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**Book Review: Turam, B. (2007). *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press**

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*Comparative Political Studies* 2007; 40; 1560

DOI: 10.1177/0010414007307622

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done by the PATH. The greatest shortcoming of the book is the lack of breadth in the cases studies, leaving the reader desiring a few more data points (especially for the 20th century) to test the thesis beyond the few pages dedicated to the Cold War and the 1990s in the final case study. That said, Löwenheim has made a worthy contribution to systemic theory in international relations literature by rightfully emphasizing the often overlooked interaction of Great Powers with nonstate actors, and I would argue that these relationships will have increasing importance within the international arena in the coming years and decades.

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Turam, B. (2007). *Between Islam and the State: The Politics of Engagement*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

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In the aftermath of 9/11, Islam's relations with the secular state has been avidly debated in both academia and policy circles. In some Muslim countries, such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, versions of political Islamist ideology are the bases of state structures rejecting any notion of secularism. In some other countries, such as Tunisia and Syria, the state does not allow any Islamic political activity. Turkey constitutes a unique case in the Muslim world by combining a secular state with a multiparty democracy (despite the military interventions), which allows political participation of Islamic groups. During the past decade, Islamic groups in Turkey experienced a substantial transformation by developing a positive attitude toward Turkey's democratization and its membership to the European Union. This transformation promises some global implications in terms of democratization of Islamic groups in other parts of the world. Yet there is still a limited number of studies on the subject. Some analyses focus on the societal aspect of the changing Islamic attitudes in Turkey (Yavuz & Esposito, 2003), whereas others examine its political dimension (Kuru, 2005). Few works stress the connection between these two sides (Kuru, 2005).

In this vein, the main strength of Berna Turam's *Between Islam and the State* is its ability to analyze the changing Islamic discourses and practices in Turkey through the analysis of both a social movement (the Gülen movement) and a political party (Justice and Development Party; AKP). Turam chose these two cases due to their extensive and increasing influence. The Gülen movement, initiated by Fethullah Gülen, has focused on education and opened more than 500 schools in about 100 different countries. It also has an international media group and a business network. The AKP is the ruling party in Turkey, which gained about two thirds of the seats in the Parliament in 2002 elections.

According to Turam, certain conditional factors, particularly Turkey's membership to the European Union, has recently led a new democratization wave in Turkey. Major

Islamic groups adapted to this process by rejecting the idea of an Islamic state. Moreover, she argues that the ideational and behavioral transformation in Turkey is not confined with Islamic actors. For her, both Islamic and secular groups changed:

Clearly it was *not* only Erdoğan [the AKP's leader and prime minister] and the Islamic followers who have changed in this short period from their confrontational *Islamist* position to a moderate reform-oriented *pro-Islamic* mode. On the contrary, the attitudes of a growing number of secular actors towards Islam have also been moderating from intolerant forms of laicism to moderate secularism since late 1990s. (p. 6, emphasis in original)

Turam's theoretical framework is mainly based on Joel Migdal's state-in-society approach, particularly on three points. First, her analysis reveals that neither the state nor Islamic movements in Turkey are monolithic; both include actors with multiple views and strategies. She rightly notes the increasing difference between the Kemalists and Atatürkists by depicting the former as followers of an official doctrine and the latter as much more open-minded: "the adherence to Atatürk—separate from the official ideology of Kemalism—has remained dynamic enough to adapt itself to changing conditions" (p. 145). Second, the secular state and Islamic groups in Turkey have changed as a result of their mutual interactions. Last but not least, these actors' behaviors have resulted in many unintended consequences. She argues it for the state: "[T]he current transition in Turkey is *not* an inevitable result of Atatürk's brand of authoritarian modernization. . . . Democratization is the product of the failure and decline or the authoritarianism of the Republican project" (p. 152). She also argues it for Islamic groups: "The Islamic networks of both the Gülen movement and of the AKP have facilitated democratization *not deliberately* through their presumably pro-democratic projects but mostly *accidentally*" (p. 25).

According to Turam, the Gülen movement and the AKP have succeeded to become legitimate sociopolitical actors and contributed to democratization in Turkey by their similarly constructive and nonconfrontational attitudes. By attitudes, she means that these two groups, unlike many Islamists in other countries, have agreed to play the game with the established rules, such as the secular state system and multiparty democracy, rather than seek to get rid of those rules. The Gülen movement, for one, has tried to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the secular and democratic regime. It has expanded its influence in Turkish society primarily by helping social mobilization of "students from lower economic status" (p. 21).

Turam conducted the method of participatory observation, particularly while examining the Gülen movement, since the movement was open "for being a subject of social research" (p. 74). Despite her personal contact with both pro-Islamic and secular agents, Turam successfully uses an objective scholarly language while analyzing very controversial and sensitive issues. That does not mean that she lacks a normative position. For example, she is a clear defender of women's rights. Therefore, on one hand, she appreciates that "the Gülen movement encourages the education

of girls as much as it does the visibility of women” (p. 115). On the other hand, she is critical of this movement’s inability to challenge male-dominant gender relations that are still influential in Turkey.

I have one theoretical and one practical reservation for *Between Islam and the State*. My theoretical criticism is that the book may be read as if it is always normatively good for social movements to accommodate the state. That is not the case if the state is an authoritarian one. In Turkey, absolute loyalty to the state largely means a problematic relationship with liberal democracy and a true secularism, in terms of Islam-state separation and religious freedom. So any movement in Turkey, either Islamic or secular, needs to keep itself distant from the state for one to criticize it for a complete democratization of the political regime.

My practical criticism is that *Between Islam and the State* provides a too optimistic view of Turkish politics. Turam argues that both Islamic and secular actors changed, which led them to reach a kind of modus vivendi. She clearly elaborated the change at the Islamic side. The readers learn about the compromises that the Gülen movement and the AKP made to accommodate with the secular state. A clear example is the following: “When the headscarf ban prevented most of the covered girls from going to school, the Gülen movement was first to insist on girls’ schooling at the cost of compromising their headscarf” (p. 115). Yet the reader has a hard time to see any policy compromise at the secular side. There are still many restrictions over religious expression in Turkey: Headscarves are prohibited in all schools and institutes of higher education, the graduates of Islamic Imam-Hatip schools are not allowed to attend universities, and to teach the Qur’an children under the age of 12 is prohibited. Moreover, Turam claims that even the secularist military has become moderate toward the pro-Islamic groups. Yet in April 2007, the military stated a warning to the AKP government and prevented the AKP majority in the parliament to elect the next president.

In sum, *Between Islam and the State* is a very good book that has a timely question and intriguing cases. The Turkish experience is full of lessons for those who are interested in Islam-state relations in other Muslim countries. This book, therefore, is a candidate to become a must-read for the students of Middle Eastern politics in particular and of religion and politics in general.

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