

The Chance for Civil Society in Central Asia or the Role of Islamic Movements in Shaping Political Modernity

Ioana Ban

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to analyze the theoretical and practical underpinnings for a potentially beneficial role that religion can play in strengthening counter-authoritarian groups and civil society in Central Asian states. Both fundamentalist and moderate standings on compatibility between religious practices, key Islamic sources, and pluralism are assessed. The present political situation in the five Central Asian states constitute a suggestive case study and show the need, as well as the opportunity, for religious channels of expression of dissident and opposition sentiments.

Key words: civil society, secularism, multiple modernities, Islam, Central Asia.