

## Editors' Letter

*New Perspectives on Turkey's* volume 62 brings together five articles on a variety of topics: the political subjectivity of Alevi youth, the transformation of the party system in Turkey, food waste in Istanbul, the politics of heritage, and the self-distinguishing of Islamic politics from other right-wing political parties in the 1970s. But despite being on very different topics, actors, and periods, there is a common thread among four of the articles, which all deal with diverse aspects of space and identity formation.

In the opening article, entitled "Visibility through Invisibility: Spatialized Political Subjectivities of Alevi Youth," Tolga Özata offers a discussion on the ways in which space and identity are entangled. He shows us how the young people in Okmeydanı, a central neighborhood in İstanbul that has come to be marked by left-wing, revolutionary politics, have negotiated their subjectivities at the intersection of the revolutionary past of the neighborhood, their Alevi family backgrounds, and violent encounters with the state.

Düzgün and Şenol Arslantaş, in their article entitled "Keeping Power through Opposition: Party System Change in Turkey," conduct a thorough analysis of the party system in Turkey since the establishment of the Republic using the classification proposed by Giovanni Sartori. Their investigation builds on two criteria: the number of parties and the spatial distance between the parties. Using party programs, the authors identify the ideological distance between the parties and how each defines its "identity" against the others. The findings not only confirm the level of polarization in the party system, but more importantly they highlight the role of the opposition in prolonging conservative, one-party rule. The authors argue that the opposition in Turkey has been fragmented and "bilateral," meaning that opposition parties are often more antagonistic toward each other rather than toward the government.

The third article investigates food banks in İstanbul not in terms of the usual focus of the literature on food donation – that is, as a remedy for food insecurity – but rather in terms of their role in contributing to food waste. In her essay entitled "Wasteful or Sensible? Donor Imageries in İstanbul's Food Banks," Candan Türkkkan collects the views of food bank staff on food donors, ranging from "socially aware citizens" and "environmentally conscious entrepreneurs" to "prodigal consumers." She emphasizes that food bank staff perceive donors as individuals, whereas in fact the donors of food banks are usually agro-food processors and distributors rather than charitable people. Türkkkan's argument is that this perspective diverts attention from discussing

why waste is generated in the food system in the first place, leading to a lopsided view of both the politics of waste and the politics of food.

We have another article in this issue on the productive relationship of space, history, and identity. In "The Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities and its Role in the Appropriation of İstanbul's Diverse Heritage as National Heritage (1939–1953)," Pınar Aykaç explores how pre-Republican, that is Ottoman and Byzantine, histories were appropriated, contested, and reformulated in the process of the making of the Turkish national identity and national spaces. Aykaç studies the inception of the commemorations of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. She discusses the decisions and negotiations of the Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities, the body responsible for the preparations of the 500th anniversary of this historical event in 1953, regarding which spaces and structures were to be saved and celebrated and which were not going to be preserved. Her analysis also enables us to contextualize the increasingly politically significant celebrations of the "conquest" since the 1990s.

The final article, entitled "Turkey's EEC Membership as a Canvas of Struggle for Identity: The NSP versus the JP," also explores the issue of space and identity, this time in the process of the formation of identities of right-wing Turkish political parties. Serra Can argues that the different positions that the center-right political parties adopted towards Turkey's European Economic Commission (EEC) membership in the 1970s allowed Islamist political parties to differentiate their identity from other conservative parties and carved out a space for the Islamic right in Turkish politics. All of the essays in this volume of *New Perspectives on Turkey* offer fresh insights into Turkish politics, not only the formal politics of the party system but also the politics of identity, food, and heritage.

In closing our letter for volume no. 62, we would like to announce the bi-annual "best paper award" for young scholars that *New Perspectives on Turkey* is initiating this year. The theme for 2020 is climate change. We will consider submissions from any field of social science addressing contemporary or historical aspects of climate change focusing on or with a comparative perspective that includes Turkey and the Middle East. We hope that the competition for the best paper award will contribute to our goal of encouraging and supporting innovative and original research in the social sciences.

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