

"Let them eat bulghur and slurry": Debates over moral economy in seventeenth-century Istanbul

Cemal Kafadar

The long seventeenth century witnessed sustained political unrest in various corners of the Ottoman empire. The capital city itself was the scene of several full-fledged revolts and numerous riots. Throughout, intense debate raged in private and public spaces with respect to the courses of action taken by different administrations regarding, among other things, the life of the market. Price controls, currency manipulations, monopolistic practices, and the political order guiding these and related policies were met with both support and dissent, eventually leading to such radical propositions as changing the dynasty (in 1687) or even the dynastic régime (in 1703) as such. This presentation will focus on the salient features of this public discourse, drawing the basic contours of how it evolved and how it contributed to the constitution of a public (*cumhūr*). Chronicles, 'āşık poetry, lyrics, and popular tales will be taken into account as well as price lists, salary registers and the like.