



Department of
International Relations

RESURGENCE OF SECULARISM AND RISING MODERATISM: THE TURNING TIDE OF ISLAMIC POPULISM IN INDONESIA AND TÜRKİYE

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Background

- Democratic decline in two largest Muslim democracies: Türkiye and Indonesia
- Islamic Populism, explanations:
 - Discontents towards globalization and capitalist development (Hadiz 2016)
 - Resurfacing historical ideal past (Yilmaz 2018; Yavuz 2019)
 - Debate over the position of religion within the state (Majiid 2023)
- This paper will examine **how the resurgence of secularism in Türkiye and Indonesia are in line with the decline of democratization** in recent history of Muslim societies
- Main argument: Secularization and democratization as a “co-evolving” process in an opposite direction

Framework: Politics of Re-Secularization

- Secularism: the state's defining role on the religious affairs that occupy the public space
 - Thin description of Secularization: Relocation of religion in society and in personal lives, which entails the decline of past religious forms and the appearance of new ones (McKenzie 2017; Taylor 2007) → **Problem**: it builds on Christian, Western European & American secularization
 - Relocation of religion: not for its rituals or institutional presents, but for the 'public reasoning' (Asad 2003)
 - Consequence on Muslim societies: changing the form of religion from its ideal past into a new, evolving form
 - Complexity: Not only an internal process from within (both bottom-up and top-down), but also international pressure
- Distinctive Secularization process in Türkiye and Indonesia
- Secularization is not a linear process, rather a dynamic process that employs de-secularization and re-secularization (Berger, 1999)

Framework: Interests, Institutions, Ideas

- Adapting Comparative Political Economy approach: Interests, Institutions, Ideas (Hall 1997; Clift 2021)
- Interests
 - To understand the material interest of the principal actors, which in our case is the state and other religious groups, that coalesce and oppose each other and how it changes over time
 - *Cui bono?* how each interest group is seeking for political and economic power to influence national policy?
 - Our case → power to define religious term, hegemony vs. counter-hegemony (Türkiye)
- Institutions
 - Emphasises the primary causal factors behind the economic policy in the organizational structures of the political economy
 - Path dependence of institutions → historical institutional choices have enduring impact on the current institutional arrangements among the actors (institutional legacies)
 - Our case → civil society influence (Indonesia), government vs. opposition battle for the secular space and institution (Türkiye)
- Ideas
 - To capture the cultural dimension that influences the policy which is often taken for granted → shaped the political structure and actor's agency to exercise its influence
 - Our case → contention between 'moderate' vs 'radical' Islam (Indonesia), Erdoğan's ambiguous laicism (Türkiye)

Framework: Comparative Historical Analysis

- Objective: how two different historical trajectories resulted in similar political outcomes
- Comparative Historical Analysis (CHA) (Mahoney & Rueschemeyer 2003)
 - Causal analysis
 - Emphasising process over time
 - Systematic and contextualized comparison
- Critical juncture: a large, rapid, and discontinuous changes, that breaks the previous path and later changes the outcome to converge with a path from another case (Munck 2022).
 - Turkiye: 15 July 2016 Coup Attempt
 - Indonesia: 2 December 2016 Aksi Bela Islam

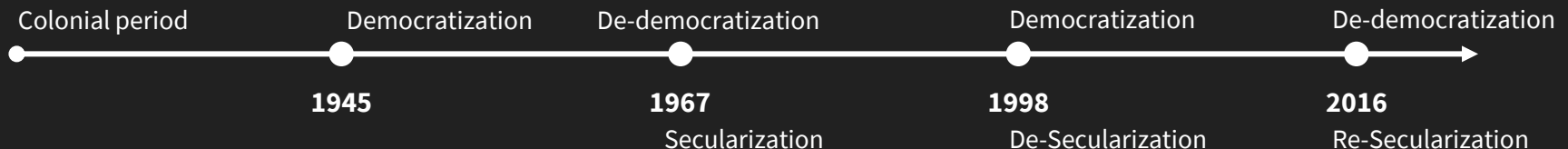
Discussion: Türkiye

	Interests	Institutions	Ideas
Main debate	Hegemonic Consolidation vs. Counter-Hegemonic Momentum	Reshaping of secular spaces and secular practices	Redefinition of secular and secularism in Türkiye
Mechanism	Electoral autocratization vs. nationwide protest	Reclaiming <i>Diyanet</i> as agency of religious propagation, construction of Taksim Camii redefinition of Turkish national holiday	Erdoğan's ambiguous laicism through two ways: laicism as a marker of national sovereignty &
Contribution to the Secularization Process	Imamoğlu momentum as defining moment of post-post-Kemalism	Continuing effort to claim secular space and practices	Soft secularism -> autocratic religious resurgence -> civil Kemalism?



Discussion: Indonesia

	Interests	Institutions	Ideas
Main debate	Pro-Government vs Opposition Islamic Group	Institutionalizing Political Islam (Or Not?)	Moderate vs Radical
Mechanism	212 as the “Islamic Populism” moment → state’s retook its control over religious group	Global War on Terror → dividing the moderate vs radical Muslims → incentivizing the ‘moderate’ + disincentivizing the ‘radical’	Detachment of ulama from defining the religious terms → embedding religiosity with nationalism → division between ‘good’ vs ‘bad’ muslim
Contribution to the Secularization Process	Justify the state intervention on religiosity and other religious affairs	Institutional legacy over the relations between the state and religion	Godly-defined term → state- defined term



Conclusion

- Different historical trajectories, different socio-political context, similar result:
 - Indonesia: 1968-1998 [Secularization], 1998-2016 [De-secularization], 2016 onwards [Re-secularization from above - resurgence of moderation]
 - Türkiye: 1960-1997 [Secularization], 1997-2003 [secularization vs de-secularization], 2003-2016 [re-secularization from below - resurgence of civil Kemalism]
- **Democratization and Secularization are co-evolving:** Strong religious resurgence coupled with political autocratization leads into re-secularization in both countries
- Secularism as a paradigm has been passing through continuous moments of self-reflection and self-criticism - 'previously democratic' turned 'autocratic' religious resurgence has opened possibilities for democratising the narrative of 'authoritarian' secularism

Thank you for your attention. Any critics and suggestions are warmly welcomed

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