FROM BINARY PERSPECTIVES TO CONTEXT-SENSITIVE APPROACHES:
Changing Trends in Scholarship on Political Islam in Turkey, Tunisia and Indonesia

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Abstract: This article deals with changing trends in scholarship on political Islam in Turkey, Tunisia, and Indonesia. Over the past decades, studies on political Islam have undergone significant changes, shaped by dynamic political contexts and theoretical frameworks. This article highlights changes in academic perspectives regarding political Islam within diverse global and national contexts. In Turkey, scholarship has shifted to analyzing interplays between secularism and political Islam under the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The post-Arab Spring in Tunisia has spurred academic investigations into the involvement of Ennahda with democracy and secular state institutions amid political instability. In Indonesia, scholars have examined various manifestations of political Islam represented by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in the context of democratic processes. This article is a literature study, based primarily upon scholarly works on political Islam, it argues that scholarship on political Islam in the three countries witnesses changes, from binary narratives to more context-sensitive approaches, reflecting the evolutionary nature of political Islam in dynamic political landscapes. Initially perceiving political Islam as ideologically rigid, various studies now acknowledge the engagement of Islamist parties in democratic processes and their adaptation to gender issues, integration into transnational connections, and dynamic interplay with secularism. This article reveals that the moderation theory can be an analytical tool for scrutinizing changing trends in studying political Islam.

Keywords: political Islam, AKP, Ennahda, PKS, moderation theory, post-Islamism.

Introduction

POLITICAL ISLAM, usually referred to as Islamism, is a term that has become a subject of academic debates, both among Western and Muslim scholars alike,[1] as early as the 1970s and particularly after September 11, 2001. As a concept, political Islam includes various manifestations of Islam as a political phenomenon, especially in the context of the relationship between Islam and the state, and the place of Islam in the public sphere.[2] Scholars have paid attention to political Islam from its initial emergence to contemporary developments. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism, particularly after the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1978 and the emergence of Islamist groups in different Muslim countries, has become a concern of those who viewed Islam as a threat to the West. Ayubi and Roy call such movements political Islam,[3] although the discourse on Islam as a religion and Islamism as an ideological aspiration produces a dilemma.[4]

In academic studies, various subjects are as complex and dynamically developing as intersections between political Islam and democracy in Muslim countries like Turkey, Tunisia, and Indonesia. The three countries have long been at the forefront of global conversations around the role of Islam in politics. As Cizre analyzes, Turkey had a secular context from Kemal's time until around 2000, when Islamist aspirations emerged, the culmination of which was marked by the rise of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*-AKP) and its victory in the

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[1] Milad Dokhanchi, "Debating Islamism as an Expression of Political Islam," *Routledge Handbook of Non-violent Extremism: Groups, Perspectives and New Debates*, eds. Elisa Orofino, William Allchorn (New York & Oxon: Routledge, 2023), 179-193; Aini Linjakumpu, *Political Islam in the Global World* (London: Ithaca Press, 2008).

[2] Graham Fuller, "The Future of Political Islam," *Foreign Affairs* 81, no. 2 (March-April., 2002): 48-60; Graham Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

[3] Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991); Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

[4] Peter R. Demant, *Islam vs. Islamism: The Dilemma of the Muslim World* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2006).

Turkish elections.[5] Tunisia has had a background of authoritarian rule since Bourguiba and then Ben Ali until the Arab Spring (2011) and the victory of Ennahda.[6] Indonesia was marked by the 1998 reform movement which challenged the authoritarian regime leading to the transition to democracy, and allowing the re-emergence of political Islam, including the Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan*), or then the Prosperous Justice Party (*Partai Keadilan Sejahtera* -PKS).[7] Scholars have explored the complexities of political ideology and socio-cultural influences that underlie these three countries' narratives. As the political landscape changes, so do the perspectives from which scholars analyze these diverse dynamics.[8]

Historically, scholarship around political Islam has been rooted in a binary perspective, often depicting it as a threat to secular governments or as a hope for those seeking alternatives to authoritarianism. However, recent developments have witnessed changing trends in studies on political Islam. This shift represents more context-sensitive approaches that recognize the changing political landscapes where political Islam operates.

This article explores the development of scholarship on political Islam in Turkey, Tunisia, and Indonesia, particularly in the form of non-violent Islamist parties –a typology made by Ayoob and Lussier.[9] Islamist parties have shown significant

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[5] Umit Cizre, *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party* (London: Routledge, 2008).

[6] Anne Wolf, *Political Islam in Tunisia: The History of Ennahda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Azzam Tamimi, *Rachid Ghannouchi: A Democrat Within Islamism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[7] Yon Machmudi, "Islamizing Indonesia: The Rise of Jamaah Tarbiyah and the Prosperous Justice Party." (Ph.D. The Australian National University, 2006).

[8] M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Hayat Alvi, *The Political Economy of Islam of the Middle East: The Case of Tunisia* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); Diego Fossati, *Unity Through Division: Political Islam, Representation and Democracy in Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

[9] Mohammed Ayoob and Danielle N. Lussier, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in Muslim Societies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020).

transformations, and academic research on this topic continues to develop over time. Scholarship on political Islam has encompassed various emerging themes that have come to define contemporary discourses.[10] This article argues that scholarship on political Islam in the three countries has experienced changes that reflect the evolving nature of Islamist parties in their political contexts.

Most studies initially viewed Islamist parties as ideologically rigid, and critical of Western democracy. In their development, studies then highlight Islamist parties' participation in democratic processes, gender dynamics, transnational networks, and interplays with secularism. These trends cannot be separated from the changing political landscapes where Islamist parties operate. From this context, using an analytical framework like moderation theory can understand the complex interactions between religion and politics. Employing a literature study, this article is based on various relevant works on political Islam that reveal changes in the scholarship and the methodology used. The article reveals that moderation theory is adopted by scholars to justify the shift of political Islam, from opposing democracy and secularism to inclusion in a democratic political system.

What is Political Islam?

Political Islam has gained increased visibility in international politics, and it has become more challenging to navigate the vast literature devoted to explaining the topic. Ayubi, Roy, and Burgat have discussed the genesis of various Islamic movements, later called political Islam or Islamism.[11] Volpi and others have studied the topic from different perspectives. They give a comprehensive introduction to studying political Islam. Offering a clear route to the most influential literature in the field, the diverse range of viewpoints presented in their work allows us to obtain a broad

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[10] François Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam* (London: IB Tauris, 2003).

[11] Ayubi, *Political Islam*; Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*; Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam*; François Burgat, *Understanding Political Islam* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020).

perspective on the most pressing questions of the post-9/11 tragedy.[12]

Political Islam/Islamism would not have emerged if the West did not exist. Habib-Zahmani maintains that Islamism does not represent cultural continuity in Muslim societies; it is more of a historical divide. There is no fundamental difference between Islamists and secularists despite ongoing political and ideological confrontation. Both are cultural divides and by-products of the West – albeit in different ways.[13]

Islamism/political Islam is a contested term.[14] There are different perspectives on the term, as elaborated in the edited work by Martin and Barzegar.[15] In this work, Emmerson maintains that Islamism is a helpful term for several Muslim reform movements. Meanwhile, Varisco contends that the public scourge of violence and terrorism perpetrated by Islamist groups too often influences public perceptions of Islam.[16]

Tibi defines Islamism as a political ideology based on a reinvented version of Islamic law. In separate chapters devoted to the main features of Islamism, he discusses among others the Islamist vision of state order and the incompatibility of Islamism with democracy. Tibi applies Hannah Arendt's theory to identify Islamism as a totalitarian ideology.[17] Cesari contends that political Islam is not simply a "religious version of the national ideology or merely an ideology." In his view, political Islam is the cultural

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[12] Frederic Volpi (ed.), *Political Islam: A Critical Reader* (London: Routledge, 2011); Elisa Orofino and William Allch (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Non-violent Extremism: Groups, Perspectives and New Debates* (New York: Routledge, 2023).

[13] Mohamed Habib-Zahmani, *The End of Islamism* (n.p: Al-Mizaan Publishing, 2013).

[14] Arno Tausch, "Political Islam: A Contested Term," in *Political Islam and Religiously Motivated Political Extremism: An International Comparison* (Switzerland: Springer, 2023), 7-18.

[15] Richard C. Martin and Abbas Barzegar (eds.), *Islamism: Contested Perspectives on Political Islam* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 17-47.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Bassam Tibi, *Islamism and Islam* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

bedrock on which both nationalist and Islamist ideologies are grounded.[18]

Political Islam includes various individuals, groups, movements, or parties that aspire to Islam as an ideology, or even in the forms of violent, extremist, or terrorist actions.[19] Ayoob categorizes political Islam based on three criteria, political objectives, participation in elections, and the use of violence, into four types: vanguard Islamist movements, non-violent Islamist parties, Islamist national resistance, and violent transnational actors. These include various groups, parties, or even individuals who express views on the relationship between Islam and politics.[20] This paper adopts Ayoob's typologies and focuses mainly on the type of non-violent Islamist parties.

Beyond Binary Narratives

Studies on political Islam have often been characterized by a tendency to homogenize various Islamist parties as monolithic entities. This simplification fails to recognize the multifaceted nature of political Islam. Ayubi, Roy, and others have adopted approaches recognizing the unique historical factors that shaped the character of political Islam.[21] Although AKP has its Islamist roots, it differs from Ennahda and PKS in terms of its political ideology and strategy.[22] By recognizing these differences, it is possible to have an accurate analysis of their impact on the political landscape of the three countries.

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[18] Jocelyne Cesari, *What is Political Islam?* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2018).

[19] Ayoob and Lussier. *The Many Faces of Political Islam.*

[20] Mohammed Ayoob, "Political Islam: Image and Reality," *World Policy Journal* 21, no. 3 (2004): 1-14. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40210231.

[21] Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World*; Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*; Anies Rasyid Baswedan, "Political Islam in Indonesia: Present and Future Trajectory," *Asian Survey* 44, no. 5 (September/October 2004): 669-690.

[22] Ai Fatimah Nur Fuad, "Islamism and Dakwah in Late Modern Indonesia: Official Discourses and Lived Experiences of Leaders and Members of the Tarbiyah Movement," (PhD. Thesis, School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science, University of Leeds. 2017).

One of the significant changes in studying political Islam is the departure from binary narratives. Scholars have often reduced the complex interactions between political Islam and secularism to a simple dichotomy. Islamism is often described as an antithesis of secularism, and Islamist parties are often categorized as either moderates or extremists. However, this binary narrative is detrimental to the diverse nature of Islamist parties since they adhere to, and can co-exist with democratic principles.[23]

The rise of AKP is often seen as a clash between Islamist and secular Kemalist groups. This analysis obscures the political landscape in which AKP operates. Recent studies challenge the binary narrative, admitting that Islamist parties are not monolithic with a uniform ideology. Rather, Islamist parties span a broad spectrum, with varying levels of political moderation or extremism. Although AKP has Islamist roots,[24] it has developed into a party that adheres to democratic principles.

A similar shift can be observed in Tunisia, where Ennahda has sought to balance its Islamic identity and the demands of democratic transition.[25] Wolf, Sigillò, and Grewal not only characterize Ennahda as a radical Islamist party, but they also recognize that the party has undergone significant changes.[26] Ennahda was inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and has

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[23] Md. Nazmul Islam, Yılmaz Bingöl, Israel Nyaburi Nyadera, and Gershon Dagba, "Toward Islam Through Political Parties, Ideology, and Democracy: A Discourse Analysis on Turkey's AK Party, Tunisian Ennahda, and Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami," *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations* 25, no.1 (2021): 26-51. doi.org/10.1177/09735984211019797

[24] M. Hakan Yavuz, "Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) Party in Turkey," *Comparative Politics* 30, no. 1 (1997): 63-82.

[25] Rory McCarthy, "Protecting the Sacred: Tunisia's Islamist Movement Ennahdha and the Challenge of Free Speech," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no.4 (2015): 447–64; Rory McCarthy, *Inside Tunisia's al-Nahda: Between Politics and Preaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[26] Anne Wolf, *Political Islam in Tunisia: The History of Ennahda* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Ester Sigillò, "Understanding the Transformation of Political Islam Beyond Party Politics: The Case of Tunisia," *Third World Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (2022): 152-169; Sharan Grewal, "From Islamists to Muslim Democrats: The Case of Tunisia's Ennahda," *American Political Science Review* 114, no.2 (May 2020): 519-535.

traditionally appealed more to the Arab-Islamic heritage than anything specifically "Tunisian." Cavatorta and Merone argue that the positive example of the MB meant that Tunisian Islamists, including Ennahda, focused more on the transnational project geared toward the broader Islamic *ummah*.[27]

However, this situation has changed since the overthrow of Ben Ali in 2011 and Ennahda's emergence as a political force, winning the most votes (37 percent) for a Constituent Assembly in the same year. Cavatorta documents how the Ennahda has strived to develop a "post-Islamist" orientation, not only moderating its ideology but also embracing *Tunisian* reformism, adopting broad principles such as justice and liberty.[28]

In Indonesia, researchers are exploring the diversity of political Islam, such as PKS and the Star Crescent Party (PBB).[29] Rather than framing these parties in binary terms, many studies explore differences in ideology, strategy, and impact on Indonesian politics. Muhtadi, Tanuwijaya, and Miichi have put PKS in the context of the evolving democratic transition in the post-New Order era.[30] Therefore, contemporary scholarship recognizes the reality as more complicated than a binary narrative, and this will allow a more accurate analysis of Islamist parties and their potential moderation.

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[27] Francesco Cavatorta and Fabio Merone, "Post-Islamism, Ideological Evolution and 'la tunisianité'of the Tunisian Islamist Party al-Nahda," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 20, no. 1 (2015): 27-42; Stefano Maria Torelli, *"The 'AKP Model' and Tunisia's al-Nahda: From Convergence to Competition?" Insight Turkey* 14, no. 3 (2012): 77-78.

[28] Ibid.; Paul Kubicek, *Political Islam and Democracy in the Muslim World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2015).

[29] Baswedan, "Political Islam in Indonesia: Present and Future Trajectory," 669–690.

[30] Burhanuddin Muhtadi, *Dilema PKS: Suara dan Syari'ah* [The Dilemma of PKS: Votes and Shari'ah] (Jakarta: Kepustakaan Gramedia, 2012); Sunny Tanuwijaya, "PKS in Post-Reformasi Indonesia: Catching the Catch-All and Moderation Wave," *South East Asia Research* 20, no. 4 (2012): 533-549; Ken Miichi. "Indigenizing Islamism in Indonesia: Prosperous Justice Party's Approaches Towards Traditionalist Muslims," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 24, no. 1 (2023): 120-133. doi: 10.1080/21567689.2023.2190893.

Electoral Politics

A shift in studying political Islam includes an emphasis on electoral politics in a democratic system. Many studies explore how Islamist parties have engaged in, or even influenced, democratic electoral processes,[31] although Tibi is skeptical and raises questions such as why Islamist parties cannot be democratic.[32] AKP has played a pivotal role in Turkish politics since 2002, and secured substantial support, emphasizing a blend of conservative values with a commitment to democracy.[33] Although Baser and Ozturk criticize AKP's governance as having led to democratic backsliding and authoritarianism, the party's participation in elections has demonstrated the viability of Islamist parties within democratic frameworks.[34]

Ennahda has also played an important role in the democratic transition after the Arab Spring in Tunisia, showing its readiness to adjust to new political landscapes.[35] Ennahda's involvement in electoral processes exhibited progress in the country's democracy.[36] Advocating moderate programs, Ennahda led coalition politics, aiding in the steadiness of Tunisia's democracy

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[31] Alfred Stepan, *Democratic Transition in the Muslim World: A Global Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

[32] Bassam Tibi, "Islamist Parties and Democracy: Why They Cannot be Democratic," *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 3 (July 2008): 43-48.

[33] Ihsan Dagi, "Islamist Parties and Democracy: Turkey's AKP in Power," *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 3 (July 2008): 25-30.

[34] Bahar Baser and Ahmet Erdi Ozturk. "Instead of an Introduction: Is It Curtains for Turkish Democracy?" *Authoritarian Politics in Turkey: Elections, Resistance and the AKP*, eds. Bahar Baser and Ahmet Erdi Ozturk (London: IB Tauris. 2017); Menderes Çinar, "From Moderation to De-Moderation: Democratic Backsliding of the AKP in Turkey," in *The Politics of Islamism: Diverging Visions and Trajectories*, Eds. John L. Esposito, Rahim Lili Zubaidah, and Naser Ghobadzadeh (Sydney: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[35] Rory McCarthy, *Inside Tunisia's al-Nahda: Between Politics and Preaching* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Alaya Allani, "The Islamists in Tunisia Between Confrontation and Participation: 1980-2008," *The Journal of North African Studies* 14, no. 2 (June 2009): 257-272.

[36] James Dennison and Jonas Draege, "The Dynamics of Electoral Politics After the Arab Spring: Evidence from Tunisia," *The Journal of North African Studies* 26, no.4 (2020): 756-780. doi:10.1080/13629387.2020.1732216.

despite intermittent trials and setbacks.[37] PKS has been involved in electoral processes since 2004 while struggling to survive in the political sphere. Moderating its Islamist agenda within a democratic framework, PKS has gained support primarily from urban middle-class voters.[38] Although its electoral influence has fluctuated, PKS remains an important voice in Indonesian politics, contributing to policy debates and shaping the democratic trajectory.[39]

The participation of Islamist parties in electoral processes exhibits the interplays between political Islam and democracy. While their involvement has sometimes raised skepticism among scholars, Islamist parties have demonstrated the potential for their active engagement in democratic systems. However, in-depth studies remain essential to ensure whether Islamist parties uphold democratic norms while still pursuing their Islamist political agendas.[40]

Gender Issues

Scholarship on political Islam often focuses on broader dimensions, ignoring the specific relationship between political Islam and gender issues. Badran highlights an important shift in

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[37] Shaul Bartal, "Rached Ghannouchi's Test: Political Islam and Democracy in Tunisia," African Studies 79, no. 1 (2020): 110-124. doi.org/10.1080/00020184.2020.1732190.

[38] Noorhaidi Hasan, "Islamist Party, Electoral Politics and Da'wah Mobilization Among Youth: The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 6, no. 1 (2012): 17-47.

[39] Jung-Hoon Park, Stuck in Place? Normalization and The Changing Voter Profile of Indonesia's Islamist Prosperous Justice Party. *Journal of East Asian Studies* 21, no. 3 (November 2021): 449-475; Jung-Hoon Park, "Islamist Political Mobilization in Contemporary Indonesia: The Case of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)," (Ph.D. Dissertation, National University of Singapore, 2021).

[40] Menderes Çinar and Cagkan Sayin, "Reproducing the Paradigm of Democracy in Turkey: Parochial Democratization in the Decade of Justice and Development Party," *Turkish Studies* 15, no. 3 (2014): 365-385; Azzam Tamimi, "Islam and Democracy from Tahtawi to Ghannouchi," *Theory, Culture and Society* 24, no. 2 (2007); 39-58; John L. Esposito, Tamara Sonn, and John O. Voll, *Islam and Democracy After the Arab Spring* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

elaborating gender issues,[41] as Arat, Halverson, and Way examine how Islamist parties address the interaction between political Islam and societal norms regarding gender equality.[42] Karam also observes the interplay between political Islam and gender, as other scholars are increasingly interested in exploring how these parties are adapting their stances on these issues to align with changing political realities.[43]

Scholars are interested in women's engagement in AKP, and how this phenomenon intersects with the role of women in a broader society.[44] Arat for example maintains that there is a growing interest in understanding the role of women in Islamist politics in Turkey.[45] Bush and Prather have studied Ennahda's stance on women's rights and its involvement in feminist discourse. Both investigate how Ennahda navigates the complex gender issues in post-Arab Spring Tunisia, examining the party's changing positions on inheritance, marriage, and women's political participation.[46] Meanwhile, there are studies that examine political Islam and gender equality in Indonesian context. Studies

[41] Margot Badran, 'Political Islam and Gender,' in John L. Esposito, and Emad El-Din Shahin (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, Oxford Handbooks (2013; online edition, Oxford Academic, December 16, 2013).

[42] Yeşim Arat, "Democratic Backsliding and the Instrumentalization of Women's Rights in Turkey," *Politics & Gender* 18, no.4 (2022): 911-941. doi:10.1017/S1743923X21000192; J. Halverson, and A. Way, "Islamist Feminism: Constructing Gender Identities in Postcolonial Muslim Societies." *Politics and Religion* 4, no. 3 (2011): 503-525. doi:10.1017/S1755048311000435.

[43] A.M. Karam, "Islamism and Gender: Male Perspectives," In *Women, Islamisms and the State* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

[44] Yeşim Arat. "Islamist Women and Feminist Concerns in Contemporary Turkey: Prospects for Women's Rights and Solidarity." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 37, no. 3 (2016): 125–50. doi:10.5250/fronjwomestud.37.3.0125; Yeşim Arat, "Religion, Politics, and Gender Equality in Turkey: Implications of a Democratic Paradox?" *Third World Quarterly* 31, no. 6 (2010): 869-884, www.jstor.org/stable/27896586.

[45] Arat, "Democratic Backsliding and the Instrumentalization of Women's Rights in Turkey."

[46] Sarah Sunn Bush and Lauren Prather, "Islam, Gender Segregation, and Political Engagement: Evidence from an Experiment in Tunisia," *Political Science Research and Methods* 9, no. 4 (2021): 728-744. doi:10.1017/psrm.2020.37

by Miichi, Nurjanah, Rinaldo, and Rofhani examine PKS' stance on gender issues, such as women politicians, women's rights, family law, and gender-based violence. Miichi even reveals the emergence of "Islamist feminism" and how feminism intersects with political Islam.[47]

In general, this approach recognizes that the positions of Islamist parties on gender issues are not static but develop over time. This dynamic perspective is important for understanding the pragmatism of these parties in response to changing societal norms and political pressures.

Transnational Connections

So far, studies on political Islam often focus on domestic politics, while the increasing interconnectedness of the world has changed the way Islamist parties work. The shift towards studying the impact of globalization on political Islam reflects the changing nature of contemporary transnational networks. The networks include activists, organizations, and even financial support. There is an interest in how these transnational relations shape Islamist parties' ideologies and strategies.[48]

This trend includes an analysis of how global Islamist networks shape the Islamist parties' agenda, assessing how Islamic parties navigate the global media landscape, use digital platforms to spread their ideologies and mobilize support from transnational groups. This trend eventually admits that the impact of political

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[47] Ken Miichi, "Post-Islamism Revisited: The Response of Indonesia's Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) to Gender-Related Issues"; Nunik Nurjanah, "Gender, Progressive Islam, and Islamism in Indonesia: Analysing the Political Attitudes of PKB and PKS," Ph.D. Thesis, Australian Catholic University, 2013; Rachel Rinaldo, *Mobilizing Piety: Islam and Feminism in Indonesia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 112-154; Rofhani Rofhani and Ahmad Nur Fuad, "Moderating Anti-Feminism: Islamism and Women Candidates in the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40, no. 1 (2012): 156-173.

[48] Anthony Bubalo and Greg Fealy. "Between the Global and the Local: Islamism, the Middle East, and Indonesia," Analysis Paper No. 9. Washington, D.C.: The Saban Center for Middle East Policy, The Brookings Institution, October 2005.

Islam extends beyond national borders. The study of globalization and political Islam involves analysis of the international relationships of Turkish Islamic organizations, their affiliation with global networks, or financial support.[49] Scholars elaborate on Ennahda's presence and its transnational ties with other Islamist parties in the Arab world and beyond, examining its participation in international discourses, and the impact on its ideological trajectory.[50] Bubalo and Fealy investigate the impact of transnational networks on PKS, analyzing the influence of global Islamic organizations on the party's political agenda.[51] This trend recognizes that the influence of political Islam is not only limited to one country but can have cross-border impacts.

Interplays with Secularism

Interplays between political Islam and secularism also become an area of inquiry. Scholars explore how Islamist parties negotiate with secularism while adhering to their core values, a kind of trade-off. Yavuz and Ozturk examine AKP's evolving perspective on secularism, analyzing how it seeks to align Islamic principles with secularism. Both challenge the binary view of secularism versus political Islam.[52] Kuru maintains that AKP's engagement with secularism has developed over time, giving rise to debate about the country's character of secularism: assertive *vs* passive. This raises debates on whether AKP has gone to what is termed

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[49] Ahmet Erdi Ozturk, "Islam and Foreign Policy: Turkey's Ambivalent Religious Soft Power in the Authoritarian Turn," *Religions* 12, no. 1 (2021): 38; Ahmet Erdi Ozturk and Bahar Baser, "The Transnational Politics of Religion: Turkey's Diyanet, Islamic Communities and Beyond," *Turkish Studies* 23, no. 5 (2022): 701-721.

[50] Monica Marks, "Tunisia's Islamists and the 'Turkish Model,'" *Journal of Democracy* 28, no. 1 (January 2017): 102-115.

[51] Bubalo and Fealy. "Between the Global and the Local: Islamism, the Middle East, and Indonesia"; Anthony Bubalo, Greg Fealy, and Whit Mason, *PKS dan Kembarannya: Bergiat Jadi Demokrat di Indonesia, Mesir dan Turki* (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2012).

[52] M. Hakan Yavuz and Ahmet Erdi Ozturk. "Turkish Secularism and Islam Under the Reign of Erdogan," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 19, no.1 (2019): 1-19.

post-Islamism or post-secularism.[53] In Tunisia, according to Özcan, there have been changes like secularism, from a French type of authoritarian-monolithic secularism to a pluralistic understanding of secularism.[54] Ennahda is seen as following the footsteps of AKP and moving from the former type to the latter. As Torelli asserts, Ennahda's leaders take the path of AKP and attempt to achieve the same success.[55]

Platzdasch studies how PKS interacts with the country's secularism, assessing whether it prioritizes preserving secular institutions while adhering to Islamic values. He characterizes the level of political dedication shown by PKS in advocating a shari'ah-minded agenda. During the 2004 election, PKS has refrained from highlighting shari'ah-related issues. Instead, they emphasize "secular" priorities, such as eradicating corruption, carrying out political reforms, and promoting economic justice, and human rights. This may be in sharp contrast with the internal discussion, which still adopts an Islamist tone.[56] However, Tomsa observes PKS, like Ennahda, as following the footsteps of AKP in the moderation process in the democratic context.[57]

In this regard, Marks maintains that this trend recognizes the interaction between political Islam and secularism as not static, reflecting the changing sociopolitical landscape.[58] Tensions and negotiations between Islamist parties and secular state structures

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[53] Ahmet T. Kuru, Changing Perspectives on Islamism and Secularism in Turkey: The Gülen Movement and the AK Party. Paper presented at Muslim World in Transition: Contributions of the Gülen Movement, London, UK, October 25–27 (2007): 140–51; M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2009).

[54] Sevinç Alkan Özcan, "The Role of Political Islam in Tunisia's Democratization Process," *Insight Turkey* 20, no. 1 (Winter 2018), 209-226.

[55] Torelli, "The 'AKP Model' and Tunisia's al-Nahda: From Convergence to Competition?" 77-78.

[56] Bernhard Platzdasch, *Islamism in Indonesia: Politics in the Emerging Democracy* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

[57] Dirk Tomsa, "Moderating Islamism in Indonesia: Tracing Patterns of Party Change in the Prosperous Justice Party," *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no.3 (2012): 486-498.

[58] Marks, "Tunisia's Islamists and the 'Turkish Model,'" 102-115.

shape the historical context of this trend. It is clear tthat the connection between political Islam and secularism has evolved into more intricate and flexible dynamics.

Moderation Theory and Post-Islamism

Moderation theory is an important theoretical framework for analyzing Islamist parties. This framework explores how Islamist parties navigate the spectrum between radicalism and pragmatism, adapting their ideologies and strategies to engage in democratic systems. The historical trajectory of moderation theory lies in the evolution of Islamist parties in response to changes in global and national landscapes. These parties began as radicals to change society based on Islamic principles. As they engage in democratic processes, however, they face the challenge of aligning ideological foundations with practical political realities.[59]

Scholars define moderation in various ways, involving the willingness to work within a democratic system and political compromise. Tezcür maintains that moderate Islamists tend to prioritize the provision of public services over rigid ideological agendas.[60] Moderation theory is often applied to observe changes in Islamist parties' orientation. Tezcür examines how AKP shifted to a more moderate stance,[61] resulting in its commitment to political pluralism, and the party's ability to maintain popular support while working within a secular democratic framework.[62]

Cavatorta and Merone investigate how Ennahda positioned itself as a moderate Islamist party that adheres to democratic ideas

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[59] Jillian Schwedler, "Can Islamists Become Moderates? Rethinking the Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis," *World Politics* 63, no. 2 (2011): 347-376.

[60] Günes Murat Tezcür, "The Moderation Theory Revisited: The Case of Islamic Political Actors," *Party Politics* 16, no. 1 (2010): 69-88; Günes Murat Tezcür, *The Paradox of Moderation: Muslim Reformers in Iran and Turkey* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).

[61] Tezcür, "The Moderation Theory Revisited: The Case of Islamic Political Actors."

[62] Menderes Conar, "From Moderation to De-moderation: Democratic Backsliding of the AKP in Turkey"; Pelin Ayan Musil, "Revisiting the Concept of Moderation in the Age of Populism: the AKP Case of Turkey," *Middle East Law and Governance* 20 (2021): 1-27.

and works in coalition with secular parties. Both assess the party's willingness to compromise on issues like women's rights and religious freedom while maintaining its Islamic identity.[63] Using moderation theory, Buehler examines how PKS balances Islamist agendas within a democratic system,[64] a stance called "moderate Islamic fundamentalism."[65] Tomsa and Woodward analyze the party's pragmatic approach to governance and its efforts to appeal to a broad spectrum of voters while respecting the country's secular principles.[66]

One may observe how Islamist actors are incorporated into the political system in light of moderation theory. It is argued that the inclusion of Islamist actors into democratic politics tends to moderate their ideology. According to Kubicek, inclusion becomes the means to foster a "moderate" Islam that is more amenable to democracy.[67]

The moderation theory or moderation-inclusion hypothesis, however, has been critically examined, although the moderation of AKP occurred not via inclusion, but after its Islamist predecessors were repressed by the government. It realized it needed to change course (emphasizing its "conservative democratic" as opposed to its "Islamic" nature) to do better at the polls.[68]

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[63] Cavatorta and Merone. "Moderation through Exclusion? 857–875.

[64] Michael Buehler, "Revisiting the Inclusion-Moderation Thesis in the Context of Decentralized Institutions: The Behavior of Indonesia's Prosperous Justice Party in National and Local Politics," *Party Politics* 19, no. 2 (2012): 210-229.

[65] Firman Noor, "Moderate Islamic Fundamentalism: Understanding the Political Thinking of the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera," *Studia Islamika* 14, no. 3 (2007): 447-481; Syahrul Hidayat, "Managing Moderation: The AKP in Turkey and the PKS in Indonesia," Ph.D, Thesis, University of Exeter, 2012.

[66] Dirk Tomsa, "Moderating Islamism in Indonesia: Tracing Patterns of Party Change in the Prosperous Justice Party," *Political Research Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (2012): 486-498; Mark Woodward, et.al. "Getting Culture: A New Path for Indonesia's Islamist Justice and Prosperity Party," *Contemporary Islam* 7 (2013): 173-189.

[67] Paul Kubicek, *Political Islam and Democracy in the Muslim World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2015).

[68] Ibid.; A. Kadir Yildirim, *Muslim Democratic Parties in the Middle East: Economy and Politics of Islamist Moderation* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press,

Ennahda has "moderated" itself, abandoning past positions similar to the MB's, but the question is how sincere this conversion is. Cavatorta suggests that the party's "post-Islamist turn" is not a pragmatic, tactical move; it is the "product of a longer-running engagement with the ideological underpinnings of a renewed Islamism" that is rooted in the Tunisian context. Ghannouchi's claim that Tunisia is an Islamic state because it guarantees liberty and justice is less a "rhetorical device" and more a "product of an important evolution that has taken place through the rethinking of religious categories."[69]

Not all observers are convinced, however. Many critics accuse Ennahda of conducting a "double discourse" and cite examples such as calls for jihad and a "new caliphate" from some Ennahda officials and a leaked videotape in which Ghannouchi gives advice to Salafist activists and appears to endorse the gradual creation of an Islamic state.[70]

Following the transformation occurring in the ideological and political orientation of Islamist parties, different scholars seek to describe them as representing what is called new political Islam (Karagiannis),[71] or post-Islamism (Bayat).[72] In a general context of the Islamic world, developments in various Islamist groups are called by Burgat "beyond Islamism,"[73] hybrid political Islam

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2016); Suveyda Karakaya and A. Kadir Yildirim. "Islamist Moderation in Perspective: Comparative Analysis of the Moderation of Islamist and Western Communist Parties," *Democratization* 20, no.7 (2013): 1322-1349.

[69] Cavatorta and Merone. "Moderation through Exclusion? 857–875.

[70] Kubicek, *Political Islam and Democracy in the Muslim World*.

[71] Emmanuel Karagiannis, *The New Political Islam: Human Rights, Democracy, and Justice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018).

[72] Asef Bayat, (ed.), *Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Asef Bayat, "The Coming of a post-Islamist Society," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.5, No.9 (1996): 43-52. doi: 10.1080/10669929608720091; Kamran Bokhari and Farid Senzai, "Post-Islamism: The Case of Turkey's AKP," In *Political Islam in the Age of Democratization. Middle East Today* (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2013).

[73] Ihsan Yilmaz, "Beyond Post-Islamism: Transformation of Turkish Islamism Toward 'Civil Islam' and Its Potential Influence in the Muslim World." *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies* 4, no. 1 (2011): 245-280.

(Bermek),[74] or in the Indonesian context, a new era of political Islam or meliorist Islamist (Hilmy),[75] or Post-Islamist politics (Hasan, Ansor).[76] Aktay describes this phenomenon using a provoking term, "the end of Islamism."[77] Chamkhi introduces the term "neo-Islamism," describing that neo-Islamism adherents have developed such concepts, priorities, and agendas of Islamist politics in response to the urgent question, 'What went wrong?.'[78] The impetus has been to redress prior failure to execute state and societal Islamization. In the absence of a proper definition, Chamkhi proposes the following: "Neo-Islamism is a tendency that emerged within the mainstream MB movement and its pro-democracy affiliates in the Muslim World, which uses liberal sets of concepts, for tactical or strategic purposes, while pursuing the same traditional goals of the Islamist movement."[79]

Conclusion

The trend in scholarship on political Islam in Turkey, Tunisia, and Indonesia is experiencing significant shifts and changes. Most scholars are moving away from binary narratives and more context-sensitive approaches. This shift recognizes the diversity in Islamist parties, their involvement in democratic electoral processes, their changing attitudes toward gender-related issues, their transnational connections, and their dynamic interplay with secularism. As these countries continue to develop and change

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[74] Sevinc Bermek, *The Rise of Hybrid Political Islam in Turkey: Origins and Consolidation of the JDP* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

[75] Masdar Hilmy, *Islamism and Democracy: Piety and Pragmatism* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2010), 179.

[76] Noorhaidi Hasan, "Post Islamist Politics in Indonesia," in *Post-Islamism: The Changing Faces of Political Islam,* ed. Asef Bayat (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 157-182; Muhammad Ansor, "Post-Islamism and the Remaking of Islamic Public Sphere in Post Reform Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 23, no. 2 (2016): 471-515.

[77] Yasin Aktay, "The 'Ends' of Islamism: Rethinking the Meaning of Islam and the Political," *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 1 (2013): 111-125.

[78] Tarek Chamkhi, "Neo-Islamism in the post-Arab Spring." *Contemporary Politics* 20, no.4 (2014): 453-468

[79] Ibid.

socially and politically, scholarship on political Islam also begins to critically analyze the dynamics of these parties and their impact on the political landscape of their respective states. In this era of ever-evolving socio-political dynamics, studies on political Islam in Turkey, Tunisia, and Indonesia reveal proof of the adaptability and resilience of contemporary scholarship. As political Islam continues to evolve, changing trends and innovative theoretical frameworks, such as the inclusion-moderation hypothesis to academic inquiry, will equip academics with more nuanced insights necessary to deal with this complex and dynamic landscape of political Islam.

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