

The Islamic Studies in China—Research in Political and Social Fields

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In the research of political and social fields, modern Islamic politics has evolved into three schools of nationalism, modernism and fundamentalism in the 20th century. The research in the field of contemporary Islam involves different countries, nationalities and different economic and political conditions. It is not only the research field of religion, but also has the characteristics of interdisciplinary academic frontier. From the perspective of academic research, these trends have attracted the attention and research of scholars inside and outside the church on Islamic political and social issues. Recently, there have been many problems related to Islam and the current international political life, as well as the research results of Islamic social thoughts and social movements.

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Islam has a deep connection with people's life, especially in contemporary social and political life. In the Islamic world and regions, the relationship between Islam and social politics is closer. We can refer to the relationship between Islam and politics as “political Islam”, “political Islamization”, “Islamic politicization” and so on. The evolution of modern Islamic politics to the 20th century has formed three schools: nationalism, modernism and fundamentalism. Nationalists take the modern nationalist view of state and society as the political cornerstone, regard Islam as the ideological belief, and take the de facto separation of politics and religion as the basic national policy. Modernists take the early Islamic political tradition as a model and advocate political principles such as nationality, freedom and equality. Fundamentalists believe that the aggression and expansion of Western powers is the root cause of the decline of Muslim national politics since modern times. Only by reviving Islamic tradition, including its political principles, ideas and ethical norms, can Muslim countries be peaceful and safe.

The research in the field of contemporary Islam involves different countries, nationalities and different economic and political conditions. It is not only the research field of religion, but also has the characteristics of interdisciplinary academic frontier. At present, many events in Islamic regions are almost related to Islam, but not all events are Islamic, nor are they religious phenomena or religious nature. From a profound perspective, it cannot be seen that these great theories are directly related to world politics and utilization. China has a nation that believes in Islam, and its Islamic religious issues inevitably affect the country's political, social and other fields. International Islamic unrest also naturally affects China's Muslim society.

From the perspective of academic research, these situations have aroused the attention and research of scholars on Islamic political and social issues. Recently, there have been issues related to Islam and the current

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international political life, as well as research results in the social ideological trend and social movement of Islam.

Research on Islamic Revival

In the late 1980s, the following collection of papers was launched through internal distribution.

Liu Jing (1989) edited and published *Essays on Islamic Revival Movement*. The collection of treatises contains important papers of representative scholars, which can be said to surface the main views at that time. Since the 1990s, the number of relevant papers, monographs and research reports of Chinese scholars has increased significantly around the issue of Islamic revival.

Representative research achievements in this field include: Wu Yungui's *Awakening of the Muslim Nation: Modern Islamic Movement* (1994); Xiao Xian's *The Return of Tradition: Contemporary Islamic Revival Movement* (1994); Jin Yijiu's *Contemporary Islam* (1995); Peng Shuzhi's *Islam and the Process of Modernization in the Middle East* (1997); Zhang Ming's *Islamic Revival Movement from the Perspective of Modernization* (1999).

Taking the colonial expansion of the modern West as the historical background, Wu's book briefly introduces the heroic struggle of Muslim nations in the world to revive their faith and strive for national independence, including the purification of faith movement, Jihad movement, new prophet movement, Islamic movement, Islamic modernism movement, etc. Xiao's book systematically discusses the origin, nature, realization form, development grand occasion and development trend of contemporary Islamic revival movement for the first time with detailed materials. Jin's book discusses Islam and politics, Islamic official policies and folk movements, the development and evolution of Islam in contemporary society, Islam and economy, Islam and culture, and the "emerging sects" of Islam, and discusses the evolution process of the Islamic revival movement. A variety of questionnaires are attached at the back of the book to provide theoretical basis and reference materials for understanding contemporary Islam. Peng's book divides the process of modernization in the Middle East into the anti-feudal revolution that Iran and Turkey want to follow at the beginning of this century. This book discusses the establishment of the independent state system in the Middle East since 1945, and makes a serious discussion on the Islamic revival movement and social modernization in the Middle East from a historical perspective. Zhang's book, starting from reality, makes cutting-edge theoretical thinking on the ups and downs of the Islamic revival movement in the process of modernization and its modern interpretation, as well as the conflict between Eastern and Western civilizations and international political interaction. These works respectively discuss the trend of thought and movement of religious revival in modern times. Chinese scholars emphasize that the Islamic revival movement is an international, multi-center and diversified political and social movement, which includes many contents from the perspective of phenomenon.

Research on the Field of Fundamentalism

There are also many research achievements in the field of fundamentalism in Islamic politics, for example: Xiao Xian's *Contemporary International Islamic Tide* (1997); Chen Jiahou's *Modern Islamism* (1998); Qu Hong's *Contemporary Political Islam in the Middle East: Observation and Reflection* (2001).

In Xiao's book, it introduces the situation of the contemporary Islamic movement, that is, it makes a deep and simple discussion on the fundamentalism in the Islamic revival movement, and has incisive explanations on

the Islamic fundamentalism from Hassan al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood to Hassan al-Turabi (Sudan Islamic national front). Chen's book analyzes the causes, organization, nature, characteristics, social basis, theoretical viewpoints, strategic strategies and development prospects of the modern Islamic movement, and has a special chapter on today's hot issues in the Middle East related to the movement and the Middle East peace process. In Qu's book, since the 1970s, with the Iranian revolution as an important symbol, the Islamic wave called "Contemporary Islamic Revival Movement" by Chinese scholars has swept the Middle East and even the whole Muslim world, and it discusses many problems related to the relationship between religion and politics.

In the 21st century, the political concept put forward by Chinese scholars will explore the trend of modern political development both internally and externally. The continuous publication of research results marks the in-depth development of academic research in this field, such as: Wu Yungui and Zhou Xiefan's *Modern Islamic Thoughts and Movements* (2000); Cai Jiahe's *Contemporary Islamic Fundamentalist Movement* (2003); Wu Bingbing's *The Rise of Shiite Modern Islamism* (2004); Ma Fude's *Pioneer of Modern Islamic Revival Movement—Wahab and His Ideological Research* (2006).

Among them, Wu Yungui and Zhou Xiefan's book is still a masterpiece in this academic field. The book not only follows the "pre-history" with a new and unique perspective, but also comprehensively combs and summarizes the complex relationship between various contemporary ideological trends and movements.

Islam and International Politics and Society

Although some scholars believe that the study of "Islamic fundamentalism" cannot only focus on extremists who are keen on violent terrorist activities, but also pay great efforts to study moderate mainstream groups, because the moderates trying to integrate into mainstream society are likely to represent the future trend. But the activities of a few extreme factions will still become a hot topic of social concern, and new problems are raised for academic research.

Social Sciences Academic Press has published monographs on Islam and politics for several years, such as: Jin Yijiu's *Islam and World Politics* (1996); Zhang Xiaodong's *Islam and the World of the Post-Cold War* (1999); Liu Jinghua and Zhang Xiaodong's *Modern Politics and Islam* (2000); Chen Decheng's *Political Modernization in the Middle East—Exploration of Theory and Historical Experience* (2000).

In the book of Jin, from the historical relationship between Islam and politics, contemporary Islam and national revolution, modern reform and socialism, it comprehensively discusses the evolution of new pan-Islam, Islamic revival movement, Islamism and politics, which is a monograph of studying Islam and world politics in an early and systematic way. In the book edited by Zhang, it analyzes the theory of Islamic threat with the changing world pattern and the development prospect of Islamic politics. In his co-work, Liu and Zhang adopted the advanced academic viewpoints popular abroad, and made a deep analysis of the relationship between Islam and political ideology, political tradition, political culture, political legitimacy, political system, political authority and political participation, as well as the contemporary Islamic revivalism and fundamentalism, and put forward new ideas. Of the books edited by Chen, it is one of the main political ideologies in the Middle East. And the theory of political modernization of Turabi and Elbasan is discussed in detail. After discussing the influence of Islam on the political modernization process in the Middle East, the author discusses Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Syria and Iraq. This is a new topic, a rare treatise.

Since the 1990s, due to the end of the Cold War between the East and the West, the world political pattern has undergone drastic changes. In the past, many regional contradictions covered up for a long time under the bipolar system broke out one after another, while religious extremism and national separatism, with the connivance and use of external forces, added fuel to various contradictions and disputes, and conflicts generally appeared all over the world. In this regard, relevant Chinese departments and research institutions have held many seminars on this theme, carried out extensive academic exchanges and countermeasures consultation, and organized many research projects and topics. Of course, these must be based on previous academic accumulation and basic theories, and on contemporary Islamic research. In 2000, the Research Report *Islam in International Politics in the 1990s* by Jin Yijiu and Wu Yungui (2000) was completed. The report makes a serious thinking and systematic combing of regional hot issues related to Islam, analyzes the causes and consequences of hot issues, and makes an objective and fair evaluation. Under the general report “Islamic issues in contemporary international politics”, eight topics are proposed.

Representative research achievements in this field include: Yang Haocheng and Zhu Kerou’s *Historical Exploration of Contemporary Hot Issues in the Middle East—Religion and Secularity* (2000); Jin Yijiu and Wu Yungui’s *Islam and International Hot Spots* (2001).

Based on the book *Ethnic Conflicts and Religious Disputes—Historical Exploration of Contemporary Hot Issues in the Middle East* published by Yang Haocheng and Zhu Kerou in 1996, it further discusses the relationship between Islamism and secularism in hot issues in the Middle East. Due to the authors’ perspective of world history, the book has become a distinctive academic work. Jin and Wu’s (2001) book takes 13 Islamic countries as cases, from the regional conflicts and wars during the Cold War, the fierce struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States in the world, to a series of major events and hot issues in the Islamic world after the Cold War, and finally concludes with the Islamic factor in international politics. The book has a huge system, rich materials, comprehensive discussion and novel views. It is a rare masterpiece in this field “After the 9.11 incident”, the issue of international terrorism and religious extremism has been put in front of us as a new topic, and the society requires academic opinions.

Conclusions

From the perspective of Islamic research, the core of the achievements in the above three aspects, namely, the study of Islamic revival movement, Islamism or “Islamic fundamentalism”, Islam and international politics, and Islam and international hot spots, is the study of contemporary Islam and Islamism. At present, some people believe that Islamism has failed, or that the whole Islamic revival movement is at a low tide. But in the author’s analysis, where political Islam will go in the 21st century depends on different political Islamic organizations themselves, as well as their national and social environment. The factor determining the future trend of political Islam is politics, not religion itself. Moreover, once the political and social pattern changes, the religious form, trend and function will also change. Focusing on the development of the world form, political Islam is no longer the normal state of Islam.

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