents indicated that they never use the dubbed feature. The respondents think this looks very fake, as what is being said doesn't match the movement of a character's mouth. Therefore, a contradiction can be found with the theory, as it is claimed that audiences like to watch series that are produced in their own language, rather than media with subtitles or even one that is dubbed (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). However, this study clearly shows that young adult Dutch audiences are not very enthusiastic about Dutch spoken drama series, and that they prefer to watch international drama series including subtitles much more.

Overall, these results indicate that language plays an important role in choosing a drama series on Netflix. Respondents are unlikely to choose a Dutch drama series, because they know the language too well. Respondents don't mind watching a series in an unfamiliar language, since they can turn on subtitles. However, a distinction can be made here between desired and undesired languages. For instance, series in English, Spanish and Scandinavian languages are preferred over series in Asian languages or German and Russian. This shows that respondents prefer not to watch these series, because the language is too distant from them. These results correspond to the theory that implies that English as a global language can be better understood by audiences, whereas series in smaller and more unknown languages are often considered to have inherent linguistic barriers (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020).

#### **4.2. Narrative**

The second theme shows that the narrative of a drama series seems to be a deciding factor in selecting drama series on Netflix. As such, respondents find the storyline of a drama series very important, and an appealing storyline also ensures that they keep watching the series and get narratively immersed. Therefore, this theme is divided into the following sub-themes: (1) appealing narratives (2) narratives from different countries, and (3) narrative immersion.

The first sub-theme is about appealing narratives. When it comes to choosing drama series, there are many kinds of narratives respondents can choose from. This is due to the fact that drama is a very broad genre. Respondent 3 (Female, 30) mentions that she finds drama one of the best genres for series, as this genre is very appealing and people can relate well to this genre. As she pointed out: "Drama is human and, therefore, also international and intercultural". This corresponds to the findings of La Pastina and Straubhaar (2005), who found that there is a global attraction for drama, as audiences are more able to identify themselves with this genre. This is partly because of their structure

of storytelling (Stehling, 2013). In relation to the findings of this study, there are a few ways of storytelling that appeal the most to respondents. The respondents consider it very important that the story in a series is exciting, thrilling and to some extent realistic. Therefore, respondents prefer to choose drama series with crime narratives. This corresponds to insights from the theory, suggesting that the sub-genre of crime drama fascinates people, and can be seen as the most popular sub-genre of drama (Bondebjerg et al., 2018). It also appeared from the interviews that this is the most popular subgenre, making it irrelevant to the respondents from which country the drama series originates, as long as the narrative is appealing.

Respondents associated certain narratives of drama series with specific countries, which is the second sub-theme. The respondents indicated that the subgenre of crime drama is commonly seen in Spanish series. Just as respondent 10 (Female, 27) indicated: “I think those Spanish series are more about the drugs world and a criminal side that is being brought up”. In fact, all respondents associated Spanish series with drugs and crime. That’s why they enjoy watching Spanish series, as they have good narratives. Respondent 4 (Female, 22) even admitted that she thinks Spain produces the best drama series. Several respondents agree with this, as they feel that the Spanish storylines are strong and have become a lot better over the last few years. Therefore, they are willing to select a Spanish drama series on Netflix because they are confident that the story appeals to them. In addition to Spanish series, respondents were also very excited about the storylines in Scandinavian series. Respondents also associated these series primarily with crime drama. Respondent 3 (Male, 29) even mentioned that Scandinavian series are the best in detective narratives. In terms of the quality of the storylines, respondents all found them to be very good. Scandinavian storylines appear to stand out from storylines from other countries. Respondent 11 (Female, 24) mentioned that she finds Scandinavian storylines outstanding, as they make simple drama series, but with beautiful stories. According to her, this is what makes them so special and it would be a shame if Scandinavia started making the same stories as America or the rest of the world. Respondents found the Scandinavian drama series a little more realistic and current on what is happening in the world. This can be linked to the sub-genre of contemporary drama, that can be defined as drama that triggers debates in the national sphere (Bondebjerg et al., 2018). Therefore, respondents who are more interested in realistic and current social and cultural topics, are likely to choose Scandinavian drama series. Furthermore, a few respondents were very enthusiastic about English drama series, since they often show some form of history. They cited *Bridgerton*, *The Crown* and *Queen’s Gambit* as examples. Although these stories are often predictive, respondents enjoy seeing how things were in the past. This is related to the sub-genre of historical drama, which gives rise to the debate and discussion about the past and the relation to our present reality (Bondebjerg et al., 2018). A similarity between the literature and this study is that this sub-genre is, compared to the other two sub-genres, less popular and less transnational. Indeed, the majority of respondents indicated that they were not necessarily interested in historical drama series.

Storylines from countries that respondents also showed little interest in are drama series from the Netherlands and France. Respondents felt that storylines from these countries were often too drawn out and not exciting enough to keep watching. Overall, respondents didn't have much to say about French series, but especially storylines from Dutch drama series were not preferred. As respondent 10 (Female, 27) indicates: "I actually never experienced that with American or international series, but sometimes when watching Dutch series I turned it off". Like the rest of the respondents indicated, they feel that international series often have a better storyline than Dutch drama series, which are very superficial. Therefore, despite the fact that cultural proximity theory implies that audiences prefer to choose media from their own culture, this theme clearly shows that respondents tend toward a strong form of genre proximity, as they are more attracted to certain storylines and sub-genres of drama rather than local media (Ksiazek & Webster, 2008; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005).

As described above, respondents like thrilling and realistic stories where they want to keep watching and find out how the story ends as soon as possible. This is related to the third sub-theme about narrative immersion. The thrilling aspect ensures that they are completely sucked into a story and that they start to empathize with the characters. The realistic aspect adds extra credibility to the story, which also makes it exciting. As respondent 8 (Female, 25) states: "When you really immerse yourself in a series, that you want to know what happened. If not, it is a nice series, but not a good one. With a good series, you want to keep watching". Therefore, respondents often binge-watch, as they watch multiple episodes in a row. This arises from the need to feel narratively immersed that corresponds to the attentive viewing theory, meaning that audiences actively engage with a drama series (Jenner, 2018). From the interviews it also appeared that drama series appear to go more in-depth and have a stronger story, opposed to comedy for example. This likewise can be explained by the theory, indicating that drama series are explicitly made for binge-watching, as these series have a powerful storyline (Lobato, 2019).

In general, these results show that respondents choose drama series based on the narratives they are most attracted to, regardless of the country of origin. Thus, if the story doesn't appeal to them, they won't watch the series. This implies an openness to content from various countries, because their choice of drama series is based on the story and they're not consciously concerned with the country it comes from. This relates to the theory of cosmopolitanism, emphasizing the belonging to the world as a whole, which is larger than one's own locality (Jensen & Jacobsen, 2020). Furthermore, both the language theme and this narrative theme show that drama series cause respondents to exhibit forms of attentive viewing. For this theme, this means that respondents are intentionally looking for a drama series that requires them to watch with focus, because they want to feel narratively immersed.

### **4.3. High quality**

The third theme that emerged from the analysis, is that of high quality. It appears that respondents consider it important that drama series are of high quality, in order for them to watch it on

Netflix. If a drama series on Netflix is of high quality, it doesn't really matter from which country it originates. However, respondents do associate high quality drama series with certain countries. A high quality means that the series is made in a professional way and that the acting is on point. In addition, respondents also associate high quality with a higher budget. Therefore, this theme consists of the following sub-themes: (1) budget, (2) actors, and (3) production values.

The first sub-theme about budget shows that respondents believe the quality of a drama series depends on the budget countries have. According to them, America, England, and Spain have the highest budget and, therefore, produce high quality drama series. In addition, the interviews also revealed that respondents think that the Netherlands has a low budget, as they associate these drama series with poor quality. Respondent 4 (Female, 22) sums this up well, when describing Dutch series: "Yes I think those are much less expensive productions. When you just see these very expensive productions, for example series they make in America or England, but also in Spain you know. Spain also has really good series, I think those countries just throw more money at it". Because certain countries have a higher budget, the actors are also better and the series is made more professional. This may suggest that respondents prefer drama series from these countries, as they value high quality content. Additionally, this sub-theme is, therefore, strongly related to the other two sub-themes.

From the interviews it appeared that actors influence how Dutch audiences perceive drama series and whether this is an indication for selecting drama series on Netflix. Therefore, the second sub-theme is about actors in drama series. Some respondents are more likely to choose a drama series that has a familiar actor in it. This also relates to the previous sub-theme about budget, as respondents believe that producers can hire better actors, when they have a higher budget. In turn, this increases the quality of the drama series. However, respondents don't specifically search for drama series with a well-known actor, but if they come across drama series with a familiar face, they are more likely to watch it. This is due to the fact that if they see a good actor, they immediately think the series is of high quality. As respondent 7 (Male, 27) mentions:

"I associate that with quality. When you know that an actor really fits a certain role well and when they are really good at acting, that is why you want to see them playing a certain role. Then you immediately know the whole vibe of the movie or series."

However, this also depends on their previous experiences with an actor. In fact, a familiar actor can also make respondents more reluctant to watch the series. For example, if they do not like the actor or if they have seen the actor too many times. Respondents indicated that this is especially the case with Dutch series. This evokes a form of irritation in respondents, as they do not feel like watching the same actors over and over again. Additionally, respondents cannot separate an actor they see often from previous characters they have played. Besides Dutch series, Spanish series also often seem to involve the same actors. However, respondents are less bothered by this, as they generally find the acting in Spanish series better. Furthermore, respondents indicated that they don't mind if there is not

a familiar actor in a drama series. If the series still seems appealing to them, they would watch it anyway. Therefore, actors in a series can be an influential factor, but it is not the deciding factor for selecting a drama series. Especially for drama series from countries where they are not yet very familiar with the actors. In this context, they might just watch any drama series, regardless of the country of origin.

Another important sub-theme is that of production values. This entails certain scene set-ups, ways of filming and music in drama series. Again, respondents felt that countries with higher budgets were also able to create cooler scenes. This is due to the fact that producers have the money for special effects, multiple studio's and shooting locations. Respondent 8 (Female, 25) is primarily excited about American production values. According to her America has more variation in drama series, opposed to Dutch or Spanish series that are filmed in lesser set-ups. She further clarified: "I think in terms of locations in Europe, it's all a bit more limited. That's not a bad thing, it's part of some series, but because you have a much wider range of American series, you also have a lot more different set-ups". This relates to the notion of Straubhaar (2021), who indicates that content from America is assumed to be more attractive to audiences, because of their high production values, quality of acting and writing, and the appeal of their depictions of the American lifestyle. This correspond to the insights that emerged from the interviews, as respondents consider American drama series on Netflix to be of good quality. This is also because America has a higher budget, so they can hire better actors and in turn be ahead of other countries in terms of making drama series. Thus, this result could imply that respondents, therefore, prefer American drama series on Netflix. Other respondents agreed that international, in particular American, drama series have a higher quality than Dutch drama series. Respondent 3 (Male, 29) admitted that, although Dutch productions have become more professional over the years, it will never make it to the quality of international productions. Because Dutch drama series are of a lower quality, respondents indicate that they are less likely to choose a Dutch drama series on Netflix. In addition, respondents feel that the Dutch offerings on Netflix are very limited. As a result, they use Videoland for all their Dutch content. They use this platform mainly for watching reality tv shows and news programs. This is consistent with the statement of Lobato (2019), who says that audiences primarily watch local media for news, sports, comedy and reality tv, and prefer international media for watching high-end dramas. This could mean that Dutch audiences use Netflix for watching international drama series, since they mainly watch the news and reality programs when it comes to Dutch content. Furthermore, it appeared that respondents don't necessarily choose a drama series on Netflix for its music, but they still consider music to be an important component of the quality of series. For example, respondent 6 (Female, 25) said that music in a series ensures her to keep watching. If the music doesn't fit very well, everything collapses. Furthermore, respondents find it slightly distracting when the sound of the music and that of the voices is not the same volume.

These results show that respondents want to watch a drama series if it is of high quality. In doing so, they don't have a strong preference for a particular country. However, there seems to be a

preference for international drama series, and in particular for America, England and Spain. These countries appeared to have a higher quality when it comes to producing drama series. Therefore, it is likely that respondents choose drama series from these countries on Netflix. This result may also be an indication that the dominance of these countries is being strengthened by their high quality of production, which is related to the notion of Ksiazek and Webster (2008) about the cultural imperialism theory. They indicate that cultural imperialism mostly predicts the flow of media from richer to poorer countries, that are based on superior production quality of media. Thus, since America, England and Spain appear to have a higher budget and high quality drama series, these series might overshadow drama series from other countries. In regard to the quality of Dutch drama series, respondents were not very enthusiastic. This is partly due to the budget, which means that the setting of the series is not appealing and the acting is bad. This result contradicts the cultural proximity theory, indicating that audiences have a preference for local media (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005).

#### **4.4. Openness cultures**

Some interesting results emerged from the analysis of the interviews, that show whether respondents are open to international content. Firstly, respondents are open to drama series on Netflix from different countries. They enjoy getting to know new cultures, and learn from them. It was also found that respondents identify themselves in a certain way with a drama series and look for points of recognition. Therefore, this theme can be divided into the following sub-themes: (1) interest other cultures, (2) cultural intellectual, (3) identification, and (4) points of recognition.

The first sub-theme is about respondents' interest in drama series from other cultures. Firstly, it appeared that respondents now watch more international content, because it is offered to them on a platform like Netflix. Without Netflix, they would have been less likely to encounter drama series from other countries. This increasing diversity on Netflix can be explained by the transnationalization of media, resulting in a diverse and almost unlimited choice in media content on video-on-demand platforms, where international media still seem dominant (Iordache et al., 2018). This also relates to the results of this study, as respondents indicated that they find the offerings on Netflix predominantly international, whereas the Dutch offerings are quite limited. As described in the previous theme, Dutch audiences do not initially use Netflix to watch Dutch drama series. Instead, they like to see content from other countries. Overall, respondents indicated that they watch a lot of content from America. This is mainly due to the fact that America simply has a huge selection of series and, therefore, they consume more of it. Like respondent 4 (Female, 22) said: "A lot comes from America and England, but I think mostly America. Therefore, you watch it very often. I think there are still one or two Spanish series on Netflix that I haven't seen, but at some point you've seen all those series". This respondent is trying to say that she runs out of other international series more quickly and then returns to American series, because there are simply more of them. This relates to the cultural imperialism theory, which emphasizes the media dominance of the United States (Iordache et al., 2018). In fact,

respondents indicated that Netflix predominantly offers American series. As a result, respondents are used to the American centered offerings, which is why they watch a lot of American or English spoken series. For this reason, respondent 8 (Female, 25) thinks that we will automatically watch more content from a particular country if there is more supply of it. However, she also says that if there are more Spanish series, for example, we will automatically watch those drama series more often. In fact, all respondents are open to watching more Spanish series. This is because they have seen some good series from Spain and, therefore, want to see more content from this country. Furthermore, respondent 1 (Male, 25) mentioned that he also sees more Spanish drama series on Netflix, but also from Sweden and Korea. This indicates an increasing diversity of drama series from different countries on Netflix. As described in the previous themes, the country of origin doesn't really matter, as long as the respondents find the drama series appealing. However, respondents appear to be more open to content from the U.S. and most parts of Europe, and less open to Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa. For example, respondents are less open to series from China, Romania, Turkey, and Russia. This is partly because they find these cultures too distant from them, but also because they haven't seen much drama series from these countries yet. As respondent 7 (Male, 27) indicates: "I'm not really eager to watch a Romanian drama series, while I don't know anything about Romania. But I don't miss that in my life. The same for everything from Eastern Europe, while they probably make very good series or films". Therefore, this is also a kind of familiarization factor. Once they are familiar with a certain country or its content, they will be more likely to watch content from this country.

The cultural intellectual sub-theme emphasizes that respondents like watching international content, because they learn more about a particular culture. They say that by watching international drama series, they see a side of a certain country that is different from what they are used to. This confirms the cosmopolitanism theory. The respondents are open to diverse cultural influences, as they dive into another world and step across certain cultural boundaries. This mostly corresponds to the stylistic capacity of Calhoun (2008), as it emphasizes the desire for individuals to embrace diverse cultural influences from other parts of the world, rather than their locality or what they are familiar with. As respondent 6 (Female, 25) indicates: "You get to know a different culture, and I really like it that we have the opportunity to experience another culture, rather than the American culture that is pushed into our faces". Therefore, this respondent takes on the stylistic approach, as she indicates that we live in a world with more cultures than just our own and that of America, which is why she wants to learn from other cultures as well. In addition, respondent 2 (Female, 30) mentions that she feels like she has got to know the Scandinavian culture better through watching drama series, and that these cultural differences now confirm the image she already had of these countries. Furthermore, some respondents mentioned that they could see some cultural differences in drama series. This relates to the psychological capacity of Calhoun (2008), which is about the feeling and appreciation that individuals have towards cultural and social differences. Respondent 11 (Female, 24) mentions Scandinavia as an example by indicating: "You can already see it when they go to lunch or something.

Here we go out for lunch and we order a sandwich, but even this is so much different over there, as well as the kind of conversations they have”. These examples illustrate that respondents are aware of the cultural differences, and that cultures can have very different values and norms. In fact, respondent 2 (Female, 30) indicated that we are culturally educated through watching international drama series, even though we are not aware of this in our consuming. This means that respondents don’t consciously choose a drama series in the Netflix catalog, because they want to learn from a specific country. Nevertheless, respondents indicated that they like the fact that by watching a drama series they get to experience something of another culture.

The third sub-theme is about identification, as the interviews revealed that some respondents identify themselves with characters from international drama series. For example, they start to sympathize with the characters in a series and compare themselves to them. Respondent 9 (Female, 25) indicates that she starts asking herself what she would do in such a situation. Here, she gives an example from the series *Breaking Bad*, by mentioning that the main character is very distant to his woman, to which she responds with: “I really would have kicked him out a long time ago, but on the other hand you are pregnant by him. So then you think like okay what would I do in such case”. In addition, respondent 2 (Female, 30) mentions that she likes it that you see a way of life in a series and certain norms and values of cultures. She states: “I think it's actually nice that it's about a world that you know little about, that doesn't relate to your own world, but that you take in the values and norms that you would like to identify yourself with”. According to her, every drama series does contain certain norms and values that people can identify with, which relates to thematic proximity that represents different themes and issues that appeal across cultures (Stehling, 2013). As an example, respondent 4 (Female, 22) mentions the American show *Modern Family*, by saying: “We all have a gay family member, we all have a family where there's always a fight, we all have something you know. So it's all very recognizable I think”. Therefore, these themes are relatable to many people and that's why it appeals to them so much. However, respondent 10 (Female, 27) mentions that she prefers drama series she can't identify herself with, as she says: “I often choose things that would never actually happen to me, or at least I hope so. Just something that is far from your mind”. The reason for this is because she watches a series in her free time, so a different story helps her to escape her daily life. Therefore, when selecting drama series on Netflix, it may be that respondents deliberately choose a series that is distant from them or that they can better identify with. When respondents choose a drama series, with which they can identify, the concept of cultural proximity is related. This might indicate that Dutch audiences interpret international drama series, according to their own cultural context, which is why they prefer media that is close to their culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). Furthermore, the genre of drama also allows respondents to better identify themselves with characters in the series. As La Pastina and Straubhaar (2015) indicate, audiences are more able to identify themselves with several aspects from the genre of drama, because everyone has experienced some form of storytelling like drama. Additionally, the way in which audiences identify themselves with

drama series and how they interpret these series, depends on their cultural capital (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). This is different for each respondent and depends on their own life experience and intellectual skills. Therefore, Dutch audiences may not perceive media the same way or identify equally with the elements of drama series.

The fourth sub-theme about points of recognition indicates that respondents like it when there are recognizable aspects, such as locations, in international drama series. Respondent 3 (Male, 29) and 4 (Female, 22) both wanted to see the Dutch series *Undercover*. The reason for this is because parts of it were filmed in Brabant, and they both grew up there. Therefore, they enjoy seeing recognizable places. If respondents know beforehand that a drama series contains recognizable places, they might select this drama series more quickly. As respondent 5 (Male, 24) explains: “It feels immediately more close to me, the feeling for a series is there more quickly”. Furthermore, respondents like to see places in series they have been on vacation. However, respondents indicated that the sense of recognition is not that important in choosing a series. They like to see recognizable aspects, but they are not consciously concerned with them. Therefore, they don’t consciously search for a drama series with recognizable places in it on Netflix.

Overall, this theme demonstrates that respondents are open to drama series on Netflix from different countries. They don’t have a strong preference for certain countries, they just enjoy getting to know new cultures, and learn from them. However, also with this theme, it emerged that America still seems dominant, since they offer the most drama series on Netflix. When selecting drama series from the catalog on Netflix, respondents may be more likely to choose a drama series with which they can identify, or in which there are recognizable points for them.

#### **4.5. Contextual factors**

When respondents have the diverse catalog on Netflix in front of them and have to make a choice, there are two factors that can be the deciding factor in choosing a particular drama series. These are: (1) social environment and (2) personal recommendations.

The social environment sub-theme indicates that, when deciding on what series they have to watch, respondents mainly listen to their environment. Respondents indicated that friends, colleagues and family members promote certain series they have to watch. They may not listen to this at first, but if more people around them are talking about a particular series, they will want to start watching the series themselves. Additionally, respondent 7 (Male, 27) indicated: “If someone would say that a series is very good and I trust that person’s taste, I would watch it”. Therefore, respondents rely on the taste of their surroundings and attach a value to their judgment. This sub-theme appears to be very important, when it comes to selecting drama series. Respondent 5 (Male, 24) even indicated that he now likes to watch Spanish series, because they have been recommended by his own network, whereas before he would never choose Spanish series himself. Therefore, this means that respondents would watch a series from any country, regardless of whether it is a familiar or unfamiliar country, as

these series are promoted by the personal network.

Since Netflix works with an algorithm, respondents receive personal recommendations on their Netflix account, which is the second sub-theme. These recommendations can also influence the way in which they perceive drama series and make a selection from the Netflix catalog. The literature indicates that these personal recommendations are based on audiences' interests and their viewing history (Burroughs, 2018; Jenner, 2018). As a result, respondents can find interesting drama series more easily, as it is being presented to them, without them having to make an effort to search. Therefore, they are more likely to watch a series from their personal recommendations. However, respondents indicated that they don't select just any series from their personal recommendations. As respondent 11 (Female, 24) indicates: "I would never rely on the title and the picture and thinking I'm going to check that series out. Instead I read the descriptions first". In addition to reading the description, respondents want to watch a trailer as well. Thus, all elements in the series, such as the storyline, must be appealing to the respondents. These are elements that have been discussed in the previous themes.

These results indicate that respondents' environment plays a greater role in selecting drama series than the personal recommendations they receive. If someone in their network says they should go watch a series, they will do so immediately, whereas if they get a recommendation for a series on Netflix, they want to have some more information about it first. However, if their recommendations show a series that the respondents have heard someone close to them talk about, they are more likely to click on that series as opposed to other series in their personal recommendations. Furthermore, they may also be inclined to watch series from certain countries more quickly, due to the influence of their own environment. However, it should be taken into account that, regardless of what their friends or family say or what personal recommendations they receive, the drama series must still be appealing to them, in order to actually start watching it. Therefore, this theme has a strong relationship to all other themes, interacting with each other.

## **5. Conclusion & discussion**

In this chapter an answer to the research question will be given, based on the obtained results. The purpose of this study was to investigate how young adult Dutch audiences perceive drama series on Netflix and make a selection from the diverse catalog. Therefore, the research question states: *how do young adult Dutch audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix?* After answering the research question, theoretical and societal implications will be discussed, followed by limitations and recommendations for future research.

### **5.1. Answer to the research question**

From the analysis of the interviews, five themes emerged that determine how Dutch audiences perceive and select drama series on Netflix. These themes are: (1) language, (2) narrative, (3) high quality, (4) openness cultures, and (5) contextual factors. In the following paragraphs, the themes are explained and connections are made, which will provide an answer to the research question.

Firstly, it appeared that the narrative of a series seems to be the deciding factor in selecting drama series on Netflix. Therefore, the second theme about narratives can be considered as the most important theme. The narrative of a drama series ensures that young adult Dutch audiences keep watching and get narratively immersed. Especially when drama series feature crime narratives, as these narratives are thrilling and exciting. Furthermore, a theme that also ensures that audiences continue to watch a series, is the third theme about high quality. Therefore, the second theme about narrative and the third theme about high quality are strongly connected. The high quality theme consists of several components that increase the quality of a drama series, which are about actors, budget and production values, such as music or the editing. All these components together ensure that drama series are actually being watched. Both themes imply an openness for drama series on Netflix from any country, as young adult Dutch audiences' choice is based on the narrative and quality of a drama series, regardless of the country the series originates from. Overall, it appeared that drama series with an appealing narrative and high quality, were associated with countries like America, England, Spain and Scandinavian countries. These countries appear to have a higher budget, and can, therefore, make drama series more professional. Additionally, the overall quality of Dutch drama series doesn't seem to be very good. In fact, Dutch drama series often look unprofessional, since the acting is bad and series often have a drawn out and superficial narrative. Usually, Videoland is preferred over Netflix when it comes to watching Dutch content. Therefore, when it comes to selecting a drama series on Netflix, young adult Dutch audiences are unlikely to choose Dutch drama series.

Moreover, since young adult Dutch audiences are open to drama series from any country, as long as the series have an appealing narrative and are of high quality, a connection can be found with the fourth theme about openness cultures. Although this theme is not directly a deciding factor for selecting drama series on Netflix, it does provide direction on how audiences perceive drama series from different countries, that ultimately might influence the decision making. Overall, this theme

demonstrates that Netflix has a very internationally focused catalog, since there are few to almost no Dutch drama series available. Due to this increasing diversity, young adult Dutch audiences now watch more international content than before they had Netflix. In doing so, new cultures can be experienced and learned from, and become less unfamiliar. Since Netflix has a large selection of American series, young adult Dutch audiences consume more American drama series opposed to other countries. However, there also seemed to be interest in watching drama series that originate from parts of Europe, such as Spain and Scandinavia, whereas drama series from Eastern Europe, Asia, and Africa are the least preferred. Furthermore, this theme about openness cultures is related to the first theme about language. The reason why young adult Dutch audiences are less open to series from certain countries, is mainly because the language is a lot more different than what they are used to. This often involves drama series that are Japanese, Korean, Chinese, German or Russian spoken, as these languages sound harsh and too unfamiliar. Furthermore, the Dutch language is not preferred either, as this is too familiar. In fact, these languages evoke a form of irritation. Languages that young adult Dutch audiences prefer to listen to are English spoken drama series, followed by Spanish, Scandinavian, Italian, and sometimes French spoken series. However, it must be taken into account that, since audiences can adjust the language and use subtitles, the language that is being spoken in a drama series can be seen as the least important factor in selecting a drama series on Netflix.

Although preferences for particular drama series vary for each person, a few contextual factors can be the final deciding factor in actually watching a drama series on Netflix. This means that Dutch audiences get to see personalized offerings on Netflix, which makes their choice easier since these recommendations are based on their interests. However, the influence of the social environment turned out to be even more important when it comes to selecting good drama series. Hence, if young adult Dutch audiences hear someone mention a good series and they subsequently see it listed in their personal recommendations, they are more likely to watch this drama series on Netflix. Therefore, they might watch series from certain international countries more quickly, due to the influence of their environment.

Therefore, through this conclusion it becomes clear that all five themes work together when it comes to perceiving and selecting drama series on Netflix. Although, when choosing a drama series on Netflix, the narrative and the quality of the series prove to be one of the most important components in the decision-making process. In this respect, it doesn't matter from which country the series originates. However, countries associated with producing appealing series are mainly America, England, Spain and Scandinavia. Therefore, it is understandable that young adult Dutch audiences have the tendency to select drama series from these countries over other countries, since they are confident that these series are of good quality.

## 5.2. Theoretical implications

After conducting this research, several findings emerged that can be a valuable addition to the existing literature and previous studies. Although most theories have already been mentioned in the results chapter, this chapter will reflect on the main concepts of this study.

Firstly, this study might enhance the understanding of how young adult Dutch audiences perceive the increasing diversity on Netflix and how they select series from the diverse catalog. Therefore, this study contributes to debates about the changing dynamics of transnational television distribution and audience consumption behaviors in this new television era (Lotz, 2021). In doing so, this research adopts a distinctive position, by focusing on an audience perspective and how they exactly deal with the diverse offerings on Netflix. This perspective has evoked relevant insights that can contribute to debates around flow studies, which will be described in the next paragraphs. However, it must be taken into account that a specific group was studied for this study, namely young adult Dutch audiences. Therefore, the findings of this study are based on their perceptions.

Overall, young adult Dutch audiences perceive the Netflix drama catalog as very diverse. They have noticed an increasing amount of international drama series being added on Netflix in recent years. Therefore, this research demonstrates that there is indeed a growing diversity on video-on-demand platforms, as Lobato (2017) argues, since consumers now have access to content from all over the world. This contributes to questions and debates surrounding the transnationalization of media in this digital era. These debates can be divided into the cultural imperialism perspective, whereas another perspective focuses on the increasing diversity of global media flows (Banerjee, 2002). This study shows that, despite the ever-increasing diverse catalog on Netflix, young adult Dutch audiences still watch American drama series very frequently. Therefore, this study offers interesting insights around the debate of cultural imperialism, implying the dominant position of America within the media field (Iordache et al., 2018; Jenner, 2018). However, it should be taken into account that the cultural imperialism theory can be seen as outdated, as there is an increasing diversity of content originating from other countries than just America and audiences have the agency to watch the content they want. Nonetheless, this research does provide relevant insights into that audiences are used to the predominant American supply on Netflix and, therefore, watch more American drama series. This is also because of the fact that they understand the English language very well, which corresponds to the earlier statement of Jensen and Jacobsen (2020). They say that, since English is a global language, it is assumable that English spoken series fit well in non-English countries. Hence, this explains the dominant position of American drama series on Netflix in the Netherlands (Jenner, 2018).

Moreover, this study shows that the increasing diversity on Netflix highly influences young adult Dutch audiences' choice for drama series on Netflix. It emerged that young adult Dutch audiences are open to drama series from various cultures, and consume more international drama series due to this increasing diversity. Therefore, the cosmopolitanism theory can still be seen as a relevant theory when it comes to examining the preferences of audiences regarding the diverse

international offerings on Netflix. The cosmopolitan theory emphasizes the growing interconnection of the whole world across national and other boundaries (Calhoun, 2008). This research demonstrates that young adult Dutch audiences adopt a globalized identity, as their lives revolve around global interconnectedness, rather than their local commonalities (Kuipers & De Kloet, 2009). Thus, Dutch audiences adopt values and practices of other cultures, rather than their own values or what they are familiar with, which makes them part of a global society.

When studying audiences' preferences for media, the theory of cultural proximity seems to be relevant, which considers the attraction of audiences for local media or media from a similar culture (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). However, this study shows that young adult Dutch audiences don't have a preference for watching Dutch drama series, which indicates that the cultural proximity theory is less relevant. Young adult Dutch audiences expressed that they don't feel attracted to the Dutch language, the narratives in Dutch drama series and the quality of Dutch drama series. Therefore, this research provides a shift in perspective regarding that not all audiences prefer local content, which nuances the importance of the cultural proximity theory.

### **5.3. Societal implications**

This study also provides insights that are relevant in societal terms. Firstly, as this research provides insight into how young adult Dutch audiences perceive and choose from the diverse catalog on Netflix, this research shines a light on cultural diversity and changing media consumption practices in today's globalized digital world (Iordache, et al., 2018). Therefore, findings of this study might be useful for Dutch audiences, as it contributes to their understanding of different cultures and diversity in this world through television. Since there is an ever-increasing diversity of content from many different countries on Netflix, this can also unleash stereotypical images that were conveyed by the media, especially Hollywood, before the rise of digital platforms. Therefore, this research is relevant for adjusting Dutch audiences' worldview.

Secondly, since this research demonstrates what Dutch audiences' preferences are towards drama series on Netflix, this research might be relevant for production companies and distributors, as they can respond to the needs of the public. This research shows that young adult Dutch audiences have preference for international drama series, as opposed to Dutch drama series. Therefore, production companies and distributors might adjust their production and offerings accordingly by providing more appealing international content. Furthermore, even though young adult Dutch audiences don't have a strong preference for watching Dutch series, it must be taken into account that this is partly because Netflix has a limited supply of Dutch series. Therefore, measures can be taken by buying more licenses to offer Dutch content on Netflix. In order to increase the commercial success of Dutch drama series, production companies can ensure that Dutch series become more attractive to the public in the longer term, by ensuring that more budget is made available for producing Dutch series and by establishing collaborations with large media companies.

#### **5.4. Limitations**

There are a few limitations of this study that need to be mentioned. Firstly, for recruiting respondents, a purposive sampling method was used. In this regard, respondents were chosen according to the set criteria and a total of 11 interviews were conducted. Although the credibility criteria of Lincoln and Guba (1985) were taken into account, results of this study might not be generalizable for the whole target group. Additionally, representativity can be seen as a flaw of qualitative research (Babbie, 2014). However, a diverse sample of respondents that provide the best possible reflection of the target group were selected, allowing different perspectives to be obtained. This means that not only respondents between 20 and 30 years old with an account on Netflix had to be chosen, but there was a deliberate consideration of variation in gender, age diversity and different levels of education. Furthermore, after conducting 11 interviews, the saturation point was reached, as no new information was obtained from the interviews (Boeije, 2012). Therefore, the obtained data provided sufficient information for answering the research question.

Another limitation of this study is that the preference for Dutch drama series among young adult Dutch audiences could not be properly investigated, because Netflix offers almost no Dutch content. Although the cultural proximity theory implies that audiences prefer local media (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005), this perspective may, therefore, be lacking in this study. However, this research shows that young adult Dutch audiences are not very enthusiastic about Dutch drama series in general. To explore the preference for Dutch content anyway, a SVOD platform must be chosen that features more Dutch content. This will be further addressed in the next paragraph regarding recommendations for future research.

#### **5.5. Recommendations for future research**

After conducting this study, opportunities emerged for future research. Firstly, for this research, respondents aged between 20-30 were chosen. Although this age group is the most accustomed to video-on-demand services, which makes them more familiar with global and diverse content (Kuipers & De Kloet, 2009; Schauerte et al., 2020), it is also relevant to study consumption patterns of other age groups and whether they are open to diverse content. Hence, older age groups might be less accustomed to video-on-demand services and, therefore, have different consumption patterns and preferences when it comes to the consumption of drama series.

Secondly, in order to examine the increasing diversity on video-on-demand platforms, it is recommended for future research to investigate the offerings in the Netflix catalog. Since this research demonstrates that Dutch audiences consume a lot of international and mostly American content, as there is a lot of supply of this, the actual amount of international offerings can be searched through catalog research. This might give an indication for audience consumption patterns regarding international content.

Thirdly, while drama is a globally known genre, it is also relevant to research other genres.

Thus, it can be examined how audiences perceive other genres and make a selection from series involving these genres. Drama is known to be easily shared across cultures, due to its identifiable aspects (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005). Therefore, investigating other genres will help to understand to which aspects of different genres audiences are attracted, that influences their choice in series. Furthermore, this study shows that audiences watch drama series to be fully engaged with the series, whereas comedy seems to be preferred when they want to relax and not pay attention. Hence, it can be uncovered what motivations and desires audiences have for choosing other genres.

Lastly, this research specifically focusses on Netflix. However, since there are other popular video-on-demand platforms besides Netflix, and young adult Dutch audiences indicate that they mainly use Videoland for watching Dutch content, it might be relevant for future research to examine other video-on-demand platforms, especially those that have a larger selection of Dutch series. This might give an indication for whether Dutch audiences indeed have a preference for local media, as the cultural proximity theory implies, which they can't find in the limited Dutch offerings on Netflix.

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## Appendix A: Respondents overview

Below, an overview of the chosen respondents for this study is provided. These respondents all meet the criteria of being aged between 20 and 30 years old, along with the requirement that they have an account on Netflix.

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Educational level</b>	<b>Place of residence</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Date interview</b>
<b>1.</b>	Male	25	HBO	Dordrecht	Dutch	25-04-2021
<b>2.</b>	Female	30	WO	Ede	Dutch	26-04-2021
<b>3.</b>	Male	29	HBO	Breda	Dutch	27-04-2021
<b>4.</b>	Female	22	WO	Rotterdam	Dutch	28-04-2021
<b>5.</b>	Male	24	MBO	Capelle aan den IJssel	Dutch	29-04-2021
<b>6.</b>	Female	25	HBO	Rotterdam	Dutch	30-04-2021
<b>7.</b>	Male	27	HBO	Rotterdam	Dutch	30-04-2021
<b>8.</b>	Female	25	MBO	Capelle aan den IJssel	Dutch	30-04-2021
<b>9.</b>	Female	25	HBO	Oosterhout	Dutch	01-05-2021
<b>10.</b>	Female	27	WO	Rotterdam	Dutch	03-05-2021
<b>11.</b>	Female	24	WO	Rotterdam	Dutch	10-05-2021

*Table A1. Respondents overview*

## Appendix B: Topic list

In this appendix, the topic list for the interviews is provided. This is a setup of topics to be covered during the interview. Nevertheless, it must be taken into account that during the interviews it was possible to deviate from the sequence of the topic list and to ask other questions if necessary.

### *Introductie*

Welkom – bedankt dat ik je mag interviewen.

Ik zal kort even vertellen waar mijn onderzoek over gaat:

Door de digitalisering is het media landschap flink veranderd. Televisie services zijn nu ook verschoven naar het internet en hierdoor is ook ons kijkgedrag veranderd. We kunnen nu waar en wanneer we willen films en series kijken. Dit komt vooral door de groeiende populariteit van video-on-demand platformen. Hier hebben we een enorm aanbod aan zowel internationale en lokale films en series. Hier gaat mijn onderzoek ook over. Ik wil graag onderzoeken hoe Nederlandse gebruikers van Netflix dit enorme aanbod aan drama series ervaren. Er zijn nu steeds meer series beschikbaar uit landen over de hele wereld en zo wil ik graag onderzoeken hoe mensen hier een keuze uit maken en welke drama series uit welke landen ze dan kijken.

Dit is dus een beetje een globaal beeld van waar mijn scriptie over gaat. Mocht je tussendoor vragen hebben of opmerkingen, laat het me vooral even weten.

#### *A. Informed consent*

- Kun je bevestigen dat je het consent form hebt gelezen en akkoord gaat met het meewerken aan deze studie?

#### *B. Personal information*

- Zou je iets over jezelf willen vertellen? (Naam, leeftijd, nationaliteit, opleidingsniveau, beroep etc.)

#### *C. Netflix*

##### Netflix use

- Wat vind je van Netflix?
- Heb je een eigen account op Netflix of deel je deze?
- Sinds wanneer heb je een Netflix account?
- Wat heeft jou gemotiveerd om een account op Netflix te nemen?
- Hoe vaak per week zet je Netflix aan? (Dagen)

- Hoe lang kijk je dan ongeveer content op Netflix? (Uren, aantal afleveringen)
- Heb je naast Netflix nog een abonnement op een ander streaming/SVOD platform?
- Zo ja, welke en waarom vind je dat dan leuk?
- Voor welke redenen gebruik je dan Netflix erbij?
- Waarom vind je Netflix beter?
- Hoe vult dit elkaar aan?

### Viewing preferences

- Kijk je het liefst series, films of tv programma's op Netflix? (kan elk genre zijn)
- Welke series kijk je momenteel op Netflix? (kan elk genre zijn)
- Naar welk genre kijk je het liefst en waarom?
- Hoe vaak kijk je naar drama series?
- Wat vind je zo leuk aan het genre drama?

### Diversity on Netflix

*Respondent vragen om drama serie catalogus op zijn/haar eigen Netflix account erbij te pakken*

- Wat voor drama series kijk je op Netflix?
- Hoe ben je bij deze drama series gekomen? (Denk aan persoonlijke aanbevelingen of via vrienden, social media, etc.)
- Welke persoonlijke aanbevelingen voor drama series zie je op jouw account?
- Zijn deze overwegend internationaal of Nederlands?
- Wat vind je van het internationale aanbod aan drama series op Netflix?
- Uit welke landen komen deze internationale drama series vooral volgens jou?
- Wat vind je van het Nederlandse aanbod aan drama series op Netflix?
- Wat vind je van de verhouding van internationale en Nederlandse drama series op Netflix?
- In hoeverre vind je dit aanbod aan drama series uitgebreid genoeg? (Genoeg om uit te kiezen of moeten er meer internationale of juist Nederlandse drama series bij?)
- Hoe heeft Netflix jouw kijkgedrag wat betreft internationale drama series veranderd? Kijk je nu meer internationale series dan voorheen?

### Cosmopolitanism

*We zien een steeds meer groeiende diversiteit, er lijken allemaal landen op te komen en veel meer mee te doen in het internationale veld.*

- Hoe sta je tegenover drama series vanuit andere landen?
- Vind je het leuk om naar hele andere culturen te kijken of kijk je liever naar plekken die je herkent?

- Vind je het fijner om naar bekende personages/culturen te kijken of juist liever onbekende culturen die verder van je afstaan? En waarom? (Jezelf identificeren)
- Als je denkt aan drama series uit Amerika, waar denk je dan aan?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Zuid Amerikaanse drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Belgische drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Duitse drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Franse drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Spaanse drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Italiaanse drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Deense drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Zweedse drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan UK drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Ierse drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Afrikaanse drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Aziatische drama series?
- Welk gevoel heb je als je denkt aan Australische drama series?
- In hoeverre sta je er voor open om drama series uit deze landen te bekijken?
- Vind je het leuk om naar deze drama series te kijken?
- Bekijk je dit land en deze cultuur nu op een andere manier dan voordat je de drama serie hebt bekeken?

#### Cultural proximity

- Als je naar de Netflix catalogus kijkt van drama series, waar let je dan op voordat je een serie aanklikt om te bekijken?
- Hoe gemakkelijk kun je een keuze maken uit het aanbod aan drama series op Netflix?
- Als je een drama serie kiest op Netflix, ben je je dan bewust van het land waar de drama serie vandaan komt?
- Kijk je zelf liever internationale of Nederlandse drama series en waarom?
- In hoeverre speelt de taal die wordt gesproken in een drama serie een rol bij het kiezen van een drama serie op Netflix?
- Wat vind je van Nederlands gesproken drama series?
- Welke gesproken taal/talen vind je het leukst als het gaat om het kijken van drama series?
- Hoe makkelijk kun je deze taal dan volgen?
- In hoeverre merk je dat je meer plezier beleeft aan het kijken van een drama serie in een taal die je begrijpt?
- Hoe vaak maak je gebruik van taal opties, zoals ondertiteling of Nederlands ingesproken?

- Welke gesproken talen vind je minder prettig als het gaat om het kijken van drama series en waarom?
- Wat voor soort verhaallijnen in drama series vind je het meest interessant om naar te kijken?
- In hoeverre spelen de acteurs in een drama serie een rol bij je keuze voor een drama serie?
- In hoeverre speelt humor in een drama serie een rol bij je keuze voor een drama serie?
- In hoeverre speelt de manier waarop een drama serie is gemaakt (denk aan bepaalde muziek of cameraopstelling) een rol bij je keuze voor een drama serie?

*Als respondent specifieke drama serie noemt doorvragen:*

- Wat vind je er zo leuk aan?
- Is het de stijl/personages/verhaal/thema's/plek waar het zich afspeelt?
- Welke serie vond je niet leuk, waarom, kun je een voorbeeld geven

## Appendix C: Code tree

In this appendix, an overview of the code tree is provided. In this code tree, only a few examples of quotes are included, which demonstrate how the respondents' answers led to the five themes and including sub-themes.

Text fragments	Sub-themes	Themes
“I do consciously watch drama series on Netflix in Spanish sometimes, because this allows me to maintain a bit of my Spanish”	Learning a language	Language
“It’s such a nice language, it is funny to listen to and it has such a different character”	Perception of a language	
“With an English series I have the tendency to grab my phone and scroll through Instagram, because I understand it anyway. But if it's Spanish, if I have no clue what it happening, because I don't understand it. So you really have to pay attention, and I think that's kind of an advantage because it really forces you to do nothing and just watch that series”	Ability to follow a language	
“Just that thrilling aspect”, “a series must be realistic”	Appealing narratives	Narrative
“I think those Spanish series are more about the drugs world and a criminal side that is being brought up”	Narratives from different countries	
“When you really immerse yourself in a series, that you want to know what happened. If not, it is a nice series, but not a good one. With a good series, you want to keep watching”	Narrative immersion	
“Yes I think those are much less expensive productions. When you just see these very expensive productions, for example series they make in America or England, but also in Spain you know. Spain also has really good series, I	Budget	High quality

think those countries just throw more money at it”		
“I associate that with quality. When you know that an actor really fits a certain role well and when they are really good at acting, that is why you want to see them playing a certain role. Then you immediately know the whole vibe of the movie or series”	Actors	
“I think in terms of locations in Europe, it's all a bit more limited. That's not a bad thing, it's part of some series, but because you have a much wider range of American series, you also have a lot more different set-ups”	Production values	
“Love it when a new Danish or Korean series comes”	Interest other cultures	Openness cultures
“You get to know a different culture, and I really like it that we have the opportunity to experience another culture, rather than the American culture that is pushed into our faces”	Cultural intellectual	
“We all have a gay family member, we all have a family where there's always a fight, we all have something you know. So it's all very recognizable I think”	Identification	
“I do like to see things that we recognize from our trip, as you can say oh I've been there”	Points of recognition	
“If someone would say that a series is very good and I trust that person's taste, I would watch it”	Social environment	Contextual factors
“I would never rely on the title and the picture and thinking I'm going to check that series out. Instead I read the descriptions first”	Personal recommendations	

Table C1. Code tree