

## Editors' letter

The fall 2017 issue of *New Perspectives on Turkey* brings together four articles from diverse fields and on diverse topics, such as the sociology of food production, analysis of Turkey's trade deficits from the perspective of technology, changing notions of mothering in the face of anxieties about health, and a critical analysis of the classification of Turkey's welfare system.

In her article based on a qualitative study of olive oil production in the northern Aegean region, Derya Nizam argues that integration with global olive oil commodity chains has reduced the economic viability of traditional methods of olive production. Producers in this region have therefore sought to use the geographical indication (GI) for Ayvalik olive oil in order to disarticulate themselves from conventional commodity chains and link up instead with GI chains, which they hope will earn them a higher share of the added value created by the olive oil trade. Nonetheless, the broader structure of the international olive oil trade puts Turkish exports at a disadvantage in that Turkish olive oil is still not a global brand.

The next article also addresses Turkish exports, but this time from the perspective of technology. In the article, Aylin Ege and A. Yavuz Ege carry out an economic analysis of Turkey's trade deficit. Their finding is that Turkish products are simply not technologically competitive enough to be able to narrow the trade deficit. Furthermore, the paucity of expenditures in the area of research and development makes it unlikely for this deficit to be shored up in the foreseeable future.

İrem Soysal Al's subsequent essay addresses mothers' anxieties about feeding their children in a healthy manner. Whereas many middle-class mothers seek out organic foods for their children, among lower-class mothers there is more of an emphasis on homemade foods. Soysal Al's analysis of her interviews with mothers, as well as of comments found on mothering blogs, shows that in both cases organic mothering practices are fed by the current atmosphere of food fear and the neoliberal rhetoric of the individualization of risks.

In the issue's final article, Martin Powell and Erdem Yörük conduct a meta-analysis of the scholarly literature on Turkey's welfare system. According to their analysis, the classification of Turkey's welfare practices shows a high degree of diversity, including numerous designations, among them "eclectic social security regime," "successful informal security regime," "Southern European or Mediterranean," "inegalitarian corporatist," "minimalist welfare state," "residual," "productive plus" regime, and "egalitarian corporatist system."

The authors hint that the lack of a scholarly consensus concerning Turkey's welfare model might, in part, result from the fact that, as is indicated by empirical data, Turkey's welfare regime seems in recent times to have been transformed from a corporatist/Southern European model into a new model that exemplifies characteristics of both liberal and social democratic models. The article's analysis shows that, thus far, the scholarship on Turkey has not considered the possibility that the Turkish welfare regime is changing in such a direction.

This issue also features a commentary by Ronald Grigor Suny in which he sheds light on our contemporary political condition, which is marked by rising populist and authoritarian regimes, the folding back of social rights, and increasing racial and ethnic conflicts. Suny's comprehensive essay reminds us that democracy is a work in progress, and argues that it has had a difficult, often troubled, and ultimately rather short history. Yet even as he emphasizes the fragility of democracy, he offers an optimistic perspective that invites us to continue to struggle in order to preserve, enhance, and recreate it.

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