

The American Passport in Turkey: National Citizenship in the Age of Transnationalism

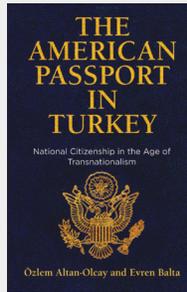
By Özlem Altan-Olcay and Evren Balta

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020, 224 pages, \$27.88, ISBN: 9780812252156

Reviewed by Çiğdem Pekar, Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

What are the values and meanings of U.S. citizenship in an increasingly global world? In their award-winning book *The American Passport in Turkey: National Citizenship in the Age of Transnationalism*, Özlem Altan-Olcay and Evren Balta aim to explore this major question while focusing on the Turkish case.

The authors analyze different “meanings and values” that various actors who all reside in Türkiye and possess or seek to obtain U.S. citizenship attribute to U.S. citizenship (p. 2). Several interconnected questions are also raised in the book such as “What does being a U.S. citizen signify outside the U.S. in contexts shaped by a history of its global power?”, “What transnational values and meanings can be assigned to national citizenship regimes?” and “What do these meanings and ideals indicate for how we perceive American power in particular and citizenship, in general, today?” (p. 169). To answer these questions the authors’ research is based on in-depth interviews with three groups of people over the course of 2012 and 2013 that were all residing in Türkiye. The first group is composed of parents who obtained U.S. citizenship for their children by giving birth in the U.S. The second group is Turkish citizens who have chosen to return to and live in Türkiye after obtaining green cards and U.S. citizenship through naturalization. The third group is U.S. citizens who were born in the U.S. but have settled in Türkiye as adults.



The chapters of the book interactively flow into the next as three groups of people residing in Türkiye exploring experiences with imaginaries of and perceptions of the status of American citizenship. In the first chapter titled “Imagining America in Turkey: A Historical Overview” the authors trace how

American citizenship has become a “coveted status” by examining the evolution of American-Turkish relations over the last 150 years (p. 35). It examines how America’s growth in global political, social, and cultural influence has been filtered via the internal dynamics of Türkiye and has resulted in today’s various definitions of America in Türkiye. “Imagining U.S. Citizenship: Risk Societies and Calculating Mothers” the second chapter of the book, discusses the process by which Turkish individuals living in Türkiye give birth in the U.S. for their children to get U.S. citizenship. Chapter 3 titled “Transnationalized Americans: Stories of Moving Up in the World,” the authors follow the lives of U.S. citizens who were born in the U.S. and moved to Türkiye during their adulthood. Their experiences demonstrate the unforeseen benefits of having U.S. citizenship abroad. In the final chapter of the book which is titled “Returning from an American Dream: Turkish Americans in Turkey,” the authors focus on Turkish actors who have resided in the U.S. for extended periods and have thereby gained a green card or U.S. citizenship. All of the sto-

ries demonstrated by the interviews indicated that in a transnationalizing world, U.S. citizenship is strongly related to the power of the U.S. passport: with this passport comes a type of geographical mobility not available to the rest of the world's population (p. 170). This passport is not simply about mobility; it also improves one's ability to escape unsafe political situations and transfer talents elsewhere during an economic downturn (pp. 170-171).

To analyze the stories told during the interviews, the authors provide a typology that rests on two dimensions: "strategic values" and "symbolic identity-based meanings" assigned to national citizenships (p. 32). Regarding "strategic values" the book argues that, first and foremost, the American passport indicated the prospect of an exit from risk which might be faced in the future. Turkish parents were assured that their children might flee political uncertainty in Türkiye to the U.S. if necessary (p. 92). Furthermore, natural-born citizens of the U.S. also told their stories about escaping the economic risks they faced in the U.S., and their stories mostly revolved around the 2008 crisis when they were able to find jobs and build lives elsewhere with their American citizenship (p. 144). For Turkish-American citizens, they were primarily discussing the mobility opportunity their American citizenship provided, which included the ability to change places of residence in response to macroeconomic and political circumstances (p. 147). Secondly, these exit discourses were part of a larger narrative of cross-border movement. People framed the American passport in terms of the uneven opportunity it provided for foreign travel and easy settlement in practically any place. In the book, the authors explore mobility as a crucial component of global stratification, as well as class strategic value (p. 83). Thirdly, "upward mobility" is asserted as another

strategic value that comes with cross-border mobility (p. 95). According to the authors upward mobility would be traced both in the lives of native-born American citizens, who shared experiences of increased purchasing power and "hanging out with upper-income groups," and Turkish-American citizens who discussed their experiences of enhanced job and business chances in Türkiye, which would have been less likely if they had remained in the U.S. (pp. 112-118).

Regarding "symbolic identity-based meanings" assigned to national citizenships, authors underline that citizenship today is particularly significant in terms of identity disputes as well as shaping disparities of instrumental opportunity outside of the nation-state. They argue that if we view citizenship practices as solely strategic, we can't capture these identity narratives and identity negotiations. As the authors state in the concluding chapter, beyond the limits of nation-states, citizenship plays a "uniquely important role in shaping inequalities and identity negotiations" (p. 174). In this regard, the book successfully intertwines the idea of instrumental citizenship with the identity and belonging aspects of citizenship. Furthermore, it connects these transnational inequities to the specific case of American citizenship and what it indicates about the U.S.' worldwide influence.

The American Passport in Turkey offers readers an in-depth analysis regarding American citizenship's transnational meanings and ideals which are ultimately tied to the country's global dominance. By exploring the concept of the value of U.S. citizenship in Türkiye from different perspectives, the book fills a significant gap in the literature and richly deserves the award it won in 2021; American Sociology Association, Global and Transnational Sociology Section, Best Book by an

International Scholar Award. It is a perfect read for sociology and international relations students and academics, as well as anyone curious about the unequal opportunities that

any national citizenship offers outside of the nation's recognized state borders, or what has been referred to as "inequalities at the transnational level" by the authors (p. 169).

Energy Politics in the MENA Region: From Hydrocarbons to Renewables?

By Valeria Talbot

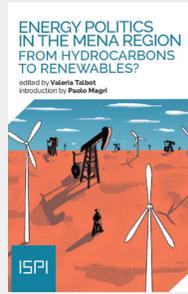
Milan: Ledi Publishing, 2022, 125 pages, €12.00, ISBN: 9788855268233

Reviewed by Mustafa Altıntaş, Qatar University

The book *Energy Politics in the MENA Region: From Hydrocarbons to Renewables?*, edited by Valeria Talbot, brings together well-researched chapters that provide a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the energy landscape in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in response to Europe's energy crisis.

European Union (EU) has come across an energy crisis because of the Russia and Ukraine war. In the short run, the EU must replace gas coming from Russia with another source. In the long run, the EU aims to abandon fossil fuels completely. The significance of this topic extends beyond the EU's energy security, as it also has significant implications for global energy politics. Such a landscape increases the importance of MENA countries. The book, which is presented as a report, tries to show possible roadmaps for the EU.

The book consists of five chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion. The book begins by discussing the EU's energy crisis and its consequences for the MENA area, setting the stage for a thorough examination of the complex interaction between energy resources, geopolitics, regional cooperation,



and the quest for sustainable energy alternatives. The EU faces several challenges to convert its energy toward renewable ones. In general, the book also highlights that the MENA region may be a renewable energy source, as most of the countries have a suitable climate for solar energy.

The first chapter sets the stage for the subsequent chapters by emphasizing the MENA region's relevance as a crucial partner for the EU in terms of energy security. With its huge hydrocarbon reserves, established export infrastructure, and closeness to European energy markets, the MENA area is considered a vital partner in this endeavor. Any cooperation of the EU with MENA countries to diversify its energy sources and reduce reliance on conventional hydrocarbon suppliers such as Russia could be a solution for the current energy crisis both in the short and long term. The chapter also emphasizes the importance of regional stability and economic growth in guaranteeing the long-term viability of this cooperation.

Chapter 2 analyzes Algeria's renewable energy development potential, including good