each other in Turkey. As in every edited book, it highlights some parts of these questions more than others in order to seek a common ground between the articles. In this case, even though almost every chapter tries to situate itself against a historical background, in some instances the theoretical perspective of the multiplicity of nationalisms and their constructed nature has been reduced to a linear narrative. This might give the reader an impression of nationalism as a very coherent discourse, interpreted the same way by the whole population since its inception, or even of the inevitability of a certain type of Turkish nationalism. This would be problematic from a historiographical as well as sociological perspective, as most of the contributors point out. This being a minor point, the book provides a very rich critical discussion of the different tensions of nationalism in Turkey, especially in the last couple of decades, and, all in all, convincingly makes its point in presenting the symbiotic relationship of competing nationalisms in Turkey. It is a must-read book for the current debates on nationalisms in Turkey, giving important insights for those interested in discussions of theories of globalization and nationalism, and the politics of Europe and the Middle East.

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Nicole Watts. *Activists in Office: Kurdish Politics and Protest in Turkey.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010, xv + 214 pages.

Since 1999, when Abdullah Öcalan was captured in Kenya and delivered to Turkish authorities, the "Kurdish question" in Turkey has undergone important transformations. In April 1999, only a few months after Öcalan was placed in a high security prison in İmralı, Kurdish activists swept into office throughout Southeast Turkey in local elections, coming "back" to official institutions after a hiatus of five years when Kurdish parliamentarians from the Democracy Party (DEP) had been ejected from the parliament in 1994. In the summer of 1999, the PKK declared a ceasefire. In 2002, emergency rule ended in the last four provinces of Hakkari, Şırnak, Diyarbakır, and Tunceli. For a while, it seemed that a peace process was about to begin. But in 2012, after a decade of reforms including the liberalization of the Kurdish language and the end of assimilation and denial policies, thousands

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of Kurdish activists are once again in jail, while public discourse on Kurdish identity and rights continues to be exceedingly exclusionary.

Nicole Watts' timely book *Activists in Office: Kurdish Politics and Protest in Turkey* offers an opportunity to reflect on the seemingly contradictory tendencies characterizing the past decade and to recognize both the extent to which the Kurdish movement has changed Turkey, and how little has actually changed. In counterpoint to the institutional discontinuity imposed on the movement by the successive closure of pro-Kurdish political parties by the Constitutional Court, Watts' narrative displays the remarkable continuity of the movement. Watts approaches this continuity not as a progressive awakening of the Kurds to national consciousness, or as a march from traditional politics to modern activism, but from a relational perspective that pays careful attention to the movement's relations with the Turkish state, the PKK, and the Turkish left. It is this relational perspective that distinguishes Watts' book from other monographs on the Kurdish movement published in recent years.

One of the most important contributions of *Activists in Office* is its careful unpacking of the tense relations between the electoral strand of the Kurdish national movement since the 1990s and the state, the PKK, and Turkish left-wing movements. Watts does not try to answer the question of whether the Kurdish parties established since 1991 are a "front" for the PKK or not. Rather, she opens up a space for thinking about what happens when a challenger movement attempts to operate within legal institutions and norms, where pressures from both the radical wings of the movement and the state are always present and have important effects, but are not determinative. Relatedly, Watts offers a close-up view of the dilemmas and consequences of working within the system for the activists of challenger parties. This enables her to address a broader set of questions about challenger movements, such as the new resources available to challenger movements that begin to operate in the electoral field, how activists maintain their challenger identity while trying to use these resources, and the ways in which challenger movements are vulnerable to the coercive impulse of the state, even when they operate within the legal field. These questions enable the Kurdish movement to be considered in comparative perspective, even though Watts does not undertake such a comparison systematically in this book.

The book begins with two empirical chapters that contextualize the Kurdish electoral movement historically, by examining such antecedents as the Turkish Workers' Party (TİP), the New Turkey Party (YTP), and the mayoral politics of the late 1970s, when Kurdish activists increasingly organized separately from the Turkish left-wing

movement. Watts also contextualizes the electoral stream of the Kurdish national movement within a broader "field of resistance" populated by other actors: the armed struggle of the PKK, a mass grass roots Kurdish movement, and legal mobilization by various organizations, such as the Human Rights Association, (İHD), the Turkish Human Rights Foundation (TİHV), and the London-based Kurdish Human Rights Project (KHRP), all of which have struggled to shape the nature of Kurds' relationship with the Turkish state. One of the interesting threads in these chapters is Watts' careful attention to the inclusion and exclusion experienced by Kurdish activists in their cooperation with Turkish parties and left-wing movements from the 1960s to the 1990s.

The next two chapters develop the argument, examining first the resources that become available to challenger parties that decide to participate in the electoral game and then the various coercive tactics employed by the state. Watts identifies five resources available to challenger parties working within the system: material and human resources (e.g., budgets, volunteers, salaries, buildings, vehicles, grants, and funds); legal resources (e.g., parliamentary immunity); access to local, national, and international institutions and networks; "role" resources that come from holding public office (e.g., duties, authorities, expectations); and legitimacy resources (e.g., votes). She then discusses the opportunities and constraints that these resources brought to the Kurdish movement. The chapter on coercion (understandably the longest of the book) documents the shooting, jailing, prosecuting, beating, fining, and threatening of party administrators, the closure of parties, the bombing of offices, and the confiscation of party property from 1991 until 2008. Importantly, Watts does not focus only on legal repression and extralegal state violence as a form of coercion, but also, bureaucratic and juridical forms of coercion and harassment, such as court cases initiated against party officials, activists, and media, and the bureaucratic hurdles mobilized by the governor's office. The juxtaposition of juridical and bureaucratic coercion with policing and extralegal coercion illuminates the continuing "low-intensity conflict" since the decline in state violence in 1999. Another important contribution of this chapter is that it also examines the way in which coercion was, at times, ineffective.

The final two chapters assess the "impact" of the movement. Here, Watts' focus is not on "success" defined as "policy change," but on how the movement transformed the discursive field and generated a new governmentality. Watts examines the 1990-94 period, when pro-Kurdish MPs used Turkey's parliament as "a loudspeaker system" from which to disseminate an alternative version of the Kurdish predicament in Turkey.

This period exemplifies deep contestation and confrontation between the meanings promoted by the state and the pro-Kurdish movement. Watts then examines the 1999-2008 period, when pro-Kurdish activists came to office through municipal elections, as one in which a new governmentality began to take root, one that routinized Kurdified practices and created a new Kurdish subject. These two chapters strike a fine balance between causal and constitutive explanations, and offer a broad perspective for thinking about the "impact" of being "activists in office"; synthesizing the insights of social movement theory with the attention of Foucauldian approaches to the processes of "subject formation" that accompany every act of resistance.

Although it is not Watts' primary question, the book leaves the relationship between the PKK and the electoral stream of the movement rather undeveloped. While noting that the party was somewhat autonomous from the armed movement, yet also subject to its pressures, the primary empirical focus of the study is the movement's relations with the state. As such, Watts doesn't trace whether the movement grew more or less independent from the PKK over time or how the military course of the armed conflict or relations with the state affected the movement's relationship with the PKK. While *Activists in Office* draws skillfully on the insights of social movement theory and moderation theory, the literature on civil wars, peace processes, and spoilers could provide alternative perspectives on the movement's relationship with the state and the PKK. Now that the Turkish government operates in a field of "peace negotiations" that is highly opaque to both the public and scholars, it is essential that the history of the past two decades is also analyzed from the civil war perspective in future studies.

Based on interviews with prominent Kurdish intellectuals and activists, as well as extensive field work in Diyarbakır and other cities, *Activists in Office* is a very readable, nuanced, and well-researched chronicle of the twenty years since pro-Kurdish activists carved out a sphere of politics between the narrow spaces recognized by the Turkish state, the PKK, and the Turkish left. It will be of great interest to scholars interested in the Kurdish movement, state-minority relations in the Middle East, social movement theory, and moderation theory, and an excellent resource for teaching in these fields.

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