

Editors' letter

Volume 63 of *New Perspectives on Turkey* was produced during the extraordinary initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore it tries to grapple with the massive changes that have suddenly enveloped us with three commentaries and a roundtable that span political, economic, historical, and sociological perspectives on the pandemic. The volume includes five research articles on a diverse set of topics from gender politics to the contemporary tourism industry to peasant resistance in the early Republic; we also continue to follow the topic of migration with two research articles.

The lead article by Hüseyin Yener Erköse addresses an understudied topic not only in Turkey but also internationally, namely labor relations in the tourism industry. Through an ethnography of two holiday villages on Turkey's southern coast, the article focuses on the dark side of labor control in this service-intensive sector. Although aesthetic labor, emotional labor, and hybrid labor control mechanisms are prevalent in the tourism sector, intensive international competition has also accentuated simple labor control, harking back to the market despotism of nineteenth-century factories in Europe. The article has become even more pertinent as the COVID-19 pandemic – which has sharply reduced international travel as of the summer of 2020 – throws the future of the tourism sector, especially the “all-inclusive” variety discussed in this paper as well as the labor control mechanisms witnessed therein, into uncertainty.

The second article in this volume turns our attention to migration management, particularly services for Syrian refugees in Turkey. Maissam Nimer, through a study on language education for adult refugees, demonstrates the increasing control of the state over civil society organizations. The Turkish state not only attempts to channel funds to organizations that are ideologically closer to it, but also delegates some functions that we would normally associate with public authorities to civil society. An important consequence of this is that there are no long-term and stable integration policies or projects targeting Syrian refugees.

Yaşar Tolga Cora's article is also about migration, but through a historical lens. Thanks to a large sociological literature we know a lot about the role of homeland associations for the integration of internal migrants to urban life, but we know little about their presence in earlier periods. Cora's focus is on Armenian homeland associations in Istanbul in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He discusses the cultural and economic goals of these associations in their home regions. He also investigates the durability of these

institutions through the political upheavals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In particular, Cora shows that homeland associations in the post-1915 period served as information networks between genocide survivors and their communities.

The next article is also a historical study. Murat Metinsoy's contribution to this volume taps into archival documents and studies everyday forms of resistance of the Anatolian peasantry to the state's effort to finance early Republican modernization through heavy agricultural tax burdens. It introduces a new perspective on Republican history by documenting the success of the Anatolian peasants in negotiating the cost of Turkish modernization, with the early Republican state resulting in one of the major hindrances before state-building efforts in the 1920s and 1930s.

Betül Yazar's article proposes to analyze the ruling Justice and Development Party's (AKP) turn to authoritarianism from the perspective of its gender politics. She problematizes an oft-expressed argument among feminist scholars that the recent changes in the AKP's gender politics have been in tandem with an accentuation of its patriarchal power. Her article aims to shed light into the complex process of the transformation of the AKP's gender politics through analyzing first the emergence of neoliberal feminism as a new subjective position, and later the modification of this official politics on women's issue and the emergence of neoconservative feminism, which has occurred parallel with the rising authoritarianism of the ruling party.

As already mentioned, we felt to need to include present scholarly reflections on the ongoing pandemic that has thrown our lives into disarray since the beginning of 2020 and has become the main issue on our minds. We offer a roundtable and three commentaries covering different aspects of the post-COVID-19 world in which we suddenly found ourselves.

The roundtable, which took place virtually due to the lockdown, brings together Ayşe Buğra, Refet Gürkaynak, Çağlar Keyder, Ravi Arvind Palat, and Şevket Pamuk for a discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from a political economy perspective. As editors, we posed three rounds of questions to them on the immediate and medium-term impact of the pandemic on the international political economic order. Although their responses had different emphases, several themes stand out from the debate. One is about how states will respond to demands for redistribution at a time when the global economy has gone into crisis. A related theme was the inequalities within and between states which the pandemic has deepened. Of course, the global economic crisis and the inequalities that it has triggered prompts the question of whether there will be international responses to it. While some participants pointed to comparable episodes in the history of international relations, such as the post-World War II period, for precedents of global

leadership and multilateral cooperation, others underlined the specter of intensified protectionism. In the end, participants thought that whether the world economy could evolve into something better than what we had before the pandemic, or something worse, would also depend on collective action and social movements.

Finally, we have three commentaries in this volume addressing issues raised by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the first commentary, as editors we draw attention to the ways in which the social sciences could fail or succeed in developing a robust understanding of the role of the non-human structures that constrain and enable human actions as well as of the inequalities generated through the interaction of climatic and pathogenic factors and social formations.

The second commentary is by historian Nükhet Varlık, whose main focus of study has been the history of plague, especially as it pertains to the Ottoman Empire. She first discusses biases in the historiography of plague. An important bias is how plague is often erased from history; another one is Orientalist and colonial myths about the origins of plague. Then, Varlık gives the reader a glimpse into the significance of the Second Plague Pandemic in Ottoman history, both in terms of how the Ottomans battled the pathogen, and in turn how that battle shaped the building of certain institutions in the empire.

Tuba İ. Ağartan, in the third commentary in this volume, addresses the response of health systems to the COVID-19 pandemic at local, national, and global levels. Ağartan explores the role of comparative thinking in the public policy literature and health systems research. In particular, she is interested in whether the spread of COVID-19 creates opportunities for policy learning and diffusion for national health systems.

This volume also includes five book reviews as well as a review article on studies on the political regime and transformations thereof in Turkey. Yunus Sözen's review shows that not only the political regime, but also studies on it, can be periodized into different waves. All in all, volume 63 of *New Perspectives on Turkey* brings together rigorous research on subjects ranging from labor control to migration management, tax revolts, and feminisms, as well as intuitive insights from scholars specializing in subjects such as health policy, the history of pandemics, social policy, and political economy regarding what futures await us in the post-COVID-19 world.

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