

implementation of the reform program (briefly, the HTP served as an important factor in the consolidation of the party's rule by rendering it legitimate); why the TTB staunchly opposed the HTP (briefly, because of the association's key characteristics, contrasting ideas about how to reform the healthcare system, and the TTB's fight against attempts to undermine its legitimacy); and in what ways private providers will continue to influence the direction of health reforms in the near future. While the book would benefit from more clearly laying out its theoretical contribution in terms of "expand[ing] the literature, which has been skewed towards Western European and North American countries" (p. 5), it concludes strongly with a very clear warning to the social policy literature, which has failed to respond to significant challenges to democratic politics in many countries. As Yılmaz warns, merely identifying the specific positions of relevant stakeholders and presenting medical associations or civil society organizations that oppose reforms as "obstacles" to successful reform could blind us to the ongoing erosion of democratic institutions and of the legitimacy of alternative views on healthcare policies. Given the widespread rise of populist and authoritarian discourses in many countries, policy scholars should be careful to not to celebrate "political will" without questioning it, but should instead carefully study the relationship between market reforms, democratic institutions and values, and populism.

**Tuba I. Ağartan**

Providence College

doi:[10.1017/npt.2019.9](https://doi.org/10.1017/npt.2019.9)

**Cihan Tuğal, *Caring for the Poor: Islamic and Christian Benevolence in a Liberal World*. London and New York: Routledge, 2017. xii + 246 pages.**

As the orthodox neoliberalism of the Washington Consensus has unraveled and given way to the social neoliberalism of the post-Washington Consensus over the last two decades, the Global South has witnessed a dramatic expansion of social assistance to the poor, both in cash and in kind. Although the state has remained the largest welfare provider, the role of non-state actors in welfare provision has continuously expanded in the era of social neoliberalism. Most of the NGOs active in social assistance have either direct or indirect ties with political parties and movements across the world, especially in the Global South. Hence, non-state actors have shaped welfare politics not only through their own charitable activities but also

through their organic links with or indirect influences over incumbent or dissident political actors. Islamic charity organizations have been among the fore-runners of the global drive toward social neoliberalism, increasing their presence in the welfare field in the late 1980s and early 1990s and thus preceding the state-driven social assistance boom of the 2000s. Such charities have also significantly contributed to the rise of Islamism from a place of opposition to one of power. Some of the leading members of Islamic charities took office in Islamist governments, as exemplified by the experience of Turkey since November 2002 and of Egypt in 2012–2013.

Cihan Tuğal's *Caring for the Poor: Islamic and Christian Benevolence in a Liberal World* comparatively examines the politics of religious charities in Egypt and Turkey. As its title suggests, the book discusses both Christian and Islamic charities, but its focus is on the latter. The first three chapters provide a theoretical and historical perspective on Christian and Islamic charity. The following four chapters examine different models of Islamic charity based on 120 interviews that Tuğal conducted in Egypt and Turkey between 2009 and 2015.

Chapter 1 lays out the theoretical framework of the book. Tuğal draws on two major approaches to welfare provision; namely, the communitarian account and the domination account. Rooted in Durkheimian sociology and Maussian and anti-utilitarian anthropology, communitarian accounts underline the role of giving in forming communities based on generalized trust, whereas domination accounts, based on Marxist and Foucauldian theories, stress the function of giving in strengthening the elites' control over the poor (pp. 16–21). Tuğal's book aims, in his words, to "ultimately dissolve the theoretical opposition" between these approaches (p. 16). Inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's pioneering work, Tuğal attempts a "thorough integration of communitarian insights into an overall domination framework" (p. 19).

Chapter 2 traces the genealogy of the Christian and Islamic ethics of giving. It shows how the interaction between political economy and different fields, both religious and non-religious, has changed the thinking and practice of welfare provision by state and non-state actors (p. 34). For Tuğal, field dynamics may have been "decisive in defining the limits of the possible, but the ultimate victory of one position over others had as much to do with broader ('hegemonic') struggles" between different social classes (p. 49).

Chapter 3 examines the transformation of the welfare paradigm since the eighteenth century in response to socialist and conservative/communitarian critiques of economic liberalism. As Tuğal notes, the rise of capitalism brought a "merciless rationalization" of welfare thinking (p. 58). Malthusian and Ricardian political economists harshly classified "the poor into deserving and undeserving camps" and attacked "poor laws and subsidies" (p. 61).

Both socialists and conservatives contested this extremely liberal paradigm (p. 62). Communitarians significantly contributed to the design of a new model that combined liberal political economy's classification of the poor into two camps while at the same time significantly expanding assistance to the "deserving" poor, distinguished from the "undeserving" through a moral test. The late Victorian paradigm deeply affected later welfare thinking and practice, including contemporary Islamic charities (p. 63). The remainder of Chapter 3 examines the evolution of Islamic charities within the context of neoliberalism. Here, Tuğal shows that both the number and budget of Egyptian and Turkish Islamic charities have soared rapidly since the 1990s. Although internal dynamics were critically important in this process, the trajectories of Egyptian and Turkish Islamic charities were also shaped by international factors, including the foundation of international Islamic charities funded by the petrodollars of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states in the 1970s and 1980s, international aid campaigns held during the wars in Afghanistan (1979–1989) and Bosnia (1992–1995), and the promotion of moderate Islamism in the post-9/11 period (pp. 85–87). Tuğal suggests that in tandem with the social neoliberalism of Islamist movements and governments—which aim to maintain the neoliberal core while sustaining the support of lower classes, partly through expansive social assistance broadcast through a religious discourse—Islamic charities also selectively borrowed from neoliberal discourses and practices. While the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) and the Turkish charities connected with it took the social neoliberal path relatively successfully, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Egyptian charity networks around it have not "experienced such a consistent turn to social neoliberalism so far" (p. 80).

The remainder of the book defines three main models of Islamic charity organization: communitarian, neoliberal, and redistributive. Chapters 4 and 5 examine the Egyptian communitarian and neoliberal associations, respectively. Chapter 6 analyzes Turkish neoliberal associations. Chapter 7 compares the communitarian and redistributive associations in Turkey. Based on his ethnographic data, Tuğal classifies "an organization as communitarian when its affiliates assumed and/or argued that the fundamental cause of poverty was the moral deficiency of society as a whole" (p. 97). Such associations aim to cultivate "Islamically inspired modesty (rather than individual responsibility) among both the rich and the poor, which would purportedly result in a community with a balanced distribution of wealth" (ibid.). The bulk of their funds go to "Islamic education and relatively little to career training" (ibid.). In contrast, neoliberal Islamic charities instrumentalize "religiosity and community for the cultivation of individual self-reliance," and Tuğal's "neoliberal interviewees assumed that the fundamental cause of poverty was the individual

characteristics of the poor, which needed to be changed for an effective resolution of suffering" (ibid.). They thus allocate greater funds to the career development of their beneficiaries. In line with his goal of dissolving the binary opposition between the communitarian and domination accounts of giving, Tuğal stresses that both models aim to establish bourgeois hegemony over the poor: "While neoliberal associations desired to tame the poor so that they would be dependent and hardworking, communitarians domesticated them so they would be dependent on the rich and thankful to God" (p. 186). Finally, redistributive associations take systemic factors rather than individual characteristics to be the main causes of poverty. Tuğal's redistributive interviewees "claimed to reach people usually ignored by other charities, such as politically risky populations (e.g. Palestinians) or marginalized sectors within Turkey (e.g. prostitutes) [ . . . ] Most favored redistributive economics as an alternative to market socialism" (p. 189). Tuğal's account testifies to the near absence of a consistently redistributive tendency in the field. The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (*İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri İnsani Yardım Vakfı*, İHH), the Candle Association, and many others combine "a redistributive approach at the international level and a neoliberal one at the national level" (p. 196). For instance, "the İHH promises a world without exploitation, borrowing from leftist vocabulary. But when it came to Turkey, İHH members' positions ranged from straightforward neoliberalism to social neoliberalism. Their concrete activities in poor neighborhoods also resembled Turkish neoliberal associations' activities, as they used the same procedures, background checks, and techniques for differentiating between the deserving and undeserving poor (p. 197).

Based on his ethnographic material, Tuğal criticizes the new institutionalist and assemblage literatures. He finds new institutionalism useful for "specify[ing] the mechanisms that push organizations to adopt business practices" (p. 26). However, even left-wing institutionalist accounts fail to "observe how the spread of American charitable ethics restructures but not completely takes over existing charitable fields" (p. 27). Although the charities connected with the Muslim Brotherhood acquired certain neoliberal traits, these "neoliberal turns were combined with the Brotherhood's already existing paternalist-communitarian dispositions (rather than undermining them)" (p. 113). Similarly, the AKP has "integrated rigorous elements of personalism, sectarianism, arbitrariness, and ample informal generosity into a neoliberalized welfare regime" (p. 81). Hence, contrary to the assumptions of new institutionalism, "the global diffusion of templates does not necessarily result in the smooth consolidation of a world culture" (p. 113). Likewise, Tuğal appreciates the emphasis of Deleuzian-Foucauldian assemblage literature on the "coupling of neoliberalism and communitarianism" (p. 158). However,

inasmuch as his ethnography reveals that many members of Islamic charities (including the neoliberal ones) have not adopted a completely neoliberal outlook, with some associations retaining certain redistributive elements, Tuğal criticizes this literature for missing the contradictions between communitarianism and neoliberalism: “Even though it is vital to show how neoliberalism frequently merges with communitarian dispositions, it is as important to underline how some of these might dynamite neoliberalization in the long run” (p. 178).

In his conclusion, Tuğal goes beyond examining the limitations of the relatively redistributive Islamist charity organizations, which emphasize neoliberalism at home and redistributivism in the world, in order to underscore their similarities with the far-right movements of the interwar era. With reference to Karl Polanyi’s analysis of the more or less simultaneous rise of communism, fascism, and Keynesianism, which shows that these movements were society’s different responses to the unchecked liberal economy in the context of the Great Depression of 1929, Tuğal argues that today’s redistributive Islamist charities express a far-right reaction in the context of the world economic crisis of the post-2008 era. As Tuğal aptly notes, “we are indeed witnessing Polanyi’s double movement again but this time the anti-market swing of his pendulum lacks centrist and left-liberal components: Society’s self-protection is challenging deep liberalization, as Polanyians have predicted, but the strong counter-liberal voices emerge on the far right” (p. 222). By contributing to “a global process of right-wing polarization (an emergent melding of imperialism, communitarianism, and capitalism) through creatively appropriating neoliberal and redistributive templates and scripts” (p. 225), “the İHH and similar organizations (and their charitable practices) might become the primary makers of a post-liberal world” (pp. 222–223).

**Burak Gürel**

Koç University

Correction:  
p. 151, line 14:  
market socialism  
Corrected:  
market capitalism