

Çayır's work makes use of literature for the purposes of sociology and political science. The epic plays a role in that the salvation narratives of the 1980s were characterized by their "epic discourse in a Bakhtinian sense." (p.156) I found it ironic that a work about a literature that repeatedly asks its readers not to "imitate Europeans," (p.11) a work where again the literature examined sees itself as a mode of self-defense against western values and norms, (p.22) is replete with literary theory that originates in the West. Theoretical frames can be very useful

tools in analyzing materials but they should not become the dominant element. The texts themselves and Çayır's analysis of them in the Turkish context is fascinating. The intertextual confrontation between the novels of the 1980s and 1990s is both remarkable and revealing. This important work should be of interest to scholars of Turkish Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, Sociology but also to anyone interested in Islamist movements and the processes of identity construction.

Roberta Micallef, *Boston University*

## Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism

By *Cihan Tuğal*

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009, 320 pp., ISBN 9780804761444 (hard-cover), ISBN 9780804761451 (paperback)

---

While Islamic fundamentalism or "radical Islam" has attracted a great deal of public attention, some societies in the Muslim world have experienced the gradual evolution of radical Islam into "moderate" or "political" Islam. Although moderate Muslims in such societies still maintain a pious commitment to Islam in their daily lives, they are not necessarily against the idea of a market economy, democracy, or the West. Where does moderate Islam come from? Is it the outcome of structural changes such as the modernization and rationalization of Muslim society? Or is the emergence of moderate Islam largely contingent upon a complex interaction between politics, the economy, and everyday social life? Finally, how should we approach this newly emerging alternative to radical Islam?

Considering that many scholars have recently begun to view "moderate Islam" or "Muslim democracy" as a solution to radical Islam, there is a pressing need for better understanding this Islamist transformation. Cihan Tuğal, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, attempts to offer just that. To do so, he turns to Sultanbeyli, an urban district in Istanbul that has experienced a shift from radical to moderate Islam. Tuğal's ethnography of the changing relationship between political parties, local authority, and society in Sultanbeyli forms the core of his rigorous work, *Passive Revolution*. Tuğal's case study is complemented by a comparative analysis of Turkish, Egyptian, and Iranian experiences of political Islam.

*Passive Revolution* sets out to demonstrate that Antonio Gramsci's "hegemonic perspective" offers a more accurate account of Islamic politics than other existing theories. Tuğal argues that moderate Islam, which is characterized by its "market-oriented, at least partially democratic, and sometimes even pro-Western direction" (p. 3), is the outcome of a complex process of the absorption of Islamic radicalism into the extant hegemony. Hegemony, from a Gramscian perspective, is the power of presenting a particular class interest as the interest of all. By establishing hegemony in a society, the dominant class is able to gain and maintain moral and political leadership because the subordinate groups view the interest of the dominant class as their own interest. In other words, the establishment of hegemony enables a minority to dominate the majority through popular consent rather than direct exercise of force. To sustain its hegemonic position in society, the dominant class sometimes adjusts its position in concession to the subordinate forces. In such cases, the powerful elites can offer material incentives to buy the consent of the working class or incorporate oppositional challengers into the dominant class through co-optation. Thus, the dominant class is able to maintain its domination by allowing the faces of its hegemonic position to change through a "passive revolution." Tuğal's analyses center on this concept, which he defines as "one of the convoluted, and sometimes unintended, ways by which the dominant sectors establish willing consent ('hegemony') for their rule" (pp. 3-4). Applying this concept to political Islam, Tuğal claims that former radical Islamists in Sultanbeyli experienced the defeat of

their radicalism in the struggle against the extant neoliberal and secularist forces. In response, they internalized the discourses and practices of their enemies in a process of passive revolution. The end result of this transformation was the rise of a moderate Islam that accepts capitalism and democracy as the common sense of the age.

Tuğal begins *Passive Revolution* by analyzing the struggle between the established secularist hegemony and the radical Islamist attempt at counter-hegemony (Chapter 2). The secularist regime, which had reorganized politics, society, and the economy to generate consent of the masses for its hegemony in the early years of the republic, faced an organic crisis, losing its grip on society as a result of socioeconomic changes and the decline of popular trust in the incumbent political parties and leaders. The organic crisis became an opportunity for Islamists to develop their own hegemony under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan's political parties. Erbakan and his followers strove to Islamize culture, urban space, and the economy based on an idea of "integral (tevhidi) Islam." These radical strategies for counter-hegemony and frontal attacks against the existing order contrast starkly with those of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party), which was formed by dissidents among the radical Islamists. The AK Party espouses neoliberal economic policies, supports democratization, and maintains a pro-U.S. stance while retaining faith in Islam. The AK Party maintains a delicate balance between Islamism and nationalism, secularism, and global capitalism. According to Tuğal, "The new leadership [of the AK Party] set the scene for the absorption of Islamism into

secular neoliberalism more or less successfully at all levels of the hegemonic formation” (p.51).

The subsequent chapters constitute the core of the book and answer how this process of absorption of Islamism worked on the streets. Tuğal pays particular attention to the role of Islamist political leadership in uncoupling civil and political society, and re-coupling them in their attempt at hegemony. On his first visit to Sultanbeyli between 2000 and 2002, Tuğal observed how the Islamist political party had challenged the secularist hegemony at various levels of power, and why it failed in its attempts. For instance, Tuğal notes that an interlocking problem of corruption, bourgeoisification, and deradicalization of the Islamist party caused popular disappointment among the Islamists in the community. He also argues that radical Islamism was unable to overcome the ethnic divide between Turks and Kurds as well as the dilemma between Islamic internationalism (Ümmetçilik) and Turkish nationalism as a vision of unity.

When Tuğal returned to Sultanbeyli in 2006, the political landscape had already changed. The AK Party had swept to power in Sultanbeyli after its landslide victory in the 2002 general elections. The locals of Sultanbeyli, which had been “the fortress of Islamism nationwide” (p.11), underwent a great transformation to conservatism. In contrast to the Islamist party previously in power in Sultanbeyli, the AK Party used the religious faith of individuals to naturalize the integration of Islam with a neoliberal economy and the West rather than to create an integral religion. This strategy succeeded in creating popular consent to the existing secular hegemony while keeping Islam

as an important component in its relation with society. The AK Party benefited from the dynamism and commitment of the remnants of radical Islamism suppressed by the 1997 military intervention, and was able to absorb former Islamic activists into the existing order of authority, capitalism, and democracy. In Sultanbeyli’s market-oriented Islamic civil society, Islam is still widely practiced, but it becomes more individualized, rationalized, nationalist, and capitalistic, says Tuğal.

In *Passive Revolution*, Cihan Tuğal offers a rigorous analysis of the complex symbiotic relationship between politics, society, and the economy, and critiques the literature that overlooks the central role that political leadership plays in its challenges to the extant hegemony or in its attempts to preserve it. While he clearly acknowledges that changes in political and economic structures have had an undeniable impact on the Islamist transformations, he places more emphasis on the role of entrepreneurial political agents who are able to hold society together through “articulation.” Further, Tuğal proposes a unique perspective to understand the rise of the AK Party as an ongoing economic process in which political Islam becomes absorbed into the extant secular, democratic, and capitalist hegemony, contributing to the creation of willing consent among religiously-oriented men and women to be subordinated to the logic of neoliberal global capitalism.

The present reviewer had one question in mind when reading this book: to what extent does the case in Sultanbeyli represent the recent transformation of political Islam and its relationship with politics, civil society, and the economy at the

national level of analysis? This question is of particular importance, as Tuğal carries out a comparative analysis on the Islamic transformations in Turkey, Egypt, and Iran (Conclusion). In this comparison, Tuğal refers to the transformations experienced in Sultanbeyli as representative of the transformations in Turkey as a whole. I do not see, however, that he persuasively justifies that what he observed in Sultanbeyli actually represents what is taking place as a nationwide phenomena. True, Tuğal briefly defends his “extended case method” (p.12) as a method emphasizing theory reconstruction over representativeness; however, his comparison would be more persuasive if he were able to establish a link between the particular (Sultanbeyli) and the general

(Turkey), or elaborate his discussion on the “extended case method.”

Overall, Tuğal’s *Passive Revolution* offers a powerful, fresh glance at political Islam. His fieldwork successfully situates personal experiences of Islamic absorption into a larger historical context. Tuğal’s hegemonic approach to the transformation of Islamic politics will lead to further debate in the literature on political Islam. Readers unfamiliar with Gramscian concepts such as hegemony, absorption, and articulation, might struggle to grasp his argument, but the reward is well worth the effort. In short, I strongly believe that *Passive Revolution* deserves close reading.

Masaki Kakizaki, *University of Utah*

## Debates on Secularism in Turkey: Secularism and State Policies towards Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey

By *Ahmet T. Kuru*

New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 313 pp., ISBN 9780521741347.

The relationship between the state and religion, or the question of secularism, has always been one of the most hotly debated issues in Turkish politics, even more so since the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) to power in 2002. Professor Ahmet T. Kuru, currently teaching at San Diego State University in the USA, has recently made a rich contribution to this debate. His book, published by the prestigious Cambridge University Press, is entitled *Secularism and State Policies toward Religion: The United States, France, and Turkey* (xvii + 313 pages). As its sub-title indicates, the book is essentially a comparative study of

secularism in the United States, France, and Turkey.

The book starts with a long and rich theoretical discussion of secularism in its historical, ideological, and policy-oriented dimensions, in which he criticizes the modernization theory, the civilizational approach, and the rational-choice theory. The modernization theory predicted the decline of religion’s political role through economic development which, however, does not seem supported by the facts. The civilizational approach posits an inherent distinction between certain religions, and