

THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE DISCOURSE
OF TURKISH ISLAMISM AND ANTI-CAPITALIST MUSLIMS

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines social justice discourse of Turkish Islamism and emergence of an anti-capitalist Muslim politics in Turkey. It looks at discourses of the Islamist parties and Islamist leaders in Turkey from 1970s to today. The research was primarily based on books of Islamist thinkers and politicians, speakings of Islamist leaders and interviews of some anti-capitalist Muslims. Additionally, articles about Islamist movement and newspaper reports were used. The conclusions reached were that the rising inequality among Muslims and AKP's power which is neo-Islamist made an anti-capitalist Muslim politics become possible in Turkey and an Islamic liberation theology which is based on social justice discourse in Islam emerged.

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Abbreviations Used in the Thesis

AKP-Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)

FP- Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi)

HAS – Halkın Sesi Partisi (People’s Voice Party) –The abbreviation also means “pure” party.

JO- Just Order (Adil Düzen)

MÜSİAD- Müstakil Sanayiciler ve İşadamları Derneği (Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association)

MTTB- Milli Türk Talebe Birliği (Turkish National Student Union)

NOM- National Outlook Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi)

NOP- National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi)

NSP- National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi)

THKO - People's Liberation Army of Turkey

THKP-C -People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi Cephesi)

TOKAD- Social Solidarity, Culture, Education and Social Research Association-

(Toplumsal Dayanışma, Kültür, Eğitim ve Sosyal Araştırma Derneği)

TUDEH- Party of the masses of Iran

WP- Welfare Party (Refah Partisi)

VP- Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi)

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INTRODUCTION

Islamism as a modern ideology emerged as an alternative third way to Western models of modernization in the postcolonial period. Islamists who represented the opposition to national and secular governments of newly independent states offered a local modernization project. They demanded an Islamic state that regarded the Quran as a constitution. This would be a solution to all of the problems that had been created by Western models. Islamism which was an opponent ideology to the current regimes shaped itself by criticizing both capitalism and socialism and interpreting the Quran in the face of modern conditions.

National developmentalism was a kind of state-induced capitalism that aimed at creating a national bourgeois class and an industrialised society. It was seen as an alternative ‘third way’ which had common features from both capitalism and socialism. This economic model was implemented with a corporatist ideology which regarded society as a bonded organism by refusing antagonistic social classes.¹ This anti-liberal and anti-Marxist ideology had roots in modernization projects in many developing countries.

National developmentalism which accepted state intervention in the economy in the Cold War period affected Islamist ideology. The Islamic state became the main aim of Islamists. This Islamic state’s intervention in the economy would remove the problems of Western models. Moreover, this state would create pious Muslims who behaved in an Islamic way in the economy and it would repair the disadvantages of the capitalist economy.

The Islamic order would be a local and unique way of modernization compatible with the cultural conditions of their countries. In the Middle East and Turkey, Islamists offered Islamism to the masses as a local way of removing poverty and maintaining social justice. They thought

¹Taha Parla, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp: 1876-1924* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 46.

that an Islamic state would necessarily result in the maintenance of social justice. They thought that religion were superior to man-made systems and had the capacity to bring forth a better model of development.

In the Cold War period, in Latin American newly independent states, –and the liberation theology movement emerged. This movement was started by Catholic priests who interpreted the Bible from a revolutionary perspective. In contrast to the Islamist movement, liberation theology did not claim to be a totally independent movement from the left. The liberationists supported labor class and leftist activities. They adopted Marxist analyses and believed that a political struggle was necessary for removal of poverty. They accepted that poverty was a consequence of capitalist system and so structural. So they struggled against capitalism with the left. They did not see any incompatibility between the Bible's orders and socialist principles. So they became a part of the socialist struggle against capitalism and defended a local socialist model for solution to social injustice. In contrast to the Islamic movement, they did not aim a theocratic state.

Some Islamists in the Middle East positioned themselves closer to socialism than capitalism, not being contented with only Islamic interpretations. They believed in the importance of other ideologies in understanding the modern world. The debate between Islamic socialism in Egypt and the leftist Islamist organization –Mujahedin Khalq– in Iran were the most important examples of this political effort. They benefited from especially Marxist critiques of capitalism. But their relations with the left were more problematic than those of the Christian liberationists. How did these Islamists in Egypt and Iran try to associate their Islamism with left politics? How did they integrate their Islamist ideology with leftist principles? Did they try to bring about a synthesis of these two ideologies? This thesis seeks to answer these questions.

Some Islamist thinkers explained Islam's approach to the poverty and social inequality. They deduced a moral critique of inequality from the Quran by a revolutionary reading of the Quran. But, did they develop an Islamic liberation theology? Or did they build a basis for an

Islamic liberation theology? Which differences separated them from liberation theologians of Latin America? These questions will also be examined.

In Turkish Islamism, national developmentalism was adopted by means of a heavy industrialization project. Differently from current developmentalist projects, an interest-free economy was offered as a solution for social injustice. Because interest was seen as the only guilty of social inequality and exploitation according to Islamists. Additionally, refusal of social classes was prominent in Turkish Islamism. They understand society as a social organism and emphasized occupational groups in their Islamist project. Class analysis was absent in their political understanding. This situation could be seen as a result of stronger anti-communist propaganda in Turkey compared to in the Middle Eastern countries as a result of Turkey having chosen the capitalist block beginning from its establishment. The Soviet Union had substantial influence on the countries in the Middle East. The Islamists' corporatist attitude towards class struggle would continue until 1994 when the Islamist Welfare Party declared that it had chosen free market economy in the Party's Fourth Big Congress.

After the Cold War, the reverse of socialism brought the victory and hegemony of global capitalism. In this period, states' intervention in economies was disregarded and the liberalization of national economies became an issue. In the period of global capitalism, the discrediting of class politics caused the rise of cultural and religious identities. This change affected the Islamist movement. In some Muslim countries, Islamist parties started to come to power instead of national developmentalist governments. Some Islamists found ways of strengthening themselves economically and so politically in these conditions due to their economic relations with global market. Their view about economy started to change and they came closer to idea of free market step by step. Their social justice discourse started to change together with it.

In Turkey, some Islamists were strengthened economically after 1980 when the neo-liberal program started to be implemented by Turgut Özal's government. Some of them moved up the social ladder and emerged as an Islamist bourgeoisie. They organized and started to work for their class interests. This affected the Islamist political project strongly and supported the development of neo-Islamism in Turkey. The thesis analyzed this changing process in the Turkish Islamists. How and why did Turkish Islamists adopt the free market? How and why did Turkish Islamism turn to neo-liberalism? What kind of political discourse was shaped for the emergence of neo-Islamism in Turkey? What did the power of neo-Islamism cause in Turkey and especially among the Islamic grassroots? How did their social justice discourse change? The thesis also tried to find answers to these questions.

Neo-Islamists in Turkey do not represent all of the Islamists of Turkey. At the end of the first decade of the 2000s, anti-capitalist Muslim politics emerged. A theologian, İhsan Eliaçık contributed to the new politics by his Quranic interpretation. This revolutionary interpretation is new for Turkey but in the Middle East, it has been done by some Islamist thinkers, especially Ali Shariati. Eliaçık's Social İslam is a revolutionary reading of the Quran in the interests of the subordinated. According to this reading, the Quran is a guide for the oppressed and justifies the working class' struggle against capitalists for its interest. This anti-capitalist view has affected some Islamists and they have established informal organizations to criticize neo-liberalism and to struggle against it. They benefit from Marxist analyses, like liberation theologians in Latin America. They joined in working class' activities and support strikes and protests of it. They justify their contribution to this leftist activities by taking references from the Quran. They especially developed a new Islamic language by criticizing neo-Islamist discourse and emphasizing importance of social justice in Islam.

This new Islamic language established itself by both a different Quranic interpretation and left ideology. Its emergence needs to be analyzed. What effect did Neo-Islamism have on the

shaping of anti-capitalist Muslim politics? Why was a new Islamic language needed? Is anti-capitalist Muslim politics evaluated as Islamic liberation theology? What did anti-capitalist Muslims understand from the term 'social justice' ? How did they benefit from leftist ideology? How did they evaluate wealth and poverty which are next to each other in the world? All these questions examined in the thesis.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

On 1 May 2012, some Muslims joined the May Day rally in İstanbul organized as an independent group which called itself “*Anti-Kapitalist Müslümanlar*” (Anti-capitalist Muslims). Parallel action could be observed in Tokat, Sakarya and Diyarbakır, where anti-capitalist Muslim groups joined the Workers’ Day activities. They claimed that workers were the oppressed of society in this modern age, and that Muslims had to struggle for and defend them. This anti-capitalist thought had already been present in Turkish Islamism before 1 May 2012. How and why were some Islamists’ political identities shaped by anti-capitalism and what kind of an effect did this have on the evolution of the Islamists’ social justice discourse? These are among the questions that I seek to answer in the thesis.

The thesis will analyze developing anti-capitalist tendencies among Turkish Islamists and the development of anti-capitalism into a separate ideology at the first decade of the 2000s, when some Islamists in Turkey opposed the AKP government by using an Islamic social justice discourse. This study will show anti-capitalist roots in the history of the Islamist movement and interpret newly emerging anti-capitalist Muslim politics as a separate ideology by demonstrating its relation to moral anti-capitalist tendencies which were first defined by Cihan Tuğal. Additionally, it will demonstrate the evolving meaning of social justice discourse in Turkish Islamism and the emergence of a new Islamic politics which can be defined as Islamic liberation theology developed by anti-capitalist Muslims. This in turn may partially explain why challenges to capitalism may be now coming from within Islam, as Islamic anti-capitalism.

Previous Literature About Islamism in Turkey

Any analysis of Islamic anti-capitalism should ideally first start with consulting the literature on Turkish Islamism. In my thesis, sources about Turkish Islamism can be grouped into

two. The first group of resources are about the National Outlook movement and its parties in the political arena. The second group consists of works on different political tendencies among the Turkish Islamists. The main sources are Ahmet Yücekök's *Türkiye'de Örgütlenmiş Dinin Sosyo-Ekonomik Tabanı* [Socio-economic Grassroots of Organized Religion in Turkey] and Ali Yaşar Sarıbay's *Türkiye'de Modernleşme, Din ve Parti Politikası* [Modernization, Religion and Party Politics in Turkey]. These theses asserted the role of Islam in politics as the representative of disadvantaged sections of the middle class in the face of the emerging capitalist class in Turkey.² They were crucial in the thesis in understanding for understanding Islamist parties' ideological approach to class politics and social justice.

Haldun Gülalp's book *Kimlikler Siyaseti* [Identity Politics] which included his articles written between 1999-2002 about Islamism in Turkey focuses on the broadening of the Islamist movement's grassroots from middle classes to include the poor and workers in cities after the 1980s.³ This point explains why the third Islamist party, the Welfare Party (from now on, WP) declared a manifesto "Just Order" and put its emphasis on poverty and social justice. Another important point in Gülalp's work is his explanation of the rise of Islamism as a product of conditions brought about by globalization. Gülalp was reminiscent of Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* in predicting the rise of culture and identity in political struggles. His realization that culture is replacing societal status and class in political struggles has also similarities with Arif Dirlik, whose work has been consulted conceptually in the thesis, and will be touched upon shortly. After the Cold War, socialism as a system was regarded as failed and thus lost its effect as an alternative model. The recession of socialist movement resulted in the

²Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme, Din ve Parti Politikası: Milli Selamet Partisi Örnek Olayı* (İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1985); Ahmet N. Yücekök, *Türkiye'de Örgütlenmiş Dinin Sosyo-ekonomik Tabanı 1946-1968* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 1971).

³Haldun Gülalp, *Kimlikler Siyaseti: Türkiye'de Siyasal İslamın Temelleri* (İstanbul: Metis, 2003): 1-45.

rise of identity politics contributing to the success of Islamist movement.⁴ However, Gülalp did not define the Justice and Development Party (from here on, AKP) as an Islamist party, although its founders had once been representatives of the National Outlook movement, but defined it as “post-Islamist.” The AKP’s adoption of liberal democracy was a signifier of this position. His explanation of the AKP’s political character as post-Islamist was essential for understanding the evolution of Turkish Islamism.

Ayşe Buğra also demonstrates the evolution of Islamist politics in the face of global socio-economic changes in a historical context. In a 2002 essay, she critically approached the issue, describing it as a compromise among different classes via Islamic social justice discourse. She warned that different interpretations of Islam could reflect class differences and it was at best vague to try to resolve these differences by Islamic justice discourse.⁵ Two years earlier, Yalçın Akdoğan, in *Siyasal İslam: Refah Partisinin Anatomisi* asserted that WP’s success in 1994 elections was a result of the support provided by the newly emerging Anatolian capitalists who benefited from economic liberalization despite the fact that the poor were harmed by it.⁶ By emphasizing that class politics had a significant influence on Islamist politics, Buğra and Akdoğan were arguing in similar lines.

Hakan Yavuz was another author who pointed out to the link between the past 1980s economic liberation programs and the rise of the WP as well as National Outlook’s evolving into a more liberal movement.⁷ He evaluated the political transformation in the National Outlook movement in Turkey in his book *Modernleşen Müslümanlar* [Modernizing Muslims]. Economic liberalization which was started by Turgut Özal (prime minister 1983-1989) affected the

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ayşe Buğra, “Political Islam in Turkey in Historical Context: Strengths and Weaknesses,” in *The Politics of Permanent Crisis: Class, Ideology and State in Turkey*, edited by N.Balkan and S. Savran, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002), 139.

⁶Yalçın Akdoğan, *Siyasal İslam: Refah Partisi’nin Anatomisi*, (İstanbul: Şehir Yayınları, 2000), 190.

⁷Hakan Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar: Nurcular, Nakşiler, Milli Görüş ve AK Parti*, trans. Ahmet Yıldız (İstanbul: Kitap Publisher, 2005), 290-91.

ideological transformation of the Turkish Islamist movement.⁸ Yet another author, Serdar Şen asserted in his research that the National Outlook parties too have liberalized ideologically since 1990, and that the AKP has to be accepted as a successor of this movement. In this thesis, the ideological position of the AKP will be regarded as neo-Islamist. Parallel to Serdar Şen's findings, it will be considered a successor of the National Outlook Movement. The first group of sources on the National Outlook and the connected parties' evolution almost all emphasized the links between liberalization, ideological transformation and efforts to emasculate the importance of socio-economic differences.

The first group of sources are about Islamist parties in Turkey and their ideological transformation. However, the Islamist movement in Turkey included radical Islamists as small groups or organizations. Thus the second group of the literature of Islamism in Turkey is based on the reality that the Islamist movement in Turkey is not monolithic. These works are about different political tendencies among Turkish Islamists.

Ruşen Çakır was among the first authors to analyze radical currents in Islam. In his research, *Ayet ve Slogan* (1990), he listed in detail the radical Islamist organizations in Turkey along with their political beliefs. He also demonstrated that one of the radical Islamist groups, *Hizbullahi Müslümanlar* had a similar discourse with the left about Turkey's capitalist order.⁹ Alev Erkilet emphasized radical Islamism's revolutionary and universal character in her article "1990'larda Türkiye'de Radikal İslamcılık".¹⁰ She asserted that radical Islamism in Turkey was deeply affected by the Iranian revolutionary tradition and remained very weak.

Another important work about radical Islamism in Turkey was Özlem Bayraktar Akkaya's thesis "National Outlook and Its Youth in the 1970s in Turkey: At the Periphery or

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar* (İstanbul: Metis, 2002), 171-75.

¹⁰Alev Erkilet, "1990'larda Türkiye'de Radikal İslamcılık," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasal Düşünce: İslamcılık*, Vol. 6., ed. Yasin Aktay (Series Eds.) Tanıl Bora & Murat Gültekinil (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004).

Outside the Social Order?”. Akkaya maintained that the youth organization of the movement, *Akıncılar* (The Raiders), was more radical than the Islamist party in the 1970s. This Islamist youth was not at the periphery of the Turkish regime like Islamist party’s politicians but against and outside the mainstream political order. According to Akkaya, there was an anti-system Muslim youth in the Islamist movement in Turkey from its very beginning and these adopted a leftist terminology.¹¹ It can be said that radical Islamism in the 1990s was founded on the political contributions of these Islamist activists. Some of these radical Islamists were also ex-members of the *Akıncılar* in the 1970s.

Cihan Tuğal’s 2002 essay written when the AKP had just come to power, “Islamism in Turkey: Beyond Instrument and Meaning” classified the different political tendencies among Turkish Islamists. Tuğal labelled some radical Islamists as “moral anti-capitalists” because their critique of capitalism was based on religious values.¹² However, the classification “moral anti-capitalist” represented only an individual political tendency against inequality brought about by the capitalist order falling short of class politics. Tuğal’s was an attempt at classification at a time when anti-capitalist tendencies among the Islamists had not yet been neatly defined.

In all these works it is hard to find more than a brief mentioning of anti-capitalist Islam in Turkey. Even Tuğal’s work appears insufficient in its coverage, though it correctly labelled and determined the emergence of the movement. But scholars are hardly to blame for this because anti-capitalist Muslims organized and emerged more strongly as a movement only very recently, no doubt conspicuous capitalism of the mainstream AKP party playing a significant role.

The Global Historical Context: Modernization of Developing Countries Before the End of the Cold War

¹¹Özlem Bayraktar Akkaya, *The National Outlook and Its Youth in the 1970s in Turkey: At the Periphery or Outside the Social Order*(Saarbrücken: Lambert, 2010), 84.

¹²Cihan Tuğal, “Islamism in Turkey: Beyond Instrument and Meaning,” *Economy and Society* 31, no. 1 (February 2002): 101.

In the post World War II era, American hegemonic power defined the political realities and created a world order which put emphasis on the nation-states' governance of their people and economy.¹³ Developing countries were to significantly intervene in their economies, states having central roles in the economic development process.¹⁴ Whether inclined to the right or left, modernization was key for states and economic development its major component. For developing countries, national developmentalism was offering an opportunity to protect national independence and to industrialize rapidly. Developmentalism was a kind of state-induced capitalism which aimed at creating a national bourgeois class and industrialised society. It was seen as an alternative 'third way' which had common features from both capitalism and socialism. This economic model was implemented with the help of corporatist ideology which regarded society as a bonded organism by refusing antagonistic social classes.¹⁵ Corporatist ideology, which was anti-liberal and anti-Marxist played an important role in modernization projects in many developing countries.

Modernization was the main issue of newly independent nation-states which were products decolonization in the postcolonial period after World War II. Here, the word postcolonial has "a double coding referring to the anti-colonial that came after the colonial [period], as well as the [still] lingering power of colonialism."¹⁶ In this Cold War period, newly independent nation-states were searching for ways of modernizing their societies while trying to remain independent of the two camps as well as their old colonizers. Both the capitalist and socialist camps had the potential for hegemonizing these developing countries by imposing their economic models. Thus, the search for a local model for modernization influenced political ideologies in developing countries.

¹³Çağlar Keyder, "Giriş," in *Ulusal Kalkınmacılığın İflası* (İstanbul: Metis, 1996), 10.

¹⁴Keyder, "Modernleşme ve Ulusal Kalkınmacılık," 27.

¹⁵Taha Parla, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp: 1876-1924* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1985), 46.

¹⁶Arif Dirlik, *Global Modernity: Modernity in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Colorado: Paradigm Publishers, 2007), 67.

Islamism and Its Modernization Project: Egypt and Iran

In the Middle East and North Africa, Islamism had been a most important ideology during the Cold War. Islam's being part of the local culture facilitated its being turned into a political ideology separate from Western ideologies. It thus offered a guide to Muslims for "authentic" modernization. Divinely ordained knowledge was considered superior to that created by man, so the Quran's political agenda had to be offering a better alternative to the human-made models. Islamism had a potential for being the Muslims' ideology in the face of Western ideologies, which were seen as foreign, as well as being associated with imperialism and colonialism.

As a political movement, Islamism started with the Muslim Brotherhood which was established in 1928 as a cultural organization in Egypt by Hasan Al-Banna but became involved in politics in the 1940s.¹⁷ Only thereafter did the Islamist movement become widespread in most of the Muslim societies, including Turkey.

Despite being formed in reaction to Western political ideologies, and perhaps because of that, the Islamist movement must also be seen as a modern political project with roots in the 19th century if not earlier. This project was based on the Sharia (Islamic rule). The Quran was interpreted in the light of modern developments and needs, which was called *ijtihad*. The necessity for *ijtihad* gained currency with Islamic modernism which was suggested as a response to "Western imperialism and supremacy"¹⁸ by the first Islamists in the late nineteenth-century. Major among these Islamist thinkers were Muhammad Abduh, Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani and Rashid Rida. Peter R. Demant said that later Islamists "took their cue from these early [Islamic]

¹⁷William Shepard, "The diversity of Islamic Thought," in *Islamic Thought in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Suha Taji Farouki and Basheer M.Nafi (London: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 74-5.

¹⁸Peter R. Demant, *Islam vs Islamism: The Dilemma of the Muslim World* (London: Praeger, 2006), 22.

modernists.”¹⁹ *Ijtihad* meant a return to the Islamic base, and emerged as a Quranic modernization project compatible with the spirit of the age. Afghani asserted “return to the faith as precondition for an Islamic Renaissance”.²⁰ His pupil Abduh on the other hand, maintained that Islam was “a basis for integrating Muslims into the modern world.”²¹ While Abduh was faithful to the Quranic text, he went on to Islamicize Western concepts such as democracy.²²

Islamism, though affected by Islamic modernism, turned to an “anti-modern and anti-Western reading of the religion.”²³ It refused Western modernization models and tried to create a new and unique model.

There were two causes of the emergence of this anti-Western Islamism: The first was Western colonization which had started in 19th century. Peter R. Demant explained its effect on Islamism:

Imperialism [in the Middle East] entailed oppression-subordination of the colonized society, culture and economy to the interests of the colonizer. [...] [just prior to and after decolonization] the Islamic world, traumatized by Western penetration, experimented with a variety of approaches. Islamism adopt[ed] Western techniques, [but kept its] own culture.²⁴

The second one was the failure of new nation-states after the period of decolonization. Deina Abdelkader, a political scientist, stated that these secular and Westernizing nation-states’ performance “[fell] short of the principles of social justice.”²⁵ They forced their society to be modernized from above. According to Dirlik, the Westernized regimes of new states “replicate[d] the habits of the [Western] colonialists.”²⁶ The Westernized governments’ politics thus caused anti-Westernism in Muslims to increase.

¹⁹Ibid., 23.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid., 24.

²²Ibid., 25.

²³Ibid., 89

²⁴Ibid., 91.

²⁵Deina Abdelkader, “Introduction,” *Social Justice in Islam* (Herndon, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2000), xvi.

²⁶Dirlik, 67.

Islamists defended social justice as an ultimate goal of Islam while pointing out the failures of Western models. They asserted that social justice was embodied in the Sharia.²⁷ The ideology of social justice shaped by some Islamist ideologues, was in a way a response to the reigning Westernized elites. According to Demant, “Islamist ideology [crystallized] from the 1950s and 1960s on. [...] In Sunnism this occurred through the writings of Pakistani author Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi and Egyptian ideologue Sayyid Qutb.”²⁸ Mawdudi saw Islamism as a political ideology and established a political party that was called Jamaat-e Islami in 1941. He said that Islam had “no need of either validation or harmonization with other ideologies. [...] It was] perfect [having been ordained by God], it need[ed] no adaptation —only the right application.”²⁹ Mawdudi’s Islamism was thus closed to effects of Western ideologies. In addition, Mawdudi’s first principle for an Islamic state was that its constitution had to be Sharia and its president a devout Muslim.³⁰ Sayyid Qutb who was the ideologue of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1950s and 1960s, was influenced by Mawdudi. He was “Islam’s most important fundamentalist thinker” and was “neither traditionalist nor modernist.”³¹ He defended the struggle against governments in Muslim countries which did not govern according to Sharia, and his political influence became very strong in the Islamist movement throughout the world. Qutb’s role as a symbol for Islamic struggle was augmented when he was martyred (became a *shahid* -a person killed in Islamic struggle for the sake of God) due to Jamal Abdel Nasser’s order for his execution in 1966. (Qutb’s political ideas were explained in the second chapter in detail.) The Islamist ideology gave a lot of importance to the state under the influence of Qutb. The state, an Islamic one, was seen as the tool which would maintain social justice.

²⁷ Abdelkader, xvi.

²⁸ Demant, 94.

²⁹ Ibid., 98.

³⁰ Ibid., 99.

³¹ Ibid., 98.

In 1978, the Iranian Islamic Revolution demonstrated that an Islamic state could be possible by revolution. Ayatollah Khomeini who became the first leader of this Islamic state had defended an Islamic state just like Qutb and Mawdudi, however,

he had his own Shiite blueprint of Islamic government based on vilayat-e faqih, the vice-regency (awaiting the return of hidden Imam) of the faqih (or the master jurist of fiqh). [A Messiah will come in the name of universal justice according to Shiite belief and he is the hidden Imam.] In this manner the law would be guaranteed to agree with Sharia.³²

This revolution's other theoretician was Ali Shariati who was "an unsystematic thinker who mixed Marxis[m], Third World[ism] and Shi[ism] to produce an eclectic Islamic liberation theology."³³ Largely due to the Iranian Revolution and Shariati's ideas, radical or militant Islamist organizations emerged in the 1980s such as the Hezbollah (Party of God) which was founded by Shiites in Lebanon and Mujahedin Khalq (People's Warriors) in Iran. Hezbollah's strategy was based on conquering state power by militant struggle.³⁴

With the end of the cold war, socialism, which was "a primary mode of resistance to capitalism" fell down. Arif Dirlik maintains that in a globally capitalist world, resistances to capitalism took the milder form of "revivals of native traditions as alternative modernities."³⁵ The new global order would thus cause new religious discourses that opened the way of new Islamisms like neo-Islamism and anti-capitalist Muslim ideology.

Global World Order and Revival of Islamism

After the Cold War, a new global order became hegemonic. Arif Dirlik maintains that the fall of socialism opened the way to the globalization of capital and the emergence of new centers of corporate capital. "The increasingly diverse labour force that staffs transnational corporations"

³²Ibid., 114-5.

³³Ibid., 115.

³⁴Ibid., 127.

³⁵Dirlik, 78.

and “transnationalization of marketing” were products of this process.³⁶ Jeffrey A. Friedan, a political scientist, writes that foreign investment became “immeasurably greater and global financial markets swamped national markets.”³⁷ Transnational corporations saw the nation-states’ interventions in economy as obstacles which prevent the economy from working properly. It was asserted by capitalists that developmental models had become unsuccessful, being clearly seen in the 1973 economic crisis and elsewhere, so nation-states’ interventions in economy were started to be minimized. Liberalization of economy and privatization of publicly-owned corporations were the important signs of creating a global market economy. Economic decisions of nation-states lost their effectiveness. This situation caused the decline of national state autonomy.

In the conditions of global market capitalism, according to Dirlik, cultural heritage became more important than before. Capitalism was globalized; for global capitalism to work properly, “cultural legacies had to render local inflections of a common discourse [global and capitalist modernity].”³⁸ He added that “multiple modernities” offered local cultural modernization projects which were adaptable to global economy, making it possible to find culturally different ways of being modern. The once Euro-centric capitalist modernity was now replaced by a multiplicity of cultures rendering new and local ways of adapting to global capitalism all over the world as global modernity.³⁹ By making everyone be a part of the game, political and economic challenges to capitalism could also be prevented. Like cultures, religion too, as an element of the locality or region became prominent in these conditions of global capitalism.

³⁶Ibid., 52.

³⁷Jeffrey A. Friedan, *Global capitalism: Its fall and rise in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Norton&Company, 2007), 391.

³⁸Dirlik, 81.

³⁹Ibid.

Islam, as a culture and also a discursive tradition⁴⁰, has created an “alternative modernity” in Muslim countries, to a large extent compatible with capitalist modernity. Talal Asad said that Islamic discursive tradition was “simply a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present.”⁴¹ The different constructions of concepts about Islamic past and future created new Islamic discourses which could constitute different Islamisms. Today, under conditions of globalization, Neo-Islamism (a capitalism friendly version of liberal Islam) became the product of a new Islamic discourse about Islamic past and future. Neo-Islamism based itself on a new look into the Prophet’s life and Quranic verses. It emerged as a new discourse and a different ideology of Islam. But its emergence and success were results of Islamic revivalism after the 1980s.

There were important causes of the emergence of Islamic revivalism. As asserted above, the first cause was the decline in the idea of national sovereignty. In the face of global capitalism, national governments lost their effectiveness. Dirlik asserted that the “failure of national liberation regimes to deliver their promises” was effective in this process.⁴² They were unsuccessful in their modernization projects and maintaining social welfare. Secondly, according to Perry Anderson, failures of national regimes were not the only cause of religious revivalism. The resurgence or reworking of Islam as a come-back tradition was part of a broader phenomenon: “There [was] a distinct sub-group in which religion played a central organizing role from the start, providing so to speak the genetic code of the [national independence] movement.”⁴³ But these religious sub-groups had been suppressed by secular national governments. After the Cold War, these groups had the opportunity of being rivals to secular

⁴⁰Talal Asad, “The idea of an Anthropology of Islam,” in *Occasional Paper Series*, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University (March 1986), 14.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Dirlik, 67.

⁴³Perry Anderson, “After Nehru,” *London Review of Books* (2 August 2012): 21-36. Available at: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v34/n15/perry-anderson/after-nehru>

national governments. According Hugh Roberts, the US had supported secular nationalist regimes in the face of the threat of Soviet Union during the Cold War, helping them to crush any internal dissent. But after the Cold War, the West has promoted democratization of these national regimes and saw a unifying, standardizing “nationalist tradition in its essence [as] anti-democratic.”⁴⁴ By democratization of the regimes, parliamentary ways were opened to political rivals of national governments —especially Islamists— in developing countries. Thirdly, Dirlik asserted that disappearance of the Soviet Union caused elimination of “the possibility of an outside to capitalism” as “a rational resolution” and it recalled “revivals of native traditions as alternative modernities.”⁴⁵ He added that culture and religion have made a comeback as alternative modernities by integrating with global capitalism.⁴⁶ In this way, global capitalism used localities in order to adapt itself to different countries. It made possible “different ways of being modern” and so multiple modernities were forged.⁴⁷ Identity politics which were based on ethnic, cultural and religious identities rose at the expense of national politics in this period.⁴⁸ Religions too, were revived as sources of multiple modernities as “genuinely” local modernization projects. In these conditions, Islamism suggested itself as an alternative modernity to Muslim masses and began to be a popular ideology.

Since the Cold War, the revival of Islamism has gradually brought about the political success of Islamist movement in different countries. Islamists started to share political power in some countries by democratic means. Olivier Roy called this Islamic revivalism “neofundamentalism” which suggested re-Islamization of society from below by “preaching an individual return to the practices of Islam”.⁴⁹ This new strategy included entering into electoral

⁴⁴Hugh Roberts, “Libya and the Recklessness of the West”, *London Review of Books*, 22 September 2012, 27. Available at: www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2012/09/22/hugh-roberts/

⁴⁵Dirlik, 78.

⁴⁶Ibid., 66.

⁴⁷Ibid., 81.

⁴⁸Roberts, 27.

⁴⁹Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1994), 75.

politics of the Middle East.⁵⁰ After this strategic shift, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt became the largest opposition in the assembly owing to “their ability to provide public services.”⁵¹ In Algeria in 1991, the Islamic Salvation Party (FIS) won the elections, only to learn that they were cancelled.⁵² In Turkey, the Welfare Party (WP) won the local elections in 1994; just like the Brotherhood in Egypt, its success was the product of the strategic shift from radical political speeches to social and charitable activities in daily life.⁵³ In many Muslim countries, Islamists’ “network of mosques, hospitals, clinics, day-care centers, youth clubs [...] ha[d] multiplied.”⁵⁴ They also could compete with the government’s public services and so could implicitly criticize its ability to provide social services.⁵⁵ These parties’ successes were also products of this strategy of “Islamization from below.”⁵⁶

The first decade of the 2000s were years which neo-Islamism proved itself to the masses in Muslim countries. Islamists changed their political attitudes toward global capitalism and found ways of integrating with it. In Turkey, the AKP came to power in 2002. In Lebanon, after the military conflict between Israel and Hezbollah in 2006, Hezbollah gained political power as a municipal agent in the Islamicization of Dahiye which is an eastern suburb of Beirut.⁵⁷ In Egypt, after the Tahrir revolution, Muslim Brotherhood’s representative Mohamed Mursi became president in 2012. These all tended to integrate with the global market economy and neoliberal order. It has been suggested by Olivier Roy that Islamist movements would not offer a genuine alternative on the economic level, and they would have to opt for one of the two paths which

⁵⁰Ibid., 77.

⁵¹Abdelkader, *Social Justice in Islam*, 85.

⁵²Ibid., 107.

⁵³John Esposito, “Islam and Civil society,” in *Modernizing Islam: Religion in the Public Sphere in the Middle East and Europe*, eds. John Esposito and François Burgat (London : Hurst & Co., 2003), 76.

⁵⁴Ibid., 75.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid., 76.

⁵⁷Ezgi Güven, “Hizbullah Sınıf Atlayınca”, *Post-Express* 127, 28 April 2012.

were state socialism and liberal neo-conservatism.⁵⁸ It seems that the second one has become the political key for success of Islamist movements in the name of neo-Islam. These movements have tried to have good relations with the US and Europe, and have been open to dialogue with the IMF and the World Bank.

In the face of neo-Islam, some radical Islamist organizations have continued their anti-US attitude. These, according to Roy, have been “in a search of an internationalist, anti-imperialist structure.”⁵⁹ After the disappearance of extreme leftist movements as a strong alternative to liberalism, the radical Islamist movement has been strengthening as an important adversary to global capitalism.⁶⁰ While radical Islamists stand up against the global order, they sometimes integrate Quranic perspectives with “pseudo-Marxist explanations.”⁶¹

Globalization affected the Islamist movement all over the world and therefore this movement itself was in a way Westernized.⁶² This Westernization of Islamism also caused the emergence of different Islamisms. As a necessity of adapting to globalization, different Islamisms have integrated with different Western ideologies to suggest alternative political ways to Muslim masses. Because Islamic economics did not suggest a new economic order as a third way, it remained as a “marketing tool” and a translation vehicle of financial facts into Islamic terms.⁶³ According to Roy, this forced Islamist groups to choose different Western ideologies in order to sustain their ideological development and to cope with conditions of global capitalism. Neo-Islamism as an alternative has been chosen in Turkey by some Islamists who established the AKP. They have had a neoliberal agenda. But other Islamist groups have chosen another path and defined themselves as anti-capitalists. This thesis will explain the political ideology of these anti-capitalist Muslim groups in Turkey, and how they have come to emerge.

⁵⁸Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, 194.

⁵⁹Roy, *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (Hurst&Company, London, 2004), 47.

⁶⁰Ibid., 332.

⁶¹Ibid., 46.

⁶²Ibid., 339.

⁶³Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, 144.

Methods and Sources

In order to trace the evolution of social justice discourse of the Islamist movement in Turkey, the thesis's research was begun with the origins of the National Outlook Parties' political ideas. The political Islamist movement in Turkey was supported by religious sects like the Naqshibendi and the Nur. However, these did not openly conduct political activities and defined themselves as social organizations. Therefore the study was not based on the writings of these religious sects' leaders. I primarily benefited from the party programmes, and books by Necmettin Erbakan who was the most important leader of the National Outlook movement. The manifesto of WP (Welfare Party) entitled "Adil Düzen" (Just Order) was used in explaining their interpretation of social justice and inequality. For the views of AKP, selected speeches of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the party's group meetings were consulted, as well as its party program.

Other main sources of the thesis are books by Sayyid Qutb, Ali Shariati and İhsan Eliaçık. The first two were the most effective and popular ideological leaders of the Islamist movement, guiding also the Islamists in Turkey. They were political symbols for the Islamist youth because of their roles in political struggle. İhsan Eliaçık's ideas represent "an Islamic liberation theology" therefore his books are sources of revelation for the political ideology of anti-capitalist Muslim groups in Turkey. As for neo-Islamists, I especially benefited from newspaper interviews with Erol Yazar. Yazar was once the most popular leader of MÜSİAD (1990-1999) who openly declared that Muslims had to try to become rich as a part of their religious duties. His ideas represent the motivations of well-to-do Muslims who especially organized around MÜSİAD. Yasin Durak, a sociologist, found that religious businessmen in Konya for example, had similar views with Yazar, in his book *Emeğin Tevekkülü (Resignation of Labour)*.

Online articles were used in following current political developments in Egypt and the Middle East. The articles in jadalliyya.com are taken from newspapers in Arab countries or

written by local authors and translated to English. The *London Review of Books* was another source for the most recent developments, with its essays on current topics written by experts.

Last but not least, to understand the political ideology of anti-capitalist Muslims, I had interviews with some representatives of anti-capitalist Muslim groups. These included two people from the central committee of Has Party, the main political organization voicing anti-capitalistic Islamic views. The interviews were conducted in 2012. They are briefly explained below.

Interviews

As a part of the research process eleven interviews were conducted with fourteen people. Two interviews were conducted by e-mail. Six interviewees were students who were organized in universities for political action. They not only aimed to oppose the AKP government but also to conduct independent political activity as Muslims while at the same time they allied with leftist groups for common political action in the public space provided by their universities.

Three of the interviewees were members of the Insa Cultural Association. The first was Ihsan Eliaçık, an Islamic theologian who is the founder of Insa; the second was Sedat Doğan, an author of *Adil Medya* (Just Media) which is the online media organ of Insa, and the third, Kadir Bal, who is the editor of *Adil Media*. These interviews were conducted in July 2012, in Insa Cultural Association's office in Fatih.

Apart from the above, I had an interview with Ahmet Örs who is one of the founders and administrators of TOKAD by e-mail. I also had interviews with one Muslim student and one leftist activist from "Emek ve Adalet Platformu" (Labour and Justice Platform) in order to get an evaluation of the platform from two different viewpoints.

Organization of the Thesis

In Chapter 2, some main concepts which help understand Islamism's ideological position in Turkey are explained. Firstly, the concept of corporatism is shortly analyzed and its main qualities demonstrated. Then, three different approaches to capitalism inside the Islamist movement in Turkey classified as "moral capitalists, alternative capitalists, and anti-capitalists" which were developed by Cihan Tuğal, are elaborated.⁶⁴ These concepts of Tuğal help categorize the National Outlook and other Islamist factions in Turkey. The National Outlook's social justice discourse is thus explained in the framework of their corporative understanding of society. This chapter demonstrates the evolution of social justice discourse in Islamist movement in Turkey between 1970 and 2000.

In chapter 3, the political roots of an Islamic liberation theology in the Middle East are analyzed. First, Christian liberation theology in Latin America is explained by the works of liberationist theologians themselves. Some liberationists emphasized that interests of the working class had to be defended by pious believers as a holy duty ordained by God.⁶⁵ Then, as main sources for the construction of an Islamic Liberation theology, works of Sayyid Qutb, Ali Shariati, Hasan Hanafi and Adil Husain are analyzed. These Islamic revivalists' ideas seem to have been an important as a basis for the emergence of a kind of Islamic liberation theology in Turkey.⁶⁶ The chapter also analyzes whether there were links between Latin American Christian liberation theologians and Islamic revivalists of the Middle East.

⁶⁴Cihan Tuğal, "Islamism in Turkey: Beyond Instrument and Meaning," 85-111.

⁶⁵See Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (London: Scm Press, 1983); Leonardo Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology for Our Time* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1978); Jose Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Fortress Press, 1975); Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberation of Theology*, trans. John Drury, reprint (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1979).

⁶⁶See Seyyid Kutub, *İslam'da Sosyal Adalet*, Cilt:1, trans. by Yaşar Tunagür and Dr. M. Adnan Mansur (İstanbul: Çağaloğlu Yayınevi, 1962); Seyyid Kutub, *Yoldaki İşaretler* (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınevi, n.d.); Ali Shariati, *Bazgasht* (Tehran: Irshad, 1978); Ali Shariati, *Öze Dönüş* (İstanbul: Şafak Yayınları, 1985).

Islamic revivalism and its liberationist thinkers influenced the emergence of Islamic-left ideology in the Middle East. Thus, some Islamic-left parties and organizations were established in the 1970s and 1980s.⁶⁷ Chapter 3 also discusses the evolution of Islamic-leftist thought as well as the organizations which were established around this ideologic position.

In chapter 4, the leftist discourse inside the Islamist movement in Turkey in the 1970s and 1980s and Neo-Islamist discourse of the 1990s are analyzed. As mentioned before, after the Özal government's implementation of neoliberalism, rich, capitalist Muslims emerged and were organized in MÜSİAD. The Neo-Islamist discourse is traced through the political ideas behind this organization. Here, MÜSİAD's and its neo-Islamism's role in the emergence of a new Neo-Islamist party, AKP, is emphasized. In the second part of the chapter, anti-capitalist Islamism is analyzed via the interviews of anti-capitalist Muslims and the works of the liberationist theologian, İhsan Eliaçık. The anti-capitalist Muslims political standing vis a vis leftist ideology, their ideas about class struggle, and possibility of a political alliance with leftist organizations were questioned in these interviews. Additionally, the political activities of anti-capitalist Muslims' organizations are observed closely in order to understand their political understanding of social justice.

In conclusion, a total evaluation of findings about anti-capitalist Muslim politics is conducted.

⁶⁷In Iran the People's Mujahedin and in Egypt the Labour Party had both Islamic and leftist principles.

CHAPTER TWO: GLOBAL HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: ENTANGLEMENTS OF ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS WITH SOCIALISM

Liberation theology in Latin America and Islamic revivalism in the Middle East were political movements that showed many parallels, both having been born in the postcolonial period after World War II. In both geographies, the legacies of imperialism and the actuality of the Cold War stirred a political crisis in search of an authentic way which would keep out or limit the effects of either of the two super power blocs. Religion was a useful resource for the construction of a new and unique method for modernization and eliminating poverty in these countries. Islamic revivalism and liberation theology both incorporated some aspects of socialism. They were coeval. They took off from similar contexts within the same temporality in but entirely different global locations. They believed that the developmentalist models adopted by many governments and supported by the USA would fall short of eliminating poverty and maintaining social justice. To quote Arif Dirlik, “the failure of national liberation regimes to deliver their promises –and even to replicate the habits of colonialists” –had a role bringing these movements about.⁶⁸ They did not take a position supporting the USSR as opposed to the USA either, because of their respective regions’ colonial pasts and desires for being independent. Thus, the religious texts and new theologies revived from them suggested a unique way of being independent and living in a just society. Such thinking was also instrumental in the resisting secular and national-capitalist governments these movements faced.

Islamic revivalism had an inspiring role in the emergence of Islamic liberation theology in Turkey. Islamic liberation theology can be defined as a next stage in Islamic revivalism which

⁶⁸Dirlik, 67.

was articulated with Marxism. This chapter investigates Islamic revivalism in combination with Islamic-left politics.

First, liberation theology in Latin America will be analyzed. Then, Islamic revivalism, and its most important thinkers' political ideas, will be investigated and evaluated in terms of their social justice discourse and their approaches to capitalism and socialism. No links or references were found in the Islamic revivalists to the liberation theologians or vice versa, though they were contemporaneous, and though some Islamic revivalists like Mustafa Al-Sibai referred to similar socialist aspects of Christianity and Judaism.⁶⁹ The parochialism of Christian and Islamic theologians and their not joining forces at least intellectually, though no doubt require further study, are beyond the scope of this study. However, because of the similarities in finding grounds for socialism in religious texts, I at times call leftist strands in Islamic revivalism and sources "Islamic liberation theology" in my thesis.

In the second part of the chapter, the emergence of Islamic-leftist politics in Egypt and Iran will be analysed. Finally, how Islamic revivalism and the global Islamic left inspired the anti-capitalist Muslims in Turkey will be investigated.

Liberation Theology

In the 1960s, liberation theology emerged as a new interpretation of the Bible. As a movement, it began from churches, initiated by some regime-opponent priests in Latin America. These were Gustavo Gutierrez (Peru), Leonardo and Clodovis Boff (Brazil), Jon Sobrino (El Salvador) and Juan Luis Segundo (Uruguay). The term "liberation theology" came from the book *A Theology of Liberation*, which was written by Gutierrez in 1971.

⁶⁹Mustafa Sibai, *İslam Sosyalizmi*, trans. A.Niyazioğlu (İstanbul: Hareket, 1974), 65-71 (Judaism and Socialism), 72-84 (Socialist aspects of Christianity).

Dependency theory was important in defining the context of the emergence of this liberation movement. The theologians saw their countries' underdeveloped status as a result of global capitalism and colonialism. Although almost all Latin American countries had gained their independence in the early nineteenth century, dependency theory maintained that their semi-colonial, peripheral status lingered on for centuries. Andre Gunder Frank, a major exponent of dependency theory, writes "underdevelopment [was] the necessary product of four centuries of capitalist development and of the internal contradictions of capitalism itself."⁷⁰

Aiming to eradicate poverty, the liberation theologians were against the capitalist developmental projects that were being implemented by their anti-democratic governments which, in turn, were supported by western countries. Reminiscent of Roberts, Anderson, and Dirlik, quoted in the introduction, Edward J. Martin stipulates that "these dictatorships [had] survived precisely because of Western hegemony."⁷¹ However, in Martin's opinion, capitalist countries wanted these developmental projects to be implemented by the Third World to perpetuate their dependency, which was also the view of Juan Luis Segundo, who maintained that,

liberation theology arose as a reaction against the developmentalist theories and models formulated by the United States for Latin America in the decade of sixties. The developmentalist model was characterized by the fact that it covered over and tried to hide the critical and decisive relationship of dependence versus liberation.⁷²

⁷⁰Andre Gunder Frank, *The Development of Underdevelopment in Latin America: Historical Studies in Chile and Brazil* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1967), 3.

⁷¹Edward J. Martin, "Liberation Theology, Sustainable Development, and Postmodern Public Administration," *Latin American Perspectives* 30, no.4, "Struggle and Neoliberal Threats" (July 2003): 79.

⁷²Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberation of Theology*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979), 37. Cited in Ivan Petrella, *The Future of Liberation Theology*, (London: SCM Press, 2006), 72.

Segundo's *Liberation of Theology* (*Liberación de la teología*) first appeared in Spanish in 1975.

The starting point for this theology was that “followers of Christ c[ould] never condone injustice”⁷³ and poverty in the world. Liberation theologians thought about the causes of injustice and poverty and also the solution to these problems. They benefited from Marxist approaches when analyzing inequality. They saw the latter as a result of western capitalism. Gutierrez asserts that “when [he] discovered that poverty was something to be fought against, that poverty was structural, that poor people were a class, it became crystal-clear that in order to serve the poor, one had to move into political action.”⁷⁴ The liberation theologians saw capitalism as a system which exploited the majority of society and made them poor. Gutierrez also said that “within a society where social classes conflict we are true to God when we side with the poor, the working classes, the despised races, the marginal cultures.”⁷⁵ To struggle for the poor and the oppressed was thus understood as the duty of a pious Christian.

Liberation theologians benefited from the dialectical interpretations of Marxism. According to Clodovis Boff, revolution was necessary in order to eradicate poverty.⁷⁶

They saw capitalism as an exploitive system which caused Third World countries to remain undeveloped. According to Gutierrez, “autonomous Latin American development [was] not viable within the framework of the international capitalist system.”⁷⁷ Therefore, liberation theology adopted a socialist path in order to eliminate poverty. However, Jose Miguez Bonino, another liberation theologian, suggested a Latin American socialist project

⁷³Martin, 71.

⁷⁴Gustavo Gutierrez, “Two Theological Perspectives: Liberation Theology and Progressivist Theology,” in *The Emergent Gospel: Theology from the Developing World: Papers from the Ecumenical Dialogue of Third World Theologians*, Dar es Salaam, August 5-12, 1976, eds. Sergio Torres and Virginia Fabells (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1978), 241.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Petrella, 27.

⁷⁷Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1978), 88. *Teología de la liberación* was originally published in Spanish in 1971.

of liberation and an authentic Latin American socialism.⁷⁸ Yet another liberation theologian, Hugo Assman, who was influenced by Immanuel Wallerstein, asserted that “overcoming capitalism was the means to overcom[ing] dependency.”⁷⁹

As well as the dependency theory of Frank, the world system theory of Immanuel Wallerstein, too, was influential on the liberation theologians. Wallerstein saw capitalism and socialism as by-products of Western civilization.⁸⁰ Capitalism as a world-economic system was all-encompassing and there was no way to escape from it. This theory made it impossible to struggle against the system. An autonomous socialist revolution could not suffice for a just society. This naturally created difficulty in constructing a project for liberation.

Liberation theologians thought also that capitalism had a dehumanizing influence on people. According to Gutierrez, the inherent exploitation and injustice moved people away from living with dignity and finding their own way in life.⁸¹ For this system to be transcended, liberation theologians saw class struggle and a classless society as the only solution to injustice. Gutierrez stated that

Only [the] transcending of a society divided into classes, a political power at the service of the great popular majorities, and the elimination of private appropriation of wealth produced by human work can give us the foundations of a society that would be just. It is for this reason that the elaboration in a historical project of a new society in Latin America takes more and more frequently the path of socialism.⁸²

The social sciences and theories were used by theologians to understand the causes of the poverty and injustice and to find ways for a just society. However, this was not enough in order to reconstruct a theological discourse for a political movement. A new

⁷⁸Jose Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia, P.A: Fortress Press, 1975), 13-15.

⁷⁹Petrella, 75.

⁸⁰Ibid, 79.

⁸¹Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 174.

⁸²Gutierrez, “Where Hunger is, God is Not”, *The Witness* (April 1977): 4, cited in Edward J. Martin, “Liberation Theology, Sustainable Development, and Postmodern Public Administration,” 78.

biblical interpretation was needed. According to Phillip Berryman, this interpretation was “an attempt to read the Bible and key Christian doctrines with the eyes of the poor.”⁸³

One important point in Christian doctrine was the evaluation of Jesus as a liberator.⁸⁴ For understanding this position of Jesus, the meaning of liberation had to be made clear in the liberation theological discourse. Gutierrez explained “liberation” by using the sayings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), who was a German theologian, such as: “[Freedom] is not a possession, a presence, an object... but a relationship and nothing else... Only in a relationship with the other am I free.”⁸⁵ Thereby Gutierrez was accepting a material understanding of liberation instead of a spiritual interpretation of it. It is understood from the biblical message that Christ gave freedom to people as a gift and Jesus is the Liberator.⁸⁶

According to the liberation theologian Boff, Jesus came in order to establish a just order called the kingdom of God, and change the condition of the poor.⁸⁷ He thus struggled for justice and “political authorities accuse[d] him of being a guerrilla fighter and executed him for that.”⁸⁸ Gutierrez was also of the opinion that “his struggle for justice” and “his identification with the poor” caused Jesus’s death. His assassination, in other words, was political.⁸⁹

Another important point was that Jesus was poor. According to Gutierrez Jesus’s poverty demonstrated “God’s preferential love for the poor.” God wanted a brotherhood

⁸³ Phillip Berryman, *Liberation Theology: Essential Facts About the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America - and Beyond* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 4.

⁸⁴ Christian Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology: Radical Religion and Social Movement Theory* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), 36.

⁸⁵ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1966): 37, cited in Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, trans. Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (London: SCM Press, 1983), 36.

⁸⁶ Boff, 266. *Jesus Cristo libertador* was originally published in 1974.

⁸⁷ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 96.

⁸⁸ Boff, 289.

⁸⁹ Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 15.

between people, and the end of poverty.⁹⁰ Jesus's solidarity with the poor dominated the Bible, and showed that brotherhood was necessary. The existence of poverty was a sin and Jesus wanted to liberate people from this "sinful condition."⁹¹ This sin also was a byproduct of the unjust law and order that served only some people. According to Gutierrez, "poverty [was] not caused by fate; it [was] caused by the actions of those whom the prophet condemns."⁹² Poverty was a result of a kind of exploitation that was refused by the Bible. A poor person who was exploited was the "oppressed one," a member of the proletariat "struggling for his most basic rights."⁹³

Liberation theologians understand siding with the working class against capitalism as a religious duty of Christians. Social justice is a holy aim for which Jesus was executed. Thus the Liberation Theology movement can be evaluated as a political struggle which was based on Jesus's messianic practice. The aim, as in socialism, was justice in the world.

Islamic Revivalism: The Main Source of an Islamic Liberation Theology

Islamic revivalism is a modern attempt in the Middle East to reinterpret the Quran and hadiths (the sayings of the Prophet) as a fundamental political ideology against western ideologies. It began with the Muslim Brotherhood (Ikhwan) in Egypt in 1928; however, it is now a world-wide movement that aims to find solutions to the social, economic, and political problems of the oppressed people in Third World countries.⁹⁴ Its roots are in the

⁹⁰Boff, 298.

⁹¹Ibid., 301.

⁹²Ibid., 292.

⁹³Ibid., 301.

⁹⁴Mohammed Yadegari, "Liberation Theology and Islamic Revivalism," *The Journal of Religious Thought* 43, no. 2 (September 1986): 38.

Islamic modernism of Abduh and Afghani; as a political movement, it developed itself by building on the Islamic modernist project.

Like liberation theology, the dependency and world system theories, Islamic revivalism too emerged in the conditions of postcoloniality. During the colonial period, there were Islamic-nationalist movements that shared the aim of independence of their lands with secular nationalists. However, after the 1950s, when secular independent states had been established in the Third World, there emerged political Islam, which was against secular nationalism.⁹⁵ According to Manochehr Dorraj, “the eroding credibility of Arab nationalism and Arab socialism” and “delegitimation of secular nationalist leaders” had important influences on the emergence of political Islamism.⁹⁶ On the other hand, corporatist ideology, which will be discussed below, which regarded community as the main political subject instead of the individual, continued to be globally very popular in the aftermath of the Second World War. Religious texts very often had a similar approach to corporatism and this common point was effective in Islamic revivalism.⁹⁷ In this way, it became an independent ideological faction in the world. The ultimate goal of this ideology was establishing an Islamic order or Islamic states in Muslim countries.

Another important point of Islamic revivalism was its cultural aspect. Western countries had a hegemony on the politics of the Middle East. In the postcolonial period, these newly independent Third World countries experienced identity crises due to the conditions brought about by national development and modernization. Islamic revivalism

⁹⁵ Mohammed Ayoob, “Political Islam: Image and Reality,” *World Policy Journal* 21, no.3 (Fall 2004): 2-3. See also Perry Anderson “After Nehru”, in *London Review of Books*, (2 August 2012)

⁹⁶Manochehr Dorraj, “The Crisis of Modernity and Religious Revivalism: A Comparative Study of Islamic Fundamentalism, Jewish Fundamentalism and Liberation Theology,” *Social Compass* 46, no.2, (1999): 228.

⁹⁷Ibid.

was seen as a way to resolve the crisis, as well as for developing a more authentic understanding of the modern world.⁹⁸

Islamic socialism was a very important concept in the development of Islamic revivalism. Tripp writes that was “a solution to the divisive effects of unequal property ownership” and also a system that suggested “redistributive measures” in order to “alleviate poverty and provide a basis for a society in which those without property had some claims on property owners.”⁹⁹ The Muslim Brotherhood was first to employ Islamic socialism against the Arab socialism of Jamal Abdel Nasr in the years 1952-1970, when Nasr was the secular and nationalist leader of Egypt. The Brotherhood was established in 1928 in Egypt by Hasan Al Benna, who was regarded as a teacher, and it became widespread in many countries in the Middle East.

The main ideologue of the Brotherhood was Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). Another important name of the movement was Mustafa Al-Sibai (1915-1964), who was a leader in Syria. These ideologues discussed both capitalism and socialism, and suggested Islamism as a third way. However, socialism was regarded as closer to the Islamic economic system. Qutb was of the opinion that capitalism was not compatible with the spirit of Islam. Al-Sibai on the other hand, wrote a book named *Islamic Socialism*. In the book, Al-Sibai delineated the differences between Marxist and Islamic systems in detail. He spoke very favourably of socialism, considered Islam as the best form of the socialism, while excoriating communism as a very harsh, hardly relizable form of socialism.¹⁰⁰

Especially Qutb’s understanding of Islam showed parallels with the liberation theology’s understanding of Christianity. His definition of liberation, which was based on a dialectical interpretation of the Quran, was similar to that of the liberation theologians.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Charles Tripp, *Islam and the Moral Economy: The Challenge of Capitalism* (Cambridge: 2006), 80.

¹⁰⁰Mustafa Sibai, *Islam Sosyalizmi*, trans. A. Niyazioğlu (İstanbul: Hareket, 1974), 47-51. *İştirakiyyat al-Islam* was originally published in 1959.

Qutb saw history as a struggle between *jahiliyya* and the kingdom of God (ideal order of Islamic law).¹⁰¹ According to Qutb, the former “prevail[ed] in many societies that [gave] sovereignty to human beings rather than to God.”¹⁰² He thought that in all the countries not governed by Sharia (Law of the Quran), including Muslim ones, *jahiliyya* reigned. Consequently, *jahiliyya* did not only symbolize a historical period before Mohammed’s order, but also became a politically loaded word which could be significant for all time. The main antagonism was thus between “jahiliyya and Islam.”¹⁰³ A Muslim’s duty was to struggle against *jahiliyya*, also called jihad. Jihad was “a continuous struggle to change regimes in order that [Muslims] may acknowledge the sovereignty of God.”¹⁰⁴ For Qutb, jihad was “a permanent and individual duty.”¹⁰⁵ Jihad was also a way of liberation, because “the major form of oppression was the rejection of Islamic law as a supreme legislation.”¹⁰⁶ The main aim of jihad against *jahiliyya* was the establishment of an Islamic state because only under an Islamic rule would the Quranic verses have supremacy over rules designed by ordinary people. The establishment of God’s kingdom on earth would liberate people from all man-made oppression and maintain social justice. Islam was also “a universal manifesto for saving people from serving others slavishly.”¹⁰⁷ Bustami Mohamed Khir claimed that Christian liberationists also had an approach similar to that of with Qutb regarding spiritual and material liberation.¹⁰⁸ However, Qutb believed the necessity of

¹⁰¹Seyyid Kutub, *Yoldaki İşaretler* (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınevi, n.d), 159. *Ma alim fi aktariq* was originally published in Arabic in 1964.

¹⁰²Bustami Mohamed Khir, “The Islamic Quest for Sociopolitical Justice,” *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*, eds. Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 514.

¹⁰³Kutub, *Yoldaki İşaretler*, 159.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 41.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷Kutub, *Yoldaki İşaretler*, 62.

¹⁰⁸Khir, 516.

establishing an Islamic state for spiritual and material liberation, though Christian liberationists did not aim at a Christian (theocratic) state.

Another similarity between liberation theology and Qutb's political view was the interpretation of their respective holy books as revolutionary. Qutb's thirty-volume Quranic *tafsir* (commentary) *Fi zilal al-Quran*, (In the shadow of the Quran) was based on his previous utilitarian understanding of the effects of capitalism on the welfare of Muslims to a position in which the sole criterion was to be the word of God written down in the Quran and experienced directly by every individual.¹⁰⁹ Since Qutb saw poverty and oppression as a consequence of *jahiliyya*, he wanted a program of action based on the Quran for struggling against secular regimes. Eliminating poverty and liberating people from oppression had to be via struggle against man-made systems like capitalism and marxism, a struggle which would establish the sovereignty of God. The religious struggle was against "all political regimes that were based on economic, class-oriented and racist principles."¹¹⁰ The Quran suggested the basis for a political ideology. First capitalism, would be resisted because capitalism created poverty. This poverty was regarded by Qutb as the artificial basis of the demand for Marxist-socialist systems.¹¹¹ This had similarity with the liberationists' praxis for the kingdom of God that based itself on the Bible.

Qutb's emphasis on social justice was also important because it made his ideological approach look like liberation theology. He explained Islamic justice by the principles of equality and social solidarity.¹¹² As in the liberation theologians, poverty was seen as a vital problem. Qutb benefited from the Quran in order to demonstrate the role of

¹⁰⁹Tripp, 153-4.

¹¹⁰Kutub, *Yoldaki İşaretler*, 63.

¹¹¹Seyyid Kutub, *İslam ve Kapitalizm Çatışması* (İstanbul: Bir yayıncılık, 1985) 31. *Ma'rakat al-Islam wa'l-Ra's Maliyya* was originally published in 1950.

¹¹²Seyyid Kutub, *İslam'da Sosyal Adalet*, Cilt:1, trans. by Yaşar Tunagür and Dr. M. Adnan Mansur, (İstanbul: Çağaloğlu Yayınevi, 1962), 43. *Al-Adalah al-ijtima'iyah fi al-Islam* was published in Arabic in 1949.

social responsibility for alleviating the condition of the poor. A hungry person was a sin for the rest of the *ummah* (the community of believers) unless they attempted to help him.¹¹³

However, this social solidarity did not mean the ultimate aim was of a classless society. Qutb was of the opinion that Islam did not accept economic equality among people.¹¹⁴ Differences among people were the result of the differences in their abilities and their capacities for work.¹¹⁵ Yet, he said that “all the causes of class and status differences” were forbidden by religion.¹¹⁶ Religion, for example, refused monopolization of resources by the wealthy.¹¹⁷ Wealth belonged to people who were needy. So *zakat*, the Islamic tax on community to help the poor, was seen as a redistributive mechanism serving to share the wealth of the rich with the needy. For Qutb, *zakat* was not only for saving people from hunger but was also an entitlement of the poor.¹¹⁸ In this way, large differences between classes would never emerge, just as God had ordained. In other words, in terms of the interpretation of the Quran by Qutb, social justice meant only social balance, not a classless society.

Another important point that contributed to the Islamic discourse of social justice was the aversion to the degradation caused by the accumulation of wealth. Money and property belonged to God only; people were consignees. Wealth was there only to be spent for God’s sake. Qutb demonstrated the necessity of distribution of wealth by statements from the Quran. People would suffer torment if they hoarded gold and silver and not spent them for God’s sake.¹¹⁹ Qutb’s interpretation was important here: he asserted that just by giving *zakat* from one’s wealth, one could not escape from suffering. Everything which was

¹¹³Ibid., 94.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 39.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 40.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 41.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 149.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 171.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 112.

surplus and not distributed to the poor would come to oppress its owner.¹²⁰ The act of distributing surplus property and money to the needy is called *infak* in the Quran. He also called attention to another part of the Quran which decried not distributing the surplus. In this section, the owners of a garden get up early for gathering the crop, so that they would not give anything to the poor. However, when they go to the garden, they see that the garden has become completely black and destroyed.¹²¹ God had thus demonstrated retributive justice to them and punished them with this calamity. Qutb said that this was a warning for people to engage in *infak* of their surplus property before the time of their death.¹²²

It was Qutb's opinion that the monopolization of wealth would cause wastefulness. Rich people would live a lives of luxury, while the majority would become poor. According to Qutb, this was illicit in Islam. Spending money on luxurious properties was forbidden by religion. Extreme wealth concentrated in a few people would be "a source of disaster for the possessors of wealth as well as the community."¹²³ Qutb asserted that if some people could not find money for a bus in order to go to work, while the rich drove their luxury cars in their leisure time, this situation would cause the rich to be punished after death.¹²⁴ As for usury, it was also forbidden by religion because it brought "boundless wealth" to a minority and caused an income gap between classes.¹²⁵ Some people could become very rich by hoarding money through interest, while the poor worked very hard. The income gap that would ensue was a sign of social injustice. To sum up, Qutb's discourse of social justice was about the fair redistribution of wealth in society.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹El-Kalem (The Pen) Sura of the Quran, verses 17-33, cited in Seyyid Kutub, *İslam'da Sosyal Adalet*, vol.1, trans. by Yaşar Tunagür and Dr. M. Adnan Mansur (İstanbul: Çağaloğlu Yayınevi, 1962), 113-4.

¹²²Ibid., 114.

¹²³Ibid., 173.

¹²⁴Ibid., 176.

¹²⁵Ibid., 166.

Ali Shariati (1933-1977), who was an important ideologue of the Islamic left in Iran, can also be seen as a contributor to the Islamic liberation theology of İhsan Eliaçık, which will be discussed below. He was a sociologist who graduated from the Sorbonne University in France in 1964 and was among the theorists of the Islamic revolution in Iran. In contrast to Qutb, Shariati was a political modernist and he “reinterpreted the Quran in his imagery of modernism.”¹²⁶ His Islamic terminology “not only protected him from official repression, but also made his message more accessible to students from traditional family backgrounds.”¹²⁷ The Islamic leftist organization in Iran called “the People’s Mujahedin,”¹²⁸ whose members were especially from among university students, was influenced by his ideas.

Shariati’s education in France contributed to his ideological themes related to the concept of “nation” which he saw as having a political will that could change society in accordance with an Islamic Enlightenment.¹²⁹ He saw Muslim community as the core of a modern nation. This nation would have its own modern state which would guide the way to an enlightened Islam. His sociological view of thinking ‘the people’ and ‘state’ as separate entities was a signifier of his modernism.¹³⁰ Shariati’s ideal Islamic state was a modern one.

Like the Christian liberationists and Qutb, Shariati adopted a dialectical understanding of the world as two general camps. The struggle between the Christian poor and the imperialists in liberation theology, and the struggle between *jahiliyya* and Islamic society in Qutb, were replaced in Ali Shariati’s belief by the struggle between the camp of

¹²⁶Sami Zubaida, *İslam, Halk ve Devlet* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1994), 63.

¹²⁷Malise Ruthven, *Islam in the World* (London: Penguin Books; 2004), 343.

¹²⁸Mujahedin Khalq; see the section on them in this chapter.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, 67.

¹³⁰*Ibid.*, 77.

imperialism-capitalism and “the imaginative realm of the truly Islamic society.”¹³¹ Shariati read the Quran from an allegorical and symbolic perspective¹³² and searched for solutions to modern problems. For example, he interpreted the Cain and Abel of the Quran in a different and symbolic way. In the Quran, Cain killed Abel and this was the first murder of humanity and also the first evil action on earth. Shariati claimed that the siblings’ social positions were very important in order to understand the religious passage about them:

Abel was a pastoral man, a herdsman. This signi[fied] the era of freedom from land when man belonged to a classless society. Cain was a farmer. That means a settler (city dweller). A settler [was] a man of a society based on class structure, individual ownership, and monopoly. The rule of man over man. With Abel’s death came the end of justice, brotherhood, freedom, equality. With the survival of Cain came ownership, war, slavery and racism as man entered his present history.¹³³

Therefore, for Shariati the first evil thing in history was the end of classless society, which had been a just society.

Shariati also asserted that the concept of social class could be encountered in the Quran. He said that certain hegemonic and dominated classes were mentioned in the book. “Three symbols demonstrate[d] three versions of the hegemonic class.” They were the “Pharaoh, Croesus and belam.” The Pharaoh had “hegemonic political power,” Croesus had “hegemonic economic power,” and belam (official clergy) had “hegemonic ideological and religious power.”¹³⁴ He said that a hegemonic class, in all of its versions was decried by God. The Prophet Muhammad was against this class, moreover, he stood by the “Al-Nass, which was the class of the subordinated.”¹³⁵

References to class society were thus many in the Quran and in the prophets’ lives, according to Shariati. The prophet of Islam had struggled against the hegemonic class in

¹³¹Tripp, 153.

¹³²Ibid., 160.

¹³³Ali Shariati, *Bazgasht* (Tehran: Irshad, 1978), 375-8, cited in Mohammad Yadegari, “Liberation Theology and Islamic Revivalism”, 43-4.

¹³⁴Ali Shariati, *Öze Dönüş* (İstanbul: Şafak Yayınları, 1985), 236.

¹³⁵Ibid.

the name of social justice. Al Nass corresponded to the “meek” of Christian theology, as Jesus had said: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”¹³⁶ The “meek” of Christian theology found indeed many references in Quran itself, which provided support for Shariati’s argument.¹³⁷

Another broad interpretation of the Quran was again about Al-Nas (the people of khalq).¹³⁸ According to Shariati, the Quran claimed that subordinated people would have their own destiny and would have to struggle against the unjust order to change it. This emphasis on the subordinated’s role in changing the usual order was parallel to Christian liberationists’ praxis. Additionally, Shariati thought that masses, provided they had a collective will, could change history.¹³⁹ This was a revolutionary interpretation of the Quran, which suggested that Shariati was to some extent influenced by historical materialism and Marxism. In this way he wanted to discover a modern ideology that was lurking behind the Quran and thus would show the latter’s timelessness.

At the same time, Shariati criticized historical materialism. He said that the Marxist belief in an eventual classless society was a result of faulty historical thinking neglecting individual responsibility and human will.¹⁴⁰ However, he also said that religious people believed that Mahdi’s (the chosen one) coming would end suffering and exploitation as a necessity of God’s will, which was similar to Marxist historical understanding (the dictatorship of the proletariat). He thus emphasized there was a connection between Islamic

¹³⁶The Bible, Matthew 5:5, *Parallel Translations*, New International Version 1984, accessed December 16, 2012 Available at <http://bible.cc/matthew/5-5.htm>

¹³⁷Al-Kasas (Anecdote) Sura of the Quran, Verse 28: “And We wished to do a favour to those who were weak (and oppressed) in the land, and to make them rulers and to make them the inheritors.” Accessed December 16, 2012 <http://www.dar-us-salam.com/TheNobleQuran/surah28.html>

¹³⁸Yadegari, 44.

¹³⁹Ibid., 45.

¹⁴⁰Shariati, *Öze Dönüş*, 96.

and Marxist ideologies. But there was a limit to such connections. Marxism had “put history in place of God and put means of production in place of God’s will.”¹⁴¹

Shariati also criticized the understanding of Marxism that saw religion as “opium” or “junk.” Religion could be liberating; it had been a supporter of anti-colonialist movements throughout the world.¹⁴² On the other hand, he justified the Marxist perception of religion by stating that the hegemonic class’s religion could be opium for the people.¹⁴³ Abrahamic religions had come to support the subordinated, who were suffering under hegemonic religions. The prophets always struggled against the settled religion in order to destroy the unjust order. The first believers of religions were almost always poor people. Islam was not opium but a liberator for the subordinated, according to Shariati.

Shariati recalled the Islamic understanding of the world *Tevhid (unity)*.¹⁴⁴ This view emerged from a dialectical understanding of material and spirit in the world. The integration of contrasts was perfect harmony and God had this perfection. “The belief in only one God who had hegemony over all being meant refusing all racist discriminations and class antagonisms.”¹⁴⁵ Social orders that were based on these inequalities were a signifier of attributing an equal to God (*şirk* or polytheism) and Shariati called these systems social “şirk.”¹⁴⁶ *Tevhid*, unity or oneness, was a liberation from them.

After Hosseiniyeh Ershad, which was a civil and independent Islamic school where Ali Shariati arranged conferences and lectures was closed in 1972, Shariati’s approach to Marxism changed. Especially in his early years, in his book *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies: An Islamic Critique*, Shariati had regarded capitalism and socialism as two faces of western ideology. They were both “form[s] of bourgeois

¹⁴¹Ibid., 94.

¹⁴²Ibid., 83.

¹⁴³Ibid., 371.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 380.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., 382.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

thought.”¹⁴⁷ However, after his imprisonment in 1973,¹⁴⁸ he thought that there was a difference between the two: “Islam’s contradiction with imperialism and capitalism was of an antagonistic nature, incapable of reconciliation, whereas Islam’s contradiction with Marxism was of a non-antagonistic nature.”¹⁴⁹

According to Shariati, the Islamic system was closer to socialism, but his socialism of Islam was “primarily an ethical one.”¹⁵⁰ Islamic order could liberate people, especially the oppressed from “the bondage of exploitative private property ownership and ‘infested bourgeois values’ when people would be governed by Islamic values.”¹⁵¹ He based his socialism on the struggle of a companion of Prophet Muhammad whose name was Ebuzer. Ebuzer had accused the rich of hoarding gold and silver and preventing the equal distribution of wealth in society.¹⁵² When there was poverty in the country, the rich were collecting heavy taxes from the rest of society¹⁵³ and were becoming richer and richer. Shariati defined this calling for “equal distribution of wealth between all Muslims” as “Ebuzer’s socialism” and saw it part of the history of socialist movements.¹⁵⁴ He saw socialism’s main criterion of social justice in Ebuzer’s struggle: “Each w[ould] get his share according to his ability and labour.”¹⁵⁵

It can be said that the consequences of interpretations of the Bible by liberationists and of the Quran by Islamic revivalists were very similar. A reason, no doubt, was that the

¹⁴⁷Tripp, 166.

¹⁴⁸Ibid, 165.

¹⁴⁹Ali Rahnema, “Ali Shariati: Teacher, Preacher, Rebel”, in *The Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, Ali Rahnema, ed. (London: Atlantic Highlands; Princeton, N.J.: Zed Books, 1994), 240.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 242.

¹⁵¹Ibid.

¹⁵²Ali Şeriati, *Ebuzer* (Ankara: Fecr Yayınevi, 2010), 20.

¹⁵³Ibid., 141.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., 20.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

two holy books belonged both to Abrahamic religions.¹⁵⁶ They included the spiritual roots of the idea of “class,” in words such as “the meek” (Bible) and Al-Nass (Quran).

However, there was a difference between liberation theology and Islamic revivalism. “Liberation theology [was] open to influences from secular ideological trends such as socialism; [whereas ... Islamic revivalists were] socially conservative and adamantly opposed to liberalism, pluralism and [Marxist] socialism.”¹⁵⁷ Another important difference was about the primary aim of the two movements. For liberation theology, eliminating poverty and struggling together with the poor was the main aim.¹⁵⁸ However, Islamic revivalists believed that an Islamic state would end inequality and maintain social justice.

¹⁵⁶Yadegari, 46.

¹⁵⁷Manochehr Dorraj, “The Crisis of Modernity and Religious Revivalism: A Comparative Study of Islamic Fundamentalism Jewish Fundamentalism and LiberationTheology” *Social Compass* 46, no: 2 (1999): 225–40.

¹⁵⁸Petrella, 26-7.

Egypt and Islamic Socialism: Between Nasser's 'Arab Socialism' and Islamism

In the 1950s and 1960s, there were anti-imperialist movements all over the Third World. Being dependent on western capitalism, Egypt also had its fair share. In 1948, sixty percent of the investment in Egyptian companies belonged to foreign capitalists.¹⁵⁹ Politically, British control over Egyptian politics was very strong. For instance, in the 1942 elections, Britain pressed for the nationalist-liberal Wafd Party's continued rule in Egypt and succeeded in this endeavour.¹⁶⁰ The Wafd Party had been a supporter of the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian treaty which had left 10,000 British troops intact in the Suez Canal region.

When, on top of all this came also the conspicuous social inequality, a strong Islamic social critique of capitalism became inevitable, just like most other countries in the Middle East.¹⁶¹ Thus, by the 1950s, the Muslim Brotherhood was the strongest force in the country.¹⁶² Other important forces were the Wafd Party, which was under the control of landowners, and the Free Officers Movement in the army, which was not yet known by anyone except its members.¹⁶³

In 1952, the Free Officers Movement, the initial organization of which went back to 1948, overthrew the regime. The Movement "coalesced around an executive committee of nine (later fourteen) men headed by Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser."¹⁶⁴ The members of the movement came from middle class backgrounds.¹⁶⁵ They were against the dependence of their country to

¹⁵⁹Peter Mansfield, *Mısır İhtilali ve Nasır* (İstanbul: Kitapçılık, 1967), 21.

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁶¹Tripp, 77.

¹⁶²Mansfield, 22.

¹⁶³*Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁶⁴William Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview, 2000), 295.

¹⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 296-299

Britain, and did not adopt the interests of the indigenous ruling elite of Egypt who benefited from the British hegemony over the country. They were “a new generation [...] of] junior officers in the army.”¹⁶⁶ They were anti-imperialist, nationalist and reformist. Before the coup in 1952, their agenda consisted of demands for “destruction of British colonialism, [and] the establishment of social justice.”¹⁶⁷

The Free Officers formed an organization called the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) that became “the executive body of the government” of Egypt after the coup.¹⁶⁸ Nasser was initially interior minister though leading behind the scenes.¹⁶⁹ In 1952, the RCC carried out an agrarian reform which limited agricultural land ownership and abolished civil titles like “Pasha” and “Bey.” This considerably reduced the political power of the land-owning old elite.¹⁷⁰

In 1956, after the Suez Crisis, Nasser became president by a national plebiscite and secured “his domestic powerbase.”¹⁷¹ In 1957, the nationalization of foreign banks and companies were started, and Nasser began to construct Arab socialism. All the wealth of the richest 600 families in Egypt was confiscated by the state and the families were practically banned from politics.¹⁷² In 1958, the United Arab Republic (UAR) was established. It consisted of Egypt and Syria, which would be two equal participants, but Egypt quickly became dominant. After the foreign policy triumph of Suez (1956), the good times for Nasser lasted to about 1961, when the United Arab Republic collapsed due to a Syrian rebellion.¹⁷³ After the break up with Syria, Nasser focused on domestic issues and started to adopt some socialist policies.¹⁷⁴ The

¹⁶⁶Ibid.

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²Mansfield, 91.

¹⁷³Cleveland, 316.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 308.

Nasser regime's difficulty in raising necessary funds forced the government to take over most of Egypt's [private] enterprises and to become responsible for all capital formation so the regime was rather a form of state capitalism than Marxist socialism and not based on the dynamic of class conflict.¹⁷⁵

In 1962, a national charter was accepted in Egypt. According to this, the national regime aimed to establish a socialist Arab union in the Middle East.¹⁷⁶ The Arab Socialist Union (ASU) was established as a mass-based single party and a revolutionary organization headed by Nasser.¹⁷⁷ The national regime was respectful of religion, and in the charter there were references to Islam at various points. According to Hamid Enayat, a political scientist, "the country [was] constitutionally regarded as Muslim and the regime respect[ed] all the observances and symbols of Islam." Thus, the emerging socialist ideology was only semi-secular, it preferred Islam when there were other significantly represented religions in Egypt, such as the Copts.¹⁷⁸ However, the government was not Islamic; its policies were not totally based on Quranic interpretations, but were Westernist. The Nasser regime for instance, as Cleveland writes, "tended to abandon the veil and to adopt contemporary international dress."¹⁷⁹

The regime was against the political activities of the Muslim Brotherhood and was in conflict with this organisation. Yet, Nasser's government adopted much from the Brotherhood's Islamic critique of capitalism. This was because the government needed Islamic justifications of its project for applying it in a Muslim society.¹⁸⁰ The appropriation was also logical because social justice was the main and common aim of both the government and the Brotherhood. Moreover, as late as 1952, many of the Free Officers had close ties to the Brotherhood and could

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Mansfield, 117.

¹⁷⁷Cleveland, 310.

¹⁷⁸Hamid Enayat, "Islam and Socialism in Egypt," *Middle Eastern Studies* 4, no.2, (January, 1968): 153.

¹⁷⁹Cleveland, 311.

¹⁸⁰Tripp, 83.

cooperate with the Brotherhood. However, by 1954, when a member of the Brotherhood tried to assassinate Nasser, this cooperation had long ended. Six leaders of the Brotherhood were executed after the unsuccessful assassination attempt.¹⁸¹ The main ideologue of the Brethren, Sayyid Qutb, was imprisoned in 1954.

The Brotherhood were against Nasser's socialism as they thought Islam was the real solution for rendering social justice. Their main method of eliminating poverty was to apply Islamic rules, for instance *zakat* (a kind of income tax). Sayyid Qutb was of the opinion that socialist theory aimed to end private ownership; this was unnecessary for social justice¹⁸². According to Qutb, Islam and socialism could not be reconciled as a synthesis because socialism was a materialist, *jahiliyye* thought that Enayat writes "stressed social welfare at the expense of moral salvation."¹⁸³ Qutb did not use alien and western terms for describing an Islamic policy, for instance he did not use the novel Arab word *ta'mim* (nationalization) for state ownership.¹⁸⁴ Qutb also refused to use the term "Islamic socialism."¹⁸⁵ Islam had no need to prove that it would maintain social justice like socialism. The Arab socialists trusted in a man-made system. But all the man-made systems in Europe were proven to be economically weak.¹⁸⁶ God's religion was enough to solve all problems of modern life. So the Brethren in Egypt became completely against the Nasser government and its Egyptian or Arab socialism.

However, the Arab socialism of Nasser was "[not] a new theory of socialism [but] merely an Arab application of the 'essence' of socialism."¹⁸⁷ Although his socialist strategy had an Islamic element, it was an "important but not principal one."¹⁸⁸ At the end of the 1950s, parallel

¹⁸¹Ibid., 298.

¹⁸²Kutub, *Islam- Kapitalizm Çatışması*, 60-1.

¹⁸³Enayat, 169.

¹⁸⁴Ibid., 168.

¹⁸⁵Ibid.

¹⁸⁶Fauzi M. Najjar, "Islam and Socialism in the Arab Republic", *Journal of Contemporary History*, The Middle East 3, no.3 (June, 1968): 186.

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

¹⁸⁸Tripp, 83.

to the development of Nasser's Arab socialism, a movement emerged among some western-educated professors and some sheikhs of Al-Azhar Mosque-University "who were anxious to prove that Islam itself contain[ed] all elements of socialism, rendering to resort to an alien ideology unnecessary."¹⁸⁹ This movement was Islamic socialism. "Islamic socialism [was] an attempt to reconcile the theological and ethical convictions of Islam with the fundamental aims of socialism."¹⁹⁰ Islamic socialists strengthened the semi-secular regime's position and contributed to its socialist ideology, Enayat writes, especially by trying to prove Islam through socialism in contrast to the seculars who were "trying to prove socialism through Islam."¹⁹¹

Al-Azhar's reformist movement in the religion was the starting point for Islamic socialism. According to Enayat, "to sanction the full permissibility of independent judgement," *ijtihad* of Quran was important because traditional Islam could not justify the socialist regime as a device to cure modern Egypt's problems.¹⁹² Moreover, the complexity of social and economic hardships that faced Muslims in modern life necessitated the call for independent judgement to "[adapt] religion to the life of each age."¹⁹³ The Al-Azhar movement opened the way of *ijtihad* and restated Islamic concepts, so that socialist views could be expressed by "the terms and categories of Islamic theology."¹⁹⁴

For the Azharites, Mustafa Sibai's book, *The Socialism of Islam*,¹⁹⁵ became a pioneering work in the conceptualisation of Islamic socialism.¹⁹⁶ In the book, Sibai compared socialism and Islam, analyzed communism as a subset of socialism, and declared his anti-communism. He demonstrated that socialism was similar to Islam. For instance, there was the principle of mutual

¹⁸⁹Enayat, 153.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁹¹*Ibid.*

¹⁹²*Ibid.*, 157-159

¹⁹³*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵Mustafa Sibai, *İslam Sosyalizmi* (İstanbul: Hareket, 1974).

¹⁹⁶Enayat, 161-163.

social responsibility in both.¹⁹⁷ Most important was Sıbai's justification of certain kind of publicly-owned property.¹⁹⁸ In his view, in Mohammad's time desert-conditions had necessitated the nationalization of fire, water and grasslands which were basic needs. Now, in the modern context, instead of fire and pastures, electricity and "all the indispensable requirements of contemporary life" could be nationalized.¹⁹⁹ Moreover, he justified land nationalization which he said prevented "concentration of property in a few hands", by verses from the Quran.²⁰⁰ The holy book demonstrated that in Islam, the right of private ownership could be limited by the state to protect the interests of the subordinate classes.²⁰¹ Therefore, the socialist initiatives of Nasser's government were accepted and supported by him. Nasser's practical socialism positively contributed to Islamic socialism, according to Sıbai.

Islamic socialists believed that there were many types of socialism, communism being one of its more radical forms. While many did not find fault with being Islamic and socialist simultaneously, many could be anti-communist, especially because of the lack of belief in the latter in a single deity, which they interpreted as lacking a soul, as being too mechanistic.²⁰²

Other Islamic socialists followed in these steps and criticized capitalism, stressing its dysfunctionality in both moral issues and social justice. Prominent among these were Muhammed Al Bahi, Sheikh Mahmud Shaltut and Ahmad Al Sharabasi, who developed further the term "mutual social responsibility."²⁰³ Al Bahi attacked capitalism because the latter created social inequality by causing class divisions in society. He said "the charging of *riba* (interest) and the drive to accumulate for the sake of accumulation" were forbidden by God because they

¹⁹⁷Ibid.

¹⁹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹⁹Ibid.

²⁰⁰Ibid.

²⁰¹Ibid.

²⁰²Sıbai, 52-55.

²⁰³Tripp, 92.

would harm the weak.²⁰⁴ Islamic anti-communist socialists supported socialist political means for the rendering of social justice. They defended “the organic solidarity of society,”²⁰⁵ giving much more importance to *maslahah* (the interests of the people or collective interest) than the individual’s interest and the right of private ownership.

In the 1980s, with the influence of the Iranian Islamic Revolution, an Islamic leftist strand of thought which was a critique of Western modernization was developed by some former leftists in Egypt. “A new trend among Arab socialists emerged as a number of well-known Marxists converted to a religious-based notion of revolution and liberation.”²⁰⁶ First among them was Munir Shafiq (1936-...), a former Palestinian Marxist affected by the Iranian Revolution and its important ideologue, Ali Shariati. Shafiq adopted dependency theory and asserted that Arabs existed in the periphery of the world system. Therefore, a revolutionary Islamic ideology could make the masses mobilized against the center (capitalist states) for independence and social justice.²⁰⁷

Apart from Shafiq, Hasan Hanafi (1935-...), who was an Islamic leftist, stressed again in the 1980s that Islamic socialism was an attempt to counter Western imperialism and materialistic aspects of capitalism. His Islamic leftist view was utilitarian, like the others.²⁰⁸ Hanafi preferred the “authentic” collective identity of Islam instead of a Marxist class consciousness.²⁰⁹ According to Michaelle L. Browsers, his attempt to develop a synthesis between socialism and Islamism, was very close to the liberation theologies in Latin America.²¹⁰ Hanafi

²⁰⁴Ibid., 95.

²⁰⁵Ibid., 98.

²⁰⁶Michaelle L. Browsers, *Political Ideology in the Arab World* (Newyork: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 24.

²⁰⁷Ibid., 25.

²⁰⁸Tripp, 100-101.

²⁰⁹Sami Zubaida, “Islam, Cultural Nationalism and Left”, *Review of Middle East Studies* 4 (1988): 7. 1-32.

²¹⁰Browsers, 27.

saw integration of leftist and Islamist ideologies as “the first step” for a revolution.²¹¹ His ideology was based on the need for the integration of Nasser’s Arab socialism and Islamism and he asserted that “Islam [was] in the heart of the masses. [...] Nasserism without Islam [would ...] always be threatened by an Islamic movement.”²¹² Therefore, he saw the left’s secular attitude as an obstacle to political success and suggested an Islamic leftist alternative. He suggested “a revolutionary religious consciousness” in order to struggle against modern world’s problems of inequality and poverty.²¹³ His aim was also to criticize Western systems and to produce an Islamic left synthesis as an alternative modernization. Last but not least, Hanafi’s statement that Sayyid Qutb would have been an Islamic leftist had his natural development not been interfered with by being jailed by the Nasserists and tortured, reflects this tendency to unite Islam and socialism.²¹⁴

Adil Husayn, who was a former communist, can be considered a theoretician of the Islamic left. He asserted that the leftist and radical Islamists had to be in alliance against Anwar Sadat’s regime and its liberal economic policies in Egypt.²¹⁵ He emphasized the separation between these two movements by the term “absurd polarization.”²¹⁶ However, after the Iranian Revolution, he suggested a more authentic model of development, which was based on Arab-Islamic heritage.²¹⁷ He joined Egypt’s Labour Party, which had been Nasserist and socialist, and influenced it strongly by the beginning of the mid-1980s.²¹⁸ Egypt’s Labor Party advocated “Arab unity, social justice, an effective independence, but this [was] all expressed in the

²¹¹Ibid. See Hasan Hanafi, “Madha ya’n, al-yasar al-islami” (What is the Meaning of the Islamic Left?), *al-Yasar al-Islami* 1(1981): 5-48, cited in Browsers, *Political Ideology in the Arab World*, 27.

²¹²Hasan Hanafi, “The Relevance of the Islamic Alternative in Egypt,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* 4, (1982): 74.

²¹³Browsers, 27.

²¹⁴Ibid., 27-28.

²¹⁵Ibid. 25.

²¹⁶See Adil Husayn, “Islam and Marxism: The Absurd Polarization of Contemporary Egyptian Politics,” *Review of Middle East Studies* 2 (1976): 71-83.

²¹⁷Ibid., 26.

²¹⁸Ibid.

framework of Islamic values.”²¹⁹ Due to Husayn, the party increasingly became closer to the principles of the Muslim Brotherhood, making an alliance with them in 1987. Leftist members of Labor were forced out of the party by conservative Brotherhood members.²²⁰

To sum up, in the period until the end of the Cold War, Islamic socialism as an ideology emerged to render social justice, and support the anti-imperialist and socialist government of Nasser, who nationalized British and French properties in the country and tried to end Egypt’s dependency on the West. Then, the Islamic Revolution in Iran strengthened the idea of Islamic socialism but developed it in a more revolutionary Islamic and less leftist way. Anti-imperialism and the political desire for an independent modernization model from the West shaped Islamism as well as the Islamic left of Egypt.

After the Cold War, the conditions of global capitalist world order reshaped Islamist ideologies. Egyptian rebellion against the Mubarak regime reestablished new correlations between the secular leftists and Islamists in Egypt. The two camps had similar views on the United States, Israel, and authoritarian Arab regimes.²²¹ The *Kifaya* (Enough) movement for abolishment of the Mubarak regime brought together Islamists and socialists on the same political side in Tahrir Square for the revolution of Arab Spring which became the general name of Arab rebellions against dictatorships in respective countries. *Kifaya* was established in 2004, as “an umbrella group encompassing hard-core communists, moderate secularists and independent Islamists.”²²²

²¹⁹François Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 38.

²²⁰Salwa Ismail, “Confronting the Other : Identity, Culture, Politics and Conservative Islamism in Egypt,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30 (1998):217-8.

²²¹Jadaliyya, “Reflections on Ideology After the Arab Uprisings,” accessed December 19, 2012

<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/4764/reflections-on-ideology-after-the-arab-uprisings>

²²²Los Angeles Times, Khalil Ashraf, “Seeking a bridge to change in Egypt; A respected intellectual tries to join polar opposites -- Islamists and leftists -- to forge a viable opposition,” last modified April 27, 2007, *Los Angeles Times* [Los Angeles, Calif] : A.5., accessed November 12, 2012.

<http://www.jadaliyya.com/>.

The Kifaya also carried out peaceful protests against the Mubarak regime during the revolutionary period in Egypt in coordination with the Muslim Brotherhood. According to Khalil Ashraf, without the support of the Brotherhood, “Kifaya rallies remained limited to a few hundred devoted activists, easily bottled up by government riot police.”²²³ The head of the *Kifaya*, “Abdel Wahab Messiri— a well-known author and a Muslim with leftist leanings— hoped to create an alliance between Egypt's leftists and the powerful Muslim Brotherhood.”²²⁴ The members of *Kifaya* tried to establish a bridge between secular leftists and Islamists of the Brotherhood and find a new and common political agenda. However, “Manar Shorbagy, a political science professor at the American University in Cairo, said ‘the Brotherhood ha[d] proved throughout the years that they [were] not willing.’”²²⁵ Moreover, the Brotherhood saw *Kifaya* as a small elite group who were not close to the people of Egypt or accepted by them. This for example was the view of Mohammed Habib, a member of the Brotherhood's twelve governing-member Guidance Council.²²⁶ Thus, after the Egyptian revolution, the Islamists of the Brotherhood and socialists could not come together.

After the Tahrir rebellion, there was no attempt to create a synthesis of Islamism and the left in the name of Islamic-left despite the fact that the two poles had common aims including social justice and equality in the country. Some former members of the Brotherhood who were in the Egyptian Current Party (ECP) and socialists of the Socialist Popular Alliance Party (SPA), however, could coexist in an electoral coalition brought together by these common aims. Their coalition was called the Revolution Continues Alliance (RCA). RCA, “according to its members, comprise[d] ideologically diverse set of political actors, namely liberals, Islamists and

²²³Ibid.

²²⁴Ibid.

²²⁵Ibid.

²²⁶Ibid.

socialists.”²²⁷ The SPA and ECP were also against the potential loan agreement with the IMF. It would mean a “continuation of the old regime’s economic policies,” fail to meet the needs of Egyptian people and fall short of maintaining social justice.²²⁸

The Brotherhood’s candidate Mohammed Mursi became president, however, and he continued the Mubarak regime’s policies which “went against clear Islamic rulings.”²²⁹ For instance, Mohamed Waked asserts,

the government has been issuing T-bills at 12 and 13 percent interest and borrowing from banks at a 16 percent interest — and that, if anything, is “usury” from an Islamic point of view. Moreover, it is quite keen on pleasing international financial institutions too, at the expense of the interests of average Egyptians — as it is overtly negotiating IMF loans that require removing energy subsidies, floating the pound, and is promoting the idea of reducing government employment and more of what Gamal Mubarak had previously upheld as remedies for the Egyptian economy.²³⁰

The liberalization policies of the new president indicate that in Egypt, the neoliberalization process of the country will be able to continue under the guidance of an Islamist government. The attitude of the new government towards labour strikes in the country also shows the despotic character of the regime in terms of the class relations. The government terminated dozens of labor strikes by policeforce.²³¹ The RCA of socialists and Islamists also continues to defend their common agenda that was firstly based on social justice, while resisting the new government that sprang from the Brotherhood.

²²⁷Jadaliyya, “Egyptian Current Party.”, accessed December 17, 2012.

<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/3156/egyptian-current-party>

²²⁸Jadaliyya Reports, “Letter to IMF From Egyptian Parties, NGOs, Syndicates and Political Movements,” last modified November 11, 2012, accessed December 19, 2012.

<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/8328/letter-to-imf-from-egyptian-parties-ngos-syndicaten> accessed in 14.11.2012.

²²⁹Mohamed Waked, “*The Scared Islamists And Their Frightened Majority*,” *Egypt Independent*, last modified November 5, 2012, accessed November 14, 2012.

<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/8201/the-scared-islamists-and-their-frightened-majorityn>

²³⁰Ibid.

²³¹Ibid.

Islamic Socialism as a Synthesis of Marxism and Islam in Iran:

The People's Mujahidin

In the Cold War period, the revised oil agreement with Britain became politicized in Iran. Anti-imperialist opposition and anti-British sentiment arose in the country by 1949.²³² In 1951, political unrest caused the Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi to appoint Muhammed Musaddiq prime minister to implement the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian oil company, which Musaddiq immediately set out to do.²³³ However, the nationalization was not supported by either Britain or the USA, and Musaddiq's government was overthrown by a military coup supported by the CIA in 1953.²³⁴ Having been restored absolute power, Reza Shah Pahlavi's rule became increasingly dictatorial. In 1963, the leftist and Islamist opposition raised a revolt against the Shah regime but it failed.²³⁵ Student movements were forced to go underground and reorganized.²³⁶ Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was exiled in 1964, after calling the Shah 'a puppet of the West'. A guerilla movement soon emerged.

On the one hand, there was the Shah's regime, which was supported by the USA; on the other, guerilla groups which were actively against the regime. These groups were anti-imperialist and anti-USA. The opposition movement in Iran could be classified generally as either leftist or religious fundamentalist guerrilla organizations. The Mujahidin, which was established in 1965, was an Islamic leftist organization. It was thus an example of a synthesis of socialism and Islam.²³⁷

²³²Parviz Daneshvar, *Revolution in Iran* (New York: ST Martin's Press, 1996), 18.

²³³Val Moghadam, "Anti-Emperyalizm mi, Sosyalizm mi? İran'da Devrim ve Sol", *İran Devrimi: Din, Anti- Emperyalizm ve Sol*, ed. Serpil Üşür (İstanbul: Belge, 1992), 112.

²³⁴*Ibid.*, 113.

²³⁵*Ibid.*, 115.

²³⁶*Ibid.*

²³⁷Yassamina Mather and David Mather, "The Islamic Republic and The Iranian Left," *Journal of Socialist Theory* 30, no.1 (2002):18.

The Mujahidin developed out of the TUDEH (Party of the Masses of Iran), which was a communist party supported by the USSR, and was joined by other Marxists from the National Front,²³⁸ which had been established against the Pahlavi dictatorship in Iran and was the first opposition movement.²³⁹ A religious group within the in National Front was crucial in its formation.²⁴⁰ The Mujahidin's grassroots were especially based in some students at Tehran University who were interested in the works of Frantz Fanon, Ali Shariati and were influenced by Marxism. The students usually came from the provinces.

Its main founders were Muhammed Hanif Nizhad, Said Muhsin, and Ali Asgar Bedizadegan, who were former students of Mahmud Taleqani, who was one of the thinkers of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.²⁴¹ Hanif-Nizhad, who was the eldest of the founders, widely read about struggles in Cuba, Vietnam and Algeria after he had finished his education at Tehran University.

However, Ahmad Rezai was the main intellectual in the Mujahidin and was essential in the construction of the Mujahidin's ideology. Rezai formulated a new interpretation of Islam and Shi'ism as a revolutionary ideology. He wrote a lot of political handbooks for the organization. In one of his books, *Husein's Movement*, which was published in 1976, he discussed that the Shi' imams (Ali, Hassan, Husein) were against "feudal landlords and [exploitative] merchant capitalists" and thus had struggled against them.²⁴² According to him and also the Mujahidin, *the Order of Tewhid* (the monotheistic order), meant that for a classless society Muslims had to continue in the Imams' struggle; they had to fight against capitalism and imperialism in order to be true to the Imams' legacy.²⁴³ Shi'ism, particularly "Husein's historic

²³⁸Merip Reports, "The guerilla movement in Iran 1963-1977," *Merip Reports* 86 (March-April 1980): 8.

²³⁹Hamid Algar, "Preface", in Mahmut Talegani, *Islam ve Mülkiyet* (İstanbul: Yöneliş, 1989): 16.

²⁴⁰Merip Reports, "The guerilla movement in Iran 1963-1977", 8.

²⁴¹Hamid Algar, "Preface," in Talegani, *Islam ve Mülkiyet*, 17.

²⁴²Merip Reports, "The guerilla movement in Iran 1963-1977," 10.

²⁴³Ibid.

act of resistance[s] ha[d] both a revolutionary message and a special place” for the culture of Iran.²⁴⁴

Ideologically, the Mujahidin shared the same analysis with the important secular Marxist organization of Iran called “The Fedayeen of the People.”²⁴⁵ Both of the two organizations’ discourses were based on “dependency capitalism, anti-imperialism, new imperialism and revolutionary struggle.”²⁴⁶ And both their ideologies were based on dependency theory. Thus, they came close to the liberation theologians in Latin America which had simultaneously embraced Marxism and Christianity. The Shah regime’s relation with US imperialism made these leftist organizations reinterpret anti-imperialism as an opposition to dependence on the USA. The Mujahidin and the Fedayeen asserted that firstly a national revolution was necessary. Like the people’s liberation movements in the third world, they insisted that US imperialism only created a comprador bourgeoisie.²⁴⁷ So a national bourgeoisie and a national religious middle class had to be part of anti-imperialist opposition as allies.²⁴⁸

The Mujahidin accepted “Marxism as a progressive social philosophy, but its true culture, inspiration, attachment and ideology was Islam.”²⁴⁹ It benefited especially from Islamic revivalists such as Ali Shariati and Jalal Ali Ahmad in cultural issues. Especially the former’s radical interpretation of Islam was adopted. Shariati and Ahmad had criticized westernist modernization, and had suggested an Islamic and third worldist way.²⁵⁰ In contrast, the Fedayeen were not interested in cultural aspects. This revolutionary-Islamist culture was not

²⁴⁴Ibid.

²⁴⁵Merip Reports, “The guerilla movement in Iran 1963-1977,” 10.

²⁴⁶Moghadam, 117.

²⁴⁷Ibid., 120.

²⁴⁸Ibid., 121.

²⁴⁹Merip Reports, “The guerilla movement in Iran,” 10.

²⁵⁰Moghadam, 126-127.

adopted by other leftist groups in Iran, therefore it did not become a broad based “case of struggle.”²⁵¹

The views of Shariati and Mujahidin ideology were found to be “a reckless exploitation of religion” by a secularist contemporary of Shariati.²⁵² However, the Mujahidin also summarized its own synthesized ideology and its necessity which emerged as:

A man is a true Muslim only if he is a revolutionary. In the whole Quran there is not single Muslim who was not a revolutionary. [...] The regime is trying to place a wedge between Muslims and Marxists. In our view however, there is only one major enemy— imperialism and its collaborators. Islam and Marxism teach the same lessons for they fight against injustice. Of course Islam and Marxism are not identical. Nevertheless Islam is definitely closer to Marxism than to Pahlavism [the dependent capitalist development model of the Shah’s regime]. Who is closer to Islam: the Vietnamese who fight against American imperialism or the Shah who helps Zionism?²⁵³

Nevertheless, the Mujahidin was divided into two in 1975. The Marxist faction who adopted Marxism as a real revolutionary ideology –and not Islam– and turned to the organizing of working class, and was called the Marxist Mujahidin. The rest of the organization was called the Islamic Mujahidin. The former established a socialist party, Qiyam-i Kargar (Workers’ Uprising). The son of Mahmud Taleqani and ironically a member of the Marxist Mujahidin, Mujtabi Taleqani explained the main antagonism between Marxism and Islam, and the necessity to choose one of them with these words in a letter to his father: “We must turn to [the] working class. But to organize the working class, we must reject Islam, for religion refuses to accept the main dynamic force of history - that of class struggle.”²⁵⁴

After the Iranian Islamic Revolution, this organization, like the Fedayeen of the People, struggled against the Islamic regime and failed. A lot of members of the organization

²⁵¹Ibid., 127.

²⁵²Ervand Abrahamian, “The Islamic Left : Radicalism to Liberalism”, *Revolutionaries and Reformers in Iran: New Perspectives on the Iranian Left*, 272.

²⁵³Merip Reports, “Pasokh Beh Etemat-i Akheri Rezhim (An Answer to the Regime’s Latest Slanders).” *The Mujahidin Organizations*, (n.p. 1973): 10-13, quoted in “The guerilla movement in Iran 1963-1977,” *Merip Reports* 86 (March-April 1980): 10.

²⁵⁴Mujtabi Taleqani, “Letter to My Father,” *Mujahid*, 6 (July 1976): 131-44, quoted in “Guerilla Movement in Iran”.

were executed by Khomeini's regime. Some remaining groups went as political exiles to France. However, in 1986, France and Iran's relationship improved and they were forced to go to Iraq which was under the Saddam regime.²⁵⁵ Now the organization has changed its ideology which had been a synthesis of revolutionary Islamism and Marxism and turned more liberal, aiming at a secular and democratic country by free elections.²⁵⁶

Conclusion

As a consequence, it could be said that anti-imperialism, nationalism and socialism were popular political themes of the 1960s and 1970s. For the peoples of colonial states in the third world, national independence was the solution for saving themselves from Western imperialism. However, after gaining national independence, they were still economically dependent on the West and social injustice continued to be a real problem. Anti-imperialism, considered to be a remedy, was thus on the rise. Capitalism, with the social injustices it allegedly brought about, was accused of being the ideology of imperialists. Socialism, as an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist ideology was seen as an alternative way out of the dependency on the Western system. However, the USSR's Soviet socialism was also seen as originally Western, so communism was not regarded as the path to follow.

In these conditions, the Third World countries had to produce "a third way" between capitalism and communism for self-styled modernization. For a 'local' and non-Western socialist model, nationalism or religion was mixed with scientific socialism. Especially in the examples of the Islamic leftist ideologies in Iran and Egypt, it could be seen that religion had a lot of difficulty in finding responses to the modern age's political and economic needs. The Mujahidin and Islamic socialists of Egypt had to resort to western ideologies in order to solve

²⁵⁵Elizabeth Rubin, "The Cult of Maryam Rajavi," *Newyork Times Magazine*, Jul 13, 2003, 29.

²⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 30.

the political and economic problems of the modern age. Their interpretation of religion could not be fully independent from Western influences. Religion, as an ideology of the pre-capitalist period, had to be thought through in the modern age. This had an inevitable effect on the interpretation process of Islam as it was tried to be evoked independently from western ideologies.

CHAPTER THREE: FROM NATIONAL OUTLOOK MOVEMENT TO THE AKP: THE SOCIAL JUSTICE DISCOURSE OF THE ISLAMIST MOVEMENT

This chapter analyzes the changing discourse of social justice in the Islamist parties in Turkey. First, it will focus on the ideology that shaped the economic project of the Islamists from 1970 to the first decade of the 2000s. Second, it will demonstrate the different attitudes of the Islamists towards capitalism by referring to the concepts of Cihan Tuğal.

Corporatism and this ideology's relation to Islamism will be explained, followed by, according to Tuğal's classification, different approaches to capitalism in Turkish Islamism will be shown. Then, chronologically, the Islamist parties' approach including that of *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (Justice and Development Party, from here on AKP) to the economy will be examined. In this way, their social justice discourses will be analysed. The importance of social justice in their economic projects will be investigated. Finally, the focus will be on how the Islamist social justice discourse has changed over time and what the AKP's redefinition of social justice is.

Corporatism and the Islamist Movement in Turkey

In Turkey, the first Islamist political party, the National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*) was established in 1970 by permission of Mehmet Zait Kotku, who was a sheikh of the Naqshibandi order.²⁵⁷ Although there had been various Islamist ideologies with adherent groups

²⁵⁷Hakan Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar: Nurcular, Nakşiler, Milli Görüş ve AK Parti*, trans. Ahmet Yıldız (İstanbul: Kitap Yayıncılık, 2005), 279.

in the Republican era, a political Islamist movement struggling legitimately for power emerged after the establishment of this party. According to Ömer Laçiner,

although Islamism ha[d] been on the agenda in all Muslim countries including Turkey for more than a century, Islamic ideologies and movements which are independent and capable of offering a human-society-order perspective with unique references, and struggling for power by separating themselves from other political ideologies have been mentioned [only] since the end of the 1960s.²⁵⁸

In the 1960s and 1970s, the national-developmental economic model was dominant in Turkey as well as other developing countries, especially in Latin America. According to Mihail Manoilescu, who is a theorist of corporatism, corporatism was an institutional-political response to a particular process of transformation that the world political economy and its attendant system of international stratification was undergoing. Although corporatism in a modern sense went back to the second half of the nineteenth century, and manifested itself during the twentieth century in various forms, not least under fascist regimes, it was very important in the 1960s and 1970s as a third way between capitalism and socialism. Philippe C. Schmitter, another expert on the subject, defines corporatism as follows:

Corporatism can be defined as a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular compulsory, noncompetitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demand and supports.²⁵⁹

The important point about corporatism is its anti-liberal and anti-Marxist character. As a model of society and economy, corporatism sees society as an organic and harmonious whole consisting of mutually interdependent and functionally complementary parts. The major units

²⁵⁸Ömer Laçiner, “İslamcılık, Sosyalizm ve Sol,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce: İslamcılık*, vol.6, vol. ed. Yasin Aktay, (Series Eds.), Tanıl Bora & Murat Gültekinil (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004), 469.

²⁵⁹Philippe C. Schmitter, “Still The Century of Corporatism”, in *The New Corporatism: Social-Political Structures in the Iberian World*, ed. Fredrick P. Pike & Thomas Stritch (Notre Dame : University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), 93-4.

and the molecules of society are the occupational groups and their organizations, that is, corporations. According to Taha Parla,

as opposed to the individual as the main unit, or the primary category — in its analytic and normative aspects— in the liberal model of the society, and as opposed to the social class in the Marxist model of the society, the corporatist model views the individualism of the former as unintendedly atomistic and consequently disruptive of the equilibrium and survival of the social organism; it views the struggle and warfare, if not the sheer presence, of classes in the latter as detrimental to the maintenance of a particular kind of system.²⁶⁰

However, this does not mean that the corporative system is not capitalist. Parla writes that private property and enterprise are central to corporatism, which makes this system of thought and way of organization closely related to, if different from, capitalism.²⁶¹

Haldun Gülalp writes the “Islamist movement in Turkey has also followed a way which parallels globally dominant ideologies and political thought.”²⁶² Consequently, the Islamist parties in Turkey, the National Order Party, *Milli Nizam Partisi* (NOP), National Salvation Party *Milli Selamet Partisi* (NSP) and Welfare Party *Refah Partisi* (WP), all had corporatist economic development projects for Turkey until the middle of the 1990s. This being the case, corporatism was seen as a third way between liberal capitalism and socialism. Islamism in Turkey also wanted to separate its ideology from other political ideologies and to become a third political alternative to parties of the right and left. Corporatist ideology was a good base for the Islamist movement in order to form a new political ideology in Turkey. The Islamists saw society as an organic community consisting of pious Muslims. Therefore, the organicist approach of corporatism was compatible with societal views of the Islamists.

Some radical Islamist groups were also part of the Turkish Islamist movement. For instance, the Ak-Doğuş group and Hezbollahi Muslims who adopted the Islamist revolutionary movement in Iran were radical groups of this Islamist movement in Turkey. However, they were

²⁶⁰Parla, 46.

²⁶¹Ibid., 44.

²⁶²Gülalp, 12.

politically weak. These groups contributed to the ideology of Islamism; they had no significant support from society at large.

Thus, I will only discuss the mainstream Islamist National Outlook Movement (*Milli Görüş Hareketi*(NOM) whose leader was Necmettin Erbakan, in this chapter. Additionally, the AKP will be evaluated as a successor of the NOM.

Different Attitudes in the Islamist Movement towards Capitalism

Islamism cannot be perceived as a monolithic ideology. Islamists have not reached a consensus in some important cases. Different kinds of Islamisms have existed in Turkey, too. Generally, the Islamists can be separated into two factions as radical and moderate Islamists. The radicals want to change the societal order completely and from above via an Islamic revolution; moderate Islamists prefer changing society partially by parliamentary ways.²⁶³ Revolutionism vs. parliamentarism is the most important criterion which separates the two from each other in Turkey.

Except for this general classification, there are different groups of Islamists outside and inside Islamist parties; there is no common approach as to how the economic system should be. According to the sociologist Cihan Tuğal, there are three Islamist wings in terms of their approach to the capitalist system. One of them is the moral capitalists. They comprise the dominant economic ideology of the Islamist movement in Turkey. The moral capitalists see both virtues and vices in capitalism. Tuğal writes that they therefore, “recognize the need for some redistributive mechanisms that will balance the goals of accumulation of capital and social

²⁶³ Alev Erkilet, “1990’larda Türkiye’de Radikal İslamcılık”, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce: İslamcılık*, vol.6., ed. Yasin Aktay, (Series Eds.) Tanıl Bora & Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004): 683-7.

justice.”²⁶⁴ They are against atomistic individualism which they regard as a consequence of capitalist society. Yet the moral capitalists favor a market economy and are conscious of its merits. They give much more importance to morality and economic prosperity in society than economic expansion and productivity. Until the middle of the 1990s, the Islamists of the National Outlook advocated “moral capitalism” in their corporatist economic programme.

A second group is the alternative capitalists. As members of the Muslim bourgeoisie, they favor liberal capitalism and do not want much state intervention in the market. Tuğal writes, “Less than surprisingly, most of the proponents of this model are Islamic businessmen and Islamic economists, though some of the prominent intellectuals of Islamism are also in this camp.”²⁶⁵ Their ultimate goal is not primarily to reduce poverty in society, but first to pursue economic profit and compete with the global bourgeoisie. They also advocate care for the poor, as long as this does not conflict with their interests in the competition against global bourgeoisie. Alternative capitalism was traditionally represented by a small group in the Islamist movement, yet they seemed stronger because of their financial power. Now, they are genuinely strong and neo-Islamism has been adopted by the masses in Turkey. This category represents the AKP and Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Organization *Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, (MÜSİAD), which consists of Muslim businessmen. Alternative capitalism aims and is congruent with the neoliberal transformation of Turkey. The AKP’s success also demonstrates the rise and success of alternative capitalism in Turkey.

The last group of Islamists is the moral anti-capitalists. They believe that the spirit of capitalism is not compatible with Islam. They criticize capitalism and Muslim capitalists by referring to Islamic sources. They also warn about the alliance between the Muslim and non-Muslim bourgeoisie against the poor. Tuğal writes that,

²⁶⁴Tuğal, “Islamism in Turkey: Beyond Instrument and Meaning,” 99.

²⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 100.

While it is possible that some of these discomforts with capitalism could be dealt with within the boundaries of an anti-monopolistic capitalism, it is highly likely that the majority of the moral drawbacks will persist as long as individual interest prevails in human relations.²⁶⁶

The moral anti-capitalists are against the commodification of human relations and the capitalist system, which is far from fulfilling basic human needs. This group of Islamists is represented by the left-theologians and anti-capitalist Muslim organizations. The Public's Voice Party *Halkın Sesi Partisi* (HAS), which was separated from the Felicity Party *Saadet Partisi* (FP) of Erbakan in 2010 had anti-capitalist views, but it can be difficult to categorize it exactly as a party of anti-capitalist Muslims. They criticized the AKP's alternative capitalism by using Marxist terms but they declared that rich Muslims can exist without oppressing the poor. They believed that Islamism must offer a different economic system to society. In their view, the Islamists must stand by the poor and the subordinated classes. However, HAS's class politics were paradoxical and it developed an eclectic approach between moral capitalism and anti-capitalism. The party did not become successful and was dissolved in September 2012. Some of its members including its leader, Numan Kurtulmuş, became members of the AKP.

Social Justice Discourse of the First Islamist Parties in Turkey

After the 1970s, one of the important changes in Turkey's political life was the establishment of an Islamist party that separated itself from the other parties of the right. The first Islamist party in Turkey, the NOP, was closed one year after its establishment. Shortly thereafter, the NSP was established in its place. These parties can be evaluated together because, as Sarıbay writes, "people who were included in the National Outlook movement (NOM)

²⁶⁶Ibid., 101.

contributed to the establishment of the NSP. NSP was the successor of the NOP which had changed very little, if at all.”²⁶⁷

The NOP’s founding was a consequence not only of ideological demand, but also of the economic situation in Turkey. The Justice Party *Adalet Partisi*, which was the main party of the right, had until then included the Islamists, but it mainly defended the interests of big industrial companies in the cities.²⁶⁸ Ahmet Yücekök stated that “the NOP emerged in Turkish political life as a representative of the artisan and craftsman who were becoming weak in some regions because of rapid industrialization.”²⁶⁹ In parallel fashion, İsmail Cem stipulated that small industrial organizations in Anatolia had thought that the Justice Party did not represent their interests due to the increase in the importance of private industry.²⁷⁰ Therefore, the Islamists preferred to establish an independent Islamist party to defend the middle classes by using Islamist ideology. However, their socio-economic grassroots were not limited to the middle class in the country. Self-employed people who came from the provinces, religious entrepreneurs and pious people in the lower classes also formed the party’s grassroots. Ruşen Çakır wrote that, “in disputes among these groups, compromises could be reached, although they sometimes had different interests from each other.”²⁷¹

The NOP and NSP both refused capitalism and socialism. Therefore, they alleged that they represented a third way between them. They stipulated in their party program that they were against both

the communist order which [took] the economic freedom and rights of people and nationalized them; capitalist-materialist views which liberalize[d] capital movements at the expense of damaging the material and spiritual development of

²⁶⁷ Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye’de Modernleşme, Din ve Parti Politikası: Milli Selamet Partisi Örnek Olayı* (İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1985), 109.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 96.

²⁶⁹ Ahmet N. Yücekök, *Türkiye’de Örgütlenmiş Dinin Sosyo-ekonomik Tabanı (1946-1968)* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi, 1971), 102.

²⁷⁰ İsmail Cem, *12 Mart: Tarih Açısından 12 Mart*, vol.2 (İstanbul: Cem Yayınevi, 1977), 122.

²⁷¹ Ruşen Çakır, “Milli Görüş Hareketi,” in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce: İslamcılık*, vol. 6, vol. ed. Yasin Aktay. (Series Eds.) Tanıl Bora & Murat Gültekinil (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004), 545.

humanity and regarded the increase of capital as the ultimate goal by using humanity as tool for some people's exploiting the rest of the society and providing them the opportunity of obtaining earnings without working by conforming to fair principles.²⁷²

However, the NOP and NSP aimed to “reinforce the development of private sector and to be its guide.”²⁷³ This attitude towards the private sector demonstrated that they were not totally against capitalism. Serdar Şen is of the opinion that “[These parties] which criticize[d] socialism and liberal market economy project[ed] a system which [was] a kind of mixed capitalism.”²⁷⁴

The NOP and NSP gave an important role to the state in economy as is usual in mixed capitalist systems. Şen observes that,

The NSP like the NOP bases itself on a definition of the state which appears to be impartial between social classes, and gives a pioneering role to the state for interventions which affect wider areas from reconstruction of government to the daily life. Economy is the area which will be intervened with the most.²⁷⁵

Heavy and rapid industrialization was the second most important aim of these parties after the spiritual and moral development of the country.²⁷⁶ Ali Bulaç notes that “this policy of heavy industrialization almost [took] central place in Islamist [NOP and NSP's] political view.”²⁷⁷ Necmettin Erbakan's economic plan for industrialization which foresaw the intervention of the state in the economy clearly demonstrated that Islamists did not suggest a third way, but a kind of capitalist way.

Erbakan, the political leader of the NOM, saw morality and spiritualism as defenders against communism. Material and spiritual development had to be realized together. This aspect separated the mixed capitalism of these first Turkish Islamist parties from the capitalist systems

²⁷²MNP Program, Cl 49, cited in Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, *Türkiye'de Modernleşme, Din ve Parti Politikası: Milli Selamet Partisi Örnek Olayı*, İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1985.

²⁷³Ibid., Cl 50.

²⁷⁴Serdar Şen, *Parti Programlarında Milli Görüş: AKP Milli Görüşçü mü?* (Taksim, İstanbul: Nokta Kitap, 2004), 49.

²⁷⁵Ibid., 52.

²⁷⁶Necmettin Erbakan, *Milli Görüş* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 1975), 226.

²⁷⁷Ali Bulaç, *İslam Dünyasında Düşünce Sorunları* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1985), 62.

in the West, according to Erbakan. The Islamist project of NOM tried to merge a mixed capitalist system with Islamist principles, which were to be applied in the economy when the National Outlook parties came to power.

According to the NOP and NSP, social justice was possible in a capitalist system. Hakan Yavuz notes that “[These parties] additionally emphasiz[ed] just distribution of the national wealth and social and economic justice.”²⁷⁸ According to the view of these parties, capitalism did not bar the road to social justice in society, but, as Erbakan declared, the “exploitative” interest-based system in the economy created the inequality. Erbakan also said that “without removing usury, development[...], social peace [...], justice are not possible. Without removing usury, the economic imbalance cannot go away.”²⁷⁹ Therefore, the Islamist ideology of the NOP and the NSP saw the difference between the rich and the poor as a consequence of the interest-based system in capitalism, but not of capitalism itself. Erbakan went so far as to see the interest-based system as the only reason for the inequality in society, and said that due to usury “capitalists [became] richer, while the poor [became] poorer.”²⁸⁰ The Islamist ideology of both parties attributed the paradoxical result of capitalism to usury. This meant capitalist system could still be accepted as a possible way for realizing social justice.

Another important factor in these parties’ social justice discourse was the economic incentives given to entrepreneurs. Erbakan, as a representative of small and medium-sized enterprises, declared that the state supported only the already-established bourgeoisie of the country with industrial incentives. Anatolian enterprises could not develop and the established bourgeoisie became richer. Erbakan saw this situation as a source of social inequality. He said,

the way to follow when industrializing the country must not become ‘I support anybody who brings a project’. Anatolian people cannot come up with projects. A happy minority who has twenty factories in İstanbul prepares those projects easily.

²⁷⁸Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 283.

²⁷⁹Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, 153.

²⁸⁰*Ibid.*, 153-4.

Twenty factories are [thus] added to [earlier] twenty factories, however, industrial foundations which need to be developed in Anatolia cannot be established.²⁸¹

Therefore, he stipulated that, for social justice, people from the middle classes had to become owners of new factories instead of the “happy minority.” M.H. İbrahimoglu, who studied the industrialization programs of the NOM wrote that, for Erbakan, “applying a just policy of distribution of credit” would make it possible to increase the number of capitalists in Turkey.²⁸² If the number of capitalists rose, the national wealth would be distributed fairly and social justice would emerge. The first Islamist parties were thus not anti-capitalist, but against the monopolization of capital. Monopoly capitalism had to cease for the moral capitalist order of these Islamist parties.

On the other hand, this aim of distributing incentive to people from every social class in order to broaden the capitalist base meant guaranteeing freedom of enterprise. Erbakan said that people from all classes had the right to interest-free credit for setting up a business.²⁸³ The freedom of enterprise was also believed to provide social justice.

For social justice, the taxation system was also a tool for balancing the distribution of income. Erbakan criticized the taxation system and spoke for justice in taxation. He said “the mechanism which solely targets the taxes from the poor must be removed. [...] We will collect the taxes not from the poor only – actually never from the poor – but from [mostly] those who have financial power.”²⁸⁴

The discourse of social justice was related to the main Islamist ideology of the parties. The mainstream ideology of the NOM was corporatist. The movement did not accept the existence of social classes; they saw society as a community that consisted of different groups that had conflicts of interest. Erbakan said that they did not accept the two opposing groups of

²⁸¹Ibid., 159.

²⁸²M. H. İbrahimoglu, *Milli Görüş Açısından Türkiye’de Sanayileşme* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınevi, 1975), 96.

²⁸³Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, 160.

²⁸⁴Ibid., 158-9.

the employee and the employer: “Inside the National Outlook, the employee and the employer are helpers of each other. They are brothers. They work for the same aim.”²⁸⁵ The fact that Erbakan emphasized cooperation, demonstrates that Islamist ideology was corporatist. Social justice was thus a problem about the cooperation between the state, the capitalists and the working class.

In Erbakan’s view, “A happy minority” caused the social inequality in Turkey. This was the group which exploited the rest of society. According to Erbakan, social justice was an important goal; its lack had less to do with classes, but rather with this capitalist group that was supported by governments. This situation was considered a consequence of western capitalism and Islamist parties’ role was to change the individualistic outlook of this capitalism by way of an organic society. In Ali Yaşar Sarıbay’s view, “[These parties] interpret[ed] society as a group of solidarity.”²⁸⁶

The first Islamist parties aimed at spiritual and moral development in the country before material development. They aimed at what Erbakan said was “not only just law, but also a just people.”²⁸⁷ People’s moral development was primary condition for development and social justice in society. Islamic morals in people who were active in the economy could provide the necessary conditions for social justice. Only a moral capitalism which was suggested by the Islamist corporatist project would be able to bring forth these conditions. This was what Cihan Tuğal classified as moral capitalism, as mentioned earlier.

The Islamists asserted that the middle class had to be given economic incentives in order to render a less centralized distribution of capital in the country. Moreover, they maintained workers had to get a share of company profits. With these mechanisms, under the controls of an

²⁸⁵Ibid., 164.

²⁸⁶Sarıbay, 129.

²⁸⁷Erbakan, *Milli Görüş*, 111.

Islamist government, the national wealth of Turkey would be distributed to people justly, and social justice would become possible.

On the other hand, moral capitalism was not a complete integration of Islamist and liberal principles. Ayşe Buğra writes that

The Islamic third way that the [parties] presented as an alternative to socialism and capitalism did not yet constitute, nor was accepted to constitute, a comprehensive model of social integration beyond the modern compartmentalization of morality, politics and economics. Religious ethics and economic development were to coexist –exist side by side, rather than being enmeshed together inseparably.²⁸⁸

Social justice was an egalitarian aim of the parties; however, their corporatist project was eclectic and neglected the antagonism between classes while it saw society as an organism held together by an Islamic brotherhood. In this moral capitalism, when the interests of businessmen and workers conflicted, it was ambiguous which class interest would be defended by these moral capitalist Islamists for social justice in society.

‘The Just Order Project’ and Its Aftermath: The Changing Discourse of Social Justice

The NSP was closed down by the military after the 1980 coup. The WP, which was established in 1983 as its successor, reached the climax of its popular appeal in the 1990s.²⁸⁹ The Turkey of the 1980s and 1990s was governed mostly by a center-right coalition. In the 1980s the political scene was dominated by Turgut Özal’s (prime minister 1983-1989) Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*). This party incorporated key business leaders as well as Islamist political elements; the latter as junior partners.²⁹⁰ The post-1980 period saw the making of the Islamist

²⁸⁸ Ayşe Buğra, “Political Islam In Turkey In Historical Context: Strengths and Weaknesses” in *The Politics of Permanent Crisis: Class, Ideology and State in Turkey*, eds. N. Balkan & S. Savran (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2002), 125.

²⁸⁹ Gülalp, 41.

²⁹⁰ Alan Richards and John Waterbury, *A Political Economy of the Middle East* (Boulder: Westview, 2008), 235-36.

bourgeoisie with significant contributions from Turgut Özal. As neoliberalization gained pace in Turkey in these years, the poverty in the cities rose.

The Welfare Party (WP) also advocated the making of an Islamist bourgeoisie, but unlike the NSP, it aimed to reduce the rising social inequality. It tried to reach a compromise among the interests of different social classes. The party supported Islamist businessmen in expanding their capital base and took its promised social justice to the poor via charity and volunteer programs, like the NOP and NSP had done earlier. Its fortunes changed significantly for the better after electoral vote on the center-right was divided between Özal's Motherland Party and its major rival, True Path (*Doğru Yol*) Party in the early 1990s.²⁹¹

In contrast to the NOP and the NSP, the WP preferred what Şen describes as “private enterprise operating according to free market principles, instead of regional development companies”²⁹² supported by the state. One cause of this change in economic policy was the fact that an Islamist bourgeoisie was in the making. The party's position evolved from being solely “the supporter of small-sized entrepreneurs” to being additionally “the supporter of the capitalists who were ready to relate with the global market.”²⁹³ The other cause was the global neo-liberal turn in the 1980s and the fact that most economists by the 1990s began to agree that markets promote better growth than states, which came to be known as the Washington Consensus.²⁹⁴ In 1991, MÜSİAD was founded.²⁹⁵ This acted as a rallying institution for Islamist businessmen. MÜSİAD openly supported the WP. According to Buğra, it was an extra-parliamentary pressure group, but also an organization defending a kind of Islamic protestantism and religious ethics in the economy.²⁹⁶ It had important influence on the politics of the party.

²⁹¹Ibid.

²⁹²Serdar Şen, *Refah Partisinin Teori ve Pratiği: Adil Düzen ve Kapitalizm* (İstanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1995), 36.

²⁹³Ibid., 9.

²⁹⁴Richards and Waterbury, 228-29.

²⁹⁵Buğra, “Political Islam In Turkey In Historical Context”, 133.

²⁹⁶Ibid., 132.

The WP's "Just Order" (*Adil Düzen*) project was launched to cater for demands of the poor in the cities. Gülalp writes that when considered along with the support given to Islamist entrepreneurs and capitalists large and small, the Just Order Project demonstrated that "Islamism, as represented by the WP, was a political movement which included different social classes, which [in turn] made classic right-left distinctions very complicated."²⁹⁷

The Just Order project was a most efficient political means for popularizing the Islamist movement in Turkey. According to Yalçın Akdoğan, a political scientist, it was a manifesto as well as a message that promised justice by improving the imbalance of income distribution in Turkey.²⁹⁸ The Just Order was influenced by the neoliberalization process, however, it also had corporatist roots. It was published as a pamphlet of the WP in 1991, and was a modified version of a text by two professors who had founded a Muslim commune in Akevler in İzmir.²⁹⁹ The WP adopted their local plan and changed it into a nation-wide Islamist project for a better order in Turkey.

In the Just Order, the state had a guiding position in the economy. As Erbakan declared, the state facilitated investment projects so that everybody knew which projects would be able to get incentives, both for the sake of new investments and increasing the efficiency of the already-existing investments in the sectors of agriculture, industry and service sector in the whole country."³⁰⁰ The project aimed to support the private sector, yet it allowed for state interference in the economy. It was not solely a free market project. On the other hand, the state would also seek a document of approval before granting credits to entrepreneurs' projects.³⁰¹ This document was to be supplied by "the moral community" which could be an occupational organization examining the entrepreneurs' moral conduct in the market. The moral communities were

²⁹⁷Gülalp, 42.

²⁹⁸Yalçın Akdoğan, *Siyasal İslam: Refah Partisi'nin Anatomisi* (İstanbul: Şehir Yayınları, 2000), 241.

²⁹⁹Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan: Türkiye'de İslami Oluşumlar* (İstanbul: Metis, Eylül-2002), 249-53.

³⁰⁰Necmettin Erbakan, *Adil Ekonomik Düzen* (İzmir: Anadolu Matbaacılık, 1992), 22.

³⁰¹*Ibid.*, 35

suggestive of a corporatist order.³⁰² This kind of economic plan, which, along with a neutral state also had functional roles for occupational communities, demonstrated that despite the neoliberal transformation of Turkey, the WP sustained the corporatist ideology which had been crucial in the NOP and NSP.³⁰³ The corporatism that the Just Order aspired to was especially instrumental in reaching compromises among different class interests in Turkey.³⁰⁴

Another important aspect of the Just Order project was the planned abrogation of income tax. Erbakan thought that this economic policy would bring social justice. In his opinion, the income tax that the capitalists paid was added anyway to the prices of goods they sold, causing prices to rise. This caused further imbalance in income distribution and increase in poverty. Income taxes were putting an economic burden on the poor. Thus, he promised, nobody, workers, farmers and entrepreneurs included, would pay income tax if the WP came to power.³⁰⁵ Now, there was a contradiction in the approach used to side with the poor and against capitalists. The Just Order wished to change the unbalanced income distribution, however, it surprisingly did not aim to collect income tax from entrepreneurs. Tax would be collected only during the production process. Çınar writes, “collecting tax solely from production, it was believed, would bring about [just] redistribution and lower prices.”³⁰⁶ Here it can be seen that the social justice discourse was being reconstructed while at the same time efforts were being made not to contradict major interests of businessmen. For the “Just Order” there was no distinction between the income of the poor and the rich in the case of income tax.

The Just Order was a capitalist project without usury. Social justice, it was believed, would not be possible in capitalism if interest were charged. Erbakan said, “a charging of interest le[d]

³⁰²Menderes Çınar, “İslami Ekonomi ve Refah’ın Adil Ekonomik Düzeni” in *Birikim* 59 (1994, March), 31.

³⁰³Cihan Tuğal, *Pasif Devrim: İslami Muhalefetin Düzenle Bütünleşmesi*, (İstanbul: Koç Üniversitesi, 2010), 119.

³⁰⁴Çınar, 29.

³⁰⁵Erbakan, *Adil Ekonomik Düzen*, 50-1.

³⁰⁶Çınar, 29.

to an order which collect[ed] from the poor and g[ave] to the rich, [...] by making the poor pay the high interests which is an additional expense.”³⁰⁷ However, Mustafa Özel who is an Islamist economist, asserts that in the Just Order there is a kind of interest which is retroactive. This is salam credit, which is seen as a very important means in combatting western capitalism and preventing unjust exploitation.³⁰⁸ Salamcredit is an interest-free Project finance tool, where a buyer pays the full price long before goods are delivered. In contrast to the assertion in the Just Order, shortening of the redemption date of the salam credit, i.e., calling in the goods early, makes expensive the goods which are the base of the credit, thus, it is a kind of retroactive interest.³⁰⁹ This seems contrary to the securing of social justice.

This “corporatist-statist”³¹⁰ project of the WP, promising social justice, started to lose its validity in 1993 with the party’s Fourth Grand Congress. During this congress, statism was refused and the RP declared itself as a “free market” party.³¹¹ Therefore, the Just Order project lost its meaning, and social justice became a void discourse without any chance of materialization. In Erbakan’s speech at the congress, the WP thus advocated the privatization of state economic enterprises. The NOM now had the opinion that “this [was] the time for laying the state’s hand off the economy.”³¹² In this transformation, the influence of Muslim businessmen and MÜSİAD cannot be denied, as well as full digestion of the Washington Consensus. Its Islamic Protestantism manifested that MÜSİAD’s Muslim businessmen were neoliberal and wanted minimal state interference in the economy. These businessmen did not like the Just Order project and found it communitarian. They instead defended an Islamic individualism in the free market. The WP had always wanted to form a strong Islamist

³⁰⁷Erbakan, *Adil Ekonomik Düzen*, 78.

³⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 42.

³⁰⁹Mustafa Özel, *Piyasa Düşmanı Kapitalizm* (İstanbul: İz Yayıncılık, 1993), 83-85. Cited in Menderes Çınar, “İslami Ekonomi ve Refah’ın Adil Ekonomik Düzeni” in *Birikim* 59 (March ,1994), 21-32.

³¹⁰Çınar, 32.

³¹¹Şen, *Parti Programlarında Milli Görüş*, 68.

³¹²*Ibid.*, 70.

bourgeoisie, therefore it was affected by the attitude of Islamist businessmen towards the economy. To state an example, the new Just Order pamphlet published in 1994, was now revised in line with the postulates of the free market.³¹³

The “debt boom” years of the 1990s which led to an economic crisis in 1994 caused the Turkish public to view a small group of rich financiers who had close links with politicians, as the culprit. This opened a way for the WP to come to power; it won mayoralties in big cities such as İstanbul and Ankara, the Muslim businessmen of Anatolia supported it (as opposed to the big businessmen of İstanbul and the Aegean coast). All this culminated in Erbakan’s becoming prime minister of a coalition government in 1996.³¹⁴

The WP’s Islamist political character as well as its success caused problems with the secularist state and also the Turkish military. When Erbakan was prime minister, on 28 February 1997, the military interfered in the political life and warned the WP via the National Security Committee (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*), which was labeled by some scholars and journalists as a “postmodern coup.” The Committee wanted the government to close some organizations, charity institutions, newspapers and also radio stations which were seen as parts of reactionist political Islam.³¹⁵ Erbakan’s government did not refuse the directions of the military, but the latter realized that the government did not want to implement these directions.³¹⁶ Therefore, the WP was accused of conducting anti-secular political activities against the Kemalist founding ideology of the state, and it was closed by the constitutional court on 16 January 1998. Erbakan was banned from politics.

The Virtue Party *Fazilet Partisi*(VP) which was established after the closing of the WP, had also an economic outlook based on the free market. Its programme advocated minimal state

³¹³Tuğal, *Pasif Devrim*, 119.

³¹⁴Richards and Waterbury, 237.

³¹⁵Hugh Pope, “Turkish Military Tightens Noose on Pro-Islamic Regime,” *Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 1997, cited in Hakan Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar: Nurcular, Nakşiler, Milli Görüş ve AK Parti*, trans. Ahmet Yıldız, (İstanbul: Kitap Publisher, 2005), 330.

³¹⁶Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 329.

interference in the economy. Şen writes that the VP demonstrated that the National Outlook Movement had left behind the statist and mixed economic understanding permanently.³¹⁷ The VP accepted that “privatization was a prerequisite for [a] free market economy.”³¹⁸ Consequently, the state was to act solely as a guide for the private sector in the NOM’s new party programme.

The transformation in the main economic ideology which had already started in the WP became permanent with the VP. The Just Order was now put aside and a new economic understanding became hegemonic in the Islamist movement. The corporatist project was no longer seen as a political path to social justice. Alternative capitalism which was a project for integrating Turkey with the neoliberal order, started to form in the Islamist wing. The VP continued to defend that poverty was a real problem of society, however, alternative capitalism was seen as the solution to this problem. In the new ideology of the VP, social justice was not precluded by the free market. According to Hakan Yavuz, the VP gave up demanding radical change in the economic order and redefined the vague concept of the Just Order.³¹⁹

In the VP, during the debate on changing the policy of the Party, two factions emerged: traditionalists (Erbakanists) and reformists (moderates). According to Yavuz, this happened in the following fashion:

The constitutional prerogatives [directed] the orientation of political change by banning anti-system Islamic parties and some key politicians from the political arena. These bans, in turn, have opened new opportunities for a younger and reformist generation of conservative Muslim politicians and facilitated the political learning process of the political elite.³²⁰

In fact, both groups were defending a liberal and moderate policy. Moreover, the VP’s program had already been liberal. In the WP’s moderate programme, which had stressed market

³¹⁷Şen, *Parti Programlarında Milli Görüş*, 71.

³¹⁸*Ibid.*, 72.

³¹⁹Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 75.

³²⁰*Ibid.*, 46.

forces and privatization more than it did the state's distributive role and individual and human rights, no doubt, the fear of being closed down had played a role. This fear had actually become the context of politics for both the WP and the new VP.³²¹ Numan Kurtulmuş, who had been a member of the VP and who was later the leader of the Public's Voice Party (HAS) until its dissolution in 2012, says that there actually had not been a debate about the program or political view. The existing administration had simply not wanted to share its power with the reformist wing. Furthermore, he says that the 28 February "coup" had taken place in order to prevent the WP government from implementing its Just Order project and to remove the obstacle in front of Turkey's integration with the global market.³²² The VP thus had no choice but to embrace the free market.

The VP had a new leader, Recai Kutan, but in fact it was under the indirect control of Erbakan. So, like the WP, it was accused of being anti-secular. Furthermore, a representative of the VP, Merve Kavakçı, not only wore a headscarf in the National Assembly, but also wanted to be sworn into her position with her headscarf on.³²³ This event was regarded by the secular establishment as a manifestation of the Party's demand for a radical Islamist and anti-secularist state. It also accelerated the closing of the VP. This party's political life was also ended by the constitutional court, in 2000.

After the closing of the VP, the Felicity Party *Saadet Partisi*(FP) which was founded in its stead by the traditionalist faction of the Islamists (Erbakanists), also adopted free market principles in its programme.

The Islamic conglomerates which were founded after 1980 operated on principles of profit-sharing (and not interest). According to Tuğal, "some Islamists posited [these] religious

³²¹Ibid., 72.

³²²Bariş İnce, "Eğer 28 Şubat Olmasaydı AKP de Kurulamazdı," (Interview with Numan Kurtulmuş), *Birgün*, last modified February 29, 2012, accessed 14 May 2012.
http://www.birgun.net/report_index.php?news_code=1330440906&day=28&month=02&year=2012.

³²³Yavuz, *Modernleşen Müslümanlar*, 336.

firms controlled by religious scholars as the real cure to the ills of capitalism."³²⁴ These companies could also expand in global market conditions, therefore the Islamist bourgeoisie in Turkey advocated liberalizing the economy. Thus, demanded by the Islamist bourgeoisie, the upholding of the free market became an ultimate goal for some members of the VP. Especially the alternative capitalists in the Party asserted that social justice would be possible under free market conditions. The competition and the efficiency of the free market would bring about social justice, according to them. Social justice thus was turned into a sideshow, a welcome potential positive output of the alternative capitalist project of the Islamist wing, instead of being a main aim of the movement.

The AKP and the Neoliberal Transformation: The Changing Meaning of Social Justice

After the closing of the Virtue Party, its members were divided into two camps: Tradititonalist and moderately Islamist (reformist). Yavuz writes that “not only was a new party, the FP created in August 2001, but also [a second one by] the more moderate ex-members formed under [Recep Tayyip] Erdoğan’s leadership.”³²⁵ The latter, i.e. the AKP’s members, were liberal Islamists who were neither against a secular state nor the free market economy. Furthermore, their party was not anti-Western. Its program, like that of its predecessor, emphasized the privatization of state economic enterprises and minimal state interference in the economy. In other words, the AKP was similar to the FP in terms of economic attitude towards capitalism. The AKP was a result of the changing National Outlook Movement.³²⁶ Before the establishment of the AKP, already with the VP, the NOM had clearly adopted liberal capitalism.

³²⁴Tuğal, *Passive Revolution*, 144.

³²⁵Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, 77.

³²⁶Şen, *Parti Programlarında Milli Görüş*, 379.

The AKP's main leaders were Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Abdullah Gül. They had been both members of the youth branches of National Outlook Parties where they gradually became important political figures. Erdoğan graduated from the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Marmara University. He became the mayor of İstanbul and served in this capacity between 1994 and 1998. Then he became a popular politician of the NOM. Gül graduated from the Department of Economics at İstanbul University. He worked as a professional economist at the Islamic Development Bank, then he became a representative from the WP in 1991. He rose to become vice president of the WP in 1993. Both Erdoğan and Gül represented the younger generation tired of party elders around Erbakan.

Changing attitudes towards liberal capitalism are related to the reshaping of class relations among the Islamists. Before 1980, Erbakan's movement was a representative of Anatolian petit bourgeois interests which were not supported by the state. The capitalist class was outside of the Islamist movement. The Islamist movement saw this class as exploitive and as obtaining profits unfairly. It thus became the mouthpiece of the middle and lower classes. However, class relations among Islamists changed over time. Güllalp writes that

Özal's reforms in the 1980s helped to create the so-called "Anatolian tigers", a new autonomous force in Turkish history, outside the control of the state, who acted to redefine Turkey by supporting a neo-liberal economic transformation, along with a conservative religious culture.³²⁷

This new emerging Islamist bourgeoisie which organized around MÜSİAD saw its economic interests as being best served in a free market economy. The reason was that in the 1980s, Turgut Özal's liberal strategy had enabled it to expand its small and medium business enterprises into large scale enterprises which have continued to expand until today.³²⁸ As already mentioned, MÜSİAD strongly affected the political view of the National Outlook which had once been skewed towards the role of state in the economy. According to Caner Taslaman,

³²⁷Ibid., 77.

³²⁸Güllalp, 51.

“many in the Islamist movement accepted liberal policies deliberately because they provided the former new fields of opportunity and independence from the state.”³²⁹

The emerging Islamist class demonstrated to the religious masses that they also could improve their economic condition in a free market environment. In Tuğal’s opinion, “these capitalists’ trustworthiness resulted from their opportunity of evoking ‘Islamic cultural capital.’³³⁰ Cultural capital means forms of knowledge, skills, education, and advantages which give a higher status to a person in society. Religious workers were organized especially under Hak-İş, which was an Islamist-oriented labor union. Yet, Hak-İş membership should not be understood in a traditional class conflict sense. Şennur Özdemir, a sociologist, says that both Islamist entrepreneurs and workers shared a common Islamic habitus, so workers did not see entrepreneurs as an opponent class. As a habitus, their Islamist values and life-styles joined together the two social classes as a community of believers.³³¹ The antagonism between the two classes of Islamists was thereby disguised. In this way, the liberal wing of the Islamists rose owing to the consent of most of the Islamist movement. This, in a nutshell, is what Tuğal calls “the rise of alternative capitalism in Turkey” by Islamists with the help of the AKP.³³² But Tuğal explained it as the absorption of the Islamic challenge to capitalism by liberal Islamists. It was the hegemony of liberal Islamists over radical ones. In other words, radical Islamists were to a large extent persuaded about the benefits of free market by liberal ones.³³³

The alternative capitalist project is thus a result of changing class relations in the Islamist movement. Yavuz writes that “The formation of an influential bourgeoisie within the Islamic movement,” and also “military-legal pressures to act within the rules of the constitutional

³²⁹Caner Taslaman, *Küreselleşme Sürecinde Türkiye’de İslam* (İstanbul: İstanbul Yayınevi, 2011): 174-5.

³³⁰Tuğal, *Passive Revolution*, 143.

³³¹Şennur Özdemir, “Müsiad ve Hak-İş’i Birlikte Anlamak”, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce: İslamcılık* Vol: 6, vol. ed. Yasin Aktay. Tanıl Bora & Murat Gültekingil (Series’ Eds) (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004): 844.

³³²Tuğal, “Islamism in Turkey,” 107.

³³³Tuğal, *Pasif Devrim*.

system,” led to “the fragmentation of class coalition [between lower classes and entrepreneurs in the National Outlook’s corporatist project.]”³³⁴ In contrast to the WP’s corporatist project, which tried to reach a compromise between entrepreneur and worker class interests, the AKP’s project focused on the interests of Islamist bourgeoisie.

Another important reason behind the support the Islamist capitalists gave the AKP instead of the FP was the discourses of the two Islamist parties. As mentioned before, the disagreement between the FP and the AKP was not on economic issues, as they were both supporters of liberal capitalism. However, as Yavuz tells us, after “some of the most liberal politicians had left the party, FP revived its old Islamic discourse.”³³⁵

Additionally, Yasin Durak, a sociologist, says that Tayyip Erdoğan made a synthesis of Islamic and modern politics in opposition to Erbakan’s romantic political line (his understanding of Muslim brotherhood among Muslim countries) and so legitimized his party’s position in the eyes of the masses.³³⁶ Erdoğan’s AKP denied that its political roots were based on Erbakan’s movement. Yavuz writes that “by declaring itself the heir to the legacy of Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal, it want[ed] to distance itself from its Islamic roots and Erbakan.”³³⁷ This was an opportune change in defining historical roots because both Menderes’s Democratic Party and Özal’s Motherland Party had once enjoyed a popularity in the mainstream center-right never equaled by Erbakan. The neoliberal transformation was thus appropriated by the AKP via reference to the older liberal parties of Turkey. Tuğal writes that “the AKP’s ideologues presented it as the expression of an economic shift, but they did so using a quite spiritual language [combining] its [religious] forces to socialize the AKP’s economic program.”³³⁸ The AKP’s rhetoric still has a communitarian spirit, enabling it to disguise the different class interests

³³⁴Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, 76.

³³⁵Ibid., 76.

³³⁶Yasin Durak, *Emeğin Tevekkülü: Konya’da İşçi-İşveren İlişkileri ve Dindarlık* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2011), 71.

³³⁷Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, 90.

³³⁸Tuğal, *Passive Revolution*, 55.

among the Islamists. It makes reference to a common identity which is composed of what Tuğal terms “a mixture of the the ummah and the nation.”³³⁹

In the alternative capitalist project of the AKP and Islamist bourgeoisie, integration with the global market and functionality of the free market are the ultimate goals. The AKP’s party program declares “a strategy of permanent and sustainable development and expansion.”³⁴⁰ As a consequence of the ultimate goals, which have both led to and are an outcome of the fragmentation of class coalition, the demand for social justice is faded into the background.

The AKP’s program too, aims to remove income distribution gap as the earlier Islamist parties. However, a functional market and competitive conditions are envisaged to bring about the sought after social justice. As mentioned before, this approach to social justice as a positive outcome of the free market had its roots in the WP’s giving up the Just Order project. The adoption of the free market principle prevented such parties from interfering with the economy to provide a just distribution of national wealth between social classes.

With the AKP, the meaning of social justice was transformed into the provision of equal opportunities for people to take up enterprise. Tuğal explains that social justice does not mean redistribution, but micro credits and support to small enterprises, and all this should be within the boundaries of a free market-oriented society.³⁴¹ For example, Erdoğan discussed in the Party’s group meetings, the necessity of reducing interest rates charged to artisans and farmers’ credits to reduce the income gap between wage earners.³⁴² There is no place for monetary transfers from the capitalist class to the lower classes in the alternative capitalist project’s social justice discourse. The share taken from the market is considered a product of “godly fate,” and this is

³³⁹Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, 275.

³⁴⁰AKP Party programme, accessed May 14, 2012, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/akparti/parti-programi>

³⁴¹Tuğal, *Pasif Devrim*, 76.

³⁴²Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, January 4, 2005, his speech at AKP Group Meeting, accessed May, 12, 2012. Available at http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/tbmmgrup/2005_01_04%20grup%20konusmasi.doc.

how social justice is redefined. To put it in the form of the “old” Islamist social justice discourse: The alternative capitalists have forgotten the deserved share of the poor in the wealth of the rich.

Conclusion

In line with global developments, the National Outlook parties too utilized corporatist economic projects until the WP's the Fourth Grand Congress in 1993, when free market principles were formally adopted. Mixed capitalisms had been preferred by Western countries in the 1960s and 1970s. Before the liberal turn in the early 1990s, the government's role in the economy had to be to prevent the capitalist system from harming the distribution of national wealth. An Islamist party had to furnish a “moral capitalism” which would not create inequality.

However, with the VP's party programme, the National Outlook parties started to adopt liberal capitalism. Both the AKP and the FP had alternative capitalist economic projects which supported class interests of entrepreneurs. This was the result of emerging Islamist bourgeoisie's changing political preference as well as rising neoliberalism throughout the world. The Kemalist-secularist state's party closures were another factor to consider by Islamist party founders in addressing populist demands and balancing or moderating them according to the similarly significant demands of the Islamist bourgeoisie.

As a consequence of these changes in the Islamist parties' economic projects, Islamists' social justice discourse was transformed. In the moral capitalism of “old” Islamist politics, social justice was a main aim. An Islamist party had to guarantee social justice and had to form an economic order which would be conforming to Islamic principles. However, in the middle of the 1990s, the National Outlook parties gave up their ‘old’ demands for changing the capitalist order in Turkey. Now, the Islamist parties believed social justice could emerge under the conditions of a functional free market. The aim of just income distribution in Turkey would not take an

important place in the alternative capitalist agenda of the AKP. Actually, “social justice” was given up in all but name when the time came for the VP's dissident faction to found the AKP. This left vacant political space for a left-of-center Islamist movement. The Islamic movement located on the left of National Outlook politics will be the topic of the fourth chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANTI-CAPITALIST MUSLIM DISCOURSE IN TURKEY

In this chapter, anti-capitalist Muslim politics in Turkey will be analysed. First, anti-capitalist tendencies in the history of Turkey's Islamist movement will be explained and leftist terminology of the movement will be evaluated. Then, neoliberalism's effect on the Islamist movement will be shown. A religious capitalist class has emerged from the newly rich Muslims in Turkey. This class's political discourse will be investigated as a source for neo-Islamism, which has gained power during and through the AKP government.

In the second part of the chapter, İhsan Eliaçık's concept of Social Islam and its different interpretation of this religion will be explained, and its relations with other Islamist traditions mentioned above, will be shown. Then, anti-capitalist Muslim politics will be analyzed, in the light of its adherents' activities and interviews carried out with anti-capitalist Muslims.

A Leftist Discourse of Radical Islamism

In the 1970s, the Islamist youth of the National Outlook became more radical in their ideology. In the mid-1970s, they began to differentiate Islamism as an independent ideology from the conservative right, and young Islamists redefined themselves as the "Muslim youth."³⁴³ Muslim youth started to gather around the Turkish National Student Union *Milli Türk Talebe Birliği* (MTTB).

The MTTB which was established in 1916 by the students of Dar-ül Fünun (İstanbul University) emerged as a nationalist and Kemalist organization.³⁴⁴ However, its political approach moved closer to an Islamic type of nationalism in the 1970s. Due to this ideological

³⁴³ Özlem Bayraktar Akkaya, *The National Outlook and Its Youth in the 1970s in Turkey: At the Periphery or Outside the Social Order?* (Saarbrücken: Lambert, 2010), 62.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 53.

shift, the MTTB and NSP (National Salvation Party) became “brother organizations.”³⁴⁵

However, members of the MTTB wanted to act independently from the party, so the Association of Raiders (*Akıncılar*) was established in 1975.³⁴⁶

The main cause of the shift from a Kemalist nationalism to an Islamic one seems to be the increased religiosity, and animosity against secularist power holders towards the end of the Cold War globally (see the introduction), and impact of translations from Urdu, Arab and Persian Islamist authors, especially from Mawdudi, Sayyid Qutb and Ali Shariati.³⁴⁷ The Muslim Brotherhood organization was genuinely admired by the Muslim Youth. Edip Yüksel, a Raider of the 1970s, said that “Sayyid Qutb ha[d] a strong political appeal, since he was hanged by the Arab nationalist leader Nasser in 1966.”³⁴⁸

The Raiders also adopted Qutb’s idea that all Muslim countries were a joint area of struggle for Islam because of their nationalist and secular governments. They consequently saw Turkey as a part of *Darül Harb* (the territory of war where Muslims must fight for Islam against non-Islamic governments) in the 1970s.³⁴⁹ The Islamic Republic of Pakistan whose leader was Abul A’la Mawdudi came to the forefront as an example of an implemented Islamic order. Islamism in Turkey as an independent ideology or a “third way” emerged and developed under the effects of these translation activities and the debates in the translated books on Islamism, capitalism and socialism in the 1970s. Due to these debates and the effect of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, some young Islamists began to think that Islamist ideology was much closer to socialism than to capitalism in the 1970s.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁵Ibid., 64.

³⁴⁶Ibid., 65.

³⁴⁷Yücel Bulut, “İslamcılık, Tercüme Faaliyetleri ve Yerlilik”, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasal Düşünce: İslamcılık* Vol: 6, vol. ed. Yasin Aktay. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004), 903.

³⁴⁸Akkaya, 63.

³⁴⁹Ibid., 77.

³⁵⁰Ibid., 84.

Table 1. The Important Works of Islamist Political Figures

Title of Work	Author	Year (of the original)	Year of Turkish Translation	Multiple Editions
<i>Islamic Socialism</i>	Mustafa Al-Sıbai	1959	1974	Yes
<i>Islam's Economic Order</i>	Abul Ala Al-Mawdudi	1962	1966	Yes
<i>Man, Islam, Marxism</i>	Ali Shariati	1976	1994	Yes
<i>On the Sociology of Islam</i>	Ali Shariati	1977	1980	Yes
<i>And once again Abu Dharr</i>	Ali Shariati	1955	1987	Yes
<i>The Battle Between Islam and Capitalism</i>	Sayyid Qutb	1950	1967	Yes
<i>Social Justice in Islam</i>	Sayyid Qutb	1949	1962	Yes
<i>Signposts On the Road or Milestones</i>	Sayyid Qutb	1964	1966	Yes

The Islamic Revolution in Iran deeply affected the radical Islamists. Indeed, it inspired belief in radical Islamists in a universal Islamic revolution. The slogan “yesterday Iran and Pakistan fell; now it is Turkey’s turn!” was used in meetings.³⁵¹ Ali Shariati and Ayetollah Ruhollah Khomeini were popular names of the revolution and Shariati’s books became best-sellers of the Islamist youth literature at the end of the 1970s.³⁵² According to Yüksel, due to Ali Shariati’s political influence, the radical Islamists adopted a leftist political terminology.³⁵³

The radical Islamists constructed their Islamic discourse by borrowing from Marxist terminology. They started to use the word *devrim* (revolution) instead of *inkılap* which is an

³⁵¹Ibid., 73-4.

³⁵²Çalışlar and Çelik, 58.

³⁵³Akkaya, 84.

Arabic synonym for it, after the assassination of Metin Yüksel, who was a Fatih Raider, by the Grey Wolves (*Bozkurtlar*), an idealist, ultra-nationalist group in 1979.³⁵⁴ The assassination also saw the break-up of the Raiders from nationalist political groups and coincided with a political invitation from the leftists for alliance “in their struggle against the oppressive regime” in Turkey.³⁵⁵ What the leftist-revolutionary movement meant by the term “revolution” was an “anti-western, anti-imperialist and anti-USA phenomenon” and this discourse was in line with Islamists’ political perception as well.³⁵⁶

However, this leftist discourse of radical Islamists could not only be evaluated as an alliance of political will with the left. Radical Islamists also aimed for a just society; they were aware of their common goal with the left and thus addressed the same mass, the subordinated classes. At the same time, the two were political rivals. The radical Islamists accused the leftists of being atheists and materialists, and claimed to be as the genuine representatives of the subordinated. Some radical Islamist groups also adopted the Marxist term “oligarchy” in defining the political regime in Turkey similar to the leftist THKP-C (Turkish People’s Liberation Party-Front).³⁵⁷ One radical Islamist group’s journal published before the 12 September 1980 military coup had a title, “Only we can overthrow the murderer oligarchy” on its cover page.³⁵⁸ Their very perception that Kemalist ideology was the oligarchy’s ideology prompted them to protest the Turkish national anthem in a meeting entitled “Liberation for Jerusalem” in Konya. Nurettin Şirin, a former WP member and journalist, said that the protest

³⁵⁴Ibid., 72.

³⁵⁵Ibid., 73.

³⁵⁶Gencay Şaylan, *Türkiye’de İslamcı Siyaset* (İstanbul: Verso, 1992), 171.

³⁵⁷Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, 298.

³⁵⁸Ibid.

was an action of the Raiders in Konya whereby they targeted Kemalism as the official ideology.³⁵⁹

The radical Islamist slogan “the sole remedy is Islam” was adopted from the leftist slogan “the sole remedy is revolution”³⁶⁰ as the solution for problems which stemmed from social inequality in class society. Last but not least, the THKO (Turkish People's Liberation Army) and THKP-C's actions were regarded favorably by young Muslims.³⁶¹

In short, in the 1970s radical Islamists appropriated some Marxist terms and political analysis. This went on in the 1980s and 1990s. *Girişim*, was an Islamist journal with the main aim of “the union of Islamist movement,”³⁶² was published between 1985 and 1990³⁶³ and was an important venue for the continuation of this exchange of ideological opinions. Mehmet Metiner, who was the journal's main editor, wrote an article that was entitled “Islamists and Socialists” for the leftist journal *Sosyalist Zemin* (Socialist Grassroots) and conceded that Islamists were wrong for attacking leftists who were also against US imperialism and who had protested it in the “Sixth fleet, Go Home” Protest in 1968.³⁶⁴ Metiner also wrote the article “The Meaning and Importance of Hılfu'l Fudül (the alliance of chaste people)” for *Girişim* in 1989.³⁶⁵ He described the alliance as an organization in line with the teaching of the Prophet, which consisted of people with different religious beliefs dedicated to preventing injustice. People, according to Metiner, could set an important example by coming together for justice.³⁶⁶

Girişim was the mouthpiece of a radical but non-revolutionary Islamist group. The Hezbollahi Muslims, on the other hand, were also radical, but they supported the Islamic

³⁵⁹Nurettin Şirin, interview by Adnan Öksüz, “İki Darbe Yaptıran Adam Algısından Rahatsızım,” *Milli Gazete*, accessed July 11, 2011 <http://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/-iki-darbe-yaptiran-adam-algisindan-rahatsizim-209074.htm>

³⁶⁰Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, 299.

³⁶¹Ibid. 298.

³⁶²Ibid. 149.

³⁶³Şaylan, 121.

³⁶⁴Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, 158.

³⁶⁵Ibid.

³⁶⁶Ibid., 158-159.

revolution in Iran and published journals *İstiklal*(Independence) (1985), *Şehadet*(Martyrdom)(1987), and *Tevhid*(The Union), (1990) in Turkey. Ruşen Çakır quotes passages from an article which was published in *Tevhid* which was established by Yılmaz Yalçınar in 1990. *Tevhid*'s authors saw the Islamic revolution as a solution to the problems of subordinated classes in Turkey and suggested it to the poor as a political alternative in order to overthrow the Kemalist oligarchy.³⁶⁷ They said that all exploited people were waiting for “a liberation program that was offered by the revolutionary Islamic movement,” and added “the Quran and Prophet’s hadiths had a revolutionary essence.”³⁶⁸ They also used the term *mustazaf*, which was a word in the Quran with a meaning akin to “exploited social classes,” and maintained accordingly that “they [would] attain the status that God promised” with the help of the Hezbollahi Muslims.³⁶⁹ This belief had similarities with the belief in Marxist analysis about the inevitability of revolution and communism.

Radical Islamism was influenced by leftist ideology in terms of its analysis of political and economic conditions. Anti-imperialism, revolution, and social justice were the main focus of these radical groups. This was a product of the amalgamation of Islamic revolution in Iran with the experiences of leftist groups in Turkey. Mainstream Islamism (National Outlook) in Turkey lacked the terminology to explain these issues theoretically. National Outlook had the aim of improving the capitalist economy by Islamic tools, but the radicals believed that this system had to be overthrown and a new system built.

Neoliberalism and Islamist Movement

After World War II, developmentalism and corporatist economic systems were hegemonic in the world. As a temporary compromise between social classes, welfare states

³⁶⁷Ibid., 174.

³⁶⁸Ibid., 175.

³⁶⁹Ibid.

emerged in Europe, whereas corporatist-national developmentalist governments filled most of the Third World. However, according to Çağlar Keyder, the 1980s was the period of economic recession. In this economic conjuncture, growth and expansion could not be sustained and the national developmentalist model lost its value and rallying power.³⁷⁰

Keyder writes that the post-1980 neoliberal period, “world capitalism, having surpassed and moved beyond national capitalisms, was no longer international, but global.”³⁷¹ States could no longer govern their national economies independently from market forces because large corporations had the ability to produce anywhere they wished by placing their capital in another country.³⁷² Capitalists could not maximize their profit when there was state intervention in the economy. In this new period, productive technological changes arose and state authority could not adapt to these ever-accelerating novelties.³⁷³ National developmentalism started to lose its effectiveness as a sustainable model, being gradually replaced by flexible production which owed its rise to decreasing communication and transportation costs.

Owing to this logic of flexible production, businesses became decentralized and the importance of small and medium enterprises increased.³⁷⁴ Especially in developing countries, Buğra writes, these enterprises started to turn towards “export-oriented production and opened up to the world market.”³⁷⁵ The most well-known example of this development was East Asian capitalism. Networks of reciprocity which is based on kinship, ethnicity, religion or neighborhood, took on a new significance in terms of what Buğra call “the flexibility of the wage relation.”³⁷⁶ Cheap labour in these developing countries increased competition in the world market. The success of the East Asian model of development especially came from these

³⁷⁰Keyder, 10. Translation by thesis author.

³⁷¹Ibid., 13.

³⁷²Ibid., 19.

³⁷³Ayşe Buğra, *Islam in Economic Organizations* (İstanbul: Tesev, 1999), 12.

³⁷⁴Ibid.

³⁷⁵Ibid.

³⁷⁶Ibid., 13.

traditional relations in Asian societies.³⁷⁷

In the 1980s Turkey it integrated with the global market economy. It was deeply affected from the globalization process. In these years, prime minister Turgut Özal began to implement neo-liberal economic policies, and gave up import substitution as a development strategy as well as state intervention in the economy.³⁷⁸ Many local and small and medium enterprises began to grow owing to their agility in adapting to international collaboration and making use of the free market.³⁷⁹ These enterprises were to be known as the “Anatolian Tigers” and which were owned by conservative and religious businessmen in Anatolia, benefited from the new export-oriented economic model.³⁸⁰ The Anatolian Tigers’ owners established MÜSİAD in 1990 as a class organization³⁸¹ that brought together Muslim businessmen. Its discourse was based on the disadvantage of being a Muslim businessman in Turkey and the advantage of this very identity “as a basis for the formation of networks of trust and solidarity.”³⁸²

Kombassan and Yimpaş holding companies which were members of the MÜSİAD were examples of Islamic networks utilized in business.³⁸³ MÜSİAD published brochures on being a Muslim capitalist; and businessmen from the organization were “busy searching Quranic verses compatible with capitalism.”³⁸⁴ It benefited from the debate between mainstream Islamic economics and aimed to construct the Muslim businessman as a homo islamicus “who behave[d] in accordance with the Islamic code of conduct,” as opposed to the always rational homo economicus.³⁸⁵ Due to their “unhidden closeness to the WP-led coalition government,”

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 12.

³⁷⁸ H. Emrah Beriş, “Türkiye’de 1980 Sonrası Devlet-Sermaye İlişkileri ve “Parçalı Burjuvazi”nin Oluşumu,” *Ekonomik Yaklaşımlar* 69, no.19 (2008): 34.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., 39-40.

³⁸⁰ Buğra, *Islam in Economic Organizations*, 15.

³⁸¹ Ibid., 20.

³⁸² Ibid., 55

³⁸³ Ibid., 33

³⁸⁴ Ibid., 27.

³⁸⁵ Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqi, *Muslim Economic Thinking: A Survey of Contemporary Literature*, (Glasgow, Britain: The Islamic Foundation, 1981), 18.

MÜSİAD's number of members rose between 1995 and 1997.³⁸⁶ This demonstrated that they wanted to be effective in the government's economic policy. Also, the WP's active foreign policy about trade and business relations with Islamic countries could be evaluated as an indicator of this close relationship.

Apart from this group of businessmen, some religious sects established holding companies with the support of Özal, who had ties with the İskenderpaşa branch of the Nakşibendi religious sect.³⁸⁷ The affiliation of the Özal family with the sect contributed to the establishment of Server Holding, which consisted of many companies from different sectors such as finance, trade, and oil.³⁸⁸ Enver Ören, who was the leader of the religious community of "İşıkçılar" founded İhlas Holding, the TGRT television channel and *Türkiye* newspaper.³⁸⁹

Özal also opened the way for the establishment of special Islamic financial institutions and interest-free banking system in Turkey.³⁹⁰ Buğra writes that, for example, "the special financial institution Asya Finans (founded in 1996) was known to be affiliated with Fethullah Gülen's [Nurcu religious] community."³⁹¹ The interest-free banks Al Baraka Türk and Faysal Finans emerged during the Özal period.³⁹² Shunning interest, these institutions were based on profit-sharing instead. Buğra explained one popular type of special financial activity:

Murabaha [takes place when] the lending institution [interest-free bank] buys the investment good desired by the customer and sells it to the latter by adding a sum said to represent the lender's share of the profit in the partnership, replacing the standard relationship between the banker and the customer.³⁹³

This was a most preferred economic method for supporting large capital imports, therefore it

³⁸⁶Buğra, *Islam in Economic Organizations*, 28.

³⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 17.

³⁸⁸*Ibid.*

³⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 18

³⁹⁰Çalışlar and Çelik, 93-4.

³⁹¹Buğra, *Islam in Economic Organizations*, 17.

³⁹²Çalışlar and Çelik, 94,

³⁹³Buğra, *Islam in Economic Organizations*, 30.

became a very popular type of partnership in Turkey.³⁹⁴ These institutions enabled some Muslim capitalists to collect religious people's money and deposit it in foreign banks "in the name of Islam."³⁹⁵ From 1994 onwards, these institutions became active in stock market and earned big sums in this way.³⁹⁶

With the growth of "Islamic capital" in Turkey, an Islamic bourgeois class emerged. The political success of the WP in the municipal elections of 1994 contributed to the rising economic wealth of Islamic businessmen.³⁹⁷ Erbakan's prime ministry clearly created opportunities for MÜSİAD's members.³⁹⁸ Due to the negative effects of the 28 February 1997 "postmodern" military coup, Islamic capital stopped its growth. However, the AKP's political success in 2002 reversed the unfavourable situation. Turkey's Islamic bourgeoisie supported the AKP and benefited from the latter's support in return.³⁹⁹

The Islamist discourse had always accused the secular and Kemalist governments of discriminating against religious people and preventing them from taking their fair share of the national wealth. Islamist parties had charged the post-1980 governments with enriching the westernized elite in big cities by state incentives. However, the westernized and state-funded bourgeoisie has not been the only capitalist class, especially since the 1990s. The Islamists also began to benefit from the national wealth thanks to the neoliberal policies and free market ideology which were popularized among the Islamist movement.

Neo-Islamist Discourse

³⁹⁴Faik Bulut, *Yeşil Sermaye Nereye?: Tarikat Sermayesi*, vol.2 (İstanbul: Su, 1999), 273.

³⁹⁵*Ibid.*, 266.

³⁹⁶*Ibid.*, 280.

³⁹⁷Buğra, *Islam in Economic Organizations*, 50-52.

³⁹⁸Buğra, *Islam in Economic Organizations*, 59.

³⁹⁹Beriş, 41-2.

Although radical Islamists were politically weak, they considerably influenced mainstream Islamist ideology in the 1980s.⁴⁰⁰ The “just order” project and quasi-leftist discourse of the WP also demonstrated this influence on an otherwise middle class-oriented party and movement. In the 1990s, the WP became politically stronger in Turkey, so, radical Islamists were more inclined to side with the WP.⁴⁰¹ Meanwhile, some ex-radical Islamists became neo-liberals. This neo-liberal Islamist ideology was Neo-Islamism.⁴⁰² For example, Erdoğan, the prime minister and leader of the AKP, was an old Raider.

The shift of some ex-radicals to neo-liberal neo-Islamism began with the WP’s success in municipality elections in 1994. For instance, some members of the İskenderpaşa community⁴⁰³ had established small companies; these companies were then merged with each other to form conglomerates.⁴⁰⁴ This period (1990s), saw the economic strengthening of other religious communities as well. Çavdar writes that, especially “Fethullah Gülen’s community and movement expanded speedily and turned into a political force in itself.”⁴⁰⁵ With the AKP’s coming to power, the Gülen movement gained the opportunity to leap forward, benefiting from the redistribution mechanism that enabled it to win small scale state tenders.⁴⁰⁶

Islamists benefited not only economically from the free market but also showed the “capability of speaking with the terminology of the market,”⁴⁰⁷ and of integrating capitalist terminology with Quranic verses. Not only passages from the Quran but also narratives about the Prophet’s life and hadiths were used in justifying the neo-liberal order. In this way, not an

⁴⁰⁰ Alev Erkilet, “1990’larda Türkiye’de Radikal İslamcılık,” *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce İslamcılık*, vol.6 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001): 693.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² “Neo-Islam”, *Post-Express* 127, (April 2007), 21.

⁴⁰³ A religious community that is a part of the larger Nakshibendi order.

⁴⁰⁴ Ayşe Çavdar, “Kemalist Boşgösterene Dönüş”, *Post-Express* 127, April 2007, 50.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

Islamic market but “an Islam of the market” emerged.⁴⁰⁸ Some books were published about the market and the Quranic approach to it. For instance, MÜSİAD’s book *Homo-Islamicus*⁴⁰⁹ was about the principles of being a global Muslim businessman. Erol Yazar, a former leader of MÜSİAD, said that this book asserted that a Muslim businessman was not free to do as he pleased in earning profit and spending his wealth.⁴¹⁰

Erol Yazar described being a Muslim businessman and accumulating wealth as a holy duty for Muslims. He said that the Prophet had not been poor, that’s why he could distribute his property to the poor.⁴¹¹ He also added that the Prophet’s modest life was only his preference, not an Islamic rule.⁴¹² In his words, the Islamic bourgeoisie’s wealth was to be spent “in order to gain the blessing of God.”⁴¹³ Businessmen “could spend their wealth for themselves” i.e. luxuries, after they [had given] 2.5 percent of their property as *zakat* (Islamic income tax).⁴¹⁴ However, they had to have *halal* (not forbidden by Islam) earning and spend it for *halal* goods and services; their “wealth [was] a test for these Muslims.”⁴¹⁵ Erol Yazar did not see a problem if a Muslim’s wealth was reflected in his life-style and clothes. He accepted that Muslim capitalists

⁴⁰⁸Ibid., 49.

⁴⁰⁹İş Hayatında İslam İnsanı (Homo Islamicus), compiled by Hüner Şencan. *Müsiad* Araştırma Raporları: December 9, 1994.

⁴¹⁰“Bir lokma Bir Hırka Yutturulmuş Zokadır,” *Haber 7*, last modified September 27, 2009, accessed in August 11, 2012 <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20090927/Bir-lokma-bir-hirka-yutturulmus-zokadir.php>

⁴¹¹Medya Faresi News, “Bir lokma Bir Hırka Yutturulmuş Zokadır”, accessed in August 11, 2012, <http://www.medyafaresi.com/haber/29907/yasam-bir-hirka-bir-lokma-yutturulmus-zokadir-erol-yarardan-bombalar.html>

⁴¹²Ibid.

⁴¹³Yeni Şafak Newspaper, “Dünya serveti Müslümanların elinde olsa 2-3 sene içerisinde fakir kalmaz”, last modified May 18, 2012, accessed in December 17, 2012 <http://yenisafak.com.tr/YurtHaberler/?t=18.05.2012&i=383968>.

⁴¹⁴Öteki Mahalle News, “Erol Yazar, ‘İslami burjuva’nın kodlarını açıkladı”, accessed in August 11, 2012. <http://www.otekimahalle.com/erol-yazar-islami-burjuvanin-kodlarini-acikladi/>

⁴¹⁵<http://www.musiad.org.tr/sube/detayHaber.aspx?id=5579&subeID=18>, accessed in August 11, 2012.

could live high in luxury and differently from other Muslims.⁴¹⁶ His views signified the emergence of an Islamic bourgeoisie in Turkey after 1990.

Şennur Özdemir, a sociologist, said that poor and rich Muslims shared a common religious habitus, the same Islamic life style and values, therefore the wealth of the Muslim rich did not constitute a problem for Muslim workers based on social class. Yasin Durak, another sociologist, asserted echoing Erol Yazar that, just as wealth was a test for the Muslim rich, poverty was a test for the Muslim poor. According to neo-liberal Islamist ideologues such as Yazar, rich Muslims worked hard and prayed, were loved by God in return, and were rewarded with wealth.⁴¹⁷

However, the rhetoric of MÜSİAD's ideologues did not match the hard realities of their real-life choices. The latter separated their "living spaces" from the poor. They chose luxurious hotels for the *iftar* meals, which signified the end of the daily fast during Ramadan. This was ironic not least because fasting during the holy month was actually supposed to make one empathize with the poor's suffering, their hunger. The price of a menu in such hotels was nearly half of a worker's monthly minimum wage.⁴¹⁸ A mosque built in Ataşehir in İstanbul with funding from the AKP strangely has a VIP room.⁴¹⁹ Another mosque built in Ankara has also a VIP room for state protocol. This mosque is specially reserved for funeral ceremonies of important people, again contrary to traditional Islamic practice.⁴²⁰ Normally, mosques are common spaces for all Muslims where they stood equally before God, irrespective of social

⁴¹⁶Medya Faresi News, "Bir lokma Bir Hırka Yutturulmuş Zokadır", last modified September 27, 2009, accessed in August 11, 2012 <http://www.medyafaresi.com/haber/29907/yasam-bir-hirka-bir-lokma-yutturulmus-zokadir-erol-yarardan-bombalar.html>

⁴¹⁷Durak, 41.

⁴¹⁸Emre Kaya(a member of Labour and Justice Platform), interview by the thesis author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 11 July 2012.

⁴¹⁹Hürriyet, Ahmet Hakan, "Mimari Geleneksel, Avizeler Postmodern, Şadırvan Devrimci", July 24, 2012. Accessed in August 22, 2012. Available at <http://cep.hurriyet.com.tr/ArticleDetail.aspx?ArticleID=331189&AuthorID=13>,

⁴²⁰Haber 7, "Başkente 15 Bin Kişilik VIP Cami", last modified August 14, 2008, accessed in August 22, 2012. Available at <http://www.haber7.com/haber/20080814/Baskente15-bin-kisilik-VIP-cami.php>

status, nation or any other kind of difference. This VIP room was a signifier of the increasing gap between social classes. It stands in glaring contrast to the religious habitus mentioned by Yarar and other neo-liberal Islamist ideologues such as Cengiz Kallek.

Another example of MÜSİAD's ideology was the neo-Islamic evocation of the market place of Medina. The Prophet's Islamic state, it turned out, had a market which Muslims could take as an ideal market of Islam, a modern version of which could be implemented today. A theologian, Cengiz Kallek, analyzed the Medina Market in a book which was published in 1992 (two years after MÜSİAD's founding) and distilled some economic principles from the narratives of some ancient theologians whose accounts were accepted as true by Islamic authorities. Kallek's study can be evaluated as a justification of free market principles in terms of neo-Islamism. Kallek asserted that the Prophet, while establishing the Medina Market, had ordered that sellers would not pay any tax for places in the market. The Prophet, according to Kallek, knew that his market would be popular among the sellers because the tax free income would mean much more profit. But, being a successful merchant, the Prophet also knew that the prices would eventually decrease because competition among sellers would make them reflect their decreased costs in the prices of goods sold.⁴²¹

Kallek asserted that state interference in prices was not accepted in the Prophet's market, and that this intervention would give rise to black markets.⁴²² All these assertions were based on liberal economic principles. Kallek justified his ideal-type Islamic market by the hadith "the ceiling price is determined by God."⁴²³ Reminiscent of the invisible hand of Adam Smith, this was proof for Kallek that state intervention in the market was not acceptable in Islam. However, sellers' collusion, speculative and monopolistic activities were also interventions in the market where actually only God had a free hand to interfere. By such disrespectful activities sellers were

⁴²¹Cengiz Kallek, *Hız. Peygamber Döneminde Devlet ve Piyasa* (İstanbul: Bilim ve Sanat Vakfı, 1991), 35.

⁴²²*Ibid.*, 90.

⁴²³*Ibid.*

thus infringing upon the rights of God.⁴²⁴ Additionally, Kallek interpreted the Prophet's hadith "scarcity and abundance were created by God only" as the Prophet's wish to emphasize scarcity in the market as the only reason for rising prices. Therefore, the only thing that could be done to decrease prices was to pray to God for creating abundance.⁴²⁵ Shortly, Kallek interpreted that in an Islamic market, direct state interventions in economy came together with danger of "excessive profit or black markets."⁴²⁶

Kallek and MÜSİAD's reflections about Islamic markets and the morality of Muslim businessmen are good examples of how neo-Islamist Muslim businessmen integrated their beliefs in God and free markets in their minds, and justified this integrative thought as political ideology.

The Opposition to Neo-Islamist Discourse: The "Social Islam" of İhsan Eliaçık

İhsan Eliaçık (born 1961), a theologian who adopted the reinterpretation of the Quran by Ali Shariati, which focused on the contrast between the rich and poor. He studied in the Department of Theology at Erciyes University in Kayseri for five years (1985-90) but left in 1990, without completing his undergraduate degree, and took up writing.⁴²⁷ He has studied Islam and the Quran for more than thirty years. In the 1990s, he analyzed revolutionary facets and modern interpretations of Islam. His views can be observed in his books *Devrimci İslam* (Revolutionary Islam), which was published in 1992, and *İslam'ın Yenilikçileri* (Islam's reformists), which was published in 2001. In a recent interview, he defined his stance as follows: "For the last five-six years, with the coming to power of the conservatives [AKP], we have

⁴²⁴Ibid.

⁴²⁵Ibid., 91.

⁴²⁶Ibid., 94.

⁴²⁷İhsan Eliaçık's site, "Özgeçmiş", accessed in November 20, 2012. Available at <http://www.ihsaneliacik.com/p/ozgecmis.html>

started to criticize them and have the opposite political stance. In fact, we are in the same camp.[We are both Muslims.] In the last period, we have put much more [critical] emphasis on capitalism, [I am] just a Muslim, [but] an anti-capitalist Muslim.”⁴²⁸

Through the Quran, God warned humanity against unjust conditions in society. Therefore, Eliaçık called Social Islam as a political understanding of the role of Islam in society. He says the purpose of his call was “to remake a sense of the emphases on social justice in the Quran, in this age.”⁴²⁹ Social Islam is an interpretation of the Quran in the light of modern conditions; it is a modern and novel (*ijtihadi*) interpretation. Eliaçık is also influenced by Sayyid Qutb’s approach of *Hareketu’l Fıkıh* (dynamic shariat). Dynamic shariat is a product of the dynamism of society and also the state, therefore a “living shariat.”⁴³⁰

Eliaçık also benefits from Mahmud Mohammed Taha, who was a Muslim intellectual and theologian in Sudan who was sentenced to death by the Sudanese government in 1985. Taha had divided the Quran’s verses between “the verses of Mecca and Medina.” He called the verses of Mecca “the soul” of Islam. The Medina verses, on the other hand, were regarded as helper measures for the period of transition to the real Islamic order. The Medina verses were inspired after the establishment of the city-state and gave the practical rules for the day to day management of the Islamic state. They were valid for the first years of Mohammed's rule of Medina.⁴³¹ However, the Mecca verses were the actual manifesto of the Islamic revolution and demonstrated the ultimate goal as a second and deep message of the Quran. The Islamic revolution needed to continue and constantly be redeveloped. Eliaçık adopts Taha's classification of the Quran's verses, and found the social soul of Islam also in the Mecca verses.

⁴²⁸İhsan Eliaçık’ site, “Murat Kantekin’s interview with İhsan Eliaçık”, *Yeni Ulus Gazetesi*, accessed in November 9, 2012. Available at <http://www.ihsaneliacik.com/2012/11/soylesi-yeni-ulus.html#more>

⁴²⁹İhsan Eliaçık, interview by the thesis author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, July 11, 2012.

⁴³⁰İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları* (İstanbul: İnşa, 2011), 95.

⁴³¹Esra Duru, “Sudanlı Mahmud Muhammed Taha,” *Doğudan* 5 (May-June 2008), 169.

Eliaçık asserts that the main emphasis in the Quran is on social justice and the necessity of challenging the hegemony of the rich in society. He especially warns that the Quran warns against the owners of property and power in the city (Mecca).⁴³² The rich are described with the concept of *tuğyan* (people deluded by their wealth).⁴³³ In the *Maun* (Alms) sura of the Quran, God said that prayers of the rich who despised orphans and did not feed the poor were empty fanciness.⁴³⁴ Eliaçık interprets the verse “you are preferring the life in the world” as “you are inclined to hoard property in the world” and that by the word “you”, the Quran addressed the hoarders of wealth and power. The people who would be saved were those who were cleansed. To be cleansed means “to give from his property in the integrity of the Quran.”⁴³⁵ Also, he emphasizes that the Quran disapproved of people who liked property, especially those who liked it the more they accumulated it.⁴³⁶ The biggest sin, according to Eliaçık’s interpretation, was living in luxury while other people were poor and starving.⁴³⁷

In contrast to the neo-Islamist approach, Social Islam regards *kenz* (the hoarding of wealth) as sin and saw wealth as something to be shared with people. The process of sharing is called *infak*. According to Eliaçık’s interpretation, *halal* wealth was a contradiction in terms because the meaning of being rich was to be an possessor of much more property than one needed.⁴³⁸ The Quran simply orders that one share the property that is much more than one needs.⁴³⁹

According to Eliaçık, the Quran evaluates the socio-economic conditions of the Arabs in Mecca. He asserts that in the first twenty-two suras (chronologically) of the Quran, not idolatry

⁴³²İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam: Dinin direği paylaşımıdır* (İstanbul: Destek, 2011), 10.

⁴³³*Ibid.*

⁴³⁴*Ibid.*, 12.

⁴³⁵*Ibid.*, 15.

⁴³⁶*Ibid.*, 16.

⁴³⁷*Ibid.*, 28

⁴³⁸*Ibid.*, 46.

⁴³⁹Bakara (Buffalo) Sura of the Quran, verse 219, cited in İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, (İstanbul: İnşa, 2011), 91.

but rather Mecca's nine plutocrats are criticized and that they are accused of demanding much more wealth than God has given them.⁴⁴⁰ This situation is emphasized with the verse: "Down with the hegemony of Ebu Leheb, down with him! His wealth and hegemony will not save him."⁴⁴¹ According to the Quran, sin of the Mecca plutocrats was their hegemonic, vast wealth, and their predilection for constant accumulation. The inherent logic of the Quran is thus antagonistic with the capitalist criterion of demanding maximum profit.

Eliaçık especially focuses on the Quranic parables about the rich in order to demonstrate the sin of *kenz*. He states, for example, that the word "pharaoh" appears in the Quran seventy-four times⁴⁴² and this figure symbolizes a person who has become a hegemon owing to his wealth. Eliaçık says that the Pharaoh was a sinner because he refuted the rule "all possession belongs to God" and claimed instead "the wealth of Egypt belongs to me."⁴⁴³ Moreover, the Pharaoh divided the people into classes and oppressed especially one class with his wealth and power.⁴⁴⁴ The interpretation of this parable for the modern times is that anyone who serves in protecting the gap between the rich and poor is akin to the pharaoh.

According to Eliaçık, an exemplary figure, in the Quran is Qaroun, who is destroyed together with the Pharaoh in the Kasas sura of the Quran. Qaroun is a very rich person and seems to be an elite of the Pharaoh's hegemonic order. He says that he has earned his wealth with his intelligence and special abilities. However, Qaroun neglects to give a definite amount of his wealth for charity, just like God gave to Qaroun from His own wealth.⁴⁴⁵ Eliaçık says that in the Tevbe sura of the Quran, *kenz* is described as fire and its possessors will be branded by their super-heated accumulation.⁴⁴⁶ For modern times, Eliaçık interprets the possessor of *kenz* as one

⁴⁴⁰İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 38.

⁴⁴¹Leheb Sura of the Quran, verses 1-2, in İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 52.

⁴⁴²İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam*, 206.

⁴⁴³*Ibid.*, 207.

⁴⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 210.

⁴⁴⁵Kasas (Anecdote) Sura of the Quran, verse 77, cited in İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 266.

⁴⁴⁶Tevbe (Repentance) Sura of the Quran, verse 34, cited in İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 267.

who has accumulated much more property, money or immovables than he needs. It is all the surplus income except what is necessary for subsistence.⁴⁴⁷ According to Eliaçık's interpretation, wealth can only come to him from the subordinated, otherwise, he will not become rich.⁴⁴⁸ *Zakat* (income tax) is not the only duty for Muslims because the gap between classes will not be removed only by this tax, but with the just distribution of wealth as a main aim of the Quran. Therefore *infak* or giving away the surplus income gains importance as the main duty of Muslims.

Infak is thus a way of maintaining social justice and minimizing the income gap between classes in society. Possessing wealth is a burden for Muslims; wealth has to be shared with the lower classes. The Leyl sura of the Quran states, "the one who gives from his property for redemption will be saved."⁴⁴⁹ Eliaçık, when focusing on the Mecca verses, maintains that although some rich people in Mecca walk around the Kaaba and pray according to the Islamic rituals, they did not give to the poor, so their prayers are rejected by God.⁴⁵⁰ He invokes verses from the Maun sura of the Quran to point out to the hypocrisy in following rituals as opposed to practices of genuine faith. In these verses, those who perform the ritual prayers of Islam (*namaz*) are criticized and it is asserted that their prayers were in vain because they were against even the smallest poor relief.⁴⁵¹ Eliaçık interprets the smallest poor relief as the level of societal sharing which will enable the poorest people to reach at least subsistence level.⁴⁵² This is intervention in the economy for social justice. But any relief as a social policy is antagonistic with the spirit of liberal capitalism, Eliaçık asserts.⁴⁵³ He thus connects the current neo-Islamists with the ritualistic rich of the Mohammad's Mecca.

⁴⁴⁷İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 54.

⁴⁴⁸İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam*, 72.

⁴⁴⁹Leyl (Night) Sura of the Quran, verse 18, cited in İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 67.

⁴⁵⁰İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam*, 12.

⁴⁵¹İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 305.

⁴⁵²*Ibid.*

⁴⁵³*Ibid.*

Another signifier of the importance of *infak* (sharing) is found in the first parable of the Quran. In the parable “owners of the garden,” the story is told of people who get up very early in the morning and go to the garden to harvest its produce before the poor have a chance to do so. Then they see that it has been destroyed by God. Eliaçık says that the owners’ unwillingness to share the garden’s produce with the poor caused the calamity.⁴⁵⁴

Another favorite Eliaçık parable in the Quran is on the observance of the Sabbath, which also criticizes those who lust for worldly possessions, and are never content.⁴⁵⁵ Eliaçık benefits from the interpretation of the social psychologist Erich Fromm and accepts the meaning of Sabbath as the day for not accumulating any possessions and sharing one’s property and belongings by doing *infak*.⁴⁵⁶ According to Eliaçık, this prohibition, dating from the times of Judaism, was augmented by Islam’s *infak*, which makes it a duty in perpetuity.⁴⁵⁷

According to Eliaçık’s interpretation, possession is a fiduciary relationship in Islam because, all possessions can belong to God only. People are only a means making use of property. Private ownership is not found in Islam because, as Eliaçık writes, “the ownership was not a right, but a duty.”⁴⁵⁸ So *infak* does not actually mean people giving away their own property or money to others, but giving the fiduciary capacity to those who needs them. *Infak* thus meant to recognize the hegemony of God over the world. Believing in God and doing *infak* are considered equal in the Quran, according to Eliaçık’s interpretation.⁴⁵⁹ In the Hadid sura of the Quran, it was not for nothing that people, after being told to engage in *infak*, are confronted with the sentence: “Why don’t you believe in God?, [...] Why don’t you do *infak* for God’s

⁴⁵⁴İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 208.

⁴⁵⁵Araf (Place of purification) Sura of the Quran, verses 166-169, cited in İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam*, 86.

⁴⁵⁶İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam*, 86.

⁴⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 87.

⁴⁵⁸Eliaçık, 44.

⁴⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 39.

sake?” “Will the skies and the earth belong to the other one from God?”⁴⁶⁰ *Infak* was thus a sign of believing in God, in Islam.

According to Islam, individuals thus had a kind of imperfect ownership right. Monopolized wealth which was not shared was regarded as a misappropriation, according to Eliaçık.⁴⁶¹ Moreover, misappropriation was the sign of a faction. The definition of which in the Quran is those who monopolize wealth and refuse to do *infak* and evade *jihad* (fighting for God’s sake).⁴⁶² The most important quality of a factious person is his being a Muslim, yet not exactly a whole-hearted and faithful Muslim because of the refusal to change the perspective towards ownership and property.⁴⁶³ A factious person, though he might be a Muslim, does not want to be equal with others, does not give to them from his property.⁴⁶⁴ In fact, he thus refuses that all wealth belongs to God.

On the other hand, Eliaçık says that *zakat* (a fortieth of one’s property to be given to the poor) was actually a minimum rate set as base in “ortodox (constant) shariat.”⁴⁶⁵ Muslims who give only the fortieth of their wealth and keep the rest could be regarded as factious people, but Muslims who share all or most of their possessions are faithful Muslims.⁴⁶⁶ Rich Muslims are responsible for the poverty of others in society according to this Quranic interpretation. They prevent social justice from taking root in society.

Eliaçık’s social justice interpretation is also related to the concept of equality among people. His reference from the Quran is: “God created eternal mountains on the ground. He rendered them fecund. There, for four seasons, sources of power were given to those in need in

⁴⁶⁰ Hadid (Iron) Sura of the Quran, verses 7-10, cited in İhsan Eliaçık, “Sosyal İslam”, 39.

⁴⁶¹ Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam*, 47.

⁴⁶² İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 109.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ Nahl (Honeybee) Sura of the Quran, verse 71, cited in İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam*, 74.

⁴⁶⁵ İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 79.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

order to benefit them equally.”⁴⁶⁷ So Eliaçık asserts that in the Quran, equality in terms of the livelihood of everyone is emphasised.⁴⁶⁸ In the Nahl sura of the Quran, rich people who does not give to the poor their surplus wealth and thus avoid becoming equal with them, are evaluated as if they deny the benediction of God.⁴⁶⁹

As an anti-capitalist Muslim, Eliaçık says: “We stand by the poor until the rich and poor become equal. We understand social justice as the removal of the gap between the rich and poor.”⁴⁷⁰ He says that Islamists who assert that there is no concept of “equality” but only of justice in the Quran try to justify the current economic inequalities by using the rhetoric of justice.⁴⁷¹ He asserts that especially after the AKP’s coming to power in Turkey, “religious people who try to become rich”⁴⁷² have emerged. The aim of these Islamists was that while some Muslims become rich the rest will remain poor.⁴⁷³ He also criticizes the aforementioned approach of Erol Yazar regarding a Muslim’s right to spend his wealth freely after he gives his *zakat* and accuses the latter of living in luxury.⁴⁷⁴ Eliaçık is of the opinion that the neo-Islamists who adopt liberal capitalism are exploiting the working class together with the secular bourgeoisie. Islam, however, is against every kind of exploitation and inequality, while neither the neo-Islamist discourse, nor its policies are genuinely Islamic.

“All wealth belongs to God” and “wealth must not be accumulated by among the rich” verses in the Quran demonstrate that Islam is incompatible with capitalism. Islamic rules about social justice, on the other hand, are similar to socialism. Yet, according to Eliaçık, “this is not the socialism of Marx, Lenin, Stalin or Mao.”⁴⁷⁵ He said: “[Islam’s] sharing aspect is even

⁴⁶⁷Fussilet (explained in detail) Sura of the Quran, verse 10, cited in İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam*, 177.

⁴⁶⁸İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam*, 177.

⁴⁶⁹*Ibid.*, 182.

⁴⁷⁰İhsan Eliaçık, interview by the thesis author.

⁴⁷¹İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 269.

⁴⁷²İhsan Eliaçık, interview by the thesis author.

⁴⁷³İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları*, 272.

⁴⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 17-19.

⁴⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 206.

stronger. If [Islamic law] could be implemented, they would say that it is not unlike socialism.”⁴⁷⁶

“Social Islam” as an Islamic Liberation Theology

İhsan Eliaçık’s style of deriving his Social Islam from the Quran is very similar to the liberation theologians’ interpretation of the Bible. This similarity may give the opportunity of evaluating social Islam as an Islamic liberation theology, notwithstanding the gap of some twenty years in between.

First, Eliaçık’s interpretation emerged as a local socialistic model from the Quran. This was in a way similar with the liberation theology’s Latin American local socialism. Eliaçık’s socialistic model also means that his Social Islam does not exclude a priori any western concepts from Islamic thought and is quite open to benefiting from them.

Secondly, in contrast to the Islamic revivalists by whom Eliaçık was inspired, Social Islam does not take the Islamic state as an ultimate goal. Its main aim is to stand by the working class in its class struggle against the capitalists, and the maintenance of social justice. Economic inequality is given much more importance than people’s religiosity. The real problem is not that Islamic Sharia laws can not be implemented. It is, rather, the removal of poverty. An Islamic political tool is chosen as the means to this end. Both liberation theology in Latin America and Social Islam put the main focus on poverty and the aim of social justice.

Another point which makes Social Islam similar to Islamic liberation theology is the debt owed to dependency theory. Social Islam incorporates the belief that the cause of the poor’s existence is the rich. When Eliaçık writes, “there is no such thing as *halal* wealth,” this means

⁴⁷⁶İhsan Eliaçık, interview by the thesis author.

that nobody can become rich without appropriating others' just shares in society.⁴⁷⁷ The rich have to share with the poor because the latter have a considerable share in the former's wealth. This logic makes it problematic to become wealthy. Thus, Eliaçık's interpretation of the Quran as regards to social classes seems to have a Marxist background.

Contempt for accumulation, profit and self-enrichment are a signifier of Social Islam's anti-capitalism. There is no carefully laid-out blueprint, but the aim is "to make the rich and poor meet in the middle class,"⁴⁷⁸ through wealth re-distribution from the rich to the poor, whereby the latter would strengthen their economic positions. In the absence of a plan, its and revolution-preventing strategies, it differs from Orthodox Marxism.

This Islamic liberation theology, which could as well be a "left theology," regards hegemonic interpretations of the Quran as too static. These hegemonic interpretations closed the option of *ijtihad* (the making of a decision in Islam based on personal effort, independently of any school) in the Umayyad period. However, it was *ijtihad* that was necessary when coping with modern life. The static Islamic interpretation which is a synthesis of Imam Al-Ghazali's, Al Shafi'i's and Eshari's works is represented by Sunni Islam,⁴⁷⁹ which Özdoğan describes as "an ultra-conservative interpretation of Islam."⁴⁸⁰ Awareness of social classes and rereading the Quran from the perspective of the subordinated could bring about a new interpretation of the Quran. Therefore, Social Islam is not a deviation from Islam.

Social Islam, which can be considered an Islamic liberation theology, thus emerged as a counterweight to the neo-Islamist discourse. It influenced some of those Islamists who were disturbed by the neoliberal political agenda of the AKP and its results. These organized and started supporting the working class. They went on strikes, organized meetings and stood by the poor and workers in their resistance to the government and capitalists. The Labor and Justice

⁴⁷⁷İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam*, 46.

⁴⁷⁸İhsan Eliaçık, interview by the thesis author.

⁴⁷⁹İlhami Güler, *Özgürlükçü Teoloji Yazıları* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu, 2004), 110.

⁴⁸⁰Kazım Özdoğan, "Hangi 'İslam' Neden 'Sol İlahiyat'," *Birikim* 256, November 2010, 35.

Platform (*Emek ve Adalet Platformu*), Free Initiative (*Özgür Açılım*), Desirable Steps (*Makbul Adımlar*), Free Declaration Movement (*Hür Beyan Hareketi*), Anti-capitalist Muslims (*Anti-Kapitalist Müslümanlar*), Revolutionary Muslims (*Devrimci Müslümanlar*) and TOKAD⁴⁸¹ are these small anti-capitalist Muslim groups.

Not only these Muslim groups, but also some Islamist politicians who separated from Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*) have been influenced by Eliaçık's approach to Islam. They chose to oppose the AKP by refusing its neo-liberal policy and what they claim is the unjust enrichment of its major supporters during the last decade. The Has Party was thus established in 2010 and its programme put social justice before rapid development. The party seek to bring solutions to the condition and problems of the working class, and supports the workers' resistance. However, it does not adopt a socialistic project but aims for a third way between capitalism and socialism like the past National Outlook parties. This political initiative, as observed below, failed.

The HAS Party: A Failed Islamist Party

The Has Party was established on 1 November 2010. Its leader, Numan Kurtulmuş, was the former president (October 2008-October 2010) of the Felicity Party, which itself was the last political party founded by the National Outlook's Necmettin Erbakan. When Numan Kurtulmuş was chosen as the leader of the party, Erbakan's supporters created trouble during the general assembly by occupying the seat of party leader.⁴⁸² After these eventful scenes, Numan Kurtulmuş resigned from the presidency and established a new party with Mehmet Bekaroğlu

⁴⁸¹The Association of Societal Solidarity, Culture, Education and Social Research (Toplumsal Dayanışma Kültür Eğitim ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Derneği).

⁴⁸²Haber Vitriini News, "Saadet Partisi Karıştı: Olaylı Kongreden Görüntüler", accessed in December 17, 2012. Available at <http://www.habervitrini.com/haber/saadet-partisi-karisti-iste-olayli-kongreden-goruntuler-472791/>

and other colleagues who had likewise resigned from the Felicity Party, including some leftists such as Zeki Kılıçaslan, Cem Somel and a theologian, İlhami Güler, who wrote about liberation theology.

Before the establishment of the HAS Party, core ideas of the future party had emerged in an initiative of Mehmet Bekaroğlu, who later become vice president (November 2010-November 2012) of the party. This initiative was the East Conference (*Doğu Konferansı*). Leftists and Islamists came together for the first time in this conference in 2005 as a result of which the East Conference Association (*Doğu Konferansı Derneği*) was established. The association had a journal, of considerable influence, whose owner was Mehmet Bekaroğlu, and its chief editor, Cem Somel. The journal focused on the political and economic problems of Turkey and the Middle East, and problematized imperialism, capitalism and neo-liberalism. It opposed neo-liberalism in both Turkey and the world and criticized the “inclinations of eurocentrism and orientalism in Turkish society.”⁴⁸³ The abstracts of the Turkish essays were provided also in English and Arabic.

This journal was established in 2007 with the support of some leftist and Islamist intellectuals such as Fikret Başkaya, Haluk Gerger, Aydın Çubukçu and İlhami Güler. Islam was interpreted as a means of resistance to the unjust order, and people such as Hasan Hanafi, an Islamic leftist who interpreted Islam similarly, were invited to contribute to the journal,. The class perspective can be observed easily in the general political attitude of the journal. It was this intellectual background and experience that formed the political agenda of the Has Party.

The Has Party’s establishment, however, was not itself caused by novel intellectual ideas, but was a result of practical governance problems in the Felicity Party. Mehmet Bekaroğlu, who had left the party, said: “In the Felicity Party, policy-making was not be possible, it was not an effective tool,” and added, “Muslims have to improve an adverse [situation or order] with their

⁴⁸³Doğudan Journal, “Sıfırıncı Sayı,” accessed in September 9, 2012. Available at <http://dogudandergisi.blogspot.com/2008/04/dogudan-sfrnc-say.html>

own efforts. If they cannot, they must stop indulging in the wrong, so the Has Party was established.”⁴⁸⁴ Bekaroğlu also emphasized the opposition to AKP’s neo-liberal policies and the latter’s using property and possession as a tool for privilege: “They are turning into the Pharaoh and Qaroun [in the Quran]. The [the unjust situation in Turkey] was not in the cards. To give something to the low[er classes] with the rhetoric of benevolence was not justice but to use privilege.”⁴⁸⁵

Numan Kurtulmuş also accused the AKP of turning into the Quranic Pharaoh, Qaroun and *belam*. (*Belam* was a class of religious functionaries who benefited from their positions according to the Quran, much like the Pharisees of the New Testament.) He said that:

If we come to power, we will never do the following three things. We will not turn into the Pharaoh. The Pharaoh represents a tyrant who oppressed the people with his political power and cruelty. We will not turn into Qaroun. Qaroun represents enrichment by using the resources of one’s nation. And we will not become *belam*. *Belam* represents the group who play politics with religion.⁴⁸⁶

The Has Party criticized the AKP’s neo-liberalism while simultaneously being a supporter of the free market economy. That’s why in its program it is asserted that struggle against poverty must not desert “market dynamics and economic conjuncture.”⁴⁸⁷ The suggested economic system was “a market economy in which morally well-equipped social policies would be implemented. [...] When the principles of justice and economic effectiveness contradict, the preference of the government must be pro-justice.”⁴⁸⁸ Social justice was thus regarded as the main aim in the party program, instead of the usual capitalist development.

⁴⁸⁴ Mehmet Bekaroğlu, interview by the thesis author, İstanbul, Turkey, July 9, 2012.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁶ Samanyolu Haber, “Kılıçdaroğlu’nun Yerinde Olsaydım”, last modified September 21, 2010, accessed in September 10, 2012. Available at <http://www.samanyoluhaber.com/politika/Kilicdaroglu-nun-yerinde-olsaydim/454064/>

⁴⁸⁷ “Parti Programı”, accessed September 10, 2012. <http://www.hasparti.org.tr/page.aspx?key=program>

⁴⁸⁸ “Numan Kurtulmuş: Ak Parti Sistemi Demokratikleştirmekle Değil Ahmet ile Mehmet’in Yerini Değiştirmekle İlgilendi.”, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/638244-ak-parti-sistemi-demokratiklestirmekle-degil-ahmet-ile-mehmetin-yerini-degistirmekle-ilgilendi>, last modified June 9, 2012, accessed in 10.09.2012.

The party had also a class perspective. It was said by Kurtulmuş that when labor and capital inevitably clashed in the market, it must be with labor, which was usually the weaker party, the state should side.⁴⁸⁹ Kurtulmuş also advocated, “if it [was] necessary, the state [should] interfere in the economy in the name of the people, whom he regarded as weak and in the need of protection.”⁴⁹⁰ Zeki Kılıçaslan too, who was a member of Has Party’s founding committee, asserted that “in economic and social order, public interest [was] key, [...] the [pursuit of] company profits must not be to the detriment of society.”⁴⁹¹ For rendering social justice, the necessity of state intervention was accepted by the party.

The party program accepted unevenness of capitalism as given and suggested that everybody “ha[d] to participate in public financial responsibilities according to his income and wealth.” The program also gave reference to the Quran and stated that wealth must not become a concentrated “property which circulated among a few hands.”⁴⁹² It was declared that minimization of the income and wealth gap among individuals would be an important principle in the planning of the party's economic policies.

As mentioned before, the party was neither liberal-capitalist nor socialist. This “third way” approach between the two was reminiscent of the National Outlook Parties’ political attitude towards modern ideologies.

The party’s class perspective was not based on a political philosophy, but was rather a late effort to understand the country's unjust economic conditions, in the light of socialist analysis. The party ideologues saw a crisis of Islamism emanating from neo-liberalism, which had to be confronted. However the way they benefited from Marxism lacked integrity. For example, as a concept "class" was utilized to give meaning to the problems of the working class

⁴⁸⁹Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰Ibid.

⁴⁹¹Zeki Kılıçaslan, interview by the thesis author, İstanbul, Turkey, July 8, 2012.

⁴⁹²Has Parti, “Parti Programı”, accessed in September 10, 2012.

<http://www.hasparti.org.tr/page.aspx?key=program>

but class antagonism was an anathema. The party, in short, was not leftist. This was reflected in vice president Erol Erdoğan's statement: "We are not a class party. [...] We are neither rightist, leftist nor liberal but anti-imperialist, local and moralist."⁴⁹³ The economic order the party aimed for could be regarded as the moral capitalism of any of the past National Outlook Parties.

On 12 June 2011, general elections took place in Turkey. The Has Party obtained only 0.77 percent of the total vote and failed to pass the minimum required votes for representation in parliament. The public support was miniscule. Numan Kurtulmuş decided to join the AKP in 2012, and declared that he had accepted the AKP's merger proposal.⁴⁹⁴ The members of the party were shocked by this news. In September 2012, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (AKP's president and prime minister) declared that as of 22nd of the month, Has Party would abolish itself and be absorbed into the AKP with a ceremony.⁴⁹⁵

However, Mehmet Bekaroğlu, Zeki Kılıçaslan, Cihangir İslam, Cem Somel and Hayri Kırbaçoğlu wrote an open letter to Numan Kurtulmuş and the founding committee and demanded that "the members who wanted to merge with the AKP must resign, [and] the rest of the members must decide the Has Party's fate."⁴⁹⁶ Bekaroğlu underlined his commitment to the Has Party cause by stating: "if the party [was] closed, establishing a new party [would] gain currency."⁴⁹⁷ The abolition of the party was discussed on 19 September. And, as a result of the

⁴⁹³Erol Erdoğan, interview by Sarphan Uzunoğlu, last modified January 20, 2011, accessed in September 10, 2012. Available at <http://jiyan.us/2011/01/20/has-parti-gb-yardimcisi-erol-erdogan-alin-teriyle-kazanan-fakir-de-zengin-de-bizim-dostumuzdur/>

⁴⁹⁴Haber 7, "Numan Kurtulmuş'un Ak Parti Kararı", accessed in August 4, 2012. Available at <http://www.haber7.com/siyaset/haber/911059-numan-kurtulmusun-ak-parti-karari>

⁴⁹⁵İslami Gündem, "Başbakan: Has Parti Kendini Feshedip AKP'ye Katılacak", last modified September 9, 2012, accessed in December 17, 2012. Available at http://www.islamigundem.com/news_detail.php?id=45390&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter

⁴⁹⁶Haber Turk, "Numan Kurtulmuş'a Sert Mektup," last modified August 28, 2012, accessed in September 10, 2012. Available at <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/771799-numan-kurtulmusa-sert-mektup>

⁴⁹⁷Radikal, "Has Parti'nin Yerine Yeni Parti", last modified September 3, 2012, accessed in September 10, 2012. Available at <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1099081&CategoryID=78>

last congress of the party, Has Party abolished itself.⁴⁹⁸ Bekaroğlu declared that the faction which had rejected the merger with the AKP had started to work for “a new party and new constitution.”⁴⁹⁹

Eliaçık could have been right in his view that for “a political party” which defended social justice with Islamic discourse, it was early. For him, Social Islam had to “pervade society as a religious, philosophical, cultural and ideological force first.”⁵⁰⁰ Has Party had not really been related to Social Islam but had a moral capitalist project. Their aims for social justice simply did not find enough reverberation in the public at large to make them strong enough to be elected to the Assembly. It is interesting that while the WP had been relatively successful, the Has party simply could not find success by a similar “third” way.

“Anti-Capitalist Muslims” and Their Participation in the Workers’ May Day

In May 2012, anti-capitalist Muslims participated in the Workers’ Day rally under the name “the cortege of struggle with capitalism” in Istanbul’s Taksim Square. The organizers of the cortege had connections with İhsan Eliaçık and were influenced by his interpretation of Social Islam. Zeynep Erkiner, an anti-capitalist Muslim said that the event was a “return to basics.”⁵⁰¹ The group’s anti-capitalism was inspired by their piety and the Prophets’ lives. Kadir Bal, editor of *Adil Medya* (Just Media), which was established as a news organ by Eliaçık in 2010, asserted that intellectual underpinnings of this call for social justice started in 2008 with

⁴⁹⁸ Akşam, “Has Parti Kapandı”, accessed in September 19, 2012 <http://www.aksam.com.tr/has-parti-kapandi--139720h.html>

⁴⁹⁹ Star Newspaper, “Mehmet Bekaroğlu Yeni Parti Kuruyor”, accessed in September 19, 2012 <http://haber.stargazete.com/politika/mehmet-bekaroglu-yeni-parti-kuruyor/haber-690304>

⁵⁰⁰ İhsan Eliaçık, interview by the thesis author.

⁵⁰¹ Zeynep Erkiner, May 7, 2012, 32.Gün TV Programme, CNN Turk, accessed September 11, 2012. <http://tvarsivi.com/player.php?i=2012050200074>

the journal *Söz ve Adalet* (Word and Justice) whose assistant editor was İhsan Eliaçık. The latter journal was later closed because of financial problems.⁵⁰²

In an interview with CNN TURK, Erkiner declared to the Workers' Day event a success by asserting that although the organizing committee had included only 25 people, 1100 people had participated in their cortege.⁵⁰³ Their slogans were either from the Quran or referenced it. Their grandest banner's slogan was “*Fekku Regabe*” (freedom to the slaves), a verse from the Beled (The Land) Sura of the Quran (chronologically one of the first suras, but in the Quran one of the least), and implying that people who work for minimum wage were the slaves of today.⁵⁰⁴ Another banner slogan was “God, Bread and Freedom”. This was interesting because “Bread and Freedom” was also a slogan of the leftists. Aktaş writes that the anti-capitalist Muslims thought that “Labor, justice, freedom and equality [were] not in the monopoly of socialism or anarchism. These were common words for humanity. [The group] want[ed] to approach this problem in the line of ‘the oppressed against [their] oppressors’.”⁵⁰⁵ Yet another verse from the Quran used in a banner was, “We wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them heirs.”⁵⁰⁶ Their Workers' Day meeting started in Fatih with an Islamic ritual of prayer (namaz) commemorating workers killed in a fire in Esenyurt.⁵⁰⁷ In short, the anti-capitalist Muslims interpreted the Quran indeed from a class perspective.

⁵⁰²Kadir Bal, interview by the thesis author, İstanbul, Turkey, July 12, 2012.

⁵⁰³Zeynep Erkiner, on May 7, 2012, 32.Gün TV Programme, CNN Turk, accessed in September 11, 2012. <http://tvarsivi.com/player.php?i=2012050200074>

⁵⁰⁴Dağses Haber, Raif Yiğit, “Fekku Ragabe Kölelere Özgürlük”, accessed December 17, 2012. http://www.dagses.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2633&Itemid=123

⁵⁰⁵Muhammed Cihad and Kadir Bal, interview by Bercan Aktaş, last modified April 28, 2012, accessed in September 11, 2012. Available at <http://www.turnusol.biz/public/roportaj.aspx?id=12522&roportaj=Antikapitalist%20M%FCsl%FCmanlar%20ne%20diyor?>

⁵⁰⁶Kasas (Anecdote) Sura of the Quran, verses 28/5. Available at <http://quran.com/28/5>, accessed in May 9, 2013.

⁵⁰⁷Hürriyet, “Anti-kapitalist Müslüman Gençler 1 Mayıs’ta”, accessed in September 12, 2012 <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/20458489.asp>

Sedat Doğan, who is an anti-capitalist Muslim and was a writer for *Adil Medya*, explained the emergence of the anti-capitalist Muslim movement with the following words:

[Islamism in Turkey] positioned itself close to the small producer in terms of class because Turkey's capitalist development had still not been completed. [Therefore] a class perspective could not be constructed. The need for looking at the Quran from an economic perspective emerged with the AKP's implementation of neoliberal policies. Projects that emerged from this need and the youth that was shaped by them resulted in the movement of anti-capitalist Muslims. İhsan Eliaçık's *tafsir* [interpretation of the Quran] and books show that Quranic concepts [constituted] a rebellion against injustice and inequality. They were much more than a personal discourse, being the Quran's own theory itself. [Eliaçık's] textual approach [critique] found a reverberation in the youth.⁵⁰⁸

There were also many young Muslims who were disturbed by the fact that the AKP implemented a neoliberal political agenda even though its members' backgrounds lay in the National Outlook. Eliaçık's Quranic perspective was very important in their political attitude, yet both these Muslims and Eliaçık asserted that they were only friends in a common cause, Eliaçık openly declaring, "I am not their leader or mastermind."⁵⁰⁹ On the other hand, Sedat Doğan emphasized that "in the tradition of Muslims in Turkey, there was no historical intellectual antecedent with which to interpret capitalism."⁵¹⁰ Actually, the AKP had unwittingly facilitated and enabled the movement. Barış Uzun, another anti-capitalist Muslim, said that "anti-capitalist Muslims emerged as a reaction to capitalist Muslims."⁵¹¹

Sedat Doğan quoted the very same two verses from the Quran as İhsan Eliaçık (see p.100) that could be interpreted as anti-capitalist: "Possession belongs to God. [...] Property must not become a possession that circulates among the rich."⁵¹²

Like Eliaçık, the class antagonism in the discourse of anti-capitalist Muslims also emanated from the Quran. Doğan added that the verse, "A human being deserves nothing but his

⁵⁰⁸Sedat Doğan, interview by the thesis author, İstanbul, Turkey, July 12, 2012.

⁵⁰⁹İhsan Eliaçık, 32.Gün, CNN Turk, May 7, 2012, accessed September 11, 2012
<http://tvarsivi.com/player.php?i=2012050200074>

⁵¹⁰Ibid.

⁵¹¹Barış Uzun, 32.Gün, CNN Turk, May 7, 2012, accessed September 11, 2012
<http://tvarsivi.com/player.php?i=2012050200074>

⁵¹²Sedat Doğan, interview by the thesis author.

labor” was the one that helped explain the conflict between the owners of the means of production and workers.”⁵¹³

In his interview, Doğan stated his opinion that Marx’s works could indeed be consulted to make the text of the Quran much more understandable.⁵¹⁴ Like other anti-capitalist Muslims, he saw nothing wrong in consulting modern thought and ideologies for sound re-interpretations of the Quran, and for creating political methods and tools from Quranic thought itself.”⁵¹⁵ Reminiscent of Eliaçık’s evocation of *ijtihad* (dynamized Islam), anti-capitalist Muslims such as Doğan believed that interpretations of the Quran must readily be adaptable to modern political conditions.

İhsan Eliaçık also participated in the anti-capitalist Muslims’ Workers’ Day cortege. Clearly evoking the late 1960s activist spirit, he said that 40 years ago, some Muslims had attacked anti-imperialist leftists who had protested against the US 6th Fleet. However, according to Eliaçık, today they rejected the political inheritance of that Islamism, and represented a novel force.⁵¹⁶

Not only in İstanbul, but also in Diyarbakır, Sakarya, and Tokat, other anti-capitalist Muslim groups participated in the Workers’ Day rallies in 2012. The group participating in the rally in Diyarbakır called itself “Amed’s [Diyarbakır in Kurdish] anti-capitalist Muslim Young People.”⁵¹⁷ In Sakarya, they were called the “Sakarya Justice Initiative” (*Sakarya Adalet Girişimi*) and included seven Islamic civil society organizations. Their common message was as follows: “We will not be slaves of this order in which increasing enrichment of some people is

⁵¹³Ibid.

⁵¹⁴Ibid.

⁵¹⁵Ibid.

⁵¹⁶Hürriyet, “Anti-kapitalist Müslüman Gençler 1 Mayıs’ta”, accessed September 12, 2012. Available at <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/20458489.asp>

⁵¹⁷Sosyalist Zemin, “Amed ve Kürdistan’da 1 Mayıs”, accessed September 13, 2012 <http://www.sosyalistzemin.com/showthread.php?t=3594>

related to the exploitation of billions of people.[...] Minimum wage is a maximal slavery.”⁵¹⁸

The group in Tokat, on the other hand, was organized under the name of TOKAD.⁵¹⁹ It is analyzed separately below.

TOKAD: An Anti-Capitalist Muslim Group in Tokat

TOKAD's (Social Solidarity, Culture, Education and Social Research Association) president is Ahmet Örs, who was also the head of the Free Authors Union. It was established in 2007. It has a thought and literature journal which is named *Tasfiye* (refinement). The organization states that it was established “in order to contribute to Muslims’ movement and political position, to call to goodness and to prevent evil, to ask for efforts of servitude to God and to transmit [the message of the coming of] the apocalypse to society.”⁵²⁰

The fact that TOKAD was the first anti-capitalist Muslim group to ever participate in a Workers’ Day rally (already a year before the others , in May 2011) has been neglected by the media. TOKAD, the Free Authors Union, Free-Education Union, and *Tasfiye* all took part jointly in Tokat’s May Day rally. TOKAD carried the banner of “Global Intifada [Uprising] against Global Capitalism,” and “Minimum Wage is Slavery.”⁵²¹ Ahmet Örs said that most TOKAD members come from a trade union tradition, where they had developed their interest in the plight of the working class. Therefore, participating in Workers' Day rallies or in the Tekel (state

⁵¹⁸Emek Dünyası, “Anti-kapitalist Müslümanlar Tokat ve Sakarya’da 1 Mayıs’ta Meydanlara İndi”, accessed September 13, 2012. Available at <http://www.emekdunyasi.net/ed/isci-sendika/17613-antikapitalist-muslumanlar-tokat-ve-sakaryada-1-mayista-meydanlara-indi>

⁵²⁰TOKAD, “Amacımız”, accessed September 13, 2012. Available at <http://www.tokad.org/amacimiz/>

⁵²¹TOKAD, “Küresel Kapitalizme Karşı Küresel İntifada,” accessed September 15, 2012. Available at <http://www.tokad.org/2011/05/02/kuresel-kapitalizme-karsi-kuresel-intifada-tokatta-1-mayis/>

tobacco and alcoholic beverage monopoly, now privatized) workers' resistance was not new for them.⁵²²

Their other banner slogans in the May 2011 were “DoNot Be a Slave to Capitalism, Stop the Order of Economic Exploitation,” “Minimum Wage is Slavery,” “Justice for Everybody, Freedom for Everybody.”⁵²³ Hilal Çetin, a member of TOKAD, asserted in her rally speech that, “the first of May [was] a day for solidarity of defenders of humanity, of labour against capitalists, imperialists, tyrants, pharaohs and the cruel.”⁵²⁴ In their press briefing, they said that they defended the Tekel workers faced with the privatization of Tekel, and that they were against global and local bourgeoisie’s turning the people into slaves.⁵²⁵ In 2012, they used the same banner (“Global Intifada against Global Capitalism”) when participating in the May Day rally in Tokat. They also used the Istanbul rally’s main slogan “Fekku Ragabe” in their press meeting. Like the Istanbul group, they too regarded the people who worked for minimum wage or even less as slaves, and claimed capitalism was the main culprit of these conditions. For five years after their establishment in 2007, they protested against the minimum wage and saw the latter as a tool for exploitation of people.

They regarded the capitalist system as essentially non-Islamic. Just like other anti-capitalist Muslim leaders inspired by Eliaçık, Ahmet Örs too said that they saw capitalism as demonical and that it was necessary for just distribution that people shared the rest of their income after meeting their essential needs. This being said, they were not totally against private property because they considered it as a sort of test in this world.⁵²⁶ In this last point they, suprisingly, had the same interpretation as the MÜSİAD members. It was indicated before that

⁵²² Ahmet Örs, interview by the thesis author, via e-mail, August 6, 2012.

⁵²³ TOKAD, “Küresel Kapitalizme Karşı Küresel İntifada.”

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Ahmet Örs, interview by the thesis author, via e-mail.

Erol Yazar, an ex-MÜSİAD leader had also considered private property as a test for a true Muslim.

Like the other groups, they saw social justice as a main Islamic aim. Like Eliaçık, Örs asserted that Quran's (chronologically) first sections were full of justice calls. In Turkey, the AKP government was trying to hide this revolutionary message of Islam as they constructed a neo-liberal hegemony, according to Örs. Like the other spokespersons of the groups in other cities Örs too said they were benefiting from and inspired by other ideologies including Marxism as [they] strove to understand the causes of current political and social conditions with all their facets and to construct [their] independent Islamic politics.⁵²⁷

Örs's thoughts about the maintenance of social justice justify being quoted in full:

Maybe, there [would] never be complete equality because of natural differences between humans. There [would] be a period of time which resembles the struggle for the abolition of slavery. There [was] an attitude that necessitated constant struggle for removal of that negativity. And one of the main aims for the social justice struggle [was that] the masses learned that poverty and hopelessness were not [their] fate.⁵²⁸

So, TOKAD's social justice perception emphasized minimizing the income gap between classes, while accepting that complete equality was not possible. The acceptance of "natural differences" among human beings is interesting because it is reminiscent of liberal ideology.

The Hür Beyan (Free Declaration) Movement: A Muslim University Students' Group in Ankara

The Hür Beyan Movement consisted of Muslim students in Ankara and was organized in 2008. They also tried to construct a form of Muslim politics against capitalism and neoliberal political power in Turkey. They too were aware that the AKP's politics was mainly neo-liberal rather than Islamic, but they were slightly more averse to the idea of a merger with the left when

⁵²⁷Ibid.

⁵²⁸Ibid.

compared to the other groups. Şahin Gürçay, who was a member of the Hür Beyan asserted the following:

If there are contributions, critiques, that come from the left, I do not think that we must neglect them [just] because they are coming from the left. It [the left] can be useful. On the other hand, organizing an Islamic-left or a synthesis of the two and creating a new thing [from this] are not things we wish for.⁵²⁹

Like the other groups, therefore, the Hür Beyan too was open to other ideologies including the left in order to construct an independent ideology. They also adopted a Quranic approach in order to shape their political attitude towards the world. Gürçay said that, “Islamic sources [were] the principles [in the Quran] and these principles [did] not show practical ways out. [One] discover[ed] the practice from the principles.[...] Muslims who read the Quran a few times [could] look at [contemporary] events from a different perspective.”⁵³⁰ Again pacing Eliaçık, his words also emphasized the importance of *ijtihad* (reinterpretation) in creating an independent Muslim politics and political ideology.

The Hür Beyan’s class perspective, too, was based on their Quranic approach to politics. The group pointed to the antagonism between justice and *zulm* (injustice). Capitalists treated workers unjustly so there had to be a struggle. The Hür Beyan supported the working class because this was a natural requirement of being just and conforming to God’s order. For instance, they visited the dismissed workers of Togo (a shoe company) and supported their resistance.⁵³¹

Their perception of social justice did not aim for the removal of social classes. Akife Alan, a leading member, said, “we see a world where everybody is equal and where there are no social classes as an utopia and do not think that it can be possible. This is not compatible with

⁵²⁹Şahin Gürçay and Akife Alan, from Hür Beyan Hareketi, interview by the thesis author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, July 8, 2012.

⁵³⁰Ibid.

⁵³¹Hür Beyan Hareketi, “Togo İşçileri Ziyareti” on May 22, 2012, accessed 18.12.2012. <http://www.hur-beyan.net/?p=1501>

Islam.”⁵³² Gürçay related the ideal of a classless society to an empty hope which aimed to establish paradise on earth. According to the Hür Beyan member, this ultimate goal was a part of materialist ideologies that ignored life after death. However, perhaps not to sound escapist, Gürçay added, “in this world, people are responsible for improving a lot of things. God sent everybody here as his representative.”⁵³³ Ending injustice among people was one of these improvements. According to Alan, “the Hür Beyan did not consider someone superior to another just because he was president, or accept he could lead a more luxurious life as a necessity of being president.”⁵³⁴ Although the Hür Beyan did not believe in a leveling of social classes, its social justice discourse was still based on a balanced distribution of income.

The Hür Beyan was a bit distant to Eliaçık’s Social Islam. The approach of Eliaçık, which showed contempt for private property and thus circumscribed it, was not supported by Gürçay. He gave as example the Nisa (Women) sura of the Quran, where there were many verses about inheritance. This demonstrated that private property was very much a part of Islam. Although the disagreement on this issue with Eliaçık was clear, they supported the “anti-capitalist Muslims” in both their struggle for social justice and the May Day rallies. They were of the opinion that it was natural for Islamists to support working people against capitalists. Being Muslim and desiring social justice were enough for participation in the Workers’ Day.

Makbul Adımlar (Desirable Steps): A Muslim Group at İstanbul Şehir (City) University

This Muslim group came together in 2012 at İstanbul Şehir University and engaged itself, like the others, in Islamic politics to face global capitalism. Melih Kayar, a member, expressed their cause in coming together: “We are in a process of developing an attitude towards labor,

⁵³²Şahin Gürçay and Akife Alan, from Hür Beyan Hareketi, interview by the thesis author.

⁵³³Ibid.

⁵³⁴Ibid.

social justice and the other [minorities of Turkey].”⁵³⁵ In their group manifesto, they accepted class struggle, the exploitation of laborers, and declared their support for working people.⁵³⁶ They visited the factory sites of Texim (a textile manufacturer) and Roseteks (a textile factory) and supported workers’ resistance at both sites.⁵³⁷

Their politics was eclectic, and was not only based on theology. In Melih Kayar’s words:

Makbul Adımlar is not a structure which uses as reference only one source. For instance, we are a group which refers to Althusser in the critique of state, or to Ali Shariati and Marx in the critique of capital. So in the case of struggle against capitalism, it has points that are common with the left.⁵³⁸

Their perception of social justice had a class perspective and emphasized the necessity of just distribution of income, class differences and being relatively unimportant.⁵³⁹ Kayar expressed this in the following words:

[Just] when we think that poverty is eliminated, nothing changes. Because the people who climb up to the middle class from poverty change their definition of basic needs. And when there is again an imbalance in income distribution, the middle class once again becomes the lower class. (...) The real problem is the widening gap in income distribution.⁵⁴⁰

The group also appreciated Eliaçık’s reinterpretation of the Quran and, like Eliaçık, was inspired by Ali Shariati. Hümeýra Seleş also said: “[Eliaçık’s interpretation] was neither a discovery of the unknown nor was it antithetical [to Islam]. They [principles such as *infak*-sharing of property] were things that Muslims were ordered to do.”⁵⁴¹ However, Gazi Giray Aydın, another member, asserted that a problem could emerge with anti-capitalist Muslim identity. Aydın was of the opinion that words describing who was a true Muslim

⁵³⁵Melih Kayar, Gazi Giray Aydın and Hümeýra Seleş, interview by the thesis author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, July 8, 2012.

⁵³⁶Makbul Adımlar, “Manifesto”. Accessed September 16, 2012
http://makbuladimlar.com/manifesto_makbul_adimlar/

⁵³⁷Makbul Adımlar, “Texim İşçilerine Ziyaret,” accessed August 18, 2012. Available at <http://makbuladimlar.com/2012/08/texim-iscilerine-ziyaret/>, “Roseteks İşçilerinin Direnişindeydik,” accessed September 16, 2012 <http://makbuladimlar.com/2012/07/roseteks-iscilerinin-direnisindeydik/>

⁵³⁸Melih Kayar, Gazi Giray Aydın and Hümeýra Seleş, interview by the thesis author.

⁵³⁹Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰Ibid.

⁵⁴¹Ibid.

and who not were problematic. [The anti-capitalist] saying that “people who are not with us [in the struggle for social justice] are capitalist Muslims” [was] more correct. The point of reference had to be becoming Muslim and the wrong [political attitude] must only be pointed out by an adjective, not by ostracizing.⁵⁴²

Hence Makbul Adımlar was more open than Hür Beyan to working with the left, closer to Eliaçık, while at the same time they were in a controversy with him in defining their Muslim identity as anti-capitalist or revolutionary Muslims. Their targeting income differences rather than class struggle, on the other hand, was reminiscent of Hür Beyan’s mildly leftist attitude of accepting the possibility of private property.

Özgür Açılım (Free Initiative) : A Muslim Group at Bilgi University

The Özgür Açılım Platform was established in 2008, in order to make Islam, the Quran and the life of the Prophet a basis for a political ideology in Turkey. Ammar Kılıç, who was a member of the group, said: “Islam demands a political, economic and social order [...] I mean that Islam is not an ethical order only; it is an order which includes all facets of life.”⁵⁴³ The group also wanted to struggle for a just society by taking heed from the Quranic notion of the Apocalypse, which they took very seriously.⁵⁴⁴

The Özgür Açılım was also against exploitation, and asserted in their manifesto that their platform was against imperialism, injustice and exploitation, that it aimed to resist to capitalism and its varieties, and that it was against liberal ideology.⁵⁴⁵ Ammar Kılıç believed that exploitation and injustice were inherent in capitalism.⁵⁴⁶ Therefore, this anti-capitalist

⁵⁴²Ibid.

⁵⁴³Ammar Kılıç, a member of Özgür Açılım, interview by the thesis author via e-mail. July 30, 2012.

⁵⁴⁴Özgür Açılım, “Hakkımızda”, accessed September 17, 2012. <http://ozguracilim.net/hakkimizda/>

⁵⁴⁵Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶Ammar Kılıç, interview by the thesis author via e-mail.

organization had a much harsher view of capitalism than either the Hür Beyan or Makbul Adımlar.

The group said it adopted a pure Islamic political ideology and asserted that it was not necessary to turn Islam into an “additional” ideology among humanistic ideologies.⁵⁴⁷ Ammar Kılıç said: “Being against waste, opulence, unjust and luxurious wealth, exploitation and misuse of labour does not necessitate being socialist. This is Islam, on its own.”⁵⁴⁸ However, they also accepted class struggle which is clearly part of Marxist interpretation of history. In Kılıç’s words: “We do not feel obliged as a group to look at capitalism from the perspective of the left. However, in historical analyses of labour/capital relations, we can benefit from the theoretical and practical experiences of the left.”⁵⁴⁹ According to Özgür Açılım this class struggle would continue until capitalism was destroyed.⁵⁵⁰

The Özgür Açılım have supported many labor resistance activities since the platform was established. They supported the workers of Casper Computer Company, who were subjected to mass lay offs because they had become members of a union.⁵⁵¹ In another active protest they spoke for Tuzla dock workers, stating that the shipyard deaths could not be attributed to fate alone.⁵⁵²

They supported the resistance of Tekel workers and opposed the privatization of the state company as part of the neo-liberal agenda of AKP.⁵⁵³ They saw this policy as part of the neo-liberal “global hegemony”. They stated in their manifesto:

Habil (Abel) and Kabil (Cain) was the name of war since the beginning of history. [...] Throughout history, people who were on the side of Habil and *mustazaf* (the oppressed)

⁵⁴⁷Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵⁵¹Özgür Açılım, “Sosyal Güvensizlik Ücrasında İşçi Ölümeleri”, accessed September 17, 2012. Available at <http://ozguracilim.net/sosyal-guvensizlik-ucrasinda-isci-olumleri/>

⁵⁵²Ibid.

⁵⁵³Özgür Açılım, “Küresel Hegemonyaya Karşı Hep Birlikte Direnişe”, accessed February 27, 2012. Available at <http://ozguracilim.net/kuresel-hegemonyaya-karsi-hep-birlikte-direnise/>

were disdained by Kabil's order as it tried to enslave them by depriving them of humanly life.⁵⁵⁴

Habil and Kabil's struggle in the Quran was regarded as a signifier of the binary opposition of justice and injustice. They also saw all the workers, like those at Tekel, who were exploited by capitalists as *mustazaf*. The first mustazaf in history was Habil (Abel), who was slain by his brother Kabil (Cain). Thus, to support the oppressed was a duty of Muslims. They emphasized their belief in capitalism's coming termination: "But history will witness the day when Habil's side will throw away the order of Kabil."⁵⁵⁵ This belief was also reminiscent of Marxism's historical materialist approach, where workers "ha[d] nothing to lose but their chains." However, the Özgür Açılım based its vision solely on Quranic references and anecdotes.

They said that capitalism prevented social justice, but also that it was not the only obstacle. Inequalities would probably still remain and it was not definite that human beings would be liberated conclusively. Rather than removing classes and their differences altogether, the group, generally addressed inequality as a broad concept in its political outlook and summed up its social justice goal with the phrase "every human being should be able to lead a respectful life."⁵⁵⁶

Özgür Açılım also supported Muslims' participation in Workers' Day rallies. Gülsüm Kavuncu, another group member, asserted that Muslim groups supported workers' struggle also because a considerable number of religious workers were resisting the system and must not be left alone.⁵⁵⁷

The group also took part in the iftar (dinner in the month of Ramadan with which daily fasting ends) protests in front of luxurious hotels in 2011, participated instead in the *Kardeşlik İftarları* (iftars for brotherhood) in which they helped bring together workers, homeless people

⁵⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁵⁶Ammar Kılıç, interview by the thesis author via e-mail.

⁵⁵⁷Gülsüm Kavuncu, "1 Mayıs ve Müslümanlar", accessed September 17, 2012. Available at <http://ozguracilim.net/muslumanlar-ve-1-mayis/>

and immigrants in 2012.⁵⁵⁸ Last but not least, they also took part in 2011 in a night-long protest in Taksim Square to demand the opening of homeless accommodations.⁵⁵⁹ However, the mastermind of all the three activities was the Labour and Justice Platform analysed below.

The Emek ve Adalet (Labor and Justice) Platform : An Initiative For Dialogue between the Left and Islamists

This platform was established in 2011 by some socialists and Islamists. Emre Kaya, who is a member of the platform said, “Those groups [leftists and Islamists in the platform] were [previously] unorganized, different reading groups.”⁵⁶⁰ They met with Zeki Kılıçaslan, Mehmet Bekaroğlu, and İhsan Eliaçık; and read the tafsir of Eliaçık.⁵⁶¹ They then organized the platform. Kaya also asserted that this platform was not a temporary group which came together for a short-term aim.⁵⁶² Labor and Justice was a critical platform. The members came together for the purpose of self-criticism of the left and Islamism in Turkey.⁵⁶³

Like the many other groups analysed, they also focused on the main aim of social justice. Again, according to Kaya :

There are a few concerns of the platform; the first is an effort and call for much more localization of the left and socialists in Turkey, the second is a call to Islamists to be interested in the labor struggle. These two concerns are integrated at the point of social justice.⁵⁶⁴

The platform did not aim to create a synthesis of Islam and the left. But there was an effort for dialogue between the two ideologies because they tried to learn the interests and

⁵⁵⁸Özgür Açılım, “Kardeşlik İftarlarına Davet”, accessed September 17, 2012. Available at <http://ozguracilim.net/kardeslik-iftarlarina-davet-1/>.

⁵⁵⁹Özgür Açılım, “Birimiz Üşürse Hepimiz Üşür 3- Basın Açıklaması”, accessed September 17, 2012. Available at <http://ozguracilim.net/birimiz-usurse-hepimiz-usur-3-basin-aciklamasi/>

⁵⁶⁰Emre Kaya, interview by the thesis author.

⁵⁶¹Ibid.

⁵⁶²Ibid.

⁵⁶³Güvercin Günlükleri which is a tv programme is made by Alev Erkilet and Ferhat Kentel, from the interview with a member of the platform, accessed September 19, 2012.

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xslzut_guvercin-gunlukleri-21-bolum_tv?start=1448

⁵⁶⁴Emre Kaya, interview by the thesis author.

political experiences of each other. According to another member, “this was not a strategic alliance between the Islamists and leftists. This is a superficial union of action. This platform had an assertion on localization. There is an effort to search for compromise with local dynamics.”⁵⁶⁵ The left too, experienced the corresponding problem of compromising, and being in the same organization with people who were devout Muslims. The Muslims were disturbed by capitalism, as indicated by a Muslim member of the platform, Nihan Doğusan who said: “We [Muslims] are aware of capitalism’s oppression of people in the system.”⁵⁶⁶ The platform thus aimed at enabling a reaching out by both Muslims and leftists to each other’s similar concerns.

According to Doğusan, Islamism traditionally acted with the right in Turkey and was actually unaware of the experiences of the left. Acting together with the Left had simply not been possible before.⁵⁶⁷ She believed that Islam was enough for delivering the necessary messages about social justice in the view of devout Muslims, but a compromise with the left had taken place so that both parties could struggle together. The intellectual and ideological underpinnings of both could well be different, but they were after all, not coming together to enter into ideological debate, according to Nihan Doğusan.⁵⁶⁸

The first meeting of the platform was to protest luxurious *iftars* in front of the Ceylan Intercontinental Hotel in Taksim. During Ramadan, these protests took place three times in 2011. There were one thousand people at the second protest, according to Doğusan. One of its popular slogans was “Not waste; mercy.” Emre Kaya said that the idea of protesting in front of the hotel which had expensive dinner menus for Ramadan belonged to one friend in the platform.⁵⁶⁹ The meetings aimed to demonstrate that Ramadan’s meaning was not only staying hungry for God’s

⁵⁶⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶⁶Nihan Doğusan, from Labour and Justice Platform, interview by the thesis author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, August 28, 2012.

⁵⁶⁷Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸Ibid.

⁵⁶⁹Emre Kaya, interview by the thesis author.

sake but also empathizing with the poor. The expensive menu prices were nearly a quarter of the minimum wage, causing an unjust situation and contrasting to the spirit and aim of Ramadan.

In 2012, the platform took the further step of organizing *Kardeşlik İftarları* (Iftars for brotherhood). The aim of these *iftars* was to demonstrate with whom the dinner of *iftar* had to be eaten.⁵⁷⁰ In a way, it was a step from the act of negative protest to that of setting a positive example. They wanted to understand the condition of the poor, so they ate during Ramadan with homeless people, immigrants, and resisting workers, organizing the *iftar* three times. Their aim was to continue to give support to these suffering parties after Ramadan. In Emre Kaya's words:

The second [of the three] iftars took place with workers who work on piecemeal basis. There was a group that was waiting in front of the factory: Rozeteks' workers. There were our brothers –knitwear workers– who were lobbying for unionization. We supported their resistance for the eight-hour work day instead of twelve, and [indeed] enabled them to decrease their working hours to eight.⁵⁷¹

In the first meeting of the Platform in Taksim, Rıdvan Turan, who was the leader of the SDP (Socialist Democracy Party) gave his support and wrote a positive article about their alternative *iftar*.⁵⁷²

In 2011, the platform also organized activities in which they stayed up until morning for three days in order to warn people about the condition of homeless people and to demand accommodations for the homeless. In this activity, the platform's banner had the slogan "if one of us is cold, everybody will be cold." The first and third stay up nights took place in Taksim.⁵⁷³ The venue for the second one was Eyüp because religious people reside in this district and the platform wanted them to hear their demands regarding homeless people. In the stay up event, apart from the homeless and the young, some prominent people such as İhsan Eliaçık, and Zeki

⁵⁷⁰Ibid.

⁵⁷¹Ibid.

⁵⁷²Emek ve Adalet Platformu, Rıdvan Turan, "Alternatif İftar ve Düşündürdükleri", accessed September 20, 2012. <http://www.emekveadalet.org/alternatif-iftar-ve-dusundurdukleri-ridvan-turan/>

⁵⁷³Emek ve Adalet Platformu, "Birimiz Üşüyorsa Hepimiz Üşür", accessed September 20, 2012. Available at <http://www.emekveadalet.org/%E2%80%9Cbirimiz-usuyorsa-hepimiz-usur%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%932-etkinlik/>

Kılıçaslan of the Has Party were also present.⁵⁷⁴ They also organized three charity sales for the homeless house of Şefkat-Der, a charity organization of Muslims for all the needy and oppressed of society⁵⁷⁵

They also supported the resistance of Texim workers, who had been laid off because of refusing the changes made by the management to their contract,⁵⁷⁶ and Casper Computer Company workers, who were dismissed for being members of a union.⁵⁷⁷ The platform also developed relations with the Piecemeal Workers Solidarity Association.⁵⁷⁸

Another of their activities was a protest rally in Banks Street in Karaköy, İstanbul. Here they carried the banner and shouted the slogan “you sucked our blood.” They had brought with them leeches so the rally’s name was the “the Protest of banks with leeches.”⁵⁷⁹ The messages were that banks took money from lower classes and “placed their funds in the service of the rich,” and that deposit interest rates were far too low to be of any use to the poor. They, in short, protested exploitation by financial capitalism.⁵⁸⁰

This platform also had reading groups. There were reading sessions about the relation between socialism and Islam, Islamic economics and the interpreting the Quran. They read the works of intellectuals such as Nurettin Topçu, Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, some Islamic revivalists, and books about Islamic economy.⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁴Emek ve Adalet Platformu, “Birimiz Üşürse Hepimiz Üşürüz 2- Etkinliğin Ardından Notlarımız ve Basına Yansıyanlar”. accessed September 20, 2012. Available at <http://www.emekveadalet.org/birimiz-usurse-hepimiz-usuruz-2-etkinligin-ardindan-notlarimiz-ve-basina-yansiyanlar/>

⁵⁷⁵Emek ve Adalet Platformu, “Evsizler Evi Kermesinin Ardından”, accessed September 20, 2012. Available at <http://www.emekveadalet.org/evsizler-evi-kermesinin-ardindan/>

⁵⁷⁶Rıdvan Turan, “Alternatif İftar ve Düşündürdükleri”, accessed September 20, 2012. <http://www.emekveadalet.org/alternatif-iftar-ve-dusundurdukleri-ridvan-turan/>

⁵⁷⁷Emek ve Adalet Platformu 2011 Yılı, 13, accessed September 20, 2012.

<http://www.emekveadalet.org>

⁵⁷⁸Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹Ibid., 29.

⁵⁸⁰Ibid.

⁵⁸¹Ibid.

Devrimci Müslümanlar (Revolutionary Muslims)

The Revolutionary Muslims were a group which took part in the “Anti-capitalist cortege” on Workers’ Day and a subset of anti-capitalist Muslims, but they then separated as a different group.⁵⁸² On 1 July 2012,⁵⁸³ they established the Rebeze Cultural Association (*Rebeze Kültür Derneği*) and organized some activities there. Their leader was Eren Erdem, who defended revolutionary shariat, and whose interpretations of the Quran had a revolutionary perspective. For instance, he interpreted Hacc (circumambulating the Kaaba) as a signifier of Islam’s ultimate goal of equality because all pilgrims had to wear the same white clothes and make Islamic pray a ritual.⁵⁸⁴

Their meeting in Ramadan had the title-slogan: “Oruç (fasting) for rebellion.” They carried out the Islamic ritual of prayer (*namaz*) in Gezi Park in Taksim because they believed the state’s mosques and Friday sermons were not sufficient to understand Islam. Quranic verses about property, for example, were not mentioned in these state-controlled sermons. They also ate their *iftar* dinner in this Park.⁵⁸⁵ Their other slogans were “not subjection, [but] rebellion; Islam, not capitalism,” and the famous banner of the Workers’ Day rallies, “Freedom to slaves.”

⁵⁸²Vatan Newspaper, “Devrimci Müslümanlar İsyanda”, *Gazete Vatan*, August 3,2012. Accessed September 20, 2012. Available at <http://haber.gazetevatan.com/devrimci-muslumanlar-isyanda/470706/1/Haber#.UFtVEbKTuYQ>

⁵⁸³Rebeze Kültür, “Rebeze Kültür Kapılarını Açıyor”, accessed September 20, 2012. Available at <http://www.rebezekultur.com/detay.asp?id=1>.

⁵⁸⁴Eren Erdem, “Kuran’da Hacc : Sınıfsız Toplum- Eren Erdem”, accessed November 28, 2012. Available at <http://vidaru.com/kuranda-hacc-sinifsiz-toplum-eren-erdem/29084464>.

⁵⁸⁵Vatan Newspaper, “Devrimci Müslümanlar İsyanda”, last modified August 3,2012, accessed September 20, 2012. Available at <http://haber.gazetevatan.com/devrimci-muslumanlar-isyanda/470706/1/Haber#.UFtVEbKTuYQ>

Table 2. Anti-capitalist Muslim Groups

Name of organization	City and year of establishment	Political view about marxism	Media Organ
Anti-Kapitalist Müslümanlar	İstanbul/ 2012	It is a useful tool to understand the Quran and its message.	www.adilmedya.com
TOKAD	Tokat/2007	It is for understanding current political and economic conditions.	www.tokad.org
Devrimci Müslümanlar	İstanbul/2012	The Quran and marxism have a common message.	www.rebezekultur.com
Makbul Adımlar	İstanbul/2012	It is useful in order to construct a Muslim policy.	www.makbuladimlar.com
Emek ve Adalet Platformu	İstanbul/2011	Marxism and Islamism have common political aims such as social justice.	www.emekveadalet.org
Özgür Açılım Platformu	İstanbul/2008	It is important for analyzing labour/capital relations and useful in terms of its theoretical and practical approaches.	www.ozguracilim.net
Hür Beyan Hareketi	Ankara/2008	It is a useful tool for constructing an independent Muslim politics.	www.hur-beyan.net

Conclusion

Different anti-capitalist Muslim groups came together in the rallies or protest meetings of workers, but there are some differences in their political understandings. Although they all believe in the necessity of *ijtihad* (interpretation of the Quran) for modern times, they have different interpretations of the Quran, especially on some modern political and economic issues such as class struggle. They define themselves firstly as Muslims in political activity, but their relations with Marxism and leftists can be controversial given their interpretations of the Quran.

It can be said that all Muslim groups accept the existence of a class society. They think that Muslims must struggle side by side with the working class because such struggle, they consider is an important duty for all Muslims. They can collaborate with the leftists for the common aim of social justice owing to their Quranic approach which accepts the existence of social classes. However, their approaches to class politics differ. Some of them have developed a leftist perspective but others only benefit from Marxist concepts and analysis and ally with leftists only for common short-term aims. In my opinion, Özgür Açılım, Hür Beyan Hareketi, Makbul Adımlar and TOKAD aim to benefit from the class analysis of Marxism in constructing an independent and anti-capitalist Muslim ideology.

Some small differences also exist among these four organizations. Özgür Açılım has the harshest attitude against an alliance with the left. They assert that their joint political activities with the left are not intended to be long-term, or to build a common order with them.⁵⁸⁶ They see capitalism as an obstacle to social justice, but, for them, its destruction is not enough to maintain social justice. Makbul Adımlar, Hür Beyan, and Tokad interpretsocial justice as balanced income distribution, but the removal of social classes is not a necessity for its realization. All of these Muslim groups have a religion-based perspective in their political understanding. So they have

⁵⁸⁶ Ammar Kılıç, interview by the thesis author via e-mail.

an important political paradox: They say that they are against capitalism, but they do not aim for a classless society. They have no political imagination as to what kind of order will come after capitalism. Their anti-capitalism may mean an Islamicly-restored capitalism but how will this interest-free capitalism continue to exist? Leftist thought is an additional political source for them in order to understand the capitalist order. They adopt some leftist politics when they justify these politics by demonstrating them as Quranic with the help of their interpretation of the Quran.

However, the groups Anti-kapitalist Müslümanlar and Devrimci Müslümanlar adopt class struggle for equality and a classless society and find their references in Quranic interpretations. So they have a leftist perspective in their political activity. Also, Eliaçık, their mentor, asserts that the gap between classes must be as minimized as it can be.⁵⁸⁷ Eren Erdem who is still giving Revolutionary Sharia lectures at the Rebeze Cultural Association said that *Hacc* (pilgrimage to Mecca) was a signifier of Islam's ultimate goal of equality because all people wear the same white clothes and make ritual praying of Islam.⁵⁸⁸ They have leftist perspective and prove that this is an Islamic perspective too. Muslims must defend leftist politics in these modern times, under the conditions of a class society, in order to maintain social justice. The main difference between the groups is their contrasting aims: the first constellation of groups aim to turn Islamic thought into a modern and anti-capitalist ideology, while the second group (Anti-kapitalist Müslümanlar and Devrimci Müslümanlar) see the left as a source of modern ideology and aim to make an alternative ideology of Muslims.

The Emek ve Adalet Platformu is a product of a long-term aim of bringing together anti-capitalist Muslims and leftists in order to act for the common aim of social justice and thus stands for a different effort. The platform's aim is not to create a synthesis theoretically, but to

⁵⁸⁷İhsan Eliaçık, interview by the thesis author.

⁵⁸⁸Eren Erdem, "Kuran'da Hacc : Sınıfsız Toplum- Eren Erdem".

furnish common political discourse in the face of capitalism. Nevertheless, most of them are close to the Anti-Kapitalist Müslümanlar and to Eliaçık's Quranic approaches.

The Islamicization of social justice and socialism is seen as an interesting development in terms of the leftists, too. Leftists in Turkey have traditionally defended class politics and sided with the working class. However, anti-capitalist Muslims have begun to support labor struggles just like them, because they see it as a religious duty to struggle for the poor and oppressed. Both leftists and anti-capitalist Muslims have started to resist neo-Islamist government, so political alliances between them can now be a possible alternative for the emergence of an opposition movement. This situation can be interpreted as a development which enables leftist politics to arise a new in Turkey.

On the other hand, the Islamicization process of social justice discourse and other political concepts like 'right' (just claim) have a threat for the political field occupied by the left in Turkey. Although some leftists evaluate this Islamicization of politics as an attempt to "localize the left"⁵⁸⁹ as an ideology, for them this situation has the danger of confining political discourse to the field of religious discourse. The localization attempts of the leftist discourse which were started by some 'old' Marxists in Egypt influenced by the Islamic revolution in Iran failed, and resulted only in the continuation of Islamic discourse's hegemony over politics.

Additionally, the Islamicization of the left's political language does not create a new solution, but declares the acceptance of the same analysis with the left, albeit from another point of view. This Islamicization of political opposition to neoliberalism also demonstrates the ignorance of the successes of the left in Muslim societies in the past. The hegemony of the Neo-Islamist discourse in Turkey has formed a basis for an Islamic opposition which uses the same Islamic sources for justification of different politics. It has caused a debate on the interpretation of religious texts in the political arena. Therefore an anti-capitalist Muslim politics has emerged.

⁵⁸⁹Emre Kaya, interview by the thesis author.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This thesis examined how anti-capitalist Muslim politics in Turkey has become possible and how it has been shaped by its relations with the left. As seen in Chapter Three, Islamism emerged as a corporatist ideology which denied existence of modern social classes and accepted society as a social organism. The ideology evaluated society as a solidarity that embodied the compromising interests of Muslims.

However, in the post-1980 era, Islamists in Turkey were affected by the globalization process and, some of them gaining economic advantages in the integration of their countries with the global economy. These Islamists adopted free market principles and transformed their ideological approaches. Chapter Three, discussed how Islamism in Turkey started losing its corporatist character after the neoliberalization policies implemented by the Turgut Özal government. Owing to Özal's neoliberal policies, some religious Muslims became rich and emerged as a religious capitalist class in Turkey. This Islamist capitalist class's emergence influenced Islamism's transformation. The wealthy Muslims became aware of their class interests, and they established a class organization, MÜSİAD. Economic power of the new capitalist class in Turkey reflected itself to the political arena. The newly enriched Muslims' support contributed to Tayyip Erdoğan's victory over Necmettin Erbakan. Erdoğan became the most important representative of Muslim businessmen's class interests and followed a neo-liberal economic agenda which was the political heritage of the Özal government.

In the thesis, the ideological transformation in Turkey's Islamist politics was analyzed through changes in social justice discourse. As a concept, social justice concept is related directly to social class relations. Thus, social justice discourse can be a useful instrument in order to see the class perspective of a political movement. When Islamism was a corporatist ideology, Islamists presented their ideology to the masses as the way for maintaining social justice. Social

justice was seen the ultimate aim of their ideology. By contrast, neo-Islamism has not offered social justice as an aim which has to be maintained by governmental actions. The first aim of the AKP has been a properly working market economy in Turkey for the welfare of people. Social justice has thus been transformed to a properly working, free market where there is no necessity for governmental policies in order to maintain it.

Chapter Two examined Islamic revivalism and Islamic left, which were seen as the main sources and political roots of anti-capitalist Muslim movement and Islamic Liberation theology. Latin American liberationists' and Islamic revivalists' viewpoints were similar and today's Muslims are affected by their understandings. They both saw their prophets as political leaders who aimed to establish a just order and thus started to struggle against rich and hegemonic classes of their societies. They both interpreted their holy books from the viewpoint of the poor and oppressed, and evaluated them as political guides of a struggle for social justice. Finally, they developed a religious critique of the capitalist order by basing it on God's messages. There is another similarity between Islamic revivalism and liberation theology in terms of oppositional character to their respective governments. Both of these movements had an anti-imperialist attitude and aimed to find a local and unique way for maintaining social justice without the influence of Western developed countries. Therefore, the Islamic revivalists' political ideas were seen as sources of political inspiration for Islamic liberation theology in Turkey.

Sayyid Qutb and Ali Shariati's works (written mainly in 1950-80) were analyzed as the main sources of anti-capitalist Muslim politics because the two were the most known and popular international political figures of Islamist movement in Turkey. They were both against national and Western-style regimes in their countries, therefore, Turkish Islamists gave importance to these political figures because they also opposed Turkish secular governments. Qutb and Shariati aimed to prove capitalism's incompatibility with Islam by their revolutionary interpretations of the Quran. Qutb saw God's order as the alternative which would bring social

justice replacing incompetent man-made systems like capitalism and socialism. Inequality was a product of man-made systems, according to Qutb. However, Shariati, as a modernist, was more prone to benefit from leftist ideology and emphasized the subordinated's role in changing unequal situation. He saw Islam's order was closer to socialism than capitalism. Qutb and Shariati's anti-capitalist views also contributed to the emergence of Islamic leftist ideologies in Egypt and Iran. In Iran, Mujahedin Khalq organization was established, synthesizing Islam and Marxism. In Egypt, Qutb's anti-Marxist emphasis lost its importance by 1980s and Hasan Hanafi as a representative of Islamic left, asserted necessity of an alliance between Marxists and Islamists for a just society.

In the present day, in Egypt, Revolution Continues Alliance (RCA) represents an alliance between Islamists and socialists who are both against neoliberalization and have common aims of social justice and freedom. This alliance is politically pitted against the Islamists of the Muslim Brotherhood which has gained power since the Tahrir Revolution and convicted them for implementing "old" neo-liberal politics in Egypt. RCA firstly seek social justice, not an Islamic regime which was aimed at by Qutb. This alliance can be interpreted as a signifier of neo-liberalization's effect in organizing people for a common political agenda.

Some small and radical Islamist groups in Turkey were affected by the translated works of Qutb and Shariati. The Iranian Islamic revolution demonstrated to them that revolutionary Islam could become successful. However, these groups' ideological proximity to leftist ideology remained very limited and superficial. Except having a similar social justice discourse with the left, they had no political relation. Radical Islamist groups did not see leftist organizations as political allies, but as their rivals.

One result of the thesis is that the anti-capitalist Muslim movement has begun to emerge in Turkey as a political response to the AKP and neo-Islamism. As Cihan Tuğal asserted, already-existing moral anti-capitalism in Turkey's Islamism has strengthened and was

transformed into an alternative movement with the influence of the AKP. The revival of anti-capitalist views from Islamist ideology's past emerged in Turkey after the AKP's coming to power, and especially its implementation of the neo-liberal agenda. The neo-Islamist approach of the party has caused an opposition among Islamists who have not adopted neoliberalism and have witnessed its social outcomes like rising inequality. A need arose for an alternate political perspective in order to criticize the AKP's politics. In the 2000s, it was all the more striking that rising inequality was neglected by ex-National Outlook politicians who, for many years, had spoken social justice. With religious capitalists, who benefited from neo-liberal policies behind them, these had now stopped their old rhetoric.

This rising awareness among Islamists led to political opposition to the neo-Islamism of the AKP. Islamic critiques of capitalism have been evoked and strongly reminded by some Muslim groups. They have discussed the need for a new Muslim politics and have started to question their relationship with leftist ideology and socialists. Class politics has become one of the most important issues of these Muslim groups. As a previously neglected political area in the history of the Turkish Islamist movement, the labor struggle has thus now gained importance. The groups have emphasized Islam's anti-capitalist character and defined themselves as anti-capitalist because of their Muslim identities. They have established different organizations.

Their most important aim is to find a way of political engagement as Muslims in the face of neo-liberal order. Except the Anti-kapitalist Müslümanlar and Devrimci Müslümanlar, other anti-capitalist Muslim groups have searched for a new Islamism which will be an independent ideology but benefit from other ideologies, especially Marxist class analysis. In this way, they have labor struggle on their political agendas and have justified this change by the Islamicization of some leftist terms. They use the Islamic term "*hak*" to justify the labor struggle. They see the working class as frustrated and oppressed. Therefore, they think that Muslims' duty must be on the right side and to stand by the working class as God ordered.

Anti-kapitalist Müslümanlar and Devrimci Müslümanlar, which have adopted revolutionary interpretations of the Quran, are positioned somewhat differently in anti-capitalist Muslim politics. Another result of the thesis is that these Muslims are supporters of an Islamic liberation theology in Turkey. First, these movements are openly an example of modernist Islam. Eliaçık has thought along the same line with the first modernist Islamists, like Mohammad Abduh and Jalal al-Din al Afgani. These Islamists had tried to adapt the Western modernization model through its Islamicization. They had used Islamic terms in order to adapt Western political institutions and concepts to Muslim countries. Similarly, Eliaçık Islamicized Marxist concepts by interpreting the Quran. He declared that socialism can be deduced from the Quran. Thus a Western ideology was justified by the Quranic interpretations of Eliaçık.

The most important reason why Eliaçık's thought is called Islamic liberation theology is its main political motivation. It is not only an attempt for only Islamicization of some Marxist concepts and creating a new Islamism. Eliaçık declared that his interpretation of the Quran was as seen from "the eyes of the poor," like the Christian liberation theologians had done earlier. Eren Erdem from the Devrimci Müslümanlar justified classless society, which is the ultimate aim of socialism by using Islamic rituals. These attempts construct a political base for a total justification of socialist worldview by Islamic terms. The case clearly can be made that there is an emerging Islamic liberation movement in Turkey among some anti-capitalist Muslims.

Through the Islamicization of social justice discourse and its regaining importance in Islamism, some Muslims share the common aim of social justice with leftists albeit from a different point of view. Although political motivations are different among the various Muslim groups, and although groups' membership –never formal- is fledgling it can be said that anti-capitalist Muslim politics has begun to develop in Turkey. The Islamist revivalist ideology emerged under conditions of imperialist threats of Western hegemony and was shaped by them; but now it is changing under the influence of neoliberalization process which is ongoing

throughout the world. It is yet to be seen, however, whether these groups will prove durable in politics.

Anti-capitalist Muslim political wing has inevitably based its ideology on leftist thought as well as Islamism. So it constructed a left wing of Islamism in Turkey. The cause of their rising relations with leftist thought must be seen as a result of the hegemony of the AKP's liberal politics. The AKP has become the closest Islamist party to the right in Turkey. In these conditions, Islamists who are against neo-liberal policies embrace the opportunity of opposing the AKP by taking leftist politics into their political agenda.

It must be mentioned here that this thesis has focused on Islamist groups' approaches and instrumentalisation of leftist ideologies and not vice versa, i.e. of leftist movements' approaches to Islam, which should be analyzed separately elsewhere.

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