An Alternative to the "Turkish Model" for the Emerging Arab Democracies

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ABSTRACT

The political and economic success of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) has generated extensive discussion about the extent to which Turkey provides a model for other Muslim, especially Arab, countries. The notion of a Turkish model has received intense focus since the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region began in 2010. Amid the excitement, more cautious voices have highlighted fundamental differences in historical and political experiences and relations with Islam between Turkey and the Arab countries. Considering these factors, this article contends that rather than Turkey's AKP, a more accurate comparison and potentially viable model for the emerging Arab democracies can be found among the Islamic-oriented political parties of South East Asia, which advocate an approach to Islam based on the *maqasid*, or higher objectives. This article examines the appeal of the *maqasid* approach in respect to its utility for maintaining Islamic legitimacy and transitioning from ideology-oriented to policy-oriented parties and thereby responding to the needs and aspirations of broad constituencies. This article discusses the function of the *maqasid* for Islamic political parties in the MENA region as it undergoes political liberalization in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings.

Along long list of scholars and commentators has argued that that Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) has emerged as an attractive model for the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Altunisik contends that in the process of democratization in the Middle East, the prominence of Turkey as a model has grown on account of the soft power it has exerted since the election of the AKP, along with its pursuit of Turkey's membership in the European Union (EU).[1] Dede argues that Turkey has become viewed as a model for emerging democracies of the MENA due to three main factors: the balancing of Islam and democracy through a bottom-up approach to Islam, sustainable economic growth and development, and the ability to exercise soft power in the region.[2] Bengio argues that Turkey is appealing to the people of the

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MENA region not only because of a cultural affinity based on Islam, but more importantly the AKP's ability to detach the military from domestic politics.[3]

Kaddorah identifies "key advantages and policies that have helped Turkey's rise and in forming its unique position to serve as a role model" including: political stability based on a genuine democratic process; domestic freedoms derived from basic reforms; economic growth based on a free-market economy and expanding economic partners; a culture of tolerance and inter-civilizational dialogue; constructive relations with neighboring countries; and engaging with Europe and the West based on a Western identity while engaging with the Muslims world based on an Islamic identity.[4] This pro-active approach displayed by Turkey has been identified by Atasoy as providing a "demonstration effect" in terms of Turkey's appeal to the Muslim world based on "its deepening democracy, booming economy and increasingly independent foreign policy."[5]

> Four main factors have been identified as central to the Turkish model and its appeal in the MENA region: The successful balancing of Islam and democracy in a secular political context; sustained economic growth and development; bringing the military under government control; and regional influence

The AKP's prominence in the MENA region has increased since the onset of the Arab uprisings. According to the most recent Arab public opinion poll conducted by the Brookings Institution and Zogby International:

> Turkey is the biggest winner of the Arab Spring. In the five countries polled, Turkey is seen to have played the "most constructive" role in the Arab events. Its prime minister, Recep Erdoğan, is the most admired among world leaders, and those who envision a new president for Egypt want the new president to look most like Erdoğan. Egyptians want their country to look more like Turkey than any of the other Muslim, Arab and other choices provided.[6]

Sixty-one percent of people in the MENA region regard Turkey as a model for their country with the highest levels of support coming from respondents in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt.[7] Importantly, this sentiment is shared by many of the emerging Islamic political parties in the region. Mustafa Abdul Jalil, leader of Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC), has called Turkey a model for Libya, stating that "Turkey's democratic structure is an example to Libya and the other countries that experienced the Arab Spring. Libya will look to Turkey

as a model for its own political and democratic structure".[8] Tunisian Prime Minister Hammadi Cibali has repeatedly endorsed the Turkish model, explaining that Tunisia would be based on Turkey's parliamentary system. For Tunisian Foreign Minister Rafik Abdessalem, the Turkish model is appealing for it demonstrates that Islam and democracy can co-exist.[9] In sum, four main factors have been identified as central to the Turkish model and its appeal in the MENA region: The successful balancing of Islam and democracy in a secular political context; sustained economic growth and development; bringing the military under government control; and regional influence, including championing such causes as Palestinian rights and statehood. However, both scholars and political leaders have expressed reservations about the viability of the Turkish model for the emerging Arab democracies, particularly in regards to the differing historical experiences, the role of Islam, and Turkish perceptions of secularism when compared with the Arab countries.

This article explains the limitations of the Turkish model in respect to the Arab countries and suggests an alternative model that is currently developing among Islamic-oriented political parties in South East Asia. Based on analysis of statements made by party leaders, political manifestos and programs of Turkey's AKP, Malaysia's People's Justice Party (PKR), Indonesia's Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), Morocco's Justice and Development Party (PJD), Tunisia's An-Nahda Party, and Egypt's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), as well as interviews conducted with representatives of the AKP, PKR and PKS, this article contends that an approach to Islam based on the *maqasid*, or higher objectives, may be a more suitable option for the Islamic parties of the MENA region. As will be elaborated later in this article, *maqasid* is a concept developed in the 14th century which in modern times has been used to establish such principles as justice, freedom, democracy, human rights and economic development as among the higher objectives of Islam.

The role of Islam in the politics of Muslim countries has attracted a plethora of scholarly research over the past two decades that generally refers to this phenomenon as political Islam.[10] Much of the focus of this body of literature is concerned with the reconciliation of Islam and democracy.[11] In recent years, the leading scholarship in this field has attempted to anticipate the future of po-

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litical Islam[12] and the prospect of post-Islamism.[13] For instance, Asef Bayet's examination of various social movements in the Middle East argues that Muslims have made Islam democratic. His work documents a shift in thinking and discourse that has occurred over the past decade or so among Muslim groups. Through a process of redefining Islam's essence and priorities democracy has found its place within Islamic organizations and societies. However, others have expressed pessimism about the extent to which domestic conditions in Muslim countries and external geopolitical factors will allow for the development of an Islamic democracy.[14] Abdelwahab El-Affendi sees four main options for Islamists: full revolutionary takeover of their respective countries; complete withdrawal from politics to become Islamic interest or pressure groups; building broader coalitions while maintaining their ideology; or radically restructuring in order to emulate the model of Turkey's AKP. What has been missed is the capacity of Islamic political parties to draw on Islamic tradition and evolve in response to modernity through a focus on Islam's higher objectives, a *maqasid* approach. Before addressing this point, it is necessary to understand the fundamental differences between Turkey and the Arab countries in terms of their historical and political experiences and relations with Islam.

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The Limitations of the Turkish Model

There is significant doubt about the viability of the Turkish model for the Islamic parties of the MENA region due to opposing perceptions of secularism stemming from contrasting historical and political experiences of Turkey and the Arab world. In the aftermath of Mubarak's overthrow and the establishment of Egypt's FJP, representatives of the party suggested that Turkey would provide a model for the party and the country. While this position has been maintained by some such as Momhammad Badie of the Muslim Brotherhood, FJP deputy leader Essam El-Erian has been a vocal critic of Erdogan's remarks that Muslims should not be wary of secularism, which the Turkish prime minister made on Egyptian television during a visit in September 2011. Although Erdogan explained that "secularism doesn't mean a lack of religion but creating respect for all religions and religious freedoms for all people" the term has a strongly negative connotation among Islamists. Essam El-Erian stated in response that secularism has "a very bad perception among Egyptians" and that "we have no

need for this term".[15] It should be noted that according to Gallup World Polling, almost two-thirds of Egyptians want *shariah* to be the only source of legislation.[16] Additionally, in an interview with *Hurriyet Daily News* Tunisian Foreign Minister Rafik Abdessalem conceded that a different interpretation of secularism from Turkey's would be needed in Tunisia as it strongly values its Arab and Muslim identity.[17]

It is also important to highlight that Turkey differs from much of the Muslim world, and the MENA region in particular, in respect to the appeal of Islamism. Since the 1980s, most Muslim governments, including those of South East Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, Islamized policies or appropriated Islamic symbols and values to improve their legitimacy and counter the appeal of Islamic opposition.[18] The most significant exception is Turkey, whose leaders have never been pressured to Islamize policies or appeal to Islam.[19] This could well be due to the restraint the secular regime has imposed on Islamists in Turkey, but an equally likely explanation is that the Turkish population has not expressed significant demand for Islamic policies or law.[20]

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The experience of European colonial rule has had a profound impact on both Arab and South East Asian Muslim countries in terms of the development and orientation of their Islamic organizations, and especially their views of the West and such concepts as secularism. Islamic political parties in the Arab world, like in Malaysia and Indonesia, generally developed as social movements that opposed the political status quo and rejected secularism in favor of Islam playing a comprehensive role in state and society. While the experience of European colonial rule was different in Malaysia from that in Indonesia, in both cases Islam emerged as a potent force in the process of independence and has continued to play a central role in state and society.[21] A popular perception among Muslims in the Arab world and in South East Asia until today is that European colonial rule attempted to remove Islam from Muslim societies and replace an Islamic identity and culture with Western norms and values. The rise and success of Islamist political parties in Muslim countries is, therefore, seen by many Muslims as completing the process of independence from European colonial rule and achieving meaningful freedom. The parties that achieved independence from colonial rule and came to power were largely seen, in a cultural sense,

as extensions of the former colonial rulers. For many Muslims, the process of independence was not complete, and only the election of Islamic or Islamist parties that reflect the identity and values of the people would finally mark the country's true independence from colonization.[22] By contrast, not having experienced European colonial rule, Turkey's Islamic political parties operated within the existing political system, did not challenge the legitimacy of the state, and while they proposed alternative definitions of secularism, they did not oppose the concept.[23]

Moreover, Turkey's AKP has the benefit of evolving out of earlier Turkish Islamic political parties, namely the Welfare Party (WP), which was followed by the Virtue Party (VP). In the 1990s, the WP began the transition from an Islamic identity-oriented party to a policy-oriented party with a broader electoral appeal. However, it was officially closed down as part of a crackdown on Islamist activism and anti-secular activities.[24] As the WP's successor, the VP was more observant of the constraints of the secular regime and moved further towards policies based on human rights, democracy and practical solutions to the social and economic problems faced by the country. It too was closed down in 2001 on the grounds of anti-secular activities.[25] This experience enabled those associated with the WP and the

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VP to not only gain valuable experience in party politics but also to further refine their message and views on the appropriate relationship between Islam and politics. In an interview in 2001, one of the founding leaders of the AKP and current president of Turkey, Abdullah Gul, offered five principles that encapsulate the party's approach to the question of religion and politics. He explained that there is no benefit in a political party making religious references, religious propaganda is not the function of a political party, a political party must serve all people, religious observance is a matter for individuals and not the government, and religion is relevant only in the political context of ensuring individual freedoms.[26]

In respect to historical experiences and contemporary contexts, Turkey's AKP differs significantly from the Islamic political parties in the MENA region. Political parties such as Egypt's FJP and Tunisia's An-Nahda, for instance, have not yet completed the transition from identity or ideology-oriented parties to policy-oriented parties, they remain skeptical if not opposed to secularism, and

they operate in a context where the prospect of implementing *shariah* as a legal code appeals to a significant proportion of their respective populations. These factors detract from the extent to which the AKP can be considered a model for the emerging Islamic political parties of the MENA region.

Additionally, further political liberalization in the MENA region may result in Islamic political parties becoming less attractive to voters unless they are able to develop substantial political programs and policies that can deliver in terms of good governance, economic growth, employment generation, raising living standards, and protection of basic rights and freedoms.[27] Simultaneously, in order to maintain their electoral base and avoid losing voters to Islamic rivals, parties such as Egypt's FJP and Tunisia's An-Nahda will have to maintain their Islamic legitimacy. For these reasons, the example of the Islamic-oriented political parties of South East Asia

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may be more instructive. Before discussing the potential model that Malaysian and Indonesian political parties offer their Arab counterparts, it is first necessary to explain the concept of the *maqasid*.

Maqasid: Its Revival and its Role

Maqasid is an Arabic word that means intent, purpose or objective. The concept gained prominence in the 14th century as a philosophy of Islamic law. It has generally been used by Islamic scholars in reference to the higher objectives of *shariah*, or *maqasid al-shariah*. I contend, however, that confining *maqasid* to *shariah* diminishes the dynamism and functionality of the concept as well as its relevance for political Islam. The most appropriate approach is to consider the *maqasid of Islam* generally and in specific terms to identify the *maqasid* of particular issues contained in the Quran. In this respect, one might consult all of the verses in the Quran concerning matters of war and peace in order to identify the *maqasid* of jihad, or all of the verses that mention women in order to identify the *maqasid* in respect to gender relations and the rights and status of women.[28] The *maqasid* approach emphasizes public interest and well-being (*maslaha*), rejects literal readings of sacred texts, and gives priority to the spirit of the message of the Quran and Prophetic traditions. As opposed to reading the verses of

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Indonesian President Yudhoyono greets Turkey's Prime Minister Erdogan in Bali.

the Quran in isolation, the *maqasid* approach requires a comprehensive reading of the text as an integrated whole in order to identify the higher objectives and then interpreting particular verses on a given topic according to the identified *maqasid*. This methodology dictates that once the *maqasid* of a particular issue is identified, all verses in the Quran concerning that issue should then be read in light of the identified *maqasid* and none of these verses should then be interpreted in a way that contradicts the identified *maqasid*.[29]

As an approach to interpreting and applying the Quran, the *maqasid* can be traced back to the administration of the second caliph, Umar bin al-Khattab (d. 644), and the Maliki School of Islamic jurisprudence, which emphasizes public interest or *maslaha*.[30] The concept of *maqasid* was developed by the 12th century theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) in reference to five fundamental protections: life, religion, property, progeny, and intellect. However, this conception was revised and expanded in the 14th century by Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) and was developed as a new philosophy of Islamic law by Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi (d. 1388).

The expansion of *maqasid* beyond al-Ghazali's conception began with Izz al-Din Abd al-Salam's (d. 1261) work on the *qawa'id al-ahkam* or "legal maxims", which broadened the discussion of *maqasid* in terms of promoting benefit and preventing harm. A more open-ended list of values, identified by Ibn Taymiyyah, which included the fulfillment of contracts, preservation of kinship ties, honoring the rights of one's neighbors, sincerity, trustworthiness, and

moral purity further expanded the *maqasid*. Ibn Taymiyyah objected to the essential objectives of Islamic law being limited to the five *maqasid* expounded by al-Ghazali, stating that these five or six do not represent the highest or most significant of objectives.[31]

The work of al-Shatibi, however, made a more profound contribution to the theory of *maqasid* by focusing on the concept of *maslaha* (public interest) as an approach to overcoming the rigidity imposed by literalism and *qiyas* (analogical reasoning). The *maqasid* theory of al-Shatibi is based on an inductive reading of the Quran in order to identify the higher objectives, intent and purpose of the Quranic verses, which are understood to preserve human interests in both this world and the next. In practical terms, however, the *maqasid* received little attention from Islamic jurists and legal scholars in the 700 years since al-Shatibi. Relatively few books have been written on Islamic law from a *maqasid* perspective. Moreover, *maqasid* has never presented a challenge to the *usul* methodology of the classical era which is based on a fairly literal reading of the sacred texts and generally extends *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) only as far as *qiyas*.[32]

> The rebirth of the *maqasid* approach in the political realm is due to the second generation Islamic-oriented political parties such as Malaysia's PKR and Indonesia's PKS whose leaders assert that good governance, economic development, and protecting basic rights and freedoms are Islamic objectives

With dramatically changing realities and conditions over its 1,400-year history, the challenge for Muslims has been to develop an approach to Islam that would ensure its continued relevance and function for Muslim societies. Increasingly, Islamic scholars and leaders have looked to the *maqasid*. The first major contribution to the *maqasid* in the modern era was Muhammad al-Tahir Ibn Ashur's (d. 1973) *Maqasid al-Shariah al-Islamiyah*, first published in 1946, which was translated into English and republished in 2006. This book is arguably the most important attempt of the 20th century to develop and apply the theory of the *maqasid*. Expressing the need for an objective-based approach to Islamic law in light of modern realities, Ibn Ashur introduces to the theory of *maqasid* the preservation of the family system, freedom of belief, orderliness, natural disposition, civility, human rights, freedom and equality as objectives of Islamic law.

Since the turn of the century, there has been a revival of scholarly writing on the *maqasid*. To understand this phenomenon, the historical context of its devel-

opment should be explained. The 13th century was a period of great turmoil for the Muslim world, particularly for those regions that suffered from the Mongol invasion. By contrast, the 14th century was a period of relative peace and political stability that allowed for intellectual activity to resume. Much of this work sought to re-evaluate tradition in light of the social, political, commercial, and religious changes that had occurred.[33]

Like the 12th and 13th centuries, the 19th and 20th centuries had a profound impact on the Muslim world on account of the significant and lasting psychological, socio-cultural, religious, economic, and political impacts of European colonial rule. European colonial rule left a legacy of anti-Western sentiments, fragmentation of legal codes, inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflict, poverty and underdevelopment, and unrepresentative authoritarian rule.[34] The struggle to reassert an Islamic identity in the socio-political context gave rise to political Islam and the concept of an Islamic state based on the *shariah*. However, half a century since independence from European colonial rule has given Muslim countries relative stability sufficient for Islamic intellectuals to contemplate the appropriate role of Islam in state and society, the realities of modernity, relations with the West, and the value of Western systems and institutions. In this context, a revival of interest in the *maqasid* developed by the turn of the century.

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Over the past several years, a number of books have been published on al-Shatibi's theory of *maqasid*, including Muhammad Khalid Masud's *Shatibi's Philosophy of Islamic Law* and Ahmad Raysuni's *Imam al-Shatibi's Theory of the Higher Objectives and Intents of Islamic Law*. Other works, such as Gamal Attia's *Towards the Realization of the Higher Intents of Islamic Law*, provide a detailed account of the concepts related to *maqasid,* both historical and contemporary. Attia contends that the *maqasid* is an essential form of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) in response to contemporary realities.[35] Additionally, the work of Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law,* offers the most comprehensive examination of the concept of *maqasid* in the context of Islamic legal thought. In documenting the evolution of *maqasid* from pre-modern to contemporary times, Auda highlights that such early conceptions as preservation of offspring, mind, honor, religion, and wealth respectively evolved into

such *maqasid* as family care, pursuit of scientific knowledge, upholding human rights and dignity, freedom of belief, and economic development.[36] Other contemporary scholars including Mohammad Hashim Kamali, Tariq Ramadan, and Mashood Baderin have also advocated and contributed to the *maqasid* approach.[37] Additionally, Yusuf Qaradawi has further extended the *maqasid* list to include social welfare support, freedom, human dignity and human fraternity, while Kamali has added to this list the protection of fundamental rights and liberties, economic development and research, and development in science and technology. Kamali contends that the *maqasid* remains dynamic and open to expansion according to the priorities of every age.[38]

While interest in the *maqasid* among Islamic scholars has grown since the turn of the century, this phenomenon cannot be attributed to the *ulema* (religious clerics) who have said and written very little about the *maqasid*. By comparison, university-based Islamic intellectuals have given considerably more attention to the *maqasid* over the past decade. However, the rebirth of the *maqasid* approach in the political realm is due to the second generation Islamic-oriented political parties such as Malaysia's PKR and Indonesia's PKS whose leaders assert that good governance, economic development, and protecting basic rights and freedoms are Islamic objectives.

The South East Asian Experience and an Alternative *"Maqasid"* Model

Although the AKP does not use the term *maqasid*, individual members of the party acknowledge that the party exhibits a *maqasid*-oriented approach to the extent that the party's policies are consistent with Islam's higher objectives and what have become universal norms and ideals.[39] The main difference between the AKP and Islamic-oriented parties in other parts of the Muslim world in regards to the *maqasid* is the overt use of the term and the compulsion to do so. It is noteworthy that at a time when the current government of Turkey has asserted its authority over the military, it continues to refrain from making appeals to Islam, which suggests a genuine internalization of the secular principles it espouses. The AKP's *Target 2023* document makes no reference to Islam other than the references it makes in opposition to "Islamophobia" in the context of supporting global peace and harmony.[40] Moreover, the document's 26 references to religion all occur in

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reference to upholding fundamental rights within a pluralistic, secular context. Secularism is defined as:

> a principle that keeps the state in equal distance to all religions and religious groups, prevent the dominance of one religious group over others, and take the freedom of belief as an indispensable part of democracy. In our view, secularism refers to the impartial stance of the state toward all religions and beliefs. AK Party takes secularism neither to be enmity to religions nor irreligion; rather, we take secularism to be the guarantee of all religions and belief systems.[41]

The AKP's lack of any reference to Islam or Islamic concepts such as *maqasid* is indicative of the absence of any imperative to appeal or make reference to Islam. Rather, it is sufficient for the AKP to retain its high standing in the Muslim world by defending the rights and aspirations of Muslims in such places as Palestine, Syria, and Myanmar.[42]

In contrast, Malaysia's PKR and Indonesia's PKS are overt in their commitment to a *maqasid* approach due to socio-political contexts which not only allows for but encourages such an approach. The PKR and the PKS are deeply committed to policies that advance justice, human rights, education, government accountability and transparency, and economic development, which they regard as the *maqasid* or higher objectives of Islam. In Malaysia's most recent elections in 2008, the PKR won 19 percent of the vote and 31 seats in the 222-seat parliament, making it the strongest opposition party in the country. In Indonesia's most recent elections in 2009, the PKS won 8 percent of the vote, giving it 57 seats in the 550-seat parliament, and as part of the governing coalition the party has four ministers in the government.

The central pillar of the PKR is the upholding of justice, a commitment rooted in the origins of the party, specifically the mass calls for an end to corruption following the ousting of Anwar Ibrahim from the United Malays National Organization (UNMO), the largest party in Malaysia's coalition government, his trials, and years of imprisonment. Among the 17 points that comprise the PKR's objectives are establishing "a society that is fair and democratic, progressive and united"; upholding "the rule of law, independent media and judicial and security institutions of the sovereign principles of professionalism"; ensuring "the freedom to think, speak, move, assemble and association for all"; and expanding "the role of religion and values to uphold universal truth of justice, moral conduct, humanitarian and human dignity". The party is also committed to the development of "a just and dynamic economy, which emphasizes growth and equitable distribution; is free from injustice, inconsistency and waste; while overcoming poverty and prevents wealth concentration in one party." Also in

terms of social justice, the PKR is concerned with the provision of "education, healthcare, housing, and public transport at reasonable cost in accordance with social responsibility, especially for low and middle income groups" as well as policies that "protect the right to work, fair wages, safety at work and the quality of life for all," including women's "rights and interests and ensuring that they can enjoy equal status and do not become victims of discrimination and exploitation." Other objectives of the PKR extend to the protection of the environment and the rights of indigenous populations.[43] The absence of specific invocations of Islam or Quranic concepts in this document is noteworthy. The PKR and the PKS have been able to articulate political programs that avoid explicit reference to Islam and focus on policy without sacrificing their Islamic legitimacy. This has been accomplished by their adoption of a *maqasid* approach. The development of this concept and the place it has come to occupy in political Islam requires further explanation.

> The potential of the *maqasid* approach to enable a change of discourse would benefit such parties as Tunisia's An-Nahda in its transition to a policy-oriented party

Muhammad Nur Manuty, head of the PKR's Bureau for Religious Understanding, contends that the party's commitment to *maqasid* is central to its identity and is what distinguishes the party from the first generation of Islamic parties in Malaysia. He regards an Islamic state as one in which "people have full equal rights, there is democracy, plurality, human rights are respected, and there is education for people, health care, and welfare services."[44] Similarly, PKS president Luthfi Hasan Ishaaq is critical of such countries as Sudan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan that adopt the title of "Islamic state" and argues that "it is not necessary to have the name [Islamic state] but move to develop, to serve the interests of the communities of the nation...Just serve the nation, the basic needs should be fulfilled, the services should be provided. This is Islam."[45]

Both the PKR and the PKS have become instrumental in promoting a democracy that is conscious of Islamic values based on the *maqasid* approach. Through this approach, they have not only demonstrated the consistency of Islam with good governance and socio-economic development but have also shown that such an approach is attractive to a broad constituency that includes Muslims and non-Muslims. Manuty contends that the *maqasid* is gaining ground among Islamic political parties because "the traditional approach has failed and the secondly [because of] pressures from the realities of non-Muslims... we are now living in a very globalized world and it is inter-connected with other parts of the world."[46] In the words of Ishaaq, "the international community is now con-

cerned about the [issues] similar to the *maqasid,* the universal values. It's time to declare the original objectives of Islamic teaching...the *maqasid shariah.* We are now moving to that." He goes on to explain that the main priorities of the PKS are education, public service, health care, income levels, and the standard of living which reflect the *maqasid*.[47] On this point, Syed Husin Ali, deputy president of the PKR, adds that for an Islamic-oriented political party in a pluralistic society, the *maqasid* "is the best approach because I think it can be easily understood not only by the Muslims but by the non-Muslims alike. If you approach from a fundamentalist angle then it becomes very difficult to explain."[48]

The potential of the *maqasid* approach to enable a change of discourse would benefit such parties as Tunisia's An-Nahda in its transition to a policy-oriented party. Torelli's analysis of Rachid Ghanouchi's speeches and An-Nahda's political manifesto shows that the party's vocabulary is very dependent on Islamic culture and Quranic concepts, which narrows the appeal of the party, restricts its ability to evolve from an ideology-oriented to a policy-oriented party, and leaves it open to criticism from liberals, secularists, and non-Muslim constituents.[49] Moreover, just as An-Nahda finds itself in a political environment still dominated by the secular institutions of the previous regime, the example of Indonesia's PKS is instructive given the secularism of Indonesian politics as a consequence of the nation's commitment to the Pancasila principles since independence.[50] Historically, Islamic parties in Indonesia have criticized the Pancasila on the grounds that it justifies the rule of secular government and precludes the possibility of an Islamic government.[51] In this respect, the PKS has found the *maqasid* approach to be beneficial in terms of how the party reconciles its identity with the nature of the state. It

> The *maqasid* is instructive as an approach that could ensure that Islamic legitimacy is maintained but that the freedom, rights, dignity and aspirations of all are respected and upheld without reference to the "Islamic" label

is important to note that since the political reformation of Indonesia since 1998 following the *reformasi* movement, Islamic political parties have been free to participate in Indonesian politics and to this extent Islam has been able to play a more active role in Indonesia.

While many Muslims hear anti-religion or anti-Islam when the word secularism is mentioned, this conception is now being challenged by current Islamic discourse. The leader of the Tunisian An-Nahda Party, Rachid Ghanouchi, has previously declared his opposition to secularism and has committed to ensuring that all Tunisian laws are compatible with *shariah*.[52] However, in the aftermath

of the uprisings in Tunisia he said "I envisage an AKP-style structure. They prove that Islam and democracy can go together".[53] In a recent speech at a forum hosted by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID), Ghanouchi went even further and made a case for the place of secularism within an Islamic worldview:

> The greater part of the debate taking place nowadays in our country is a misunderstanding of such concepts as secularism and Islam... secularism is not an atheist philosophy but merely a set of procedural arrangements designed to safeguard the freedom of belief and thought.[54]

Ghanouchi explained that within the legal tradition of Islam there is acknowledgement of the distinctions between or separation of the civil (*mu'amalat*) and the religious (*ibadat*) in terms of human action and interaction. He added to this point by saying that

> It is not the duty of religion to teach us agricultural, industrial or even governing techniques, because reason is qualified to reach these truths through the accumulation of experiences. The role of religion, however, is to answer the big question for us, those relating to our existence, origins, destiny, and the purpose for which we were created, and to provide us with a system of values and principles that would guide our thinking, behaviour, and the regulations of the state to which we aspire.[55]

In reconciling Islam and secularism, Ghanouchi draws on the *maqasid*, referring specifically to its historical and contemporary founders:

> This distinction between the religious and the political is also clear in the thought of Islamic scholars/jurists. They have distinguished between the system of transactions/dealings (*mu'amalat*) and that of worship (*ibadat*). Whereas the latter is the domain of constancy and observance i.e. reason cannot reach the truth, the former is the domain of searching for the general interest, for Islam came to realize people's interests as confirmed by such great jurists as Al-Shatibi and Ibn Ashur. These scholars have agreed that the highest objective of all divine messages is to establish justice and realize people's interests, and this is done through the use of reason in light of the guidelines, objectives, values, and principles provided by religion. Thus, there is a domain of transactions/dealings which is constantly evolving and represents the sphere of variables, and there is the domain of creed, values, and virtues which represents the sphere of constants.[56]

It should be appreciated that the second generation of Islamic political parties in Turkey, Indonesia and Malaysia were able to develop due to the opportunity of political participation in the respective countries. Such opportunities have been denied to the people of the MENA region, which was a central factor to the uprisings that began in Tunisia at the end of 2010. In the aftermath of the uprisings, the elections and debates over the constitutions of Tunisia and Egypt reveal the challenges ahead for An-Nahda and the FJP. Violent clashes have erupted in Tunisia between secularists and Islamists, and in Egypt between Islamists and secularists and the Coptic Christian community. Egypt's FJP seeks to retain the wording of the constitution in respect to the law being based on Islamic principles. However, the more conservative An-Noor Party is pushing for a more comprehensive and explicit reference to the *shariah*, while the secular and liberal parties are seeking the removal of all references to religion.[57] It is in this context that the *maqasid* is instructive as an approach that could ensure that Islamic legitimacy is maintained but that the freedom, rights, dignity and aspirations of all are respected and upheld without reference to the "Islamic" label. The political programs of the PKS and the PKR (and the AKP) show that it is not necessary to invoke the name of Islam in order to pursue Islamic objectives. In this respect, the *maqasid* approach has enabled the Islamic-oriented political parties of South East Asia to redefine the conception and application of Islam in the contemporary socio-political context.

Conclusion

The development of the *maqasid* approach among South East Asian Islamic political parties is instructive for the emerging Islamic political parties of the MENA region. While the context and experiences of no two countries are identical, there are a number of similarities between the South East Asian nations of Malaysia and Indonesia and the MENA nations of Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. Namely, all of these nations were under European colonial rule, Islam has retained broad social and political appeal, and secularism has been strongly rejected by their Islamically oriented political parties. While there is currently a fixation on Turkey's AKP as the model for the such parties as Egypt's FJP, Tunisia's An-Nahda and Morocco's PJD, opposing views on secularism stemming from contrasting historical experiences, as well as different experiences with political Islam between Turkey and the Arab countries, detracts from the viability of the so-called "Turkish model".

Like the leaders of Muslim countries of South East Asia, the leaders of various Arab regimes were all affected by the resurgence of Islam in the second half of the 20th century, and in response made appeals to Islam and Islamized

certain policies. However, such concessions to Islam are not normative in Turkey, which reflects a contrasting position of Islam in the socio-political context compared to the broader Muslim world. It seems that the political and economic success of the AKP has allowed the party's championing of Muslim causes to be sufficient for the party to retain its esteemed status within the Muslim world without it having to express its policies in reference to Islamic concepts. By contrast, reference to Islam and Islamic concepts continues to have value for Islamic-oriented parties in both South East Asia and the MENA region.

While studies show that the majority of Muslims in the Arab world want their state and society to be consistent with Islamic values and norms, this majority does not necessarily vote for Islamic parties. The data suggest that with the liberalizing of political participation in the Arab world, the appeal of Islamic political parties will decrease if all they have to offer is ideology.[58] Given the demands on the emerging Islamic political parties in the MENA region to respect and reflect Islamic values and principles while developing policies that deliver on governance, economic growth, employment opportunities, and the protection of basic rights and freedoms, the *maqasid* approach should be expected to become more widely embraced. There are already signs that this approach is influencing the ideas, strategy and rhetoric of Morocco's PJD and Tunisia's An-Nahda Party. This development will have profound implications for the conception and application of Islam in the socio-political context and is likely to result in the emergence of a system that could accurately be termed "Islamic democracy". While the adoption of the *maqasid* approach in the MENA region may enable the Arab countries to more closely approximate the Turkish model, it is perhaps more likely to produce an alternative model that is more reflective of and responsive to the history, conditions and aspirations of the MENA region.

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