MEDİAD

Narrative Transformation in the Turkish Television Industry: The Rise of Conservative and Secular Conflict

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Abstract

Television has held a privileged place in the social sphere since the day it first succeeded in transmitting moving images and has become one of the main sources of entertainment and information. The idea that it triggers social conflicts due to the narratives it constructs has, from time to time, led to criticism. This study was conducted to examine the strategies and potential effects of how the conservative-secular conflict, which has been frequently addressed in recent broadcasting, is presented on screen. The sample consists of the series *Bir Başkadır* and *Kızıl Goncalar*, which have a stronger sociological context compared to other series addressing similar themes, and content analysis was used in the examination. To explain the origins of the conservative-secular conflict, Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory, which aims to expand the boundaries of Marxism and Weberianism by placing authority at its center, was employed. The study determined that *Bir Başkadır* is one of the pioneering productions that laid the groundwork for the rise of the modern conservative-secular conflict in Türkiye. It was identified that the methods of constructing conflict in conventional broadcasting and digital platforms are similar, and that both ideologies are portrayed in extreme forms, detached from their philosophical roots. It was observed that in scenes involving conservative-secular poles, narrative codes change, emphasis is placed on symbols and metaphors, and tension is heightened through side-conflict elements. It was concluded that the ideological conflicts constructed on screen increase politicization in the public sphere and deepen social polarization.

Keywords: Television, Streaming Services, Digital Culture, Conservatism, Secularism, Conflict Theory

Türk Televizyon Endüstrisinde Anlatısal Dönüşüm: Muhafazakâr ve Seküler Çatışmasının Yükselişi

Öz

Televizyon, görüntü aktarımını başardığı ilk günden itibaren toplumsal alanda ayrıcalıklı bir yer edinmiş, eğlence ve enformasyonun ana kaynaklarından olmuştur. İnşa ettiği anlatılar nedeniyle toplumsal çatışmaları tetiklediği düşüncesi, zaman zaman eleştirilmesine neden olmuştur. Bu çalışma, son dönem yayıncılık alanında sıkça işlenen muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasının ekranlarda sunulma stratejilerini ve potansiyel etkilerini incelemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Örneklem, benzer temaları işleyen dizilere göre daha güçlü sosyolojik bağlama sahip olan *Bir Başkadır* ve *Kızıl Goncalar* dizilerinden oluşmuş, incelemelerde içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasının kökenlerini açıklamak için Ralf Dahrendorf'un Marksizm ve Weberyanizmin sınırlarını genişletmeyi amaçlayarak otoriteyi merkeze aldığı çatışma kuramından yararlanılmıştır. Çalışmada *Bir Başkadır* dizisinin Türkiye'de modern muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasının yükselişine zemin hazırlayan öncü yapımlardan biri olduğu belirlenmiştir. Konvansiyonel yayıncılıkta ve

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dijital platform yapımlarında çatışma oluşturma biçimlerinin benzer olduğu tespit edilmiş, iki ideolojinin felsefi kökenlerinden koparılarak uç noktalara taşındığı görülmüştür. Muhafazakâr-seküler kutupları içeren sahnelerde anlatı kodlarının değiştiği, semboller ve metaforlara ağırlık verildiği, yan çatışma unsurlarıyla gerilimin artırıldığı saptanmıştır. Ekranlarda inşa edilen ideolojik çatışmaların kamusal alandaki politizasyonu artırdığı ve toplumsal kutuplaşmayı derinleştirdiği sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Televizyon, Dijital Platform, Dijital Kültür, Muhafazakârlık, Sekülerlik, Çatışma Teorisi

Introduction

Television, one of the most powerful actors in the mass communication industry with the ability to transmit audiovisual messages synchronously, has been a significant medium since its invention. Compared to the span of human history, the transmission of the first moving image occurred relatively recently, yet television has undergone rapid transformation in the 21st century. Technological innovations have turned television into a mass communication medium that is highly sought after, enabling it to swiftly gain prominence in the social sphere. Since its emergence, television ownership has steadily increased on a global scale.

The expansion of access to television has enabled viewers to learn about events occurring both globally and in Türkiye more easily and in less time. Television has become a functional means of providing information and a major source of entertainment. In the period following its widespread adoption, the number of channels representing different ideological perspectives increased, leading to multiple shifts in the narrative structure of programming. All of these developments have transformed television into a pivotal mass communication tool that facilitates sociological change. Shortly after internet technology gained the capacity to transmit video, streaming services emerged, liberating audiences from the temporal and spatial constraints of traditional television. Each individual tended to watch content that appealed to their own tastes on their personal mobile devices, and television ceased to function as a medium based on collective, ritualistic use.

In addition to processes of technological development, the television industry has undergone numerous narrative transformations. The driving forces behind these shifts have at times been government interventions and, at other times, popular cultural orientations. The development and narrative transformation processes of Turkish television have paralleled global trends, with television narratives and popular preferences undergoing radical change.

This study emphasises narrative transformation rather than technological advancement and brings the conservative-secular conflict—one of the most current and prominent cultural dynamics—into focus. Today, the Turkish television industry continues to exist not only through conventional broadcasting but also via streaming services. These platforms, which mediate the formation of digital culture, undoubtedly have a significant impact on the sociological structure and are particularly important for younger generations. It has been observed that the two channels continuing their broadcasting activities in Türkiye emphasise the conflict between

conservatives and secularists, and this study aims to contribute to the literature by discussing the reasons for this emphasis and how the issue is addressed.

This study deals with the conservative and secular conflict, which is frequently televised in Türkiye, within the framework of Dahrendorf's authority-centred conflict theory and, in this respect, differs from other significant studies in the field. Another aspect that distinguishes this study is the platforms through which the productions are presented to society. It analyses the popularity of the issue in Türkiye through a series broadcast on a streaming service, followed by a focus on a television production. Although this element of conflict has been featured in TV series and films many times, it was the Netflix series *Ethos* that captured viewers' attention and revealed the subject's potential.

The research, recognising that both streaming services and conventional television broadcasting remain popular in Türkiye, addresses the subject through a sample representing both media forms. The aim of the study is to examine narrative transformations through the series *Ethos*, broadcast on the Netflix platform, and *Kızıl Goncalar*, broadcast on NOW TV (formerly FOX TV). These two series were selected because they offer a stronger sociological context than many other productions aired on various channels.

The content analysis method was used to examine the series, and the main categories and subcategories were defined based on the relevant literature. The main categories include 'general framework', 'cultural and sociological perspective', 'cinematography', and 'technical structure'. The corresponding subcategories are: 'title of the production', 'director', 'screenplay', 'genre and target audience', 'broadcasting platform', 'socio-ideological aspects of characters', 'religion and belief systems', 'gender and ethnic representations', 'political and ideological context', 'class and socioeconomic structure', 'historical and geographical context', 'conflict elements', 'space and time', 'symbols and metaphors', 'lighting techniques', 'depicted atmosphere', 'visual composition', 'scene design', 'camera scales and movements', 'costume and set design', 'colour grading', 'editing techniques', 'visual effects', and 'the use of sound and music'. The analyses were carried out systematically, aiming to draw sociological inferences from the series. Conclusions were drawn in light of all findings.

1. Television Industry and Television Broadcasting in Türkiye

Although the invention of writing was undoubtedly not the only factor in the transition from archaic civilisation to Promethean society, it played a crucial role in accelerating the process. With the invention of writing, information became transferable, storable, objectifiable, and conceptualisable. Just like the invention of writing, mass media has served as a mediator of modern transformations in the dissemination and consumption of information. The sociology of knowledge, while examining issues such as the social conditions and acquisition of knowledge, has also had to engage with the evolving modes of knowledge dissemination. From this perspective, some of the most significant discoveries in human history have involved developments in the distribution of information—and television technology is no exception. With innovations in the dissemination process, humanity has progressed from face-to-face communication to one-way, wireless communication (Cazeneuve, 1962, p. 119; Golding, 2000, p. 165; Sassen, 2002, p. 365; Silverstone, 2005).

Television has become one of the most effective and versatile tools in the mass communication industry. However, to offer a simple definition of television: it is a technological process, an electronic device, and a system that transmits images and sounds. Although television as a means of mass communication did not begin to have a significant impact on society until the late 1940s and early 1950s, the foundations of television technology were developed in the 1920s (Magoun, 2007; Morley, 2012, p. 79; Wasko, 2009, p. 3).

Even when television technology was in its infancy, it was considered a technological revolution, and the possibility of instantaneous transmission of information over long distances attracted global attention. With Michael Faraday's discovery of electromagnetic waves, Paul Nipkow's invention of the Nipkow disc, and the contributions of scientists such as John Logie Baird and Charles Francis Jenkins, the idea of transmitting moving images resonated worldwide. Over time, television evolved into an electronic device, and the mechanical television process came to be regarded as the experimental groundwork for the broadcasting industry (Stephens, 1991, p. 35; Van den Ende et al., 1997). Although the word 'television' was initially associated with radio technology in the minds of the public, the historical development of television has been quite different from that of radio (Garratt & Mumford, 1952). Radio and television, two major technologies in terms of both the technical processes of message transmission and their sociological effects, began to emerge as rival technologies simultaneously. Undoubtedly, the presence of a powerful element such as the moving image in television broadcasting enabled viewers to have a more enriched media consumption experience. This development was one of the earliest factors that opened the door to many transformations, particularly the ease of access to information and entertainment.

Evaluating the complex relationship between television and society has undoubtedly been a challenge throughout the history of communication sciences. This issue has also presented researchers with methodological difficulties. Today, although digital transformations—and the rise of digital culture in parallel with these changes—have shifted television audiences to different media, television remains a fundamental part of daily life for many people. While new digital technologies are drawing viewers away from television, it is reported that the average American still watches more than four hours of television per day, which amounts to 28 hours a week and two months per year. Undoubtedly, American television viewing habits are not identical to those in all countries, but it is undeniable that television continues to play an important role in people's everyday lives (Wasko, 2009, p. 3). In many countries, television has the power to influence key dimensions of the social sphere, such as politics, consumption, and entertainment, which means that all segments of society—from rulers to the ruled—inevitably engage with television at various levels. Although the structure and content of television broadcasts may vary across time and place, its capacity to transmit synchronized images and sound and to provide an immersive experience makes it one of the most powerful storytellers. Therefore, television is not merely a technological tool but also a narrative medium (Söğütlüler & Aday, 2023; Söğütlüler, 2023, 2024).

The positioning of television as a narrative medium in the social sphere has led to the adoption of different orientations in television research over the past sixty years, particularly within the social sciences. This process began with the recognition that television is one of the

tools that significantly impact the social sphere. For this reason, it has been positioned in studies as a key site for examining the interrelationships between society and power, culture, class, language, and religion. These studies vary considerably in both theoretical and methodological approaches, which is why the need to distinguish between types of television research has been frequently emphasised in the academic field. While political economy approaches are concerned with the macro-relational structure of television, cultural approaches tend to focus on the relationship between the individual and television from a micro perspective (Başer & Söğütlüler, 2023; Bell & Gray, 2007, p. 113; Grindstaff & Turow, 2006, p. 103; Mittell, 2006, p. 29; White, 1989, p. 282).

Stating that analysing the connections between macro-sociological approaches focusing on the whole and micro-sociological approaches focusing on individual experiences reveals the true potential of sociology, Mills put forward an idea that has shaped the conceptual orientation of the television research literature. Although this type of categorisation may appear to be a systematic approach, the practice of watching television—central to micro approaches—is an act that is highly individual and inherently difficult to analyse or measure. Moreover, the individual act of viewing is influenced by numerous factors (Letak, 2022; Mills, 1959, p. 10). When the entire process is considered, the act of watching television is both individual and social. At the same time, the effects of television are both individual and social. Therefore, television, like other mass media, has a complex nature. However, one of the key elements that makes television even more complex is its ability to offer a more immersive experience through visual and auditory elements compared to other forms of mass media. For this reason, the messages presented by television are subject to various limitations by regulatory bodies and are often under the supervision and control of power.

Television's influence in the social sphere presents not only potential opportunities but also significant threats for those in power. The role of leisure time in society is much more substantial than it may appear, and the underlying dynamics of television viewing—often regarded as a simple act or ritual of leisure—are remarkably complex (Carr & Carr, 2023, p. 516; Roberts, 2015; Stebbins, 2018, p. 44) In order to explain this complex nature, scientific studies focusing on the viewer have been conducted. David Morley, one of the pioneering scholars in the field, has analysed—through a cultural studies perspective—how class and cultural differences affect the ways in which television is interpreted, as well as the impact of gender on television viewing patterns (Morley, 2003). Several studies in the field have examined the nature of television from behavioural perspectives, while others have approached it through the lens of cultural studies.

The difficulty of explaining the complex relationship between television and its audience has been similar across different societies. Television has remained an important mass communication tool in Turkish society for many years, witnessing nearly all major events, especially since the 1970s. Numerous studies on television and its nature have been conducted in Türkiye, and these studies have been informed by similar approaches in the global academic literature. Until the rise of streaming services enabled by Internet technology, television was one of the primary—if not the primary—sources of entertainment and information consumption for all generations.

Television broadcasting in Türkiye began on 31 January 1968 through TRT, and one of the most important actors in the mass communication process rapidly entered the social sphere after

this date (Yengin, 1994). Broadcasting on certain days and hours of the week, TRT began its broadcasting journey in cooperation with Istanbul University and continued independently after a while, switching to colour television in 1982. TV 2 became Türkiye's second channel, followed by the establishment of GAP TV and TBMM TV, and on 7 May 1990, the first private channel, Star TV, was launched (Özçağlayan, 2000). In this process, television has become a sought-after mass communication tool within the social sphere and has gained importance in leisure, news, and entertainment practices.

The broadcasting process of Turkish television, which began with the state and developed through private sector initiatives, has also served as an important bridge between the government and society. Television has undertaken a significant mission to provide the public with news while simultaneously enhancing their cultural and artistic accumulation. In particular, state-led projects such as GAP TV were directly aimed at increasing the cultural capital of society. Undoubtedly, these projects have taken their place in history as well-intentioned efforts; however, television has not always been a medium that benefitted Turkish society. Numerous studies have established a close relationship between acts of violence, class-political polarisation, and television, demonstrating over time that it is not possible to assess television solely as an innocent tool.

Since the beginning of Turkish television broadcasting, political powers have been eager to use TRT in line with their own ambitions, while the industry has rapidly adapted to technological developments. Technological innovations were swiftly adopted through cable broadcasting trials. Channels such as SHOW TV, CINE 5, ATV, KANAL D, KANAL 6, HBB, and TGRT—many of which are still active today—began their broadcasting activities, and both private and public broadcasting continued side by side (Özçağlayan, 2000). Due to the fact that the television sector has an economic structure based on advertising, public broadcasts have primarily aimed to inform society, whereas private television channels have focused on increasing viewership. This situation has led to various problems over time, and the Regulation Law No. 3984, which governs private radio and television broadcasts, was put into effect. With the enactment of this law in 1994, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) was established, and broadcasting activities began to be supervised by the state.

Since the early 2000s, internet technology has become dominant on a global scale, leading to a transformation in broadcasting practices. As the 21st century opened its doors, humanity became integrated into digital networks, and the world was swept into a paradigm shift. Since then, streaming services have come to dominate broadcasting activities worldwide, and Türkiye has also been influenced by this transformation.

With the dominance of digital culture, television—which holds a significant position in Turkish society—has begun to lose its influence, especially among younger generations. While television, one of the most prominent actors in Türkiye's mass communication industry, is gradually losing its appeal to the youth, the act of viewing through mobile devices and the availability of unlimited content have accelerated this transformation. Undoubtedly, whereas conventional television broadcasting is tied to time and space constraints, the global digital transformation driven by the internet has removed these limitations. Streaming services now

offer personalised content suggestions by identifying viewer preferences, and audiences have shifted toward content that directly appeals to their individual tastes via mobile devices, free from the limitations of traditional broadcasting. This shift in television culture has been reflected in the findings of numerous quantitative and empirical studies.

According to a report by the Radio and Television Supreme Council, there has been a significant decline in television viewing time since 2006. In 2006, weekday television viewing averaged 5 hours and 6 minutes, increasing slightly to 5 hours and 12 minutes on weekends. By 2012, weekday viewing time had dropped to 3 hours and 42 minutes, and to 4 hours and 24 minutes on weekends (RTÜK, 2018).

Other organisations monitoring television and viewing trends have also reported a decline in viewing hours. According to a report published by the TV Audience Research Company, there was a significant decrease in television viewing hours between 2014 and 2019. Data from the TV Audience Research Company indicate that television viewing is lowest among the 12–19 age group and highest among those aged 55 and above. This suggests that, although television has lost its influence on younger generations, it remains an important medium for middle-aged and older viewers (TIAK, 2020, p. 3). Undoubtedly, these developments have both sociological and psychological effects. Communication sciences have played a leading role in researching these issues, and shifts in viewing habits as well as narrative transformations in broadcasting have been frequently discussed. These debates have historically addressed topics embraced by various research traditions and have shaped the direction of mass communication studies. The adaptation of television to digital technologies compels researchers to move beyond traditional perspectives and to reconsider how established methods can be applied within the new media landscape.

2. Dahrendorf's Conflict Theory and the Sociology of Television: A Brief Overview

Born in Hamburg in 1929, Ralf Dahrendorf participated in anti-Nazi movements during his school years and was arrested in 1944. Between 1947 and 1952, he studied Sociology and Philology at the University of Hamburg and continued his research at the London School of Economics. He received his PhD in 1956 and became a Professor of Sociology at the University of Hamburg in 1958 and at the University of Tübingen in 1960. Dahrendorf distanced himself from traditional conflict theories and the functionalist perspective in understanding social systems, describing them as utopian (Dahrendorf, 1958a; Turner, 2010) Dahrendorf's theory of conflict, which he developed as an alternative to the basic arguments of classical Marxism, is based on group dynamics. Dahrendorf's understanding of social differentiation is considered a class theory because of its connections with Marx's framework. However, Dahrendorf's interpretation of social differentiation lacks some of the core features of Marx's and Weber's classical class theories, yet it also incorporates certain elements of class-based approaches. Therefore, it is viewed as distinct from traditional understandings (Tittenbrun, 2013). Dahrendorf also stated that social groups constantly compete with one another to control authority. He drew a connection between struggles over authority and class conflict. He argued that social conflicts in post-industrial society are not solely rooted in class issues; instead, he pointed to the influence of other types of social ties. According to Dahrendorf, social groups must continually engage in conflict to protect their own interests, and he regarded such conflict as a normal and expected aspect of social life (Dahrendorf, 1958a, 1958b).

According to Dahrendorf, social conflict does not arise solely from economic reasons, and this idea differs from Marx's perspective. Weber argues that conflicts are not purely economic either, but that both authority and economic structures create favourable conditions for conflict. For Weber, what is of central importance in conflicts is the concept of *legitimacy*, and all systems of oppression must first be perceived as legitimate in order to be functional. Therefore, legitimacy is one of the most critical components in conflict theories. Weber suggests that social classes are more complex than Marx assumed and that many factors contribute to inequality. According to Dahrendorf, one of the leading factors is authority, and his conflict theory is built upon this concept (Dahrendorf et al., 2006; E. N. Ö. Söğütlüler & Söğütlüler, 2025). In his work *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, Dahrendorf states that authority-based conflict occurs between those who possess authority (those who hold power) and those who do not. Therefore, individuals in the social sphere must form groups to protect their interests. According to Dahrendorf, these groups are divided into two: dominant groups and dependent groups (rulers and the ruled). Conflict is an inherent part of social life and is inevitable. It is also impossible to speak of a stable equilibrium in conflict, which distinguishes his view from functionalists such as Parsons. According to Dahrendorf, conflict is normal, unavoidable, and continuous (Dahrendorf, 1990, 2022; Kühne et al., 2019; Parsons, 2017).

Dahrendorf synthesises the Marxist concepts of class, class interests, and class conflict on the one hand, and modern action theory on the other. According to Dahrendorf, authority is the focal point of social conflicts and plays a dual role in the social structure, functioning both as an integrating force and as a source of conflict. Dahrendorf seeks to theoretically explain the formation of both obedience and conflict within the same social structure (Weingart, 1969). Dahrendorf endeavours to produce a counter-thesis to functional theory, which posits that society is static, experiences change in a balanced manner, and that each element of the social order plays a role in maintaining stability. According to him, if there are competing interests in a society, conflicts between groups inevitably arise (Umanailo et al., 2019). In summary, Dahrendorf argues that social conflicts have shifted from class struggle to a struggle over interests, and that this transformation is linked to the contest for authority and ascendancy in society. This perspective represents a significant departure from the classical Marxist conception of conflict.

While fulfilling their basic functions, mass media also fuel social conflicts. Television, one of the most powerful mass media due to its audiovisual message transmission capabilities, exacerbates tensions by exploiting political differences, economic inequalities, or class-based polarizations to increase its ratings. This orientation, driven by commercial interests, contributes to the deepening of societal conflicts and the perpetuation of intractability.

According to Gramsci, ruling classes maintain their power through the use of cultural and ideological tools. Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony argues that coercion or the use of force alone is not sufficient to rule a society. In order for the ruling class to impose its ideas, it must establish a form of rule based on consent rather than force—that is, it must manufacture consent. Education, religion, language, and, undoubtedly, media tools play a significant role in this process. Television productions, in particular, are effective instruments through which the ruling class can disseminate and legitimize its ideas by non-repressive means. Therefore, television is

one of the most influential actors in the production of societal consent (Bates, 1975; Gramsci, 2011).

Television broadcasts—including entertainment content—are products that shape the thinking of both societies and individuals, and most households around the world still have at least one television set. These broadcasts transmit messages that, in various ways, pacify society, highlight certain ideas while marginalizing others, and possess the power to influence public perception and direction (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1997). Despite the rising dominance of Internet-related media technologies, conventional television continues to be one of the most powerful forms of mass media with the ability to influence society. Numerous studies have been conducted on television, primarily focusing on its effects on both society and the individual. Television is a medium that is dependent on authority, possesses the power to produce and distribute cultural knowledge, and is capable of conveying different messages to diverse audiences. For this reason, it has been viewed as directly related to authority and sociological practices.

In modern societies, television is neither purely an institution nor merely a market. Rather, it constitutes a public space in which symbolic representations of the world, society, and identities are constructed—reflecting cultural conflicts. The production, utilisation, and representation of television content mirror underlying societal dynamics. Production refers to the transfer of debates and opportunities from the public sphere to television. Audience studies seek to explain the relationship between viewer experience and cultural industries. Analysing television representations means exploring the compromises and conflicts that exist within different societies (Macé, 2001).

Pierre Bourdieu, who contributed to many disciplines within the social sciences through his original concepts—such as capital, field, habitus, and play—is one of the pioneers of sociological thought, and his ideas on mass media, particularly television, remain influential. He sought to explain the dynamics shaping the social field, different cultures, the impact of mass media, relations of domination, and many other sociological phenomena. Bourdieu's work is particularly noted for combining empirical precision with theoretical depth. By synthesising the major traditions of sociological thought—Marx, Durkheim, and Weber—he offered enlightening pathways for the advancement of sociology as a discipline (Bourdieu, 2002; Wacquant, 1998). The concept of *habitus*, which dates back to Aristotle and whose conceptual framework was shaped by Durkheim, Weber, and especially Bourdieu, emphasises that individual predispositions are shaped by past experiences. This concept suggests that an individual's codes of thought and behaviour are shaped by the social classes to which they belong (Bourdieu et al., 2006; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013; Costa et al., 2019; Ignatow & Robinson, 2017). The French sociologist applied his conceptual tools to the media and television and shed light on the forms of hidden domination and symbolic violence exercised by television. Based on his field studies, he explained that the current state of television and media tools poses a threat to the autonomy of fields such as politics and academia, which operate within certain rules and are endowed with capital. Bourdieu insisted that it is these underlying power and economic relations that jeopardise social space and democracy (Marlière, 1998).

In Bourdieu's sociology, certain behaviours and tastes reflect class codes. These class predispositions are not shaped solely by the economic structure but are influenced by multiple social frameworks (Bourdieu, 2015). The class structure of elections also manifests itself in the

field of mass media and television, and there are conflicts between classes. According to Bourdieu, social conflicts are visible in every field, and there are infinite areas where conflicts can take place. However, each field — or 'game,' as Bourdieu calls it — has its own rules. Television, newspapers, magazines—in short, all media tools—must use their power according to the rules of the game. The conflicts between the players are shaped under the sovereignty of authority (Bourdieu & Ilgaz, 1997). This idea is important in terms of providing a sociological perspective on the status of television in Türkiye and the root causes of conflict. Each social group or class tends to watch programmes that cater to their own tastes. When this tendency is combined with television's power of message transmission, it can lead to the dominance of a single way of thinking and the development of negative attitudes toward others.

Giddens sees the aforementioned effects of mass media as a modern risk factor. He discusses the cultural practices transformed by the process of globalisation in relation to the conditions of the age and attributes special importance to mass media (Strasser & Lentz, 1989; Tomlinson, 1994). Culture as structure is one of the central ideas in Giddens' sociology. According to Giddens, culture consists of the basic rules used in social interactions. These 'rules' are not merely the norms and values emphasised by structural functionalists, but rather embedded and embodied dispositions that regulate social practices (Scott, 2007). This definition creates a framework similar to Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus'. According to Giddens (1987), not only have cultural changes occurred in modern society, but the concepts of time and space have also shifted, with their boundaries becoming increasingly blurred. This condition represents a rupture from the traditional social structure. Mass media, and particularly television, have played a significant role in this blurring of time and space. One of the main reasons for this is television's ability to transmit audiovisual messages instantly to large audiences (Scott, 2007). People have turned to electronic media such as television for entertainment and information, and this has transformed everyday life practices. Large communities have accessed entertainment and information comfortably, without leaving the intimacy of their homes. This development has made modern societies more complex. In modern life, individuals have had to adapt to rapid innovations, and these changes have also introduced new social risks (Strasser & Lentz, 1989). Television has been seen to have the potential to deepen conflicts when it exhibits polarising tendencies, and has increasingly come to be regarded as a modern risk factor as well as an advantage.

3. Conservatism, Secularism and its Representation in the Turkish Television Industry

Stuart Hall, one of the pioneers of the British Cultural Studies school, focuses on how meaning is constructed in media tools and develops the theory of representation. According to Hall, media tools are producers of popular culture. Social representations such as ideology, language, religion, and race remain faithful to their origins while being produced by media tools. Media professionals construct representations within the framework of social codes, and analysing these representations enables the analysis of the relations behind media texts. Television productions play a leading role in the production of representations; therefore, analysing these texts allows for the interpretation of social practices reflected on the screen (Campbell, 2016; Hall, 2020) Conservative and secular identities are also represented on screens

using certain patterns; however, these two identities have deep-rooted histories and a complex nature.

Conservatism is defined as a way of thinking or an ideological approach that advocates maintaining the traditional way of life and preserving social order by approaching cultural and social transformations with caution. *Reflections on the Revolution in France* by Burke (1986) played a major role in establishing conservatism as a definable concept in the academic field. This work provides a comprehensive analysis of the French Revolution while simultaneously offering a critical evaluation of the revolutionary process. Recognised as one of the foundational texts of conservatism in academic literature, it became a key source for conservative ideologies in the 19th and 20th centuries (Burke, 1986; O'Brien, 1993). One of the central criticisms Burke raises is that the French Revolution forced a sudden transformation of existing traditions and thus could have destructive effects on the social fabric. The work contends that gradual social transformations are more desirable than abrupt changes and that revolutions can undermine social order and institutions.

The Conservative Mind, written by Russell Kirk in the mid-1900s, contains significant ideas about conservatism. In his work, Kirk views conservatism as a principle that ensures social continuity. At the same time, he emphasises its role as a concept that highlights the necessity of caution against radical changes and the importance of preserving traditional values. Therefore, the core idea underlying the ideology of conservatism is resistance to abrupt breaks with tradition in order to protect and maintain the existing social order. In Kirk's work, conservatism is not only an ideologically based concept but also a philosophy of life (Kirk, 1952, 1986, 2024; Regnery, 1977).

When we examine the position of conservatism in Türkiye, it is possible to define it as a concept that has been detached from its philosophical context and reconstructed with new meanings. In most sources, conservatism—originally referring to the preservation of the traditional social order in the face of abrupt changes—is often discussed solely in terms of its religious aspects and its association with extremism. This conceptual transformation has become particularly evident with the rise of political Islam in Türkiye. Today, conservatism has evolved into an ideology or a philosophy of life that is perceived as the opposite of modernisation and secularism within the social sphere. However, under current conditions in Türkiye, it is more accurate to define conservatism as an ideological position rather than a philosophy of life.

Secularism, which is portrayed as the opposite of conservatism in Türkiye's current sociological context, refers to the separation of religion from state institutions. Secular thought, which argues that religious beliefs should be confined to the private sphere, maintains that state governance and public life should remain independent of religious influence. The earliest ideas on the separation of religion and state can be traced back to the writings of John Locke. Sociologists have laid the foundation for this concept by arguing that secularism is essential for ending religious persecution of minorities, preventing internal conflict, and shielding individual conscience from state interference (Kateb, 2009, p. 1001; Locke, 1764, 2003, 2012, 2016; Quadrio, 2014, p. 39).

Secularisation theory holds an important place in sociology, yet it has recently been challenged on specific grounds. Researchers have argued that religious beliefs have not declined

in modern society, and the sociology of religion has increasingly been seen as closely linked to the concept of secularism (Maguire & Weatherby, 1998, p. 171).

According to Taylor (2010), although mainstream studies generally accept that democracies should be secular, the issue is quite complex. While it is difficult to provide definitive answers to questions such as what secularism means or whether its meaning varies across different geographies, it is possible to state that secularism—like conservatism—is perceived differently from one society to another. Secularism, commonly defined as the 'separation of church and state,' has at times been interpreted as the complete disassociation of the state from religion. In definitional terms, a secular state should "manage" the relationship between religion and state institutions in a way that both subjects it to certain limitations and distinguishes special requirements. In current perspectives, modern secularism manifests in several different forms— political, economic, educational, ethical, and scientific—all of which are based on the same foundational principle (Buckser, 2011, p. 205; Cannell, 2010, p. 85; Lanman & Lanman, 2010, p. 205; Lebner, 2015, p. 62; Zala, 2019).

According to Sajó (2008), constitutional arrangements have at times faced intense religious conflicts in the public sphere, weakening the dominance of secular thought in society. Secularism has been regarded as a concept capable of offering solutions not only to conflicts between religions but also to tensions among different sects within those religions (p. 605). In a world increasingly fragmented by religious conflict, the pursuit of solutions and continued research on the topic has remained essential (Phillips, 2011, p. 5). Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007) is one of the key sources focusing on the topic. The work argues that although individuals are exposed to various idealised religious and non-religious ways of life throughout their lives, only a limited number of these exert a lasting impact. While this situation can lead to significant shifts in belief, it also marks the beginning of a transformation that extends from the individual to the societal level. How individuals experience religion is closely tied to their personal search for meaning. For this reason, the concept of secularisation does not imply the disappearance or elimination of religion from society. However, the work has also faced criticism—the most notable being that it serves as a philosophical endorsement of Christian moral and political life (Taylor, 2007). According to Pramono and Sunarya (2023), the overemphasis on reason has led modern Western societies to exclude religion from all political discourse. Concepts such as man, power, constitution, and the state have ceased to be associated with God, resulting in a clear separation between politics and religion (p. 293).

Analysing the concept of secularism in Türkiye requires a framework very similar to that of conservatism. Just as the moderate tendencies of conservatism have been marginalised and its polarising aspects have become prominent in the social sphere, secularism has acquired a similar connotation. In modern Turkish society, secularism has been equated with a complete rejection of religion and the exclusion of all related elements from every aspect of life. Political discourses and mass media have played a significant role in shaping this perception.

These outcomes stem from a smear campaign and efforts to polarise the philosophical foundations of both conservatism and secularism. Although both ideologies are grounded in rational principles, as previously explained, their meanings vary across societies. In Türkiye, both

concepts tend to be perceived in their most extreme forms, creating a unique opportunity for the mass media industry.

The shared life experiences of members of a society form a collective memory. Through this process, life experiences are transmitted from generation to generation. Any disruption in traditions, language, culture, or common symbols can have negative effects on cultural identity and collective memory. These adverse effects are clearly observable in the modern age. With globalisation, cultural mobility has accelerated, and language, religion, traditions, and all social symbols have become objects of consumption for capital. Today, television series and films—key components of this consumption landscape—have become some of the most important tools for transmitting cultural symbols (Pösteki, 2012). Each social group has developed its own frameworks for conveying cultural symbols on screen.

In Türkiye, the mass media industry tends to construct stereotypes for individuals who adopt various ideologies and often amplifies these stereotypes to extremes. Some of the most visible examples of such stereotyping are conservative and secular characters (Okutan, 2024). This tendency leads audiences to categorise characters into specific social classes at first glance and occasionally results in misinterpretations.

Religion is a social phenomenon that influences the public sphere and shapes individuals' lives. With the advent of television broadcasting and streaming services, the ways in which religious messages are conveyed to society have also evolved. In Türkiye, the portrayal of religious figures in television series or films often leads viewers to categorise these characters into certain stereotypes. Television constructs these stereotypes through religious programmes, series, and films with religious themes (Temel, 2019; Turan, 2007) In addition, television can contribute to the formation of a particular type of religiosity in society by broadcasting popular topics and featuring individuals trusted by the public in a religious context, which may lead society toward a specific religious orientation. Studies focusing on the subject have examined the representations of clergymen on screen and noted that stereotyping leads viewers to adopt oppositional reading practices (Dertli, 2021) According to Menekşe (2005), all forms of art and products of the mass media industry reflect a particular worldview and way of life.

In Türkiye, the mass media's perspective on the concepts of conservatism and secularism has shifted in accordance with the conditions of different historical periods. In the early Republican era, mass media broadcast content that supported secular ideology and focused on themes of modernization. With the expansion of mass media and the rise of private initiatives, ideologies aligned with conservative thought began to gain visibility. Especially after 2002, the rise of political Islam in Türkiye directly influenced the orientation of the mass media, leading to an increase in conservative ideologies and representations. This polarisation within the media landscape evolved into an effort to critique both ideologies by portraying them in their most extreme forms, detaching the concepts from their original philosophical roots and transforming them into instruments of polarisation.

The conservative–secular conflict in Türkiye has also become visible through television series and films. Television broadcasting and the rise of streaming services have sought to boost viewership by leveraging the tension between the two poles. However, Turkish television has not limited itself to this dichotomy alone but has also aimed to increase ratings by emphasizing

broader social differences. Productions such as *Issız Adam*, *Aşk-ı Memnu*, and *Fi* have been associated with secularism by portraying individuals' pursuit of personal freedom, while series like *Ayla*, *Diriliş: Ertuğrul*, and *Payitaht: Abdülhamid* have reflected conservative ideology. In Türkiye, series depicting conservative or secular lifestyles have frequently appeared on television, but the popularization of the conservative–secular conflict intensified after the 2000s. Prior to this period, series such as *Bizimkiler*, *Süper Baba*, *İkinci Bahar*, *Mahallenin Muhtarları*, *Ekmek Teknesi*, *Masumlar Apartmanı*, *Camdaki Kız*, and *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman ki* did not directly address this conflict, but rather approached it indirectly through specific characters. These shows included both conservative and secular characters, and their interactions often involved humorous elements. Compared to contemporary series, the portrayal of the conservative–secular divide was more moderate. However, in recent productions, the duality has become more prominent and central, raising concerns about increasing social polarisation.

In Türkiye, several studies have been conducted on television series that address the conflict in question, yielding important findings. While some of these studies analysing the conflict on television focus on audiences, others have approached the issue through theoretical frameworks such as representation theory. It has been observed that studies examining the conflict between conservatives and secularists through TV series tend to concentrate particularly on *Kızılcık Şerbeti*. These studies are significant in shedding light on one of Türkiye's major and ongoing sociological tensions (Aydos, 2024.; Gökalp et al., 2024; Kaymak, 2024, p. 25; Kazaz & Say, 2024, p. 125). Research on the *Ethos* series, broadcast on the Netflix platform in Türkiye, has addressed the topic within key sociological frameworks such as the conservative–secular divide, gender, the provincial–urban dichotomy, representation, and everyday life. In this regard, it is evident that the studies conducted in this context are valuable for highlighting the conflicts reflected in the Turkish television industry (Aycan & Çalışkan, 2021, p. 252; Bingöl, 2021, p. 55; Kaçar, 2021; Köse, 2023, p. 120; Özer & Gül, 2021). This study aims to provide a framework for understanding how these conflicts are portrayed on screen and their potential negative impacts on society.

4. Research Design

Analysing television series and films has become increasingly important in societies integrated with media tools (Mikos, 2014). Movies and TV series can be analyzed using various methods, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Content analysis is one of the scientific methods used to examine media products. It involves analysing content by focusing on the meanings, contexts, and sociological conditions embedded in messages. Content analysis entered the academic literature as a scientific method when the U.S. government supported a project led by Lasswell during World War II (Devi Prasad, 2008; Janowitz, 1968; Lasswell, 1962).

One of the primary steps in adapting the qualitative content analysis method to the subject of research is to define the categories and prepare a coding schedule. The coding schedule provides a structure informed by the relevant literature and aims to investigate different dimensions of the communication content to be coded (Devi Prasad, 2008). TV series or films are a way for producers to convey their ideas to society. The conditions under which the production is carried out and the individuals involved in the production also determine the sociological

orientation of the works. The medium in which the works are produced, by whom they are produced, their target audience, and the broadcasting platform are of great importance, and there are many variables in this regard (Allen et al., 1997; Bufkin & Eschholz, 2000; Monaco, 2000). It is difficult to classify films or television productions along precise lines, as there is no universally adopted classification system in the scientific field. Therefore, the direct contribution of the researcher is required (Allen et al., 1997; Grant, 2003; Kaminsky & Mahan, 1985; Thompson, 1993). In applying the content analysis method to cinema and television productions, the theoretical framework of the study and observational data constitute a critical foundation. Many researchers who use content analysis in cinema and television studies develop coding items and subcategories to base observed phenomena on a systematic framework. Previous studies and classifications in the relevant literature also play a significant role in the development of these categories.

The research aims to analyse productions that focus on the conservative-secular conflict in the Turkish television sector in light of the aforementioned concepts. It is believed that the productions based on this conflict in Türkiye were inspired by the series *Ethos*, directed by Berkun Oya and broadcast on Netflix. In the sample selection, series broadcast between 2020 and 2024 were taken into consideration. In this context, two productions—one broadcast on a streaming service and the other on a conventional television channel—were analysed in light of shifting viewing trends. *Ethos* was included in the sample because it was broadcast on Netflix and addressed the conservative-secular conflict, while *Kızıl Goncalar* was selected because it was broadcast on television and explored the same conflict. The content analysis method was used in the examination of the series, and each production was analysed within the framework of categories and subcategories. The translation of the article from Turkish to English and language checking were performed using DeepL and ChatGPT 4o. The research seeks to answer the following questions.

Research Questions:

RQ1: What are the underlying causes of the conflict between conservatives and secularists?

RQ2: How is the historical and geographical context conveyed?

RQ3: How are ethnic identities represented, and which cultural codes are associated with these representations?

RQ4: How are thematic codes constructed in narratives involving conservative and secular identities?

RQ5: Which elements are emphasized through the use of symbols, lighting, and spatial arrangements in the visual narrative?

RQ6: How are technical elements employed to reflect the atmosphere in the scenes?

The coding scheme created in the light of the literature on the subject is presented below (Allen et al., 1997, p. 89; Bordwell et al., 2010; Bufkin & Eschholz, 2000; Bullerjahn & Güldenring, 1994, p. 99; Kist, 2015, p. 549; Krippendorff, 2018; Monaco, 2000; Weber, 2004).

Factors such as the broadcasting channel's relationship with political authority and its economic status shape production and distribution practices. Therefore, each researcher must approach this issue from the perspective of their own geographical and cultural context. For instance, in Türkiye, streaming services are often able to present content featuring more

marginalised characters and stories compared to traditional television broadcasting. Similarly, television channels possess distinct ideological orientations and thus offer narratives with varying codes to their audiences. For these reasons, General Framework was selected as the main category, with subcategories including: title of the production, director, screenplay, genre and target audience, broadcasting platform, and socio-ideological aspects of characters.

Television and cinema productions are closely tied to the cultural codes of the geography in which they are created. They carry specific ideological orientations and are not produced solely for entertainment purposes. These productions are shaped by complex power structures and economic relations. For this reason, each series or film is inherently connected to the political context, belief systems, class structures, history, time, space, identities, and social classes of its geographical origin (Allen et al., 1997; Bordwell et al., 2010; Bufkin & Eschholz, 2000; Monaco, 2000; Uluç & Balcı, 2024). Revealing elements such as belief systems, gender roles, ethnic identities, and class structures within these works also helps illuminate their potential social impact. For these reasons, under the main heading of Cultural and Sociological Perspective, the following subheadings have been identified: religion and belief systems, gender and ethnic representations, political and ideological context, class and socioeconomic structure, historical and geographical context, and conflict elements.

Television and cinema productions are products that are closely tied to the philosophical, cultural, and sociological contexts of the period in which they are created, aiming to deliver their intended messages to the audience in the most effective way. However, this process of message transmission is not always direct and requires visual and narrative elements to be presented in harmony. Researchers from the British Cultural Studies Tradition, who focus on this subject, argue that the audience's reception of media works is not linear. Audiences do not always interpret messages as intended by the producers; therefore, productions need to be aligned with audience expectations (Bordwell et al., 2010; Hall, 2007; Kist, 2015; Krippendorff, 2018; Monaco, 2000) Although often overlooked at first glance, a significant part of the intended message is embedded in implicit elements. Many aspects of scene construction are used as tools to reflect the philosophical, cultural, and sociological context. For this reason, space and time, symbols and metaphors, lighting techniques, depicted atmosphere, visual composition, and scene design are discussed under the main heading of Cinematography.

Television and cinema productions employ various techniques—such as camera angles, music, colour, editing, and visual effects—to convey embedded codes (Bordwell et al., 2010; Bullerjahn & Güldenring, 1994). Although these techniques often go unnoticed by audiences, they are particularly significant in terms of cinematography, which is closely connected to both the cultural and sociological perspective and the general framework. Therefore, it can be said that each item in the content analysis coding scheme discussed in the study is interrelated. In this study, camera scales and movements, costume and set design, colour grading, editing techniques, visual effects, and the use of sound and music were examined under the main heading of Technical Structure.

Table 1. Coding Scheme for the Qualitative Content Analysis of the Series Used in This Study

General Framework	Cultural and Sociological Perspective	Cinematography	Technical Structure
Title of the Production	Religion and Belief Systems	Space and Time	Camera Scales and Movements
Director	Gender and Ethnic Representations	Symbols and Metaphors	Costume and Set Design
Screenplay	Political and Ideological Context	Lighting Techniques	Color Grading
Genre and Target Audience	Class and Socioeconomic Structure	Depicted Atmosphere	Editing Techniques
Broadcasting Platform	Historical and Geographical Context	Visual Composition	Visual Effects
Socio-Ideological Aspects of Characters	Conflict Elements	Scene Design	The use of sound and music

These series sparked significant public reaction following their broadcasts, and NOW TV was fined for airing *Kızıl Goncalar*. Undoubtedly, beyond the subject matter of these productions, the manner in which they were portrayed in the media and the ideological orientations of the broadcasting channels also played a crucial role in shaping their impact on the social sphere. Recognizing the dominance of digital culture in Türkiye, the study selected samples from two distinct media platforms to examine the transformations in both traditional and digital broadcasting practices. *Ethos* was included in the sample to represent Netflix, which significantly shapes viewing trends in Türkiye, while *Kızıl Goncalar*, aired on NOW TV, was selected to represent conventional television broadcasting. Both series led to polarization among viewers on digital platforms, with communities dividing and engaging in heated debates under relevant hashtags, particularly on Ekşi Sözlük (2025) and X (2025). The following two tables present the ratings of conservative-secular-themed series on conventional television channels (TIAK, 2024).

Table 2. *Audience Ratings for the Kızıl Goncalar (2024) Series on Its Broadcast Day (September 30, 2024), According to TIAK Data*

Rank	Program	Channel	Start Time	End Time	Rating (%)	Share (%)
1	Kızıl Goncalar	NOW	21:01:04	24:13:57	5.32	16.57
2	Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert	ATV	09:59:59	12:59:56	4.31	34.71
3	MasterChef Türkiye	TV8	21:01:07	24:20:03	4.05	13.03
4	Kızıl Goncalar (Özet)	NOW	20:00:11	21:00:59	3.98	11.42
5	Esra Erol'da	ATV	16:20:53	18:45:45	3.88	21.09

Table 3. *Audience Ratings for the Kızılcık Şerbeti (2024) Series on Its Broadcast Day (September 13, 2024), According to TIAK Data*

Rank	Program	Channel	Start Time	End Time	Rating (%)	Share (%)
1	Kızılcık Şerbeti	Show TV	21:01:13	24:17:32	6.82	21.41
2	Kızılcık Şerbeti (Özet)	Show TV	20:01:29	21:01:13	4.49	14.72
3	Yalı Çapkını	Star TV	21:00:10	24:18:12	4.46	14.04
4	Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert	ATV	10:00:17	13:00:11	4.38	29.88
5	Arka Sokaklar	Kanal D	20:54:09	24:15:36	3.04	9.65

All issues related to these situations are systematically discussed under specific headings and in the light of the relevant literature. The findings are interpreted within the framework of Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory. According to this theory, social conflicts are not based solely on economic reasons. One of the main causes of conflict in the social sphere, Dahrendorf argues, is the disagreement between authority elites and those subject to authority. This distinction exists across all segments of society. When an individual or group assumes authority, resistance to that authority gives rise to conflicts that tend to intensify over time (Dahrendorf, 1990, 2022; Kühne et al., 2019; Weingart, 1969, p. 151). Dahrendorf's conflict theory aligns with the sociopolitical dynamics of Türkiye. This is largely due to the rise of political Islam and the shift in power elites since 2002. One of the main drivers of the emergence of conservative-secular conflicts in Türkiye and their reflection in the mass media is the long-standing tension between the ruling and the ruled. Thus, Dahrendorf's theory offers a useful framework.

5. Findings and Discussions

In Türkiye, conservative and secular social groups have confronted each other for years, and conflicts have emerged due to differences in opinion. The 28 February Process, the Justice and Development Party era and the headscarf controversy, the Gezi Park protests, the Istanbul Convention and women's rights debates, and LGBT+ rights debates can be cited as examples of direct encounters between these two groups in Türkiye.

German sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory differs from traditional conflict theories in that it is centred on authority and power. According to Dahrendorf, different groups within society are in conflict with one another; these conflicts are normal, but they also reshape the social structure. Such transformations mediate the emergence of new social orders. Conflicts often arise from efforts to become part of the authority elite that holds power. Dahrendorf's conflict theory offers a lens through which to analyse both social movements in Türkiye and the conservative–secular conflict that forms the basis of this study. There are two major social groups in Türkiye—conservatives and secularists—and these groups compete for authority. This conflict is dynamic, ongoing, mediated by mass media, and

transformative for society. In Türkiye, conflicts between social groups are sometimes carried to extremes and, contrary to the functionalist perspective, do not result in equilibrium. Mass media plays a significant role in either exacerbating or resolving social conflicts. However, both productions analysed in this study intensified the conflict and failed to offer any resolution.

The rise of internet-based viewing in Türkiye has led to the emergence of a digital culture, and many daily activities have begun to be conducted through digital means. This shift has necessitated the adaptation of traditional content production strategies in television broadcasting to digital environments. The duration of series episodes has been shortened, temporal and spatial dependency has been eliminated, and viewers now have the opportunity to watch content anytime and resume from where they left off.

In this study, the transformation of broadcasting strategies and audience culture in the direction of digitalisation was considered, and the analysis was carried out within the framework of current developments. At the same time, the sociological context of Türkiye was taken into account, and the conservative/secular conflict, which has deepened due to political polarisation, was interpreted through the lens of Dahrendorf's conflict theory.

However, these conflicts are not always presented explicitly to the public, as seen in the series analysed in the sample. They are sometimes conveyed in an implicit or veiled manner. The way in which these characters and representations are constructed falls within the domain of media professionals. The issue was addressed in various productions prior to the series selected for this study. Yet, in those series, the conflict in question was communicated indirectly and was not positioned as the central theme.

For instance, similar tensions can be observed in *Bizimkiler*, one of the longest-running Turkish television series. Although *Bizimkiler* portrays characters from different segments of society by blending them with elements of humour, it also includes conservative-secular or modern-traditional conflicts. These tensions are not the main focus of the series but are embedded implicitly. Since such representations are integrated with comedic elements, they do not draw attention as a focal point or as a catalyst for social polarisation (Baloğlu, 2019; Oğuz, 2005). Comparable portrayals can be found in series such as *Mahallenin Muhtarları*, *Ekmek Teknesi*, *Süper Baba*, and *İkinci Bahar*, yet they are not highlighted enough to form a central conflict. In contrast, the conservative-secular conflict is portrayed explicitly in *Ethos* and *Kızıl Goncalar*.

5.1. *Ethos* Series
5.1.1. General Framework

'Ethos', which means habit, tradition, custom, or character, is a term that symbolises the traditional tendencies and stance of an individual or society (Corts, 1968; Sattler, 1947). The *Ethos* series, broadcast on Netflix and directly reflecting the meaning of its name, diverges from the platform's conventional narrative patterns with its slow pace, reflective tone, and engagement with social conflicts.

Ethos (2020), written and directed by Berkun Oya and premiered on Netflix on 12 November 2020, addresses the conservative-secular conflict in Türkiye (Netflix, 2024). The series has also demonstrated that this issue can be explored within Türkiye's media landscape while achieving high viewer ratings. Its rapid rise in popularity encouraged subsequent productions and created a new site of conflict on screen. The series, which addresses significant sociological themes such as

identity, class, belonging, social taboos, and the rural-urban divide, resonated strongly during its broadcast period. The leading actors include Öykü Karayel (Meryem), Fatih Artman (Yasin), Defne Kayalar (Peri), and Funda Eryiğit (Ruhiye).

The character of Meryem (Öykü Karayel), one of the protagonists of the *Ethos* series, is portrayed as a representative of the conservative segment of society, working as a house cleaner on a daily basis. Although Meryem does not explicitly express an ideological stance, her conservative disposition is frequently emphasised. She represents the marginalised and economically disadvantaged strata of society. The series finds its unique narrative rhythm when Meryem visits a physician and, following an episode of fainting, is referred to a psychiatrist.

Peri (Defne Kayalar), a psychiatrist, is portrayed as a figure symbolising the secular segment and is shown to marginalise Meryem, albeit unconsciously. While Peri does not demonstrate an overt ideological position, the viewer recognises her as emblematic of the secular middle class. Both characters play a central role in shaping the narrative and the unfolding conflict.

Yasin (Fatih Artman), Meryem's older brother, exerts pressure on her, assumes responsibility within the traditional family structure, and prioritises religious values. His wife, Ruhiye (Funda Eryiğit), is depicted as a character suffering from psychiatric distress but unwilling to seek professional help. Ali Sadi Hodja (Settar Tanrıöğen), a respected imam, is frequently consulted for guidance. Meryem and her circle inform him of their intentions in advance and often refrain from making decisions—medical or otherwise—without his counsel. He is portrayed as the key decision-maker in their lives.

All characters in the series represent various segments of Turkish society. In addition to the secular–conservative divide, the narrative explores a range of identity-based and cultural tensions. The characters are crafted with sociological nuance, reflecting embedded cultural codes. Among these, the conflict between secular and conservative identities emerges as the most pronounced.

Ethos stands out for portraying conflicts as deeply internalised struggles—conflicts that unfold primarily within the characters' inner worlds. What distinguishes *Ethos* is the introspective nature of these tensions, most of which are experienced at the psychological level. In particular, the resolution of the cultural conflict between Peri and Meryem is intentionally left open to interpretation by the viewer. In this respect, while the series refrains from adopting a clear ideological stance, it simultaneously underscores the irrationality of the conflict itself.

5.1.2. Cultural and Sociological Perspective

The series sheds light on the current sociological structure of Türkiye through the relationship between Meryem and Peri, addressing various contradictions. Peri, a psychiatrist who has adopted a Western, secular lifestyle, and Meryem, who lives in a remote district of Istanbul, form a relationship through therapy sessions, and the narrative presents their conflicts through this dynamic.

The plot takes a pivotal turn when Meryem defies social taboos rooted in her class position by seeking psychiatric help, thereby reflecting both social and individual tensions. The series highlights dilemmas arising from the religious and cultural differences between Meryem and

Peri—particularly the practice of consulting a religious teacher for health concerns, which is portrayed critically. However, the series refrains from overtly praising or condemning any lifestyle, instead aiming to expose irrationalities embedded in different worldviews and to critique moral decline. In doing so, it offers implicit criticisms of certain aspects of the Western lifestyle, particularly within the context of male-female relationships. Themes such as infidelity, impossible love across class divides, and dramatic coincidences are explored, though some of the coincidences may appear implausible.

Characters can broadly be categorised into two opposing camps. These groups differ socio-economically, with the secular characters typically representing the upper-middle class and the conservative characters representing the lower-middle class. While the series does not directly highlight economic hardship, it frames conflict through lifestyle and values. It succeeds in embedding the characters into a class hierarchy that the audience is encouraged to interpret. Although the series does not foreground historical context, certain scenes imply a contemporary setting. For instance, a scene displaying the Euro exchange rate (6.466) on a TV tuned to Halk TV references 30 July 2018. Geographical settings are also frequently shown, yet the series avoids overt commentary, leaving interpretation to the viewer.

The primary axis of conflict is the conservative–secular opposition, which allows characters to be classified according to ideological perspectives prevalent in Turkish society. This dichotomy serves as a critique of the mutual antagonism directed at both conservative and secular lifestyles, which have gained visibility in contemporary Türkiye.

5.1.3. Cinematography

The series, much of which unfolds between the remote and modern districts of Istanbul, prefers to convey its themes through symbols and metaphors rather than explicit dialogue. Some of these metaphors include headscarves, religious leaders, alcohol, sexuality, and consumption habits—in short, key lifestyle markers. This symbolic language is one of the series' greatest strengths. While Turkish society is deeply familiar with these images, the sociological issues they represent are often too sensitive or complex to be openly verbalized in everyday discourse. Thus, seeing internalized metaphors and symbols reflected on screen enabled viewers to engage in deeper and more personal sociological reflection.

In this sense, the series constructs its core tensions through a focus on symbolic representation. It employs both natural and artificial lighting techniques reminiscent of Turkish independent cinema, especially post-2000s. While the director occasionally uses pastel tones and dim lighting, he consciously avoids lighting styles that might suggest warmth or optimism. Instead of sunlit exteriors or high-contrast brightness, subdued visuals dominate. This lighting strategy deliberately mirrors the emotional atmosphere of the narrative, reinforcing a sense of discomfort and unresolved sociological tension. Feelings of entrapment or mediocrity are conveyed through visual cues such as prolonged silences, anonymous movement through crowded spaces, or mise-en-scène compositions that visually confine the characters. Scene designs are carefully structured to externalize these internal and social constraints.

From this perspective, it becomes evident that the series reinforces its central conflicts through a deliberate interplay of visual symbolism, sociological nuance, and aesthetic restraint—all working together to provoke critical reflection in the viewer.

5.1.4. Technical Structure

Elements such as the iconic Istanbul skyline, Bosphorus views, and seagulls—commonly featured in Netflix productions—are notably absent in *Ethos*. While the camera angles and shot scales generally conform to traditional narrative conventions, the visual focus diverges from that of typical Netflix aesthetics. Rather than showcasing the picturesque side of Istanbul, the series often depicts scenes of unplanned urbanization and precarious housing. In this sense, the color palette aligns with the overall narrative tone. Pastel hues and overcast weather dominate the visual storytelling, reinforcing the understated, subdued atmosphere. The series avoids intense visual or sound effects, instead embracing the minimalist aesthetic characteristic of Turkish independent cinema that emerged after the 2000s.

However, one of the most distinctive features of the series is its use of music. Songs by Ferdi Özbeğen—an iconic but relatively forgotten figure among younger generations—are used to underscore the emotional resolution of various narrative arcs. It can be argued that the digital popularity of *Ethos* was partially amplified by the deliberate inclusion of Özbeğen's music. Following the release of *Ethos* on Netflix, his songs began to reappear in public venues and across digital platforms, indicating that the musical orientation of the series was a carefully curated and culturally resonant choice.

5.2.1. *Kızıl Goncalar* Series

5.2.2. General Framework

Directed by Ömür Atay and Özgür Sevimli and written by Şükrü Necati Şahin, Melih Özyılmaz, Ceylan Güleç, Deniz Gürlek, and Gamze Arslan, the Kızıl Goncalar series started broadcasting on NOW TV on 18 December 2023 (Ömür & Sevimli, 2024). The series tells the intersecting stories of Levent (Özcan Deniz), an idealistic doctor, and Meryem (Özgü Namal), who grew up in a conservative family. The series has a structure that differs significantly from Netflix's conventional narrative style. It focuses on the events between a cult structure called 'Faniler' and the 'Alkanlı' family, which reflects the secular lifestyle. Targeting a general audience, the series was broadcast by a television channel with an oppositional stance. NOW TV was penalised by the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) for the series, which contributed to its rise in popularity. The reason for this penalty was cited as a 'violation of the national and moral values of society', and these circumstances brought the series to the centre of public debate in Türkiye (BBC, 2023). At the same time, it is possible to state that the series contains strong sociological debates compared to other television series on the same subject, as in Ethos. The reason why the Kızıl Goncalar series was included in the sample of the study is that it represents two opposing poles and includes metaphors that clearly reflect the aim of the research.

As in the Ethos series, *Kızıl Goncalar* also follows certain narrative patterns in the conflict between conservatives and secularists. While the religious, conservative segment of society is represented through the characters affiliated with the sect, the secular segment is depicted as educated and belonging to higher income groups. Levent Alkanlı (Özcan Deniz), one of the main characters around whom conflicts are constructed, is introduced to the audience as a psychiatrist—similar to the secular representation in Ethos. Levent Alkanlı is an educated, idealistic doctor who has adopted Western values and is also the oppressive child of an

authoritarian father. Levent, the son of an overbearing father, neglects his daughter and wife while pursuing the dreams imposed by his upbringing. He imposes the same kind of fatherhood on his daughter as he experienced himself. Every character in the series, especially Levent, is a party to the conservative-secular conflict, and the series does not offer the viewer any alternative path.

The character of Meryem (Özgü Namal) is portrayed as the devoted wife of an intelligent, conservative, compassionate yet oppressive husband (Naim), who lives by Islamic traditions. She is a character who strives to prevent her daughter (Zeynep) from enduring the same hardships she experienced and occasionally rebels. One of the characters who plays a crucial role in establishing the conservative-secular conflict in the series is Cüneyd. Cüneyd is someone who, from a clinical perspective, requires psychiatric treatment, but is regarded as a wise and knowledgeable figure within the 'Faniler' sect. Sadi Hüdayi Güneş (Erkan Avcı) is the character who represents the identity of a clergyman. Sadi, the spokesperson and heir of the Faniler sect, is one of the central figures of authority. All the characters who embody the conservative and secular conflict in the series are situated at the extremes of the two ideological poles. Just like in *Ethos*, the conflict is constructed through the psychiatrist–client relationship. Although the characters do not exhibit an explicit ideological orientation, the audience classifies them and interprets them within predefined frameworks, leaving little room for ambiguity or critical questioning.

5.2.3. Cultural and Sociological Perspective

Compared to similar narratives in other television series, it has been observed that the conservative and secular conflict in Kızıl Goncalar is embedded in a stronger cultural and sociological context, and it appears to prompt the audience to reflect on religion and belief systems. The series has a structure in which sectarianism and sect culture are brought to the forefront, and conservative representations are conveyed through sects. It reflects the extremes of conservative lifestyles, prompting viewers to question them—while also drawing attention to similar extremes in secular lifestyles.

The series focuses on the cultural clashes between religious sects—as a form of organisation and community based on Islamic faith—and secular individuals who adopt a Western lifestyle. Undoubtedly, sects are generally closed communities, and certain conditions must be met in order to be included. For this reason, it is possible to say that they have distinct socialisation practices. Presenting this insular world to the audience increases interest in the series. This contrast is not observed in the more open socialisation patterns of secular lifestyles, and the series deliberately utilises these differences.

While *Kızıl Goncalar* draws attention to the problems and cultural conflicts experienced by a sect called Faniler in modern life, it also organises other narrative elements around these tensions. This series, which stands out for its discussions on gender and identity, has drawn criticism for its portrayal of religious sects and girls. Issues such as marrying off girls at a young age, not allowing them to attend school, and scenes depicting violence in Quranic courses drew reactions from conservative audiences, who feared these depictions could provoke negative perceptions. At the same time, the issue of girls being denied access to education was linked to a suicide attempt by a girl from the Faniler sect. After being rescued, she stated that her act was

not related to the sect, but rather intended to draw attention to the issue—implicitly highlighting the pressure she faced not to speak out. As seen in this example, these symbolic portrayals enable viewers to make inferences and adopt a critical stance toward the underlying opposition.

The series avoids glorifying any group or ideology, instead encouraging the audience to engage in their own questioning. The 28 February process—a period marked by deep tensions between secular and conservative sectors in Türkiye—is referenced through Levent's father, who is portrayed as one of its perpetrators. The sociological context of the series overlaps with Turkish society, presenting a hierarchical sect structure led by a spiritual leader. The belief that this leader serves as an intermediary in the path to heaven is prevalent among the sect's members. Therefore, the leader is positioned at the top of the class hierarchy. Women are excluded from decision-making processes and are ranked below men in social status; their education is restricted by various power mechanisms. From a socio-economic standpoint, the sect is shown to place strong emphasis on charity and benevolence. Its charitable activities serve not only as social outreach but also as a means of sustaining its unique economic structure.

The sect, which prioritises helping conservative neighbourhoods in Istanbul, appears to use these acts of charity to maintain its financial model. Members of the sect, who describe secular individuals with labels such as 'sinner' or 'infidel,' tend to avoid close relationships with them. Similarly, secular characters are shown to distance themselves from those who lead conservative lifestyles. This mutual exclusion symbolises the social division between the two segments and underlines the difficulty of reconciling them as a unified whole.

5.2.4. Cinematography

The series, in which the remote and modern districts of Istanbul are presented together, conveys elements related to lifestyles and sociological structure through symbols and metaphors. For this reason, the choice of location and the elements related to it also carry metaphorical meanings. The clothing and lifestyles of conservative and secular characters indicate to the viewer which group they belong to at first glance and do not prompt them to question this distinction. Especially in the representation of conservative women, there are distinct elements. For example, conservative women have different styles of dress in private and public spaces, and when they go out in public, they wear a completely black veil. In scenes involving the sect and its members, lighting is generally dim, and warm colours are preferred.

In the series, the warm colours in the dervish lodge scenes are created using artificial light sources and candlelight. Undoubtedly, colours have various psychological effects on the audience, and this issue has been discussed in many studies. Whether they realise it or not, cinematographers have used the power of light to influence viewers. Some studies reveal that the perception of colour is not universal and is influenced by language, culture, environmental factors, and even gender (Berens, 2014). These studies indicate that colours can convey many contradictory meanings even within the same film and that they play an important role in shaping meaning. It is evident that colours are used in different ways in scenes where conservatives and secularists are prominently featured. The colour palette of the series, which symbolises social separation, can be associated with post-2000s Turkish independent cinema, as in the series *Ethos*.

For this reason, it was concluded that the lighting techniques used in the series were intended to represent two distinct groups.

The atmosphere presented to the audience is designed to create a negative impression. Bright scenes, sunny days, images with saturated colours, and visuals of the aesthetic Istanbul silhouette are deliberately excluded. The series, which employs conventional lighting techniques to separate two different ideologies, frequently depicts scenes of cult members and secularists in enclosed spaces with dialogue. The depth of field is significant in most scenes, and the director seeks to draw the viewer's attention to the characters. This choice shapes the overall visual composition, and the visual narrative of the series is built entirely on these techniques. The stage design also includes spatial representations that reflect the two poles. The *dergah*, adorned with Islamic motifs, and the ordinary spaces that reflect a Western lifestyle are used to present the two contrasting representations in the series.

5.2.5. Technical Structure

When the series is analysed in terms of camera angles, distinct narrative techniques are observed. It is possible to see scenes in which the camera is positioned to capture the entire composition, a perspective referred to as the *Godly Gaze* in the literature (Leonard, 2009). This angle is used especially in scenes where members of the sect, representing the conservative sector, appear en masse. The camera usually tends to shoot in medium close-up with the characters, reflecting the actors' facial expressions and the psychological depth of the dialogue.

When examined in terms of colour arrangements, it is possible to divide the series into two parts. It is seen that scenes with secular and conservative characters, as well as scenes where the two poles occasionally intersect, have distinct colour designs. While warm tones are preferred in the *dergah* and other locations associated with conservative figures, conventional techniques and pastel tones are observed in scenes involving secular characters.

The most commonly used transition type in the series is the cut, and intense visual effects are not employed. The series, which makes limited use of music, prioritises dialogue and actor gestures throughout the narrative. At the same time, since it is a drama genre production, minimal use of visual and auditory effects is expected. Therefore, it is possible to say that the series employs fictional, visual, and auditory techniques in line with the narrative conventions of its genre.

Conclusion

Television, one of the most powerful actors in the field of mass communication in Türkiye and around the world, has always been subject to economic and political control. Not even a hundred years after the transmission of moving images over long distances, television has become one of the most influential tools shaping trends in the social sphere, and many scientific studies have focused on it. While these studies have emphasised the instantaneous and effortless nature of television in delivering information and entertainment, they have also noted that it is not an innocent medium. One reason for this is television's high manipulative power, owing to its effective use of visual and auditory elements.

Although the transmission of moving images is a relatively recent achievement, television technology has undergone various transformations. One of the most significant of these has been

the integration of television with the Internet. The development of Internet technology and its capacity to transmit video content has begun to undermine the dominance of conventional television. While television remains an important medium, it is no longer the preferred platform for younger generations. This indicates that if televisions are not integrated with the Internet, they may soon become obsolete.

The television industry can be divided into two main branches based on this radical transformation: the first is conventional broadcasting, and the second is streaming services. These two broadcasting models have distinct dynamics, and conventional television is subject to stricter regulation.

Television, which became a major influence in Türkiye especially after the 1970s, has also played a role in societal polarisation. Politicians have used television channels to disseminate their messages, while the opposition has done the same. These practices, along with polarising political strategies, have resonated in society. Among the resulting conflicts, the conservative-secular divide stands out as one of the most prominent, with roots predating the television era. Television has thus become both a producer of conflict and a medium that utilises it. This study aims to examine two different broadcasting models within the context of these dynamics. Accordingly, two series representing each model were included in the sample: *Ethos*, broadcast on Netflix, and *Kızıl Goncalar*, broadcast on NOW TV.

The research employed content analysis, with findings categorised under main headings. These categories include: 'general framework', 'cultural and sociological perspective', 'cinematography', and 'technical structure'. Subcategories include: 'title of the production', 'director', 'screenplay', 'genre and target audience', 'broadcasting platform', 'socio-ideological aspects of characters', 'religion and belief systems', 'gender and ethnic representations', 'political and ideological context', 'class and socioeconomic structure', 'historical and geographical context', 'conflict elements', 'space and time', 'symbols and metaphors', 'lighting techniques', 'depicted atmosphere', 'visual composition', 'scene design', 'camera scales and movements', 'costume and set design', 'colour grading', 'editing techniques', 'visual effects', and 'the use of sound and music'. It was observed that politics is one of the main sources of the conservative-secular conflict in Türkiye, and the findings were interpreted through the lens of Ralf Dahrendorf's conflict theory.

It was found that *Ethos* addresses the conservative-secular conflict through a psychiatrist–client relationship. With a strong sociological framework that includes themes such as identity, class, gender, and poverty, the series builds conflict through symbols and metaphors. One of the most salient of these is the conservative-secular divide. The series does not glorify any ideology but instead highlights the irrationality of certain actions. Thus, *Ethos* influences viewers through implicit meanings. The conflict, although rarely discussed openly in society, is experienced by both groups and is presented on strong narrative grounds. Economic hardship is not directly emphasised, but socioeconomic disparities are reflected in living conditions. Modern, secular characters represent the middle and upper classes, while conservative characters embody the poor. Spatially, these groups live in separate areas that are geographically close yet socially

distant. It can be said that *Ethos* brought the conservative-secular dynamic to the forefront of public discourse and inspired subsequent productions.

Kızıl Goncalar tells the story of a conflict between a religious sect named *Faniler* and the *Alkanlı* family. Compared to other television series, it presents a more robust sociological context. Despite certain flaws, the series offers a more accurate reflection of the social sphere than its peers and shares a similar narrative structure with *Ethos*. Featuring a closed community that is striking for NOW TV's audience, the series refrains from directly criticising either side. Like *Ethos*, it builds critique through symbols and metaphors. Issues such as child marriage, the exclusion of women from decision-making, and male-dominated culture serve as criticisms of the conservative pole. Likewise, by referencing the 28 February process, the narrative suggests that secularism also has the potential for extremism. The series also incorporates themes of Turkish–Kurdish and left–right ideological divides, revealing how multiple layers of conflict may intensify tensions in the social sphere.

Although both series address one of Türkiye's most enduring issues, they appear more inclined to reinforce divisions than to promote resolution. Consequently, these narratives may contribute to social fragmentation and exacerbate ideological polarisation. The study concludes that both series employ similar narrative strategies, tend to portray both ideologies in extreme terms, differ in cinematographic approaches to conservative representation, and ultimately risk deepening social segregation.

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Türk Televizyon Endüstrisinde Anlatısal Dönüşüm: Muhafazakâr ve Seküler Çatışmasının Yükselişi

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Kavramsal Çerçeve

Kitle iletişim endüstrisinin en güçlü aktörlerinden biri olan televizyon, icadından henüz yüz yıl geçmeden köklü sosyolojik dönüşümlere tanıklık ve aracılık etmiştir. Hareketli görüntünün transfer edilmesine ve izleyicilerin anlık olarak sunulan mesajları alımlamasına olanak tanıyan konvansiyonel yayıncılık, insanlığın daha önce karşılaşmadığı bir yenilik olmuş, yüz yüze iletişim sürecini tek yönlü boyuta indirgemiştir. Yayıncılık adı verilen söz konusu yeni iletişim pratiği, uzun zaman geçmeden dönüşümler geçirmiştir.

2000'li yıllardan itibaren internet teknolojisi hanelerde yaygınlaşmaya başlamış, Web 2.0'ın etkileşimli doğası hareketli görüntü transfer edebilecek yetkinliğe erişmiştir. Bu durum izleme eyleminde önemli dönüşümleri beraberinde getirmiş, dijital platformlar (VOD) televizyon karşısında önemli bir rakip olmuştur. Konvansiyonel yayıncılığın zaman ve mekâna bağlı izleme deneyimi sunan yapısı, dijital platformlarla birlikte yerini zaman ve mekândan bağımsız bir izleme deneyimine bırakmıştır. Bu olanakları nedeniyle özellikle genç kuşaklar dijital platformlar aracılığıyla içerik tüketmeye yönelmiş, televizyonun aracılık ve eşlik ettiği aile içindeki kolektif ortam dağılmıştır.

Söz konusu dönüşüm süreçlerinin yanında Türk televizyon endüstrisi sıkça anlatısal dönüşümler de geçirmiştir. Türkiye'de televizyon, özel teşebbüslerin ardından zaman zaman kutuplaşmaların çözümüne yönelik çabalar ortaya koyarken, kimi zaman da kutuplaşmanın sebebi olmuştur. Bu durumda iktidarların televizyonu politik ve ekonomik olarak etkileme isteği başat rol oynamıştır. Bu nedenlerle televizyonun ideolojik bir araç olduğunu söylemek, Türkiye'de toplumsal çatışmaları körükleyerek reyting ya da izlenme oranlarını artırmaya odaklandığını görmek mümkündür. Çalışmada söz konusu durumlar gözetilmiş, konvansiyonel ve dijital olmak üzere iki farklı yayın mecrası ele alınarak konuyu temsil eden diziler örnekleme dahil edilmiştir.

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Araştırma Tasarımı

Çalışma Netflix'te yayınlanan *Bir Başkadır* ve NOW TV'de yayınlanan *Kızıl Goncalar* dizisi üzerinden konuya odaklanmıştır. Belirtilen dizilerin seçilme nedeni, benzer yapımlarla kıyaslandıklarında daha güçlü bir sosyolojik bağlama dayanmaları olmuştur. İncelemelerde içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmış, diziler sistematik bir çerçeve gözetilerek ana kategoriler ve alt kategoriler altında incelenmiştir. Ana kategoriler Genel Çerçeve, Kültürel ve Sosyolojik Bağlam, Sinematografi ve Teknik Yapı olmuş, alt kategoriler Yapımın Adı, Yönetmen, Senaryo, Tür ve Hedef Kitle, Yayın Platformu, Tartışmalar ve Eleştiriler, Din ve İnanç Sistemleri, Cinsiyet ve Etnik Temsiller, Siyasi ve İdeolojik Bağlam, Sınıf ve Sosyoekonomik Yapı, Tarihsel ve Coğrafi Bağlam, Çatışma Unsurları, Mekân ve Zaman, Semboller ve Metaforlar, Aydınlatma Teknikleri, Tasvir Edilen Atmosfer, Görsel Kompozisyon, Sahne Tasarımı, Kamera Ölçekleri ve Hareketleri, Kostüm ve Set Tasarımı, Renk Düzenlemesi, Kurgu Teknikleri, Görsel Efektler, Ses ve Müzik Kullanımı olmuştur. Türkiye'deki muhafazakâr ve seküler çatışmanın kaynaklarından birinin siyaset olduğu bilinciyle gerçekleştirilen araştırmada, bulgular Ralf Dahrendorf'un otoriteyi merkeze alan çatışma kuramı gözetilerek yorumlanmıştır.

Dahrendorf'un çatışma teorisine göre toplumsal alandaki çatışmaların temel nedenlerinden biri güç elitleri ve otoriteye tabi olanlar arasındaki uyuşmazlıklardır. Bu ayrım, toplumun tüm kademelerinde kendini belli etmektedir. Bir birey veya bir grup otoriteyi ele aldığında, otoriteye karşı direniş, çatışmalar meydana getirir ve bu çatışmalar zamanla derinleşir. Dahrendorf'un çatışma kuramı Marksizm ve Weberyanizmin sınırlılıklarını aşarak daha geniş bir çatışmacı yaklaşım inşa etmeyi amaçlarken, otoritenin dönüşümü üzerinden sınıfsal kutuplaşmaları tartışır. Dahrendorf'un teorisi ve Türkiye sosyolojisinin kesişimini, siyasal İslami ideolojinin yükselişiyle okumak mümkündür. Bu nedenle Dahrendorf'un modern çatışma teorisi çalışmaya kaynaklık etmiş ve söz konusu karşıtlıkların açıklanmasına yardımcı olmuştur. Türkiye'nin güncel siyasi ve toplumsal yapısı göz önüne alındığında söz konusu ikiliklerin oluşması ve bu çatışmaların metalaştırılması, otorite ile yakından ilişkilidir. Türkiye'nin siyasi kutuplaşmasına dayanan bir anlatı olarak görülen muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasının kökenleri, kuşkusuz politik gelişmelerden bağımsız değildir ve kitle iletişim endüstrisi söz konusu kutuplaşmayı metalaştıracak her yolu denemektedir.

Bulgular ve Yorumlar

Bir Başkadır Dizisi

Dijital platform kullanıcısı orta-üst sınıfa hitap eden bir yapım olma niteliği taşıyan *Bir Başkadır* dizisi, yayınlandığı dönemde büyük yankı uyandırmış ve 2020'li yıllara damga vuran bir dizi olarak ifade edilmiştir. *Bir Başkadır* dizisinde muhafazakâr-seküler çatışması danışan ve psikiyatrist ikilisi çerçevesinde ele alınmakta; toplumsal sınıf, kimlik, toplumsal cinsiyet gibi kavramlara sıklıkla vurgu yapılmaktadır. Söz konusu çatışma unsurları Türk toplumunda özellikle 2000'li yıllar sonrasında sıkça tartışmaya açılan ve çeşitli dönemlerde kitle iletişim araçlarının da etkisiyle kutuplaşmalarla sonuçlanan yapıya sahiptir. Bu nedenle dizinin Türkiye sosyolojisi için önem taşıyan konulara değindiğini belirtmek, anlatının kurulduğu zeminin Türk toplumu için hassas niteliğe sahip olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Dizinin muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasını zaman zaman örtük, zaman zamanda doğrudan kurduğu görülmektedir. Toplumsal yaşamda dile getirilmese de mevcudiyeti mutlak olan hususlar genellikle diyaloglar üzerinden izleyiciye

aktarılırken sessizlikler, oyuncu mimiklerini öne çıkarmak ve izleyicilere sorgulama fırsatı tanımak için bırakılmıştır. Dizinin izleyiciyi sorgulamaya zorlayan ve kurulan çatışmaya objektif bir perspektiften bakmasını amaçlayan anlatıya sahip olduğunu söylemek mümkündür. Dizi her ne kadar söz konusu perspektifi benimseyerek izleyiciyi ekrana odaklamaya çabalasa da çatışma unsurlarının çözümüne ve gerilimin indirgenmesine olanak tanımaz. Dizinin Türkiye'de muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasını merkeze alması, uygun platform ve zamanda yayınlanmasıyla bu anlatıyı popülerleştirdiği sonucuna varılmıştır.

Kızıl Goncalar Dizisi

Kızıl Goncalar dizisi Faniler tarikatı ve Alkanlı ailesi arasında geçen ilişkiler çerçevesinde muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasını içeren bir anlatıyı izleyiciye muhalif bir kanal aracılığıyla sunar. Türk konvansiyonel televizyon yayıncılığında muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasını sıklıkla ele alan dizilerin olduğu görülmekte ve bu dizilerin toplumsal zeminde izlenme eğilimi olduğu görülmektedir. Bu dizi, konvansiyonel televizyon yayıncılığı tarafından izleyiciye sunulan benzer anlatıya sahip diğer dizilerle karşılaştırıldığında daha güçlü bir sosyolojik bağlama sahiptir ve Türk toplumunu daha doğru kodlarla yansıtmaktadır. Muhafazakâr ve seküler çatışmasının *Bir Başkadır* dizisinde ele alınmasına benzer biçimde hasta-danışan çerçevesinde de sunulduğu görülse de *Kızıl Goncalar* dizisi doğrudan bu konuya odaklanmaz. Son dönem Türk televizyon ve sinema endüstrisinde psikiyatri ve psikoloji bilimine atıfta bulunan anlatıların (Örn. Gülseren Buğdaycıoğlu uyarlamaları) izlenme eğiliminin yüksek olduğu da gözlemlenmektedir. Söz konusu yapımların bu konuyu da anlatıya dahil etmesinin izlenme eğilimleri üzerinde olumlu etkisi bulunmaktadır. Özellikle NOW TV izleyicileri için ilgi çekici olan, kapalı bir topluluğu resmeden dizi, iki kutbu doğrudan eleştirmekten kaçınarak izleyiciyi sorgulamaya zorlar. Dizi konuyu her ne kadar tarafsız bir vurguyla ele alsa da NOW TV izleyici kitlesinin muhafazakâr ideolojiye yönelik karşıt bir alımlama süreci yürüteceği belirgindir. Bu durumu herhangi bir ideolojik yönelime sahip kanalın karşıt ideolojiyi sunmasında da görmek, bulguyu genellemek mümkündür. Örneklemde yer alan yapımlarda anlatısal ve teknik açılardan iki kutubun temsilinde farklılık gözlemlenmektedir. Bu durum hem dram türünün klasik anlatı kalıpları gereği hem de dizinin ritmik doğasından ileri gelmektedir. Zaman zaman sessizlikler kullanılmakta, izleyici oyuncu ile baş başa bırakılmaktadır. Dizinin yine orta-üst sınıfa hitap eden bir yapım olduğunu, toplumsal sınıf, kimlik, toplumsal cinsiyet, tarikat gibi unsurlara vurgu yaptığını söylemek mümkündür. Diyaloglara ek olarak yoğun sembol ve metafor kullanımı görülmekte, kız çocuklarının okula gönderilmemesi ve küçük yaşta evlendirilmesi, kadınların karar verici pozisyonlarda olmaması, erkek egemen bir düzenin sıkça vurgulanması gibi hususlar, hedef kitlesi olan NOW TV izleyicilerini mutlak bir karşıtlığa yöneltmektedir.

Sonuç

Her iki dizi de Türkiye'nin en önemli sorunlarından birine değinmekte olsa da çatışmaları çözmekten ziyade gerilimi artırmaya odaklanan, muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasını metalaştırmayı amaçlayan niteliktedir. Bu amaç, izleyicilerin muhafazakâr ve seküler kesime ilişkin temsillerle parasosyal etkileşim kurarak genelleme yoluna başvurmasına ve çatışmaların derinleşmesine neden olabilecek tehlikeli bir sonuca da işaret etmektedir. Ayrıca *Bir Başkadır* ve *Kızıl Goncalar* dizilerinde tek çatışma unsurunun muhafazakâr ve seküler karşıtlığı üzerinden kurulmadığını

söylemek mümkündür. Dizilerin ikincil çatışma unsurları incelendiğinde *Bir Başkadır* dizisinin etnik kimliği, *Kızıl Goncalar* dizisinin ise politik karşıtlığı kullandığı saptanmıştır.

Çalışmada muhafazakâr ve seküler çatışmasının *Bir Başkadır* dizisiyle beraber Türkiye'de popüler konuma yükseldiği görülmüş, söz konusu çatışmayı işleyen *Kızıl Goncalar* dizisinin de benzer anlatı kodlarına sahip olduğu tespit edilmiştir. İncelenen yapımların muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasını uç noktalara taşıma eğiliminin olduğu, çatışmanın doğasına özgün anlatı kodlarını yapılandırdıkları bulunmuştur. Sinematografik yapının iki kesimi içeren sahnelerde farklılık gösterdiği, uzlaşmanın yeteri kadar yer almadığı ve kutuplaşma karşıtı söylemlerin bulunmadığı ve sözü edilen yapımların muhafazakâr-seküler çatışmasını derinleştirebileceği sonucuna varmıştır. Sözü edilen diziler estetik unsurlarla donatılmış, anlatısal kodları yerinde kullanmış ve nitelikli yapımlar olmalarına rağmen iki kutup izleyiciyi de karşıt bir alımlama gerçekleştirmeye sürüklemiştir. Dizilerin toplumsal kutuplaşmaya aracı olmaması için çatışma yanında uzlaşı ya da çeşitli hususlar üzerinde mutabakat içeren sahnelerin de yer almasının önem taşıdığı vurgulanmıştır.