

Simten Coşar and Gamze Yücesan-Özdemir, eds. *Silent Violence: Neoliberalism, Islamist Politics and the AKP Years in Turkey*. Ottawa: Red Quill Books, 2012, 332 pages.

The essays collected in Simten Coşar and Gamze Yücesan-Özdemir's *Silent Violence* aim to take the analysis of the phenomenon of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) beyond popular dichotomies, such as democracy versus authoritarianism, laicism versus anti-laicism, and civilian versus military rule. The editors analyze the conservative characteristics of the AKP with reference not only to Islam but also to neoliberal economic policies. Moreover, they argue that this juxtaposition of Islamist and capitalist principles challenges the long established tension between Islam and the modern, indicating a thorough transformation of economic, political, and ideological structures through the instruments of political power the editors' term "silent violence" (pp. 9-10). The editors thus read the AKP years as the coexistence of a "violent" neoliberalism and the "silence" of Islam (p. 295).

The contributors to the volume focus on different aspects of Turkey's economic, political, and ideological structure within the framework of neoliberal capitalism. They all underline that the combination of neoliberal economics and Islamic politics is a long-term state policy that does not pertain only to the AKP. This analysis clearly reveals the historical continuity between neoliberal economic policies, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis of the 1980 military coup and the AKP government. It suggests that the AKP government is only the latest ring in a long chain of neoconservative/neoliberal politico-economic tradition, showing no essential difference from the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAP) of the 1980s. This analysis of the AKP as not unique within the framework of the historical and structural neoliberal transformation process is an original contribution to the literature.

The first part of the book scrutinizes the changes in Turkey's state structure, societal conditions, and legal regime as a consequence of neoliberal economic transformation. Galip Yalman's chapter focuses on the separation of the economy from politics under neoliberal hegemony, which technicizes the economy and dissociates the state from the class struggle. Yalman asserts that the neoliberal transformation of Turkey in the post-1980 period (including the AKP years) has put an end to class-based politics and led to the rise of identity politics (pp. 23-30). In this context, law has played a crucial role in the transformation of state-society relations under neoliberal hegemony. Ali Murat Özdemir deals with the changes in the legal system in the AKP years, stating that the

legal reforms of the AKP correspond to the post-Washington consensus, which aims to create and protect institutions to support the market-based allocation of resources (p. 44). Özdemir focuses on the changing structure of the Constitutional Court (*Anayasa Mahkemesi*), the constitutional situation of labor rights and social security reform, concluding that the separation of political decision-making from economics has empowered the market against society (p. 65). Simten Coşar's chapter examines the affiliation between neoliberalism and the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. She asserts that the neoliberal transformation of Turkey has occurred on a dual axis: on the one hand, there has been an increasing discourse of individual rights and liberties with reference to economic liberalism; on the other, society has been invoked through a conservative socio-cultural discourse (p. 88). Coşar then highlights the intertwined nature of the neoliberal and conservative characteristics of AKP policies. In the section's last chapter, Berna Yılmaz critically examines the assumption of the organic connection between embourgeoisement and democratization through the changing political position of the Islamic bourgeoisie.

The second part of the book problematizes the perspectives of social policy, citizenship, and gender in the process of neoliberal transformation. Gamze Yücesan-Özdemir sheds light on the influence of neoliberalism, Islamism, and conservatism on the social policy regime of the AKP. She asserts that the introduction of neoliberalism confronted Turkish society with a combination of informal working conditions, a lack of social security, and de-unionization, rendering it dependent upon social assistance (p. 126). The laboring classes have thus increasingly found themselves in precarious work and at the mercy of social assistance based on Islamist philanthropy as concrete social rights have decreased and the social policy regime has been reduced to conservative benevolence. Yücesan-Özdemir asserts that AKP social policy is, in fact, based on the prioritization of the market over society, reducing society's rights and wages while increasing the market's profits (p. 148). In her chapter on the citizenship regime of the AKP, Nalan Soyarık-Şentürk states that the identity politics which emerged in the 1990s challenged the previous conceptualization of republican citizenship. However, although the human rights aspect of citizenship was underlined in this period, the realm of social rights was neglected. The detachment of citizenship from social rights has been followed not by the recognition of minority rights but by a new type of Turkish nationalism that has arisen on the basis of Islam (p. 174). Similarly, the gender aspect of the neoliberal transformation indicates an affiliation between neoliberal workfare

and the conservative family. In the following chapter, Metin Yeğenoğlu and Simten Coşar analyze the new patriarchy under the reign of neoliberal conservatism, in which the family has become the natural unit of a woman's existence both economically (with neoliberal motives) and socially (with conservative motives) (p. 188).

The last part of the study examines the relation between the neoliberal transformation of Turkey under the AKP government and the world capitalist system. Birgül Demirtaş evaluates the foreign policy of Turkey within the context of neo-Ottomanism, neoliberalism, and pragmatism. Filiz Zabcı focuses on the relations between the AKP and the institutions of global capitalism, such as the World Bank and IMF. She asserts that the reforms in the pension system, education, and healthcare, as well as the termination of subsidies in the agricultural sector clearly indicate that the economic tendencies of the AKP government have been determined by the demands of global capitalism. The last chapter in the book, by Zuhul Yeşilyurt-Gündüz, examines the relation between the AKP and the European Union (EU) in the context of the evolution of the EU's social policy regime from social democracy to neoliberalism.

Overall, *Silent Violence* aims to assess the AKP years of Turkey within the combined contexts of Islamic politics and neoliberal transformation. Each chapter evaluates the policies of the AKP on the basis of this combination. However, although this Islamic-neoliberal convergence partly succeeds in explaining both the violence of neoliberalism and the silence of society, the book remains impotent in the face of one central question: how has the AKP been able to stay in power despite its violent and oppressive neoliberal policies? From a broader perspective, why do people remain silent against the violence of neoliberalism? The contributors explain the silence of the masses by Islamist politics. Moreover, they assert that the separation of the economy from politics has led to the end of class politics, empowering the neoliberal and neoconservative parties as unrivalled political forces. However, these theories remain unable to explain the AKP's ability to stay in power since 2002 as against ANAP's inability to do the same.

Thus, the question is how the AKP has successfully established its sociopolitical hegemony, and it remains to uncover the mechanisms of the reproduction of consent, embodied as the silence of the masses against the violence of neoliberalism. The political transformation of the state apparatus and the mobilization of civil society have enabled the AKP to establish hegemony through the mechanism of violence and consent. Yet, through their focus on neoliberal transformation *per se*, the contributors render the concrete policies of the AKP invisible. From this

perspective, one other shortcoming comes to the fore: the homogenization of the neoliberal transformation after 1980. Turkey's neoliberal experiment after 1980 cannot be reduced to a one-way linear development, which equalizes the ANAP of the 1980s, Kemal Derviş, and the AKP of the 2000s. For example, both Ali Murat Özdemir and Filiz Zabcı claim that the AKP's economic reforms accord with the post-Washington consensus, which assumes the separation of the economy and politics through the autonomy of economic institutions. However, the AKP's approach toward autonomous economic institutions has not remained uniform: Elsewhere, in an article on the "the politics of de-delegation," Işık Özel has asserted that, after the 2001 economic crisis, Turkey's establishment of independent regulatory agencies was related to the increased specialization of economic procedures under neoliberalism. However, she claims that recent legal changes by the AKP have aimed to reduce the dominance of bureaucrats in key sectors without any public accountability, denouncing it as a "lack of democracy" and the "hegemony of bureaucracy." For Özel, this "de-delegation of politics" does not mitigate the neoliberal tendency of the AKP; however, it does suggest the different paths of neoliberalism under the AKP government and the complicated relations between political agencies and economic institutions.

Lastly, any study focusing on the neoliberal transformation of Turkey under the AKP should analyze the role of the discourse of development and the construction sector. Making up 5.8 percent of GDP in 2012, this sector has been the lifesaver of the Turkish economy. It provides palliative employment for the masses and accommodation for the population, creating upward mobility for the middle classes while dispossessing those living in the informally constructed *gecekondu* neighborhoods. More widely, Turkey's neoliberal transformation cannot be fully comprehended without relating the capital accumulation process to the increased exploitation of nature. In addition, the discourse of development realized in many urban transformation projects, hydroelectric power plants, and new highways plays a key role in the reproduction of consent.

Despite these criticisms, *Silent Violence* is an important contribution to the literature regarding neoliberalism, political Islam, and AKP rule. The analysis of AKP policies as a combination of economic neoliberalism and social conservatism and the evaluation of the conservative characteristic of the AKP with reference to both Islam and neoliberal economic policies are significant attempts to comprehend the current situation beyond classical dichotomies such as center-periphery or laic-fundamentalist. Ultimately, this collection positions the AKP in a his-

torical and structural framework which helps the reader analyze the last decade in Turkey more systematically.

Mehmet Ertan

Boğaziçi University

İren Özgür. *Islamic Schools in Modern Turkey: Faith, Politics, and Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, xiv + 249 pages.

What are the shifting relationships between political organization and religious education in contemporary Turkey? How do these shifting relationships articulate with and reorient broader debates over secularism, Islam, and Turkish national identity? In her thorough, accessible, and meticulously argued new book, *Islamic Schools in Modern Turkey*, İren Özgür raises and troubles each of these pivotal questions on the basis of a detailed history and ethnography of Turkey's İmam Hatip schools. These are secondary public vocational schools intended to train religious functionaries; *imams*—prayer leaders at mosques—and *hatips*—preachers who offer Friday sermons at mosques.

Few nation-states have exemplified French Marxist Louis Althusser's contention that education is a key "ideological state apparatus" better than republican Turkey. From the early days of the republic through to the contemporary era, the Turkish education system has mediated and underpinned the relationship between national belonging and the legitimacy of the state. In most public schools, the narrative of nationhood hinges on Atatürk's revolution itself while Islam plays a relatively smaller role, both inherent to Turks' collective past and awkwardly situated in relation to their ostensibly modernist, secularist present. The pedagogical construction of this secular nationhood is no stranger to anthropologists and sociologists of Turkey; in recent years, monographs by Samuel Kaplan and Ayşe Gül Altınay have plumbed the processes and procedures of this national pedagogy. In spite of these valuable works, however, a major lacuna has persisted in the study of Turkish education and its attendant politics. In addition to standard public schools, Turkey also maintains a system of vocational high schools. By far the most influential, pervasive and controversial vocational schools are the İmam Hatip schools. Despite both the expansion of İmam Hatip schools in