

[New Book: Voices that Matter: Kurdish Women at the Limits of Representation in Contemporary Turkey \(University of Chicago Press 2022\)](#)

Discussion published by Marlene Schäfers on Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to announce the recent publication of my book, *Voices that Matter: Kurdish Women at the Limits of Representation in Contemporary Turkey* (University of Chicago Press, 2022). Through an ethnography of Kurdish women's struggle for voice in today's Turkey, the book provides a nuanced analysis of contemporary politics that routinely incite marginalized subjects to voice in the name of empowerment, emancipation and representation, highlighting the desires and aspirations as much as anxieties and vulnerabilities that such politics produce. Please find more details below.

Kind regards,

Marlene Schäfers

Voices That Matter: Kurdish Women at the Limits of Representation in Contemporary Turkey

By Marlene Schäfers

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A fine-grained ethnography exploring the sociopolitical power of Kurdish women's voices in contemporary Turkey.

"Raise your voice!" and "Speak up!" are familiar refrains that assume, all too easily, that gaining voice will lead to empowerment, healing, and inclusion for marginalized subjects. Marlene Schäfers's *Voices That Matter* reveals where such assumptions fall short, demonstrating that "raising one's voice" is no straightforward path to emancipation but fraught with anxieties, dilemmas, and contradictions. In its attention to the voice as form, this book examines not only what voices say but also how they do so, focusing on Kurdish contexts where oral genres have a long, rich legacy. Examining the social labor that voices carry out as they sound, speak, and resonate, Schäfers shows that where new vocal practices arise, they produce new selves and practices of social relations. In Turkey, recent decades have seen Kurdish voices gain increasing moral and political value as metaphors of representation and resistance. Women's voices, in particular, are understood as potent means to withstand patriarchal restrictions and political oppression. By ethnographically tracing the transformations in how Kurdish women relate to and employ their voices as a result of these shifts, Schäfers illustrates how contemporary politics foster not only new hopes and desires but also create

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novel vulnerabilities as they valorize, elicit, and discipline voice in the name of empowerment and liberation.