The Applicability of the "Turkish Model" to Morocco: The Case of the Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD)

FERİHA PEREKLİ*

ABSTRACT

The "Turkish model," in the form of a marriage between moderate Islam and democracy, the AKP's electoral success and the economic growth witnessed in the last decade, has become the ultimate allure to which Arab Islamists aspire. This study focuses on the main premises of the Islamist PJD (Parti de la Justice et du Développement) of Morocco in order to understand what the "Turkish model" signified for them. By not confining the "Turkish model" solely to the AKP policies, but stretching it instead to the pre-AKP Islamist parties, the idea is to uncover which features of the "Turkish model" are espoused by the Moroccan Islamists and which features are not appreciated. After a brief introduction regarding the AKP's understanding of secularism and how it differs from radical secularism, the emphasis is given to the PJD's position on secularism. The following section explores lessons gathered by the PJD from Turkish parliamentarian Islamism in regards to engagement in political participation in the face of state repression. The last section examines the transition of the PJD's discourse from being moralistic-based to policy-oriented, in which the Turkish experience once again formed a reference point.

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Within the Arab Islamist circles, the AKP example has been considered to be the epitome of moderation, pragmatism, good governance and the convergence between Islam, democracy and modernity. The ascension of the AKP to power was certainly a triumph for the moderate Islamists who opted to pursue a peaceful and gradualist (*tadarruj*) strategy, such as respecting the redlines of the established order by fielding a reduced number of candidates for elections and avoiding any kind of revolutionary rhetoric. Within the larger debate on the alleged "incompatibility" between Islam and democracy, Arab Islamists were widely accused of "hijacking democracy" by participating in elections in order to establish theocratic regimes with totalitarian features.[1] Because the AKP, the primary proponents of political Islam in Turkey, strengthened the

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* Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, Indiana University-Bloomington,
perekli@indiana.edu

democratic process during the 2000s, Arab Islamists can now face their critics and contend that they too can be part of the electoral process and actually reinforce democracy in their countries.

Inspired by the AKP's democratization reforms, the Arab Islamists argued that in the event of being given full legal recognition, or full integration within the political system instead of "restricted participation," they would replicate the AKP in striving to reinstate the main components of democracy.[2] In this regard, Tunisian Islamist moderate Rashid al-Ghannoushi lauded the AKP's feat of developing a way to reach out to the various sections of society, adopting a strategy promoting human rights, and extending political freedoms in line with European norms, to establish a modern democratic state.[3] Likewise, in acknowledgment of the AKP's widespread appeal, the Egyptian Freedom and Justice Party, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood, consulted with members of the AKP ahead of the elections in order to make their own message more palatable to the public and to "correct the false image that the Muslim Brotherhood aims to monopolize political activity."[4] Praising the AKP for raising the standard of living, along with restraining the "army's tutelage upon the will of the people,[5] Ghannoushi also commended Turkey for openly challenging Israel for first time ever. For him, this shift in the foreign policy domain, which aspired to address the problems of the Islamic community at large, strengthened Turkey's Islamic identity.[6] This rising "Turkophilia" around the region occasionally took unexpected forms, leading Islamists to see in Turkey what they wanted to see. For instance, Yasser Burhami, head of the Egyptian *al-Dawa al-Salafiyya* (Salafist Call) group held that the Egyptian tourist industry should look to Turkey for guidance, claiming that "male beaches there are segregated from female beaches, [yet] still attract Arab and foreign tourists."[7]

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The Moroccan PJD (*Parti de la Justice et du Développement*) is one of the Islamist parties whose leaders have applauded both the success of the Turkish Islamists over the years and the electoral victories and democratization reforms of the AKP government.[8] In this study, the Turkish model illustrates both the policies of the AKP government and the Islamist political parties, which predate the AKP. This article tries to unpack what the "Turkish model" means for the PJD, which components of the Turkish model the PJD leaders are willing to embrace, and which ones they are less likely to accept.

The Critical Difference between the Two Parties: Secularism

As with other Islamist parties in the Middle East, the PJD acknowledges the AKP's success in the electoral and economic domains, and aspires to create their own "Moroccan model."[9] Regarding the comparison between the PJD and the AKP, PJD members place an emphasis on the differences between the political identities of the two states (secular vs. non-secular).[10] Mustafa Khalfi, the Minister of Communications and spokesman for the PJD-led coalition government, underscored the differences between the two countries, pointing out the primarily long-entrenched secularism in Turkey and the religious legitimacy of the Moroccan king,[11] both of which create a divergent interplay between Islam and the established order in each country.

In Turkey, the secular establishment (e.g., the military, judiciary and high level state bureaucracy) interpreted secularism as the exclusion of religion from the public sphere by confining religion to the private domain.[12] Arguing against the relegation of Islam only to the private sphere, and believing it to be more than just a compilation of rituals,[13] the Islamists of the Welfare Party (WP, 1983-1998) however, did not embrace this interpretation of secularism. They argued for the revitalization of religion by placing it more in the center of life. This understanding of Islam in relation to religious freedoms was eloquently summarized by Bahri Zengin, a prominent member of the Welfare Party's MKYK (Council of Central Decision and Administration), who stated, "Religion is one holistic entity. Religious freedoms exist in those places where this comprehensiveness has been protected. In a place where this comprehensiveness has been disrupted, or some part of it is accepted but not without a feeling of guilt, we cannot talk about freedom of religion or conscious. Religious freedoms should be extended to cover the economic, political and social domains and not relegated to the individual domain."[14] This reading of Islam as a holistic entity was embodied in many of the Welfare Party's actions, including the formulation of an Islamic model of finance, creating alcohol-free municipalities, and aspirations to establish an Islamic counterpart to the United Nations and NATO.

As was indicated in various party programs, Turkish Islamists chose to interpret secularism not as a separation of religion from state affairs, but as the "state's providing its citizens with religious freedoms and protecting religious freedoms from any violation."[15] This divergent understanding of Islam (as rituals in private domain versus being a comprehensive world order), and thereby secularism resulted in verbal sparring between the secularists and Islamists.

Numerous political parties with an Islamist tilt, including the National Order Party (1970-1971), the National Salvation Party (1973-1980), the Welfare Party (1983-1998), and the Virtue Party (1997-2001), were shut down by the secular establishment due to their alleged involvement in "anti-secular activities."[16]

After a period of introspection regarding the political representation of Islam, various members of the AKP's upper echelons understood the "self-defeating success"[17] of their electoral victories of the 1990s, as the Welfare Party and its successor the Virtue Party were not able to avoid being closed down in 1998 and in 2001 respectively. Exemplifying this self-appraisal, Abdullah Gül, current President of Turkey and then MP in the AKP, asserted,

> We understood that implementing politics based on religious references does not bring any benefit, neither to the country nor to the observant Muslims. The political party is not an instrument of religious propaganda. The political party is an instrument for bringing service to the people. I may be a religiously observant person, but people who vote for me should not cast their vote based on this fact alone. They should vote for me because they think that I can efficiently rule the country. We now consider the issue of religion in the framework of individual freedoms.[18]

By opening a freer space for religious social mobilization, increasing the visibility of religious symbols in the public sphere, and refusing to consider them as a "threat" to the secular foundation of the regime, the AKP in fact brought a new understanding of secularism, which Nilüfer Göle labeled, "post-Kemalist secularism."[19] This is neither the secularism of the hardcore secularists, based solely on the rigid separation of religion from the public sphere by curbing some religious freedoms, nor is it secularism as interpreted by the Welfare Party, which only pays attention to guaranteeing religious freedoms by refusing to rule out the political representation of Islam. The AKP political elites explicitly expressed their intention of not setting Islam as the yardstick for political arrangements. As they refused to believe that religious social activism and greater religious visibility in the public sphere constitutes a threat to the perpetuation of secularism, their discourse regarding secularism centered more on cherishing democracy by guaranteeing the freedom of religion and conscience. In this vein, the AKP characterized secularism as an "indis-

Article 3 of the Moroccan constitution enshrines Islam as "the religion of the state," without any reference to Islamic law or its being "primary source" or "source among sources" of Constitution pensable condition of democracy."[20] This mellower understanding of secularism, crafted by toning down the intransigent aspects of radical secularism, was advocated by Bülent Arınç, Vice Prime Minister, who stated that secularism "should be redefined to maintain separation of mosque and state without stifling public expressions of private piety."[21] Furthermore, the impartiality of the state towards all the religions was frequently reiterated by PM Erdoğan, who stated, "We are equidistant from every religious group. We will bring service to Muslims, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, and Atheists alike. All religious communities exist under the guarantee of the state. I believe in secularism as a system of governance, but the people themselves cannot be secular."[22] Although whether or not people can be secular depends on how we define secularism,[23] what is essential here is the intention of the AKP elites to agree on adopting a system of governance, which is not shaped by religious injunctions or references.

The Moroccan King as the "Commander of the Faithful"

The king has been considered to be the "Commander of the Faithful" (*Amir al-Mu'minin*), since the ratification of the 1962 Constitution.[24] He acquires this religious status based on the claim that the ruling Moroccan Alaoui dynasty is descended from the family of the Prophet Muhammad, which in turn provides his rule with religious legitimacy for the vast majority of the Moroccans.[25]

The 1200-year old monarchical tradition[26] is accepted to be an important component of Morocco's administrative heritage. It is due to this fact that even the leftist parties openly admit, "Islam [is] integral to Morocco's socio-political identity."[27] According to Article 42, the king is the head of the state, the symbol of the unity of the nation, the guarantor of its perpetuity, and the arbiter between the various state institutions. Moreover, he is accepted to be inviolable by Article 46. While Article 42 places the king at the center of the political system, additional constitutional articles designate his vast executive responsibilities.[28] The kingdom's famous motto, "God, Homeland, and the King" has been codified within the constitution,[29] and is proudly inscribed upon the walls of the numerous governmental institutions throughout the country.

Article 3 of the Moroccan constitution enshrines Islam as "the religion of the state," without any reference to Islamic law or its being "primary source" or "source among sources" of Constitution. The same article also guarantees freedom of religious practices to all faiths.[30] Among the various legal codes, only the Family Code (*moudawana*), which underwent a challenging reform process in the early 2000s, is based on Islamic law. Apart from the Family Code, all other legal codes were borrowed from Western jurisprudence, including those codes governing economic, justice, educational, social policy and international relations.[31] Therefore, it is the dual identity of the Moroccan constitution, simultaneously encompassing both secular and Islamic references, which paved the way both for Islamists and secularists to selectively choose references from the Constitution in order to vindicate their own political agendas. For instance, the king's being the "Commander of the Faithful" and the mentioning of Islam as the "religion of the state" enabled Abdelilah Benkirane, the head of the PJD and the current Prime Minister of Morocco, to explicitly define the Moroccan state as an "Islamic state."[32] He argues that there is no need to call for the re-establishment of an Islamic state, as one already exists. While it is debatable whether or not the Moroccan state can be labeled "Islamic,"[33] the PJD's acceptance of the Moroccan state as fully "Islamic" serves its political interests in helping the party to legitimize the established order while fostering its political integration into the existing system.

In Morocco, where Islam is the "religion of the state," Islamic banks still have not acquired state permission to operate, in contrast to "secular" Turkey, where Islamic banks have been functioning since the 1980s. However one is free to eat outside in Turkey during the fasting month of Ramadan, but doing so is prohibited in Morocco, a ban, which has been roundly criticized by both Moroccan secular elites and the secular public alike.[34] As long as the Islamist groups do not challenge the legitimacy of the monarchy, the Royal Palace does not oppose their religious activism or the public visibility of Islam; rather, the monarchy invigorates it. In actuality, the increasing visibility of Islamic symbols in the public sphere is nothing but a buttressing factor for the perpetuation of the monarchy, as it derives its legitimacy from traditional-religious references. In order to outmaneuver the social activism of the Islamist groups, essentially in charity activities, the monarchy has been developing aid programs for poor families and organizing collective dinners throughout the fasting month of Ramadan, along with increasing the number of television programs with religious content.[35] Furthermore, the monarchy, through the Ministry of Islamic Affairs has been financing the establishment of mosques and Islamic education centers throughout the country, as a way to disseminate the state-endorsed version of Islam. As is the case with the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs, Moroccan imams are appointed by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and are required to preach a standard sermon.[36] Hence, it is not coincidental that one of the world's largest mosques, the Has-

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san II Mosque, is in Casablanca. The monarchy's public outreach, in order to promote a state-friendly, moderate Moroccan Islam, culminated recently in the development of a project of *murshidates* (women preachers), who are trained by the Ministry of Islamic affairs and are responsible for giving religious instruction to women in mosques. They do not however, lead Friday prayers.[37]

Despite encouraging the growth of religiosity in the country, the king firmly opposed the politicization of Islam, which might challenge his highest position in religious affairs. In his various royal speeches, the king explicitly asserted that political parties could not be established upon religious, ethnic, linguistic or regional bases. This is also substantiated with the change in the Code of Political Parties on February 14, 2006, which prevented the establishment of political parties based on religious principles.[38] Determined to operate within the political boundaries designated by the monarchical system, the PJD members continuously reiterated their intention of not appropriating Islam in their official declarations. Instead of branding themselves as an "Islamist party," they described the PJD as a political party with an "Islamic reference" (*marji`iyya*).[39]

Operating within a political system heavily shaped by the monarchy, and adopting an Islamic reference, the PJD does not agree with the AKP's secularism, no matter how different it is from radical secularism. Accepting secularism as a system of governance equidistant from all religions, as Prime Minister Erdoğan asserts, would be tantamount to the PJD rebutting its own raison d'être, which was stated in numerous party programs as, "bringing the present constitution and legislation in line with Islamic law and making it the primary source of the constitution."[40] Despite the recent downplaying of its moralistic discourse after 2003,[41] the PJD formulated the majority of its political agenda based on the moralization of the public sphere by adopting Islamic principles as its benchmark. As part of its efforts to apply moral and religious principles to the public sphere, the PJD presented various written and oral proposals to the government between 1997 and 2002, which intended to reduce or stop the consumption and selling of alcohol. These propositions included restricting where alcohol was sold, making it more difficult to obtain permission to sell alcohol, restricting the consumption of alcoholic drinks to the hotels catering to foreign tourists, impeding all direct and indirect advertisement of alcohol, and bolstering the penalties related to its misusage.[42] In addition to alcohol, the PJD politicians did not hesitate to correct the "deviations," which were reported on the beaches. The party deemed the moral degradations (e.g., mix of genders) on the beaches to be against Islamic injunctions. The PJD believed that the government has the responsibility to fight against those situations, which do not respect modesty on the beaches.[43] Beaches were not the only aspect of the public sphere subject to being brought in line based on an Islamic yardstick; the casinos in Marrekech,

Photo: AP Photo/Azzouz Boukallouch, Nov. 29, 2011

King Mohammed VI, right, receiving Abdelilah Benkirane, the secretary general of the PJD, to appoint him as the head of the country's new government.

Mahmudiya, Agadir and Tétouan, were also targeted. Since gambling is not permissible in Islam, the existence of these entertainment centers was severely criticized.[44] Hence, for a party, which has centered its discourse on moral principles in line with Islamic injunctions, secularism, which requires an equidistant position from all religions in the political domain, sounds nothing short of the Westernization of the state institutions, long criticized by the PJD.[45]

To put the AKP and PJD's differing levels of Islamist character into a vernacular language, the leader of the PJD and current Moroccan Prime Minister, Abdelilah Benkirane, asserted, "We are thick-bearded, but [their beards] are much thinner."[46] Furthermore, clearly weary of analogies being made between the AKP and the PJD, Benkirane asserts, "I am not Erdoğan, and Morocco is not Turkey. Secularism is not suitable here, because our monarchy rests upon Islamic law."[47] A similar view was also supported by the PJD's current Minister of Justice, Mustafa Ramid, who stated, "In Turkey, Islamic reference was able to function under a comprehensive secular ceiling (*saqf*). Here in Morocco, we are living under an Islamic constitution (articles 3 and 41) and under an Islamic ceiling. In reality, however, the practices are secular. The state has a religious reference and our party has an Islamic reference as well."[48]

Political Participation: Lessons Learned from the Turkish Experience

The PJD, which was transformed from an Islamist movement into a political party in 1998, worked tirelessly to acquire legal recognition from the monarchy. Heavy state repression in the late 1970s and 80s resulted in the emergence of intra-group schisms among the revolutionary al-*Shabiba al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Youth).[49] Offshoot Islamists from *al-Shabiba al-Islamiyya*, under the leadership of Abdelilah Benkirane (current Prime Minister of Morocco from the PJD), established a new group, namely, *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Group) in 1983. Later, they submitted a document to King Hassan II and the Interior Ministry detailing the establishment of their new organization and their intent to work within the established order by no longer opposing the legitimacy of the monarchy and rejecting violent means.[50]

While secularism serves as the diverging point between the two parties, the Turkish Islamists' determination to continue their political activism in the formal political sphere, despite state repression, constitutes the appeal of the "Turkish model" for the PJD

Throughout the Middle East, the early 1990s was marked by top-down, regime-initiated political liberalizations, as was the case in Morocco.[51] Political openings (e.g., the inclusion of some opposition parties into the electoral process), no matter how restricted, functioned as safety valves for the regimes to channel the dissent of the aggrieved masses. Although these openings did not pave the way for democratic reforms across the board, they did lead to the establishment of a regime-controlled electoral contestation, which in turn increased the political demands of the opposition forces.

King Hassan II decided to implement a set of constitutional amendments, in 1992 and 1996, granting a relatively larger say to the parliament, while still not limiting the predominance of royal power in the political arena.[52] Considering the new political context of the early 1990s as an opportunity space, *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* accelerated its political activism. Firstly, it changed its name from *al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* to *al-Islah wal-Tajdid* (Reform and Renewal) by deleting the Islamic reference from its name in order to alleviate the concerns of the Moroccan royalty, traditionally the ultimate voice of religious affairs. In order to demonstrate its political dedication, *al-Islah wal-Tajdid* established a political party, namely the *Hizb at-Tajdid al-Watani* (the National Renewal Party) in May 1992, and expected to acquire royal legal recognition.[53] Their hopes were shattered however, when King Hassan II refused to grant legal recognition to the party. As a last resort in 1996, *al-Islah wal-Tajdid* decided to unite with a dormant party, namely the *Mouvement Populaire Démocratique Constitutionnel* (MPDC) led by Abdulkarim Khatib (1921-2008), who was an important nationalist figure in the Moroccan independence movement against France and who served in various cabinets throughout the 1950s and 1960s. By joining the MPDC, the Islamists finally managed to participate in the formal political process and found the chance to compete in the 1997 elections. As Abdulkarim Khatib continued to be the head of the MPDC, the party changed its name to the *Parti de la Justice et du Développement* (PJD) in 1998.[54] In parallel, encouraged by these new developments, an Islamist group, *Rabitat al-Mustaqbal al-Islamiyya* (League of the Islamic Future) united with *al-Islah wal-Tajdid*, and formed the *Mouvement Unité et Réforme* (MUR).[55] While the PJD became the political wing of parliamentarian Islamism, the MUR became the grassroots wing of the PJD.

While secularism serves as the diverging point between the two parties, the Turkish Islamists' determination to continue their political activism in the formal political sphere, despite state repression, constitutes the appeal of the "Turkish model" for the PJD. In spite of continuous state constraints, the integration of Turkish Islamists into the legal political system since the early 1970s had a great impact on the PJD cadre's perseverance in continuing their struggle to participate in the formal political process. Muhammad Hamdawi, the head of the *Mouvement Unité et Réforme* (MUR), praises the Turkish Islamists' "persistency for continuing political participation," despite being subjected to periodic state repression. Their determination to remain within the legal boundaries of politics, Hamdawi says, demonstrates the Turkish counterparts' "perseverance in confronting the secular establishment." It is due to this determination, he continues, that the AKP was able to "neutralize the military tutelage over politics."[56]

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In the Moroccan context, the decision to participate or not participate in the formal political process has a special meaning, due to the clashing views held by the PJD/MUR and another influential Moroccan Islamist movement, *al-Adl wal-Ihsan* (Justice and Charity). The Islamist predecessors to the PJD and the PJD itself agreed to integrate themselves into the formal political sphere and adopted a gradualist political approach. This meant espousing a low-profile by conforming to the monarchy's orders to reduce the number of the candidates it fielded for electoral districts. Moreover, the gradualist approach necessitated Islamists' consistent assurances to the established order that the group was not pursuing revolutionary goals and that they were not a threat to the status quo. In contrast to the PJD however, *al-Adl wal-Ihsan* has always refused the legitimacy of the monarchy, boycotted elections and rejected to participate within the formal political sphere. Although the organization is officially banned, the monarchy tolerates its existence. Founded in 1981, *al-Adl wal-Ihsan*, headed by the prolific Islamist thinker, theorist and Sufi master, Abdessalam Yassine (1928-present), retained its anti-monarchical stance after its split from the revolutionary *al-Shabiba al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Youth). While refusing to resort to violence,[57] the group has harshly criticized the concept of a hereditary monarchy, considering it to be "un-Islamic" (*jahili*).[58] Underscoring the perceived futility of participation in the monarchy-dominated political system, Nadia Yassine, a prominent *al-Adl wal-Ihsan* member and daughter of Abdessalam Yassine, asserted, "The PJD preferred to effect a change within the current system by participating in it. It did not manage to change anything though, and [the party itself] was changed throughout the same process."[59]

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The PJD's endorsement of the participatory nature of the "Turkish model" was not restricted to the AKP example, but harkened back to the various parties of Turkish parliamentary Islamism. Stated differently, the desirability of the "Turkish model" in the eyes of the Moroccan Islamists was formed gradually over time. *Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya* (Islamic Group), the precursor Islamist movement to the PJD, studied Turkish Islamist politics throughout the late 1980s and 1990s in a detailed manner, and followed the developments in its newspapers, *al-Islah* and *al-Raya*.[60] The newspapers covered the Welfare Party's electoral ascendancy and the challenges it confronted. While recalling their program of the past decades, Mustafa Khalfi, the Minister of Communications and spokesman for the PJD-led coalition government, noted,

> We examined what happened in the 1970s with the National Salvation Party. We sometimes hold seminars that just look at the Turkish experience. We learned from them that while participating, you are going to implement what you are looking for instead of boycotting or ignoring the democratic system. In the late 1980s, we crystallized the idea of participation in parliamentary politics as we began to see the positive elements of the democratic system.[61]

For the PJD, the Turkish model concretized the marriage between "Islamic values" and the "modern civil state."[62] A common demand between the Islamist-led governments of the post-Arab Spring and the PJD is the call for the formation of a civil state. This meant the absence of a partial or full-fledged theocracy, where there is a supra-constitutional body of religious scholars who are authorized to exert tutelage over the elected parliamentarian bodies.[63] The civil state necessitates the formulation of state institutions, in which the rule of law and the provision of social and political freedoms constitute the essential elements of the democratic political order. This arrangement, Khalfi argues, helps to eradicate the "Islamist specter" and enables Islamists to become influential political actors, capable of pursuing democratic reforms "akin to the 2010 constitutional reforms which the AKP government implemented."[64]

Transition from Identity-Based Approach to Policy-Oriented Approach

Borrowing Kaufman's definition of "identity politics," as the belief that identity itself "is and should be a fundamental focus of political work,"[65] the Turkish Islamists devised an identity-based political discourse accentuating the Islamic identity, mainly throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The Welfare Party (WP) appropriated Islam by labeling its followers as "believers,"[66] forming a polarizing political environment regarding the religious status of the "others" who do not vote for the WP. Adopting a discourse based on Islamic identity only aggravated the already existing cultural rifts within society, and hardened the efforts of reconciliation, dialogue, and cross-ideological coalitions. For a political party, which intends to remain a fringe party, identity-based politics is an appropriate fit. However, as the WP began to consider itself a viable political alternative in the early 1990s, it felt the need to tone down its exclusionary, identity-based discourse. Stated differently, as the WP set its goal to appeal to a wider audience in the early 1990s, the downplaying of its identity discourse became inevitable.[67] This shift is witnessed for the first time in the WP's advertisements for the 1991 national elections. These advertisements found a widespread circulation in the mainstream media, including billboards, commercials on TV and in print.[68] They touched not only upon the predicaments of the religious segments of society, but also addressed a wide range of socio-economic problems, which aggrieved mainly the urban poor. For instance, bearing the slogan, "A New World," one of the posters related the non-covered woman's complaint, "I am a woman, that is to say, a human being…" under which, the WP's response was written, "The WP would protect the honor of being a woman."[69] Another showed a man saying, "The taxes are breaking our backs," and the accompanying byline states that the WP "will abolish the unrighteous taxes."[70] Yet another portrayed a prostitute saying, "I'm a prostitute, what about my life?" The response here was that the WP "will change the system that forces people into that life."[71]

The Virtue Party (VP) succeeded the Welfare Party (WP) after its closure in 1998, due to the secular establishment's large-scale crackdown on Islamist activism, known as the "February 28 Process."[72] The aim to appeal to the wider audience in order to come to power, and the external shock of the February 28 Process upon the internal dynamics of the WP, initiated a series of self-appraisals by the Turkish parliamentarian Islamists. The VP's electoral manifesto of the 1999 national elections did not include any religious reference or any implication of a worldview based on binary oppositions, such as "righteousness versus fallaciousness," as was extensively used by the senior members of the WP. In its preamble section, Virtue Party head Recai Kutan, from Necmettin Erbakan's old guard cadre, highlighted the overall transition from values, which were determined by the rigid ideologies of the 20th century to the new values that centered on individual, human rights and democracy.[73] The new world order, he argued, urges policies for "further participatory and an inclusionary worldview."[74] Instead of the dichotomous WP stance, which pitted Islam against the West, primarily in the cultural domains, Kutan seemed to acknowledge the universality of some Western-originated concepts (e.g., human rights and democracy) and the necessity to cherish them, while previously these ideals were approached with caution. Instead of dwelling in ideological conflicts, the 1999 electoral manifesto prioritized solving the practical problems of the country. This ranged from broad recommendations of a reform project among various branches of the state (legislative, executive, and judiciary), to socio-economic policies including family, science, health, education, environment, energy, transportation, agriculture, and tourism.[75]

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The Turkish experience, which achieved a transition from identity-based approach to policy-based approach, caught the attention of the Moroccan Islamists. This can be examined through the assertion of Mustafa Khalfi, who stated,

> We also developed some ideas that in politics, you need to approach society and the state by utilizing policy-based ideas, not mainly religious ideas that reflect what the state and society is in need of at the time. We learned a great deal about this openness to the other parties and actors from the Turkish experience.

> The Moroccan case took Turkey as an example to see how a faith-based, or an identity-based, political party could develop pragmatic policies to deal with the challenges of realities at the state and society level.[76]

Khalfi's remarks espousing the Turkish model in relation to the transition from an identity-based approach to a policy-based approach have been shaped by domestic events. Morocco, which has been known for its peaceful Sufi-derived brand of Islam, was shaken by five suicide bombings, perpetrated by twelve radical Islamists, in Casablanca on May 16, 2003. The attacks left 45 dead and more than 100 people wounded. The attackers, whom state authorities argued had been recruited locally by the Moroccan branch of al-Qaeda (the Moroccan Islamic Combat Group), came from the poor slums of Casablanca.[77] Despite the fact that the bombings were born out of radical jihadi Islamism, the PJD, a moderate Islamist party which had been participating in parliament since 1997, was stigmatized by the state authorities, leftist secular parties, and the secular media alike. Opponents argued that it had been the PJD's anti-Western and anti-Israel rhetoric which had laid the ideological groundwork for the attacks.[78] In this regard, the close ties between the MUR (the grassroots wing of the party) and the PJD were criticized heavily by state authorities and the secular political parties. In the aftermath of the bombing, the king gave various royal speeches, which demarcated the lines between politics and religion by arguing that religious affairs should only be places of worship, scientific councils of the religious scholars, and mosques.[79]

Bombarded by both the secularists and the monarchy, the PJD decided to de-emphasize its religious discourse by distancing itself from the MUR in order to alleviate these external pressures. This necessitated the emergence of introspection about the dual identity of the party, which led to the severing, though not breaking, of ties between the grassroots movement MUR and the PJD.[80] The MUR's meeting of the *Majlis al-Shura* (Consultative Council) in 2004 led to the decision to implement a "differentiation" (*tamyīz*), and not a "separation" (*faṣl*), between the PJD and the MUR.[81] The party transferred the majority of the identity issues, such as invigorating Islamic education, Islamic morals, and religiosity in the society, to the MUR, thus refining the lines between political and *da'wah* activism (calling to Islam).[82] When asked whether or not this implies a step towards secularization, Benkirane de-

حزب العدالة والتنمية
Parti de la Justice et du Développement

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nied this intent, and emphasized their party's "Islamic reference."[83] According to the new arrangement, the MUR became institutionally independent from the PJD, while developing a different leadership cadre. The MUR, the main financier and source of manpower for the PJD's electoral campaigns, withdrew more to the civil society domain, aiming to generate "pious individuals."[84] Regarding this distinction between the two organizations, the head of the MUR, Hamdawi, asserted, "The party (PJD) and the movement (MUR) are institutionally independent from each other, and the [current] relations between the two can be labeled as a partnership (*sharaka*), while they used to fully support each other."[85] This differentiation enabled the PJD to devise public policies to find practical solutions to day-to-day problems, while leaving the discussions of how to consolidate religiosity with society to the MUR. Put differently, while Islamist idealism has been retained by the MUR due to its continuing religious activism, the party has become more realistic in understanding the bright lines of the political system and more pragmatic so as to maintain its viability in the parliament. This also resulted in the diminishment of the dual character of the PJD, as being both a political party and a religious movement, and the criticism expressed by its political rivals that it engaged in a "double-tongued discourse."[86]

> The new program no longer called for the current Moroccan civil law system to fall closer in line with Islamic law; instead, the electoral manifesto emphasized the "protection of Morocco's Islamic identity" in the face of globalization

The PJD organized a national dialogue in 2008 entitled, "From an Identity-Based Discourse (al-khitāb al-huwīyyāti) to a Policy-Based Discourse (khitāb al-tadbīr)," where the Turkish experience was widely discussed. The meeting underlined the importance of the delineation between the domains of political party activism and religious social activism, and their differentiation at the institution, discourse, and functional levels. In the aftermath of the functional differentiation between the PJD and the MUR, PJD members began to utilize modern political terminology more frequently, including human rights, democracy, civil state, pluralism, rule of law, and the peaceful rotation of power.[87] The PJD's heavily moralizing discourse, which it was known for between 1997 and 2002, heavily criticized the non-Islamic life style practices in tourism, education, cinema, entertainment and the arts. This later gave way to an emphasis on constitutional and judicial reform, the prevention of corruption in politics, and the enlargement of the parliament's prerogative as the only accountable political entity in the Moroccan political arena.[88]

The electoral program of September 7, 2007, with its slogan, "Together to Build a Just Morocco,"[89] focused primarily on economic and public policy-related issues.[90] The new program no longer called for the current Moroccan civil law system to fall closer in line with Islamic law; instead, the electoral manifesto emphasized the "protection of Morocco's Islamic identity" in the face of globalization.[91] In contrast to the previous manifestos, such as the manifesto for the 2002 national elections, where religious law was accepted to be the primary source of legislation,[92] the 2007 manifesto made no mention of the application of *shari'ah*. The party opted instead to advocate for a general reinforcement of moral principles with a special emphasis on moderation, in order to confront extremism, restate their support for missionary organizations and their activities under the section labeled "Bolstering National Values and Morocco's Islamic Identity."[93] In the list of various challenges facing Morocco, the primary focus was given to socio-economic problems (e.g., the fight against unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and expanding higher education), and the endorsement of a transition to democracy (judicial reform, constitutional reform, and reinforcement of human rights and public freedoms).[94] The program's sole reference to Islam came when discussing Islamic banking, which is offered as a way to "diversify investment tools."[95]

> The downplaying of the identity-based discourse, which was triggered by external pressure in the aftermath of the 2003 Casablanca bombings, continued unabated as the PJD became the major partner in a coalition government in December, 2011

Similar to the 2007 electoral manifesto, the electoral manifesto for the June 12, 2009 municipal elections did not refer to religious law. Instead, the party utilized neutral terminology, such as "putting the historical - cultural identity of the cities on display."[96] Instead of a religious discourse which aimed to increase the religiosity of society, the 2009 manifesto placed the majority of its emphasis upon socio-economic policies, such as establishing municipal hospitals, the fight against illiteracy, encouraging institutions which deal with women's issues, increasing financial help for the needy, and improving public parks.[97] Similarly to 2007 and 2009, Islamic law was not present in the latest electoral manifesto for the 2011 national elections. The establishment of the rule of law, the reinforcement of democracy, and the fight against corruption and establishing a strong national economy were heralded as being among the PJD's most important goals, as detailed in their 2011 manifesto. Comparatively, the emphasis given to the nation's "Islamic character" and the "Moroccan identity" were further down the same list of goals.

The downplaying of the identity-based discourse, which was triggered by external pressure in the aftermath of the 2003 Casablanca bombings, continued unabated as the PJD became the major partner in a coalition government in December, 2011. This enabled the party to devise practical solutions to socio-economic ailments, as was stated in its electoral pledges, and to formulate a middle ground between the political agenda of the coalition government and the royal authorities. Today, the dilemma faced by the PJD as a centrifugal political power, comes both from attempting to challenge imbedded interests of the *makhzen98* and from maintaining a peaceful co-existence with the royal court. The latter is unavoidable for the PJD, as the party members recognize the linchpin role of the monarchy in the political domain, and the necessity to maintain cordial relations with it for the coalition government's perpetuity.

After becoming Prime Minister in December 2011, Benkirane designated five areas upon which the new government should center its focus, such as the judiciary, education, unemployment, housing, and health.[99] In order to put the electoral promises into practice, the PJD made a move to disclose a list of those corrupt individuals that benefited from the transport licenses, as an act to "put an end to financial corruption."100 However, the preparation of the list was delayed, most likely due to the intervention of the *makhzen*, prompting Benkirane to admit the difficulty they faced in fighting the rampant corruption throughout the country.[101] In June of 2012, in a parliamentary session, the combat against corruption continued with PJD MP Abdelaziz Aftati's accusation that the ex-Finance Minister was embezzling 400,000 dirhams (approximately $46,000 USD) monthly, on top of his regular salary.[102] This initiative, however, was not endorsed by King Muhammad VI who asked Benkirane's group to "devote more time to confront the problems of the country instead of provoking polemics, which serve no Moroccans."[103] The PJD-led government's goal of fighting corruption went hand-in-hand with working on a reform of the pricey subsidy system. Lamenting the current subsidy system, governmental officials asserted that over half of the funds spent on subsidies were going to the wealthiest one fifth of the country's 33 million citizens.[104] The aim of the new subsidy reform was to cut the subsidies going to the "sectors of the economy that do not need the state's support," which would "enable us to save a few billion [dirhams] this year alone," as Najib Boulif, General Affairs and Governance Minister, elaborated.[105] In order to alleviate the rift be-

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tween privileged and under-privileged Moroccans and make good on its election promises to reduce the number people living in poverty by one half,[106] a figure estimated at nearly 8.5 million, the government created additional compensation funds for the needy (widows, divorced women, the disabled, and the elderly). It planned on doing so by subsidizing a number of basic products.[107] The subsidy reform was accompanied by new taxes upon companies and raising taxes on alcohol as a way to increase state revenues, as called for by the 2012 budget.

Conclusion

The Turkish model, combining the political experience of the Islamist parties prior to the AKP and the AKP's decade-long political tenure, has been a source of inspiration for the Moroccan PJD as well as various Islamist parties throughout the Middle East. Each and every achievement made by the AKP, be it electorally, economically, or politically, was evaluated as an accomplishment for the greater Islamist project, despite the AKP's founders' repeated rejection of an Islamist political identity.

One significant factor, which makes the Turkish model attractive for the PJD, is the determination of Turkish parliamentarian Islamists to maintain their political activism in the formal political process, despite being subjected to the secular establishment's previous crackdowns. Operating in a monarchy-dominated political system, which opposes political Islam, it was tremendously difficult for the PJD to receive royal consent to participate in the formal political sphere. Despite being subjected to the royal constraints, the PJD maintained its resoluteness to compete elections and finally culminated in its ascent to power in November 2011. The monarchy was not alone in impeding the PJD's political aspirations, as a rival, anti-monarchical Islamist group, *al-Adl wal-Ihsan* (Justice and Charity), also functioned as one of the severe critics of parliamentarian Islamism. In this vein, the determination of the Turkish parliamentarian Islamists to remain in the formal political process and their ascent to power in 2002, inspired the PJD and bolstered the party's actions in the face of its critics.

> Turkish Islamists' experience of transition from an identity-based approach to a policy-oriented approach was identified as an important lesson in various PJD meetings

The other factor making the Turkish model appealing for the PJD is the Turkish Islamists' successful transition from an identity-based to a policy-oriented approach since the early 1990s. The bloody 2003 Casablanca terrorist bombings became a turning point for the PJD to reassess its organizational structure, its political program and its discourse. Subjected to massive monarchical and secularist pressure to alter its organizational structure and profoundly moralistic discourse, the PJD drew the lines between its social movement and political party wings. In this vein, the Turkish Islamists' experience of transition from an identity-based approach to a policy-oriented approach was identified as an important lesson in various PJD meetings. Following this path, the morals-first agenda of the pre-2003 electoral manifestos was replaced by the post-2003 party releases and declarations, suffused with calls for greater democratization, constitutional, judicial, health and judicial reforms.

Despite various factors rendering the Turkish model appealing for the PJD, secularism, no matter how malleable the AKP's interpretation might be, has not echoed well, neither within the PJD nor in its grassroots movement, the MUR. This is partly due to the incompatibility of secularism with the non-secular character of the Moroccan monarchy and the PJD's founding tenets. As was stated in its various party releases, the PJD aims to redress the inconsistency between the Islamic essence of the constitution and secular practices on the ground.

> Despite various factors rendering the Turkish model appealing for the PJD, secularism, no matter how malleable the AKP's interpretation might be, has not echoed well, neither within the PJD nor in its grassroots movement

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