Post-Islamism and Legal Reform: The Challenges and Future of Political Islam in Indonesia

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Abstrak: Dalam politik Indonesia, post-Islamisme telah muncul sebagai tanggapan terhadap kebangkitan Islam politik sejak awal Reformasi tahun 1998. Post-Islamisme bersifat negosiatif dan akomodatif, berusaha beradaptasi dengan realitas politik dan kondisi sosial aktual di Indonesia. Dengan demikian, gerakan ini tidak mendorong konfrontasi dengan kekuatan politik, seperti yang umum terjadi pada gerakan Islamis yang mendapatkan daya tarik sebelum Reformasi, bahkan ketika gerakan ini berusaha untuk melawan kecenderungan Islamis yang telah menjadi terkenal di Indonesia saat ini. Temuan artikel ini adalah bahwa Post-Islamisme menawarkan masa depan di mana hak-hak politik semua warga negara dijamin, keadilan sosial ditegakkan, dan hak asasi manusia dijunjung tinggi. Kaum post-Islamis tidak mendukung formalisasi hukum syariah atau transformasi fundamental negara Indonesia, melainkan ideologi politik substantif yang menyambut (dan bukan menolak) demokrasi. Hukum Islam di Indonesia bermanifestasi dalam Perda Syariah Provinsi dan Kabupaten yang disahkan oleh politisi lokal dan gubernur atau bupati yang didukung partai politik dan pedagang. Meskipun upaya untuk mengembangkan pola pikir pasca-Islamisme telah terhalang oleh elemen-elemen masyarakat Indonesia yang intoleran, eksklusif, dan ekstremis, diharapkan organisasi-organisasi seperti Muhammadiyah dan Nahdlatul Ulama dapat terus mempertahankan pemahaman Islam yang moderat, inklusif, dan toleran.

Kata kunci: Post-Islamisme; pragmatisme; negosiasi politik; toleransi; moderatisme; hukum Islam

Abstract: In Indonesian politics, post-Islamism has emerged in response to the rise of political Islam since the beginning of *Reformasi* in 1998. Post-Islamism is negotiable and accommodative, seeking to adapt to the Indonesian Archipelago's political realities and actual social conditions. As such, it does not promote confrontation with political powers—something common in the Islamist movements that gained traction before *Reformasi*—even as it seeks to counteract the Islamist tendencies that have gained prominence in contemporary Indonesia. This article finds that post-Islamism offers a future in which the political rights of all citizens are guaranteed while social justice and human rights are upheld. Post-Islamists promote neither the formalization of sharia law nor the fundamental transformation of the Indonesian state, but rather a substantive political ideology that welcomes (rather than rejects) democracy. Meanwhile, Islamic law in Indonesia includes sharia laws passed at the provincial and regency levels by the governor or regent (*Bupati*) with political parties and traders. Although efforts to cultivate post-Islamist mindsets have been hindered by intolerant, exclusive, and extremist elements of Indonesian society, it is hoped that organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama can continue to maintain a moderate, inclusive and tolerant understanding of Islam.

Keywords: Post-Islamism; pragmatism; political negotiating; tolerance; moderatism; Islamic law

Introduction

Islamism encompasses political activities designed to mobilize Islamic revival and promote the shariatization of public spaces (Bayat, 1996). Since Indonesia began its political reform in 1998, Islamism has found fertile ground, as proponents of political Islam—long stifled by the authoritarian regime—became able to espouse their views freely (Aspinall and Mietzner 2014). Islamism in Indonesia thus traces its roots to the political Islam of Suharto's New Order, which was commonly marked by radicalism and challenges to the ruling regime; Kartosuwirjo and Kahar Muzakar are but two of the most extreme examples (van Bruinessen 2002; Hunter and Bruinessen 2008).

Under the New Order regime, political Islam often challenged the established power structure, preventing the establishment of good relations between Muslims and their political leaders. Consequently, state violence against citizens was not uncommon (Heryanto, 2014). For years, the forces of political Islam were silenced by the military-supported political regime, which suppressed any perceived rebellion quickly and violently (Pepinsky et al. 2010; Aspinall 2015). Nevertheless, in the 1990s, the Suharto regime established the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendekiawan Muslim Indonesia, ICMI), which precipitated the rise of Indonesia's Muslim middle class (Hefner and Hefner 1990).

Indonesia has had significant experience in political shifts since the reform era in 1998. Movements promoting political Islam tended to be more willing to accommodate and negotiate with the ruling political regime, as they are no longer subjected to discriminatory and exploitive actions by the state (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, 2019a; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019). Political Islam no longer rebels against the regime, highlighting the subjugation of Muslims under a despotic leadership. Instead, it has taken advantage of the changing political culture, including the direct elections implemented in the early 2000s(Miichi & Kayane, 2020) The government, in turn, has increasingly accommodated the interests and actors of political Islam (Hefner 1995).

Since 2004, Indonesian elections have reflected the ongoing transformation of political Islam in Indonesia. No longer is political Islam positioned vis-à-vis the political regime; instead, these forces

are seen as mutually accommodative and negotiable (Pepinsky et al. 2010). Proponents of political Islam contest elections, participate in political parties and even find employment within the bureaucracy. Consequently, political Islam is no longer seen as a threat to the dominant regime (Hamdi, 2013). Indeed, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) was seen as protecting proponents of political Islam both within and without parliament (Abdullah et al. 2019)—even those activists whose views leaned towards radicalism and Salafism (Yunanto & Hamid, 2013).

Political Islamic movements rose to the forefront during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, during which Anies Baswedan and his running mate Sandiaga Uno ran against the incumbent Basuki Tjahaya Purnama (better known as Ahok) and his deputy Jarot Saiful Hidayat (Ansor, 2016). Rumors that Ahok had blasphemed Islam were spread by the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS), the National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN), and the Gerindra Party; Islamism, thus, was used to achieve political goals. At the same time, non-governmental organizations such as the National Movement for the Salvation of Ulamas' Fatwas (Gerakan Nasional Penyelamatan Fatwa Ulama, GNPF; led by Bahtiar Nasir), the Islamic Defenders' Front (Front Pembela Islam, FPI; led by Muhammad Rizieq Shihab) and Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia were mobilized to stoke religious sentiments further (Nurlinah et al. 2018). The 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election has thus been identified as the peak of political Islam in Reform-era Indonesia (Sebastian & Arifianto, 2018).

Religious sentiments were again exploited during the 2019 Presidential election to mobilize voters in the contest between Prabowo Subianto (and his running mate Sandiaga Uno) and Joko Widodo (and his running mate Ma'ruf Amin), signalling the continued role of Islamism in Indonesian politics(Arifianto, 2020). Consequently, hopes that religious sentiments would no longer be exploited to mobilize voters went unfulfilled. If Islamism continues to be allowed and even embraced, Indonesian democracy could stagnate and even erode (Aspinall and Mietzner 2019). Authoritarian powers could potentially legitimize themselves by referring to religious texts. It is important to stop the exploitation of religious sentiments and ensure Indonesian politics can be inclusive, tolerant, and plural (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019b).

Indonesia can only move from Islamism to post-Islamism with inclusivism, tolerance, and accommodativeness (Menchik 2016). It would be neither intolerant nor overly liberal but moderate, reflecting the values of the most prominent Islamic organizations in the country: Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) (Nashir et al. 2019). These organizations have long promoted tolerance—indeed, NU has long been identified with tolerance (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2020)—even though individual members have participated in political activities and promoted religious understandings that diverge from those of their organizations (Hilmy, 2016). It is therefore necessary to contemplate the rise of political Islam since Indonesia began its political reform in 1998 (Formichi, 2015). Furthermore, the victory of religious/nationalist parties in the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections suggests the rise of a political Islam that differs from that widely debated during the election (Mietzner, Muhtadi, and Halida 2018)

Post-Islamism refers to the political movement that emerged in response to the rise of Islamism and its failure to address contemporary political issues. It is no longer the state vis-à-vis sharia law but rather sharia ideals vis-à-vis political reality (Bayat, 2005). Post-Islamism has been noted in the Middle East following the Arab Spring (Chamkhi, 2014). In Tunisia, it has emerged in response to the failure of Islamism to address the needs and realities of democracy (Sigillò 2020). In Egypt, post-Islamism has responded to the authoritarian failure regime to ensure the well-being of society (El-Aswad, 2016). In Turkey, it has emerged as a critique of efforts to formalize Islamic law (Tomac, 2020), while in Pakistan, post-Islamism has responded to the ongoing debate over non-Muslim involvement in public spaces (Harmakaputra, 2015). In brief, it may be said that post-Islamism seeks to redefine political Islam as an alternative to practical politics (Dokhanchi, 2020).

This article analyses the shift in political Islam in Indonesia since 2019. Post-Islamism has provided an antithesis to the Islamist movements that have become prominent in Indonesian politics since 1998, particularly during the 2014 and 2019 elections, when religious (Islamic) identities were used as political commodities. The continuities and interruptions of post-Islamism must be analyzed, as these will determine the future of political Islam in Indonesia. The future of political Islam in Indonesia is essential, as it may present a political

tradition that is open to negotiation and avoids capitulating to the dominant political regime and ideology.

This article thus analyzes the impact of Islamic law in Indonesia and its challenges to the democratization process in Indonesia. The study confirms that post-Islamism is not opposed to Islamism, as commonly posited, but negotiates with Islamism—which tends not to view democracy as necessary in the current dynamics of political Islam in Indonesia. In Indonesia, post-Islamism is a way of presenting a more open and just Islam in the political arena.

The Turn to Post-Islamism: Change and Continuity

Post-Islamism emerged in response to Islamism, a movement that sought to formalize Islamic law and use religious symbols to articulate more substantial issues. Post-Islamism offers an anti-thesis to Islamism that has long influenced Middle Eastern politics (Bayat 2016). In post-Islamism, Islamic symbols articulate the ethos of Islam and other Abrahamic religions (al-Anani, 2015), including unity, nationalism, patriotism, and national defence. This provides a stark contrast with Islamism, which promotes the establishment of Islamic states in previously non-Islamic ones (Bayat, 1996).

Islamist movements have viewed democracy as violating the principles of Islam and thereby requiring replacement with a caliphate—a non-democratic system without elections (Bayat, 2020). Conversely, post-Islamism must view democracy not as an enemy of Islam, but rather as reflecting the substantial values of the religion. As such, proponents of post-Islamism must not voice the desire for an Islamic state but rather seek to negotiate the political ideals of the 16th–19th centuries and embrace a realistic (rather than utopian) state ideology (Bayat, 2018).

Unlike Islamists, post-Islamists must not deem it necessary to transform states that are not built upon Islamic values fundamentally. In Indonesia, for example, post-Islamist activists and actors should not debate the use of Pancasila as the national ideology or promote its replacement with more explicitly Islamic values; instead, the substance of Pancasila should be understood as congruent with Islamic values and even as reflecting Islamic beliefs (Latif, 2018)

The particularly important are substantial ethical politics, wherein emphasis is given to fulfilling the needs of society rather than cultivating particular images. In other words, a humanitarian ethos must be the foundation for the political ethos (Nashir et al., 2019). Only by ensuring that everyday needs are fulfilled can political Islam truly become for the people rather than an elitist expression (Latief & Nashir, 2020). Such an ethos must significantly differ from that embraced by Islamism, which neglects philanthropy and social justice in favor of ever-stronger bargaining positions (Hefner 2016)

According to a political ethos that embraces religious (Islamic) values, such a political articulation of humanitarianism may be understood as a cultural form of political articulation. Political articulation should recognize and accept diverse political choices, ideologies, and religious beliefs, value religious and ethnic minorities, and provide space for members of vulnerable and disadvantaged social groups. For example, this last element may be seen in the increased political participation of Indonesian women since the political reforms in 1998 (Maula, 2016). Post-Islamism thus seeks to cultivate tolerance and gender justice through a moderate Islam that emphasizes not religious symbols but the substantial and universal values of religion. In so doing, it attempts to create a society that is free of discrimination.

In Indonesia, politicians and political actors with post-Islamist views should rely heavily on the support of Muhammadiyah and NU, the two largest Islamic organizations in the country (Hefner 2019). At the same time, as proponents of civil Islam, these organizations can continuously monitor the activities of political actors and organization members acting as individuals. It is hoped that, in this manner, Muhammadiyah and NU can promote a truly cultural, inclusive, and tolerant political Islam that relies on peace rather than violence (Menchik 2019). If these organizations can serve as checks and balances on political actors, they can curtail the spread of despotism, intolerance, and authoritarianism. However, if they are unable to play such a strategic role, intolerant political forces that promote violence, hate, and discrimination may find fertile ground. Muhammadiyah and NU thus need to receive support from non-religious civil society organizations active in human rights, corruption eradication, gender justice, and social justice.

In the post-Islamist era, political Islam would be best served through the proselytization of values that promote welfare, cultivate respect for difference, prevent social crimes (corruption, environmental destruction, deforestation, etc.), and counterbalance the Islamist tendencies such organizations as the Council of Indonesian Ulamas (Majlis Ulama Indonesia, MUI), Islamic Union (Sarekat Islam, SI), Nahdlatul Wathan, Al-Wasliyah, and the Front Islamic Defender (Front Pembela Islam, FPI)(Muhsin et al., 2020). Islamic social organizations must strive to create a new social movement that addresses the nation most pressing issues. Only then can they promote an enlightened and progressive Islam (Qodir et al. 2020)

Promoting justice and the prohibition of evil (*al-amr bi al-ma'rūf wa al-nahy 'an al-munkar*) through proselytization can counter the forces of despotism and end social and theological iniquity. Social issues such as corruption (rampant among politicians, bureaucratic elites, and state security forces) have long left Indonesia with significant legal problems (Lay, 2017) All religious institutions—including Muhammadiyah and NU, MUI and similar organizations—have a social responsibility to counteract such ills. Corruption and other wicked acts are not simple matters, for they severely hinder Indonesians' efforts to live national, state, and religious lives that reflect the values and teachings of their sacred texts.

Education is paramount for the success of post-Islamist political activities, as ignorance often leads to stagnation and regression (Qodir 2017). Consequently, proselytization must be dedicated to eradicating ignorance, thereby facilitating policymakers in promoting national development while ensuring that sufficient checks and balances are available to prevent those in power from embracing despotism and authoritarianism. Because of its importance in eradicating ignorance, education—particularly higher education—must not be entrusted to extremist Islamic organizations that promote intolerance and sectarianism, such as those that have long established their branches on university campuses (Arifianto, 2018).

Poverty, which has caused significant welfare gaps between those better off and those who require assistance in supporting themselves and their families, also requires the attention of post-Islamist actors. This is crucial, as such welfare gaps contribute to national crime rates

and may even lead to rebellion against the government and/or political parties (Noor, 2016). Post-Islamist political movements, thus, must strive towards transforming poverty and downtrodden into prosperous people with access to necessary economic resources (Suryadinata, 2018). If post-Islamist movements can successfully guide Indonesians out of poverty and into social welfare, Islamic populism—such as that which has marked the Middle East since the Arab Spring—may be avoided (Hadiz, 2016)

Ensuring that political activities are undertaken equitably, without discriminating against any element of society (particularly religious and ethnic minorities) will further ensure that post-Islamist politics avoids the widespread sectarianism and parochialism that has stifled the spread of alternative views. Parochialism manifests a selfish approach to politics, wherein individuals with different views and political ideologies are marginalized or negated. In the post-Islamist era, political Islam must offer a civil approach to politics that humanizes humanity (Hadiz, 2017)

Political activities in the post-Islamist era must be marked by non-violence, offering not only peace but also mutual understanding and respect for the political process. No longer should the masses be mobilized to put pressure on political opponents. Rather, efforts must be made by post-Islamist actors to avoid and prevent intolerant and violent acts against religious and ethnic minorities. Indonesian elections in 2014 and 2019 were marred by acts of political violence that endangered the future of democracy in the nation (Mujani, 2020); indeed, scholars have identified Indonesian democracy as having stagnated or even failed (Diprose et al. 2019). The success of post-Islamist politics will be evident once politicians stop using political violence to attack their opponents.

The success of post-Islamism will also become apparent once women enjoy equal access to political spaces. Post-Islamist movements must seek to eradicate gender injustice, thereby distinguishing themselves from the Islamist and conservative organizations that generally prohibit women from becoming involved in practical and party politics (Afrianty, 2015) or require them to receive male permission to become involved. Islamist and conservative organizations have argued that women are not supposed to be involved in public spaces but instead remain within domestic spaces where they can raise their children, maintain their homes, and serve their husbands (Suhandjati & Kusuma, 2018). The

success of post-Islamism will be evident once women enjoy the same political spaces and opportunities as their male peers.

Also important for post-Islamism will be realizing ethical politics through collaboration between nationalist–religious parties and Islamist parties. Such collaboration must be based not on a shared religious ideology but rather on understanding the nation and Indonesian identity. Although religious parties will fail in their electoral bids (i.e., in local and national elections), they continue to divide their support bases through sectarianism and parochialism (Miichi 2007). Over time, as post-Islamism grows, religious symbols and ideologies will no longer be sufficient to entice would-be voters (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2018). voters will be interested in candidates' professional qualities rather than their religion and ethnicity.

One crucial consideration is politicians' and actors' involvement in Indonesia's response to COVID-19. As of writing, the pandemic has yet to be fully overcome, and over time, it has exacerbated Indonesian society's political and ideological polarization. Some have used COVID-19 to legitimize their efforts to counter capitalism and liberalism, arguing that the pandemic resulted from an international capitalist–liberal conspiracy to destroy Indonesia (Mietzner 2020a). The political elite is currently facing a war between Islamist and capitalist/liberal ideologies; including a moderate approach that emphasizes national unity is sorely needed (Nashir et al. 2019)

The ongoing collaboration between the Indonesian Armed Forces/ Indonesian National Police and moderate Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU (or, in other words, between government apparatuses and Muslim civil society) signals that space remains available for post-Islamism in Indonesia. Such organizations take no issue with Indonesia not being an Islamic state or taking Islam as its national ideology, recognizing that the country was established through the collaborative efforts of people from diverse religious, ethnic, gender, and social backgrounds (Assyaukanie, 2019). This collaboration underscores the continued dominance of moderate Islam, rather than extreme or fundamentalist Islam, in Indonesia. Moderate organizations seek not the fundamental transformation of Indonesian society nor the establishment of an Islamic state but rather endeavor to ensure the continued development of national and humanitarian interests (Assyaukanie, 2014).

From these notes, it is apparent that religious, ethnic, and social sentiments must be abandoned in the mobilization of Muslim voters in a post-Islamist society. In the future, as information becomes increasingly open and social media becomes ever more widespread, the political Islam that develops must be based not on sectarianism and religious symbols but on religious values and ethics.

Accommodative Politics and Muslim Politicians: The Impact of Legal Reform

A shift from Islamism, which tends to be confrontative and uncompromising in its search for power, to post-Islamism in Indonesian political Islam would represent a significant transformation. In the post-Islamist era, Muslim politicians would focus on more realistic political movements (Assyaukanie, 2019). Muslim politicians should ground their religious goals in the reality of Indonesian politics, thereby ensuring that they can readily contest the arenas of political power without abandoning their identities as Muslims. Such politicians must negotiate sharia politics and interests with the needs of everyday Muslims, thereby expressing their political aspirations without coming into confrontation with the State (Ghauri, 2018; Rijal, 2020)

This is not to say that political activities in the post-Islamist era should be secular; indeed, even as they oppose the creation of theocracies and strict implementation of religious ideologies (such as sharia law) in everyday life, post-Islamists must reject secularism (Dokhanchi, 2020). Post-Islamist political expressions must be true compromises resulting from the negotiation of political actors' identities as Muslims and the political realities of society. In other words, post-Islamist politics may be better understood as pragmatic.

As noted by Asef Bayat, post-Islamist movements around the globe—particularly those that have emerged in the Middle East since the Arab Spring—have been characterized by compromises with political realities, pragmatism in implementing government programs, and tolerance of diverse groups. Thus, post-Islamism embraces a more moderate approach that challenges neither existing governments nor diversity (Bayat, 2018). In Indonesia, Bayat argues, this is best represented by the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS). In Turkey, meanwhile, post-Islamism is exemplified by the Justice and Development Party

(Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), which appears more secular than the country's other religious parties (Hadiz, 2011). The increased openness of these parties, which continue to use religious symbols, is indicative of significant shifts in political Islam in the post-Islamist era. It also suggests that parties that employ Islamic symbols and which initially used religion to mobilize the faithful for practical purposes, have experienced secularization. Through this process, Islamic political parties have been able to negotiate their pragmatic needs with those of the Muslim community (Norris, 2013).

Nevertheless, in Indonesia's most recent legislative elections, parties that employ Islamic symbols—such as the aforementioned PKS as well as the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; PPP) and the Crescent Moon Party (Partai Bulan Bintang, PBB)—have been unable to gain a majority. Instead, Parliament has been controlled by nationalist–religious parties such as the Golkar Party (Golkar), the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya; Gerindra), the Nasdem Party (Nasdem), and the Democratic Party of Indonesia – Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia – Perjuangan; PDIP). In the 2014 legislative election, Islamic parties received only 23.4% of votes; this decreased to 17.7% in the 2019 legislative election. This indicates that parties using religious symbols have been unable to capture the hearts of Indonesia's Muslim voters (Aspinall et al. 2020).

In the post-Islamist era, political actors must not position themselves vis-à-vis the state or their political opponents but rather act pragmatically and accommodatively. Political parties and actors must act professionally, designing programs that fulfill the needs and desires of the people while simultaneously emphasizing politicians' abilities and results when accumulating voter support (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2018). At the same time, however, post-Islamism will present its challenges for Islamic political parties. Their continued commitment to democracy will be tested, and voters will ascertain whether political actors are advocating for the common people or advancing their own particular interests. Voters will soon realize that political actors seize opportunities, cultivate their public image, and take advantage of political exigencies.

As noted by Asef Bayat, in the post-Islamist era, politics must be driven not by sectarian considerations, religious sentiments, or political schisms but rather by the real needs of society and the tangible benefits

that can be provided to the nation and its people (Bayat 2016). This will be particularly evident when real issues involving diverse societal elements are debated in parliament. Post-Islamist politics must avoid discriminating against religious and ethnic minorities, be they minorities that exist outside the dominant group (i.e., to borrow examples from Indonesia, Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists) or within the dominant group (such as Ahmadis, Shiites, and Baha'i). Currently, such minorities face serious obstacles as their rights are abrogated by despotic and sectarian leaders (Burhani, 2020; Makin, 2017).

Given the situation of political Islam in the post-Islamist era, it will be a challenge to ensure that Islamic parties (and Muslims in general) guarantee everyone has access to democracy. Suppose Muslim politicians and voters can actively shape the political climate by involving diverse politicians and political actors with varied personal and collective interests without forcing their ideologies upon these actors. In that case, this will bode well for post-Islamist politics in Indonesia. Conversely, politicians and political actors ignore the political realities around them and attempt to force their ideologies on the state and its inhabitants. In that case, post-Islamism will be marginalized, even as ongoing political, social, and economic challenges are left unchecked.

Challenges for Post-Islamism after the 2019 Election

A significant obstacle for post-Islamism in Indonesia is the rising tide of authoritarian actors that limit their political opponents' access to public spaces. Such authoritarianism stymies the continued growth and development of democratic traditions. Authoritarian regimes seek to consolidate their power, creating a monopoly that cannot be readily checked or balanced, even as human rights violations go unaddressed, public funds are embezzled brazenly, clientelism is broadly practiced, and religious/ethnic minorities continue to face intolerance and discrimination (Hadiz, 2010; Kusman, 2015; Mietzner, 2018a).

Corruption networks, for example, have long been maintained amongst government officials, bureaucrats, and politicians at the local level. In Malang City, for example, a ring involving entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, and the mayor had a significant and detrimental effect on the state. However, such acts of corruption have not been punished appropriately; in some cases, perpetrators have simply been released due

to their benefactors' influence on the police and other officials tasked with eradicating corruption (Salahudin et al. 2020).

Such authoritarianism would be highly dangerous if allowed to develop further in Indonesia, as it ultimately undermines decades of democratization at the national and local levels. Consequently, it is necessary to remain loyal to a multi-party system where diverse views can be openly contested. Rather than being silenced, opposition voices must be provided the space to expand further, acting as checks and balances on the dominant political actors. At the same time, the political participation of civil society—i.e., those not involved in political parties or the state bureaucracy—must be safeguarded (Hefner 2019)

Also dangerous is the rise of political oligarchies and kinship politics, suggesting the emergence and development of feudalism and clientelism. Oligarchies are dangerous as they serve to centralize power rather than ensuring that it remains distributed amongst political parties and thus further limit the opportunities available to opposition forces (Hadiz 2017; Teik, Hadiz, and Nakanishi, 2014). In an oligarchic system, political parties are controlled by individuals who are perceived as the "primary stakeholders", i.e., by the founders, sponsors, administrators, and their clients. Although incumbents commonly cultivate oligarchies, it is also possible for them to be spearheaded by political parties and regimes that seek to preserve their power. As such, many have doubted the possibility of ending oligarchies, as they are created not only by ruling regimes but also by actors with the financial and human resources to mobilize voters—often by exploiting their religious and ethnic sentiments (Aspinall 2013; Aspinall and Berenschot 2019; Aspinall and Mietzner 2019).

Another challenge to post-Islamism is the widespread practice of money politics, which is associated with the exorbitant costs of the electoral process. Candidates contesting legislative seats or executive offices spend billions of rupiah buying votes, resulting in increasingly expensive campaigns. Individuals seeking a nomination must be prepared to overspend in amounts their backing party often determines. Candidates who lack sufficient financial capital are forced to withdraw from consideration. Only those capable of funding their campaigns can continue the candidacy process.

Indeed, given the excessive costs involved, it is not uncommon for candidates to practice money politics even before their candidacy is

announced, promising certain amounts to party administrators, campaign staff, and potential voters. This has become a nigh omnipresent practice, often expected by all involved, and thus cannot be easily concealed. To recuperate these expenses, members of parliament and government officials often commit corruption, embezzling money from the projects in which they are involved. Money politics and corruption are heavily intertwined, and all involved in the electoral process—from candidates and political parties to voters—consider them inevitable (Aspinall 2015; Aspinall and Mas'udi 2017; Aspinall and Mietzner 2019b).

One practical challenge to post-Islamist politics and Indonesian democracy is the presence of political forces and other non-parliamentarian actors who often commit acts of violent extremism against those with differing religious and political views. Their victims are often people from minority groups, such as Ahmadis, Shiites, practitioners of local religions, and the ethnic minorities of a region. Such persecution occurs as a direct result of political and religious support of vigilante groups (Mietzner and Muhtadi 2018, 2020; Muhtadi 2019); consequently, persecution and violence have become integral to Indonesian politics. Extraordinary actions have regularly been taken to mobilize the masses and gain political support (Mietzner 2018b; Mietzner and Muhtadi 2018, 2020; Muhtadi 2019; Mujani 2020)

Another serious challenge to realizing post-Islamism in Indonesia is the rise of political traditions in which religious sentiments are exploited, thereby bringing about religious populism. Initially a criticism of the centralistic politics practiced by the political elite, i.e., those who had long controlled Indonesia's political arenas and excluded the common people, populism has become a means of mobilizing the masses to advance the interests of the elite. Populism's initial mission of challenging the despotism of the political elite has given way to a no-less despotic practice: paternalism (Aspinall et al., 2020)

In Indonesia, the forces of populism have blatantly used religious symbols and beliefs to silence their political opponents. Indonesian politics, thus, has been marked by acts of violence and intolerance (Menchik 2019). Having been built upon the basis of shared beliefs (in this case, Islam, the religion of the majority), populism has led to Indonesian politics becoming increasingly Islamist, marred by intolerance and violence (Fossati, 2019). Islamic ideologies come face

to face with nationalist and even communist ones, resulting in further violence (Arifianto, 2019)

Such political challenges show that Indonesian politics have become increasingly vulnerable. Several civil society organizations have taken matters into their own hands, seizing control of state policy. Members of these organizations may be religious leaders, businessmen, political elites, and bureaucrats; generally, however, they all have particular political and religious views to distinguish themselves from others. Suppose post-Islamism, as well as the political reforms that Indonesia has experienced since 1998, cannot overcome these challenges. In that case, Indonesian politics may regress to authoritarianism even as it remains marked by religious and ethnic considerations.

The Future of Political Islam and Legal Reform

In the future, political Islam will not develop maximally. As the information on politicians' behavior and ethos becomes increasingly open, so will their limited interest in public affairs. Indonesians will recognize that politicians and political elites are focused more on improving their bargaining positions and power. They care little for the social injustices faced by everyday Indonesians, let alone the chaos caused by fake news of unclear origin. Indeed, many politicians and political elites claim that Muslims are being abused, manipulated, and marginalized without supporting their claims with accurate and verifiable facts. Social media has been highly influential, facilitating the spread of misinformation about Islam's current situation (Mietzner 2020b, 2021; Rakhmani 2019) Such stories are widely consumed by the Muslim politicians and political elites who contest legislative and executive elections, who then use their bargaining positions to negotiate with candidates and create patronage networks (Bland 2019; Minardi 2018; Power and Warburton 2020; Satrio 2019).

Political Islam can only develop well in Indonesia if it embraces an inclusive, civilized, tolerant, friendly, moderate, and non-violent approach that wards against despotic and authoritarian tendencies (Mietzner 2014; Power 2018; Warburton and Aspinall 2019). In such a situation, the forces of political Islam will rely heavily on civil Islam, as represented by moderate organizations (such as Muhammadiyah and NU) and their sizable communities. The forces of civil Islam hope to realize Islam

as a blessing to all, Islam *raḥmatan lil ʿālamīn*, a religion of love for all humanity (Brown 2019; Brown and Fauzia 2019; Hefner 2019; Menchik 2016). Such organizations must provide points of reference for Indonesia's Muslims, as opposed to the religious parties that exploit symbols while separating them from their meaning (Assyaukanie, 2019). It is these Islamic parties that have driven the rise of identity politics in legislative and executive elections, thereby reducing Muslims' interest in practical politics.

As such, the future of political Islam cannot be determined by the Islamic parties that have failed to embrace civilnprity, tolerance, inclusiveness, and democracy, relying instead on sectarianism and parochialism. It is hoped that, in the future, the proselytization activities of mainstream Islamic organizations will improve literacy levels among Muslims in Indonesia. Organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU are among the largest in Indonesia and have been recognized as heavily influencing national politics (Brown 2019; Brown and Fauzia 2019; Dokhanchi 2020; Hefner 2018, 2019b; Menchik 2016; Sebastian and Arifianto 2018). Muhammadiyah and NU have spread their moderate ideals even as they have worked to overcome their challenges (Hilmy, 2013, 2016). They have based their service activities on humanitarian values (Latief, 2012, 2014, 2016)

In the digital era, all aspects of society are integrated; no element of society is truly separate, and changes thus occur rapidly. This also holds for Muslims in Indonesia. Society and politics are transforming rapidly and drastically, and those who fail to adapt will fall behind. This holds for political Islam as well; if it cannot adapt to the digitization of society, as well as the rapid spread of information, it will be unable to stem the spread of parochialism, sectarianism, and despotism. Ultimately, this will be detrimental to the nation, and Muslims will abandon political Islam in favor of a nationalist–religious approach.

Reforming the understanding of Islamic sharia can provide a basis for bringing Indonesian Islamic politics from the formal to the substantial. The understanding of sharia must not be seen in formal ritual practices but in humane ones that respond to the social problems of Indonesia. If this happens, the idea of post-Islamism will find a strong foothold in the legal reform desired by many progressive Muslims.

Conclusion

Post-Islamism in Indonesia is different than that in the Middle East or other countries with a majority Muslim population. In the Middle East and Muslim-majority countries, the practical world of politics must compromise with political realities rather than oppose the incumbent political regimes. In Sudan, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria, humanitarian political practices that accommodate the interests of politicians have gained the support of citizens. In Indonesia, politicians have continued to put forward a formal ideal of Islamic sharia through regional regulations.

This difference is due to the failure of post-Islamism in Indonesia; since the 2014/2019 elections, Islamization (Islamism) has been espoused by politicians and political activists from Islamic organizations such as Majlis Mujahiddin, the Islamic Defenders' Front, the Ansharu Daulah Network (JAD), the former Hizb al-Tahrir, and other Islamic organizations. Some desire Indonesia to become a sharia country, albeit under the auspices of Pancasila. Some want Indonesia to become an Islamic State, using Islamic law rather than Pancasila to manage the country, even though this position has not received much support from moderate organizations such as Muhammadiyah and NU.

Islamic political activists continue to promote shariatization (formalistic sharia) by encouraging the passage of sharia regional regulations and collaborating with religious-nationalist parties to contest local elections. Some Islamic activists have joined nationalist-religious parties with the aim of Islamizing nationalist parties. The continued electoral victories of Gerindra, Democrats, PDI-P, and Golkar are partly due to the involvement of Islamic activists from the Association of Indonesian Islamic Students and Students of Islam, which has sought the Islamization of Indonesia since the 1980s.

In the Middle East, post-Islamist politics have had an accommodative role in practical politics, being employed by Muslim politicians who recognize their political realities. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the conditions are different. Muslim politicians with activist backgrounds continue to promote Islamization by joining religious nationalist parties, entering the bureaucracy, military, and police, and running for legislature. These Islamic activists keep their sharia agenda in the public sphere through regional regulations and bureaucratic policies

that benefit Islamic groups. Elections are used to control parliament and the state bureaucracy.

A shift from formal Islamism to post-Islamism would ultimately provide opportunities for more humane and civilized political practices. This will occur when political parties and politicians do not view Muslim citizens as a driving force for the formalization of sharia but as participatory political subjects in national elections and local politics.

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