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## EN Sansür – Zensur im türkischen Fernsehen

In my bachelor thesis 'Sansür - Censorship on Turkish Television', I dealt with censorship practices on public television in Turkey. I have been watching Turkish television since my childhood and have noticed over time that censorship is increasing. The censorship is not comparable to that in Germany. In Germany, a scene is simply cut out. On Turkish television, on the other hand, scenes are pixelated, which creates a certain curiosity. A well-known example of this is the cigarette: when a person holds a cigarette in their hand, their entire upper body is no longer visible.

I chose this topic because I want to show the arbitrary decisions that are made to censor visual media. Scenes that appear problematic on channels critical of the government are often broadcast on pro-government channels without any problems. Since 2008, it has also been observed that the media landscape as a whole has become more conservative. The artist Seyfettin Dursunoğlu used to be able to appear on public television as a drag queen. This was no longer possible from 2010. The reason given was that such a show was no longer wanted.

The fundamental problem is that it is not clearly defined what exactly is allowed and what is not. In theory, anything can be broadcast, but the consequences for supposedly harmful material are enormous. This is not just about the usual censorship that exists worldwide, such as for violence or sexual content for the protection of minors. Every country has its own rules and moral concepts. While extreme violence can be shown on public television in the USA, this is directly curtailed in Germany. Conversely, sexual content can be shown on German television without any problems, which would be punishable in the USA.

Since it is not clearly defined what is considered a problem by the authorities, broadcasters tend to censor content so heavily that they do not have to fear sanctions. As a result, sometimes more is censored than is actually required, which also explains the curious censorship.

Turkey is a vibrant country where everything can change at any time. During my research time alone, I had to add a few incidents afterwards. During the time I was writing my bachelor's thesis, all kinds of events happened that changed the media landscape in Turkey once again. It is often said that the current government is the reason for these conditions, but this is not the whole truth. The roots of censorship lie in the history of the Republic of Turkey. Censorship has always existed in the media, especially in times of coups when many films were banned. During the 1980 coup, many left-wing films were completely destroyed because they were considered harmful to the government. This changed in the 1990s when private broadcasters went on air. The broadcasters themselves decided what should be censored. However, this led to real crime documentaries being broadcast completely uncensored, such as the program 'SICAK SICAGINA' where real corpses were shown on public television. After numerous complaints, the RTÜK was founded in 1996 to monitor the broadcasters.

What began as regulation developed over time into a dogmatic censorship apparatus. The current political situation also plays a major role. In good economic times, there is hardly any censorship and much more is tolerated, whereas in tense times there are much stronger sanctions. Turkish television reflects the current situation in Turkey and is far more important than in Europe. You can read more about this in my bachelor thesis. It is based on the situation in 2021/22 and will be updated again by 2025. Incidentally, this is only the abridged version. If you are interested, please send me an e-mail.

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