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Hegemonic Masculinities in Popular Culture and the Appeal of Authoritarian Rule: A Comparative Examination of *Magnificent Century* (2011–2014) and *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* (2014–2019)

Deniz Zorlu*
Izmir University of Economics, Turkey

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Abstract: This article examines the connections between the representation of hegemonic masculinities in Turkish popular culture and the rising tide of political authoritarianism in Turkey by comparatively examining two historically-based TV series produced in the 2010s, *Magnificent Century* (2011– 2014) and *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* (2014 – 2019) with a focus on the representation of two central male characters in these series: Prince (Şehzade) Mustafa and Ertuğrul. *Magnificent Century* was recurrently condemned by high-ranking government figures for its alleged demeaning misrepresentation of Turkish history. The fourth season of *Magnificent Century* coincided with the Gezi Park protests of 2013, and during this time, the series started to get a more critical perspective towards governmental power abuses and oppression. It is also during this fourth season that Prince Mustafa emerged as the central character of the series until his death and his scene of execution has become one of the greatest media events of recent Turkish television history. The series' portrayal of Prince Mustafa draws extensively from left-wing memories of loss and repression in Turkey, and the series' criticisms of power abuse implicate the contemporary Turkish government as well. For instance, Ottoman people who protest Prince Mustafa's murder are referred to as "çapulcu," "marauders" several times

* Ph.D., Department of Cinema and Digital Media, Izmir University of Economics
e-mail: deniz.zorlu@izmirekonomi.edu.tr

in the series, which is the same expression used to disparage Gezi Park protestors. In contrast, *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* was screened by state channel TRT with endorsements from government officials, who publicly praised the series on multiple occasions. *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* tells the story of Ertuğrul, a tribe chieftain, who resurrects the glory of a polity in disarray in the early beginnings of what would later become the Ottoman Empire, paralleling the contemporary Turkish governments' emphasis on revival and resurrection. In the portrayal of Ertuğrul and his men, Islam is recurrently presented as the ultimate marker of national identity. However, the close-textual analysis showcases that, despite their thematic and ideological dissimilarities, both series converge in positing the male leader and his loyal militarist men as the building blocks and guardians of the national polity. Additionally, in the portrayal of Ertuğrul and Prince Mustafa, we find a paradoxical embrace of militaristic, authoritarian displays of power, but also an emphasis on rebelliousness to established authority, and male victimization, which, I argue, constitute the essential constituents of contemporary hegemonic masculinity in Turkey. Hence, I argue that some of the essential components of hegemonic masculinity we encounter in political discourse can be traced to the arena of popular culture where it is reproduced and magnified.

Keywords: Hegemonic masculinities, Turkish TV series, political authoritarianism, militarism, opposition, popular history.

Introduction

The central objective of this article is to assess the role of popular culture in providing an impetus to increased levels of political authoritarianism in Turkey through an examination of hegemonic masculinities in contemporary television series. I comparatively examine two historically based TV series that are screened in the 2010s, *Magnificent Century* (2011-2014) and *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* (2014-2019). Both these historical series broke rating records respectively, yet they are diversified by aspects of their thematic content. *Magnificent Century* received repetitive condemnation from high-ranking government officials (Toksabay 2012), as well as getting backlash from conservative factions of the society (Basaran, 2011). The last season of *Magnificent Century*, screened in 2013-2014, coincided with the Gezi Part Protests of 2013, which significantly shaped the series' thematic orientation towards a more critical perspective. On the other hand, *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* (2014-2019) was screened in the state channel TRT and was openly supported and praised by government officials. In comparatively examining these two series, I aim to demonstrate that pro-governmental and critical popular cultural products ultimately combine in creating a ripe socio-cultural atmosphere for the rise of authoritarian politics, as they collaborate in supporting and maintaining hegemonic masculinities.

I comparatively examine the portrayal of two central male characters in these two series; Prince Mustafa (Şehzade Mustafa) from *Magnificent Century* and Ertuğrul from *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* with an intention to highlight and discuss the representation of hegemonic masculinities in Turkish popular culture. This study is based on the idea that it is through examining popular cultural texts that we can identify the linkages between hegemonic masculinities in popular culture and popular authoritarianism in Turkey. Both these historically-based series project contemporary political concerns to the distant past and speak to the contemporary age through the ways in which they represent history. In that regard, their textual analysis reveals more information about the present age and the contemporary issues of Turkey than the historical

episodes they are narrating. In other words, thematically speaking, they tell us more about the present than the past.

I believe this comparative examination sheds light on how oppositional voices and pro-governmental propaganda are structured similarly on the sacralization and adulation of male leaders of the past. At the most basic level, the future of the polity in both series depends on the success of its male leader and his followers. Both series converge in their reliance on the male hero and his circles of militaristic male followers as the cornerstones of the national polity. In the last season of the *Magnificent Century*, it is Prince Mustafa's early death that becomes the main reason for the subsequent decline and eventual fall of the Ottomans. In *Resurrection*, we are repeatedly told that it is only through Ertuğrul's guidance that the polity can hope to revitalize and thrive.

I argue that this comparative close textual analysis of Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul's representation uncover some of the core features of hegemonic masculinity in the way it is operationalized in contemporary Turkey. The specific content of their characterization draws from different ideological frameworks; Şehzade Mustafa's representation shows close parallels to left-wing discourses in Turkey, and in narrating his story, the series takes a critical lens towards the contemporary political situation in Turkey. On the other hand, in Ertuğrul's portrayal, Islam is identified as the central component of the national identity, and the series often appears to be created for overt pro-governmental propaganda.

Despite such significant discursive differences in their portrayal, we can detect notable overlapping points when it comes to the representation of their masculinity, which constitutes the focus of this article. Both Mustafa and Ertuğrul combine a paradoxical image of being powerful and powerless, their characterization is marked by rebelliousness to unjust authority and the glorified display of their own authoritarian deeds and forceful use of power. They both are positioned as outsiders fighting against an established regime of corruption and decadence and yet are also presented as the essential guardians of the established polity. I believe the paradoxical representation of these two

central male characters approximates and matches the self-portrayal of the contemporary Turkish ruling elite; thus, we can detect the linkages between popular cultural representations of hegemonic masculinity and the operation of popular authoritarianism in contemporary Turkey.

Popular History and Masculinity: *Magnificent Century* and *Resurrection: Ertuğrul*

Magnificent Century is often considered as the internationally most successful Turkish TV series at a time when Turkish series' global popularity reached its apex (Bhutto, 2019). Even though its international appeal was geographically more limited, *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* also obtained significant international fame especially in the Middle East and East Asia, as well as among Muslim minorities living in Western Europe (Khan, 2020). Even though various aspects of these two series have been discussed extensively both in academic research and journalistic accounts, not enough attention is given to the political implications of these two series' construction of hegemonic masculinities., which is a central objective of this article.

Despite its many problematic aspects, *Magnificent Century* has also been praised for opening up to debate the questions of power, sovereignty, and oppression, especially in its last season (Atay, 2014). The last season coincided with the Gezi Park demonstrations of 2013, which significantly altered the series' representation of 16th-century Ottoman history. The troubling events of the distant past are used as subtexts to take a critical perspective on recent developments in Turkey. The most dramatic event of the last season is the execution of Prince Mustafa, who emerged as the main character in this last season until his death. His scene of the murder, besides breaking rating records, has arguably become the most talked-about popular cultural event of recent Turkish television history. Turkish press reported that hundreds of people visited his long-forgotten tomb in the morning after his execution was screened ("Two Thousand Visitors" 2014; Arslan & Tezcan, 2014).

In the persona of Prince Mustafa and his execution, the series metaphorically condemned not only the monarch Suleiman who ordered the killing, but also the powerholders of Turkish history with implications for the contemporaneous Turkish government, which has likewise been criticized for engaging in power abuses. As a basic example, the Ottoman people who protest the execution of Prince Mustafa ware called several times as "çapulcu," marauder, the same expression used by the Turkish Prime Minister against Gezi Park protestors in those days. Prince Mustafa has emerged as the innocent and youthful victim of repression, striking a chord with the young people who have lost their lives during Gezi Park demonstrations, as well as other youthful activists who died in the Turkish Republic's history, while high-ranking government officials are disparaged as the source of villainy.

Resurrection: Ertuğrul started to be screened a few months after the ending of the *Magnificent Century* in 2014 and ended with its last episode on May 29, 2019. It was openly praised by government officials who even visited the filming set on several occasions. President Tayyip Erdogan referred to *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* as "a series that our people watch in great admiration" ("Resurrection Ertuğrul is the Greatest Answer", 2017). *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* narrates the early beginnings of what would later become the Ottoman Empire by focusing on the life of Ertuğrul, who is the father of Osman, the namesake of the Ottoman Empire. In focusing on the early beginnings of Ottoman imperial power, the series draws a close parallel between the historical period that it narrates and the contemporary self-portrayal of the Turkish government as the redeemer and resurrector of the national polity's historical greatness. Just like lionized Ertuğrul is on the path to bring together and resurrect the old glory of a dissipated polity with his fellow men, so does the contemporary Justice and Development Party with its leader. Hence, the series blatantly and repeatedly uses the past in a propagandistic fashion to elevate the public image of the contemporary Turkish government.

In this article, I specifically focus on the textual representation of Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul. These two historical characters appear to be portrayed with different purposes; there is a discernible intention to raise political criticism through Prince Mustafa's portrayal, whereas Ertuğrul is depicted as to serve the interests of the contemporary Turkish government. We can also observe clear thematic and ideological differentiations in the way historical events are portrayed in these series. In the article, I first emphasize these ideological differentiations between the two series, and later pinpoint their commonalities in the way they portray Prince Mustafa's and Ertuğrul's masculinity. I argue that it is these commonalities amidst ideological differentiations that allow us to pinpoint the central components of hegemonic masculinity in contemporary Turkey with implications for Turkey's downward path towards political authoritarianism.

Theoretical Background

The hegemonic masculinity is sometimes misconstrued as certain universal and static characteristics about men, instead, it should rather be seen as contextual and strategic acts and representations that give men a position of power over women and nonhegemonic masculinities, thus serving to legitimize unequal relations between gender (Messerschmidt, 2019, p. 88). In the words of Connell, "hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the… currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees… the dominant position of men" (Connell, 1995, p. 77). The defining characteristics of hegemonic masculinity are its relationality and contingency; it is formed in relation with, or juxtaposition to certain forms of femininity and non-hegemonic masculinity, and that it is subject to change over time (Messerschmidt, p. 58). The specific content of hegemonic masculinity, thus, goes through cycles of adaptation, and such change is acceptable so long it ensures continuing male dominance over women. This also means that hegemonic masculinity can incorporate elements that belong to marginal and subordinated masculinities in its

drive for the reproduction of patriarchy (Demetriou, p. 349). Such hybridization of components tends to produce better results in ensuring patriarchal dominance (Arxer, 2011, p. 391).

The patriarchal hegemony works to the extent that it can persuade groups of people who are subjugated by it, necessitating some degree of compliance and consent from women and nonhegemonic masculinities (Talbot and Qualy, 2010, p. 256). Hegemony can be seen as a soft form of power that works primarily by gaining the consent of a significant number of women and men through seemingly mundane ideas, everyday practices, and representations (Hearn, p. 52-53). The fact that men in general do not embody hegemonic masculine ideals, at least not on a continual basis, does not harm the ideological hegemony of masculinity, as these men continue to uphold and exalt these ideals in a complicit form (Connell, 1987, p. 183). Conceptualizing hegemonic masculinity as a cultural ideal, rather than a routinely experienced aspect of men's lives, it should also be stressed that media images play a vital role in the promulgation of these ideals (Demetriou, p. 342).

Popular cinema and television reflect and shape "wider socio-cultural and political structures," in fact, they are a constitutive part of political processes, as well as cultural reproduction and change (Hall, 1980, p. 129). In that regard, hegemonic masculinity is often reinforced especially through "exemplary life stories," which are frequently encountered in media productions (Spector-Mersel, 2006, p. 72). Hence, emotionally charged narratives provided by popular culture in general, and popular television series in particular work as significant tools in the construction and sustenance of hegemonic masculinities. Even when they are laden with nationalist imaginaries and symbols, the depictions of hegemonic masculinity are easily marketable commodities in the global mediascape (Balaji and Hughson, 2013, p. 208), which explains Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul's substantial international appeal. However, Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul's portrayal plays a particular role in the specific cultural context of Turkey, as we can associate their representation with the rampant political authoritarianism in the country, which constitutes the focus of this article. In the context of this

study, popular political authoritarianism can be defined as greater public investment in the leadership ethos and belief in the leader's unique attributes and capabilities to the detriment and curtailment of civil liberties, accompanied by the erosion of the system of checks and balances and separation of powers in the country as necessary ingredients of a healthy democracy (Yılmaz & Turner, 2019, p. 691).

Male images on popular culture offer the audiences "cultural types," and at any period, we can observe overlapping and rival cultural types, which are contesting versions of appropriate manhood in a struggle for cultural hegemony (Spicer, 2001, p. 2). In the representation of Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul, we can likewise come across a range of differences and similarities. For instance, Prince Mustafa's portrayal clearly draws from left-wing imaginaries, whereas Islamic discourses are more clearly emphasized as part of Ertuğrul's identity. The central commonality is that both characters are paradoxically denoted as powerful and powerless, exalted in their display of power, and yet are also celebrated as the embodiments of the underdog and the representatives of powerless.

Possession of power is a central pillar of hegemonic masculinities (Kabesh, 2013, p. 111). Hegemonic masculinity often corresponds to "a man in power, a man with power, and a man of power" (Kimmel, 2004, p. 184). This certainly does not mean that men in real life are always already in a position of power, but power and the desire to be in possession of power is a commonly encountered aspect of men's social relations and actions (Hearn, 2004, p. 51). In this vein, militarism, militarist male heroes, and the showcasing of their power have historically been attributed paramount significance in the construction of hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995, p. 232). This is where hegemonic masculinity and nationalism coalesce and find ideological support in each other. As Joane Nagel (2005) argues: "the culture and ideology of hegemonic masculinity go hand in hand with the culture and ideology of hegemonic nationalism" (p. 401). In both series that I examine, we frequently encounter displays of power performed by the two leading characters. Especially victorious combat and war scenes we

regularly encounter in these series give the audience a sense of being superior to the nation's foes, especially that of Western Europe. Such scenes can be seen as a projection of male desire to feel powerful, but more importantly, they encode the nation as a powerful man, reflecting the lead character's prowess to the nation, thus, they nationalize his power, portraying the nation as a man in charge.

Despite the frequent attention to showcase their power, a paradoxical point of emphasis in the portrayal of these two male characters is their lack of power, their being disenfranchised, misunderstood, and mistreated. I argue in this article that this paradoxical representation is the central aspect of the operation of contemporary hegemonic masculinity in contemporary Turkey. Hence, the public appeal of popular authoritarianism is rooted in this paradoxical aspect of hegemonic masculinity, that it is associated with being powerful and powerless, which portrays the ideal man as a purveyor of change through his power and the representative of the downtrodden in his powerlessness, who is an authoritarian leader and yet also a rebel to authority.

Donovan points out that the contradictory emphasis on sensitivity and toughness better reinforces the power hierarchy that privileges men among certain groups in America (Donovan, 1998, p. 826). In the same vein, we can detect a contradictory emphasis on power and powerlessness in the construction of hegemonic masculinity in contemporary Turkey. Mustafa and Ertuğrul's power, or the display of their power, serve to identify them as the location of hope from future days when they will set things straight, on the other hand, the paradoxical emphasis on their lack of power makes them guiltless in the face of social ills and problems that yet remain unresolved in their polity. I argue that what renders this paradoxical nature of hegemonic masculinity particularly significant is that it constitutes the central aspect of contemporary Turkish ruling elite's performance of masculinity, who is often presented as strong but harmed and wounded, authoritarian but a rebel to established sources of corrupted authority. Hence, based on the literature on hegemonic masculinity, this article

traces the interlinkages between portrayals and enactments of hegemonic masculinity in popular culture and political discourse.

Methodology

This article relies on the comparative close textual analysis of *Magnificent Century* and *Resurrection: Ertuğrul*. This methodological preference is informed by the desire to unearth latent meanings of these two texts, as well as their connections with each other and the contemporary socio-cultural atmosphere of Turkey. Popular cultural texts are typically multilayered constructions, and that we can observe the traces of multiple discourses in them. Furthermore, as audience/reception studies indicate, there is a range of different interpretative frames within which specific groups and individuals make sense of the texts they encounter, thus they can attribute differing meanings to what they watch. While acknowledging the insights provided by reception studies, it should nonetheless be stated that these studies, for the most part, focus on verbally expressible and easily articulable aspects of the texts they examine (Phillipov, 2013). Thus, they tend to overlook aspects of the texts that are laden with implicit meanings, which can be disclosed by simultaneous detailed attention to the texts and the socio-political world that these texts are a constitutive part of.

There has been an ongoing tension between textual approaches and audience research in the field of media studies (Creeber, 2006, p. 82; Havemann, 1999, p. 5-6). For those who defend a textual approach, such as Elfriede Fürsich (2009), it is primarily through textual analysis we can "elucidate the narrative structure, symbolic arrangements and ideological potential of the media content" (p. 239). While not privileging one methodological approach over the other as providing a more correct type of information, it should still be stressed that there is much to uncover through a detailed and closed examination of the textuality of popular cultural products in regard to their ideological functioning. Thus, comparative textual analysis is preferred in this study because it is

through close attention to these two texts that we can uncover their overlapping points and divergences, while also investigating how these resonate and interact with broader socio-cultural phenomena in Turkey.

Rick Iedema (2001) argues that to examine the socio-cultural implications of media productions, the analysis should focus on the essential contours of the conflicts and encounters in the studied texts, as well as the central characters who are caught up and act on these conflicts. It is often the case that the text makes political commentaries and activates political discourses through the portrayal of its leading characters, thus, we can better evaluate the political subtexts of the examined text when our focus remains on the central characters' representation. Since the purpose of this study is to investigate the construction of hegemonic masculinities, the emphasis is given to the representation of the two leading male characters. The nature of the conflicts Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul are engaged in, their activities, as well as the depiction of their allies and foes, best illustrate the key constituting elements of their masculinity.

The selected scenes are taken as examples of recurringly occurring phenomena in these two series; thus, they are illustrative instances to thematically emphasized aspects of the examined texts. My textual examination is primarily based on finding answers to these questions that focus on the representation of Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul: Who are the central character's enemies, what are the causes of conflicts, how the male hero is distinguished from his enemies? What is the nature of his relationship with his close male companions? Are there notable differences between his representation and the leading female characters' portrayal? Are his personal deeds associated with the national polity's past and future, how? How do his activities and representation resonate with prevalent political discourses in contemporary Turkey? In the following sections of this article, I answer these questions by simultaneous attention to narrativization of Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul's life stories, their specific verbal expressions, and the textual fabric of these two series, which lays bare implicit, latent

meanings of these audiovisual texts in regard to hegemonic masculinities.

Magnificent Century: Hegemonic Masculinities in Political Criticism

Magnificent Century is a composite narrative text that combines and weaves together many disparate thematic elements and ideological statements, but one aspect that remains constant throughout is that the series is about magnificent men. In its earlier seasons' majority of the screening time is devoted to palace women, yet, it is ultimately militaristic men who are positioned as the essential national subjects and backbones of the polity. In the series, the national polity thrives on the shoulders of its virile men and falls in their absence. This latter point was more directly stressed by the fourth and last season when the series becomes more directly involved in the contemporaneous politics of Turkey and adopted a more critical tone. As Gezi Park demonstrations of 2013 and growing authoritarianism of the Turkish government coincided with the third season, the series started to criticize aging Sultan Suleiman's power abuses and the overall corruptness of his government officials as subtexts to comment on the contemporaneous political situation in Turkey. The series' main approach of opposition is based on recalibrating and re-imagining patriarchy rather than opening it up for debate. In fact, the more it got politicized the more the series started to rely on young male heroes as the central characters, showcasing to us that the politics in Turkey are often done through a focus on male bodies and by emphasizing male deeds.

By its 4th season, the series goes through a thematic re-orientation to emphasize Prince Mustafa as its central character, who is portrayed as the youthful hope for a better polity and later a benevolent victim of repression. Episode 124 featuring Mustafa's funeral broke rating records in Turkey. Reportedly, hundreds of people flocked to the tomb of this long-forgotten Ottoman prince the day after his execution was screened. I would like to demonstrate that painful memories of Turkey's recent history are transferred to Prince Mustafa, who has emerged as the

embodiment of especially young people who have lost their lives through Turkey's troubled years from the 1960s to the present. His representation corresponds with the collective memory practices of left-wing activists from the 1960s and 1970s, but also with the more recent memory of young people who lost their lives during Gezi Park protests of 2013, which occurred about a year before his scene of execution got broadcasted on television. In one of the clearest references to the contemporaneous political situation in Turkey, the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire repetitively refers to the protestors who are agitated by the killing of Prince Mustafa as "çapulcu," referring to the labeling of Gezi Park activists with the same adjective by government officials.

Construction of hegemonic masculinity in juxtaposition to femininity

A major similarity between *Magnificent Century* and *Resurrection* is that both series portray respectively Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul as the militaristic leaders of a militarist community. Prince Mustafa's execution is represented as the root cause of the decline and eventual fall of the once-powerful Ottoman Empire. *Magnificent Century* posits that the national polity can only survive the ordeals and grow under the leadership of virile men. For instance, in episode 133, standing in front of Prince Mustafa's tomb, the monarch Suleiman is chastised for setting the downward path of the Ottoman dynasty by executing the young Prince, as Mustafa's mother utters: "Look, Suleiman, our sun is down, our future is sunk into darkness… right here lies the future of the Ottomans."[1]

On several occasions during the last season, Suleiman is represented as demasculinized for being immersed in relentless tides of palace intrigues. He is depicted as spending an inordinate amount of time in the palace, which is primarily marked as the feminine domain. There are firm divisions as masculine versus feminine, indoors versus outdoors, the city versus the province in the series, and Suleiman's days in the indoors spaces of the palace play a vital role in his gradual

[1] "Bak güneşimiz battı, istikbalimiz karanlığa gömüldü…iyi bak Süleyman…iste burada, tam burada, Osmanlı'nın, hanedanımızın istikbali yatıyor."

demasculinization. This duality is expressed in a visually striking manner in episode 90. Suleiman tries to solve another line of intrigues taking place in his palace. The last shot of this scene is a medium close-up to his desolate face; his days in the palace rendered him dysfunctional and devoid of masculine energy (fig.1.1).

The next shot is a provincial town surrounded by a green, natural environment where the young prince lives, subtly indicating that hegemonic masculinity resides neither in the city nor in the palace with its power games and intrigues but belongs in the province with its authentic atmosphere (fig.2.2). Then, we have a close-up of a soldier resting his hand on his sword as a phallic object of power, and the action-packed music starts playing (fig.3.1). A few shots/seconds later, Prince Mustafa enters the picture, under the symbolic cover of the swords raised above for his passage (fig.1.4). As the current patriarch is being consumed by the palace, in contradiction, Prince Mustafa emerges as the ideal phallic hero; he and his military men are positioned as the nation's best hope for the future.

Fig 1.1-1.2-1.3-1.4 *Juxtaposition of Sultan Suleiman sitting debilitated on his throne and Prince Mustafa as the rising phallic hero.*

Hegemonic masculinity is maintained through homosocial relations and gatherings that stress masculine unity (Bird, 1996, p. 121). These militarist male bonding practices allow an easy demarcation of masculinity from femininity, in which what is considered masculine is valued over what is presented to be feminine (Duncanson, 2015, p. 235). Such portrayals of militarist men and their close bonding practices designate them as embodiments of hegemonic masculinity, in which nationalism and male hegemony are co-constituted and reinforced, gaining strength and validation from each other (Mostov, 2000, p. 89).

The narrative and visual elements of the series provide insight into how the series' construction of hegemonic masculinity operationalizes through its juxtaposition to femininity and foreignness. In another notable scene, Mustafa's half-brother Cihangir, who is portrayed as an exceptionally benevolent but emotionally vulnerable person, passes away, not being capable to heal from the pain of losing his beloved Mustafa. Nurbanu, a central female character of the last season, who is originally a Venetian slave, receives the news of Cihangir's death in her bathtub. She is the only person who uses a bathtub, which she acquires despite many protests. Hamam, the so-called Turkish bath, is a communal place allowing several people to wash, in contrast, the bathtub is the private property of an individual. Nurbanu is told that she

should let go of the bathtub as a relic from her previous life, yet she never listens to these counsels.

Nurbanu continues to carelessly enjoy herself in her bathtub after she hears about Cihangir's death in a scene that emphasizes her apathy towards kind and caring Cihangir. (fig.4). Her indifference and self-interestedness are directly linked to her foreignness and femininity through the bathtub, as the bathtub is signified in the series as both a foreign object and a tool of the feminine quest for beauty. Foreignness, femininity, individualism, and egocentricity all are lumped together, interconnected, and condemned subtly through the focus on Nurbanu and her bathtub as the natural opponents of the national subject. While Prince Mustafa and his fellow men are marked by their selfless dedication to each other and the well-being of their polity, women in the series, especially in its last season, are frequently portrayed as power-hungry and egoistical. It can also be said that the series depicts sexualized femininity as foreign and harmful to the national subject. Hence, hegemonic masculinity operates through finding its other in sexualized women, who are associated with egocentrism and are depicted as foreign.

Fig.3.1. *Foreignness and femininity as the binary others of the national subject.*

As argued by R. W. Connell (1987): "hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinate masculinities as well as in relation to women" (p. 183). The subordination of nonhegemonic masculinities, foreigners and women is the main channel through which male power is asserted and maintained (Charlebois, 2011, p. 32). Masculinity needs its other against which to define itself in hegemonic form, and it builds the figure of the denigrated women and "feminized" men as its natural opponents (Kabesh, 2013, p. 91). Similarly, in the case of *Magnificent Century*'s portrayal of Prince Mustafa, the series upholds masculinity in a hegemonic status by juxtaposing him to female characters and "feminized" men.

Left-wing discourses in Prince Mustafa's representation

In the series' narrative, Prince Mustafa is portrayed as an island of purity and innocence in a growingly corrupt world marked by power games and intrigues at the highest echelons of the state hierarchy. A potent visual symbol of his ethical uprightness comes in episode 116 when Mustafa is shown to be the only standing figure surrounded by fallen others, depicted by the fallen leaves that surround him. The camera first shows us the leaves on the ground for a couple of seconds (fig.2.1). Then, it starts moving up slowly to reveal Mustafa who marches towards the camera/ audience (fig.2.2). The camera then continues to film him from various angles, situated in a sea of fallen leaves. This imagery is supplemented by a matching story told by one of Mustafa's closest friends in parallel editing. Prophet Ibrahim is condemned to death, and a giant fire is put in place to burn him alive. A small ant, however, sets to work to rescue him. Carrying a tiny water blob in its mouth, it walks towards the execution arena. An eagle mocks the ant, telling that no good can come from such a feeble attempt. The ant replies: "So be it, at least they would know which side we were in for."[2] At his point, the camera finally rests on Mustafa's face in a close-up shot. The moral lesson of the

[2]"Kartal gülmüş, senin bir damla suyun ona ne yapabilir ki. Su taşıyan karınca mağrur, olsun demiş, hiç olmazsa safimiz belli olur."

story is that one should do what is right irrespective of the circumstances or the personal risk involved in his actions, just like Prince Mustafa and his followers are doing in *Magnificent Century*.



Fig.2.1-2.2-2.3 *Prince Mustafa as the only upright figure in a sea of fallen leaves.*

This central aspect of his personality as the lone hero in a forest of corrupted people is closely associated with the collective memory practices of left-wing activists in Turkey. In a notable scene, the prince is depicted as planning and progressing with land reform in his city Manisa. A peasant explains Mustafa's plans: "His Highness the Prince said that he is going to give fields to anyone who demands it…Whatever is needed will be provided by him. We are going to do the work of cultivating the field, some will be ours, and the rest will be given to state

treasury."[3] The project sounds proto-socialist in its aims, giving lands and all needed pieces of equipment to those who demand it for free. In Mustafa's vision, thus, we see a land reform that is often voiced by the leftist activists, especially in the 1960s and 1970s (Ulus, 2011, 57).

The episode featuring his execution introduces a new song to the series' soundtrack: "*Zahit Bizi Tan Eyleme*," which accompanies Mustafa's last steps to his death and is later played at his funeral. This is a recent cover of an old anonymous song that has been popular among the leftist circles in Turkey, especially in the 1960s and 1970s.[4] The song is also played in another recent popular Turkish series, *Remember Lover (Hatirla Sevgili)* (2006-2008) in the episode featuring young left-wing activist Mahir Cayan and his friends' deaths at the Kizildere town in 1972, associating Mustafa' representation with the history of slain youth activists in Turkey's history. Melancholic tunes of the song are complemented by the lyrics that stress the heart-wrenching loss and pain, but also the resilience to continue the struggle: "We cannot be counted by fingers, we will not go extinct by breaking/killing."[5] In the same episode, on more than one occasion, people who protest against his murder are labeled as "çapulcu" by high-ranking government officials. Memories of loss from the 1960s and 1970s, as well as 2010s are thus converged to create a national subject position by the focus on unjustly treated, harmed, and murdered male body, which points to state officials as power abusers who are blamed as the chief causes of troubles in the society.

Mustafa's execution on the orders of his father Sultan Suleiman is caused by a multitude of reasons, but we are shown repeatedly that the prince had enough support to overthrow the monarch if he so desired.

[3] "Şehzade Hazretleri isteyenlere tarla vereceğini söylemişler…Ne lazımsa temin edilecekmiş…, biz ekip biçeceğiz, bir kısmını biz alacağız, gerisi de hazineye gidecekmiş."

[4] For instance, a left-wing activist mentioned in an interview that as they used to look for villages to spend the night, they singed "Zahit Bizi Tan Eyleme." (Gece vakti konaklayacak köy arar, 'Zahit bizi tan eyleme' diye türkü söylerdik.) (*Okuz*, 1998, p. 3).

[5] "Sayılmayız parmak ile, tükenmeyiz kırmak ile."

Ultimately, he gets executed because he prefers to die as an honorable man rather than getting his morality compromised by betraying and overthrowing his father. He puts an envelope on his chest that his father reads in episode 124, as his dead body is carried on the shoulders of his loyal soldiers who weep exhaustively (Fig.3.1-3.2-3.3). The letter pays homage to all "oppressed peoples" of history, pointing out Prince Mustafa as their embodiment and representative:

> My Sultan, my dearest father… I leave you this cruel world where a father kills his son, as I would prefer to die as a victim of oppression than become a man who murders his own father for power and prosperity… Historians may write that I was a traitor and a rebellious prince… Let them write so. One day, the story of the oppressed peoples would also be told, perhaps years, even hundreds of years later, somebody would tell my story… and that day, justice would be served for the persecuted.[6]

The series invites the audience to identify with a victim of oppression and mourn for all the oppressed peoples through him. In that regard, Mustafa's death is tinted with "left-wing melancholia" (Traverso, 2016, p.2), which "perceives the tragedies and the lost battles of the past as a burden and a debt" (Traverso, p. xv). In Prince Mustafa's murder, "the present gives its meaning to the past," (Traverso, p. 7) in the sense the melancholic mood emanating from recent losses is projected into the distant past of the Ottoman 16th century. Unjustly treated, suffering, and dispossessed male subjects emerge as the embodiment of national

[6] "Ey hünkarım… Size bir babanın evladına kıydığı bu zalim dünyayı bırakıyorum…Zira ikbal ve iktidar uğruna babasının canına kast etmiş bir zalim olarak yaşamaktansa bir mazlum olarak ölmeyi yeğlerim… bir hain ve asi bir Sehzade olduğumu yazacak vakanüvisler. Varsın ole yazsınlar…bir gün gelir mazlumların hikayesi de anlatılır, belki yıllar, belki de yüzyıllar sonra, biri benim hikayemi anlatır…iste o gün mazlumun hakki mazluma teslim edilmiş olur."

subjectivity, and the national history is framed as one of national victimization. To put it differently, the series nationalizes victimhood by its emphasis on Prince Mustafa as the representative of all those who suffered in the hands of a brutal state apparatus.

Fig.3.1-3.2-3.3 *Prince Mustafa as the innocent victim of oppression in his all-white clothing.*

This male-centric political criticism towards Turkey's political history, as well as the present-day political situation, is constructed at the expanse of sidelining and even vilifying female characters of the story. Even though the series already had many issues regarding the representation of women in its earlier seasons, it was still primarily about the life of palace women, especially of Hurrem Sultan, from whose eyes much of the story was narrated. Besides the fact that most central female characters are directly or indirectly implicated in Prince

Mustafa's murder, the overall representation of women throughout this last season grew significantly more problematic. Thus, the series' political criticism is achieved by sacralizing the victim male bodies and decidedly sidelining the stories of women in Ottoman history.

Prince Mustafa's overall portrayal draws from various memories of loss, distant and more recent. Our subjectivities are often constituted "by those we grieve for" (Pribram, 2012, p. 123), and in this case, we are grieving not only for an executed prince, but we are invited to mourn for all the young men who have lost their lives in fighting for a good cause in Turkey's history, and the nation itself, which is depicted as harmed irretrievably by their loss. In other words, the series portrays not only Mustafa but the entire nation as a victim of oppression. In its last season, *Magnificent Century* redefines and re-signifies masculine ethos, rather than engaging in a thoroughgoing criticism of it, as a result, the criticism of the contemporaneous authoritarian political climate falls short of touching its major breeding ground. While condemning the ruling elite for its abuses of power, the series identifies the suffering male body as the constitutive essence of national subjectivity. Hence, the nation remains defined essentially as "the community of men" (Mosse, 1985: 176), this time connected, not in glory, but shared suffering. Hegemonic masculinity, thus, is constituted through a paradoxical mixture of militaristic, authoritarian leadership and a narrative that draws from left-wing memories of loss and persecution of innocence.

Ertuğrul: A Rebel and Authoritarian Leader

The televisual broadcasting of *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* follows suit *Magnificent Century*. The series' very existence appears to be a result of the government initiative to take control of the remembrance of Turkey's Ottoman past and, in that regard, it can be seen as a direct response to *Magnificent Century.* Thus, *Resurrection* supplies the Turkish government with the desired image of Turkey's Ottoman past. Indeed, on several occasions, high-ranking government officials visited the filming set and praised the show. The primary aim of this section is to showcase that

there is inadvertent cooperation between government-backed and critical discourses in Turkey, as this collaboration reflects itself in the way government-backed popular TV programs work in tandem with purportedly critical popular productions in creating a rife environment for authoritarian politics.

Due to its popularity with the audiences, *Resurrection* appears as the most successful fruit of the Turkish governments' desires to project its own constructed image into the past. The series promises "resurrection," paradoxically to an empire that is yet to be born: The Ottoman Empire. It thus identifies the present-day moment of JDP (AKP) rule as the commencement of the oncoming age of national prominence, a moment of resurrection. The series' rendition of the late 13^{th} century and JDP's vision of contemporary Turkey amalgamate, as they both rest on the promise of restoration and revival.

The central character Ertuğrul is a bold chieftain, who, relying on his equally virile and loyal men, fight for the survival of his small tribe. He is both a leader to a rising polity, but also a rebel to the established order of clashing imperial powers and a corrupt governmental apparatus that tries to stop him or even kill him. It is this mixture of being a militaristic leader to a rising polity and yet a rebel to the established world order that constitutes the character's charm, and which closely reckons President Erdogan's constructed public image in Turkey. As Turkey has started to face growing international pressures for the escalating trend of authoritarianism and human rights abuses, in addition to severe economic difficulties, government-backed media have started to rely extensively on conspiracy theories to diffuse external and internal criticisms of government policies. Ertuğrul*: Resurrection*, likewise, represents a mirror image of this narrative; Ertuğrul is surrounded by multiple foreign enemies from the west to the east and hidden internal traitors who are together bent on the destruction of his polity. Ertuğrul is positioned as a virile leader whose orders should be followed unquestioningly for the good of the nation, as well as being a dissident and nonconformist who oppose the powerful forces of unjust

world order, which closely approximates contemporary Turkish government's self-representation.

Ertuğrul's speeches are an assortment of mottos that emphasizes violence as a necessary way to lead a polity against its multiple foes. He says in episode 137: "Here, I come to face your power, roaring like a lion"[7] against a mighty Mongolian military commander. He also asserts in the same scene that: "Henceforth, all the decisions that serve to oppress would be nullified by the shedding of blood."[8] When offered a high position for his submission to Mongolian authority, he replies that "ropes that hold foxes by the neck cannot hold the wolves."[9] Hence, Ertuğrul is constantly positioned as a nonconformist who disrupts the plans of powerful oppressors and leads his polity to better days through his violent actions. Violent exercise of power is repeatedly legitimized as the only way for the national polity to survive its enemies.

Just like in *Magnificent Century,* male bonding is a recurrent leitmotif of *Resurrection*. On various occasions, we see Ertuğrul and his loyal men come together in emotionally intensified scenes, such as when Ertuğrul is thought to be dead but returns to his tribe to the extreme jubilance of his loyal soldiers. His men start shaking in happiness as they find it hard to believe that their leader is still alive and approaches from afar. Later, Ertuğrul hugs one by one all these men who cry and laugh at the same time from exuberance (fig.6.1-6.2-6.3). As I suggested before, the main function of the male homosocial interactions and bonding in the series is that it defines the national community as the close gathering of militarist men.

[7] "Kudretine aslanca kükreyerek geldim."

[8] "Bilesin ki, bundan böyle zulümle verilen hükümler kan ile bozulacaktır"

[9] "Tilkilerin boynuna geçen kement, kurtların boynuna işlemez."

Fig.6.1-6.2-6.3 *A conventional scene of emotionally intensified male bonding, reminiscent of Prince Mustafa's close bonding with his men.*

Islam as the central marker of national subjectivity

As a significant narrative difference of *Resurrection: Ertuğrul*, it is often the Shamanistic Mongolians and their Turkish allies who are the main opponents of Ertuğrul and his tribe, as much as their Christian enemies. This is a striking contrast to previous popular and official history writings in Turkey. In the early years of the secular Turkish Republic in the 1920s and 1930s, the Ottoman past is represented as the archaic other of the new Republic (Çolak, 2006, p. 591), and instead of the Ottomans, official Turkish history writing focused on the pre-Islamic, central Asian origins of the Turks (Gürpinar, 2013, p. 84). In later decades, the Ottoman past eventually emerged as a central element in the nationalist imagery to propagate the notion of Turkish greatness (Eldem, 2010, p. 29), without disowning the pre-Islamic past of the Turks.

In *Resurrection*, however, pre-Islamic Turkic groups are frequently portrayed as vile, barbaric, and self-interested. For instance, a Shamanistic Turkish commander is shown drinking wine from a skull, presumably belonging to a man he killed (fig.5.1). One of Ertuğrul's loyal men yells to a group of Mongolian soldiers in episode 199: "You conquer countries, but to what end, only to spread devastation and fear everywhere you go."[10] Mongolians and their Turkish allies are represented as fighting for bounty and personal enrichment only, whereas Ertuğrul and his loyal men fight for a just cause, "Rıza-i Ilahi," that is God's will.

Additionally, Shaman religious practices often take place in the darkness and are associated with evil intent in clear contrast to the peaceful representation of sage Muslim religious leaders (fig.5.2-5.3). The series showcases that Shamanistic Turks and Mongolians share many cultural similarities with Muslim Turks. They dress and speak analogously. Both are frequently shown using the same old Turkic idioms in their daily speeches. The cultural similarity of Shamanistic and Muslim Turks, however, does not alter the fact that followers of Shamanism are clean-cut separated from Muslim Turks as the enemy. In short, Islam is presented as the sole marker of belonging to the national polity, nullifying any other identity marker's significance. By altering the way Turkish history has come to be written in drawing a clear line between pre-Islamic and Islamic Turkish history, the series entrenches the notion that Islam is the exclusive marker of belonging to national polity.

[10] "Siz ülkeler fethedersiniz de ne olur? ... Gittiğiniz yere yıkım ve korku götürürsünüz."

Fig.5.1-5.2-5.3 *On the left, a Shamanistic Turkish commander drinks wine from a skull, in the middle, a Shaman leads a religious ceremony in darkness, and in contrast to unfavorable depictions of Shamanism, a sage Muslim religious leader instructs serenely his disciples, as the low angle camera stresses his power.*

Contours of national subjectivity change considerably when we compare a critical TV show with a directly government-backed series. However, they share a crucial similarity in that they both rely on the creation and sustenance of a masculine ethos that is presented as the root cause of a nation's rise or fall. In *Magnificent Century,* the Ottomans decline and fall because Prince Mustafa was murdered. In *Resurrection: Ertuğrul,* likewise, the polity's future completely depends on Ertuğrul. Hence, we can observe a ball-sharing exercise in diverse popular historical productions in making Turkish society prone towards authoritarianism by constantly elevating male leaders, and their loyal militarist followers, to the status of being indispensable foundations and protectors of the nation.

A climactic scene in episode 123 of *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* best illustrates this ball sharing exercise in reinforcing male hegemony in political discourse between oppositional and propagandistic cultural productions. There is a direct intertextual reference to the famous scene of Prince Mustafa's execution in the *Magnificent Century. Resurrection* plays with the cultural memory of this recent popular cultural event in Turkey by connecting the destinies of Ertuğrul and Prince Mustafa.

Basically, like Mustafa, Ertuğrul enters an imperial tent to be murdered in a plot but returns back from there alive. The visual construction of this latter scene is a replica of the scene of Prince Mustafa's murder. In fact, the actors who took part in Prince Mustafa's execution play similar roles in this scene as well. For instance, an actor who plays a leading role as a devoted supporter of Mustafa in the *Magnificent Century*, likewise, is in the role of a dedicated follower of Ertuğrul, in both cases waiting in trepidation in front of the tent (fig.7.1-7.2-.7.3-7.4). After Mustafa's murder, his followers repeatedly say across several episodes: "They killed our hope," rationalizing why they are so incensed by his death. In *Resurrection*, Ertuğrul's anxiously waiting friends repeat this line twice as their leader comes out alive from the tent: "So long Ertuğrul lives, there will always be hope."




Fig. 7.1-7.2-7.3-7.4 *Above, Prince Mustafa's execution inside Sultan Suleiman's imperial tent, below, Ertuğrul's survival under analogous circumstances in the climactic scenes of Magnificent Century and Resurrection: Ertugrul.* The same actor plays a similar role in both scenes.

Resurrection strengthens the saga of Ertuğrul by relating his life to Prince Mustafa and his execution, which occupy a considerable place in the cultural memory of the people of Turkey thanks to the *Magnificent Century*. Even though Prince Mustafa's and Ertuğrul's representations in these two series differ markedly, they both are looked upon as the source of hope for the polity's rejuvenation and rise. In a sense, Ertuğrul is what Prince Mustafa would have become if he could survive the plot against his life in the narrative universe of the *Magnificent Century*, which is the redeemer of his national polity. This single intertextual reference showcases popular productions in Turkey share visual and narrative, as well as thematic correspondences in portraying masculine leaders and their dedicated followers as the redeemers of the national polity. Consequently, despite the differences in the way they conceptualize national subjectivity and contours of national belonging, they together play pivotal roles in maintaining, reproducing, and bracing hegemonic masculinity and authoritarian politics. Hence, the comparative textual analysis of *Magnificent Century* and *Resurrection* regarding the portrayal of Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul indicates that despite their diversified political content, they still converge in the way women are sidelined from political discourse, and masculinity is positioned as the central component of national subjectivity and national hope.

Conclusion

Magnificent Century and *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* are the two most successful Ottoman-themed television dramas of Turkey in the 2010s at a time when the discursive hold of Ottomanism and the popularity of Turkish television series have both skyrocketed. *Magnificent Century* reflects the political developments of its times of production from 2011 to 2014. From celebrating the "magnificent century" of the Ottoman Empire in its earlier seasons in alignment with the relatively positive political climate in Turkey with a focus on the lives of palace women, the series thematically diverts its attention to condemn the powerholders

and their power abuses in the Ottoman past as a subtext to criticize intensifying authoritarianism in contemporaneous Turkey. Prince Mustafa's incapability of reaching his rightful place as the polity's leader becomes the single major event that prevents the redemption of the national polity from cycles of corruption, causing the decline and the eventual fall of the Ottoman Empire in the series' narrative universe. The series portrays the Ottoman monarch Sultan Suleiman as an anti-hero throughout much of its last season, while putting forward his son Prince Mustafa as the ideal phallic leader of the national polity. In this way, it re-calibrates hegemonic masculinity along the paradoxical lines of military prowess and a narrative of the victimized male body, indebted to left-wing discourses and memories about the loss of young people in Turkey's history. The series, thus, re-interprets national history as one of national victimization, while re-establishing the constitutive role of the militarist male leader and his loyal men. This narrative transformation also indicates that the growing politicization of televisual narratives in regard to contemporaneous political debates tends to sidestep women's perspectives and stories, as they reify hegemonic masculinities as central pillars of national subjectivity.

Resurrection: Ertuğrul is screened by the state-controlled TRT and is praised on multiple occasions by government officials. The series draws parallels between the early beginnings of what would later become the Ottoman Empire and the present-day self-representation of the AKP (JDP) government that, according to its own propaganda, leads the way for a rejuvenated Turkish polity. The series' central character Ertuğrul is portrayed as an authoritarian leader who brings justice and restores order through violent means. He is also depicted as a rebel leader against a cruel world order, fighting at many fronts against multitudes of foreign foes, but also against internal traitors, striking a chord with the Turkish government's self-representation. In short, *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* reflects the contemporary Turkish government's socio-political desires and projects its self-portrayal into the historical past. Surrounded by multiple enemies trying to hurt him and his polity, often betrayed by those who are close to him, and regularly suffering a

great many losses, a language of victimization and a depiction of wounded male personality is also a significant component of Ertuğrul's masculinity.

The close comparative textual analysis indicates that *Magnificent Century* and *Resurrection: Ertuğrul* converge in perpetuating the ethos of masculine leader and militarist male-bonding practices as the constitutive essences of the Turkish national polity. Despite ideological differences in the portrayal of Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul that respectively emphasize left-wing and Islamic discourses, both series coalesce in positing the male leader and his followers as foundational elements of the nation. Additionally, both Prince Mustafa and Ertuğrul are portrayed as simultaneously powerful to exert forceful change and sometimes simply powerless in the face of a deeply corrupted world. Thus, in their militaristic use of power, they are identified as harbingers of better days, and in their powerlessness, they are idolized as intrinsically different and unconnected to a corrupt world. Ultimately, the displays of might and the depiction of male victimization are equally stressed in both series, giving us the essential components of contemporary hegemonic masculinity in Turkey. Crucially, the portrayal of these two male characters strikes a chord with the self-representation of the Turkish ruling elite, which proclaims itself as the sole guardian of the nation (Yılmaz & Turner, 2019, p. 693), as well as regularly embracing a language of self-victimization.

This study postulates that the recent intensification of authoritarianism in Turkey has been on the making in the realm of popular culture through an inadvertent collaboration of governmental propaganda and criticism, as they all join forces in supporting hegemonic masculinities. The government-subsidized popular productions and TV series that attract appreciation for their critical aspects blend in building and maintaining a cultural environment suitable for the rise of authoritarianism. Hence, this article argues that, rather than exclusively focusing on governmental propaganda or government-funded popular productions, it is the general cultural climate that celebrates and finds its

hopes of salvation in unique male leaders that should be challenged to wage a struggle against political authoritarianism in Turkey.

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Popüler Kültürde Hegemonik Erkeklik Temsilleri ve Otoriter Yönetimin Çekiciliği: *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* (2011–2014) ve *Diriliş: Ertuğrul* (2014–2019) Dizilerinin Karşılaştırmalı İncelemesi

Öz: Bu çalışma *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* (2011–2014) ve *Diriliş: Ertuğrul* (2014 – 2019) adlı dizilerdeki iki ana karakter olan Şehzade Mustafa ve Ertuğrul'un temsiline odaklanarak 2010'larda yapılan tarih temelli bu iki diziyi karşılaştırmalı olarak incelemekte ve bu karşılaştırma üzerinden Türk popüler kültüründe hegemonik erkekliklerin temsili ile Türkiye'de yükselen siyasi otoriterlik akımı arasındaki bağlantıları ele almaktadır. *Muhteşem Yüzyıl*, Türk tarihini aşağılayıcı biçimde yanlış tanıttığı iddiasıyla üst düzey hükümet yetkilileri tarafından defalarca kınanmıştır. Dizinin 2013'teki Gezi Parkı protestolarına denk gelen dördüncü sezonunda dizi, iktidar suiistimalleri ve baskılarına karşı daha eleştirel bir bakış açısı kazanmaya başlamıştır. Yine bu dördüncü sezonda, Şehzade Mustafa ölümüne kadar dizinin ana karakteri olarak yer almış ve infaz edildiği sahne, yakın Türk televizyon tarihinin en büyük medya olaylarından biri haline gelmiştir. Dizideki Şehzade Mustafa tasviri, Türkiye solunun kayıp ve baskı anılarından yoğun olarak yararlanmakta ve dizinin iktidarın kötüye kullanılmasına yönelik eleştirileri, çağdaş Türk hükümetini de kapsamaktadır. Örneğin, Şehzade Mustafa'nın öldürülmesini protesto eden Osmanlı halkı dizide defalarca Gezi Parkı eylemcilerini küçümsemek için kullanılan "çapulcu" ifadesi ile anılmaktadır. Buna karşılık *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, devlet kanalı TRT tarafından, diziyi birçok kez kamuoyu önünde öven hükümet yetkililerinin onayıyla gösterilmiştir. *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, çağdaş Türk hükümetinin yeniden canlanma ve diriliş vurgusuna paralel olarak, daha sonra Osmanlı İmparatorluğu olacak olan yapının ilk başlangıcında kargaşa içindeki bir devletin görkemini yeniden canlandıran bir aşiret reisi olan Ertuğrul'un hikayesini anlatmaktadır. Ertuğrul ve adamlarının tasvirinde İslam, tekrarlı biçimde ulusal kimliğin nihai işareti olarak sunulur. Bununla birlikte, yakın metin analizi, tematik ve ideolojik farklılıklarına rağmen, her iki dizinin de erkek lideri ve onun sadık militarist adamlarını ulusal yönetimin yapı taşları ve koruyucuları olarak konumlandırmada

birleştiğini göstermektedir. Ek olarak, Ertuğrul ve Şehzade Mustafa'nın tasvirinde, militarist ve otoriter güç gösterilerinin paradoksal bir kucaklaşmasını ve aynı zamanda, Türkiye'deki çağdaş hegemonik erkekliğin temel bileşenlerini oluşturduğunu iddia ettiğim, kurulu otoriteye isyan ve erkek mağduriyetine yapılan vurguyu bulmaktayız. Bu nedenle, politik söylemde karşılaştığımız hegemonik erkekliğin temel bileşenlerinden bazılarının, yeniden üretildiği ve büyütüldüğü popüler kültür arenasında izlenebileceğini savunuyorum.

Anahtar kelimeler: Hegemonik erkeklikler, Türk TV dizileri, politik otoriteryenlik, militarizm, direniş, popüler tarih.