

Politics in TV Series and TV Series in Politics. Case Study of Turkish Historical TV Shows

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The phenomenon of rapidly growing international popularity of relatively new “Made in Turkey” brand, the TV series, is under the scope of interests of not only art or cinema critics but also journalists, sociologists as well as scholars in the fields of Turkic Studies, Cultural anthropology etc. Thematic peculiarities, perfect performance, gorgeous views of Istanbul and other cities, shown in the films could be considered as clues to the success of Turkish TV shows that are not only means of entertainment for millions of viewers all over the world but, which is more important, functional instrument for representing Turkish culture and lifestyle as well as agitating the ideas and concepts acceptable for the Turkish Government. Thus, TV shows become an important platform for constructing or even reconstructing audience’s perceptions of a wide range of issues including both historical matters and modern situation. This article aims to trace main patterns of utilization of the TV shows as a “soft power” tool, focusing on the Turkish TV shows “Resurrection: Ertuğrul” (“Diriliş: Ertuğrul”, 2014–2019), portraying the establishment of the Ottoman statehood and “The Last Emperor” (“Payitaht Abdulhamid”, 2017–2021), chronicling the efforts to forestall the decline of the Ottoman Empire and preserve sovereignty. Despite their focus on distinct historical epochs, not only do both series utilize the historical contexts to address issues prevalent in modern Turkey but also serve as a platform to justify the decisions of current authorities and to shape viewers’ perceptions and understandings of contemporary social, political problems.

Keywords: Turkey, TV series, soft power, propaganda, Abdulhamit II, Ertuğrul.

Introduction

In international relations theory, the traditional understanding of state power has always been military, hard power. However, more “soft” methods have been also applied by different countries to expand their own influence. Over time, alongside with the development of technologies, the possibilities to utilize such methods also expanded. The fact that in 1990 American political scientist J. Nye put into circulation the concept of “soft power”, presenting the non-military perception of power in a theoretical dimension, proves the activation of “soft” policy manifestations [1]. Nowadays, it can be said that “soft power”, whose strategies usually differ depending on the cultural-value system of a specific state, has become an effective tool for spreading influence for many countries, including the Republic of Turkey. Among other educational and cultural tools, Turkey actively uses film production. The thematic and content diversity of Turkish TV series, the performance of the actors, the filming locations with modern equipment and, of course, the great state

support contribute to their wide popularity both inside and outside the country. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Turkish state propaganda machine uses them as a means of ideological work with external and internal audiences. The role of TV series is not decreasing with the spread of the Internet, as one might expect, but on the contrary, it is increasing due to easy access, growing number of users and expanding geography of broadcasting. This article aims to trace the main patterns of utilization of the TV shows for promotion of ideological clichés and concepts of the ruling elite in Turkey. Our case study is based on the films “Resurrection: Ertuğrul” (“Diriliş: Ertuğrul”, 2014–2019) and “The Last Emperor” (“Payitaht Abdulhamid”, 2017–2021).

The modern tool of Turkey’s soft power — Turkish TV series

Cinema is regarded as one of the most effective means of popularization of modern culture. If properly programmed and used cinematography could be a very successful soft power tool. According to the approaches of director, screenwriter’s way of thinking, TV series create ideal heroes for people, regardless of the real prototype of the given character and often far from that prototype.

The Turkish authorities make a focus on TV series in the field of film production, because according to the research data, they are in the list of most-watched ones in Turkey [2, p. 188]. TV series are targeted as a broad platform of agitation accessible to the majority and this platform is skillfully used to shape the desired version of the Turkish reality for the foreign and domestic audience on the one hand, and send messages both to its own society and foreign countries, on the other hand. Moreover, the great state support for the making of the TV series, the active involvement of government circles, including the highest-ranking officials, in the organizational work indicate that the TV shows, as a resource of “soft power”, are controlled and directed right from Ankara. Turkish researcher and journalist S. Korucu mentions a marked interest of the Justice and Development Party, Turkey’s ruling party since 2002, in TV series and especially historical shows, and states that naturally this is especially important factor in the propaganda domain [3, p. 52].

The phenomenon of Turkish TV series, which have been actively introduced in the world TV market since the 2000s and enjoy great publicity, has been examined both by public-journalistic and academic circles. Although the researchers emphasize the agitation function of the TV series as a part of the “soft power” toolkit, especially aimed at the foreign audience, they play an equally significant role in conveying certain messages to the Turkish audience. In the context of revaluing the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish authorities consider historical TV shows as a place to transform the stereotypes formed in the society with specific emphasis. Moreover, if the trend of revaluing the historical Sultanate is very clear, the discussion of perceptions about the fall of the empire and the creation of the republic is still open in some sense.

It should be noted that although Turkish film production has a history of about 100 years, and Turkish channels have long been broadcast in different countries of the world through satellite television, an unprecedented increase in interest in Turkish “soap operas” began in the 2000s, with large investments and serious quality changes in the field. President of the Union of Turkish Film Producers, M. Tunc Turk mentioned in the interview to Anadolu Agency, that Kazakhstan paid \$30 for each episode of “Crazy Heart”, aired in 1998–2002, and for each episode of “Magnificent Century”, aired in 2011–2014,

already more than 200,000 dollars [4]. Currently, Turkey is second only to the USA in terms of the number of TV series translated into dozens of languages [5] and exported to more than 150 countries¹ [6, p. 68]. Turkish TV series are popular even in Latin America, despite the fact that in the 1990s, the countries of this region were the leaders in this field [7, p. 84].

This success of TV series as certain “cultural ambassadors” also contributes to the growth of interest in the Turkish language and Turkish culture, promotes tourism. Dealing with the export of Turkish TV series, founder of the TV content distributor “Global Agency” İ. Pinto noted in his interview to Al-Jazeera, “400 million people admire Turkey every evening, there is no better advertisement than this” [8]. According to journalist S. Yavuz, following to the TV series, children in different countries of the world have even started to be given Turkish names [9]. Along with this, a number of countries from Scandinavia to Afghanistan and the USA are trying to put some restrictions against what they call Turkish cultural invasion, shortening the screening hours and so on. It is noteworthy that even in Azerbaijan, the screening of TV series in Turkish was banned on the grounds of negatively affecting the state language [6, p. 79].

It is worth noting that Turkish TV series have a high ranking in some Balkan countries with a certain anti-Turkish stance and negative historical memory. Since 2005, all leading Greek TV channels have shown more than 50 Turkish TV series. The first of them was the film “Borders of love” (“Yabancı damat”), whose humorous plot was based on the love story of a Turkish girl, Nazlı, and a Greek boy, Niko [10]. The success of Turkish soap operas in Greece can be owing to their high quality on the one hand, and to the social and everyday commonalities of both societies on the other hand. However, a number of circles in Greece talk about the inexpediency of showing Turkish TV series and the dangers associated with their wide spread [11].

The Modernization of the Ottoman Past in Turkish Historical TV Series

Artistic or documentary references to historical topics are especially popular today in different countries of the world. For example, a number of documentaries and feature films have been shot in Russia about the Romanov imperial dynasty. In other words, this should be considered in the context of the 21st century or modern world. Historical TV series have a unique place in the diverse palette of Turkish TV series.

Historical TV series describe the rich Ottoman history; the heroism of the Sultans, special emphasis on the religious and cultural elements of the Ottoman period is made, as well as sometimes the frauds, murders and betrayals typical of the Ottoman period are presented [12, p. 36].

Among the historical TV shows shot during the period of the Justice and Development Party rule are “Magnificent Century” (“Muhteşem Yüzyıl”, 2011–2014), which remains the most watched Turkish TV series in the world today [13, p. 849], “Magnificent Century: Kösem” (“Muhteşem Yüzyıl: Kösem”, 2015–2017), “Resurrection: Ertuğrul” (“Diriliş: Ertuğrul”, 2014–2019), “Founder: Ottoman” or “The Ottoman” (“Kuruluş: Os-

¹ The number of Turkish film lovers has drastically raised when the Arab MBC channel broadcasting in 22 countries of Middle East and North Africa bought the right to broadcast Turkish TV series in 2008. According to the polls, 74 % of MBC audience watch at least one Turkish TV show.

man”, 2019–...), “The Conquest” (“Fatih”, September 2013 — November 2013), “The Last Emperor” (“Payitaht Abdulhamid”, 2017–2021).

In this article, we have chosen for thorough research “Resurrection: Ertuğrul” and “The Last Emperor” TV series and in particular the propaganda elements in them. The series selected by us represent two diametrically different phases of the Ottoman history: the beginning of statehood and the era of postponing/preventing the loss of statehood. Despite this fact both shows use the historical background to address main issues of the modern Turkish society justifying attitudes of the authorities on the one hand and trying to (re)shape viewers’ perceptions of different problems on the other hand. Filming with high-level sponsorship is another commonality that unites the two films, and the parallel examination of these two films allows us to see the evolution of a certain direction of the Turkish official propaganda machine in 2014–2021.

It is clear that the president of Turkey R. T. Erdoğan himself and his government show a keen interest in the historical TV series. Considering that historical TV series are quite popular outside of Turkey, Erdoğan pays much attention to the opinion being formed and wants his ancestors to be seen always fighting and winning. For example, the TV series “Magnificent Century” did not receive the full approval of President. R. T. Erdoğan specifically states: “And we do not know Suleyman as he depicted in the TV series. The viewer sees him only in the harem, among countless women and opulence” [14]. O. Saral, representing the AK Party, drafted a new bill, which banned the showing of TV series and films in which historical reality will be distorted or historical figures will be humiliated [15].

From December 10, 2014 to May 29, 2019, the TV series “Resurrection: Ertuğrul” was shown on the first channel of the Turkish State Television and Radio Company. It presents the events of the 13th century. The main theme of the TV series is the life and heroism of Ertuğrul Gazi, who laid the foundations for the establishment of the Ottoman Empire². The film is seasoned with Turkish proverbs and heroic stories about the Turkish people [16, p.2337]. Preparations for the series lasted 6 months, the actors took part in special courses to hold a sword and acquire other professional qualities. TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, in Turkish Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu) paid 1 million 100 thousand Turkish Liras for each episode of the TV series. According to the T24, The TV series, consisting of five seasons and a total of 150 episodes, was able to secure the highest positions in the rating list of the TV series throughout the duration of the show [17]. It has been shown in more than 60 countries. In 2017 TRT Deputy General Director I. Eren stated in an interview to “Haber7”: “Until now, we have not exported any TV series to the Middle East, but ‘The Resurrection: Ertuğrul’ TV series was so largely searched by Arabs on the Internet that big TV channels finally bought the right to screen it”³ [18]. It should also be noted that the interest in the film is so great in Arab countries that the life of Ertuğrul Gazi was published in Arabic under the title “Gazi Emir Ertuğrul” and was put on sale at the 46th Baghdad International Book Fair [19].

² The information on life and activity of Ertuğrul is mostly based on myths and legends thus being scanty and unreliable. According to accepted historical perspective after the Gengis Khan’s invasion to the Central Asia in 1219–1221 Oghuz Turkmen Kaya tribe migrated to the West and appeared in the Asia Minor in the 1230s. The small group of nomads led by Ertuğrul got lands in Söğüt from Selcuk Sultan Aladdin Keykubat I (1219–1236).

³ It should be mentioned that the majority of Turkish historical films are available on the official YouTube page of the leading historical TV shows producer TRT channel with Arabic subtitles to be accessible for Arab-speaking audience.

President Erdoğan has a unique attitude towards the film. This is evidenced by his regular visits to the film set, his occasional meetings with E. Altan, who plays the main character of the film, Ertuğrul, and the director of the film, and of course, his words of praise at every suitable opportunity: “Wherever I go to the end of the world, they tell about the movie ‘Ertuğrul’. You can see how interest in Ottoman history has increased thanks to this series” [20]. Erdoğan has repeatedly expressed that historical TV shows contribute to the increase of young generations’ knowledge in history and becoming more self-confident [21]. The newspaper “Hürriyet” cited president Erdoğan: “Resurrection: Ertuğrul” TV series is watched with interest everywhere. My grandchildren are also looking forward to the reruns of the TV series, this means we have succeeded” [22].

The filming locations of historical TV series in Turkey have become not only a place for visits by Turkish officials, but also a place for visits of famous people and foreign delegations. In 2018, Venezuelan President N. Maduro visited the set of the TV series [23], and in 2019, M. Ozil, the famous football player of the FC Arsenal [24].

The wide spread of the TV series contributed to the development of tourism. Foreigners visit Turkey especially to see the grave of Ertuğrul Gazi [25]. The clothes and accessories of the heroes of the TV series have become important elements of consumer culture, even in the case of children’s clothes [12, p. 40].

Despite the great positive response, some historians have also criticized the TV series. Their criticisms mostly refer to the details of the film, design, or factual-chronological inaccuracies, rather than ideological assertions. Among the factual omissions, one of the most important is that Ertuğrul’s father is G. Alp [26, p. 76] in the story, while Süleyman Şah is portrayed as that character in the film. Historian M. Kesik notes that the connection of the Ottoman dynasty with the name of the founder of the Seljuk state, Süleyman Şah, is purely a political goal [27].

In his interview to the Turkish news portal haberler.com famous Turkish historian İ. Ortaylı highly appreciated the Turkish historical TV series, including “The Resurrection: Ertuğrul” but at the same time criticized, noting that historical films are not considered history: “The TV series does not correspond to the historical reality, there are boundaries that should not be crossed” [28]. On the other hand, another well-known Turkish historian A. Şimşirgil, spoke to “Milliyet” newspaper and noted that the TV series has nothing to do with reality: “The film is certainly very interesting, but, unfortunately, it cannot be considered historical” [29].

Turkish TV series as a platform for domestic and foreign political messages, or Ertuğrul has been interfering in the internal affairs of the 21st-century Turkey from the 13th century

It can be asserted that historical TV series have become a unique platform for conveying foreign and domestic political messages in Turkey. In “The New York Times” newspaper, W. Armstrong expresses the opinion that the new Turkish TV series are “in tune with the political atmosphere” [30]. That is, sometimes the episodes are adapted to the current socio-political processes and turn into an overt or subtext message. In the context of this issue, the textual component is also noteworthy, because in the series there are often expressions, words that are disputed whether they were used in the 13th, 16th centuries or even at the end of the 19th century. Sometimes there are words in the series that create

undisguised parallels and associations with the terms symbolizing the current socio-political processes or used during them, and we will talk about this with actual examples next.

In the TV series with a large audience, the characters of the heroes and their expressions are not chosen randomly, and it can be assumed that “Resurrection: Ertuğrul”, which shows us the historical past, actually reflects the Turkey of the 21st century. The messages, the terms used are sometimes so transparent that the viewer often sees Erdoğan in the character of Ertuğrul. Özçetin sees clear parallels between the politics of the current ruling party of Erdoğan, the priorities important to him and the plot lines of the series, which he considers an indirect order from the authorities [31, p. 41]. “The American New York Times” wrote about the TV series “Resurrection: Ertuğrul” that this work, being a film describing the Ottoman period, typically represents the events taking place in Turkey in the 21st century [32].

For example, in the TV series there are quite transparent hints about the conflict between Erdoğan and the famous US-based preacher F. Gülen. In particular, among the traitorous characters presented in the TV series, one of Suleyman Şah’s close associates, Kurdoğlu, who secretly serves the Christian crusaders, constantly informs them about all the intentions and plans of the Kaya tribe [26, p. 76]. At the first glance, it seems that this is an ordinary episode typical of the Ottoman period, but on closer inspection it becomes clear that the character of the treacherous general is likened to F. Gülen. Already in the 23rd episode, after the episode of Ertuğrul’s beheading of the traitor [33], the following thought began to actively circulate in the Turkish segment of social networks: “I hope that one day Erdoğan will do the same with Gülen” [34].

Continuing the topic of political messages, we should note that the curse⁴ of F. Gülen received a great response in Turkey, which was also expressed in the film. Erdoğan replied to Gülen in the TV series through the character of the religious leader Ibn ul Arabi [35]. In the 14th episode of the TV series, Ibn ul Arabi advises his dervishes during a regular conversation: “As Muslims, we don’t have the right to curse even infidels. We must at all costs keep ourselves away from being malicious” [36].

In the same context of political messages, we can consider the 2016 statement of Turkish President R. T. Erdoğan that Turkey has launched the “Euphrates Shield” military operation against Syria and that the time for a final solution to the Syrian issue has come. “This poisonous water must be cleaned”, the president said in his speech [37]. This same phrase was also found in the 10th episode of the TV series, where Ertuğrul says: “A great punishment will befall the person who will drink the poisonous water of Aleppo. If we cannot clean this poisonous water, the Islamic world will be in great danger” [38].

As expected, echoes of the attempted military coup in Turkey on July 15, 2016 are also present in the TV series. In the last episode of the TV series, Turkish soldiers try to remove Ertuğrul from the position of Bey, but the people stop them [39].

One of the important elements of the TV series is the chosen music, which is the same as the music played during the pre-election campaign of the JDP. It is also important to note that when Erdoğan visited Somalia in 2015 the soundtrack of the TV series “Ertuğrul” was played during the official welcome ceremony at the airport [40]. The same soundtrack accompanies Erdoğan during many events and rallies [41, p. 9; 42, p. 95].

⁴ When any action against him or the followers of his ideology takes place Gülen uses different platforms including social media to curse the government.

The expressions containing political messages in the TV series, the emphasized religious preaching, the similarity between Ertuğrul and Erdoğan allow us to claim that the TV series carries elements of an open government order and fully corresponds to the principles of Erdoğan's policy.

The return of the “reformed” character of Sultan Abdul Hamid II through the TV series

In Turkey, for almost two decades, agitation has been consistently carried out at the state level, aimed at reassessing the Ottoman past and emphasizing the fact that it is the center of the Islamic world, the caliphate. In this context, the authorities pay special attention to the figure of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876–1908). Regularly organized conferences and discussions, naming various institutions and structures after him are aimed at glorifying and promoting the personality of Abdul Hamid. The at least partial success of this policy is evidenced by the appearance of jewelry and tattoos replicating sultan's seals, the trend of making photos in sultan's clothing, and many other domestic examples. President Erdoğan also directly or indirectly supports this process, emphasizing the importance of the years of Abdul Hamid's rule for Turkey [43; 44].

Today, the reassessment of Abdul Hamid's character is taking place along with the classical methods of soft power using other tools, including films. The TV series “The Last Emperor: Abdul Hamid” presents the last decade of Abdul Hamid's reign. Erdoğan's visits to the film set, his words of gratitude in the address to the TRT, which broadcasts the TV series, or his sincere confession that he watches some episodes, and his grandchildren do not miss a single episode and discuss the developments of the film with him, testify to his special attitude towards the TV series [45].

This TV series is also full of propaganda elements and obvious distortions of historical facts. The TV series presents a powerful, rich Ottoman Empire, which almost always wins wars and succeeds in diplomacy, which does not correspond to the situation at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. In the film, inspired by the 1965 book “The Mighty Ruler” by the famous Turkish writer, ideologist Necip Fazıl Kısakürek⁵, the character of Abdul Hamid II is naturally idealized [46]. He is presented as a possessor of great knowledge and a sharp mind, a patriot, honest, fair, benevolent person. As the columnist of the bilingual (Armenian-Turkish) “Agos” weekly published in Istanbul, E. C. Dağlıoğlu said: “Hamid is not a sultan, but a Polat Alemdar⁶ who lived in the 1890s. He is a police genius who uncovers cases he is not aware of and reads newspapers in languages he does not know” [47].

It is noteworthy that the foreign policy aspirations and plans of Turkey are presented in a disguised way in the TV series. For example, in episode 56, Abdulhamid asks to perform an “Azerbaijani” turku (folk song) for him. In response to the Sultan's request, Ismail Hakkı Bey offers to sing the song “Ay Laçın” “written after the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by the Russians” in his own words, and after receiving the consent of the Sultan,

⁵ It is worth mentioning that the president Erdoğan has a special attitude to the role that Necip Fazıl Kısakürek had played for Turkish society. Back in 2014 speaking during the Necip Fazıl Kısakürek Award Ceremony he underlined the importance of Kısakürek as the reformer of one-party period mentality.

⁶ Polat Alemdar is Turkish actor who became famous as the main character of “Kurtlar Vadisi” TV show.

he begins to sing it in Azerbaijani accompanied by a piano. At that moment, the Russian ambassador, going to the Sultan's reception through the corridor of the palace, asked in amazement whether an Azerbaijani song was being played. In response to his question, the accompanying Paşa says: "The Turks have never forgotten Baku, Mr. Ambassador". Already during the reception with the Sultan, in response to the Sultan's proposal to deepen diplomatic ties with Tsarist Russia, the ambassador said: "You might think that you are dreaming of Baku from the turku songs you hear", to which the Sultan replies: "As long as the children in Baku speak Turkish, as long as the ezan sounds from the minarets, that dream will be in our hearts" [48].

The modern political situation of Turkey and of course President Erdoğan are also present in this TV series. As E. C. Dağlıoğlu notes, "Abdul Hamid does not seem to be a sultan in the film, he is a politician who has travelled to the past from our days, who gets power not from his family, but from popular love, the roots of which are unclear, and one gets the impression that the sultan is reborn in Erdoğan's image" [49, p. 49]. One of the invisible details aiming to show the similarity between Abdul Hamid and Erdoğan is, for example, the assassination attempt on the Sultan in the first part of the film and his rescue with the help of a common citizen. Specialists compare this episode to the unsuccessful military coup against the Erdoğan regime on July 15, 2016, and during it, ordinary citizens took to the streets at the call of the president. As it is mentioned in the article written by E. Afyoncu in Sabah newspaper within the framework of the Erdoğan-Abdul Hamid parallel, the film also presents the initiative of the Sultan to build the "Marmara" underwater tunnel connecting Europe to Asia [50]. Abdul Hamid says in the episode of the TV shows: "If we have a dream, it will come true one day, because we live and work for the sake of our country" [51]. It is clear from the context that this dream of Abdul Hamid was realized with the efforts of Erdoğan, because the Marmara Line of the Istanbul Metro was put into operation during his rule [52]. The following thought uttered by Abdul Hamid's character is one of the manifestations of the overt propaganda orientation of the TV series: "We water the rose, and that water is good for both the rose and the thorn... if the thorns we water turn to us one day, we will definitely cut them off" [53]. The play on words made with the Turkish word "rose" — *gül* — seems to be a message of open threat to the former President of Turkey Abdullah Gül, as well as to the former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who, being former teammates of Erdoğan, now have an oppositional position towards the current authorities and Erdoğan himself. It is noteworthy that A. Davutoğlu focused on this issue and noted that he never took seriously a number of phrases in the film and containing references to the country's modern political agenda, which it was impossible for the Sultan to ever use, and that the messages attributed to Abdul Hamid were not suitable for state, in his opinion, and also from the point of view of public ethics [54].

It should be noted that the TV series "The Last Emperor: Abdul Hamid" was severely criticized by many even pro-government nationalist figures for factual-chronological inaccuracies. Historian M. Bardakçı briefly described the TV series as "shameful and ridiculous". He drew attention to the fact that there are too many spelling errors in the Ottoman writings in the series. The historian also notes that Abdul Hamid always dined alone or rarely with Sultana Müşfika, and the film portrays the Sultan as always dining with children and women [55].

İ. Ortaylı, in response to a journalist's question, said that he does not want to talk about it, because there is no such Abdul Hamid [56]. The historian was particularly an-

gered by the fact that Abdul Hamid slaps the consul in the first series because according to Ortaylı Sultan was not capable of such a thing [57]. About this same scene, Nihan Osmanoğlu, one of the representatives of the Ottoman dynasty, said that it reminded him more of Erdoğan [58].

Conclusion

Thus, the government led by Erdoğan in Turkey has been turning historical TV series into an effective platform for propaganda, as well as external and internal messages for a long time. Our research allows us to claim that one of the strongest weapons of Turkish soft power today are Turkish TV series, especially TV series with historical themes. At the same time, the current authorities of Turkey, by simulating or even identifying themselves with the characters of idealized heroes in historical TV series, try to make TV viewers-citizens an important element of a pro-state but actually pro-government society. In addition, historical TV series strengthen the nationalist position of the society, remind about the imperial past, and President Erdoğan has an active role and participation in this whole process.

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Сериалы о политике и «сериальная» политика: пример турецких исторических теленовелл

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Феномен возрастающей популярности турецких телесериалов, за относительно короткий период ставших новой визитной карточкой страны, привлекает внимание не только искусствоведов и кинокритиков, но и журналистов, социологов, антропологов, тюркологов и т. д. Турецкие многосерийные фильмы, благодаря актуальности выбранных тем, достойной актерской игре, продуманному сюжету и не в последнюю очередь великолепным видам Стамбула и других городов более десяти лет собирающие миллионные аудитории у экранов по всему миру, давно уже перестали быть только средством развлечения и превратились в действенный инструмент пропагандирования турецкой культуры, образа жизни, а зачастую продвижения идей и концепций, выгодных правящей элите страны. Можно с уверенностью утверждать, что сегодня так называемые мыльные оперы являются важной платформой формирования и трансформации общественного мнения по широкому кругу тем — от исторических вопросов до современных общественно-политических проблем. В данной статье были исследованы основные методы и формы использования теленовелл как инструмента «мягкой силы» на примере многосерийных фильмов «Воскресший Эртугрул» (*Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, 2014–2019), рассказывающего о становлении османской государственности, и «Права на престол» (*Payitaht Abdülhamit*, 2017–2021), повествующего о борьбе за сохранение

целостности и суверенитета Османской империи. Несмотря на то что эти сериалы посвящены абсолютно разным историческим эпохам, они оба используют исторический контекст для обращения к актуальным для современного турецкого общества социально-политическим вопросам, служат своеобразной платформой для обоснования внутренней и внешней политики действующих властей.

Ключевые слова: Турция, телесериалы, мягкая сила, пропаганда, Абдулгамид II, Эртугрул.

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