


Despite these criticisms, this ethnography is an impressive attempt to tackle layers of violence, suffering, and memory while focusing on the everyday experiences of Kurds, Turks, and Syrians. The book's success lies in years of fieldwork that offers a deep and thick understanding of violent relations historically and spatially. Thanks to Biner, one can imagine the stone buildings, lands planted with grapes or cotton, and the yellowish dirt hiding the stories of pain while reading the book. It is an ethnography of suffering that conveys pain, fear, anger, disappointment, and hope to the reader in a complete sense.

Selin Sayin 

Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey

Email: ssayin20@ku.edu.tr

Özlem Altan-Olcay and Evren Balta, *The American Passport in Turkey: National Citizenship in the Age of Transnationalism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020.

doi:[10.1017/npt.2022.27](https://doi.org/10.1017/npt.2022.27)

What compels individuals to stay in, move away from, or return to the countries where they were born? What does citizenship signify for them, politically, culturally, and emotionally, beyond the borders of the nation-state? How do they experience their “natural born” and “acquired” citizenships in transnational spaces? *The American Passport in Turkey: National Citizenship in the Age of Transnationalism* by Özlem Altan-Olcay and Evren Balta is a thoughtful and instructive engagement with these questions. Drawing on more than a hundred semistructured interviews with people who describe how they imagine and experience US citizenship in Turkey, the authors draw a vivid portrait of the aspirations and doubts associated with citizenship on the move.

The book starts with an introductory chapter that delineates “hierarchies of citizenship,” detailing inequalities between citizenship regimes and various combinations of subject positions. For cosmopolitan and upper middle classes who make up the subjects of the book, “U.S. ‘soft’ power actually continues to work, not only through unequal processes of globalized cultural production and dissemination, but also by offering a globally privileged citizenship and the feeling of security associated with it *despite* increasingly negative perceptions of the U.S. government” (p. 17). By engaging with scholars of citizenship and migration, the authors make the case for studying transnational imaginaries of America to understand what the United States means and signifies, how it is understood and experienced beyond its borders, and the transformations of the institution of citizenship more broadly.

Chapter 1 opens by acknowledging increasing anti-American sentiment and resentment of US foreign policy in Turkey in the last two decades, alongside the persistent desire to work, live, and study there. To address this puzzle, the authors sketch a historical overview of the relationship between the United States and Turkey by

focusing on three different periods, starting with late-nineteenth-century interactions between the United States and the Ottoman Empire until World War I, which were characterized by missionary and educational activities. The second period, the interwar and Cold War years, saw the arrival of developmental experts and corporations, alongside dreams to transform Turkey into a “little America” starting in the 1950s. The 1960s and 1970s were marked by leftist and student protests against incidents like the Cuban missile crisis and the arrival of the US Sixth Fleet in the Bosphorus. The third period, “post-1980s,” has been characterized by neoliberalism and market liberalization, which created new opportunities for affluent urban groups, such as an increasingly privatized education system at home that adopted American models and the possibility of pursuing dual citizenship, which has been allowed in Turkey since 1981. After this sweeping overview, the remaining chapters of the book switch to a more textured analysis to “explore America through the personal biographies of people who desire or have access to the status of U.S. citizenship outside of the United States, in Turkey” (p. 66).

Chapter 2 draws on interviews that the authors conducted with people from Turkey who obtain US citizenship for their children by giving birth in the United States. The interviewees, most of whom are mothers, belong to the “post-1980s,” educated, secular, upper middle, and upper income groups. When asked why they take considerable medical risks and financial burdens to undertake this journey, amid right-wing paranoia around “anchor babies” in the United States, they cite their worries and fears about the AKP government’s constant changes to the national education system and its infringements on women’s rights. Given their sense that the current government is challenging their “self-defined identities as modern, Western and secular citizens of (and women in) Turkey,” the authors argue, these women make strategic calculations to navigate what they perceive as the uncertainties of a “risk society” (pp. 75, 81). In addition to calculations about a secure place for their children to escape in case of problems in Turkey, this group also assigns symbolic values to the United States by depicting it as a “space of freedom” and “civilized attitude” (p. 87). Still, many of the respondents describe raising their children as “Turkish,” with corresponding values and as citizens; one mother describes how she still tears up when the Turkish national anthem plays (p. 89). Through these vivid anecdotes, Altan-Olcay and Balta scrupulously mine their interview material and demonstrate the flexibility of citizenship, which is better conceived “as a ‘constellation’ in which individuals can be linked to several political entities at the same time” (p. 91).

Chapter 3 turns to US citizens and Turkish-American citizens who live in Turkey, thus complicating the notions of risk and security that were outlined in the previous chapter. The rich set of interviewees in this group include Americans working in private English-language schools and in multinational corporations, as well as those who moved to Turkey through marriage. In this chapter, too, the authors document flexible, complex, and contradictory attitudes toward citizenship and residence in the two countries. Many Americans in Turkey describe their lives in Turkey “as freer, protected, and upwardly mobile in terms of status, income, and career trajectories,” also noting their ability to escape social and gendered conventions (p. 97). Inverting the previous chapter’s intergenerational dynamics about imagining better futures for their children, the interviewees share their anxieties about raising children in contexts where they did not grow up, at the same time as they are able to “eschew the negative connotations of US foreign policy as individuals” (p. 110). In this chapter, Altan-Olcay and Balta show how

the relative ease with which Americans shift between tourist visas, residence, and work permits is a testament to unequal and multiple regimes of mobility, as well as to the continuing power and privileges associated with nation-state-based citizenship and the enduring power of the “American dream” abroad, even if it is increasingly impossible for most in the United States (pp. 101, 126).

Chapter 4 is about Turkish people who obtained US citizenship and residence permits through well-paying jobs or marriage but decided to return to Turkey. As with the subjects of chapter 2, this group consists of transnationalized professionals who benefited from policies of neoliberalism and the relaxation of immigration regimes from the 1980s onward. Their vacillating attachments to citizenship in both countries and their calculations about navigating “risk society” also resonate with the interviewees of the previous chapters. Many made the decision to return citing the difficulty of raising children without social support systems and networks in the United States. Working and retirement options also seemed less precarious in Turkey, although the political repression and economic instability of recent years made them appreciate how “having U.S. citizenship would give them, at the very least, a way out” (p. 138). The chapter once again demonstrates the desires and values associated with each place, while also documenting the shifting meanings of home and citizenship for the people who were interviewed.

Altan-Olcay and Balta conclude *The American Passport in Turkey* with a discussion of the transformations in Turkish politics and Turkey-US relations, and ask: “What can different citizenships do for people who feel threatened by macro-level changes beyond their control and who want to retain geographical and upward mobility, who want to ensure their children’s future, and so on?” (p. 168). As they persuasively demonstrate throughout the book, answering this question requires studying citizenship through everyday practices, narratives, and imaginaries that speak to the porosity of the boundaries between the national and the transnational.

The authors’ ability to capture the affective dimensions of citizenship is illuminating as they recount their interviewees’ experiences of longing, doubt, anxiety, dreams, expectations, disappointments, and their sense of present and future security and lack thereof. As affect studies scholars have argued, moods and emotions, such as the ones that propel and reverse migration or stop it in its tracks in this book, have material underpinnings, including resources, opportunities, political and economic constraints and openings, all of which are unevenly distributed. The book’s attention to mostly affluent, mobile, and secular professionals ends up setting aside larger and structural questions about who gets to leave (or return) and who has to stay behind. And while the book does a fantastic job of documenting the compromises entailed in so-called integration into Turkish and American societies, it alludes to but does not quite investigate how these difficulties are compounded by intense racial, ethnic, and other types of discrimination in both places.

The American Passport in Turkey is a meticulous and compelling account of the lived experience of transnational citizenship; Altan-Olcay and Balta carefully listen to and chronicle their interviewees’ responses about who (or what) they are returning to and who (or what) they have left behind. On a personal note, I finished reading the book during the period between my US naturalization ceremony and the arrival of my US passport and really appreciated its insights into the emotional, political, and economic complexities experienced by people who were undertaking similar journeys

with different motivations and circumstances. This book will be of great interest to scholars and students of citizenship, migration, transnationalism, Turkey, and the United States.

Begüm Adalet 

Cornell University, Ithaca, NY

Email: ba375@cornell.edu

Erdem Yörük, *The Politics of the Welfare State in Turkey: How Social Movements and Elite Competition Created a Welfare State*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2022. xvi + 221 pages.

doi:[10.1017/npt.2023.7](https://doi.org/10.1017/npt.2023.7)

Research on welfare politics is still highly skewed towards countries in Western Europe, North America, and Australasia. In the 1990s and 2000s, one exception to this was the once-burgeoning literature on the relationship between developing countries – mostly in Africa and Latin America – and international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Although this literature has advanced our understanding of the internationally imposed limitations on the fiscal sovereignty of developing countries, it has not provided us with a sufficient grasp of the influence of domestic politics on social policy change in these countries. Overall, the domestic politics of welfare in developing countries has long been a “black box.” In the 2010s, however, researchers began paying attention to the politics of social policy in previously understudied countries, including India, Iran, Russia, and Turkey. Erdem Yörük’s *The Politics of the Welfare State in Turkey* is highly relevant in this context. It is also a welcome addition to the growing literature on Turkish welfare politics.

Yörük uses the theory presented by Piven and Cloward in their 1971 book entitled *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare*, which offers an explanation for the emergence and changing scope of poor relief in the United States. The Piven–Cloward thesis characterizes welfare provision as a government response to civil disorder and contends that welfare programs, along with their expansion and contraction, serve broader political and economic goals that are unrelated to welfare. Yörük bases his main hypothesis on Piven and Cloward’s theory and uses the republican history of Turkey – the post-1980s history of the Kurdish question in particular – as a testing ground.

Yörük’s book makes an important empirical contribution. It is based on an original dataset of organized public protests that were chronicled in the Turkish daily newspaper, *Cumhuriyet*. The dataset affords Yörük a rare opportunity to illustrate changes in organized public protests over time; it also allows him to go beyond the often sketchy official statistics on strike activities and bring clarity to anecdote-based accounts of contentious periods in the republican history. Yörük’s conclusion will surprise many scholars of republican history: “The level of grassroots political activism in the neoliberal era has been comparable to the 1970s, the heyday of grassroots