

## EDITORS' LETTER

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### Introduction

*New Perspectives on Turkey's* issue number 66 features a special dossier on women's care burden, three independent articles, and a commentary. The special dossier on care work and women's disproportionate share in it covers issues whose importance has been brought home once more since the pandemic. The independent articles are also part of ongoing scholarly debates in Turkey. As we marked with a commentary by Erol Yildiz in issue number 65, 2021 was the sixtieth anniversary of the labor migration agreement between Turkey and Germany. While Turkey itself has become a migration country, migration to Europe is ongoing and continues to be a topic of scholarly discussion. Another issue that deserves scholarly attention in Turkey is the mushrooming of mega development projects. The building of mega projects means, among other things, the extravagant expenditure of public funds, which has drained the Turkish economy in recent years. That brings us to another current debate, namely the fragility and mismanagement of the Turkish economy, which has culminated in a currency crisis at the end of 2021. This issue also includes an article on literary studies. In this letter, we provide an overview of how these topics are treated in this issue of the journal.

The special dossier guest edited by Saniye Dedeoğlu offers articles that focus on different aspects of women's care burden in Turkey. Dedeoğlu puts these into a conceptual context in her editor's introduction, by situating Turkey within different care models and emphasizing that the welfare regime and the state's role in regulating care have had a deep impact on both women's care burden and their employment outcomes.

Çisel Ekiz Gökmen's article delves into the relationship between women's care burden and employment prospects and status. In her statistical analysis using the 2014–2015 Time Use Survey of TURKSTAT, she shows that the time spent by women caring for dependent household members and access to care services are the most important factors influencing women's employment probability. Accordingly, both informal and formal child-care services increase women's employment. Also, access to institutional care services enable women to transition from part-time to full-time jobs, and from unskilled to professional jobs.

The next article in the special dossier by Hayriye Özgül Özkan Değirmenci is on the motherhood wage penalty. While the article states that in Turkey women with

children earn 21.3 percent less than those who do not have children, it goes further and shows which group of mothers is more affected. While the wage penalty does not exist for mothers employed in the public sector, women in the private sector, especially young and university-educated mothers, suffer the greatest wage losses. Put differently, the article shows that the gross penalty estimate of 21.3 percent is misleading when broken down by age, education, and the public and private sectors, and it establishes the vulnerability of highly educated young mothers in the private sector.

Reyhan Atasü Topcuoğlu's article is the third in this special dossier and it is about the "distorted" commodification of care in Turkey, with a focus on disability. She shows how the limited welfare state, large shadow economy, patriarchal backlash, Islamization, and neoliberalism interact in the construction of the care regime in Turkey. She conceptualizes the outcome as distorted commodification of care. Her article also provides examples from long-term disability care, which is characterized by the outsourcing of disability services to for-profit private companies and the introduction of a cash-for-care policy.

Finally, Özge İzdeş Terkoğlu and Emel Memiş focus on the impact of elderly care on the "sandwiched generation" of women who encounter the care needs of their elderly as they continue to care for their children. Their article investigates whether and how caring responsibilities can be associated with the caregivers' economic participation, where the retreat from institutional provisioning of elderly care services is concealed within a neoconservative family-oriented rhetoric. Using TURKSTAT's 2014–2015 Time Use Survey, they analyze the relationship between informal elderly care provision and employment hours, taking into account the potential impact of providing elderly care on labor force participation, focusing on the sandwiched generation of women.

We also feature three independent articles in this issue. Meltem Gürle's article is on coming-of-age stories in Irish and Turkish literatures written in the past two decades. This article argues that these child or adolescent characters have shared qualities such as playfulness, self-experimentation, and messianic idealism, and resist the linear structure of the *bildungsroman* and the corresponding model of progress. Contemporary Turkish and Irish novels open a new terrain of possibilities that offer liberation from the poverty of experience Agamben attributes to modern society. Gürle suggests that Ireland and Turkey, being "infantilized nations," are at an advantage in playfully engaging with new forms of resistance, where true experience becomes accessible.

Our next article by Selda Dudu and Teresa Rojo examines Turkish migration to the European Union (EU) between 2008 and 2018. By focusing only on Turkish newcomers to the EU (rather than migrant stocks), and using data provided by the OECD, Eurostat, and the World Bank, they show that mostly security-based and social determinants (specifically social networks and a demand for democracy) attract Turkish newcomers to EU-28 destinations.

In our final research article, Deniz Sert and Umut Kuruüzüm explore the impact of a mega development project—the Osman Gazi Bridge—on material change and popular imagination about the future. They argue that while the bridge, which connects İstanbul to the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara, created a colossal material change that could be observed by everyone, it animated an imagined

post-industrial transition and inclusive development in the industrial town of Dilovası. While the dream of a better future serves as a medium for the industrial town's underprivileged inhabitants to socialize under their current conditions, it also fuels potential future resistance, if imagination remains lacking in the ability to transform realities.

The issue includes a very timely and important commentary by Fikret Şenses which dissects the currency crisis in the Turkish economy between September and December 2021. A lot has been said about the crisis in the popular media, but Şenses provides the reader with a detailed analytical account of what happened during the "long and bitter" fall (or perhaps Fall). He first identifies the structural reasons, external dynamics, and political factors behind the crisis. Then he describes the responses of the government, the business community, labor, and mass media to the crisis, the combination of which did not help to alleviate it. Discussing what lies ahead, Şenses warns about high inflation, low growth, lack of investment, and distributional problems. While he emphasizes the need for a strong industrial policy to overcome the middle-income trap in the medium term, he also warns that this cannot happen without political will.

Finally, in this issue we also feature five book reviews on Ottoman history, and politics in Turkey and Northern Cyprus.

While the end of the pandemic seems to have finally appeared in the horizon, this issue comes out in the thick of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and a deepening economic and political crisis in Turkey. In the midst of this flux, we are happy to contribute to the scholarly discussions on women's care burden, neoliberal mega projects, literary debates, migration, and the currency crisis in Turkey.