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Article

Neo-Ottoman Turk-Scape: Analyzing the Role of Dizis as Türkiye's Soft Power

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Abstract

Türkiye has grabbed the world's attention in the last three decades for its strategic use of soft power as an instrument of cultural diplomacy. Buoyed by relative economic success in the post-Cold War period, the new ruling elites of Türkiye used Islamic practices and value-system, particularly its Ottoman past, as tools of the soft power in cultural diplomacy. Turkish *dizis* (television series), particularly those based on historical figures, have played a critical role in the nation branding exercise of Türkiye. These *dizis* have not only created a soft spot for the country, and boosted its tourism, but it also helped the government, particularly President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan project himself as a leader with potentials to lead the Muslim world or *Ummah*. This article assesses the role of Turkish *dizis* as a soft power instrument in cultural diplomacy and the nation branding of Türkiye. Interestingly, Turkish *dizis* were primarily produced for domestic consumption, and were not necessarily targeting foreign audience, at least in the beginning. Thus, they perform the dual function of molding public opinion within the country, while also helping create a positive image about Türkiye and its past among the foreign audience. But nostalgia of the past alone is not sufficient, if not complemented by reciprocal actions on the ground.

Keywords

Cultural diplomacy, soft power, Turkey, Türkiye, Turkish *dizi*, Turkscape

Introduction

The relative economic success of Türkiye (spelled Turkey until December 2021) in the post-Cold War period gave Ankara the leverage, and confidence, to see

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