

## Reality Crime Programs in Turkish Television: The Notorious Case of Palu Family on Müge Anlı

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*The crime drama has always been popular on radio and television. Following this popular programming type, these programs found its way into reality crime programs. The reality crime programs emerged in U.S television in the late 1980s as the combination of news, crime dramas, and even horror genre. The reality crime programs placed themselves mainly in two formats in the television world. There is a vignette format where actors reenact actual crimes, and another one is the live-action format. It is the 1990s for Turkey to introduce reality television to the audience. One of the popular programs that were first broadcasted on ATV in 2008 hosted by Müge Anlı is the Müge Anlı ile Tath Sert. After we discuss the popularity of the reality crime television and the cases from American television, MATS is discussed as a certain criminal case from Turkey. This case is publicly recognized as Palu Family. This article argues how the case of the Palu Family became a televised public psychosis in MATS which is a hybrid reality crime program. With this regard, we will study family violence, sexual abuse, and homicide that have become publicly available to the audience.*

**Keywords:** reality TV, reality crime programs, infotainment, crime, Turkish television, Müge Anlı

### Introduction

On 21 December 2018, a family attended to a Turkish television program called *Müge Anlı ile Tath Sert*, claiming that two of their family members are missing for ten years. Later it was discovered that this family is involved in the murder of two members and also it has come to light that there are abuse, violence and drug use within the family. This case was solved on the live broadcast and became one of the most terrifying stories in Turkish television. With the impact of the program, many authorities got alarmed and started taking action against this case. In this article, we will analyze this case and identify the format of the program *Müge Anlı ile Tath Sert* along with it.

Our main argument in this article is to define *Müge Anlı ile Tath Sert* as a hybrid reality crime program and discuss the case of the Palu Family within this context. Specifically, the case of the Palu Family is selected to analyze the uniqueness of *Müge Anlı ile Tath Sert*'s format within the crime based-reality programs in Turkish television. We will begin with introducing infotainment as a new media content in television programming. Later we will discuss the genres

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and formats of television programming along with its hybrid feature. We will move on to reality television and define its subgenres and formats. Within the subgenres of reality television, we will focus on reality crime programs. We will give brief history of reality crime programs before moving on to its reflection on Turkish television. Before analyzing *Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* as a hybrid crime-based reality program, we will define several features of reality television formats in Turkish television. Therefore, this article will include the process of the localization of U.S. television-based reality programs in Turkish television history. Then, this article's main argument will be based on the claim that *Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* is a hybrid format, which has both features of a broadcasting crime and an investigation-based program. The program's specificity comes from the long-term hosting of Müge Anlı, the program's impact on the unsolved cases, and the hybridity derives from information and entertainment-based formats. We will analyze the reality television history and place this program as a hybrid reality television program in Turkish television. The theoretical background and the literature include the reality in the media, the representation of the crime, the localization of the reality television in Turkey. We will conclude our statement with a specific case from *Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* to illustrate the features of reality crime programs in Turkey. The case is publicly known as the Palu Family case, which consists of a considerable number of types of criminal acts, including murder, theft, physical and psychological abuse, manipulation, fraud, and forgery of documents. The case of the Palu Family case in the *Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* has been broadcasted for two weeks. Due to the public response on the case, the high degree of rankings, and sensation created by the program, the case of Palu Family has occupied the agenda in Turkish television for two weeks. After defining the position of the *Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* as an only hybrid crime-based reality program in Turkish television, the representation of the crime in the program and the unique way Müge Anlı as a host in the investigation of the case will be analyzed.

### Methodology

The analysis of the article is constructed within the media studies. Specifically, the genre within the media content is reality television. To research the reality television genre, the analysis is conducted from the reality crime programs that have been broadcasted in Turkish television. The content analysis method is used to investigate a specific case called the Palu Family case from *Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* to reveal the format's definitive features. The reason for analyzing *MATS* among other Turkish reality crime programs is that *MATS* is the most long-lasting reality crime program with the same host in the same channel in Turkish television history. The analysis is limited to examine the Palu Family case through fifteen days from 21.12.2018 to 11.01.2019. Therefore, from the beginning of the Paul Family case to the detention of the person of interest, fifteen episodes of *MATS* are detailed analyzed to describe *MATS'* format and its unique qualities. Television ratings determine the initial limiting factor for choosing the case. The article will

demonstrate how the Palu Family case effects on *MATS*' ratings. Moreover, the Palu Family case is a perfect example to examine the *MATS*' hybridity that the case includes several types of criminal activities ranging from murder and missing person to fraud and theft that allow *MATS* to offer the audience both information and entertainment.

The study's hypothesis is grounded on the argument that *Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* is a unique Turkish reality crime television program that can only be defined with its hybrid qualities. The hybridity is based on *MATS*' well-combined features, which come from other reality television formats in global and Turkish television. This study attempts to analyze which qualities of *MATS* allow us to define the program unique and hybrid. For that purpose, we ground the framework on this central research question of how *MATS* could be defined in the reality television genre? In line with this purpose, we will attempt to answer these questions: what is the position and uniqueness of *MATS* in Turkish television, and if we prefer to call *MATS* as a hybrid television program, which qualities become essential to define *MATS* within television studies' discourse. Theoretical background and literature review are based on media studies that are focused on the arguments on the history of the reality television genre, the representation of crime and criminal in media, the localization of reality television programs in Turkish television history, and the ancestor examples of *MATS*. Cavender and Fishman (1998), Surette (1997), and Breslin's (1990) seminal works on the representation of crime in global reality television are stated and give directions to the theoretical framework of the article. Notably, the arguments on Turkish reality crime programs in Turkish scholars' studies, such as Erol Işık and Yaman (2017) and Çelenk's (2015; 2011), enrich the section titled the localization of the reality television.

However, the literature, scoped researches on contemporary Turkish reality crime programs, is relatively limited in Turkish academia, because Turkish reality television programs, including crime-based reality programs, have been adapted from global television before *MATS*. As a contemporary example, *MATS* is a unique format that has not been officially defined and described yet. Thus, this study could contribute to the field because the analysis aims to define and examine the prominent example of a contemporary Turkish reality crime program through a specific case in Turkish television history.

### **The Reality in the Media**

This section examines the history and types of the reality television formats in several media. For that purpose, the history of reality television and the literature of the television studies are revealed to discuss the specificity of *Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* in the next chapters. There are four basic types of content in the media. These basic media content areas are advertising, news, entertainment, and infotainment (Surette, 1997: 15). Traditionally, news, entertainment, and advertising were sufficient to define the media content landscape, but today infotainment is a significant addition (Surette, 1997: 15). With the emergence of infotainment in the early 1980s, the aspect of news, entertainment, and advertising combined under a

single umbrella. Thus, they are no longer separate media spheres 'due to infotainment's influence' (Surette, 1997: 19). Infotainment refers to a cluster of program types that blur the lines between information and entertainment genres of television programming. Especially, since the dominance of infotainment in television programming, hybrid formats of television programs started to appear.

A television program, or simply as a TV show, is any content produced for broadcast that viewed on television, excluding breaking news and advertisement. Television programs are more varied than most other forms of media because there is a wide range of formats and genres that can be presented. A television program could be categorized as fictional such as comedies or dramas and non-fictional such as documentary, news and reality television. For instance, as Cavender and Fishman (1998: 3) mentioned, "[g]ame shows and late-night talk shows (e.g., Letterman and Leno) are not fiction, but neither they are the news; they are entertainment programming". As Berger (1975: 3) mentioned; Television genres refer to a class of television programs and a given program is an example of that genre. The term genre comes from the French language and means type or kind. It is hard to place a television program in a single genre. Many television programs could fit into several genres. Furthermore, there is also a wide range of hybridity among the genres that causes a wide range of hybrid programs on television. It is impossible to deal with all the different genres and subgenres shown on television. There are several different genres of television programs competing with one another for viewers (Berger, 1975: 9).

A hybrid television genre on television programming is reality television. Reality television appeared in the late 1980s as a new trend hybrid television programming genre where the main subject is the representation of real people and reality. For Cavender and Fishman (1998: 3) "the defining feature of reality television is that these programs claim to present reality". It is certain that reality television according to Penzhorn and Pitout (2008: 62) focuses on ordinary people, voyeurism, audience participation, and the attempt to simulate real life. Reality television is about actual events and real people; "non-professional actors, unscripted dialogue, surveillance footage, hand-held cameras, seeing events unfold as they are happening in front of the camera" (Hill, 2005: 41). In reality television, there are different subgenres, such as hidden camera shows, home improvement shows, court shows or reality legal shows. Most of these subgenres have elements from other genres and formats of television programming. For instance, lifestyle formats, such as *Changing Rooms*, that contain stories of do-it-yourself (DIY) makeovers as well as ideas on interior design. One of the well-known reality game formats is *Survivor* where the show is about capturing "ordinary people in emotionally and physically challenging situations" (Hill, 2005: 8). Among the reality television genre on television programming, crime-based formats found its place on television.

## The Representation of the Crime

The aim of this chapter is searching different ways of the representation of the crime in media. The history of crime programming on television derived from crime drama programs on radio. Cavender and Fishman (1998: 8) stated "[m]ost histories of the media noted that television copied much of its programming style from radio". Many of the crime programs were based on novels and short stories and even dramatization of real police cases as radio crime entertainment. These broadcasts were cheap to produce and intriguing for the audience. In the 1930s a new type of radio program appeared. "Beginning with *True Detective Mysteries*, which described an actual wanted criminal at the end of each program, shows like *Homicide Squat*, *Calling All Cars*, and *Treasury Agent* dramatized real police cases as radio crime entertainment" (Stark, 1987: 241). This tradition of crime drama on radio has found its place in television programs. U.S. reality crime television started in 1987 when *Unsolved Mysteries* appeared as a pilot episode (Cavender and Fishman, 1998: 10). Following *Unsolved Mysteries*, *America's Most Wanted* aired on the new Fox network in January 1988. "The look of America's Most Wanted was a combination of 1940s films, MTV music videos, and gritty realism" (Breslin, 1990: 93–94). *America's Most Wanted* and *Unsolved Mysteries* quickly generated clones, including *Cops* (1989), *Rescue 911* (1989), *America Detective* (1991), *Untold Stories of the F.B.I.* (1991), *True Stories of the Highway Patrol* (1993), and *Crime-watch Tonight* (1999). For instance, *Cops* and *Real Stories of the Highway Patrols* are marked as reality-based police shows. "While *Cops* is filmed live via a hand-held camera, *Real Stories of the Highway Patrol* involves reenactments of sensational cases, combined with some live footage" (Carmody, 1998: 164). A variety of hybrid television forms emerged in the 1980s and now popularly known as "reality TV". "Stories about crime – its nature, extent and resolution – have become routinized through repetitive and formulaic depiction in news and fictional entertainment forms" (Kohm, 2009: 193).

Reality legal show, which deals with subjects such as police, crime, and litigation, is a hybrid genre that borrows elements from documentary television, talk shows, news shows, caught on tape shows, and hidden camera shows. Among the reality legal shows, Cavender and Fishman highlight reality crime programs as "present true stories about crime, criminals, and victims" (Cavender and Fishman, 1998: 3). The reality crime programs are characterized between fact and fiction, and information and entertainment. Reality crime programs borrow several vocabularies from journalism such as correspondents or reporters. However, "the genre of reality crime is a long way from journalism. Program producers repeatedly step outside the bounds of accepted journalistic practice when they mix interviews of real victims and investigators with the reconstruction of events using actors" (Cavender and Fishman, 1998: 11). These shows include "crime reenactment, rescue and emergency reenactment, actual police action, home videos, entertainment news and magazine report" (Sholle, 1993: 56). These programs also combine "news, crime drama, and even elements of the horror genre" (Cavender and Fishman, 1998: 80). This format also 'emphasizes action, sets events to music,

compresses time, speeds up the action and uses camera angles typical of horror films, action movies, or cinema vérité' (Cavender and Fishman, 1998: 12).

### The Localization of the Reality TV

This chapter reveals the localization process of the reality programs in Turkish television and the effects on the U.S. based-reality television programs on the Turkish formats. The mixture of formats and genres borrowed from European television or American television emerged Turkish television. "Television format adaptations, in general, are foreign in terms of format, and the concern here is that this foreignness would lead to an estrangement and assimilation in content" (Çelenk, 2011: 139). The beginning of the 1990's new television formats and genres emerged in Turkish television. "Especially, the newly established private TV channels introduced several new programs, including TV series, game shows, reality shows, talk shows and live broadcasts, either locally or globally produced" (Kesirli, 2017: 91). Among these new types of entertainment programs hosted by celebrities as well as magazine programs and talk shows became especially popular on Turkish television (Kesirli, 2017: 43). The emergence of reality television in Turkey resulted in many improvements on television. For the first time in Turkish television history, "programs include live camera recordings, hidden camera recordings, amateur video recordings of events" (Binark and Kılıçbay, 2004: 74). These features also included "interviews with primary witnesses, slow-motion presentations of events, close-up shooting angles, and sound overlays on the event" (Binark and Kılıçbay 2004: 74). Following the emergence of these formats, a different and transitional format that combined elements from news and reality television can also be observed. This format also featured of the live broadcast of some police-judicial cases that develop during the day. Some examples of this format are, *Yakın Takip* (Close Chase, 1993), *Olay Var* (There is Incident, 1993), and *Sıcak Takip* (Hot Chase, 1993) (Aksop, 1998: 89). These daily reality television programs were 15-minute episodes that aired before the main news programs. Although these programs derive from real crime events, they are not journalistic but entertainment programming.

The first proper example of reality television and also reality crime program in Turkey is called *Sıcağı Sıcağına* (In the Nick of Time, 1993) which was aired on private television channel Show TV on May 5, 1993 (Aksop, 1998: 91). The hosts of this new shows on Turkish television are often celebrities to draw the attention of the audience (Çelenk, 2005: 208). The first host of *Sıcağı Sıcağına* was the Turkish actor Haluk Bilginer, later another actor Cem Kurtuluş continued to host this program. The content of the program *Sıcağı Sıcağına* formed around daily news of traffic accidents, demolitions, and fires. The use of visual effects, music, and reenactments aimed to draw the attention of the audience as well. This format resembles the vignette format of reality crime programs in which actors reenact actual crimes, and also feature "interviews with victims, their family and friends, the police, and film and photographs of suspects" (Cavender and Fishman, 1998: 79). In these vignettes, the mixture of reconstructions, the camera angles,

music, lightning is used to enhance the dramatic and entertainment elements. (Surette, 1997: 22). After the success of *Sıcağı Sıcağına*, several reality crime programs appeared on Turkish television in this format. Some examples of these are *Söz Fato' da* (Fato is Talking, 1993), *Kayıp Aranıyor* (Missing Person, 1997) and *Devriye* (Patrol, 1994) that aired on another private television channel ATV.

Among the following examples of reality crime programming on Turkish television, *Söz Fato' da* was hosted by actress Fatma Girik on private television channel Kanal D. The main issues in the program were murder cases, rape, incest relationships, drug use, fraud, corruption, etc. First few episodes of this program were using news from official police reports as cases similar to the format of *Sıcağı Sıcağına*. However, the following episodes were based on events that were reported by the audience via letters or personal applications. The program centered on the binary opposition between victim and perpetrator. Fatma Girik as the host became the guardian of the innocent victims within the male-centered television world. This format of crime programming became popular on Turkish television. In the 2000s the crime programs have a place in Turkish television that most of the private television channels have created a program similar to this format. Some of the popular examples of these crime programs are, *Kadının Sesi* (Voice of Women, 2008), *Serap Ezgü ile Biz Bize* (Serap Ezgü is with Us, 2005), *Suç ve Ceza* (Crime and Punishment, 2010), *Sizin Sesiniz* (Your Voice, 2007) and others which began to focus on cases of missing people or other domestic issues including violence within the family. "These television programs have been presented by female hosts, who portrayed themselves as strong, determined, courageous, protective and heroic ways" (Erol Işık and Yaman, 2017: 73). The hosts of these reality crime programs are celebrities and mostly women. These programs combined elements from reality crime programs, court shows and formed into hybrid television programs.

Among several hybrid reality crime programs on Turkish television, we will analyze the program *Müğe Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* (Sweet and Sour with Müğe Anlı). The host of the program is Müğe Anlı who is an ex-magazine reporter. After presenting the news magazine program *Dobra Dobra* (2006), she started her own program *Müğe Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* (MATS). This program was first broadcasted on ATV in 2008 and still continues to air every weekday from 10:00–13:00. This program is the only program on Turkish television that has been on air since 2008 and still going on. The program's format, airing time, and channel have not changed since 2008. The consistency of this program is one of the major reasons for our analysis. In *MATS*, Müğe Anlı as the host focuses on the unsolved criminal cases, such as murder, fraud or kidnapping. "The program also presents itself as a service provider for those victimized due to the actions of others. From time to time, the producers of the program collaborate with the police authorities to find missing babies, children, teenager and even adults" (Erol Işık and Yaman, 2017: 73).

According to Kazaz and Bayar (2019: 187) the programs such as *Balçişek İltar ile Olay Yeri* (Crime Scene with Balçişek İltar, 2017), *Gerçeğin Peşinde* (After the Truth with Serap Ezgü, 2017), and *Müğe Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* (Sweet and Sour with Müğe Anlı, 2008) resemble court shows in global television programs. The reason

they resemble court shows is that they mimic the court-room format with discussion-based editing (Kazaz and Bayar, 2019: 187). Also, in these programs, there are lawyers, psychologists and sometimes forensic experts are invited. For instance, in the *MATS* case, the participants are victims, relatives of the victims, witnesses, eye-witnesses. Along with participants, there is a psychiatrist; Prof. Dr. Arif Verimli, a forensic scientist; Prof. Dr. Mehmet Şevki Sözen and attorney; Rahmi Özkan is present in every episode. Also, reporters sent to the crime scenes and live videos broadcasted from the scene. *MATS* is a hybrid reality crime program. While this program has several elements of reality crime programs, it also contains elements from court shows as well.

### **The Case of "Palu Family"**

We will analyze the case of Palu Ailesi (Palu Family) and discuss the format of the program *Müge Anlı ile Tath Sert* within this case. We have chosen the case of Palu Ailesi (Palu Family) to study in this article. The first reason is that this case which involved, murder, sexual abuse, family violence, and several other issues that have happened in a single family was closed by Müge Anlı and her team. The second reason is, this case was so violent and striking that among many cases Müge Anlı took in hand, this specific one was known throughout the country. "This is not only a reality show, but this is also the visual example of all problems we deal with our country's legal system" wrote Deniz Zeyrek who is a journalist of a local newspaper in Turkey. We will analyze the evidence that Müge Anlı revealed on the show, and also discuss the *MATS*' format along with it. The participation of the members of Palu Family in the *MATS* and the interrogation by the host constitute the informative and investigate side of the program.

Among the family members, İsa Palu, son of Harun and Havva Palu, called the program to report that her sister Meryem Tahnal and her daughter Melike Tahnal is missing for ten years. After the prior notice of İsa Palu, Müge Anlı started her investigation process by inviting the victim's relatives, witnesses, and suspects to the program. The Palu Family attended to *MATS* on 21 December 2018 for the first time till 9 January 2019. Harun and Havva Palu have five children respectively; Fatih, İsa, Emine, Ayşe Melek, and Meryem. The first family members that appeared on the program were mother Havva Palu, and her two sons, İsa Palu and Fatih Palu. They claimed that Meryem Tahnal and Melike Tahnal are missing, and they also claimed that they do not know what happened to them. The first evidence of Müge Anlı was the testimony of Havva Palu. Havva Palu testified to police in 2011 that her son-in-law Tuncer Ustael caused the death of her daughter Meryem Tahnal and her grand-daughter Melike Tahnal. However, on *MATS* when Müge Anlı confronted Havva Palu about her testimony, she refused it.

Along with Müge Anlı, Prof. Dr. Arif Verimli, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Şevki Sözen, and Rahmi Özkan get involved in the process and started asking questions to the participants. As we have mentioned earlier, *MATS* has as a reality crime program has elements of court show format. Court shows in global television

typically portray small claims court cases, produced in a simulation of a small courtroom inside of a television studio. The genre began in radio broadcasting in the 1930s and moved to television in the late 1940s, beginning with such TV shows *Court of Current Issues* (1948), *Your Witness* (1949), *Famous Jury Trials* (1949) (Murray and Ouellette, 2004: 227). The Turkish television did not adapt this format directly. From 2000s the reality crime programs have court room-like feature. To be specific, in *MATS* alongside with the host Müge Anlı, lawyers, psychologists and forensic experts are part of the investigation process. These individuals can judge and debate with the participants in order to solve the crime.

Along with Müge Anlı's investigation, other guests have their turn for commenting on the case related to their professions as well. For instance, Prof. Dr. Arif Verimli as in the psychiatrist role in this program explained the situation as a collective delirium. He speculated that what Palu family experiencing is a serious case of irregularity in their brain. That is why the members who lived with Tuncer Ustael are under the influence of him and they do not believe any factual events. The reason is that Tuncer Ustael declared himself as hodja and took control of this family. Thus, the guests who are part of Müge Anlı's team in this program claim to approach to the case "scientifically".

Müge Anlı sends her team to investigate the area because many witnesses accused Tuncer Ustael of burying Meryem Tahnal in this area. Also, she sent out reporters the house they used to live in, because in *MATS* "The reporters go the scene of the incident to investigate the case or talk with other witnesses" (Erol Işık and Yaman, 2017: 73). Later police officers and other local personalities got involved in this investigation. They continued their investigation in the area in Kocaeli with the help of police officers, local authorities and dug this area to be able to find Meryem Tahnal's dead body. This activity in the program resembles the format defined by Cavender and Fishman, actual footage of police in action. In this format, "the audience sees and hears what the police see and hear. While this approach is touted as "the real thing," the programs are edited to air the most action-packed sequences (Cavender and Fishman, 1998: 4). With the localization of this format in Turkish television caused collaboration of police force and *MATS* and resulted with the footages of police forces wandering in the fields to locate a body or evidence.

Many of their neighbors of the family called the program and reported that there are violence and abuse within the family. There are several eyewitnesses not only in Istanbul but also in other cities in Turkey. In *MATS* news coordinator Gökhan Bektaş presents himself as a reporter. He visits crime scenes, victim's family houses, and locations as reporter and interviews with relatives, police or local authorities to help Müge Anlı to solve crimes. This feature of the *MATS* is from global reality crime program format. The vignettes feature interviews with victims, their family and friends, the police, and film and photographs of suspects. Viewers are urged to telephone the police or the program with information about crimes or suspects (Cavender and Fishman, 1998: 4). These video footages are shown during the program by Müge Anlı to share shreds of evidence with the audience.

The case of the Palu Family continued until 9 January 2019. Ranking and rating of MATS during the Palu Family case showed that this case made MATS one of the most watched programs in Turkish television within this period. With the participation of the main suspect, Tuncer Ustael in the program, the rating started to increase. As Table 1 shows that, 9 January 2019 which is the date Tuncer Ustael and other members of the family have been arrested in live broadcast, has the highest rating of this program. This case continued thirteen days with the live broadcast on private channel ATV. The first seven days of the case the ratings of the program were not different than usual. However, after the first week, Müge Anlı and her team found out that the case is not only about murder but also there is violence and abuse present in the family. These issues raised the audience's interest in the case and also in the program. From the eighth days of the case in the program, the rating increased constantly. Even after the family has been arrested on day thirteen, 9 January 2019, the audience kept on watching the program on the fourteenth day, 10 January 2019, for further information.

*Table 1.* The Television Rankings and Ratings of the Palu Family Case during Two Weeks

DAY	DATE	RANK	CHANNEL	RATING	SHARE
1.	21.12.18	6	ATV	4.79	28.26
2.	24.12.18	9	ATV	4.27	26.45
3.	25.12.18	6	ATV	4.97	27.13
4.	26.12.18	6	ATV	4.69	26.03
5.	27.12.18	6	ATV	4.94	26.25
6.	28.12.18	8	ATV	4.17	23.63
7.	31.12.18	8	ATV	4.28	22.7
8.	02.01.19	6	ATV	4.73	25.38
9.	03.01.19	5	ATV	4.86	27.36
10.	04.01.19	5	ATV	5.19	28.19
11.	07.01.19	3	ATV	5.92	31.58
12.	08.01.19	3	ATV	6.53	31.99
13.	09.01.19	2	ATV	7.09	34.94
14.	10.01.19	2	ATV	5.45	28.48
The New Case	11.01.19	8	ATV	4.78	25.95

Source: <https://www.medyaradar.com/rejting-sonuclari/21-aralik-2018>.

According to the Turkish BBC website, the discussed topics in the program were accepted as a warning by Kocaeli Chief Public Prosecutors Office. Afterward, the Office has compiled a file of accusations and opened an investigation towards the family. Family's five members in their house in Kocaeli, Tuncer Ustael and his wife Emine Ustael in Istanbul was taken under police supervision during the live broadcast of the program on 9 January 2019. Later the members of the Palu family, which are the mother Havva Palu, her sons Fatih and İsa and her daughter Ayşe, were arrested after the trial they were condemned with. However, the father Harun Palu was released. Alongside these names, Tuncer Ustael and his wife Emine Ustael were also arrested. A written statement by Kocaeli Chief Public

Prosecutors Office states that the arrested six names are arrested under the accusation of murder in the first degree. These members are; Havva Palu, İsa Palu, Fatih Palu, Ayşe Melek Palu, Tuncer Ustael and Emine Ustael. The statement of the Chief Prosecutor Office mentioned that the research for the bodies of mother Meryem Tahnal and her daughter Melike Tahnal failed. The evidence of the murder of mother Meryem Tahnal and her daughter Melike Tahnal were sent to Sakarya Ferizli Chief Public Prosecutor's office for further investigation. There are several accusations toward Tuncer Ustael for sexual abuse for his own two children Samet Ustael and Zeynep Ustael also two children of Meryem Tahnal; Recep Tayyip Tahnal and Melike Tahnal. A local newspaper website Haberturk.com stated that the story of the Palu family caused awareness throughout the country. Many citizens called out to authorities through social media such as twitter and facebook that they should arrest family members.

### Conclusion

This article revealed and argued the roots and several features of the crime-based reality programs in global television. Then, the localization ways and the process of these types of programs in Turkish television history were researched. Theoretical framework and literature review directed us to approach the article's hypothesis. Thus, many arguments on global and Turkish television history were stated. Then, *MATS*' uniqueness as a hybrid crime-based program and the role of the Palu Family case were examined. For that purpose, the content analysis method was used to define and describe *MATS* through fifteen episodes of the program during the Palu Family case.

The role of the media in the Palu Family case might also suggest that the boundaries between fiction and factual representation of crime are blurred. The case got the attention of Turkish citizens in a way that such a story of crime could be categorized in both reality television and news. The reason is that the case was solved in a television program. This program is in the format of entertainment programming, both serve information and entertainment. By the analysis of the Palu Family case, the specificity of *MATS* is explained with the hybridity comes from mixture of the information and entertainment. Thus, it could be claimed that *MATS* is infotainment. The hybridity of this program derives from the mixture of global reality programming. However, this program found its format on Turkish television. Therefore, the analysis of the *MATS*' unique format within the reality television programs -both local and international ones- could contribute to the television studies due to this divergent and unique format's way of investigating and the broadcasting the criminal cases in a different way from its ancestors. In other words, this program's uniqueness is based on the combination of crime program elements with court shows, talk shows features. As a result, *MATS* has dramatic narratives alongside the content which loops back into news reporting. Therefore, we reached a proper answer to the study's main research question that *Müge Anlı ile Tatlı Sert* could be defined as a contemporary and hybrid Turkish

crime-based reality program that makes *MATS* a unique format in Turkish television.

Moreover, this article revealed how *MATS* hybridizes different types of the crime-based programs and the ways of *MATS*' in the creation of the unique and local format in Turkish television. Besides, the analysis of the Palu Family case proves the success of Müge Anlı as the longest standing host of a crime-based reality program in Turkish television. Despite essential works of Kesirli (2017), Erol Işık and Yaman (2017) and Çelenk (2015; 2011) on Turkish reality television related to the crime content, the numbers of studies on the contemporary reality television formats in Turkish television do not reach considerable amounts. Therefore, the article's contribution to the field becomes essential to open new perspectives for forthcoming researches. By the content analysis on the Palu Family case, *MATS* is defined with its hybrid qualities. This result could broaden an understanding and provide a different perspective on the localization of the global and well-known formats in television studies.

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