



26.10.07
FRIDAY

‘Islamic Puritanism’ as a Source of Economic Development: Contributions of the Gülen Movement

by *Selcuk Uygur*

Panel:
Gülen and Islam as Social Capital

Venue:
Lecture Theatre,
Brunei Gallery, SOAS

26.10.07 Panels	Parallel Session 1	Parallel Session 2
9:30-11:30		
13:00-15:00		
15:10-17:00	Presentation 11	

Turkey has been going through significant transformations over the last two decades, which might be studied under diverse rubrics. The focus in this paper is on the emergence of a new bourgeoisie that is overwhelmingly religious; its aim is to describe the motives behind the attitudes of religious business people and to discuss the contribution of the Gülen movement.

The paper begins by clarifying relevant concepts that appear vague – such as ‘Islamic Puritanism’ and ‘Islamic work ethic’ – following the particular interpretation by Wilhelm Hennis of Max Weber’s familiar ‘Protestant ethic’ thesis. Rather than looking for mechanical causal relationships, this paper focuses on life goals and ways of living and discusses the Gülen movement’s contribution to the way of living related to economic activities. (The movement is considered as a new interpretation of Islam – Turkish and strongly influenced by Sufism.) Next, the institutional and moral sources enabling an enterprise culture are discussed. This paper considers the transformation in Turkey to be securely founded on the moral sources and suggests that Turkish Islam might be considered as a source enabling a particular type of entrepreneurs, and that this type is helpful to Turkey’s modernisation project as it anticipates membership of the European Union.

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