

# **READING SEX AND THE CITY: A SITE OF NEGOTIATION FOR NON-WESTERN WOMEN**

**Burcu Baykan**

Ms., Doctoral Researcher in Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, baykanb@tcd.ie

## **Abstract**

This paper is devoted to an exploration of the reception of American television series “Sex and the City” by non-Western female fans. It aims to explain the appeal of Sex and the City to women audiences from non-Western societies and to make an analysis of the discourses involved in the ways they receive and negotiate this imported media text into their culture and forms of everyday life they are embedded in. This analysis incorporates some broad discourses involved in the reception and consumption processes of Sex and the City by local women audiences: cultural and ideological contexts, processes of economic liberalization and globalization, macro-structures of gender hierarchies, perception of the Western culture and modernity. The paper examines the extent to which these discursive contexts influence the audiences’ compliance with or resistance to Sex and the City, the bold constructions of femininity in the show in particular. The paper seeks to understand how non-Western women audience members “use” Sex and the City as an imported media text and investigate the feelings of pleasure in their consuming of the show. It provides insights into what this phenomenally groundbreaking program means to its numerous non-Western female fans avidly watching it, putting emphasis on their reactions to the bold depictions of women in the show and the culturally specific experience of non-Western female fans, compared to how the series is watched and discussed in the West. To gain insight into the discourses about women in other parts of the world rather than U.S or Europe, as Sex and the City viewers, this paper employs a range of qualitative methods including internet based forum and message board participant observation, directly contacting the posters of the forums through email, textual analysis, analysis of newspaper coverage and discourse analysis to address these broad questions.

**Keywords:** Sex and The City, Reception Studies, Non-Western Women, Discourse Analysis, Constructions of Femininity.