



CHICAGO JOURNALS

Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective by Karen Barkey
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Source: *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 116, No. 2 (September 2010), pp. 705-707
Published by: The University of Chicago Press
Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/656224>
Accessed: 05/07/2011 16:04

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a broader range of women can make personal choices beyond the reach of structural or state-sanctioned forms of violence.

If there is one weakness of this nuanced and important comparative ethnography, it stems from its analytic strength: its focus on the political-economic convergences in the structure of tourism and intimate exchanges in two neighboring Caribbean nations. While readers with an interest in variations in the Cuban and Dominican sex industries can find many ethnographic references to national differences, the overall work effectively represents the homogenizing influence of the global tourism industry in the Caribbean, producing local dynamics that are remarkably similar in these two politically distinct nations. This is perhaps most palpable in relation to the Cuban revolutionary period. While Cabezas does make brief reference to unique revolutionary responses to tourism (such as the development of a local tourism industry prior to the Special Period and the institutionalization of rehabilitation camps for sex workers), her analysis strongly privileges structural and social similarity over variation. Nevertheless, the subtlety with which Cabezas engages local people and incorporates voices leaves the reader feeling grounded in local realities.

This nuanced and readable ethnography will be of interest to a wide audience, ranging from scholars and students of Caribbean culture, globalization, tourism studies, women and gender studies, sexuality and sex work studies, and global trafficking campaigns.

Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective. By Karen Barkey. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. 342.

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How and why do empires form, persist, and eventually fail? This question has occupied many social scientists, and in *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* Karen Barkey tackles it in a novel manner. The originality of her approach stems from two factors. Empirically, she brings to the comparative study of empires the much less well studied Ottoman Empire that formally existed from 1300 to 1918 (p. 15), more than six centuries. And she does so with frequent comparisons with “traditional, contiguous, land-based” Habsburg, Russian, Roman, and Byzantine empires (p. 14). This is a major comparative undertaking that needs to be lauded because it is predicated on a very broad reading of the literature on empires. Theoretically, Barkey employs a structural institutionalist network approach, analyzing “organizations and networks connecting large and constantly changing structures” (p. 6). Her subsequent focus on the networked linkages and the compacts between the state and social actors lead Barkey to reach the following conclusion: while the Ottoman state was initially successful in forming vertical link-

ages with social actors that recognized its diversity and difference, it eventually lost this flexibility mainly due to changing "war and commercial ties" (p. 294), gradually leading to its demise.

The book comprises eight chapters organized in two parts. Part 1 sets out the imperial model as each of the chapters articulate, in sequence, the emergence, establishment, and maintenance of the Ottoman Empire. Brokerage across disparate ethnic and religious networks provided the Ottoman dynasty with the flexibility to contain the multicultural social formations it encountered in Asia Minor, politically carrying it further than other similar principalities as well as the Byzantine Empire. Once thus formed, the transformation into an empire occurred through the establishment of institutions and control through a strong center manned by a patrimonial army and officials, provinces vertically integrated yet horizontally segmented by the center within the framework of a flexible economy, and the normative order provided by the religion of Islam. The empire was then able to sustain itself through its expression of tolerance executed through a spacious administration of difference that was nevertheless often marked by dissent. Part 2 focuses on the 18th-century transformation that eventually brings about the demise of the Ottoman Empire, as it transforms into the Turkish nation-state. Inspired by the eventful approach of William Sewell, Jr., the discussion commences with a chapter analyzing the 18th century through three transformative events that renegotiate the nature of political and economic relations between the Ottoman center and the provinces. The ensuing chapter focuses on how war, trade, and taxation alter the hub-and-spoke network structure, irretrievably pulling it outward and away from the control of the center. The final chapter analyzes how the empire then moves into a nation-state formation as changes, first, in tax-farming practices cannot be successfully contained by the state and second, in the treatment of minorities, who lose the tolerance once displayed toward them, spinning the imperial parts away for good. Barkey is especially thorough in discussing the extremely complex and constantly evolving tax-farming arrangements of the Ottoman Empire.

A work with such broad sweep cannot of course be easily based on primary sources. Barkey therefore employs a wide array of secondary literature on empires in general and the Ottoman Empire in particular. What is striking, however, is the paucity of Turkish secondary sources employed, especially ones that have been published since the 1990s. For instance, of the 531 works mentioned in the bibliography, only 58 (about 11%) are in Turkish. As Barkey's native tongue is Turkish, one would have expected her to take this opportunity to incorporate into her work—and thereby present to the English-speaking scholarly audience—the vibrant field of recent Ottoman studies in Turkey. There have been many works by many young scholars in Turkey that tackle the changes of the Ottoman Empire such as, for instance, those of Musa Çadırcı, Atilla Doğan, Feridun Emecen, Yavuz Ercan, Ahmet Gökçen, and Nadir Özbek

to name a few. Yet Barkey chooses to focus mainly on the works of senior scholars in Turkey and abroad who write in English.

Barkey's selection of sources is probably determined by the structural institutional framework she employs, a framework that does not fully take into consideration the critical interpretation of cultural elements, the spectrum of negotiated meanings in society. The focus on networks privileges the analysis of formal political and economic relations over the critical reading of cultural ones. How various social actors negotiate meaning in their everyday lives, how they thus influence Ottoman culture, and, furthermore, how these actors are currently interpreted by scholars of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey today remains largely unaddressed. Hence, even though Barkey argues that her analysis focuses on "the interaction between the macro-structural institutional level, the meso level of networks and individual agency" (p. 278), the last one seems to dissipate as structures and institutions dominate.

This lack of consideration of social agency is perhaps best documented in the imagery Barkey employs at the conclusion of her book. She likens the Ottoman Empire to a cosmic system kept together by "the gravitation of networks that both built and changed the empire" (p. 294). In this system, the financial pull of the center is countered by the push from the provinces, mainly due to changes in tax farming. The system then unravels into "a galaxy of nationalisms increasingly floating free from one another" as the practice that holds the empire together, namely "the policy of flexibly managing diversity" is eventually abandoned by the center (p. 295). Such a depiction takes into account how the formal, solid structures shape social reality. It does so at the expense of noticing and incorporating into the explanatory narrative the system's spectrum of colors and meaning as well as the manner in which social actors actually actively shape this cosmic system. In spite of this small criticism, however, Barkey's impressive work is a most welcome addition to the analysis of the Ottoman Empire within the structural institutional framework.

Secular Cycles. By Peter Turchin and Sergey A. Nefedov. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009. Pp. ix+349.

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In the book *Secular Cycles*, Peter Turchin, an ecologist and evolutionary biologist, and Sergey Nefedov, of the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, are bold in their claim that there may be general laws of historical dynamics—that historical societies can be studied with the same methods physicists and biologists use to study natural systems. Start with a general theory, they say, translate it into mathematical models, use the models to make specific quantitative pre-