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Abstract

Despite the often articulated assumption of Post-Islamism, the many and diverse movements of political Islam still are a potent force of the world political system. Nevertheless, the field of research concerning Islamist movements in political science has undergone a significant change: After the devastating attacks of “9/11” and the following military (counter)measures of several Western states under the leadership of the US, which sometimes overstated the security threat posed by jihadist networks, critical voices grew louder not to overlook civil operating Islamist groups or parties. These voices were enhanced by the electoral success of the Turkish JDP and the initial political transformations of “Arab Spring”. Since then, the potential of Islamist movements to moderate their religio-political positions and to foster democratic transitions became the focus of several influential publications and research projects.

The following study departs from this change in political science’s analysis of political Islam. In light of recent developments in Turkey under a more and more dominant acting JDP, the killing of Osama bin Laden and the decentralization of al-Qaeda, as well as the recurring total exclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood from the political arena by the Egyptian military the current state of Islamist movements, both their civil and jihadist branches, is explored. Based on a model of the world political system guided by the work of the late Sociologist Niklas Luhmann and the social scientific approach of Islamology, which was developed by Bassam Tibi, this book neither favors the position of the potential of ideological and political moderation provided by Islamism, nor the position of an intensified competition between the diverse groups of political Islam over members, financial support and political influence. Stated in a nutshell, the current state of Islamism displays organizational and semantical processes of differentiation that enable the diverse groups and ideological positions with both: resilience and the potential to adapt to different world political circumstances.