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Hanna L. Muehlenhoff, *EU Democracy Promotion and Governmentality: Turkey and Beyond*. New York: Routledge, 2019. xii + 173 pp.

The European Union (EU) has always been dominated by liberal policies, however the rise of neoliberal tendencies in European states has been reflected in EU governance as well. The Open Method of Coordination introduced by the Lisbon Treaty is cited as a good example to show neoliberal governmentality in the EU by incorporating many actors such as civil society and private actors into decision-making processes. For Walters and Haahr, such actors should be active participants, because “now everyone is supposed to strive for self-improvement to achieve a utopian goal of becoming a knowledge based economy”¹ (p. 21). Neoliberal governmentality of the EU also reveals itself with project funding for civil society organisations (CSOs), thereby empowering them to become managerially oriented, visible and self-sufficient institutions. As various commentators, ranging from Michel Foucault to Milja Kurki to Jens H. Haahr, have suggested, neoliberal governmentality instruments transform civil society organizations to perform like corporations and render them less grassroots. Kurki describes, in particular, a special relationship between neoliberal governmentality and depoliticization over a direct EU instrument called the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). She states that EIDHR creates a depoliticizing influence for CSOs’ work and political positions.² Hanna L. Muehlenhoff’s book, *EU Democracy Promotion and Governmentality: Turkey and Beyond*, covers similar territory and raises the question whether the EU’s CSO funding created such a depoliticizing effect by showing “actual influences” on the CSOs in Turkey. In her words, this book “analyzes whether and how the EU’s civil society programs depoliticise civil society in Turkey by integrating an analysis of the EU’s policies and the domestic context of CSOs” (p. 10).

Four key structural issues are significant for shaping Muehlenhoff’s analysis of the Turkish case. First, Turkey’s lengthy candidacy process; second, the concept of Europeanization which occupies a significant place in Turkey’s domestic politics as well as rationalities of domestic political actors; third, a skeptical attitude toward CSOs under Turkey’s authoritarian tendencies; and last, the Gezi protests in 2013, breeding a different form of civil society that demands more rights and democratic change. Muehlenhoff limits her

1 William Walters and Jens H. Haahr, *Governing Europe: Discourse, Governmentality and European Integration* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

2 Milja Kurki, “Governmentality and EU Democracy Promotion: The European Instrument for and Human Rights and the Construction of Democratic Civil Societies,” *International Political Sociology* 5, no. 4 (2011): 349–66.

analysis for the period 2002–13, as for her the Gezi protests constituted a breaking point and were followed by more oppressive politics. However, such delineation seems to be problematic because the outputs of liberal or neoliberal rationalities in the domestic context continued after the Gezi protests and they affected both CSO structures and the dialogue between the EU and Turkey. Muehlenhoff limits her study to three categories of CSO, namely those representing liberal women and the LGBT and Kurdish communities. She justifies these choices by explaining that the EU only funds those CSOs in Turkey on the one hand; and that they challenge patriarchy, heteronormativity, and ethnic/national belonging notions of Turkey on the other. Separate chapters are devoted to analyses of different CSOs in these separate issue areas. The book also includes explanations of key concepts—depoliticization, neoliberal governmentality, and hegemonic struggles—in a separate chapter as well as another chapter on the neoliberal governmentality of the EU civil society programs.

Conceptual explanation is quite important for such a book to reach comprehensive findings and understanding in terms of an analytical framework. Thus the chapter clearing the conceptual ground satisfies the reader by offering a theoretical background, literature review, and real-world examples. Liberal and neoliberal governmentality are so clearly explained that even a reader who is not well acquainted with these concepts would understand them clearly. Muehlenhoff generally refers to Kurki and Foucault for explaining depoliticization and governmentality, emphasizing that depoliticization is both the removal and denial of the political while also stressing governmentality as a governing rationality shaped by specific mentalities. The author agrees that neoliberal governmentality is mostly expected to depoliticize civil society and she discusses such depoliticization as producing four effects, offering concrete examples for each. First, neoliberal governmentality creates self-managed CSOs that are empowered to take care of human rights problems, but “civil society becomes responsible for its own development instead of politicising the insecurity of the marginalised” (p. 33). Second, neoliberal governmentality generally leads to the privatization of social welfare, and in such a system CSOs are known as social service providers rather than demanders that meet the needs of the state. Third, the participation of CSOs in decision making is seen as a creation of “rational consensus” that decreases contestation, and this lies at the heart of neoliberal governmentality. Last, self-management practices involve technologies of performance and visibility which increase the bureaucratic burden on CSOs and leads them to become technical bodies rather than political actors engaging in political debates. As a person who worked in many EU projects I cannot agree more with the fourth observation: CSOs that had EU funding once want to get more funding and mostly concentrate on the

bureaucratic formalities of either completing an existing EU project or initiating a new one. Such a bureaucratic cycle becomes the major focus of the CSO rather than the substantive issue area they are working on.

The next chapter deals with two EU civil society programs conducted in Turkey, namely the EIDHR and Civil Society Facility (CSF). Those programs are analyzed through calls for proposal documents (such as guidelines and application forms) and interviews with Turkey's representatives on these programs. Through her analysis, Muehlenhoff reaches a finding that is different than Kurki's regarding neoliberal governmentality. For Kurki, EIDHR considers CSOs as providers of social services, however Muehlenhoff cannot find any reference to the service provision mission of either EIDHR or any Turkey-specific EIDHR program. Instead the EIDHR promotes the idea of "civil society mainstreaming," meaning mainstreaming civil society participation and encouraging authorities to work with civil society, for Muehlenhoff (p. 56). She also stresses that both EIDHR and CSF focus on participatory democracy, including a liberal notion of pluralism and consensual decision making. The result is a need for more cooperation between civil society and the public sector. Muehlenhoff portrays it as an increasing partnership between civil society and government, in which CSOs are becoming part of the consensus in a political decision-making process. Although theoretically the institutionalization of cooperation may exclude parts of civil society, Muehlenhoff reaches the conclusion that:

neo-liberal rationalities underpinning the EU civil society policy in third countries do not have to have a depoliticising effect on civil society because first, liberal rationalities of EU programs can politicise CSO issues, second civil society can change or resist neo-liberal rationalities (seen in KADER's empowerment projects for instance) and third, the context of discursive struggles in which CSOs act may reverse the depoliticising effects. (p.69)

In the following chapters the author reaches similar findings on EU programs and their neoliberal rationalities that are supposed to depoliticize CSOs in Turkey. Chapter 4 focuses on women rights organizations. Muehlenhoff limits discursive struggles to headscarf and abortion debates and explains political actors' stances in detail while also stressing that the discursive space is divided into different groups for each of those debates. For example, Kemalist and non-Kemalist groups agreed on a pro-headscarf discourse, but discursive groups were split over the abortion issue. Three CSOs—Mor Çatı (Purple Roof of Women's Shelter Foundation), Kamer (Women's Centre Foundation), and Kader (Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates)—are selected for the field study.

Mor Çatı implemented many EU projects and Muehlenhoff portrays it as a manager employing technologies of visibility and performance implying depoliticizing effects of neoliberal rationalities. However, she also emphasizes that Mor Çatı tries to put women's issues on the political agenda in and out of the framework of EU projects. Kamer follows a similar path to Mor Çatı in terms of EU project implementation, bringing violence against women onto the political agenda through those projects. Kader's discourse, on the other hand, is mostly shaped by liberal feminist ideas, focusing on the representation of women in office. Nevertheless, its empowerment project, which was not supposed to politicize women, faces resistance at the local level and in fact ended up politicizing them.

In chapter 5 Muehlenhoff makes two determinations for the LGBT community and organizations in Turkey: first, they have been somewhat invisible and marginalized in the past; and second, they have traditionally displayed anarchist tendencies politically. Due to the second tendency in particular, some CSOs such as Amargi are against the idea of receiving external funds. However, the author still chooses it as an important case study. Other case studies are KAOS GL (Chaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Research Association) and Spod (Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies Association). Muehlenhoff believes that the EU KAOS GL projects, either having liberal or neoliberal rationalities, made it part of the civil society landscape again and helped them to be heard more effectively (p. 99). On the other hand, these projects also contributed to the politicization of LGBT issues. Spod having only a single EU fund from the TASCOS (Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organisations) program and Amargi having no EU funding at all, include skeptical internal groups that think those funds would impede social rights. Yet I could not find enough justification for why Muehlenhoff chose Amargi as a case study, even though it has not been funded and is being disbanded.

Chapter 6 discusses the (de)politicization of the Kurdish issue in Turkey. For Muehlenhoff, Kurdish rights is one of the most divisive and securitized issues in Turkey, where discourses on peace and Kurdish rights are seen as counter-hegemonic and there is no space for political activism. That is why the EU funds organizations that promote Kurdish rights through depoliticization. However, this also leads to politicization. Muehlenhoff shows this relationship in İHD (Human Rights Association), TİHV (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey), and HYD (Helsinki Citizens' Assembly). All these organizations each have EU funds and each rely on neoliberal rationalities which supposedly have depoliticizing effects or an apolitical character. It is important to note that those projects increased the legitimacy of these organizations and the political awareness around them. The Mazlumder

(Association for Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed) case is quite different, as a liberal organization opposed to receiving EU funds, since they are well aware of their neoliberal character. Mazlumder has close ties with the government but, at the same time, criticizes the government. This is why sixteen Mazlumder branches were shut down in 2017, and for Muehlenhoff Mazlumder was not co-opted by the state. However, in this book I could not see a similar evaluation for HYD by the author, as some important members of the organization helped to organize the “we will not be a party to this crime” petition in 2016. Although HYD is not directly involved in discursive struggle, its stance was clear and such an approach had the potential to influence its relations with the EU considerably.

To conclude, this book is precious in observing the EU’s funding in Turkey and showing the “dialectical” relationship between politicization and depoliticization. However, I believe that comparative studies on similarly situated countries would have enriched the argument of the book, rather than focusing solely on Turkey.

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