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*Islamic Populism in Indonesia
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de Vedi R. Hadiz,
por Erna Anjarwati

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Built upon the perspective of historical sociology and political economy on the trajectories of the current Islamic politics in Indonesia, Egypt, and Turkey, this comparative case study analysis focuses its explanation on some problems attached to social transformations and political movements of the PKS, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the AKP political parties, as well as their associated disruptions expressed in the rise of a new Islamic Populism and its contributions to the reshaping of the socio-political landscape of most of the Muslim world in the post-cold war era. By exploring some commonalities and differences of the new Islamic populism in conjunction with several external factors, added to the Islamic doctrines, including the outcomes of cold war-era conflicts, the legacies of Western colonialization, the pressures of globalization in the Muslim world, and the evolution of secular state power and socio-economic change, the book deepens the readers' understanding about the main approaches to Islamic populism and how its political agendas need to adjust to respond to the constellation of social power and interests, and the challenges emerged from its engagement with a contradiction-laden neoliberal globalization. While the main objective of the old Islamic populism was to challenge colonialization and establish a state based on Islamic Caliphate and Sharia Law of Pan-Islamist ideology, the new Islamic populism in contrast, aims to mobilize a sort of identity politics among an increasingly diverse *ummah* (the community of believers), which is marginalized by authoritarian regimes, to forge asymmetrical cross-class coalitions for the contestation of power and resources in the confines of the nation-state. Thus, political parties, mass organizations, paramilitaries, and terrorist groups are those that can be used as the vehicles for social mobilization of the new Islamic populism.

By merging what is considered social movement strategies and conventional political parties, the PKS of Indonesia, the AKP of Turkey, and the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt are thus seen as the socio-political agents that can make an appeal to the *ummah* for building a morally resilient society against the threat of erosion associated with the "Western culture." In essence, the book places the question about the shaping, major characteristics, and strategies and organizational vehicles of the new Islamic populism and how they are different not merely from the old one but also from a common type of populism that took place in the West. The book

also provides a valuable contribution to the current debate in Political Science, in which it has indirectly answered a question of Diamond: "why the Middle East had remained relatively untouched by the so-called third wave of democratization?" (Diamond et al, 2003).

In general, the book is divided into eight chapters aside from the introduction part and conclusion. Chapter 2 discusses: Islamic politics and the emergence of a new Islamic populism, chapter 3: The genesis of Islamic Populism: historical legacies, chapter 4: Modernization and the cold war: paving the way, chapter 5: Pathways of political failure: dissent from the fringe, chapter 6: A study in political marginality: the Indonesian Darul Islam movement and its heirs, chapter 7: Navigating through democracy: a pathway to power?, and chapter 8: Navigating through neoliberalism: a pathway to power? Even though every chapter offers new insights and perspectives about the evolution of Islamic politics and the new Islamic populism, chapters 2, 4, and 7, however are the most essential to broaden the knowledge about this contemporary issue of the Muslim world.

One of the critical points discussed in chapter 2 is about the characteristics of the new Islamic populism and the engagement of the bourgeoisie, the urban middle-class, and the urban poor as the constituents for the success of Islamic populist cross-class alliances. It is argued that the main characteristics of the new Islamic populism are: "1) it is often led by the elements of the urban middle class, and 2) people with comparatively high levels of education but who find themselves stuck nonetheless" (Hadiz, 2016, p. 34). In the cases of Indonesia, Egypt, and Turkey, the socio-political agents of the new Islamic populism are those educated through the urban-based formal education system, such as the high school or university rather than those of politically socialized or conventional religious education. In Indonesia, such a system has been adopted by the PKS, especially in the post-New Order regime in 1998, while in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood has been using this approach to cultivate a culture of obedience and loyalty to Islamic movement leaders by applying the "*usroh*" system in schools and universities, within which senior students act to discipline juniors through the indoctrination of Islamic principles. Meanwhile, in Turkey, all the social agents of the AKP are those educated from the secular system of education, as religious education was prohibited since the establishment of the Republic. Such an education system produced more ambitious young urban middle class who developed new ideas and strategies to challenge the authoritarian rules that muted meritocratic advancement. Urban poor is also the other significant constituent of the new Islamic populism. While the AKP and the Muslim Brotherhood had made inroads with the urban poor through their engagement in social services and grassroots activities, such as health care and humanitarian relief organizations, in Indonesia, the absence of the Leftists since the 1960s and the strong factor of Soekarnoist populism hindered, however,

the incursions of the new Islamic populist into the urban poor. Furthermore, the absence of a culturally large Muslim bourgeoisie and the long-held dominance of an ethnic Chinese, one excluded from definitions of the *ummah*, has given the new Islamic populism more limited success in Indonesia compared to Turkey and Egypt.

In chapter 4, the significance of the outcomes of Cold-War era social conflicts and its implications to the emergence of new Islamic populism are thoroughly discussed. One of its outcomes was the destruction of the Leftist movements in the three selected countries, starting with the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in the 1960s, followed by the success of Anwar Sadat to destroy the legacy of Nasserism in the 1970s in Egypt, while in Turkey it took place in the 1980s when the Kemalist diminished the influence of the Leftists. It became evident that the weakening of Leftist movements during the Cold War involved cooperation with Islamic political forces. Such an outcome helped to create spaces enabling Islamist organizations to express their dissent against abusive and corrupt governments in many of the Muslim countries. At the same time, they promote their Islamic ideology as one of the principal alternatives to the existing political parties, such as traditional nationalist, socialist, and liberal organizations. This opportunity opened the path for the development of a new Islamic populism, based upon frustrations and aspirations of a marginalized *ummah* to reflect a cross-class alliance within existing social orders.

Chapter 7 contributes to the debate about the challenges of new Islamic populism when it encounters democracy that went beyond the simple thesis of political moderation through democratic inclusion. The underlying idea is that the adherence to modern democracy in the Muslim world tends to lead to disintegration of the *ummah* along party lines and national ones and is considered a form of violation of Islamic doctrine that prohibits any form of state but the Caliphate. In contrast, however, the PKS case discloses how ideological transformation had changed the way they think about the importance of democracy. The party adopted a non-literalist understanding of scripture, while suggesting Muslims to obey modern laws instead of religious doctrines, as long as they do not go against the spirit of God's commands. The significant finding is that the AKP is the only party that maintains the multi-class alliance by embracing the poor, while the PKS and the Muslim Brotherhood have been struggling with the absence of well-organized political vehicles that can represent the marginalized *ummah* to navigate their political agendas through the democratic terrain. Democracy in the Muslim world therefore tends to be embraced when broad-ranging multi-class alliance is forged under the banner of Islam to advance their political, social, and economic position of a deprived *ummah*, strengthened by a common experience of marginalization and the rejection of capitalism and neoliberal globalization.

The author concludes that the rise of the new Islamic populism in the Muslim

world is but the mirror image of the emergence of populist tendencies in the West. What makes it different with populism in the West is its attempts to build a strong cross-class alliance instead of just a homogenous group. The evolution of the new Islamic populism is therefore closely related to the major issues of social dislocation, marginality, and uncertainty. One of the findings of the book suggests that the new Islamic populism is more likely to drive the Muslim countries back to authoritarian rule instead of implementing democracy, in order to keep the Islamic parties' interests and future prospects for advancement. This comparative study essentially helps to deepen the knowledge of a complex narrative of the new Islamic populism that goes beyond liberal democratic triumphalism and security studies.

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