

Post-Islamism in Contemporary Muslim Politics: A Comparative Study of Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the development of post-Islamism in contemporary Muslim politics through comparative studies in Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia. In recent decades, Islamic politics in various Muslim countries has undergone a transformation from an ideological orientation focused on the establishment of an Islamic state and the formalization of sharia to a politics that is more pragmatic, inclusive, and compatible with democracy. This research uses a qualitative method with a library *research* approach and comparative analysis. Research data were obtained from books, journal articles, official documents, and various scientific publications related to Islamic politics, democracy, and religion-state relations in the three countries. Data analysis was carried out in a descriptive-comparative manner using the theory of Post-Islamism from Asef Bayat, the theory of Political Cleavage from Lipset and Rokkan, and the Catch-All Party theory from Otto Kirchheimer. The results show that Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia are both undergoing a transformation towards post-Islamism, but in different forms. Indonesia shows a democratic and pluralist post-Islamism model through the strengthening of moderate Islam and inclusive politics. Turkey is witnessing a transformation from Islamism to conservatism and religious populism marked by consolidation of power. Meanwhile, Malaysia is developing a hybrid form of post-Islamism through negotiations between Islamic identity, Malay nationalism, and the realities of a multicultural society. This research offers the concept of Comparative Post-Islamic Politics, which is a condition in which Islamic parties and movements maintain Islamic identity as a source of moral legitimacy and political symbols, but their political strategies, orientations, and agendas are increasingly moving towards democratic and post-ideological pragmatism. These findings show that post-Islamism is not a uniform phenomenon, but rather a process of Islamic political transformation that is contextual and influenced by the social, political, and institutional dynamics of each country.

Keywords : post-Islamism, Islamic politics, democracy, Indonesia, Turkey, Malaysia, comparative politics.

Introduction

The development of Islamic politics in recent decades has shown a significant transformation in the orientation, strategy, and practice of Islamic movements in various Muslim countries. If in the 1970s to 1990s Islamic politics were synonymous with efforts to formalize the sharia, the establishment of an Islamic state, and the ideological struggle to make Islam the basis of the political system, then contemporary developments show the emergence of a new tendency that is more pragmatic, inclusive, and compatible with democracy. This transformation gave birth to a phenomenon that in Islamic political studies is known as post-Islamism, which is a condition when Islamic movements and parties begin to reinterpret the relationship between Islam, democracy, the state, and the rights of citizens (Bayat, 2011).

The concept of post-Islamism was first introduced by Asef Bayat to explain the changing political orientation of Islam in post-revolutionary Iran. According to Bayat, post-Islamism is a condition and political project that emerges when the attractiveness, symbols, and legitimacy of Islamism begin to experience *exhaustion*, thus encouraging the birth of efforts to combine Islamic values with democracy, pluralism, individual rights, and civil liberties. Post-Islamism does not mean a rejection of Islam in politics, but is a form of

criticism of Islamism that is exclusive and oriented towards the religious state.

The post-Islamist phenomenon is becoming increasingly relevant to study as various Islamic movements and parties in the Muslim world show a tendency to abandon the agenda of formalizing sharia and turn to more substantive issues, such as social justice, governance, welfare, democracy, and human rights (Bayat, 2013). These changes show that Islamic politics is not regressing, but is undergoing a process of adaptation to social changes, globalization, and the demands of modern democracy. In this context, Islam is maintained as a source of moral legitimacy and political identity, but it is no longer the exclusive ideology that governs all aspects of state life.

Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia are three Muslim countries that are interesting to study in a post-Islamist perspective because each has different historical experiences, religious-state relations, and political dynamics of Islam. Indonesia is known as a country with the largest Muslim population in the world that has developed an accommodating and pluralist model of religious-state relations. Islamic parties in Indonesia, such as PKB, PAN, and PKS, in recent decades have shown a tendency to prioritize universal issues and public policies rather than the agenda of formalizing Islamic law. This phenomenon shows a shift from ideological Islamic politics to a more pragmatic and inclusive

Islamic politics (Munandar & Suwendi, 2025).

In Turkey, the development of post-Islamism can be observed through the transformation of the Justice and Development Party or AKP under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. At the beginning of its emergence, the AKP projected itself as a conservative-democratic party that sought to combine Islamic identity with democracy, economic liberalization, and integration with Europe. However, subsequent political developments show a more complex dynamic, in which political pragmatism and power consolidation have also shaped the new face of Islamic politics in Turkey. This condition makes Turkey one of the important laboratories in understanding the development of post-Islamism in the Muslim world.

Meanwhile, Malaysia offers a different experience because Islamic politics in the country cannot be separated from the issue of Malay ethnic identity and the country's policy of placing Islam as the official religion. The Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) and the United Malays National Organisation have shown an effort to combine Islamic identity with a more pragmatic political strategy in the face of a multicultural society and electoral democratic competition. These changes show that Islamic politics in Malaysia is also undergoing a process of adaptation and transformation in line with the thesis of post-Islamism (Abbott & Gregorios-Pippas, 2010).

Although the concept of post-Islamism has been widely used to explain the political transformation of Islam in the Middle East, comparative studies analyzing post-Islamist manifestations in Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia are still relatively limited. Most research tends to focus on the experiences of a particular country and has not provided a comprehensive explanation of how the social, political, and religious-state contexts affect the form and character of post-Islamism in various Muslim countries (Munandar & Susanti, 2025). In fact, comparative analysis is very important to understand that post-Islamism is not a uniform phenomenon, but rather has different variations and characteristics according to the context of each country.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to analyze the development of post-Islamism in contemporary Muslim politics through comparative studies in Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia. This research also seeks to explain the similarities and differences in Islamic political transformation in the three countries and offers the concept of Comparative Post-Islamic Politics, which is a condition in which Islamic political actors maintain Islamic identity as a source of moral legitimacy and political symbols, but their political strategies, orientations, and agendas are increasingly moving towards democratic and post-ideological pragmatism.

Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative method with a comparative study approach

and comparative library research. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand and explain in depth the post-Islamist transformation in contemporary Muslim politics in Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia. Meanwhile, a comparative approach is used to identify similarities, differences, and characteristics of post-Islamist developments in the three countries that have different historical backgrounds, political systems, and religious-state relations (Hamzah, 2020).

The source of research data consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from books, journal articles, and scientific works that discuss post-Islamist theory, Islamic politics, democracy, and religious-state relations. The secondary data was obtained from official government documents, reports of international institutions, election results, reports of political organizations, as well as scientific and media publications related to the development of Islamic politics in Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia.

The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies and systematic literature review by identifying, classifying, and selecting various literature sources that are relevant to the focus of the research. The literature studied includes research on the development of Islamism and post-Islamism, the transformation of Islamic parties, the relationship between religion and the state, and the dynamics of democracy in the three countries. The literature selection process was carried out

based on the relevance of the theme, the quality of the publication, and its contribution to the development of the research analysis framework (Hayman & Smith, 2020).

Data analysis was carried out using descriptive-comparative methods through four stages. First, data reduction, which is to select various data and information that are relevant to the focus of the research. Second, data categorization, which is grouping data into several themes, such as Islamic political transformation, changes in ideological orientation, religious and state relations, and post-Islamism manifestations in Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia. Third, comparative analysis, which compares the similarities and differences in post-Islamist developments in the three countries based on historical, ideological, and institutional dimensions. Fourth, data interpretation, namely interpreting research findings using the theory of Post-Islamism from Asef Bayat, the theory of Political Cleavage from Lipset and Rokkan, the Catch-All Party theory from Otto Kirchheimer, and the theory of Multiple Secularities to explain the variation in the relationship between religion and the state in the three countries.

To improve the validity of the data, this study uses source triangulation, which is comparing information obtained from various books, scientific articles, research reports, and official documents. This technique was carried out to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the post-Islamist transformation in contemporary Muslim politics as well as to minimize

interpretive biases towards the phenomenon being studied.

As a literature-based research, this study has limitations because it does not involve the collection of field data directly through interviews or observations. Therefore, the findings of this study are more directed to build a conceptual and analytical framework regarding the development of post-Islamism in Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia and provide a theoretical basis for empirical research on comparative Islamic politics in the future.

Result and Discussion

Post-Islamism Conceptualization in Contemporary Muslim Politics

The development of Islamic politics in recent decades has shown a significant transformation in ideological orientation, political strategy, and relations between religion and state in various Muslim countries. If in the 1970s to 1990s Islamism was synonymous with the struggle to establish an Islamic state, the formal application of the sharia, and the establishment of a political order based on the principles of religion as a whole, then contemporary political developments show the emergence of a new tendency that is more pragmatic, inclusive, and compatible with democracy. This transformation gave birth to a phenomenon known as post-Islamism, a concept that explains the change in the orientation of the Islamic movement from an ideological project to a political project

that is more substantive and adaptive to modernity (Azra, 2016).

Historically, the emergence of Islamism in the 20th century was a response to Western colonialism, the secularization of the state, and the failure of national political elites to realize development and social justice in Muslim countries. Movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jamaat-e-Islami in South Asia, and various political Islamic movements in the Middle East view Islam not only as a religion, but also as a political ideology capable of offering an alternative to capitalism and socialism. In this perspective, Islamism seeks to make religion the main foundation in the state system and public life (Roy, 1994).

However, political experience in various Muslim countries shows that the project of Islamism faces various limitations. The implementation of the Islamic state agenda is not always able to solve the problems of poverty, social inequality, corruption, and democratic crises. In fact, in some countries, Islamism has given birth to new forms of authoritarianism and narrowed the space for civil liberties. This condition then encouraged the emergence of critical reflection on the project of Islamism and paved the way for the birth of post-Islamism.

The concept of post-Islamism was first introduced by Asef Bayat to explain the changing orientation of the Islamic movement in post-revolutionary Iran. According to Bayat, post-Islamism is a

condition when the project of Islamism experiences ideological exhaustion and is no longer able to answer the demands of modern society which is increasingly plural and complex. This condition encourages the birth of a new paradigm that seeks to combine Islamic values with democracy, pluralism, individual rights, and civil liberties.

For Bayat, post-Islamism is not the antithesis of Islamism nor is it a form of full secularization of politics. Post-Islamism is an attempt to reconcile religion and democracy, religiosity and modernity, as well as Islamic identity and citizenship. In this paradigm, Islam is still maintained as a source of ethics and moral values, but is no longer used as an exclusive and hegemonic political ideology (Bayat, 2007). Therefore, post-Islamism emphasizes more on the substance of Islamic values, such as justice, equality, and welfare, than on the formal symbols of the Islamic state.

This phenomenon can also be understood through the perspective of Olivier Roy who stated that Islamism has failed in realizing the ideal of an Islamic state. According to Roy, globalization, modernization, and democratization have changed the social structure of Muslim societies so that the project of Islamism oriented towards the religious state has lost its political appeal. In this situation, Islamic parties and movements began to adopt a more pragmatic strategy by emphasizing issues of welfare, governance, economic development, and institutional reform (Roy, 1994).

Roy's analysis shows that the transformation of Islamic politics does not mean the loss of the role of religion in the public sphere, but it shows the deideologizing of Islamic politics. Religion is no longer positioned as a total ideology that governs all aspects of political life, but rather as a source of moral legitimacy and public ethics. Thus, the success of Islamic politics is no longer measured by the extent to which the sharia is formally applied, but by its ability to bring social justice, clean governance, and the welfare of the community.

In this context, post-Islamism can be understood as a form of adaptation of Islamic politics to modern democracy. According to Bayat (2013), post-Islamism was born from the realization that democracy, human rights, pluralism, and civil liberties should not be seen as a threat to Islam. Rather, these values can be integrated into Islamic political thought and practice. Therefore, post-Islamism is more oriented towards strengthening civil society, political participation, and democratic governance than on the project of formalizing sharia.

The transformation also represents a fundamental change in the relationship between religion and state in the Muslim world. In the phase of classical Islamism, the state was seen as the main instrument for implementing the sharia and realizing an Islamic society. On the other hand, in the post-Islamist paradigm, the state is no longer the only arena of Islamic struggle. Attention began to shift to strengthening

civil society, social empowerment, and building democratic institutions.

In a comparative political perspective, post-Islamism did not develop uniformly throughout the Muslim world. Each country has a different historical context, political culture, and religious-state relations, resulting in diverse forms of post-Islamism. In Indonesia, post-Islamism developed through the moderate Islamic tradition developed by Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, which emphasized compatibility between Islam, democracy, and pluralism (Hefner, 2023). In Turkey, post-Islamism developed through the transformation of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) which sought to combine Islamic identity with democracy and economic liberalization before undergoing a shift towards conservative populism (Yilmaz, 2011). Meanwhile, in Malaysia, post-Islamism is developing in the context of a multicultural society that has led Islamic parties to adopt more pragmatic and inclusive political strategies.

These contextual differences show that post-Islamism is not a universal model, but rather a contextual and dynamic phenomenon. In some cases, post-Islamism encourages democratization and pluralism, but in other cases it can evolve into a new form of conservatism or religious populism. Therefore, understanding post-Islamism requires a comparative approach that considers the interaction between ideological, institutional, and social factors.

Based on this analysis, this study argues that post-Islamism can be

understood as a new phase in the development of contemporary Islamic politics characterized by three main characters. First, there is a shift from identity politics and sharia formalization to a more substantive and public policy-oriented politics. Second, there are efforts to integrate Islamic values with democracy, pluralism, and citizens' rights. Third, the increasingly dominant political pragmatism in the strategy of Islamic parties and movements.

Thus, post-Islamism does not mark the end of Islamic politics, but it represents a transformation in the way Islam is understood and practiced in the modern political space. Contemporary Islamic politics moves from an ideological project to an ethical and democratic project that seeks to make Islam a source of moral value in public life without having to be realized in the form of a religious state. These changes show that the future of Islamic politics no longer lies in the formalization of religious symbols, but in its ability to present democratic, inclusive, and responsive political governance to the needs of modern society.

Post-Islamism in Indonesia: Moderate Islam and Inclusive Politics

The development of post-Islamism in Indonesia shows a different character compared to various other Muslim countries. If in some post-Islamist countries it emerged as a response to the failure of the Islamic state project or as a form of criticism of exclusive Islamism, then in Indonesia the phenomenon

developed through a gradual process of Islamic political moderation and rooted in the moderate Islamic tradition. After the 1998 reforms, Islamic parties and organizations in Indonesia showed a tendency to abandon the agenda of formalizing Islamic sharia and turn to more substantive issues, such as democracy, social welfare, justice, corruption eradication, and good governance (Qodir, 2023).

This transformation cannot be separated from the political changes that occurred after the collapse of the New Order regime. The 1998 reforms opened up a wider democratic space for various Islamic groups to be involved in the political process. At the beginning of the reform period, various Islamic parties emerged that carried Islamic agendas and identities more openly. However, the development of electoral democracy shows that public support for the Islamic state's agenda and the formalization of sharia is relatively limited. This condition encourages Islamic parties to adjust their political strategies by prioritizing universal issues that are acceptable to a plural and heterogeneous society (Maula, 2023).

This phenomenon can be seen in the transformation of several Islamic parties, such as the National Awakening Party (PKB), the National Mandate Party (PAN), and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). The three parties no longer make the agenda for the implementation of Islamic sharia the main program, but rather emphasize the issues of democracy, welfare, economic development, education, and bureaucratic

reform. In fact, in various political contests, these parties tend to adopt more pragmatic and inclusive political strategies to expand the electoral support base.

This transformation shows that Islamic politics in Indonesia is undergoing a process of deideologization, namely a shift from politics oriented to symbol-oriented and formalized religion to a more substantive and public policy-oriented politics. In this context, Islam is no longer positioned as an exclusive political ideology, but is better understood as a source of ethics and moral values that can provide inspiration for the development of democracy and the welfare of society.

The development of post-Islamism in Indonesia is also influenced by the plural and multicultural character of Indonesian society. Indonesia consists of various ethnic, religious, and cultural groups that make pluralism a social reality that cannot be ignored. In these conditions, political agendas that are exclusive and based on religious identity tend to find it difficult to gain broad political support. Therefore, Islamic parties and Islamic organizations are encouraged to develop approaches that are more inclusive and compatible with the principles of democracy and citizenship.

Dalam perspektif Robert W. Hefner, keberhasilan demokrasi di Indonesia tidak dapat dilepaskan dari berkembangnya konsep Civil Islam, yaitu tradisi Islam sipil yang menekankan pluralisme, toleransi, partisipasi demokratis, dan penghormatan terhadap hak-hak warga negara. Menurut Hefner, Islam Indonesia memiliki karakter

yang unik karena mampu mengembangkan hubungan yang konstruktif antara agama dan demokrasi. Islam tidak diposisikan sebagai kekuatan yang berlawanan dengan demokrasi, melainkan menjadi salah satu kekuatan sosial yang berkontribusi terhadap konsolidasi demokrasi (Hefner, 2023).

The concept of *Civil Islam* became an important foundation in the development of post-Islamism in Indonesia. Major Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah played a central role in introducing the idea that Islam and democracy are not in a conflicting relationship. The two organizations consistently encourage the strengthening of civil society, democracy, and religious tolerance as part of the implementation of Islamic values in the life of the nation and state (Susanti, 2024).

Nahdlatul Ulama, for example, through the idea of *Islam Nusantara*, emphasizes the importance of moderation, tolerance, and acceptance of cultural and religious diversity. Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah through the concept of *Progressive Islam* develops the view that Islam must be a force for social transformation that encourages progress, education, and community welfare. Both approaches show that the development of Islamic politics in Indonesia is more aimed at strengthening the substance of Islamic values than the struggle to form an Islamic state.

In Asef Bayat's perspective, this phenomenon is one of the manifestations of post-Islamism, which is when Islamic

actors begin to combine religious identity with democratic values, pluralism, and citizens' rights. Post-Islamism in Indonesia is not marked by the loss of Islamic identity in politics, but by a change in the way Islam is articulated in the public sphere. Islam remains a source of moral legitimacy and social identity, but it is no longer positioned as an exclusive ideology that must be embodied in the form of a religious state.

This transformation can also be seen from the change in the political orientation of a new generation of activists and Muslim elites in Indonesia. If in the 1980s and 1990s some Islamic movements were still influenced by the idea of transnational Islamism and the formalization of sharia, then the contemporary Muslim generation tends to focus more on issues such as social justice, economic empowerment, the environment, governance, and the strengthening of democracy. This change in orientation shows that Islamic politics in Indonesia is increasingly moving towards *citizenship politics* and *policy-oriented politics*.

Nevertheless, the development of post-Islamism in Indonesia has not been without challenges. In recent years, the strengthening of identity politics and the rise of religious conservatism have shown that the Islamist agenda still has a place in the dynamics of national politics. Political mobilization based on religious identity in several electoral contests shows that religious symbols still have a certain political appeal. However, this phenomenon does not automatically indicate the rise of Islamism, but rather

reflects the use of religious identity as an instrument of political mobilization in electoral democracy.

At the same time, Islamic parties continue to show a tendency to prioritize political pragmatism and inclusive politics. They are increasingly active in building coalitions across ideologies, carrying universal issues, and avoiding the sharia formalization agenda that has the potential to narrow the political support base. This condition shows that post-Islamism in Indonesia is developing in a relatively moderate and democratic form.

Thus, post-Islamism in Indonesia can be understood as a process of transformation of Islamic politics from an ideological orientation to a substantive orientation that seeks to integrate Islamic values with democracy, pluralism, and citizenship. Islamic politics in Indonesia has not undergone secularization or loss of its religious identity, but has undergone moderation and adaptation to the reality of a pluralistic society and the demands of modern democracy.

Based on this analysis, this study argues that the main character of post-Islamism in Indonesia lies in its ability to combine Islamic identity with inclusive and democratic politics. Islam is maintained as a source of moral legitimacy and public ethics, but is no longer used as an exclusive ideology to build a religious state. Therefore, Indonesia's experience shows that Islamic politics and democracy do not have to be in an antagonistic relationship, but can develop in a complementary

manner within the framework of a plural and democratic civil society.

Post-Islamism in Turkey: From Islamism to Conservatism and Populism

Turkey is one of the most important cases in the study of post-Islamism because it shows the dynamics of complex and non-linear Islamic political transformation. In contrast to many other Muslim countries, Turkey has a long history of state secularism inherited by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's reforms since the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. The Kemaistic Reforms placed religion under state control and systematically limited the role of Islam in the political space. For decades, the military and state institutions acted as guardians of *secularism* that monitored and restricted the development of Islamic political movements (Yavuz, 2009).

Nevertheless, the strict policy of secularism did not eliminate the Islamic identity of Turkish society. Instead, various Islamic movements continued to develop through social, educational, and economic networks that ultimately gave birth to new political forces. In the 1970s and 1990s, political Islamist movements led by Necmettin Erbakan through the *National Salvation Party* and the *Welfare Party* sought to present Islam as an alternative to Kemalist secularism and Western liberalism. However, Erbakan's ideological and confrontational Islamist agenda faced resistance from Turkey's military and secular elites, leading to the dissolution of Islamist parties and military political intervention in the late 1990s.

This experience encouraged the birth of a new generation of Islamic politics in Turkey that was more pragmatic and moderate. The emergence of the Justice and Development Party or *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP) in 2001 became an important point in the transformation. Under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül, the AKP sought to break away from the image of traditional Islamism and define itself as a conservative-democratic party.

In the early phases of its rule, the AKP carried an agenda of democratic reform, economic liberalization, protection of civil rights, and integration with the European Union. The party avoids the exclusive use of Islamist symbols and prefers a pragmatic approach that is acceptable to various groups of people. The strategy shows a transformation from ideological Islamism to a more inclusive and compatible form of politics with democracy.

In Asef Bayat's perspective, the development of the AKP in the early phases of its rule can be understood as one of the manifestations of post-Islamism. The AKP no longer fights for the establishment of an Islamic state or the formal implementation of sharia, but seeks to integrate Islamic identity with democracy, free markets, and modern governance. Islam remains a source of moral legitimacy and cultural identity, but is no longer positioned as an exclusive political ideology (Bayat, 2013).

According to Yilmaz, the success of the AKP shows that the Islamic movement can adapt to global democracy and capitalism

without losing its religious identity. Turkey's economic success in the early 2000s, increased foreign investment, and political stability strengthened the legitimacy of the AKP as a new model of democratic and pragmatic Islamic politics. In fact, many academics and political observers at the time viewed Turkey as an example of the successful synthesis between Islam and democracy in the Muslim world.

However, political developments after 2013 show a different dynamic. The Gezi Park protests, the increasing political polarization, and the failure of the coup in 2016 were turning points that changed the political orientation of the AKP and Erdoğan's leadership. The government began to strengthen the consolidation of power, increase control over the media, limit political opposition, and expand the role of religion in the public sphere.

In this context, religion is again used as an instrument of political mobilization and power legitimacy. Islamic symbols are increasingly prominent in Erdoğan's political rhetoric, while religious identities are being used to build political support and strengthen conservative electoral bases. This phenomenon shows that Turkey's political development is undergoing a shift from post-Islamism to a new form of politics often referred to as Islamic populism.

According to Yilmaz, *Islamic populism* is a political strategy that combines populism with Islamic symbols and identities to build political legitimacy. In

this model, political leaders position themselves as authentic representations of the will of the people and the religious identity of the majority, while opposition groups are often perceived as threats to national and religious identity.

These developments show that post-Islamism in Turkey is not progressing towards liberal democracy in a linear manner. Instead, the process undergoes a transformation towards a form of electoral authoritarianism, which is a political system that maintains electoral mechanisms and formal democratic institutions, but is accompanied by a concentration of power, weakening of opposition, and restrictions on civil liberties (Levitsky & Way, 2010).

From a comparative political perspective, Turkey's experience shows that post-Islamism has a dynamic character and does not always result in sustained democratization. The transformation from Islamism to post-Islamism may move in a more democratic political direction, but it may also evolve into populist conservatism and authoritarianism depending on the domestic context, political leadership, and evolving institutional structures.

This analysis also corrects the initial assumption that post-Islamism is the final stage of the evolution of Islamic politics towards liberal democracy. Turkey's case shows that post-Islamism is not the *end point*, but rather a political process that is heavily influenced by power dynamics and domestic political competition. Under certain conditions, post-Islamism can

encourage democratization and pluralism, but in other conditions it can regress towards populism and centralization of power.

In the perspective of Asef Bayat (2013), the phenomenon shows that contemporary Islamic politics cannot be understood through a simple dichotomy between Islamism and secularism. Islamic politics moves across a broad spectrum and continues to undergo negotiations between religious identity, democracy, nationalism, and practical political interests. Therefore, Turkey's experience provides an important lesson that the relationship between Islam and democracy is dynamic and highly dependent on the political and institutional configuration of each country.

Based on this analysis, the study argues that the development of post-Islamism in Turkey shows three main characters. First, there has been a transformation from ideological Islamism to a more pragmatic and inclusive conservative-democratic politics. Second, the consolidation of power and political polarization are driving a shift towards *Islamic populism* and electoral authoritarianism. Third, Turkey's experience proves that post-Islamism is not a linear process, but a dynamic political phenomenon that is susceptible to change according to the domestic political context.

Thus, Turkey is an important example that post-Islamism does not necessarily lead to deeper democratization, but can also give birth to a new form of relationship between religion and politics that

combines Islamic identity, populism, and the concentration of power in an electoral democratic system.

Post-Islamism in Malaysia: Islamic Politics between Identity and Multiculturalism

Malaysia offers a different experience in the post-Islamist development in the Muslim world. In contrast to Indonesia, which developed an accommodating and pluralist relationship between religion and the state, and Turkey, which was built on the foundation of state secularism, Islamic politics in Malaysia developed in a context strongly influenced by the relationship between religion, ethnicity, and Malay nationalism. In the Malaysian political system, Islam not only functions as a religious identity, but also becomes an integral part of the construction of Malay political identity and the legitimacy of the state (Fahmi, 2016). Therefore, the development of post-Islamism in Malaysia cannot be understood solely as an ideological transformation of Islamic politics, but also as a process of negotiation between Islamic identity, societal pluralism, and electoral democratic competition.

Constitutionally, Malaysia places Islam as the official state religion as stated in Article 3 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia. However, Malaysia is also a multicultural country consisting of various ethnic and religious groups, such as Malays, Chinese, Indians, and various other minority communities. This condition creates a unique political dynamic because

every Islamic political agenda must deal with the reality of social plurality and the need to maintain the stability of intergroup relations.

From a comparative political perspective, the relationship between Islam and Malay identity is one of the main factors that distinguishes the development of Islamic politics in Malaysia from other Muslim countries. Since the time of independence, the concept of *Malay supremacy* has been an important foundation in the Malaysian political system. In this context, Malay identity, Islam, and monarchy are intertwined and form the basis of the country's political legitimacy (Milner, 2008). As a result, the debate on Islamic politics in Malaysia is not only related to religious issues, but also to issues of ethnic identity, distribution of power, and nationalism.

The development of Islamic politics in Malaysia began to undergo significant transformations since the rise of Islam in the 1970s and 1980s. The emergence of the Islamic da'wah movement, the increase in religious awareness among the Malay community, and the influence of transnational Islamic movements have led to the emergence of demands to strengthen Islamic identity in political life. In this context, the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party or PAS appears as the main actor who fights for the agenda of the Islamic state and the formal implementation of sharia.

In the early phase of its development, PAS carried an Islamist agenda that was quite ideological. This party places the

establishment of an Islamic state as the main goal of its political struggle and makes sharia as the normative basis in the administration of the state. This strategy differentiates PAS from the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) which prioritizes Malay nationalism and political pragmatism.

However, political dynamics and democratic competition in Malaysia are slowly driving a transformation in PAS' political orientation. The competitive political system and the reality of a multicultural society make it difficult for the Islamic state agenda to gain broad support, especially from non-Malay and non-Muslim groups. This condition encourages PAS to make strategic adaptations by reducing ideological exclusivity and prioritizing more universal issues.

These changes were evident in the early 2000s when PAS began to build political cooperation with non-Islamic parties through opposition coalitions. In some periods, PAS adopted a more pragmatic approach by carrying out issues of good governance, social justice, anti-corruption, and democratic reform. In fact, this party introduced the concept of a Welfare State as an alternative to the idea of an Islamic state which has been the main agenda of the party.

In the perspective of Asef Bayat (2013), the transformation shows the existence of post-Islamist tendencies, namely when the Islamic movement begins to combine Islamic identity with

democracy, pluralism, and the demands of modern society. PAS did not completely abandon its Islamic identity, but sought to reinterpret its political goals to be more compatible with social realities and the needs of electoral democracy.

According to Liow, the change in PAS's strategy shows that Islamic parties in Malaysia are increasingly aware of the importance of political pragmatism in maintaining relevance and expanding their support base. Islamic politics is no longer only understood as an ideological struggle to form an Islamic state, but also as an effort to present a government that is clean, fair, and responsive to the needs of the community (Liow, 2004).

However, the development of post-Islamism in Malaysia is different from Indonesia's experience. If in post-Islamism Indonesia develops within the framework of civil Islam and democratic pluralism, then in Malaysia the transformation is still influenced by the close relationship between Islam and Malay identity. Islamic politics in Malaysia has never been completely separated from identity politics because Islam has become one of the important instruments in maintaining Malay political dominance.

In this context, the development of post-Islamism in Malaysia shows a more hybrid character. On the one hand, Islamic parties and Muslim political elites are adopting a more pragmatic and inclusive strategy. On the other hand, Islamic and Malay identities remain a very important source of political legitimacy. Therefore,

post-Islamism in Malaysia did not result in a comprehensive de-ideologizing of Islamic politics, but rather gave birth to a new form of Islamic politics that combined democratic pragmatism with identity politics.

This analysis is strengthened by Malaysian political developments after the 2018 election and the 2022 election. The change in the political constellation shows that the issues of governance, corruption, and welfare are increasingly dominant in political competition. At the same time, however, Islamic and Malay identities remain an important factor in the process of political mobilization and the formation of power coalitions. This condition shows that Islamic politics in Malaysia is undergoing a process of adaptation to modern democracy without completely abandoning its traditional identity base.

In the perspective of post-Islamism theory, Malaysia's experience shows that Islamic political transformation does not always lead to a model of liberal democracy or political secularization. In contrast, post-Islamism can develop in a more complex and contextual form, in which religious identity is maintained as a source of political legitimacy, but its political orientation and strategy are increasingly pragmatic and public policy-oriented.

Based on this analysis, this study argues that post-Islamism in Malaysia has three main characters. First, there is a shift from the agenda of the Islamic state to a more pragmatic politics oriented towards governance and social welfare. Second, the

transformation takes place in the context of a multicultural society, thus encouraging Islamic parties to develop a more inclusive approach. Third, Islamic and Malay identities remain a source of strong political legitimacy, resulting in a hybrid form of post-Islamism.

Thus, Malaysia's experience shows that post-Islamism is not a uniform process across the Muslim world. Post-Islamism in Malaysia developed as a form of negotiation between Islam, democracy, ethnic identity, and multiculturalism. Islamic politics is no longer completely dominated by the agenda of formalization of the sharia, but moves towards a more pragmatic political model, while still maintaining Islamic and Malay identities as important foundations in national political life.

Comparative Analysis of Post-Islamism in Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia

The results of the study show that Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia are both undergoing an Islamic political transformation that leads to the phenomenon of post-Islamism. However, the post-Islamist manifestations in the three countries developed in different forms according to their respective historical contexts, political structures, religious-state relations, and social dynamics. These differences show that post-Islamism is not a universal model that develops uniformly in the Muslim world, but rather a phenomenon that is contextual and influenced by the domestic conditions of each country.

In general, post-Islamism in all three countries is marked by a decline in the attractiveness of the classical Islamist agenda oriented towards the establishment of an Islamic state and the formal application of sharia. Instead, Islamic parties and movements began to adopt more pragmatic political strategies by emphasizing issues of democracy, welfare, governance, and economic development. This condition indicates that contemporary Islamic politics is undergoing a process of deideologization, namely a shift from symbol- and identity-oriented politics to a more substantive and public policy-based politics.

Nonetheless, the basis of post-Islamism transformation in each country shows a different character. In Indonesia, the development of post-Islamism was strongly influenced by the moderate Islamic tradition and pluralism that developed through major Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. The civil Islamic tradition that has developed in Indonesia has encouraged the birth of the view that Islam and democracy are not two opposites, but can strengthen each other in the life of the state (Hefner, 2023).

In contrast, in Turkey, post-Islamism developed through the process of democratic reform and the transformation of the Islamic movement post-secularism Kemalis. The emergence of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in the early 2000s showed an attempt to combine Islamic identity with democracy, economic liberalization, and integration with Europe.

However, subsequent political developments suggest that post-Islamism in Turkey is moving towards stronger conservatism and populism under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

Meanwhile, in Malaysia, the development of post-Islamism is inseparable from Malay-Muslim identity politics. Islam in Malaysia has not only become a religious identity, but has also become an important part of the construction of Malay nationalism and the political legitimacy of the country. Therefore, the transformation of Islamic politics in Malaysia took place in the context of negotiations between Islamic identity, democracy, and multiculturalism.

These differences in contexts result in different political orientations. In Indonesia, post-Islamism is developing in a more inclusive and substantive form of politics. Islamic parties tend to prioritize issues of welfare, democracy, and governance rather than the agenda of sharia formalization. Islamic politics in Indonesia is moving towards a *citizenship politics* model that seeks to integrate Islamic values with democracy and pluralism.

In Turkey, the post-Islamist orientation is developing in a more pragmatic and populist form. The AKP initially managed to blend Islamic identity with democracy and global capitalism, but political developments after 2013 showed a tendency towards conservative populism and consolidation of power. In this context, Islamic identity is again used as an

instrument of political mobilization and power legitimacy.

As for Malaysia, the post-Islamist orientation shows a more hybrid character. Islamic parties adopt a more pragmatic political strategy and prioritize issues of governance and social justice, while at the same time maintaining Islamic and Malay identities as a source of political legitimacy. Therefore, post-Islamism in Malaysia developed in the form of a blend of democratic pragmatism and identity politics.

Another difference can be seen in the pattern of relations between religion and the state. Indonesia developed a model of religious-state relations that is accommodating. The state recognizes the importance of religion in public life, but does not make a particular religion the basis of the state. This condition allows for the development of a more inclusive and moderate Islamic politics.

Instead, Turkey is built on the country's strong tradition of secularism. Since the era of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, religion has been placed under state control and limited in its role in politics. However, post-Islamist developments show that state secularism does not completely eliminate the influence of Islam in the public sphere. On the contrary, Islam has regained political space through the transformation of Islamic parties and the rise of conservatism.

Meanwhile, Malaysia places Islam as the official religion of the state and makes Malay-Muslim identity an important

foundation in political life. This condition creates a closer relationship between religion and the state than Indonesia and Turkey. Therefore, the development of post-Islamism in Malaysia is more colored by negotiations between democracy, ethnic identity, and religion.

These differences in political contexts have resulted in diverse forms of post-Islamism. Indonesia shows a more democratic and pluralist form of post-Islamism. Islam remains a source of moral legitimacy, but it is not used as an exclusive ideology to build a religious state. Turkey exhibits a more conservative and populist form of post-Islamism, in which Islamic identity is used to strengthen political legitimacy and consolidate power. Meanwhile, Malaysia shows a hybrid form of post-Islamism, which is a blend of democratic pragmatism and Malay-Muslim identity politics.

Comparison Table of Post-Islamism

Aspects	Indonesia	Turkey	Malaysia
Transformation Base	Moderate Islam and pluralism	Reform of democracy and conservatism	Malay-Muslim identity politics
Political Orientation	Inclusive and substantive	Pragmatic and populist	A hybrid of identity and democracy

Religious-State Relations	Accommodating	State secularism	Islam as the official religion
Main Actors	PKB, PAN, PKS, NU, Muhammadiyah	AKP	PAS and UMNO
Post-Islamist Forms	Democratic and pluralist	Conservative-populist	Identity and multiculturalism

The findings show that post-Islamism is not a single phenomenon, but rather has variations according to the political structure, social configuration, and religion-state relations in each country. Thus, there is no single post-Islamist model that can be used as a representation of the entire Muslim world.

Based on this comparative analysis, this study offers the concept of Comparative Post-Islamic Politics, which is a condition in which Islamic parties and movements in various Muslim countries maintain Islamic identity as a source of moral legitimacy and political symbols, but their political strategies, orientations, and agendas are increasingly moving towards democratic and post-ideological pragmatism. In this concept, Islamic politics is no longer understood as a single project to establish an Islamic state, but as a process of continuous adaptation to democracy, pluralism, and social change.

The concept of Comparative Post-Islamic Politics also shows that the future of Islamic politics is not determined by the success of implementing formal religious symbols, but by the ability of Islamic parties and movements to respond to contemporary problems, such as democracy, welfare, social justice, governance, and the management of multicultural societies. Thus, post-Islamism can be understood as a new phase of Islamic political development that moves from an ideological orientation to a more substantive, pragmatic, and contextual orientation.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This research shows that the development of Islamic politics in Indonesia, Turkey, and Malaysia has undergone a transformation that leads to the post-Islamism phenomenon, namely a shift from Islamic politics oriented towards the formalization of sharia and Islamic state to a more pragmatic, inclusive, and oriented politics on substantive issues such as democracy, welfare, governance, and social justice. Although all three countries show a similar tendency towards the deideologizing of Islamic politics, post-Islamism manifestations develop in different forms according to the social, political, and religious-state contexts of their respective countries. Indonesia shows a democratic and pluralist model of post-Islamism through the strengthening of moderate Islam and inclusive politics. Turkey shows a transformation from Islamism to conservatism and religious populism colored by the consolidation of

power. Meanwhile, Malaysia is developing a hybrid form of post-Islamism through negotiations between Islamic identity, Malay nationalism, and the realities of a multicultural society. Thus, this study offers the concept of Comparative Post-Islamic Politics, which is a condition in which Islamic identity is maintained as a source of moral legitimacy and political symbols, but its political strategy and orientation are increasingly moving towards democratic and post-ideological pragmatism.

This study recommends that Islamic parties and movements in Muslim countries should no longer be caught up in debates about the formalization of religious symbols, but rather focus on strengthening Islamic substantive values, such as justice, welfare, democracy, and good governance. In addition, the strengthening of civil society, political education, and dialogue between Islam and democracy needs to be continuously developed so that post-Islamist transformation can contribute to the consolidation of democracy and the strengthening of social cohesion in multicultural societies. Further research is recommended to use an empirical approach through field studies, in-depth interviews, or comparative surveys to examine how political actors, Islamic organizations, and young generations of Muslims interpret and implement post-Islamism in contemporary political practice in various Muslim countries.

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