

Contemporary Narratives of Leftist Islam Movements in Indonesia and Turkey: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

This research analyses the contemporary narratives of leftist Islam movements being developed as a counter-narrative to dominant Islamic discourse in Indonesia and Turkey. These leftist Islam movements were introduced under different circumstances in the two countries. In Indonesia, leftist Islam was initially promoted by Islamic scholars who were interacting with Marxist references. This was shown in the cases of Haji Misbach, who was one of Indonesia's – and the world's – first leftist Muslim figures. In the case of Turkey, some leftist Islamic movements were inspired by the modern Turkish Marxist movement, which emerged in the middle of the twentieth century and was eventually combined with Islamic elements. This research argues that as both Indonesian and Turkish governments are consolidating their modes of authoritarian neoliberal governance, combined with increasing religiosity, the narratives of leftist Islam are re-emerging as a way to provide socio-political criticisms and to formulate alternative ideas on the role of Islam in improving the livelihood of Muslims in Indonesia and Turkey. This research engages with several cases of leftist Islamic movements in Indonesia and Turkey. In Indonesia, this research takes the examples of FNKSDA (Nahdliyyin Front for Natural Resource Sovereignty) and its media outlet *Islam Bergerak* (Islam on the Move) which have had an important role in organising leftist Islamic movement in Indonesia during the 2010s. In the case of Turkey, we examine the role of *Antikapitalist Müslümanlar* (Anti-Capitalist Muslims), also known as *Kapitalizmle Mücadele Derneği* (Association for Fight against Capitalism). This research identifies the socio-political origins, main ideas, goals, and strategies of the contemporary leftist Islam movements in Indonesia and Turkey.

Keywords: Leftist Islam, FNKSDA, Misbach, Kapitalizmle Mücadele Derneği, Turkish Marxist movement

Introduction

While the concept of leftist Islam has been systematically founded since the early twentieth century, the sociological and political context of leftist Islam and its application remain under-explored, limited to discussions on how the idea of leftist Islam was being interpreted by Muslim intellectuals around the globe.¹ The discussion on this topic was initially limited only to the exploration of leftist Islam in the Arab world by Arab intellectuals.² Eventually, with the movement to translate the works of Arab intellectuals, this idea found audiences in the different corners of the Muslim world. As the idea spreads further, leftist Islam has found new momentum and energy that strengthens the cornerstone of its theoretical framework, and thus, inspires new movements in many Muslim countries.

During this period of increasing authoritarianism, enforced by neoliberal economic systems, some communities in the Muslim-majority countries feel they are being seriously disenfranchised from the political and economic system. These communities are suffering because of the injustices imposed on them by governmental and economic forces claiming to represent the values and principles of economic progress. In several cases, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, this notion of economic progress, which was coupled with the notion of political stability, is also being legitimised by religious narratives.³ Therefore, criticisms from disenfranchised groups are easily repressed because they are considered as not suitable with the accepted religious framework, which itself is sponsored by the state and cannot accept the counter-narratives as legitimate, not even as a narrative that shifts away from the prevailing religious understanding. This is why the idea of leftist Islam discovered its relevance in some Muslim democracies. Instead of experiencing fallout, the leftist Islam narrative was re-constructed once more as a framework to build an alternative system amid the dominating authoritarian neoliberal governments in Muslim countries.

This paper explores the contemporary application of leftist Islam in two of the world's most prominent and developing Muslim democracies: Indonesia and Turkey. It is necessary to clarify that the idea of leftist Islam cannot be exclusively limited to the ideas developed by Arab intellectuals in 1970s and 1980s, as it has its roots in the earliest days of Bolshevik Revolution in 1917.⁴ Mirsaid Sultangaliev can be hailed as one of the earliest figures promoting the idea of leftist Islam. This paper shows how two notable leftist Islam movements in Indonesia and Turkey –

¹ Jenkins 2021.

² Hanafi 1982.

³ Liow and Liow 2009; Hamayotsu 2015.

⁴ Shigavbdinov 2007.

Nahdliyyin Front for Natural Resource Sovereignty (FNKSDA) and *Antikapitalist Müslümanlar* respectively – position themselves against the dominant religious, economic, and political narratives by employing the ideals of leftist Islam derived from global and local Muslim thinkers. This paper also seeks to understand how these movements are trying to gain support from the wider Muslim community in their respective countries.

Authoritarian neoliberalism in Indonesia and Turkey

Leftist Islam will not find the needed momentum without the rise of authoritarian neoliberalism. Thus, before understanding the context of contemporary leftist Islam, we need to clarify the definition of authoritarian neoliberalism, especially in the context of Indonesia and Turkey. Defining authoritarian neoliberalism is not a simple task, as neoliberalism itself is already a diverse phenomenon. Since its inception, neoliberalism has always been intended to be implemented in a democratic system. It is a system that is not only necessarily an open market, but also an open society. Proponents of neoliberalism argue that it should emphasize the role of individuals in re-shaping their societal, cultural, and political system based on the logic of the openly competitive market.⁵ Instead of the state having an enormous role in ensuring the workings of all fields of society, it is actually the individuals themselves who hold the prominent roles in ensuring that change and transformation is possible. Neoliberalism's earliest inception was mainly caused by the dissatisfaction of several politicians and economists with state-led policies that resulted in high levels of public spending.

Initially, neoliberal policies brought the economies of several Western countries from possible economic retraction to acceleration. This was made possible by enabling incentives for companies and reducing company taxation, allowing them to expand their business and improve their capacity to compete in an otherwise free market.⁶ However, the economic advancements made possible by the neoliberal system were not sustainable. This was inevitable in cases where the neoliberal economic system was being enacted by semi-democratic or even autocratic leaderships. This phenomenon, occurring in several parts of Latin America and Southeast Asia, was the first instance of what we can call authoritarian neoliberalism. Although neoliberalism was devised to help developing countries open up their economic and political systems, these countries were not

⁵ Stiglitz 2019.

⁶ Prasad 2006.

experiencing economic advancement along the pathways designed by the Washington Consensus.⁷

Many countries illustrate the dangers of implementing neoliberalism under autocratic or semi-democratic leaderships. In the case of Southeast Asia, Springer argues that several countries, such as Indonesia and Cambodia, have continued the process of neoliberalization, Indonesia and Cambodia are still lacking the necessary progress in democratisation that would ensure social, political, and economic equality for all. In the case of Middle East, such as in Egypt,⁸ where the process of neoliberalization affected income levels and quality of life, the combined practice of neoliberalism and autocratic policies in fact reversed the process of democratisation and increased the level of socio-economic inequality. This is also seen in the case of Turkey.⁹ Meanwhile, due to various pitfalls during the process of neoliberalization and the intensification of free-market rules, countries in Latin America are also suffering several setbacks, especially in terms of economic inequality, social injustice, and human rights violations.¹⁰ The transformation of political and economic system in Peru under the rule of Alberto Fujimori and Alan Garcia could be categorized as an early case of authoritarian neoliberalism.¹¹

Jessop states that there are four primary variants of neoliberalism: neoliberal system transformation, neoliberal regime shifts, neoliberal economic restructuring, and neoliberal policy adjustment.¹² What happens in the case of authoritarian neoliberalization in many countries could involve one or some of these variants. In countries experiencing economic crises, it is often due to neoliberal economic restructuring and regime shifts. In this case of economic restructuring, usually the government has repressed oppositional voices and established a new economic regime through illiberal, undemocratic practices. In this context, Tansel argues that authoritarian neoliberalism can be marked by two distinct practices. The first practice is when governments give neoliberal policies a prominent place through sets of administrative, legal, and coercive mechanisms, which eventually will pressurise any potential popular resistance against neoliberalism. The second practice is when the state prefers coercion, applying it through either legal or extra-

⁷ Washington and Bank 1997.

⁸ Sika 2019.

⁹ Hadiz 2018.

¹⁰ Weyland 2004.

¹¹ Weyland 2004; Roberts 1995.

¹² Jessop 2019.

legal intimidation, further advanced by the increasing control of state over every sphere of social life.¹³

There are several reasons behind the occurrence of creeping authoritarian neoliberalism in countries that have experienced certain levels of democratization. Firstly, authoritarian neoliberalism – which is sometimes termed authoritarian developmentalism – is developing deeper roots in democratizing societies due to the increasing populist attitudes of the political elites. These populist attitudes can be identified by the delineation of differences between the establishment and the people.¹⁴ Secondly, regimes led by authoritarian values always try to establish new legal, economic, and social frameworks to tackle existing issues faced by the populace. Therefore, politicians who subscribe to authoritarian political mindsets focus their policies on promoting public morality against all kinds of ‘societal evils’, constructing new public spaces and infrastructure in line with the political agenda promoted by elites.¹⁵

In the context of authoritarian neoliberalism, Garcia notes that leaders of authoritarian neoliberal regimes also ‘legalize’ their actions through constitutional design that allows the government to exercise its administration with the logic of the market.¹⁶ Thus, the policymaking process conducted in this kind of regime does not necessarily involve democratic deliberation. Since democratic deliberation generally involves oppositional politics, authoritarian neoliberal regimes only allow modest discussion and deliberation. In this context, the ideological orientation of most authoritarian neoliberal regimes is directed to sustain the reproduction of global capitalism, to the extent that these regimes will also sacrifice democratic protest. When authoritarian neoliberalism is then finally executed as official ideology, politics takes the form of ‘economic technocracy’, as argued by Kiely.¹⁷ Kiely considers that economic technocracy is a true consequence of economic liberalism’s treachery against the values of political liberalism. This is due to the fact that the neoliberal system in developing countries only uses democracy and political deliberation as tools, not goals. Thus, this process allows the creation of democratic elitism that in turn establishes economic technocracy.

How is the authoritarian neoliberal system reconstructed in developing Muslim democracies, such as Indonesia and Turkey? In the case of Indonesia, the creation of a neoliberal regime in democratizing Indonesia has been a subject of

¹³ Tansel 2017.

¹⁴ Arsel, Adaman, and Saad-Filho 2021.

¹⁵ Centeno and Cohen 2012.

¹⁶ García 2019.

¹⁷ Kiely 2017.

significant academic debate since the early years of the post-Suharto reform period, known in Indonesia as *Reformasi*. Some scholars argue that the process of neoliberal regime establishment in Indonesia was actually initiated in the later years of Suharto's New Order, which stood until 1998. Following the improvement of the Indonesian economy by the early 1980s, the middle class began to take a more prominent role in Indonesian society. The formation of a middle class played an instrumental role in the fight against the authoritarian Suharto government, especially during the mid-to-late-1990s, when Indonesia was experiencing series of political and economic crises, as the Suharto administration was forced to follow economic restructuring mandated by the World Bank.

The end of Suharto's administration did not spell the end of neoliberal authority. At the time, neoliberal policy was being implemented as a way to accelerate the development of Indonesia's crippled economy after the New Order period. It should be recognized that some aspects of Indonesia's economy did indeed advance as a result, to the point that Indonesia is included as a member of the G-20. However, it must be noted that this economic acceleration was not followed by similar advancement in political democratization. Following the 2014 Indonesian presidential election, several scholars noted that Indonesia is experiencing a populist turn in national politics. Latent and systemic problems of injustice, which were not properly addressed during the period of economic acceleration, have now become an area of political contestation, manipulated as a political tool by elites from both secular nationalist and Islamist parties in their attempts to win the election.¹⁸ This resulted in the oligarchic dominance of Indonesian politics. In addition, the neoliberalist approach has become more entrenched in Indonesian politics due to the existence of *proyek-hunting*,¹⁹ performed in many political spheres as a way to enforce already-established lines of political patronage.²⁰

Following the election of Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo as president of Indonesia in 2014, and his re-election in 2019, Indonesia is experiencing a 're-autocratization' of politics. Mietzner explains that Jokowi has managed to apply certain measures of illiberal politics that secure the dominance of both his administration and his

¹⁸ Diprose, McRae, and Hadiz 2019.

¹⁹ *Proyek* ('project) are activities conducted by politicians and conglomerates in Indonesia to extract advantages from each other. *Proyek* are usually considered as illegal ways of implementing programs, because the decision to do so are not taken through the process of deliberation, but through the patronage relations that enable certain conglomerates to exert their influence and politicians to gain material advantage from these conglomerates.

²⁰ Aspinall 2013.

cliques in Indonesian politics. This “illiberal innovation” can be seen through the manifestation of control over electoral laws to limit the abilities of political opposition, manufacturing forms of identity-based politics, concentrating power in certain branches of government, and empowering the executive branch.²¹ This was subsequently followed by increasing intolerance towards religious minorities and oppressed groups, poor human rights implementation, stronger crackdowns on oppositional movements, and widening inequality in Indonesian society, as well as by the deepening process of neoliberalization, made possible by the ironclad coalition between the political elites and economic oligarchs. Some critics argue that Jokowi’s ‘authoritarian neoliberal’ regime could be also called as a regime which implements a militarized *lex mercatoria* – a rule of government which has command over the armed forces as well as legal system designed by and for the benefit of corporates and economic oligarchs. This rule of militarized *lex mercatoria* became obvious with the ratification of the so-called ‘Omnibus Law’, which eases business processes at the sake of workers’ welfare.²²

Despite clear evidence of authoritarian neoliberalism in Indonesia, several actors still consider that Indonesia is applying only a ‘hybrid’ or ‘limited’ version of neoliberal economic policy.²³ One example of how this fact is blatantly avoided is a statement made by the then-Supreme Head of the Indonesian Ulama Council, Ma’ruf Amin, who, since 2019, is Jokowi’s Vice President. During a press conference in 2018, Amin stated that Jokowi’s administration was not following the neoliberalist orientation in its economic policy. Amin argued that it is impossible for Jokowi’s policies to have neoliberalist orientations because the policies are intended to alleviate economic on the poor and especially on the *pesantren* populace (*pesantren* are Islamic boarding schools).²⁴ This statement shows that there is serious misunderstanding and ignorance from Indonesia’s official Islamic authority on the issue of neoliberalism. In fact, this statement actually proves the insights provided by Alexander Chandra that highlight Indonesia’s dilemma in fulfilling its ‘socialist’ constitutional mandate while at the same time facing global economic competition with a ‘neoliberal outlook’.²⁵

²¹ Mietzner 2020.

²² JN and M 2020.

²³ Indonesia Investments 2019. The writer follows the definition of neoliberal economic policies as policies that strongly emphasize “free-market liberalization, regressive taxation, and the elimination of social services”. Although the implementation of neoliberal economic policies may differ depending on the context of the countries, neoliberal regimes generally implement these principles. (Goudarzi, Badaan, and Knowles, 2022).

²⁴ Stefanie 2018.

²⁵ Alexander 2011.

The Turkish experience tells a different story. The rise of neoliberalism in Turkey was mainly aided by the Europeanization of Turkey since the 1960s. After the acceleration of Turkish economic development in the 1980s, aided by globalization, it is argued that Turkish political elites agreed to implement a neoliberal economic outlook to drive the Turkish economy over the next decades. Although this process was challenged by changing coalitions and complex social issues, ranging from the Kurdish independence question to the rise of political Islamism, this crisis ultimately provided neoliberalism with a firmer foothold in the Turkish political and economic system. Under the cold-handed Kemal Derviş, a former World Bank expert who became Turkey's Minister of Economic Affairs in 2001-02, Turkey underwent a series of reform that transform its market to become more open to both European and global interests.²⁶

Derviş specifically argued that Turkey needed to experience the sequence of market and political reform, with market reform being the utmost importance. As Cizre and Yeldan elaborate, Derviş maintained his position to prioritize economic restructuring to ensure a smooth stabilization of Turkish economy before eventually shifting the focus to the political reform process.²⁷ Derviş had likely learned some lessons from Latin America, where countries were showing that political democratization would not pave a smoother path for economic neoliberalization. In Turkey, political democratization would mean that the working class would not be in favour of certain measures promoted by the neoliberal system; Derviş wanted to avoid this (Cizre and Yeldan 2005b).

Following several years of economic restructuring, the initially pro-European, centre-right, (post-)Islamist AK Parti (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, or Justice and Development Party) secured victory during the 2003 Turkish parliamentary election. As a party which initially supported the full integration of Turkey into the EU, AK Parti did not oppose the plan that Kemal Derviş had set in motion. AK Parti gave its full support for the continuation of the neoliberalization project, noting that AK Parti found its roots in pro-Europeanism and developmentalism, as with many other parties in Turkey at that time. AK Parti had also learnt from the failures of coalition government, which had been unable to manage economic crises due to mismanagement and corruption. This prompted AK Parti to pursue a developmentalist agenda instead, with its staunch support for the developmentalist approach originating from the National Outlook Vision (*Milli Görüş*) promoted by former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan. The National

²⁶ Bedirhanoğlu 2021.

²⁷ Cizre and Yeldan 2005a.

Outlook Vision envisioned Turkey becoming a state which prioritized the heavy industry and manufacturing sectors. Even though AK Parti was created as a way to innovate the political methods of National Outlook, it is clear that AK Parti also inherited Erbakan's ideology and, furthermore, matched the National Outlook ideology with the neoliberalization agenda.²⁸ AK Parti was also trying to redefine Kemalism in a new era, by emphasizing that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was advocated for an economically advanced Turkey.

The neoliberalization process in Turkey did not end in the formation of a free market. The Turkish economic and political sphere, which was previously occupied by Kemalist political forces, is now being dominated by AK Parti politicians and their coalitions. The increasing presence of Muslim capitalists and entrepreneurs must be noted. Muslim capitalists and entrepreneurs previously wanted to establish a more 'just', 'moralist', and 'Islamic' economic system against the atheistic 'communist' economic system and 'capitalist' system. Most of these economic actors associated themselves with National Outlook movements, articulating Zahid Kotku's principles on the importance of promoting morality and political Islam in the public arena.²⁹ Kotku is known for a statement that is often repeated during election period: Muslims should never choose any politicians who are atheist, agnostic, masonic, and criminal, and should never side with parties that support these kinds of politicians.³⁰ Muslim capitalists immediately embraced the neoliberal system and amplified it with Islamic values.³¹ Atasoy argued that the shift of power during this era was also shown through centralization of authority to AK Parti and its coalitions. By mentioning the idea of '*muhafazakar demokrasi*' (conservative democracy), which was proposed by Yalcin Akdogan, Atasoy saw that conservative democracy was making marriage possible between two differing ideologies, Islam and neoliberalism.³² Abdurrahman Arslan figured that this marriage between was made possible by the inability of Muslims to contextualize Islamic messages in their response towards modernity. Furthermore, in his writing, Arslan projected that the 'modern Muslim' man has been trapped in the neoliberal framework, that no matter how 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' his economic model looks, the substance will always be disciplined to follow the logic of modernity, or, in this context, neoliberalism. In any case, the concept of 'modern Islamic economics' will

²⁸ Özsel, Öztürk, and Ince 2013.

²⁹ Özdalga 2020.

³⁰ Yeni Akit 2018.

³¹ Atasoy 2009a.

³² Atasoy 2009b.

never conform to the true principles of Islamic economics as conceptualized by the rules of *fiqh*.³³

Ercan Yildirim has even classified the political economy model of Turkey during the era of AK Parti as ‘neoliberal Islamism’ (*neoliberal İslamcılık*). In short, neoliberal Islamism found its ultimate momentum after an oppositional challenge stemmed from the Gezi Park movement in 2013. Yildirim proposes that there are at least three main periods of neoliberalization in Turkey: the adaptation period of the 1980s, the deliberation period of the 1990s, and the application and adoption period of the 2000s. During these periods, political Islam activists in Turkey followed careerism at the cost of their own Islamist ideals, subjecting themselves to the ideology of ‘*meşrutiyet İslamcılık*’ or state-centric Islamist, never questioning the hegemony of neoliberal government.³⁴ The Gezi Park momentum strengthened and made more influential the notion of constitutionalist, neoliberal Islamism. The resistance displayed by oppositional actors made it easier for the neoliberal Islamists to define their enemy and set clear boundaries for its political agenda. Neoliberal Islamists also found another way to entrench their own version of morality in public sphere by exerting the role of *Diyanet* (the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs) as a moral guarantor of the neoliberalization process and making Islamic symbolism more visible in Turkish public spaces (Mutluer 2018).

Eventually, the most determining episode of the consolidation of neoliberalism in Turkey was the failed coup of 15 July 2016. 15 July was a crisis that made Turkish ‘state capitalism’ emerge as the victor over the network of Muslim capitalists, as illustrated in the case of the Fethullah Gülen movement, also known as *Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü* (FETO), the Fethullah Terror Organization. AK Parti’s neoliberal politics were finally being put under pressure by various systemic conditions, ranging from the Syrian refugee crisis to Turkey’s own domestic economic challenges. While the neoliberal populist model applied by AK Parti since its inception to gaining power in 2003 might have fulfilled the expectation of some citizens, it failed to live up the aspiration of the working, blue-collar citizens facing instabilities during the ongoing economic crisis.³⁵

Leftist Islam Movement in Indonesia

The discourses of leftist Islam movement in Indonesia and Turkey will be discussed in the coming pages. In the case of Indonesia, the idea of leftist Islam movement has been constructed by no other than traditional Islamic intellectuals

³³ Arslan 2015.

³⁴ Yıldırım 2016.

³⁵ Bozkurt-Güngen 2018.

(*kyai*) since the nineteenth century. The interaction of *Hajji* and *kyai* with the global environment, either through their participation in Western educational institutions or their interactions with global Muslim communities during their *hajj* pilgrimage, helped nurture their worldviews and subsequently develop their own understandings of leftist Islam. Many *Hajji* and *kyai* were initially interested in the thoughts of pan-Islamism, as promoted by Jalaluddin al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh.³⁶ Pan-Islamism was considered to be the best possible way to resist Western domination. Nevertheless, several traditional Islamic intellectuals considered this idea to be impractical, lacking clear goals and ideological principles. This led them to prefer Communism over the proposal for pan-Islamism.

One of the earliest examples of Indonesian *Hajji* who followed the leftist Islam movement is Haji Misbach. Haji Misbach came from a middle-class merchant family, similar to many Muslims working in the textile industry in Surakarta at that time. As it was a common activity for Muslim intellectuals at the time, Haji Misbach was also involved in several Islamic organizations, such as Muhammadiyah and Sarekat Islam. During his involvement, Haji Misbach wrote numerous articles on the importance of establishing stronger solidarities between Muslims in order to stand up against the colonial government. Haji Misbach focused his attention particularly on the issues of feudalism and capitalism, which had oppressed the Javanese working class. He also argued that only the combination of Islam and communism could help the oppressed Muslims and working class people in Java and, more broadly, Indonesia.³⁷ Due to the provocative nature of his writings, which combined the message of Islam and communism, Haji Misbach was imprisoned several times by the colonial government, even though he was not only directing his criticism to colonial government. Haji Misbach considered the Muslim organizations to which he belonged, Muhammadiyah and Sarekat Islam, as 'Muslim capitalists'.³⁸

Haji Misbach was not the only intellectual at the time to explore leftist Islam in Indonesia. Others included national figures like HOS Tjokroaminoto, Sukarno, and Tan Malaka. These individuals advocated for a synthesis of Islam, nationalism, and socialism/communism as a tool to construct a comprehensive national political agenda and to resist the imperial policy of the Netherlands East Indies.³⁹ However, after Indonesia declared independence in 1945, particularly with the rising influence of political Islam and the dynamics of the Cold War, the idea of synthesizing Islam and leftist thinking was very much abandoned by Islamic

³⁶ Hanif 2015.

³⁷ Mawardi 2018.

³⁸ Ardanawati 2019.

³⁹ Sukarno 1926; Malaka 1948; Fogg 2019.

intellectuals. Many leading Muslim politicians, especially Mohammad Natsir, staunchly criticized the propagation of communism within Indonesian Muslim society. Islamic intellectuals such as Wahab Chasbullah and Achmad Sjaichu from Nahdlatul Ulama were more interested in finding ways to unite the interests of Muslims living in different parts of the colonized 'Third World'. It can be seen from the views of Chasbullah and Sjaichu that they were trying to produce a form of Third World Islamism through the creation of Asian-African Islamic Conference, but this effort failed because of a lack of proper momentum.⁴⁰

Following the ban of Communist ideology in Indonesia after 1965, all Islamic organizations devoted themselves to combatting the excess of communist/socialist influences, which they saw has having threatened the traditional Islamic institutions of *pesantren*.⁴¹ All Islamic organizations were conditioned by the newly-installed New Order regime to comply with anti-leftist politics and to situate their congregations according to the needs of the regime. This condition continued at least until the 1980s, when new generations of activists and scholars were interacting once again with a more holistic reading on ideological debates between conservatism, liberalism, and social democracy. This critical discussion of ideologies was made possible by the enactment of Pancasila as the sole state ideology by the New Order. Indonesian Muslim intellectuals, such as Abdurrahman Wahid and Dawam Rahardjo, initiated new debates that opened up the opportunities for the narratives of leftist Islam to grow.⁴² One of the new institutions which had a crucial role in propagating the narratives of leftist Islam was *Lembaga Kajian Islam dan Sosial* (LKIS, the Institute for Islamic and Social Studies).⁴³ As an institution which was mainly driven by young and progressive activists of Nahdlatul Ulama, LKiS had a remarkable role in translating various works from Arabic that mainly focused on leftist Islam and progressive Islamic views. LKiS helped many Indonesian activists, politicians, and students to study the thoughts of Hassan Hanafi, Abdullah Ali an-Naim, Ashgar Ali Engineer, Fatima Mernissi, and other scholars who advocated for the contextualization of Islamic teachings in the end of Cold War era.⁴⁴ Besides LKiS, *Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan*

⁴⁰ Nursalikhah 2022.

⁴¹ Hadiz 2021.

⁴² Dafit 2017.

⁴³ LKiS was developed by cadres of Nahdlatul Ulama and affiliates in early 1990s as a way to respond to globalization and transformations of the socio-political environment after the Cold War. LKiS particularly emphasized the spread of ideas promoted by the new generation of Islamic intellectuals, such as Hassan Hanafi dan Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, who were known for their radical interpretations of traditional Islamic values.

⁴⁴ Wangsitalaja 2003.

Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial (LP3ES, the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information) also primarily campaigned on the relevance of social democracy and progressive Islamic teachings in the Indonesian context.⁴⁵

In the 2000s, following the fall of the New Order regime and the (re-) installation of democracy, the process of *Reformasi* eventually made discussion on communism and socialism more visible in the public sphere. There were several moments in which leftist political parties attempted to participate in elections, but due to the continuing ban on communist/socialist ideologies, these leftist political parties were not given any chance to become involved in Indonesian national politics. Nevertheless, leftist ideas have found strongholds in many civil society organizations in Indonesia, including in Islamic mass organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama.⁴⁶ The flexibility and the organic nature of Nahdlatul Ulama greatly helped the ideas of leftist Islam to find its ground within the organization, despite the fact that these perspectives are not officially recognized by Nahdlatul Ulama. Forms of leftist Islam ideas and progressive Islam narratives are mainly promoted in the agenda of Lakpesdam PBNU, Nahdlatul Ulama's main body responsible for member education, human rights development, and community empowerment. The leftist Islam agenda of Lakpesdam PBNU was particularly promoted during the leadership of Abdurrahman Wahid. Meanwhile, certain members of Muhammadiyah are also known to closely affiliate themselves with the teaching of leftist Islamic ideas. One of the main doctrines of Muhammadiyah promoted by founder Ahmad Dahlan is the Al-Maun theology; it is considered to be part of Muhammadiyah's teaching with a close correlation with socialism.⁴⁷ In this era of rising authoritarian neoliberalism in Indonesia, leftist Islam movements are building coalitions with other leftist platforms, such as media collective IndoProgress, or collaborating with political parties that have leftist agendas, such as *Partai Hijau Indonesia* (Indonesia Green Party). On some occasions, leftist Islam movements have even involved themselves in public debates vis-à-vis conservative Islamists and liberal Islamists. The next sub-chapter will elaborate on this, discussing the role of FNKSDA and its media wing, Islam Bergerak, in shaping the agenda and narrative of leftist Islam in contemporary Indonesia.

⁴⁵ Sindonews 2020. LP3ES was founded by cadres of Muhammadiyah, who had obtained doctoral degrees and were inspired by views on democracy and socialism.

⁴⁶ Barton, Yilmaz, and Morieson 2021.

⁴⁷ Nashir 2018.

Leftist Islamic Movement in Turkey

In Turkey, leftist Islam, while showing some parallels with the Indonesian case, has its own distinct historical trajectories. The development of leftist Islam in Turkey was also initiated towards the end of nineteenth century. At that time, Ottoman intellectuals who had been educated in Europe were bringing in and transmitting the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the Ottoman Turkish language. Socialism was firstly interpreted as a specific term by James W. Redhouse in his monumental Turkish-English dictionary. Redhouse defined socialism or *istirak* as “*kaffe-i emvalin mustereken tasarruf olunmasi usulu ve kavli*”: “the ways and deeds of publicly spending and managing the whole wealth”.⁴⁸ Socialism was known by Ottoman intellectuals not only through the works of Marx and Engels, but also through the events such as the Paris Commune of 1871. The Paris Commune helped Ottoman intellectuals to learn much about the practical aspects of socialism, with Cesur arguing that some Ottoman intellectuals were experimenting with the ideas of Islamic socialism during this time, albeit in a limited way.⁴⁹ During World War I, there were also several militia groups who organized themselves in the *Kuva-yi Seyyare* (the Green Army Society or the People’s) as a way to spread the values of Islamic socialism. Led by Cerkez Ethem, this movement was not successful, however, because of their opposition towards the larger Turkish nationalist movement under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.⁵⁰

The leftist Islam movement in Turkey did not find its momentum during the Cold War. Instead, it were the counter-left organizations developed. The key organization was known by the name of *Komunizmlle Mucadele Dernegi* (the Association for Fighting Against Communism). This organization was informally established in 1948 at the city of Zonguldak and was eventually formally supported by CIA from 1963.⁵¹ The organization was mainly driven by religious figures and politicians, organizing meetings and campaigns to promote Islamic moralism and a conservative ideology against the ideology of communism and socialism. Many other Muslim scholars at that time were also active in denouncing communism and socialism. Figures like Nurettin Topcu and Necip Fazil Kısakurek were very active in mobilizing ideological fights in newspapers and magazines against the spread of communist ideas amongst Turkish Muslim youth.⁵²

⁴⁸ Cesur 2017a.

⁴⁹ Cesur 2017b

⁵⁰ soL 2010.

⁵¹ Meşe 2018.

⁵² Duran and Aydın 2013.

The advent of Turkish neoliberalism during the premiership and the presidency of Turgut Ozal in the 1980s strengthened the consolidation of middle-class Muslim capitalists in inner Anatolia. The exposure of this class to higher education and a wide variety of ideologies largely did not influence this section of society. However, there was a small section within Turkish Muslim intellectual circles who were following the development of progressive Islam and leftist Islam narratives from the Arab world. These Turkish Muslim intellectuals were to be known as *Ankara İlahiyat Okulu* (Ankara School of Divinity, or *Ankara Okulu* for short.)⁵³ *Ankara Okulu* was a group of scholars from the Faculty of Divinity at Ankara University who wished to develop a new conception that would advocate for promotion of ‘democratic Islam’ discourse against the ‘fundamentalist/radical Islam’ discourse.⁵⁴

Bulut notes that *Ankara Okulu* was initiated as early as 1949 by several professors at Ankara University, but its complete formation was achieved in 1983 by the publication of a journal entitled *İslami Arastirmalar*, which focused on publishing works on the thoughts of Fazlur Rahman, women in Islam, hermeneutic methods in Quranic interpretation, and other related topics.⁵⁵ This journal involved many of Ankara University’s professors, such as Lutfi Sever, Hikmet Akgul, Hayri Kirbasoglu, Omer Ozsoy, and Mustafa Ozturk. While Hayri Kirbasoglu and İlhami Guler went on to establish an Islamic and social-democratic party named HAS Parti together with Numan Kurtulmus, other professors from *Ankara Okulu* established their own publishing house, *Otto Yayinevleri*. *Otto Yayinevleri* has a substantial role in promoting the ideas of progressive Islam and leftist Islam in Turkey by translating works from Arabic and disseminating the writings of the professors of Ankara School of Divinity.⁵⁶ *Ankara Okulu* still maintains its influence and its publishing house today. Although the role of *Ankara Okulu* in propagating the values of progressive Islamism cannot be overlooked, ultimately this movement has held a liminal role in shaping the dynamics of political opposition in Turkey.⁵⁷

The narrative of leftist Islam in Turkey finally found its ultimate momentum during the 2010s. After the dismissal of Islamic and social-democratic HAS Parti, several Muslim intellectuals tried to revive the movement by creating another

⁵³ *Ankara İlahiyat Okulu* should be differentiated from the *Ankara İlahiyat Fakültesi*, since the first terminology is a school of thought, while the second terminology is the name of faculty affiliated to the University of Ankara/*Ankara Üniversitesi*.

⁵⁴ Yıldız 2007.

⁵⁵ Bulut 2019.

⁵⁶ Bulut 2019.

⁵⁷ PARMAKSIZ 2021; Kırbaçoğlu and interviewed by Gülay Türkmen 2019; Şükür 2020.

platform. According to Bayram Koca in his article on the dynamics of Left Islamism in Turkey, there are two platforms with instrumental roles in ensuring the continuation of the leftist Islam narrative in Turkey: the EAP (*Emek ve Adalet Platformu*) which was founded by Mehmet Bekaroglu, and the AKM (*Antikapitalist Muslumanlar/Kapitalizmle Mucadele Derneği*), which was founded by Ihsan Eliacik. The elaboration on AKM's narrative of leftist Islam will continue on the following sub-chapters.⁵⁸

The Case of FNKSDA: The contemporary narrative and movement of leftist Islam in Indonesia

The formation of *Front Nahdliyyin untuk Kedaulatan Sumber Daya Alam* (FNKSDA, or the Islamic Front for Popular Resource Sovereignty) was proposed by several organizational platforms close to the neo-traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama, such as LKiS, the Gusdurian Community, and Lakpesdam NU Jombang Chapter. As of 2019, this movement has at least 18 branches across Indonesia.⁵⁹ Although FNKSDA states in its political manifesto that it would follow the theological framework of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyyah* (the Nahdlatul Ulama school of *Ahl as-Sunna wa-l Jamaah*), FNKSDA does not affiliate themselves within the formal structure of the Nahdlatul Ulama. FNKSDA instead positions itself as a grassroots and cultural organization driven by *Nahdliyyin* (the 'cultural' members of Nahdlatul Ulama) and sympathizers to organize a movement that would stand against the overreaching influence of neoliberalist and populist politics in Indonesia. FNKSDA as an organization of Nahdliyyin sympathizers wishes to continue the vision of *Resolusi Jihad* (Jihad Resolution) that was declared by Hasyim Asy'ari in 1945 against the return of colonial power in Indonesia. According to FNKSDA, the spirit of *Resolusi Jihad* in the context of neoliberalism should be understood differently and continued in a progressive way, so that Nahdliyyin and Nahdlatul Ulama can make their role more relevant in advocating for the rights of oppressed peoples and villagers in the face of extractive capitalism.⁶⁰ The founder of Nahdlatul Ulama, Hasyim Asy'ari, even stated that the main focus of Nahdlatul Ulama is to advocate for and to make prosperous the livelihoods of farmers and villagers.⁶¹

FNKSDA strongly promotes the idea of eco-theology as their basis for struggle. According to Nafia, FNKSDA uses the eco-theological approach in their movement due to the existing framework established in Nahdlatul Ulama since a

⁵⁸ KOCA 2018.

⁵⁹ Ubaidillah 2019.

⁶⁰ FNKSDA 2015.

⁶¹ Ahmad 2020.

1994 conference (*muktamar*). At this Cipasung conference, Nahdlatul Ulama pointed out that government-run industrialization processes have brought about negative and serious excesses that not only affecting the surrounding environment, but also impoverishing the people living in areas where the extractive industries are actively exploiting resources.⁶² By referring to this statement, FNKSDA shows its efforts to contribute to the debate on the usage of Islamic law in critical contemporary issues, particularly on the issue of environmental crises, capitalism, and disaster. One of the frontrunners of this movement, Muhammad al Fayyadl, argues that FNKSDA should be able to provide an alternative discourse of Islamic law that will tackle injustice and inequality in Indonesia.⁶³

Additionally, Fayyadl also iterates that while FNKSDA follows the theological orientation of *Aswaja an-Nahdliyyah*, this does not mean that FNKSDA necessarily stands for moderation. Fayyadl argues that Islamic moderation will not be enough to be used as a basis for a grassroots movement to resist the neoliberal hegemony that has accumulated capital in extreme manners (*takatsur*).⁶⁴ Hornbacher-Schönleber argues that FNKSDA members follow a theology that combines the Islamic values and Marxist ideology, also known as ‘material theology’.⁶⁵ This ‘material theology’ is thus being offered as a way to answer one of the most serious issues in Indonesia: the environmental crisis. FNKSDA prefers to follow a more ‘secular’ approach in its political programs, and even criticized political Islamist ideology, such as through its criticism of the 212 Movement.⁶⁶ This is the reason why one of the leaders of FNKSDA, Roy Murtadho, joins the ‘secular’ Indonesian Green Party.⁶⁷

FNKSDA also promotes the usage of progressive interpretations of the Quran and *hadith* to mobilize the *santri* (students of Islamic boarding schools) and other Indonesian Muslims in the struggle against neoliberal hegemony. In its own

⁶² Nafia 2021a.

⁶³ Nafia 2021b.

⁶⁴ Al-Fayyadl 2016.

⁶⁵ As a conception, ‘material theology’ might be sounding like an ideology that combines Islam and socialism in a comprehensive way, but in writer’s opinion, socialism and Islam are founded in different ontological foundation. Thus, instead of reflecting a genuine effort to synthesize both perspectives, material theology was designed as a way to legitimize efforts by FNKSDA to find moral ground for their resistance against extractive industries.

⁶⁶ Hornbacher-Schönleber 2021. The 212 Movement is a movement that tried to strengthen the influence of the political Islamist movement, such as the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI). This movement originated from initiatives by certain Muslims to ask the government to prosecute Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, the former Governor of Jakarta, for allegations of religious blasphemy.

⁶⁷ Infobanua 2021.

interpretation, FNKSDA opines that God has mandated humankind to own, justly manage, and take advantage of all the resources available in the Earth. Another *hadith* by FNKSDA is a *hadith* that mentions the importance of Muslims to maintain the public/collective ownership of four items: water, mines, forest, and fire (or gas, in the modern context).⁶⁸ FNKSDA connects this *hadith* with a clause in the Indonesian Constitution that specifically mentions the role of the state in the management of natural resources for the public good.

In terms of its strategies, FNKSDA has applied several ways to ensure that their visions can be achieved in the most idealistic way. Firstly, FNKSDA is staying true to its root by building coalitions and networks with villagers and farmers who are being persecuted because of their resistance against development projects. FNKSDA notably built alliances with Wadas villagers in their efforts to stop a mining project in Purworejo; with Temon villagers during their protests against the construction of the New Yogyakarta International Airport; and with Kendeng farmers when they were facing repression from cement factories.⁶⁹ However, FNKSDA activists is not limiting their cooperation with these local and grassroots activists. Through Roy Murtado, one of its leaders, FNKSDA has also built important collaborations with local churches and civil society organizations focusing on environmental issues. This shows that FNKSDA has a very flexible way in building their network, not limiting their choices to only cooperating with Islamic organizations.⁷⁰ This flexibility even brought them to even recognize the LGBTQI+ identity, although this recognition is limited only to the acknowledgement of differing sexual identities without necessarily approving of same-sex marriage. In fact, Fayyadl argues that legalization of same-sex marriage would damage Indonesian morality and cause social crises.⁷¹

Secondly, FNKSDA remains consistent with their *Nahdliyyin* roots by using *salawat* (prayers or supplication to the Prophet) as a way to promote their message of progressive Islam. As the main philosopher of the movement, Fayyadl had composed several *salawat* to address the issue of environmental crises and political opposition. There are two particularly notable *salawat*: *Salawat Bumi* (Prayer for the Earth), and Prayer of the Demonstrators. In these *salawat*, there is a strong emphasis on the message of protecting the Earth from the destruction and manipulation of the natural resources, shown by the statement of “*allahumma shalli ‘ala sayyidina Muhammadin alladzi thanqathi’u bijahihi asbabul mufsidin*

⁶⁸ Al-Fayyadl 2015.

⁶⁹ Aude 2019; Daulathijau 2022; Islam Bergerak 2014.

⁷⁰ CNN Indonesia 2020.

⁷¹ Al-Fayyadl 2018.

wathaghin wal baghin fi wajhi aardhika" ("may it be through the grace of Prophet Muhammad PBUH that the evil cause of the oppressors, intimidator, and despots be annihilated").⁷² This means that the movement also employs traditional Islamic culture to address the problems of environmental exploitation. In the Prayer of the Demonstrators, Fayyadl stresses the urgency of students and activists to defend the truth and to remind the government (*ta'laamu maa nuwi alal haaqiiq, nashihatul umaraa'l assurraqi*) by going to the streets (*rabbi azil madhayiq ath-thariq, liannalasna qutthaqa at thariq*).⁷³ Thirdly, FNKSDA has several educational programs and media tools in order to educate their supporters and affiliates. In 2014, FNKSDA has run media outlet *Islam Bergerak* as a way to share the writings of FNKSDA sympathizers to promote the values of leftist Islam in Indonesia. FNKSDA also established and sponsored the creation of *pesantren agraria* (Islamic boarding schools focusing on agrarian issues), *ngaji ekologi politis* (Islamic classes/lessons on ecological issues), and *ngaji agraria* (Islamic classes/lessons on agrarian issues). Additionally, one of the ecological Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren ekologi*) recently established, *Pesantren Ekologi Misykat al-Anwar*, was also founded by Roy Murtadho.⁷⁴

The Case of *Antikapitalist Müslümanlar*: The contemporary narrative and movement of Leftist Islam in Turkey

Antikapitalist Müslümanlar (AKM) is a Turkish leftist Islamic platform which focuses on mobilizing and organizing activists in their resistance against authoritarian neoliberalism in Turkey. The movement is coordinated by Ihsan Eliacik, a religious instructor and expert on Quran and *hadith* interpretation with a considerable number of student followers. Eliacik originally supported Islamist political parties, such as Saadet Partisi and AK Parti, but as he witnessed the seeds of authoritarianism and capitalism growing in AK Parti, Eliacik ceased his support for them. He also thought that there should be an alternative political movement for Islamists who were not in agreement with the political styles of AK Parti and wished to find a synthesis between Islamic values and leftist political ideologies.⁷⁵ With this perspective, Eliacik aimed to develop a new political movement that advocates for larger freedoms and defends human rights in Turkey in line with Islamic tradition.

⁷² Al-Fayyadl 2017.

⁷³ Al-Fayyadl 2019.

⁷⁴ Widayati and Suparjan 2019; Aspirasi 2021.

⁷⁵ DW 2019.

Together with fellow socialists, who also identified as practicing Muslims, Eliacik established AKM in 2012 under the name *Kapitalizmle Mucadele Dernegi*.⁷⁶

The theological basis of AKM which makes themselves different from another leftist movements in Turkey is their strong focus on the advocacy for the rights of oppressed workers, women, and families, as stated in the Quran Surah an-Nisa, verse 75, and the liberation of slaves and the working class, as stated in the Surah al-Balad, verse 13.⁷⁷ By using these verses, AKM is trying to reconstruct religious narratives that are going against the traditional Islamic discourse. *Dine Karsi Din* (conflict between religion) was used as a motto to criticize the dominant Islamic narratives which generally defend the state-centred and state-oriented Islamist vision. *Dine Karsi Din* was brought from the narratives being developed by Ali Shariati, one of the most prominent Muslim theologians and leftist Muslims.⁷⁸ As an expert on the interpretation of Islamic scriptures, Eliacik believes that the available interpretation of Islam, and especially in the context of political Islam, was mostly crafted by the political powers who wish to defend their authority and domination by using scriptures. He recognized the production of this 'authoritarian Islam' as '*imparatorluk fikih*' (imperial *fiqh*).⁷⁹ Thus, especially in this era of creeping authoritarian neoliberalism which uses religion as one of its legitimizing bases, Eliacik argued that the time has come for Muslims to find the real meaning of Islam by exploring scriptures and traditions in a critical manner. The eventual end of this exploration should be the realization of *dar-as-salam* or *baris yurdu* ('land of peace'), which is based on the principles of justice and reconciliation.⁸⁰

Eliacik frequently highlights the story and the role of Abuzar al-Ghifari as one of the prime examples of Muslim socialists. Eliacik strongly believed that due to his role in the early phase of Islamic history, Abuzar should be a role model for Muslims living under authoritarian neoliberal regimes.⁸¹ The 'radical' and 'distinct' stances of Abuzar, who did conform to the lavish and capital accumulating lifestyle of the Prophet's companions, should be imitated as a way of life to remind Muslims of the meaning of *tauhid*. This is why AKM uses distinct battle cries during their demonstrations, such as "*Mülk Allah'indir*" ("All property is of Allah's ownership") and "*Allah Ekmek Özgürlük*" (Allah, bread, and freedom).⁸² The usage of such

⁷⁶ Adil 2012b.

⁷⁷ Adil 2019.

⁷⁸ Palabıyık 2021.

⁷⁹ Eliacik 2009.

⁸⁰ Adil 2019.

⁸¹ Eliaçık 2009.

⁸² Fersude 2020.

slogans are also accompanied by Eliacik's ground-breaking views and visions on various aspects of Islamic teaching. Eliacik's criticism of traditional *fiqh* teaching led him to criticize the value of *fitre* or *zakat-ul fitrah* as being too small and unable to cater even for the basic needs of Muslims and the poor in Turkey. Eliacik argues that the amount determined by Diyanet should be increased from 40 Turkish lira (US\$2.14, based on 16 December 2022 rate) to 140 Turkish lira (US\$7.51, based on 16 December 2022 rate), so that the provision of *fitre* would be able to uplift the quality of life of the most vulnerable people in Turkey. Eliacik argues that the amount of *fitre* should not only consider the *fiqh* regulation applied within the Hanafi *madhhab*, but also the quality of life of Muslims and vulnerable communities in Turkey.⁸³

Other elements of *fiqh* addressed by Eliacik include the issue of *qurban* slaughter, which he classifies as an outdated practice with no relevance in contemporary Islamic society. He argues that *qurban* should not be understood as making the ritual slaughter as an obligation, but rather a way for Muslims to become closer to oppressed and vulnerable peoples. Eliacik thinks that the money used to buy *qurban* animal should be given directly to the vulnerable communities, so that they can use the money as a medium to prosper. Because of his constant criticism of Diyanet and its *fatwa*, Eliacik also argues for the dismissal of the institution. In response, he faced strong criticism from many government officials and Turkish Islamic scholars.

In AKM's efforts to construct the leftist Islamic narrative in Turkey, AKM and its leader Eliacik have implemented several strategies.⁸⁴ Firstly, AKM collaborates with individuals and other leftist Islamic organizations, such as former members of HAS Parti and *Emek ve Adalet Platformu* (EAP, or Labor and Justice Platform), in their struggle. Interestingly, AKM's and EAP's efforts to collaborate and combine Islamic values in their socialist political agendas were not entirely welcomed by communist/socialist parties in Turkey, with the exception of *Halkin Demokratik Partisi* (People's Democracy Party).⁸⁵ Eliacik even argues that communist/socialist political parties in Turkey do not understand the importance of building alliances with practicing Muslims. He adds that he can only ally with various Muslim socialist groups in Turkey due to the inability to build a broad alliance with larger communist/socialist political blocs. Nevertheless, the distant attitudes shown by Turkish communist and socialist parties did not prevent AKM and from participating in activities held by those parties. Thirdly, as a platform, AKM has tried to promote

⁸³ Chumriyet 2022.

⁸⁴ Gazete Duvar 2016.

⁸⁵ Gerçek Gündem 2022.

its visions through media outlets and public events. AKM founded its own media outlet, *adilmedya.com*, as well as publications and cultural centres such as *Insa Kulturevi* and *Insa Yayinevi*. At their cultural centre, *Insa Kulturevi*, AKM often holds discussions and talks with Eliacik and other speakers who specialize in leftist Islam.⁸⁶ Eliacik is also actively involved in various talkshows in televisions, such a talkshow called *Bana Dinden Bahset* on KRT Kultur TV. Together with EAP, AKM also conducts events called '*yeryuzu sofralari*' ('earth table') to invite people from different people to share their foods and *iftar*.⁸⁷

Conclusion

Based on the elaboration of leftist Islamic movements in Indonesia and Turkey above, the authors would like to compare the cases of Indonesia and Turkey through four different aspects. The first aspect is the religious basis for these movements. Both movements are founded on the same basis of progressive Islamism. While FNKSDA founded its movement on the principles of progressive *Aswaja an-Nahdliyyah* and eco-theology, AKM establish its movement on the basis of Islamic liberation theology. For FNKSDA, this is due to FNKSDA's close relationship with Nahdlatul Ulama, which enabled FNKSDA to use several main aspects of Nahdlatul Ulama's theology as their own theological background as well. AKM, on the other hand, does not have any kind of formal or even informal affiliations with religious congregations in Turkey, so they have more flexibility in determining their basis of religious doctrine. Additionally, AKM does not clearly state whether they are having a specific doctrinal reference in terms of *fiqh* and religious theology.

FNKSDA and AKM also engage with religious texts with different manners. FNKSDA focus on devising *fiqh* to answer specific issues, particularly in relation to environmental crises. FNKSDA often conducts special classes or courses specifically to address environmental crises and political-economic problems from the perspective of traditional *fiqh*. FNKSDA believes that traditional *fiqh* have already addressed the issue and can therefore be used in order to criticize neoliberal government policies. AKM, through the opinions of its leader Ihsan Eliacik, directly attack the mindset of traditional Islam, including traditional *fiqh*, to be able to construct *fiqh* that are free from the discourse of the dominant power, which has always oppressed the poor and underprivileged Muslim societies. AKM's efforts to construct alternative views on *fiqh* are not accepted by most mainstream

⁸⁶ Adil 2012a.

⁸⁷ T24 2019.

Muslims but should be recognized as a necessary step in the renewal of interpretation of Islamic knowledge.

In terms of strategy, FNKSDA and AKM have several significant differences. The first difference is that these two platforms have distinct ways of building their coalitions and collaborations at the national level. FNKSDA has successfully networked with various socialist/communist platforms and organizations without their partners overly worrying about FNKSDA's neo-traditional Islamist credentials. This is because both FNKSDA and leftist movements in Indonesia can understand each movement's differing approaches. Indonesian leftist movements do not see their leftist Islamic counterpart as an organization that could significantly deter the progress of their movements, thus the collaboration continues strongly until this day. FNKSDA also have unique political strategies, through allowing a 'secular' political mindset within their overall leftist Islam conception. Whereas for AKM, the lack of collaboration and the inherent suspicion of leftist political parties towards any kind of Islamist political movement has caused a distance to develop between AKM and Turkey's leading leftist parties.

Overall, the most remarkable difference between FNKSDA and AKM is that their different approach to propagating the message of leftist Islam. FNKSDA, due to its neo-traditionalist approach, uses the Islamic boarding schools and discussion sessions as methods to grow their influence and make their transfer of message more effective for students and the public alike. Being an unofficial affiliate of Nahdlatul Ulama, FNKSDA prioritizes Islamic boarding school graduates as their audience, so that they can effectively manage the organization without significant difficulties resulting from differing perspectives and opinions. On the other hand, AKM, as with many other leftist Islamic movements, prioritizes the usage of its own publishing house and cultural institution, along with collaboration with other media platforms in order to reach their intended audience.

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