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From the Sublime Porte to Mogadishu: reading neo-ottomanism and its trajectory in the history of republican Turkey

Abstract

How can social sciences read neo-ottomanism and its trajectory in the history of republican Turkey? In order to answer this research question the present study proposes an analysis the complex and nebulous concept of neo ottomanism by applying elements of three different critical theories of social sciences to a body of secondary sources, Turkish and international, which deal three dimensions of Turkish politics and society in which neo-ottomanism, as a broad social phenomenon, is present. In the first section the analysis provides a reading of neo-ottomanism in Turkish domestic politics through Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony. The second section reads neo-ottomanism in Turkish foreign policy through Holsti's role theory. The third section integrates the previous two with a reading of neo-ottomanism through the lens of ontological security. This approach to neo-ottomanism is deemed useful to achieve a panoramic but theory-based reading of a complex and nebulous phenomenon without forcing it into the cage of a single theoretical reading.