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# Dizi as a Genre: A Historical Review in Comparative Perspective

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## Résumé

### Abstract

This work-in-progress examines the rise of the *dizi* as ‘Turkish television drama,’ drawing its particularities and differences from other international genres like the soap opera, telenovela or the BBC drama. Exploring the historical course through which the initial *dizis* have been produced, it tries to delineate the development and consolidation of their structural elements. This process includes the era between 1970s-1990s, where the dynamics of *dizi* production were controlled by the official TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), and the post 1990s, where private channels created their own style and diversity.

Methodologically speaking, an ethnographic approach has been adopted where the research used both written and oral sources. As the *dizi* has also been a historically constructed cultural form closely connected to the community of Turkish cinema, the advertisement industry and theater circles, written sources will consist mainly of related press accounts and published surveys and memoirs. The research will also use interviews conducted since 2011 with producers, screenwriters, directors, art directors, directors of photography, editors, musicians, actors, managers and location scouts. The narratives of these interviews help greatly to observe the collective creative processes leading to the production of the final genre, which we call *dizi* today.

How the *dizi* genre emerged through Turkish television history, and how it reached the final form which is now exportable to other countries needs undoubtedly to be explored in the international context of the popular culture market. When compared with the production and consumption patterns of the soap, telenovela or the newly emerging contents and formats of international television, *dizi* as a genre has been praised and despised in the global market from different angles. This study therefore also tries to situate the Turkish *dizi* sector within the general framework of the global television events such as MIPTV, MIPCOM, AFM, ATA or the more local ones like the Discop or ITVF. Although the international reception has been an important dimension highly acknowledged in recent years, what makes up the genre of *dizi* continues to be primarily ‘local’ where the production and reception processes continually negotiate between the creative input and the mercantile profit.

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