

Berna Turam**Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement**

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Since September 11 there is a renewed interest in understanding the inner workings of Islamic cultures. Unfortunately, the polarized environment of the post-9/11 period has created an environment in which there has emerged a body of literature analyzing the troubled state of affairs in Muslim countries without paying much attention to the cultural, historical and social differences between these countries. As a result, a growing body of recently published work on Islam, in general, and Muslim countries, in particular, has reduced the complexity of Muslim countries and cultures to a decontextualized and ahistorical reading of Islam (Lewis 2003; Pipes 2003).

There is also, however, an emerging body of literature that goes beyond such generalities to provide a richly detailed analysis of Islamic movements and forms of Islamic politics, emerging from specific and unique circumstances of individual Muslim countries (Atasoy 2005; Cinar 2005; Eisenstadt 2001; Roniger and Waisman 1992). Berna Turam's richly researched book belongs within this second category of scholarship, providing a much needed analysis, based on careful research of the relationship between the state and Islamic political actors in Turkey. Furthermore, Turam's book contributes nicely to the growing literature on multiple forms of modernity in non-Western places. Through a series of detailed case studies, this literature refutes the claim that the relationship between modernity and tradition is always one of conflict. Instead, it emphasizes the idea that modernity is no longer an exclusively western phenomenon but instead is constantly reinterpreted and remade in non-western places (Eisenstadt 2001; Roniger and Waisman 1992).

The thesis of Turam's book counters the common belief that the interaction between the secular state and Islamic actors is always a confrontation. Instead, Turam argues that the Turkish case is more complex: Islamic political actors engage with the secular state through contestation, negotiation and accommodation. The result is greater cooperation between the state and Islamic actors, leading to the acceptance of the latter as legitimate political actors. A more contentious argument made by Turam is that this non-confrontational form of interaction between the state and Islamic actors contributes to democratization in Turkey.

The book develops its argument by focusing on two distinct and separate political movements in Turkey: the Gulen Movement and the Justice and Development Party (Adalet and Kalkinma Partisi, hereafter referred to as the AKP). The Gulen movement is a loosely organized Islamic movement, with extensive economic holdings and widespread networks of schools, both within Turkey and abroad, while the AKP is a formally organized political party and currently the governing party in Turkey. It is no accident that the book focuses on these two diverse movements as they have both had, in their own way, a transformative impact on the Turkish political scene. While the political impact of the Gulen movement is derived from its large base of followers, in addition to its educational activities and significant economic assets, the AKP has been an active participant in formal politics. As the governing party, the AKP continues to have a major impact on the functioning of state institutions. The book devotes the bulk of discussion to the Gulen movement and pays significantly less attention to the inner workings of the AKP. In discussing why both movements have relatively non-confrontational relationships with state actors the book reveals some striking similarities between them, which in turn provide some clues as to how and when Islamic actors adopt a more cooperative approach vis-à-vis state institutions: both the Gulen movement and the

Justice and Development Party are nationalist in their orientation and share the dominant nationalist discourse represented by the state. Many Islamist movements in the Middle East situate themselves against the dominant state discourse and strive to be pan-Islamic in orientation. In contrast, both the Gulen movement and the AKP do not pose a direct challenge to the dominant ideology. In some cases, they even support and further the nationalist discourse that is the foundational pillar of the Republican regime in Turkey. This eases the tension between the state and these movements and makes them more acceptable in the eyes of state institutions. Furthermore, both the Gulen movement and the AKP are extremely adept in conforming to the neoliberal economic order. The Gulen movement controls a series of successful enterprises within and outside Turkey and seems to have no apparent problem with profit-making capitalist logic. Similarly, during its tenure as the government, the AKP has implemented reforms to further liberalize the economy. It has also maintained close ties with international financial institutions and implemented the necessary reforms to attract and keep foreign investment within Turkey. This emphasis on economic liberalization makes the AKP government both more attractive to international economic institutions and less threatening to the urbanized elite in Turkey. In other words, as the book suggests, the AKP government and the Gulen movement allow the new conservative middle class to become part of consumer society and reconcile some of the tensions between modern life and conservative moral values. Finally, both the Gulen movement and the AKP appear to respect pluralism as the basis of democratic public discourse. While both organizations are communitarian in their orientation, and exhibit authoritarian tendencies within their communal boundaries, they are also very careful to be pluralistic and accommodating in their dealings with the larger Turkish society. As a result, Turam's research suggests that rather than taking a confrontational approach with the state and larger society, both organizations politically engage in "horizontal activities," thereby creating "vertical platforms of islam and the state" (29).

While the book provide invaluable insights, particularly into the inner organization and dynamics of the Gulen movement, and less so into the AKP, some unexplored venues render the thesis of the book less coherent. Given that the book attempts to analyze the political engagement between the state and Islamic actors, there is very little theorizing of the state and its institutions. While the book acknowledges in passing the contradictory attitude of state institutions, it fails to engage with a detailed analysis of state structure. The Turkish state in the book appears to be monolithic, while in practice state institutions in Turkey usually take contradictory approaches to accommodating Islamic actors. For example, while the army and certain segments of the judiciary have traditionally been hostile to the political representation of Islamic movements in the public sphere, other segments of state bureaucracy tend to more hospitable. Any work attempting to analyze the shift in state institutions towards the representation of Islamic actors needs to theorize the structure of state institutions. Furthermore, there is very little discussion in the book about the impact of globalization and the process of European Union membership on the transformation of modernity in Turkey. As a result, it is implied that the gradual transformation of Turkish modernity towards more liberal forms of modernity has largely come about as a result of the political engagement of Islamic actors. Yet globalization and EU membership processes have also had a similarly transformative impact on Turkish modernity and possibly on the political strategies of Islamic actors. Finally, last April's open conflict between the AKP government and the military over the Presidential election, along with increasing state scrutiny of the Gulen movement, raises questions as to whether the state has fully accepted them as legitimate political actors.

While further discussion of these issues would have strengthened its thesis, Turam's book still makes an extremely important contribution to understanding the relationship between the state and Islamic political actors. Rich detail shows political Islam as a complex and contradictory phenomenon.

Islamic political actors engage with various aspects of modern life on an ongoing basis and the outcome of this engagement is not necessarily conflict and confrontation. Perhaps an even more significant observation to emerge from this book is that the representation of Islamic actors in public discourse can encourage engagement and foster social and political pluralization in the public sphere.

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Feyzi Baban

Trent University
fbaban@trentu.ca

Feyzi Baban is an Associate Professor of Politics at Trent University. His research interests include Democratization and citizenship in the Middle East. He is currently working on a research project focusing on the impact of European Union membership on the Turkish politics.

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