



## **Genealogy of Soekarno's syncretic-eclectic thought: the intersection of culture values, religion, and ideology (1916-1926)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of values and ideas that shaped Soekarno's syncretic and eclectic thinking. This study uses a historical method that includes four stages, namely heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Through comparative analysis, it is shown that there are differences between the concepts of syncretism and eclecticism. Eclecticism is an approach to thinking that selectively combines various elements of thought from different systems of thought. This differs from syncretism, which tends to combine elements of values and thoughts into a unity with traces of contradiction within it. The results of this study show that Soekarno's syncretic thinking was born from an active dialectical process between tradition, values, and philosophy. The intersection of Javanese values, Theosophy, Abangan Islam, and Hinduism became the foundation for the formation of Soekarno's moral horizon, which was oriented towards the idea of unity. Meanwhile, Soekarno's eclecticism was the result of his adaptation of HOS Tjokroaminoto's eclectic style of thinking, as reflected in his writings on Islam and Socialism. Tjokroaminoto selected concepts of socialism that were compatible with the framework of Islam, rather than accepting the doctrine of socialism. Based on this approach, Soekarno formulated syncretic and eclectic ideological ideas in his 1926 writing Nationalism, Islamism, and Marxism. The uniqueness of this study lies in the position of syncretism as Soekarno's moral philosophy and eclecticism as Soekarno's epistemology.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

For decades, Soekarno has been reduced to a charismatic political figure of independence. The Marhaenism ideology formulated by Soekarno is also not free from efforts to degrade so that Marhaenism is only considered as a manifestation of narrow nationalism. All of this is a logical consequence of the de-Soekarnoization policy that occurred during the New Order era. In fact, Soekarno was not only a charismatic nationalist figure, but also a thinker with philosophical depth. He struggled with various values and thoughts that made him a central figure in the political world of the independence movement.

As is known, Soekarno lived in a plural family background. He grew up with diverse values, philosophies, cultures and thoughts. He recognized Javanese, Hindu, Islamic, and Theosophical philosophies from an early age. The intersection of plurality of values in turn formed the basis of Soekarno's syncretic moral thinking. Syncretism emphasizes harmony between different value systems and thoughts. The logical consequence of a syncretic way of thinking is an attempt to unify the various contradictions that exist. This influenced how Soekarno avoided conflicts between the dominant ideological political movements in Indonesia.

Before entering politics, Soekarno had studied political thought from various figures such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Marx, Engels, Lenin, and others (Adams, 1966). However, the turning point of Soekarno's thinking cannot be narrowed down to theoretical issues only, but also the praxis aspect. The dimension of Soekarno's political praxis that changed his thinking can be traced in his relationship with HOS Tjokroaminoto. Tjokroaminoto was an accomplished politician of Sarekat Islam who had strong charisma. He also had an eclectic style of thought. Eclecticism is a style of thought that is oriented towards the unification of various concepts of thought from different systems of thought without having to adopt them absolutely and entirely. The eclectic approach emphasizes the selection method to achieve compatibility of one concept of thought with another, even though each concept departs from different traditions of thought. This contrasts with syncretism, which brings together various elements without resolving contradictions within them. The manifestation of Tjokroaminoto's eclectic thinking can be seen in his writing entitled *Islam and Socialism*. In that writing, he was able to harmonize the principles of socialism that were compatible with Islam. He neither accepted nor rejected the doctrine of socialism in its entirety. That is where Tjokroaminoto used the selection method to unite the concepts of Islamic thought and socialism. Soekarno elaborated on Tjokroaminoto's eclecticism in his 1926 essay *Nationalism, Islamism, and Marxism*.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the genealogy of Soekarno's intellectual formation by analyzing the syncretic and eclectic character of his thought during the early period of his life (up to 1916). Specifically, this study seeks to answer three interrelated research questions: (1) Why was Soekarno's moral thinking syncretic? (2) Why was Soekarno's epistemological basis eclectic? and (3) How was Soekarno's syncretic-eclectic thinking realized in practice? To address these questions, the discussion is structured into several sections. The first section explores the plurality of cultural, religious, and ideological values that shaped Soekarno's moral horizon from childhood to 1916, laying the foundation for his later philosophical orientation. Subsequent sections trace the influence of these values on his epistemological eclecticism and examine the ways in which his syncretic-eclectic thought manifested in political, cultural, and intellectual expressions. The second section examines Soekarno's intellectual struggle with HOS Tjokroaminoto. The third section discusses Soekarno's syncretic-eclectic thinking in his writing *Nationalism, Islamism, and Marxism*. Comparative analysis is used in this study to explain the fundamental differences between the concepts of syncretism and eclecticism. The meanings of these two concepts are often misunderstood due to their similar emphasis on unity. However, the concept of syncretic unity differs from that of eclectic unity. Furthermore, Soekarno's moral syncretism and epistemological eclecticism can be specifically elaborated in a comparative analysis.

So far, there has been no research that examines the origins of Soekarno's syncretic and eclectic thinking. The genealogy of Soekarno's syncretic thinking can at least be traced from the writings of Bernhard Dahm, but the emphasis on syncretism as a moral foundation has not been studied. In addition, research on eclecticism as the basis of Soekarno's epistemology has been inadequate. Syncretism and eclecticism are inseparable in Soekarno's thinking. National-scale research examining Soekarno's thinking has so far focused more on ideological products such as Marhaenism, Pancasila, Nationalism, Marxism, and secular Islam, rather than the Soekarno's syncretic-eclectic thinking. Some journal publications such as Kuswono's research only emphasize Marhaenism as a socio-nationalist ideology initiated by Soekarno to free Indonesia from colonialism and imperialism (Kuswono, 2016). Ema Agustina emphasized Marxism as the most important element of Soekarno's NASAKOM concept. (Agustina, 2019). Bimo Rafi Widiyanto focuses on Soekarno's Marhaenism which became the premise of Pancasila (Widiyanto et al., 2022). Adrian Ichsan Pratama discusses Soekarno's political thoughts on nationalism as the embryo that shaped the Pancasila philosophy (Pratama et al., 2024). Ganjar Razuni examines Pancasila as Soekarno's response to diversity in

Indonesia (Razuni, 2023). Anif Kiftiyah and Ika Septia Wahyuningsih emphasized that Pancasila was Soekarno's attempt to synthesize all the ideas of the nation's founders and community groups (Kiftiyah & Septia Wahyuningsih, 2025). Robert Mubarrod and Nur Rizki Eka Putra study Soekarno's inclusive and tolerant Islamic political thought (Mubarrod & Eka Putra, 2025). Muhammad Soleh Aminullah examines Soekarno's Islamic thought which tends to be secularistic (Aminullah, 2020). Therefore, research that emphasizes the historical roots of syncretism and eclecticism in Soekarno's thought is a study that has novelty value.

On an international scale, research on syncretism is dominated by studies of religious syncretism. Aliya Mursalova's research focuses on the emergence and development of religious syncretism (Mursalova, 2025). Zhao Yuanwang's research discusses syncretism between Chinese religion, local animism, and Islam in the worship of Datuk Gong in Malaysia (Wang, 2022). Hans Gerald Hödl's research discusses the concepts of syncretism and hybridity in the context of religions originating from Africa in America (Hödl & Schmidt, 2023). Juan Dejo and Mariana Dupuy's research focuses on religious syncretism between Christianity and the ancestral beliefs of the Andean origin (Dejo & Dupuy, 2025). Irawan and Zayadi's research discusses the syncretism of Islamic law in the context of Hindu cultural dominance in a Balinese village (Irawan et al., 2025). Thobekile Masombuka's research explores religious syncretism in Akwaeke Emezi's novel *Freshwater* (Masombuka, 2025). Kiyong Kim's research discusses the superiority of Yhwh's position among other gods, thereby rejecting theological syncretism. (Kim, 2025). Barbara Pimentel da Silva Cruz's research discusses syncretism and *mestiçagem* as variables that shape Afro-Brazilian religions (Pimentel Da Silva Cruz, 2025). Marciano Adilio Spica's research focuses on the influence of Afro-Brazilian religious syncretism in shaping the philosophy of religious diversity (Spica, 2025). Contrary to this research, which focuses on moral syncretism, it cannot be denied that religions also shape Soekarno's moral values. However, it should be emphasized that moral syncretism is an abstraction of the overall values that are embedded in Indonesian society.

## RESEARCH METHOD

Every work step in this research is based on the historical method. The historical method is a process of testing and analyzing the historical record of the past (Gottschalk, 1983). The historical method consists of several stages: heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography. Heuristics is the process of extracting and collecting relevant primary and secondary historical sources. To dig up information about the genealogy of Soekarno's thought, the researcher focused on literature studies related to the history of Soekarno's life and Soekarno's writings that reflected his syncretic-eclectic ideas.

Primary sources discussing the origins of Soekarno's syncretic and eclectic thinking include *Bung Karno: Penjambung Lidah Rakyat Indonesia*, *Dibawah Bendera Revolusi Djilid 1*, and *Tanamkan Tat Twam Asi Didalam Dadamu!*. Meanwhile, primary sources discussing Tjokroaminoto's eclectic thinking, which influenced Soekarno, include *Islam dan Sosialisme* (Islam and Socialism). Secondary sources discussing Soekarno's biography and his thoughts include *Sukarno dan Perjuangan Kemerdekaan* by Bernhard Dahm, *Sukarno: Sebuah Biografi Politik* by John D. Legge. After collecting sources, the next step is to test the sources collected with criticism. Criticism itself consists of two parts, namely external criticism and internal criticism. External criticism analyzes the authenticity of the source. Internal criticism analyzes the credibility of the source. External criticism deals with the physical aspects of the source, while internal criticism deals with the substance of the source. After being successfully tested through criticism, researchers interpret the historical facts obtained. The interpretation process is commonly known as the interpretation stage. The interpretation process is carried out by examining the interrelationship of historical facts that produce certain conclusions. The historical facts that have been interpreted confirm that Soekarno's syncretic-eclectic style of thought was derived from the dialectic of various conceptions and styles of thought encountered in his life journey.

The genealogical approach in this study focuses on tracing the origins of thought. The concept of intellectual genealogy is used to analyze the dynamics of values and ideas that shaped Soekarno's thinking. In addition, comparative analysis is used to explain the differences between Soekarno's concepts of moral syncretism and epistemological eclecticism. After that, all historical facts that have been interpreted are processed into a form of historical writing. This stage is historiography.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### **Syncretism: The Plurality of Values that Shaped Soekarno's Thought**

Soekarno was the second child of Raden Sukemi Sosrodiharjo and Ida Ayu Nyoman Rai. He was born on June 6, 1901 in Surabaya (ANRI, 1943). Each of Soekarno's parents had a quite different background. Raden Sukemi Sostrodiharjo was a minor nobleman, while Ida Ayu Nyoman was a Balinese Hindu.



Figure 1. Soekarno with his father, Raden Sukemi Sosrodiharjo

Source: (Adams, 1966)

The values that parents believe in are certainly the initial foundation that shaped Soekarno's thinking. The tradition of thought and values of Theosophy, Javanese Islam, and Hinduism from Soekarno's parents contributed to the formation of the initial foundation. Soekarno's father was an abangan Muslim who was closely related to Javanese traditions. The abangan Islamic tradition needs to be distinguished from the puritan Islamic tradition which refers to the purity and totality of the teachings in the Qur'an and Sunnah. In the abangan context, it means that Islamic teachings have been fused with Javanese belief values. Clifford Geertz explains the main characteristic of abangan is that it does not prioritize the doctrine of a belief, but only focuses on ceremonial rituals (Geertz, 2013). The implication of prioritizing the doctrine of belief is permissiveness towards other doctrines of belief. The permissive character of the Muslim abangan helped shape Soekarno's views, which tended to easily accept a plural variety of beliefs and traditions.

Meanwhile, the teachings of Theosophy and Hinduism which also influenced Soekarno basically have a close intertwining of teachings. Theosophy is a western esoteric teaching that embodies the eastern orientalist tradition. Theosophy aims to maintain the wisdom that underlies theological, religious, and scientific truths for the sake of the formation of universal brotherhood between fellow humans (Nugraha, 2001). Theosophy is strongly influenced by the Oriental Hindu-Buddhist

tradition. Aspects of Hindu-Buddhist teachings in it are the philosophy of life cycle movements such as reincarnation.

From an early age, Soekarno was forged with the teachings of Theosophy by his father. Raden Sukemi taught the need to be kind to all living things, both humans and animals, which is similar to the teachings of Hinduism. Soekarno recounted that when he accidentally dropped a bird's nest from a tree, his father was furious and warned him to treat animals as he treated humans. This is based on a philosophy that emphasizes the equal position between living beings before God. This philosophy is known as *Tat Twam Asi*.

*Tat Twam Asi* is a teaching derived from Hindu philosophy where the equal dignity of all living beings is recognized. The term has its roots in Sanskrit, *Tat* meaning he, *Twam* meaning you, while *Asi* means is. Philosophically, *Tat Twam Asi* means "He is you" and "you are Him". The term "He" refers to the entity Brahman as the ultimate reality that is the source of all life, while the term "thou" refers to Atman as the soul that lives all beings (Suastini & Rach Suarjaya, 2021). The philosophical aspect of this teaching simply emphasizes that the soul of every being is actually sourced from one entity, Brahman. Long before his father taught *Tat Twam Asi*, Soekarno had obtained this teaching from his mother, who had a Balinese Hindu background. Ida Ayu Nyoman also instilled the value of *Tat Twam Asi* to Soekarno since childhood (Departemen Penerangan RI, 1964).

In addition, his grandparents also introduced Soekarno to Javanese cultural values. As is known, Soekarno spent most of his childhood with them in Tulungagung, Kediri. The grandfather always taught Soekarno to be honest and fair within the framework of Javanese ethics. Not only forging moral lessons, he also gave Soekarno the freedom to play and enjoy puppet shows late into the night. Soekarno also likes to watch puppet shows from dusk to dawn (Dahm, 1987). It was there that Soekarno explored all aspects of traditional Javanese cultural values. Wayang is considered the highest cultural tradition of the Javanese palace and rural Javanese people (Legge, 1985).

Wayang is a Javanese cultural product that is performed by displaying leather puppets under the light of a screen. Wayang performances generally contain mystical stories from Javanese history that are full of wisdom and life lessons, rather than mere entertainment. Wayang stories are also adapted from Indian epics that have undergone a process of javanization, such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics, among others; these stories hold hidden secrets about the deep meaning of life (Legge, 1985). The stories of gods, kings, chivalry, and nobility do not merely serve as entertainment, but reveal the deep connection between humans and the universe. Stories generally emphasize the harmony between humans and the universe. Harmonization of humans as microcosm and the universe as macrocosm. The Javanese philosophical messages contained in the puppet stories also influenced Soekarno's way of thinking, which strongly emphasized harmony and unity, rather than conflict.

The culture and tradition of plural thinking that traces the values of universal wisdom are absorbed in Soekarno's experience. That is what became the fundamental initial framework before Soekarno plunged into the field of national movement. Plurality of values and traditions is not to be contradicted, but to find the essence of compatibility. Soekarno's syncretic style of thought departs from the struggle of diverse values in his family. He believed that there were always contradictions that could be clashed, but this could be overcome by taking the elements of commonality. In this view, differences often lead to disputes and quarrels. The union of elements between the Javanese horizon of thought, Theosophy, Hinduism, and abangan Islam that came from his family manifested itself as syncretism.

Syncretism is an understanding that combines various elements of different schools of thought, values, and cultural traditions to realize a harmony of balance (Ekopriyono, 2005). Soekarno's syncretism cannot be separated from the Javanese style of thinking. Bernhard Dahm argues that a way of thinking that seeks compromise, synthesis, coexistence, or consensus to create a pattern of harmony and balance is a typical Javanese perspective (Dahm, 1987). Soekarno's syncretic views were acquired through praxis as someone who was raised in the Javanese tradition. According to Benedict Anderson, Soekarno's syncretic way of thinking is not unique, but a reflection of the culture of Indonesian society itself (Anderson, 2002). It cannot be denied that syncretism is a common phenomenon of Javanese society. Like syncretism, the Javanese way of thinking boils down to harmony and balance. Javanese syncretism in turn shaped Soekarno's moral perspective in

seeing differences that could potentially lead to disputes. That is where the moral framework of reconciliation is formed from the context of a plurality of values, philosophies, traditions and cultures that intersect directly with Soekarno.

The syncretism referred to here is not religious syncretism that seeks to combine the teachings of beliefs into one unit, but moral syncretism that unites various values from various sources of value. Syncretism is the ethical dimension of Soekarnoism. Soekarno's philosophy of syncretism presupposes an ethic of pragmatism. Pragmatism is an ethic that is oriented towards benefits and usefulness. However, the ethics of pragmatism cannot be simplified with ethics in the western philosophical tradition which is released from the cultural context. On the contrary, pragmatism that emphasizes benefits is an integral part of Javanese philosophy. Soekarno's pragmatism is based on Javanese ethical principles. In Javanese ethics, being benefit-oriented is collective in nature. Avoiding conflict is a manifestation of Javanese pragmatism. Magnis-Suseno explains that Javanese ethics have two fundamental principles, namely harmony and respect. The principle of harmony manifests itself in harmonious conditions, minimization of conflict, the realization of peace, and unity. (Roring & Tondok, 2025). Javanese ethics have long been embedded in Soekarno's soul.

### **Eclecticism: Intellectual Struggle with Tjokroaminoto (1916-1926)**

Soekarno continued his secondary studies at *Hoogere Burgerschool* (HBS) in Surabaya after graduating from *Europeesche Lagere School* (ELS) in Mojokerto in 1915. In Surabaya, Raden Sukemi left Soekarno at the house of his friend, Tjokroaminoto. The majority of HBS students are actually Europeans, but the father did not want Soekarno to be influenced by western life patterns. That is the reason why he entrusted his son to Tjokroaminoto who had the nickname as the king of Java without a crown (Adams, 1966). In turn, Tjokroaminoto had a big hand in shaping Soekarno's style of thinking.

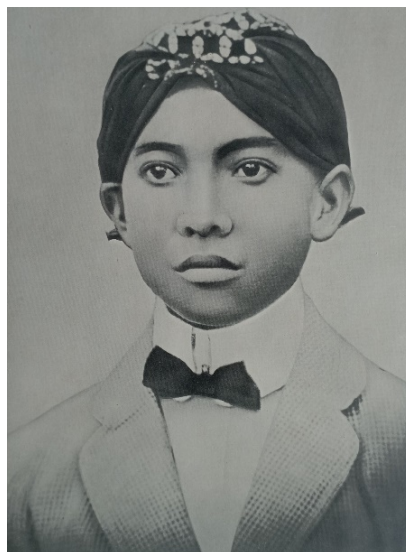


Figure 2. Young Soekarno.  
Source: (Soekarno, 1965)

During his time at HBS, Soekarno often received discriminatory treatment. Dutch students tend to keep their distance from the native people. Furthermore, discriminatory treatment did not only come from students, but also HBS teachers themselves. Teachers gave much harsher punishments to bumiputera such as a ban on attending class for two days. The grades given by teachers to bumiputera also tended to be unfair. Soekarno stated that the grades obtained by Dutch children were always higher than the bumiputera (Adams, 1966).

Even so, Soekarno often received special attention from HBS teachers. One of them was C. Hartogh. He introduced Marxism to Soekarno for the first time (Salam, 1966). He was the teacher who led the discussion club at HBS (Soetjiatingsih & Kutoyo, 1981). From the discussion club, Soekarno began to learn a lot about rhetoric, argumentation, and the ability to lead his friends.

In addition, Soekarno learned a lot of political science from HOS Tjokroaminoto. He is the charismatic leader of Sarekat Islam (SI) who is highly revered by the Javanese people. Tjokroaminoto is considered a messianic figure depicted in the Javanese mythological figure "Ratu Adil". Tjokroaminoto's house was often used as a base for gatherings of political movement figures. It was in this house that Soekarno knew several movement activists such as Agus Salim, Sneevliet, Musso, and Alimin (Ricklefs, 2011). Soekarno's political awareness began to grow in this environment as recorded in the Cindy Adams interview. During dinner, Soekarno discussed the Dutch colonial government's exploitation of Indonesia with Musso, Alimin, and Tjokroaminoto (Adams, 1966). Soekarno's political consciousness was also influenced by the books he read. Through books, he can wrestle with world thinkers such as Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Vladimir Lenin, Otto Bauer, Voltaire, Jean Jacques Rousseau, to Jean Jaures (Adams, 1966).

Not stopping at theory, he entered politics for the first time in Tri Koro Dharmo. It was a student organization in Java that aimed to build solidarity and unity among students (Dahm, 1987). In 1918, this organization changed its name to Jong Java. Apart from Jong Java, Soekarno was also active in writing in the Sarekat Islam newspaper, Oetoesan Hindia. He wrote sharply not only against the oppression of the colonial regime, but also against the naivety of the native people. As in his criticism of the formation of the Jong Java and Jong Sumatra federations in the article "Intelektual?" published in Oetoesan Hindia in 1921. According to him, the federation was just intellectual nonsense that did not touch the root causes of the misery faced by the bumiputera (Dahm, 1987). The article was Soekarno's early political conception that tended to be socialistic, rather than nationalistic. The split of Sarekat Islam into two camps (Islamist and Communist) also changed Soekarno's view on the importance of political and ideological unity.

The conception of ideological unity had actually been started by Tjokroaminoto. He concocted an eclectic unity between the concepts of socialism and Islam. Eclecticism is an approach that seeks to unite various doctrines from different systems of thought without adopting them in their entirety. Eclecticism accepts doctrines from different traditions of thought as long as they are coherent with the main doctrine (Wibier, 2015). Therefore, doctrinal conformity is aimed at justifying the truth of the main doctrine. Eclecticism needs to be clearly distinguished from syncretism. Syncretism is not based on the search for truth, but only unites a plurality of doctrines.

In the context of ideology, Tjokroaminoto was open to exploring other ideologies without adopting them in their entirety. In 1924, Tjokroaminoto left a legacy of eclectic thinking in a paper entitled Islam and Socialism. Tjokroaminoto was able to point out the similarities and differences between Islam and socialism. He rejected the philosophy of materialism that was the basis of the ideology of socialism. Islamic theology, which is based on the explanation that everything originates from God, certainly contradicts materialism, which states that everything originates from matter. Materialism assumes that non-material activity arises from material activity just as the emergence of the mind is a consequence of brain activity. Materialism rejects the assumption that non-material things determine material things as the concept of creation in religion. Therefore, the principle of materialism cannot be incorporated into Islamic doctrine. Tjokroaminoto insisted that everything comes from God and will return to God (Tjokroaminoto, 2018).

Nevertheless, Tjokroaminoto explained that there are similarities between Islam and socialism. Islam and socialism view humans as equal. Socialism calls for the abolition of social classes, whereas Islam was able to elevate the status of slaves and women at a time when Arab society was sinking into moral decline (Tjokroaminoto, 2018). The Prophet Muhammad taught to free slaves, honor women, and protect the rights of orphans.

But it is the equality in the economic context that stands out the most. Tjokroaminoto considered that Islam and socialism had the same goal of fighting capitalism. Islam forbids usury which is considered equivalent to surplus value (*meerwaarde*) which is the enemy of socialism. The surplus value is produced by the workers, but the workers cannot enjoy the results. Capitalists continue to

rob workers of surplus value in order to make huge profits. Tjokroaminoto considered this to be related to the teachings of Islam which require to give benefits to the workers as value producers (Tjokroaminoto, 2018). In turn, Soekarno emulated how Tjokroaminoto articulated the equation of Islam and Socialism in Nationalism, Islamism and Marxism in 1926.

In the period 1921-1926 Soekarno's political activities increased. He established relationships with prominent political figures such as Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo. Soekarno was also one of the founders of the Algemeene Studieclub Bandung, a student discussion group with a socialist-nationalistic character. The Algemeene Studieclub in turn formed the Indonesian National Party (PNI) in 1927.

### **Nationalism, Islamism and Marxism: Soekarno's Syncretic-Electic Thought**

In the context of Indonesian politics in the early 20th century, the political movement was dominantly divided into three ideological camps: nationalist, Islamist, and Marxist. Each camp had different philosophies and political conceptions, but Soekarno saw a commonality between the three camps, namely the vision of achieving Indonesian independence.

In Nationalism, Islamism and Marxism, Soekarno attempted to unite the three movements with a rational and ethical foundation. He explained the similarities in the doctrines of the three ideologies. He also presented concrete evidence of the relationship between movements in the context of resistance to colonialism. In this paper, Soekarno uses an eclectic approach when connecting the concept of one ideology with the concept of another ideology, while the syncretic thinking style is seen when Soekarno tries to reconcile various movements to achieve a common goal. The syncretic-eclectic style of thinking is the basic framework of this paper.

Soekarno raised the philosophical question "Is it possible for Islam as a religion to coexist with nationalism based on the principle of nationality? Can Islam as a religion unite with Marxism based on the principle of materialism?" "Can nationalism unite with Islam and Marxism based on international principles?" (Soekarno, 1965). Soekarno articulated the idea of nationalism that was not confined to the racial, religious, and geographical boundaries of a nation. He emphasized nationalism that is oriented towards human values as the antithesis of chauvinist nationalism that departs from racial supremacy. Mahatma Gandhi and Sun Yat Sen were Nationalist figures that Soekarno idolized. Gandhi's nationalism manifested in an effort to embrace various religious groups. This is where he realized the importance of building a foundation of nationalism based on the common interests of all groups. He also established good relations with pan-Islamist political figures such as Maulana Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali. This proved that nationalists could work together with Islamists. Meanwhile, Sun Yat Sen was a Kuomintang nationalist figure who accepted the teachings of Marxism such as opposition to imperialism and capitalism (Soekarno, 1965). As is known, Sun Yat Sen had a political affinity with the Marxists. Not only at the level of praxis, philosophically Sun Yat Sen tried to unite the factors of nationalism with marxism in the principle of San Min Chu I. This principle consists of three elements: the first is the principle of nationalism and the second is the principle of marxism. This principle consists of three elements: Min Tsen (Nationalism), Min Chu (Democracy), Min Sheng (Socialism). Elements of nationalism and marxism helped shape Soekarno's conception of eastern nationalism.

Soekarno made a clear distinction between eastern nationalism and western nationalism. Western nationalism is driven by the desire for conquest, while eastern nationalism is driven by the desire for liberation and independence. This cannot be separated from the condition of most of Asia which became a European colony. The Asian experience of colonization gave birth to a nationalism that was socialistic, rather than fascistic or chauvinistic. This is the general trend, but it does not mean that chauvinistic-fascistic nationalism did not grow in Asia. The Arya Samaj nationalist movement is an example of an extreme form of nationalism that broke the harmonious unity of Hindus and Muslims (Soekarno, 1965).

Soekarno's nationalism was oriented towards human values, not exclusive and sectarian nationalism. Therefore, Soekarno saw the hostility of the nationalists to the Islamists as unreasonable. In fact, nationalists and Islamists have similar goals, namely fighting the greed of western imperialism (Soekarno, 1965). Although Islamists do not recognize the principle of nationality like nationalists, Islamists are still obliged to defend the interests of their homeland. The

intersection of interests is something that shallow nationalists cannot see. The political idea of pan-Islamism, which was aimed at countering western greed, in turn succeeded in becoming a big wave that spread to various colonized Muslim countries. The inter-racial character of Islamism became a strong bond, despite having different racial and cultural backgrounds.

Islamism as a theological political movement has political views that are certainly at odds with Marxists and Nationalists. This is what makes Marxists and Nationalists unwilling to establish political relations with Islamists. They have prejudices against religion. Marxists are of the view that religion is often used as a tool by the elite and bourgeoisie to cover up oppression. Nationalists, on the other hand, generally held the view that religion should not be brought into politics (Soekarno, 1965). However, conservative Islamists also looked down on nationalists and marxists. Soekarno emphasized that true Islamists are neither anti-nationalist nor anti marxist. On the contrary, Islamic values basically contain socialistic and nationalist elements. Islam teaches its people to love their homeland. Soekarno gave examples of pan-islamist figures who love their nation and homeland such as Al-Afghani, Seyid Jamaluddin, Arabi Pasha, Mustafa Kamil, Mohammad Farid Bey, Ali Pasha, Ahmed Bey Agayeff, Mohammad Ali, and Shaukat Ali (Soekarno, 1965). Soekarno also said that the anti-foreign (anti-asing) nationalists had the same goal as the anti-infidel (anti-kafir) Islamists. The phrases anti-asing and anti-kafir must be seen from a broader perspective because if you only stop reading at this writing, then Soekarno seems to be a chauvinist and fascist figure. Whereas, as is known, Soekarno was a political figure who was anti fascist and tolerant of various beliefs. Islamists are not necessarily gratuitously anti heathen, nor are nationalists necessarily anti-foreign. The phrases "anti-kafir" and "anti-foreign" are actually nothing more than Soekarno's expression of resistance to the Dutch colonial regime.

In another article, Soekarno also elaborated on the relationship between Islam and nationalism. He emphasized that Islam does not conflict with nationalism. Islam only conflicts with superficial nationalism that encourages hatred of other nations. This shallow nationalism is articulated as chauvinism and provincialism. In the Islamic treasury, this is similar to the concept of Ashabiyah which is hated by Allah. The term Ashabiyah is a form of chauvinist nationalism and provincialism (Soekarno, 1965).

When Soekarno elaborated on the similarities between Islam and Marxism, he was greatly influenced by Tjokroaminoto's analysis in Islam and Socialism. Soekarno agreed with Tjokroaminoto's statement that capitalism is the main enemy of marxists and Islamists. Marxists fight against "surplus value" (meerwaarde) exploited by the bourgeoisie, while Islam forbids usury in any form. Surplus value and usury are considered similar concepts. Capitalism works by exploiting the surplus value produced by workers. The capitalists do not give the right share of profit to the workers as the producers of surplus value which is the source of profit (Soekarno, 1965). According to Soekarno, exploiting surplus value has the same position as eating usury. Another thing that proves that Islam and Marxism have something in common is the opposition to capital accumulation. Soekarno said that Islam prohibits accumulating money in a capitalistic manner (Soekarno, 1965). In capitalism, money is not only used as a means of payment, but is placed as the main purpose in circulation.

In addition, the obligation of Zakat is also considered to have similar principles with Marxism. Zakat implies giving a share of wealth to the poor (Soekarno, 1965). The principle of zakat is similar to marxism which wants to create welfare for the poor. The socialistic principles of zakat and marxism need to be fully distinguished because Islam still recognizes private property rights, while marxism wants to abolish private property rights to achieve the ideal of social welfare. The similarity between Islam and Marxism is actually more dominant in the aspect of ethical goals. If there is a concept that seems to be forced to unite with other concepts, it does not mean that Soekarno does not understand the depth of the concept, but there is a big goal to be achieved: unity between political movements. Soekarno criticized how nationalists and Islamists wrongly assumed that marxism had failed in Russia, even though Russian conditions could not be used as a basis for justifying the complete failure of marxism. Soekarno gave reasons about the preconditions that had not been met to realize the ideals of marxist socialism. This ideal can only be achieved if most of the country has become socialist (Soekarno, 1965). The second reason was the capitalist and imperialist attacks and blockades against Russia turning into a socialist country. Soekarno wanted

to show that the failure of the Bolsheviks in Russia was rooted in external factors, rather than the faulty conception of marxism itself as nationalists and Islamists alleged.

Soekarno realized that the hatred of nationalists and Islamists towards Marxism stemmed from the conception of Marxist philosophy that rejected the principles of nationality and religion. Soekarno quoted from the Communist Manifesto that Marxists have no homeland and give up religion (Soekarno, 1965). Soekarno did not agree with Marx and Engels' statements that delegitimized the concepts of nationality and religion. He considered that Marx and Engels were not prophets whose teachings were valid throughout the ages, therefore of course their teachings could be changed according to the times (Soekarno, 1965). According to Soekarno, the alliance between marxists, nationalists and Muslims was the demand of the times to face colonialism and imperialism.

The marxist tactic of antagonizing nationalists and Islamists had to be abandoned as it did not suit the needs of the movement. In the Asian context, the main fight is not against the capitalists because the proletariat is not yet the majority as it is in Europe and America. The first step is to fight feudalism. Resistance to feudalism presupposes a tactical cooperation with the "klein-burgerlijk" petty bourgeoisie. Soekarno gave examples of political cooperation between nationalists and marxists in China or Islamists and marxists in Afghanistan.

Political cooperation was necessary to win national autonomy from the colonizers. National autonomy is a stage that marxists need to go through in order to implement socialism freely. Therefore, the nationalist and Islamist movements need to be embraced to realize this political goal. It cannot be denied that the Islamists' hostility towards the Marxists is not only a tactical issue, but also a philosophical one. Materialism, which is the ideological foundation of Marxism, is certainly at odds with the theological foundation of religious people. Soekarno distinguished the philosophy of materialism and historical materialism. The philosophy of materialism questions matter as the origin of thought, while historical materialism questions how material conditions determine changes in thought (Soekarno, 1965).

He emphasized that these two concepts have differences. Religious people are considered wrong to accuse marxists of deifying matter because marxism is associated with the philosophy of materialism, rather than historical materialism. Soekarno also explained that the accusation came from the propaganda of the conservative church in Europe. That is what makes Marxists hate religious people. In the European context, religion is used as a tool to protect the interests of the elite and capitalism. In the Asian context, Islam is the religion of the oppressed and colonized. Islamists want liberation from the shackles of colonization and oppression, which is certainly in line with the spirit of the Marxist struggle.

Table 1. Comparison of the Concepts of Syncretism and Eclecticism in the Thoughts of Soekarno

| Aspect                                   | Syncretism                                                                                                         | Eclecticism                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Approach</b>                          | Combines various values, traditions, and thoughts into a unified whole, even if contradictions remain.             | Selectively adopts compatible elements from different systems of thought without accepting them entirely.         |
| <b>Orientation</b>                       | Oriented toward harmony and unity of diverse values.                                                               | Oriented toward selection and compatibility of concepts.                                                          |
| <b>Process</b>                           | Integrates contradictions into a synthesis (unity despite tensions).                                               | Filters and chooses suitable doctrines, discarding incompatible ones.                                             |
| <b>Soekarno's Source</b>                 | Derived from his family background: Javanese philosophy, Abangan Islam, Hinduism, Theosophy.                       | Inspired by H.O.S. Tjokroaminoto's eclectic style in <i>Islam and Socialism</i> .                                 |
| <b>Application in Soekarno's Thought</b> | Seen in his attempt to reconcile nationalist, Islamist, and Marxist movements under one struggle for independence. | Seen in his selective use of Marxism, Islam, and Nationalism in <i>Nationalism, Islamism, and Marxism</i> (1926). |
| <b>Philosophical Basis</b>               | Moral syncretism (ethical unity of values): foundation of Soekarno's paradigm of unity.                            | Epistemological eclecticism (intellectual method of selection): foundation of Soekarno's conceptual reasoning.    |

|                            |                                                                               |                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Philosophical Style</b> | Typical of Javanese culture: emphasizes balance, coexistence, and compromise. | Typical of critical intellectual adaptation emphasizes rational coherence and doctrinal consistency. |
| <b>Outcome</b>             | Creates a moral framework of reconciliation.                                  | Creates a practical intellectual framework for combining ideologies.                                 |

Based on the comparative analysis presented in Table 1, this study provides a new perspective on the distinction between syncretism and eclecticism in Soekarno's thinking. Although there have been previous studies examining Soekarno's syncretic thinking, the analysis in those studies is still lacking in depth. The uniqueness of this study lies in the position of syncretism as Soekarno's moral philosophy and eclecticism as Soekarno's epistemology. The manifestation of his moral syncretism is his determination to maintain social harmony and avoid conflict between political movements. Meanwhile, the manifestation of eclecticism is the selection of various relevant and coherent ideological ideas to create a new ideology.

This comparative analytical framework provides a theoretical basis for contemporary historians to develop research on intellectual history in the future. The genealogical approach to thinking by tracing the dynamics of values and ideas in the historical journey of a figure must be viewed through a comparative lens so as not to distort one concept with another.

## CONCLUSION

Soekarno has syncretic-eclectic thinking. Soekarno's syncretic thinking was obtained from the values taught in the family, while eclectic thinking was obtained from Soekarno's efforts to adapt Tjokroaminoto's style of thinking. The values of Javanese philosophy, Theosophy, Abangan Islam, and Hinduism succeeded in shaping Soekarno's syncretic thinking style. The syncretism in question is not a form of religious syncretism that combines all streams of belief into a single entity. Soekarno's thinking is closer to a moral syncretism that combines values from various sources of value. Moral syncretic thinking encouraged the birth of Soekarno's unity-oriented paradigm. The paradigm of unity can be seen from how Soekarno tried to unite the nationalist, Islamist and Marxist political movements. Soekarno already had a paradigm of unity before he recognized nationalism as a political ideology which in fact also had a vision of unity. On the other hand, Tjokroaminoto's eclectic style of thinking greatly influenced how Soekarno thought. Eclecticism combines similar concepts and doctrines from different systems of thought. In 1924, Tjokroaminoto wrote Islam and Socialism which combined the similarities of the concepts of Islam and socialism. Soekarno emulated this style of thought in writing Nationalism, Islamism and Marxism in 1926. He elaborated on the similarities between the concepts of Nationalism, Islamism and Marxism. Furthermore, he united the perceptions of all these movements to achieve one common goal: Indonesian independence. Therefore, the writing is not only an expression of eclectic thinking, but also an expression of Soekarno's syncretic thinking.

This study offers a new perspective on the historiography of intellectual history in Indonesia. Specifically, it explores the thinking of the founding fathers, not only in terms of political thought, but also philosophical thought. In a broader context, research on syncretism is not limited to religious ideas alone. A suggestion for further research is to explore the thoughts of national figures more deeply through a historical and comparative lens.

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