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Approaches to Political Islam in Turkey:

A Gramscian Challenge

Abstract

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This presentation will demonstrate how the rise of political Islam in Turkey is understood by the mainstream academia and how Gramscian terminology (especially the integral state) would help us to illustrate power relations among neoliberal restructuring of the state within the state and civil society relations. Basically, existing literature on political Islam will be critically evaluated in this presentation. It would not be quite convenient to compare Turkey with other Islamic states because its own *sui generis* features such as its early and relatively high level of industrialisation, and its early but profound class contradictions and conflicts within it. Therefore this research will be primarily focussed on Turkish case and discussions among political Islam have been limited within the literature on Turkey in this research. The literature is separated into three basic subtitles as follows: state-centric approaches, society-centric approaches and institution-centric approaches. In the first one, there is an abstract assumption of strong state tradition which conflicts with civil society as if they are antagonistic entities. The second one accepts the strong state tradition as given, but there is more emphasis on civil society within identity-based issues. Finally, third one provides limited analysis of the fact since it is kept only within institutional level. The presentation will draw a Gramscian understanding of the state after the critical evaluation of mainstream approaches. In this context, it will be questioned that how the state and civil society relations should be considered in order to carry out a class-based analysis and how the rise of political Islam in Turkey should be comprehended within neoliberalism.