

# TV SERIES: TÜRKİYE, SERBIA AND BEYOND...

MAPPING THE GENRE SYSTEM OF TV SERIES: NARRATIVE STRUCTURES, PRODUCTION MODES, AND FINANCES  
CARTOGRAPHY OF TV SERIES: REAL AND FICTIONAL SPACES

## Program

### Opening Speeches:

13:00 Prof. Dr. Metin Kozak, Dean

13:05 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Levent Soysal, Project Researcher

TÜBİTAK-MoESTD Project 220N370\_TV Series: A Comparative Perspective - From Geopolitics to Geocriticism Serbia and Turkey

13:10 First Session (Moderator: Assist. Prof. Dr. Defne Tüzün RTC Department, Chair)

13:15-13:30 "An Overview of the Economic and Political Determinants Influencing Turkish TV Dramas"

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Selin Tüzün Ateşalp, Marmara University

13:30-13:45 "A Comparative Analysis of Dizi Genres in Turkey: Traditional TV vs OTT Platforms"

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ürün Yıldırım Önk, Yaşar University

13:45-14:00 "Dizi as a Media-text: Different Layers of Narrative"

Prof. Dr. Arzu Öztürkmen, Boğaziçi University

14:00-14:10 Q&A

14:10-14:30 Coffee Break

14:30 Second Session (Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Melis Behlil, Project Researcher)

14:35-14:50 "TV Series: Where is Finance?"

Prof. Dr. Belma Öztürkkal, Kadir Has University

14:50-15:05 "Is Caucasian Chalk Circle Reversed in Turkish TV Series?"

Prof. Dr. Deniz Bayrakdar, Kadir Has University

15:05-15:15 Q&A

15:15-15:45 "Serbian TV Series Reco(r)ding: New and Old Genres"

Prof. Dr. Nevena Daković, University of Arts Belgrade

Assoc. Prof. Alexandra Milovanovic, University of Arts Belgrade

15:45-16:00 "Balkan cartographies: geocritical analysis of Serbian and Turkish TV series"

Iva Leković, University of Arts in Belgrade

16:00-16:10 Q&A

16:10 Concluding Remarks

VENUE: KADİR HAS UNIVERSITY, D BLOCK, CINEMA HALL A

23 MAY 2023 13:00-16:30

Cibali Mah. Kadir Has Cd. No: 17 Fatih/Istanbul

Webinar I and Webinar II are organized in a hybrid format as part of the 2259 TÜBİTAK-MoESTD bilateral program, Project 220N370 "TV Series: A Comparative Perspective - From Geopolitics to Geocriticism Serbia and Turkey"



### Assoc. Prof. Dr. Selin Tüzün Ateşalp, Marmara University

Selin Tüzün Ateşalp is an Associate Professor at the University of Marmara in Istanbul, Faculty of Communications, Department of Radio-TV and Cinema. She is a graduate of the same department. She completed her master's thesis at the Communication Faculty of Galatasaray University in 2005 in Istanbul. She received her Ph.D. degree in July 2011 from the Radio and Television Department of Marmara University. Her research interests include media industries, transnational television, and audience studies. She teaches courses including Communication Theories, Media Studies, and International Communication.

### Prof. Dr. Deniz Bayrakdar, Kadir Has University

Deniz Bayrakdar is a film professor at Kadir Has University, Radio, Television and Cinema Department. She is the principal investigator of the 220N370\_TÜBİTAK-MoESTD TV Series Project on the Turkish side.

She has organized New Directions in Turkish Cinema between 1999-2019 and has published seventeen volumes thereof. Her recent publication is "Migrant Bodies in the Land/City/Seascapes of the 2000's Turkish Cinema" in *Refugees and Migrants in Contemporary Film, Art and Media* (eds. D. Bayrakdar and R. Burgoyne, by Amsterdam University Press, 2022).

### Prof. Dr. Nevena Daković, University of Arts Belgrade

Nevena DAKOVIĆ, Ph.D., is a full professor of Film and Media Studies at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade, and the director of the Institute for Theatre, Film, Radio, and Television, FDA. Nevena Daković has written (most recent *Images without Memory: trauma, film, transmission / Slike bez sećanja: trauma, film, transmisija*, 2020), and edited a number of books (*Film and Screen Media Studies: Serbia 3.0 / Studije filma i ekranskih medija: Srbija 3.0*, 2019, etc.); and published more than 150 articles and texts. She is often invited as a guest lecturer at European and American Universities. She is a member of Academia Europaea.

### Iva Leković, University of Arts in Belgrade

Iva Leković is a Ph.D. candidate at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, University of Arts in Belgrade. She obtained her BA degree in Art History at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade and a MA at the UNESCO Department for Cultural Policy and Management. She curated exhibitions and is the author of various essays on visual arts and film. She participates in conferences and publishes articles internationally. As a junior researcher, she is a team member of TÜBİTAK-MoESTD's project TV Series: A Comparative Perspective from Geopolitics to Geocriticism: A Comparative Perspective: Serbia and Turkey.

### Assoc. Prof. Alexandra Milovanovic, University of Arts Belgrade

Aleksandra MILOVANOVIĆ, Ph.D., is an associate professor of Film and Media Studies at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Belgrade. She is the author of the book *Towards New Media: Transmedial Narratives Between Film and Television / Ka novim medijima: transmedijalni narativi između filma i televizije* (2019). Her recent theoretical papers include *Remediating Yugoslav Television Heritage* (2021), *Serbia: Reco(r)ding the Cinematic Turn* (2020), and *Navigating Through Layers of Digital Platforms: Immersive Balkan Experience* (2019). Her research fields focus on television series, transmedia storytelling, digital archives, media, memory, and identity.

### Assist. Prof. Dr. Ürün Yıldırım Önk, Yaşar University

Ürün YILDIRAN ÖNK completed M.A. (2004) and Ph.D. (2011) degrees at Dokuz Eylül University, Institute of Fine Arts. She held Assoc. degree in 2022. Since 2007, she has been working at Yaşar University, Faculty of Communication, Department of Radio, Television, and Cinema, and currently serves as the vice dean. She participates in international and nationally funded projects. Her recent work focuses on television genres. She coordinated a project about Dizi (Turkish Serials) on Turkish OTT platforms called 'New Screen New Dizi.' She has articles, conference papers, and book chapters in the fields of television, cinema, and media history.

### Prof. Dr. Belma Öztürkkal, Kadir Has University

Dr. Öztürkkal is a Professor of Finance at the Faculty of Economics, Administrative, and Social Sciences. She is a Management Committee Member for Turkey and a member of the Diversity Group in COST CA19130 Action - Fintech and Artificial Intelligence in Finance - Towards a transparent financial industry. Her research spans areas within finance, with particular emphasis on investments, corporate finance, and ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance).

Her research is published in finance journals such as the *European Journal of Finance*, *Emerging Markets Finance*, and *Trade, Journal of Cultural Economics*, and *Borsa Istanbul Review*. Her book chapters are published in Palgrave Macmillan, Springer, and McGraw Hill.

She was a visiting fellow at the Graduate Institute Geneva in 2019. She taught at the University of Texas, Cologne Business School, Koç University, Sabancı University, and Bilgi University. She was at the University of Texas at Dallas, Department of Finance for her Post-Doc in 2008-2009. She received a BS from Boğaziçi University, Department of Mechanical Engineering, and a degree of MBA in Finance from the University of Miami. She holds Ph.D. in Business Administration - Finance from Marmara University.

### Prof. Dr. Arzu Öztürkmen, Boğaziçi University

Arzu Öztürkmen is a professor of folklore, oral history, and performance studies at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, Turkey. She published several articles on the cultural history of Turkey, is the co-editor of *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean* (2014) and *Celebration, Entertainment, and Theater in the Ottoman World* (2014), and the author of *Türkiye'de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik* (1998), *Rakıdan Oyuna: Türkiye'de Dansın Modern Halleri* (2016), and *The Delight of Turkish Dizi* (2022). She is currently chairing the National Committee of ICTM-Turkey and is an active member of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce-Film Industry Coordination Committee.

### "An Overview of the Economic and Political Determinants Influencing Turkish TV Dramas"

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Selin Tüzün Ateşalp, Marmara University

The export of Turkish television dramas began in the early 2000s, with *Crazy Heart* (1998-2002) being sold to the Kazakh market in 2001. Since then, the export of TV dramas has taken off, with MBC airing several Turkish dramas, including *Noor* (Silver, 2005-2007) in 2008. While scholars have analyzed the reasons behind the success of Turkish TV dramas, "genre proximity" is identified as one of the contributing factors. Additionally, in-depth interviews conducted with TV executives and distributors since 2012 suggest that the universal stories and emphasis on human emotion underlying Turkish dramas also play a significant role in their appeal to both domestic and transnational audiences.

Turkish audiences' strong preference for domestic dramas that secure audience loyalty and high advertising revenues has encouraged television channels to make significant investments in TV dramas. As production budgets increase and market competition grows, television channels need to increase advertising revenue. However, the law limits advertising spots to 20% of any given clock hour, leading television channels to demand longer episodes from producers. Consequently, by 2023, a typical prime-time Turkish Keywords: drama episode lasts around 150 minutes. This duration issue has increased the pervasiveness of melodrama in the industry.

TV dramas in Turkey are often canceled after only a few episodes due to low ratings. The change in the rating system in 2012 has made channels more reluctant to take risks and try different, innovative projects. This study examines the economic and political determinants influencing the content of Turkish TV dramas, based on in-depth interviews with industry professionals.

Turkish Television dramas, "genre proximity", duration problem

### "Is Caucasian Chalk Circle Reversed in Turkish TV Series?"

Prof. Dr. Deniz Bayrakdar

Bertold Brecht's "Der kaukasische Kreidekreis" (1954) poses the question "Who is the real mother of the child?" This question builds the basic plot for most of the TV series. Brecht's work is derived from poet Dichter Henschke's (aka Klabund) theatre play which is adapted from a Chinese song play from the 14th century by Li-Hsing-tao "Hoei-lan-ki" (chalk border or chalk line), a line which the child has to cross and show its choice. Henschke developed this line to the "Chalk Circle" and presented it in Deutsches Theater in Berlin, where Brecht was a playwright and developed the story further.

The "Chalk Circle" plot will be the key to my presentation: the referentiality, the intertextuality, and the migration of stories from the far east to the West and then again in the form of films and TV series back to the East. The oscillation between East and West evolved the "Chalk Circle" plot from a line to a circle having the mother in its center.

A comparative perspective between Turkish and Serbian series also shows that the global narratives of TV series nowadays transgress the domination of one civilization, one religion (Westphal, 2011, 4). The "Caucasian Chalk Circle" plot as the core of my presentation will support me in analyzing *Bir Zamanlar Çukurova*, *Uyanış Büyük Selçuklu*, *Babil*, *Şahsiyet* and *Besa* in a comparative way referring to the code co-occurrences of the project's data analysis.

Keywords: Caucasian Chalk Circle, referentiality, motherhood

### "Serbian TV Series Reco(r)ding: New and Old Genres"

Prof. Dr. Nevena Daković, University of Arts Belgrade

Assoc. Prof. Alexandra Milovanovic, University of Arts Belgrade

The paper explores the genre diversification of Serbian TV series production in the period of 2015-2022, and its role in the domains of soft power and cultural diplomacy. During these years, the rapid growth of TV series production and their genre dynamics are evident, especially regarding the variety of historical topics (from action thriller to political drama). With their complex narratives, the new series are able to meet the expectations as well as regain popularity and success with the audience, both in Serbia and in the region. Considering the total number of national TV series produced in the last decade, the historical genre dealing with key moments of national history is more than well represented, but proportionally to the big-budget demands.

The in-depth analysis of the paper focuses five-part historical mini-series, *The Family* (Porodica, Bojan Vuletić, 2021), which tells the inside story of the downfall and the last days of freedom of the former Serbian and Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic in the midst of the entangled political and family crisis. The series aired on Serbian national television with record ratings, coinciding with the twentieth anniversary of Milosevic's extradition to the Hague's tribunal, where he was prosecuted for war crimes and crimes against humanity. *The Family* is neither a history lesson nor hindsight, but it highlights both the current social moment and the historical context of the time. Its production follows well-popular and established patterns of BBC and HBO political dramas and has inspired numerous national and regional comments and debates. In 2021, at the Sarajevo Film Festival, it was awarded the specially designed Heart of Sarajevo for the best drama series in the Western Balkans. Consequently, the multifaceted (hi)story of *The Family* reveals the past and the present and their unfolding cultural and political tensions; discloses opposed parties and conflicting identities in the country and in the region.

In the last decade, Serbian TV series have both reco(r)ded new genres and redefined old ones. The wide range of soft power narratives is characterized by the nuanced exploration of the troubled past through a revival of historical TV dramas such as *The Family*. This TV series actively contributes to the diversity of regional cultural relations and empowers the critical analysis of the audio-visual sector, identity, soft power, and cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: Serbia, TV series, Historical drama, genre, soft power

### "Balkan cartographies: geocritical analysis of Serbian and Turkish TV series"

Iva Leković, University of Arts in Belgrade

The period of postmodernism has brought new perspectives on different kinds of maps and different forms of spatial representations, allowing the proliferation of diverse cartographies that are often combining physical geography and cultural texts that represent those (real and imaginary) spaces. Grounded on reading the spaces that are shown in works of literature and media, Bernard Westphal coined the term geocriticism in order to define how the works of fiction constitute the image of actual places they refer to. As one of the most fundamental cultural artifacts of the contemporary world – that, according to Dominique Moisi, reflects and shapes today's geopolitics – TV series often draw their own cartographies of cities, countries, and regions, sometimes providing a guide for the gaze of the fictional flâneur. On the intersection of Dominique Moisi's geopolitics of TV series and Bernard Westphal's geocriticism, the exposé will provide a critical reading of the Balkans based on the narratives of Serbian and Turkish TV series. Focusing on different aspects of TV series' narrative and their visual design (including the opening intro in certain cases), the analysis aims to show how the representation of spaces intersects with the representation of identity, what is the relation within the body and the space, identity and spatial transgressions and how they all create a cartography of the region of the Balkans. The geographical and geopolitical notion of the Balkans will be observed in a wider context so that it includes the reflection of a Turkish Anatolian side. As the subject of the analysis is generated within the scope of TÜBİTAK – MoESTD's project, the lecture will focus mainly on the spaces as represented in the series *Besa*, *Black Sun* (Senke nad Balkanom), *Bitter Lands* (Bir Zamanlar Çukurova), *Persona* (Şahsiyet) (that are all case-studies of the project), but also another production, such as *The Gift* (Atiye) that serves as a fine example of how the fiction transforms factual locations by mythologizing them.

Keywords: geocriticism, Balkan cartographies, Serbian and Turkish TV series.

### "A Comparative Analysis of Dizi Genres in Turkey: Traditional TV vs OTT Platforms"

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ürün Yıldırım Önk, Yaşar University

Turkish TV Drama, also known as 'dizi', has been dominating the schedules of Turkish traditional television channels as well as leading the catalogs of Turkish OTT platforms. Based on its popularity nationwide and worldwide 'Turkish dizi' recently became an important profit-making media content for producers. Consequently, every year dozens of new productions are aired or streamed belonging to a range of more than twenty genres defined in international literature. Furthermore, the Turkish OTT platforms claim to try untried genres/formulas and bring a new dimension to the Turkish dizi sector. From this point of view, this study aims to compare the genre preferences of traditional television channels with the OTT platform's preferences. The genre analysis method is used to classify Turkish dizi both on traditional TV and OTT platforms. Based on this idea, Turkish dizi streamed by three national OTT platforms (BluTV, Exxen, Gain) are listed and categorized according to their generic specifications. The results show that three main genres dominate the generic distribution of Turkish dizi on OTT platforms. These genres are listed as comedy, drama, and action/crime. They are followed by police and teen dramas, although they are few in number. On the other hand, horror, science fiction, musical and fantastic genres that have been previously ignored by traditional television had a chance on OTT platforms. For traditional TV, the sample is limited to Turkish dizi aired on seven major television channels (ATV, Fox TV, Kanal D, Show TV, Star TV, TRT 1, TV8) in two weeks. The results regarding the traditional TV channels indicate that prime-time soap opera is the leading genre on screen. It is followed by action/crime and period dramas. Although limited in number, there are also dramedies and sketch comedies. Both results are interpreted along with the top listings, ratings, and audience studies (survey and focus group). According to the findings, the genres seem to be shared between traditional TV and OTT platforms except for action/crime. Drama, comedy, and police genres are the ones on OTT platforms whereas soap operas and period dramas are popular on traditional TV. Moreover, the new trials seem to remain as attempts as the OTT platforms no longer prefer to promote them. Eventually, it is possible to conclude that genre preference is highly dependent on the audience expectations for both traditional TV and OTT platforms. This study proves an important aspect of genres connecting the audience and the industry but also modestly contributes to opening more space for further genre studies to analyze the latent reasons beyond their popularity or disfavor.

Keywords: Turkish dizi, OTT platform, television, genre analysis

### "TV Series: Where is Finance?"

Prof. Dr. Belma Öztürkkal, Kadir Has University

This study develops the idea of the film industry as an area of creative industries to create value with cultural activities. (İncekara et al., 2013) states that the economic analysis of creative industries will reveal a lot of information. We investigate the Turkish TV series *Uyanış: Büyük Selçuklu-The Great Seljuks: Guardians of Justice*, *Babil-The Choice*, *Bir Zamanlar Çukurova-Bitter Lands/Tierra Amarga*, *Şahsiyet-Persona* as well as some episodes of Serbian TV series. (Waterman et al., 2013) draws attention the rapid development of online platforms as Youtube, Amazon, I-tunes, and Netflix and their share of advertisement revenues.

Currency, finance, economy, gold, jewelry, credit, bank, real estate, money, and investment are the words which take place within the focus group discussion related to the finance topic words in the TV series. There were 1,019 referrals to the finance topic words and more than half of the times the word 'money' was used.

Keywords: finance, investment, TV series, online platforms

### "Dizi as a Media-text: Different Layers of Narrative"

Prof. Dr. Arzu Öztürkmen, Boğaziçi University

Dizis undoubtedly captivate their audiences with their stories and characters, but as a final product, they are also media texts, which comprise many other visual and performative elements. They pass through a complex production process, which includes a collaboration between writing, shooting, and post-production activities. A deeper understanding of the final media text, therefore, requires a thorough ethnography of these production processes, which generate each episode's broadcast tape and afterlife. As a media text, each episode of a dizi represents a collective creative effort on the part of writers, producers, directors, actors, editors, musicians, and - in recent years -international distributors.

My ethnographic research during the first two years revealed that dizis' production and broadcasting processes were tightly interwoven, offering a different mode of communication and consumption, and one that is extremely sensitive to the different conjunctures. When compared to many other national industries, the Turkish dizi industry operates with particular precarity, where many screenwriters begin to write without knowing whether the project in hand would remain on air until its finale. While the writing, producing, and broadcasting processes are interactively linked, audiences and distributors have also a say in shaping the final outcome. Audiences give prompt responses to each episode, and distributors give suggestions to producers on favorite topics and stars the market demanded. In that regard, it is important to distinguish dizis from some other television genres with which they are often associated with, like soap opera, telenovelas, or musalsal.

Keywords: dizi industry, media-text, narrative, audience

# WEBINARS ON TV SERIES: TÜRKİYE, SERBIA AND BEYOND..

MAPPING THE GENRE SYSTEM OF TV SERIES: NARRATIVE STRUCTURES, PRODUCTION MODES, AND FINANCES  
CARTOGRAPHY OF TV SERIES: REAL AND FICTIONAL SPACES

## Program Committee

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2259 TÜBİTAK-MoESTD bilateral program, Project 220N370 "TV Series: A Comparative Perspective - From Geopolitics to Geocriticism Serbia and Turkey"

The project posits TV Series in a comparative perspective using both Dominique Moïsi's geopolitics and Bertrand Westphal's geocriticism. Serbia and Turkey with shared geographies and histories and culture in the Balkans will be approached in this study on the basis of the emotions embedded in TV series, and the referentiality to real and imaginary places that were read through them. Geopolitics of the Balkan region and geopolitical relations of Serbia and Turkey amply sustain the concept. The project is the first comparative research on TV series in Serbia and Turkey.

Website: <https://tsts.khas.edu.tr>

Instagram: @tvseriesproject

Twitter:@TVSeriesProject

Zoom link for webinars: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89264973988?pwd=WXF5cDJrditmUHArbXhOczdadG91UT09>

Meeting ID: 892 6497 3988 Passcode: TV Series

