

narrative locates the ruler and his signifiers as the key historical determinants of post-imperial national awareness.

That said, these limitations hardly undermine the work's overall significance. *Rural Visibility and Popular Belonging in the Ottoman Empire* is a noteworthy example of integrating nineteenth-century imperial and post-imperial studies. The book's chronological structure presents the historical evolution of the key concepts and arguments coherently. While presenting rich historical evidence at local and imperial levels, it offers a creative dialogue of different archives. In covering a long period with several actors, events, and discussions, it incorporates micro and macro perspectives throughout the study by focusing on the Bulgar communal belonging during and after the Ottoman period.

Fatma Öncel

Sabancı University, Istanbul, Turkey

Email: fatmaoncely@gmail.com

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Elif M. Babül, *Bureaucratic Intimacies: Translating Human Rights in Turkey*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017, xiv + 230 pages

This highly insightful, readable, and award-winning volume deals with the puzzle of coexistence of EU-funded human rights training for Turkish bureaucrats (and ensuing indicators of progress) and ongoing state violence. How is it possible that after so many years of training for the sake of harmonizing Turkish official practices with the EU, violations still go on? Skeptical of seeing human rights training as mere “lip service,” Babül convincingly argues that the way the programs are designed “unexpectedly and perhaps unintentionally” helps reproduce already existing aversion in Turkish bureaucracy toward human rights as a Western construct and elicit nationalist and conservative responses in addition to paving the way to impunity. Simultaneously, she provides a Bourdieusian analysis of reproduction of the state on the basis of distinctions and hierarchies while also paying attention to the agency of various figures, such as government workers, translators, human rights advocates, and experts.

The book is composed of two main parts. The first part, divided into two chapters, provides background on the formation of the state and government workers and their transformation since the Early Republican era. Here Babül argues that longstanding structures of the pedagogical state shape attitudes of government workers who take part in human rights training. Accustomed to

the position of the governor/teacher, government workers feel anxious in transnational settings such as training provided by foreign or internationally connected Turkish experts and fear losing their elite status. They respond in various ways: by evading training or by challenging it as too theoretical and distant from local realities. According to Babül, these responses help them reproduce their elite status in ways that are shaped by their nationalist conservative worldviews. Babül nicely captures the political character of government worker's mundane practices. However, although she pays attention to the various distinctions between government workers, her analysis leads to a sense that the ideological response of government workers are broadly consistent. This may be seen as an overgeneralization. Her insistence on the continuity of the elite self-identity of the government workers appears as less convincing given their emphasis on knowledge of the local and Anatolian ways. What would happen if the bureaucracy were still held by the Kemalists who are shaped by a much more Western-oriented "social imaginary"? If the encounters of government workers are in part shaped by the social imaginaries, as Babül puts it, it is difficult to say that Kemalist cadres would have the same nationalist conservative response to human rights training. This is an important point given the recent discussions around the Kemalist legacy and its comparison with contemporary authoritarianism in Turkey.

In the second chapter, the author examines the tactics of professionalism and expertise in human rights training. Professionalization of the bureaucracy refers to a rationalization of the processes and construction of public officers as competent, respected, and knowledgeable agents serving the public. Expertise, on the other hand, casts good governance standards as technical criteria to be followed due to professional reasons rather than a commitment to the politics of human rights. Babül interestingly observes that calls for a professional approach to human rights training paradoxically ended up relying on the good conscience of officers due to a lack of resources, while the expertise became a basis on which different professional groups (the police, judiciary, and medical professionals) sought to justify contradictory official practices. These also mean that the attempts to sanitize human rights from political content by turning it into knowhow failed, and thus human rights training became an arena of contestation rather than anti-politics.

The second part of the book deals with new approaches to human rights education, politics of translation, and statehood. After showing how adult human rights education around the world shifted toward an experiential model that emphasized ways of doing things and creating professional incentives to comply with good governance, rather than an ethical reflection on the nature of humans, the author examines the role of language and translators. Babül shows that the language barrier becomes a constant reminder of the

foreignness of human rights. Another interesting insight is that, despite predictions that translation processes will be shaped by the unequal structural relations between languages, the Turkish “state language” (p. 127) had the upper hand. The words of international human rights trainers were translated in ways that paid attention to sensitivities of the public officers, and thus the gap between good governance standards and already existing practices seemed much narrower. In Chapter 5, Babül explores the performance of public officers in these trainings. She argues that, due to the ups and downs of relations between the EU and Turkey, participation in these trainings included risks for trainees. While at times they wanted to be seen as part of the official effort to harmonize with the EU, through cynicism and parody government workers redrew the boundaries between the national and the foreign by locating themselves as insiders and attributed state violence to impersonal structures beyond individual control and culpability.

My final points are theoretical. The notion of encounter is one of the main lenses through which the volume seeks to understand human rights trainings as interfaces between the foreign and the national, the global and the local, the advanced and the developing nations. Despite this centrality, the concept is not elaborated at length in the volume. Moreover, while the concept of encounter raises specters of interaction between two actors, the volume is mostly focused on the practices of Turkish officers. Second, the volume deals with a wide spectrum of human rights issues and does not link its conclusions to specific rights. The right to be free from torture, the right to a fair trial for children and the right to bodily integrity are all shaped by similar historical and political structures but there are also very specific dynamics in the violations of these rights.

These points aside, Babül’s volume is a significant and welcome contribution to the political sociology of human rights in Turkey and beyond. It is unique in terms of its access to this intimate sphere of encounter between the state and global governance mechanisms, bringing to life and fully exposing the theoretical implications of mundane training practices. Babül not only questions assumptions about the anti-politics of development and hierarchies of language but also provides much food for thought for the discussions on state, human rights, and regimes of truth. The volume should be read by not only students of human rights but also practitioners looking to improve the delivery of this kind of training.

Şerif Onur Bahçecik

Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey Email: bahcecik@metu.edu.tr