

Moment JOURNAL

Journal of Cultural Studies, Faculty of Communication, Hacettepe University

2019, 6(1)

ISSN: 2148-970X.

FROM THE THEME EDITORS

Populism has recently been one of the most popular concepts within politics, everyday life, public space, and academic debates; and Turkey is no exception. We often talk about the rise of populism, populist parties, and authoritarian populism. Political parties, political leaders, class relations or economic policies are usually the focus of populism debates. However, there is one aspect that is not emphasized enough: the relationship between the media and populism. So, this issue of Moment Journal themed Media and Populism includes various significant articles contributing to this often-neglected field and also articles outside the theme.

Moment Journal opens with Tuğba Taş's article "*Authoritarian Populism and The New Portrait of the American Agitator: Nicholas J. Fuentes*". In her article, Taş analyzes the discourse of Nicholas J. Fuentes, an American social media phenomenon and pro-Trump agitator, and tries to understand how authoritarian populism produces its political strength on a discursive level and what instruments and strategies are used; and then associates the agitator of the 1940s America with today's agitator. The author examines the agitator's *Twitter* account, *YouTube* channel, personal web site and statements in various interviews, and analyzes the authoritarian discourse of a modern agitator using the concepts of the Frankfurt School.

In their comprehensive article "*Looking to the Success of Populist Leaders from the Perspective of the Media Systems: A Comparison on the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Turkey*", Emre Erdoğan and Tuğçe Erçetin examine why and how populist actors appear on the media and how they make use of it. The authors compare the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Turkey with reference to Hallin and Mancini's three models of

media systems (liberal, democratic corporatist and polarized pluralist). The discussion based on the three models offers an explanatory and illuminating perspective in that it presents different aspects of the populism-media relationship.

The third article of this issue *“Background of the Populist Discourse: The Evaluations on the Law No. 5224 on the Assessment and Classification of Motion Pictures”* by Yıldız Derya Birincioğlu provides a different perspective including populism in the film production and distribution processes. Addressing the politics, support mechanisms, censorship and self-censorship in cinema, the article brings forward significant questions regarding the not so considered relationship between populism and cinema.

The fourth and last article within the theme is by Uğur Baloğlu. The article *“Democracy, Populism and Extinction of Nature”* mainly focuses on how industrialism, “the end of modernity”, results in the extinction of nature along with the recently famous populist movements. Underlining the serious connection between populism and the absence of democracy it creates, and the environmental problems, the author analyzes how the desire of development of global capitalism is legitimized via various maneuvers of populist movements, the attitudes of developed countries, especially the USA, towards environmental disasters, and their policies in this regard.

Sinem Şahin Yeşil’s *“The Collapse of Modernist Utopia under the Concrete Walls of High-Rise”* is one of the articles outside the theme in this issue. The author analyzes the novel *High Rise*, an architectural dystopia, around the image of skyscraper within the frame of modernism, instrumental rationality and everyday life. Thus, she focuses on how to make use of architecture and urban studies in literature and dystopia studies, and how to consider J. G. Ballard’s novel *High Rise* from a critical point of view. The article examines the status of skyscrapers, which are considered the most significant symbol of modernist architecture, within urban theories, and discusses how the everyday life of the inhabitants living in the skyscrapers can transform through the possibilities of fiction around this novel.

“An Evaluation of Undergraduate New Media Education and Expectations of the Sector in Turkey” by Zeynep Özarlan, an article following the theme of Moment Journal’s former issue, examines the general situation of the new media and creative industries education and sectoral expectations in Turkey through an investigation of relevant departments in universities, courses and job advertisements in the sector. Özarlan draws attention to the situation in other countries and uses quantitative research techniques to

address the discrepancies between expectations of the sector and limitations of formal education in this area and proposes a framework for research on this extensive subject.

Cemile Tokgöz Şahoğlu's article *"Commodification of Playboard in Location-based Mobile Games and Social Production of Hybrid Spaces"* follows the theme of our former issue as well. Her study explores the new forms of exploitation over playbour by the commercial capital associated with the location-based mobile games that combine digital information and physical space.

In this issue of Moment Journal, we present three essays -one within the theme and two outside the theme- to our readers. The essay within the theme is written by Ali Zain and it bears the title *"Rise of Modi's tech-populism in India"*. Zain focuses on the political strategy of Narendra Modi, India's example of the rising global populism, and how he massified it using both social and mainstream media. Citing various examples, Zain examines Modi's emphasis on technology that permeates his rhetoric and his skillful use of new communication technologies to spread his word. His evaluation of Modi's rhetoric, known as *"high-tech populism"* in the literature, also supports the predictions that the role of social media in politics will gain more prominence in the future.

The first essay outside the theme is a subjective and critical evaluation of the concept of "provincial [taşra] university". İlknur Meşe's article *"'Taşra' University as a Space and 'Taşra' of Sociology: A Critical Analysis of Experience"* examines the "provincial" mentality that has spread to almost all universities in recent years by using direct observations made in provincial universities. As a result of the last fifteen years' goal of establishing a university in every city, the number of universities founded both by the state and the private entrepreneurs under the name of "foundation universities" has increased astronomically. Naturally, this increase brought about a quality problem. There are no Turkish universities that rank among the world's best 500 universities. Perhaps the most important reason for this is the recent spread of mediocre mentality, which comes from provincial universities that are opened in a rush with insufficient academic and administrative staff and infrastructure, to the once well-established universities. In this way, Meşe critically analyzes this provincial mentality, which is widespread in all Turkish universities, condemning all employees and the academic climate to mediocrity.

Another essay outside the theme is *"Scholarly Communication and Literature Usage Culture: An Evaluation from the Literature Obsolescence"* by Haydar Yalçın. In this study, Yalçın tries to make inferences on the literature usage patterns of scholars working in the

field of communication sciences by using the citation analysis method. For this analysis, the author examines bibliographic data on books and book chapters indexed as “communication” in the Web of Science between the years 1990 and 2018. This study can be considered as the first Turkish study examining patterns of literature usage in the field of communication.

The first book review of this issue is written by Burcu Şenel with the title “*Flâneuse: On Women Walking the City and the Transforming Nature of Walking*”. In her review of Lauren Elkin’s *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice, and London*, Şenel tells how Elkin had set out to question the glaring absence of the female counterpart of *Flaneur* in the 19th century, whom she refers to as *Flâneuse*, and how she turned her attention to women walking on the street.

Another book review is “*Digital Games between the Tensions of Culture, Creativity and Industry*” by Serra Sezgin. In the article the author reviewed Aphra Kerr’s book “*Global Games: Production, Circulation and Policy*” which has been published in 2017; the author believes the research, which was conducted using technique of face to face interviews with game producers through 10 years of field study and detailed analysis of the data of game industry, will provide a broad perspective to both researchers and the actors of the game industry in Turkey.

Beginning with the current issue, we also decided to include book presentations to our journal since book presentations are at least as valuable as book reviews in terms of introducing newly acquired academic works to the academic researchers. The first book presentation of this issue is written by Mehmet Ertan, entitled “*An effort to Trace Back a Concept: “What is Populism?”*”. He fluently introduces “*What is Populism?”* by Jan Werner Müller which is one of the books that have been translated to Turkish in recent years focusing on the subject of “populism”, what Ertan considers as “one of the most commonly used concepts of political science to explain the general tendencies of contemporary politics where the distinction between the right and the left have blurred, the established party systems have begun to dissolve”. In Müller’s book, Ertan asserts that although he has been able to scrutinize the conceptual relationship between populism and democracy in depth, it is not guiding enough for the struggle against populism. However, Ertan considers the book as one of the exceptional examples of the growing literature on populism.

The second book presentation on the theme of this issue is written by Burak Gökalp who presents Frederico Finchelstein's book titled *From Fascism to Populism*. Gökalp notes that Finchelstein defines fascism as a secular political project, emerging as a response to both parliamentary democracy and the socialist project of the USSR and populism as a response to fascism and to the crisis of representation that creates fascism and then destroys it. However, he also reminds that the book proposes a way in which a proper scrutiny of the two forms of power would require a more complex and more in-depth analysis.

Another contribution to the book presentation section comes from Şule Karataş Özaydın. In her article that she presents Gary T. Marx's book "*Windows into the Soul: Surveillance and Society in an Age of High Technology*" which was published in 2016, Karataş Özaydın remarks that he provides a detailed analysis about how the big data compiled by Windows with respect to our personal and private data, a communication technology widely discussed as a surveillance tool, works for and provides convenience to its users. With that being said, according to the author, Marx underlines that it is necessary not to consider such technological surveillance tools as neither a disaster scenario nor a utopian model.

The only theme-related interview of our issue is "*Ruth Wodak Interview on Politics of Fear: Pragmatism and Right-Wing Populism*", conducted together by one of the theme editors of this issue Tezcan Durna and Gökçe Özsu, with Emeritus Professor of Lancaster University Ruth Wodak, who currently gives lectures on critical discourse, language, communication and more recently on right populism at University of Vienna. The interview is based upon Wodak's book, *The Politics of Fear*, in which she attempts to analyze the rise of right-wing populism in Europe in the context of racism, anti-immigration and anti-Semitism. The interview, which is particularly focused on why the right-populist *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP) experience that is also on the rise in Turkey has not been included in the book, also attempts to elucidate why the populism rises rapidly especially in the era of digital and social media.

We hope that this special issue we've prepared, *Populism and Media*, will kindle the interest of Moment's readers. We invite our readers to read, discuss and share all the works of this issue, which have been contributed by many people; authors, editors, referees, language editors, secretariat, design. As the editors of this issue, we would like to thank the assistant editors, the language editors and our colleagues who have

undertaken the secretariat and design roles, and the referees who have contributed to the expeditious assessments of the articles with their invisible labour.

Tezcan Durna

Burak Özçetin