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EDITOR INTRODUCTION

Editors' Introduction: Fall 2026

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The Fall 2026 issue of *New Perspectives on Turkey* appears at a moment when Turkey's already harsh political climate continues to be shaped by an even more perilous regional and global conjuncture. Russia's continuing war against Ukraine and the war involving Iran, Israel, and the United States unfold alongside wider economic and political instability, deepening the uncertainties through which societies are living. On the domestic front, the decades-long armed conflict in the Kurdish region appears to be reaching a definitive conclusion through a formal agreement and new legislation, a profoundly consequential process poised to reshape politics in Turkey. These are difficult and violent processes. The contributions gathered here do not offer a single account of this conjuncture. Across distinct periods, sites, and methodological approaches, they examine the institutions, infrastructures, moral languages, memories, and material relations through which power is organized, contested, and lived in Turkey.

The issue opens by tracing the deeper historical formation of the authoritarian present. Onur Kalkan's article revisits the politics of religious education from the 1940s to 1971. Rather than treating its postwar expansion simply as a reaction against secularization, Kalkan situates it within a longer history of state involvement in moral education and within the changing forms of political legitimacy that followed World War II. The article shows how secular and center-right actors forged a modern conservative consensus in which religious education became an instrument of moral and civic formation, shaped by mass education, populism, and anti-communism.

Questions of history, cultural power, and authoritarianism continue in Kerem Öktem's analysis of two major centennial exhibitions held in İstanbul in 2023 and 2024. The exhibitions offer sharply different Islamist–authoritarian and liberal–Kemalist renderings of the Turkish Republic. Yet, based on fieldwork, curator interviews, and audience responses, Öktem finds a convergence in their state-centric and exclusionary modes of representing the past. The article argues that this convergence illuminates the autocratization of the cultural field, in which history becomes spectacle either in triumphalist or nostalgic forms rather than a space for plural and critical engagement.

From the cultural field, the issue moves to the infrastructural and regulatory conditions underlying Turkey's networked authoritarianism. Zeyno Ustun's cartographic ethnography of media ownership, regulatory centralization, and the expert

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discourse surrounding the Internet Conferences of Turkey (INET-TR) challenges accounts that locate authoritarian consolidation primarily in the aftermath of the Gezi resistance. The article instead traces a longer, slower process in which privatization, market concentration, legal control, and institutional standardization created the conditions for increasingly centralized management of domestic information flows without abandoning international connectivity and commercial integration.

Alongside these political transformations, the issue also brings the economic pressures shaping Turkish society into focus. Zeren Tatar Taşpınar and İzak Atiyas revisit labor-productivity growth in Turkey from 1999 to 2023 through an additive decomposition of chain-linked gross domestic product. Their analysis places changes in relative sectoral prices alongside within-sector productivity and labor reallocation, showing how the composition of growth shifted across crisis and non-crisis periods. In particular, the weakening of structural change after 2018 emerges as a key part of the broader slowdown, while sectoral contributions vary sharply across time. Volkan Yilmaz and Anıl Gürbüztürk examine distributive justice preferences across education, healthcare, old-age pensions, and unemployment insurance using an original nationwide survey. They find strong support for equality in three of these policy areas, while equity is favored in pensions, and propose the concept of "distrustful egalitarianism" to capture egalitarian preferences shaped by low trust in official allocation mechanisms as much as by ideological commitment.

These structural pressures also shape more intimate and everyday forms of governance. Two articles address gendered governance, migration, and the limits of recognition and solidarity. Based on interviews with women diagnosed with human papillomavirus (HPV), Ceren Alkan examines how the absence of public vaccine coverage, conservative sexual norms, and clinical practices place the burdens of prevention, care, disclosure, and moral judgment disproportionately on women. The article shows that individual resources do not dissolve the stigma and access barriers surrounding HPV, and argues for non-moralizing, confidential, and partner-inclusive prevention. Burak Özçetin analyzes 2,285 migration-related news items published in eight national newspapers between 2011 and 2020, alongside a close reading of positive and humanitarian stories. He identifies recurring figures of the "good refugee" in the form of the vulnerable woman or child, the heroic young man, and the talented or entrepreneurial refugee, and shows how these ostensibly humanizing portrayals can reproduce conditional recognition while affirming a Turkish national self-image of compassion and sovereignty.

Sinem Bal continues this inquiry through feminist praxis and refugee women. Drawing on interviews with feminist- and migrant-led non-governmental organizations, Bal examines how short-term, humanitarian, and project-funded forms of engagement can delimit more collective forms of solidarity. Rather than presenting this as a final judgment on feminist politics, the article uses the incorporation of refugee women as a lens through which the tensions between emancipatory aspirations, intersecting inequalities, and governance frameworks become visible.

The ninth article of this collection turns to an earlier historical moment of minority political mobilization. Besim Can Zirh offers a retrospective reading of *Yurtseverler Birliği*, an Alevi political journal published in Berlin from 1982 to 1989. Through its nine issues, Zirh reconstructs the longer transformation that preceded

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the Alevi Revival commonly associated with Turkey in the early 1990s. The article shows how the strategy of making Alevism visible became increasingly central in Europe, and suggests that the 1990 Alevi Manifesto and the first Alevi Culture Week in Germany should be understood as outcomes of an already developing political and intellectual context.

Before turning to this issue's special dossier, we take stock of a field increasingly central to debates on Turkey's future. The issue includes Daniela Kızıldağ, Sinan Erensü, and Sena Akkoç's systematic assessment of environmental studies on Turkey between 2013 and 2023. Drawing on a dataset of journal articles and book chapters, manual coding, and interviews with scholars, the authors trace the substantial growth of the field while also identifying its uneven institutional and methodological development. Climate change, sustainability, and energy have become central themes, yet research remains concentrated in a limited number of universities and disciplinary perspectives. Their article asks whether the field of environmental studies on Turkey is consolidating or continuing as a set of fragmented conversations, and calls attention to the place of critical, justice-oriented, and more-than-human approaches within it.

This mapping of the field sets the stage for the issue's special dossier,[1] which turns to one of environmental studies' most pressing objects: the transformation of agriculture itself. At the center of this issue is the Special dossier, "Rethinking Agriculture through Product-Specific Commodity Chains," prepared by guest editors Derya Nizam, M. Fatih Tatari, and Zafer Yenal. The dossier approaches agrarian transformation in Turkey through the material and social specificity of cheese, avocados, hazelnuts, sweet cherries, and farmed fish. Its contributions bring political economy, political ecology, and science and technology studies into conversation to examine how labor, ecological conditions, knowledge, state institutions, corporate strategies, and producer organization shape the uneven incorporation of people, places, and products into commodity chains. By treating disarticulation and re-articulation not as simple opposites but as contested and recursive processes, the dossier provides a richly grounded account of contemporary agrarian change. Its interview and review essay extend this perspective by reflecting on the analytical value of a commodity-centered approach and on the possibilities of a more-than-human field of critical agrarian studies.

Finally, the issue includes five book reviews that range across the late Ottoman and Republican periods. Sinan Yıldırmaz reviews Reuben Silverman's *The Rise and Fall of Turkey's Democrat Party: The Cold War and Illiberalism, 1945–60*; Muhammet Dervış Mete considers Valentina Rita Scotti's *Constitutional Law and Politics in Türkiye: From Atatürk to Erdoğan*; Umut Özsu reviews Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky's *Empire of Refugees: North Caucasian Muslims and the Late Ottoman State*; Bahadır Yolcu discusses Abdulhamit Kırmızı's *Empire of Officials: Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Bureaucracy*; and Önder Eren Akgül reviews Mehmet Polatel's *Armenians and Land Disputes in the Ottoman Empire, 1850–1914*. Together, these reviews extend the issue's engagement with state formation, constitutional politics, migration, bureaucracy, property, and the historical making of social and political difference.

[1] Editorial note: Deniz Yükseker, our co-chief editor, was not involved in the editorial processes of this special dossier because of her participation as an author in the dossier.

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As this issue goes to press, the historical and contemporary questions raised across its pages acquire particular urgency. They direct attention not only to dramatic political events, but also to the slower processes through which authority is built, vulnerability distributed, and alternative forms of collective life constrained or sustained. *New Perspectives on Turkey* remains committed to scholarship that takes these processes seriously across disciplines, periods, and scales.

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