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# From Liberation to Market: Turkish TV Serials 2001-2012 in the Eyes of their Producers

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## Résumé

### Biography

Studies in political science, history and visual communications University of Hamburg, London School of Economics and Free University Berlin; writer of screenplays and commentaries in doc and feature films, reporter, editor, news cutter and advisor in television (DW/ZDF). Since 1992 fieldwork on the globalisation and privatisation of the television landscape in India and successively also in Turkey. 2007 PhD in social and cultural anthropology (European University Frankfurt/Oder): *The Televised Community: Culture, Politics and the Market of Visual Representation in India*. 2008-2009 post-doctoral researcher at the University Priority Research Project (UPRP) 'Asia and Europe', University of Zurich, 2010-2012 research project at the University of Bern: *The Meaning of Turkey: Narratives and Negotiations of the Secular and the Islamic in Turkish Commercial Television*. Currently finishing a monograph: *The Undisputed Land: the Gujarat Pogrom and Medialised Democracy in India (WT)*.

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### Abstract

Over the past decade, the production of serials in Turkey has undergone some substantial changes in terms of the ownership structure of TV channels, notably with the largest serial-producers Kanal D and atv. The 'peace' that the owner of Kanal D and Dogan Medya, Aydin Dogan, had to eventually strike with the AKP-government in 2010 and the sale of atv to the Calik Holding, which has close ties to PM Erdogan's family, in 2006 have affected the long-standing self-confidence of secular mainstream representation and its producers. Before this background, and based on long-term in-depth fieldwork in the Turkish TV landscape, my contribution seeks to draw a trajectory from the founding and the first coming to power of the Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi (AKP) as a conflicting carrier of hope for democratic change in 2001/2002 to the time of the party's/government's increasing popular authoritarianism and pressure on media, evaluating the relationship of economic/commercial and political/legal implications in producers' discourses and practise. I will argue that an observable increasing collapse of identification with the representational work that producers, directors and writers in and for the TV companies do and promote exemplifies a blending of economic and political dependencies that evade clear causalities and that at the same time indicate an

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\*Intervenant

intensified focus away from audiences towards media owners and the government. While a discourse of the new and of 'reality', as opposed to 'ideology', in 2001/2002 had made way for increasing alarm at what was perceived as 'growing Islamisation' in 2009, prompting a near-activist stance particularly in Kanal D, all problems were declared to be solved by my interlocutors in 2012 with growing commercial success and export rates of the serials to the Middle East. Interlacing analysis of different serials on screen with producers' discourses behind screen and political events over a decade, I will try and show different evaluations of the same central themes in serials' representation (gender/ woman's role in society, domestic/sexual and political violence, urban- rural/modern-feudal relationship, everyday modesty against Ottomanisation/grandeur fantasy) and question both the absence and the possibility of political oppositional discourse and practise in commercialised entertainment production.