

Party Politics in the Muslim World: The Nexus between Institutionalization and Agency in the
Development of Islamist Parties

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Abstract

Islamist parties are comparatively assessed across Muslim majority countries to determine the effects of structural conduciveness and effective agency on party performance. Using correlative studies with historical analyses, institutionalization is observed to establish the limits of party success while effective agency has been demonstrated to facilitate electoral success. These findings suggest that while institutionalization could structurally impede the development of Islamist parties, their ability to spatially compete in party politics were primarily determined by the party's ability to maximize voter mobilization.

Keywords: Islamism, party politics, electoral competition, party performance

An emerging trend in political Islam is the proliferation of electoral Islamism. As a recent materialization of an ideology that has immensely influenced domestic and international politics, this concept challenges how academics have treated traditional Islamism. Previously, most Islamist organizations, those advocating Islamic-based institutionalization, were contained to underground networks. As a result of their ideologies, these networks were fiercely targeted by state institutions, best exemplified by the clash between the Muslim Brotherhood and Nasserist Egypt throughout the 1960s.¹ Since then, trends in political Islam bifurcated to encompass militant and moderate Islamism. The former has been characterized by the proliferation of violent Jihadist movements across the Muslim world, becoming the focus of Islamist researchers in the process. Moderate Islamism, however, continued to influence politics across the Muslim world while being overlooked by academics. Consequently, comparative assessments of moderate Islamist movements are largely absent from the literature.

This shift towards electoral participation is characterized by the advent of Muslim-democratic parties, not unlike Christian-Democrats in countries like Germany, in Muslim majority countries. These organizations have attempted to adapt to democratization by conceding partially some incompatible ideological tenets. This compromise allowed some Islamist parties the freedom to engage in democratic processes and legislate through legitimate means, leading to their proliferation in electoral competitions. As such, debates around Islamist parties mainly revolved around their compatibility with democracy. The Egyptian coup in 2013 exemplified widespread skepticism towards the notion of Muslim-democratic parties and their feasibility in contemporary politics (Rahka, 2013). However, the cases being explored in this paper demonstrate not only

¹ The clash between Nasser and the Muslim brotherhood was representative of a broader ideological clash between Islamism and the secularization of majority Muslim countries in the 1960s. After failed assassination attempts allegedly orchestrated by the Brotherhood, Nasser ordered the execution of notable leaders such as Sayyid Qutb in 1966. See Gerges, F. A. (2018).

compatibility but often times, a symbiosis within the political system they reside in. This is perhaps epitomized by *Ennahda*, who aided the democratization of Tunisia. Moreover, several countries in the Muslim world have in their party systems operational Islamist parties who display regular party behavior.

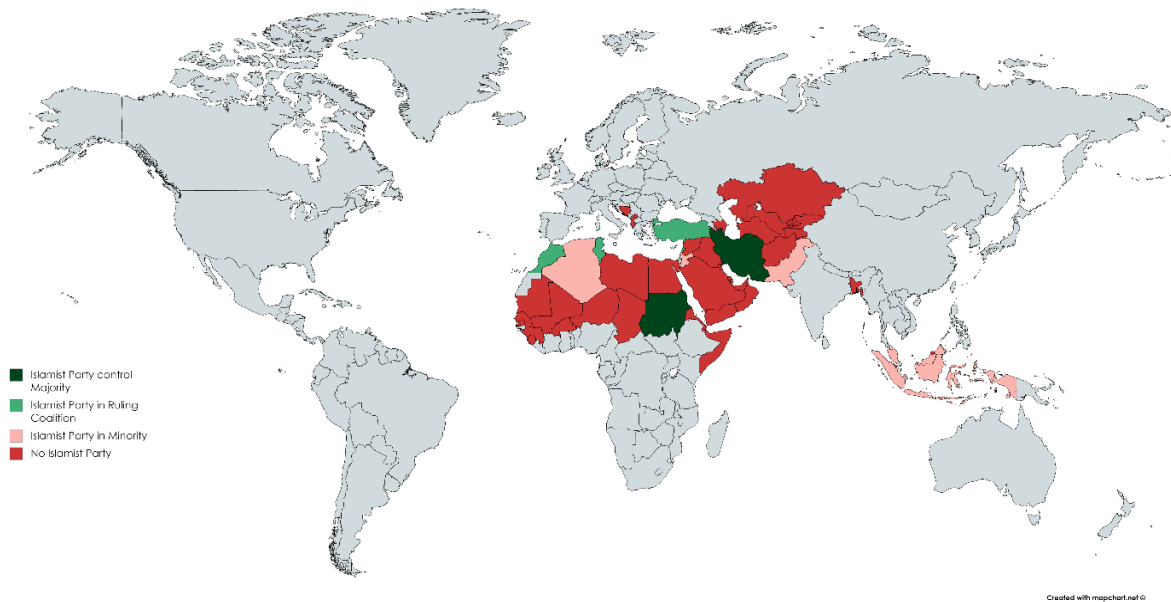


Figure 1. Islamist party control in legislatures. Control indicated by shades of green, absence of control indicated by shades of red.²

Academic depictions of political Islam often fail to capture the eclecticism of Islamist movements, instead portraying a generalized homogenous global trend that inaccurately represents the differences between most electoral Islamists. Instead these depictions fail to describe the historical contexts that facilitated the divergence of Islamist parties. For example, while both parties are fundamentally Islamist, the PJD in Morocco and *Ennahda* in Tunisia do not espouse shared policy interests beyond central ideological goals. This paper builds upon electoral-Islamism

² Because some countries outlaw the participation of formal parties, such as the case in the Kuwaiti parliament, Islamists are sometimes represented by informal blocs of legislators which might suggest that the participation of Islamists in legislation is actually understated in this graphic.

and focuses instead on the party development process that feed ideological divergence. These differences that delineate the PJD from *Ennahda* mostly stem from local dynamics that have historically shaped each party and consequently its platform. Similarly, Islamist organizations vary significantly despite them all advocating the institution of Islamic policies. Islamists in Iran and Sudan both represent autocratic regimes that force Islamism into politics whereas groups like *Ennahda* in Tunisia consciously refrained from monopolizing power in order to sustain the fragility of Tunisian democracy. Hence, Islamist parties emerge in different contexts that characterize and distinguish them from each other.

While the founding ideologies revolve around the legislative institution of Sharia-based policies, Islamist parties differ significantly across systems. Instead, parties develop to their domestic political moods accordingly. Moreover, despite them participating in Muslim-majority countries that often have shared histories and cultural traditions, Islamist parties rarely perform similarly across countries. For example, in 2002, the newly-formed “AK-Parti” in Turkey competed, for the first time, in parliamentary elections. Despite the party being approximately a year old, and despite competing against the Republican People’s Party (a party co-founded by Turkey’s first president, Kemal Ataturk), the AK-Parti, or AKP, won 363 seats out of 550 in Turkey’s parliament. The party could now not only resist vetoed legislations, they could with this majority recommend constitutional changes. Since then, the AKP has firmly remained in a position of legislative power in Turkey. Conversely, The Justice Party (PK) in Indonesia campaigned on a similar ideology to the AKP but failed to meet parliamentary thresholds, attaining less than 1% of the vote. It was not until they rebranded their party goals and platform (and changing the party name to the Prosperous Justice Party) that the PKS was able to win some seats in Indonesia’s parliament. This drastic difference between the success of the AKP in Turkey and the PK’s failure

in Indonesia depict a less homogeneous Muslim world. The varying outcomes instead prompt the consideration of a relative heterogeneous view of Muslim societies that may react differently to Islamism and politics in general.

At its core, the research examined why parties develop the way they do, and in doing so explain the role of the political system in determining party performance. Furthermore, it has demonstrated how employing effective agency can best predict party success. Through a comparative analysis of party systems in Indonesia, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey, the thesis analyzed the factors that propel parties towards electoral success. The research controlled for party-type, focusing primarily on the spatial competitiveness of electoral Islamist candidates and their parties. Muslim-Democratic parties distinguish themselves by their unique, and often seemingly contradictory characterizations. Historically, Islamism advocated the institution of Sharia-based laws and the absolute convergence of Islam and politics. This was the argument that many notable Islamists, such as Hassan Al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, strove towards during their lives. Since then, however, modern Islamists have compromised to concede these goals of erasing the separation of religion and state, instead focusing on co-existing alongside democratic institutions (Bayat, 2013). Therefore, this movement led by electoral Islamists incorporates their religiously inspired ideology onto party platforms to ultimately achieve Islamic ideals through the electoral process.

Through utilizing the proliferation of institutional Islamism as a central theme to examine the development of political parties, the study developed a theory that helps explain why parties are products of an amalgamation of domestic politics. In essence, the dynamics that guide party behavior are its interactions with both the state and the electorate. Thus, the delineations that emerge between Islamist parties in Indonesia and Turkey do not necessarily imply a different

implementation of Islam, but rather describe the context wherein domestic politics has, over time, caused parties to diverge away from their founding ideologies. Observational analyses, accompanied by correlative relationships, explored the factors most influential over party performance in democratic elections. These conditions might help explain why Islamist parties are able to win dramatically in some elections and fail to meet the threshold in others.

Theory and Literature Review

Parties in democratic theory are suggested to be products of representative democracies, and in their essence, agents of their voters (Katz, 2006). Party behavior, therefore, is dictated by maximizing electoral success and maintaining political longevity. In essence, parties seek to expand their appeal to a broader audience while ensuring the implementation of an agenda reflective of their voters' preferences. In the case of electoral Islamists, their base would theoretically be composed of social conservatives whose mobilization relies on the salience of religion in their lives.

A prominent debate in the literature revolves around the compatibility of Islamism with secular democracies. However, this research explored beyond this debate, instead assuming compatibility based not only on the existence of Muslim-democratic parties but their seeming willingness to participate alongside other party-types. In this sense, Islamist parties were selected as a central theme to explore international trends in Muslim majority democracies. Particularly, because Islamist parties perform differently across countries, the research explored how some

parties are able to accrue electoral success while others did not. Fundamentally, this revealed that trends in Islamism were not supranational and instead emerged in discrete circumstances.

Predicting the determinants of electoral success were therefore delineated into two major concepts. Succinctly, party performance is reliant on the culmination of structural conduciveness and effective agency. What this means is that parties require a conducive system to operate and compete in, but cannot secure electoral success without employing effective instruments to maximize their appeal to the electorate. Similarly, it is hypothesized that rigid systems minimize the ability of parties to seek voter mobilization wherein the manifestation is weakened party outcomes.

Voter Mobilization	Political Structure	
	Conducive	Rigid
	High	Success
	Low	Failure

Figure 2. How Structure and Agency can help determine party performance.

Scholars surveying Islamist parties generally attribute their rise in parliamentary politics to socio-political transformations that necessitated their development. In particular, academics such as Asef Bayat (2007) have argued that electoral Islamism is the product of both societal changes as well as a sensitive global context. Therefore, what he describes as “post-Islamism” emerges as a product of reform wherein the movement concedes classical Islamist concepts to assimilate into democratic environments. Similarly, Karagiannis (2017) describes this emergence of “Islamism-

democrats” as products of adaptation. In essence, he argues that these parties adhere to the democracy master frame to retain political legitimacy that had been minimized by a sensitive global context (p. 103).

Moreover, scholars that previously assessed Islamist parties have found that Islamists are particularly successful when they are able to appeal to bipartisan political cleavages. For example, Wolf (2017) describes *Ennahda*’s campaigning strategies in Tunisia as emphasizing a flexible character that catered to both religious conservatives and liberals. Wolf identified that the absence of a united secular opposition, mainly due to the relatively young age of Tunisian democracy, attributed to the initial success of *Ennahda* in the 2011 elections. Wolf’s work suggests that political cleavages in young democracies are undergoing development and thus present a window of opportunity for Islamist parties during this period to consolidate power.

Before electoral success, these Islamist parties must be able to withstand structural institutions that regulate their ability to participate. Without structurally conducive institutions, the restrictions placed on these parties might inhibit them from effective participation in electoral politics. This is exemplified by the collapse of the Turkish Refah party in 1997. The Islamist party competed successfully in Turkish parliament and assumed a share of leadership role, ultimately having the party leader, Necmettin Erbakan, serve as Turkey’s prime minister. The party quickly met with institutional opposition wherein the military essentially force the party leadership to withdraw from power. Academics such as Gulalp (1999) attribute this failure of Refah to the absence of permissive institutions. Gulalp, in essence, argues that the transformation of Islamist parties, exemplified by the transformation of Refah into Fazilet party, illustrates the attempt to restructure party platforms to satisfy the pre-existing institutions that regulate domestic politics.

Notwithstanding the significant role institutions play in dictating the electoral success of Islamist parties, they do not explain why some parties fail to consolidate power even with permissive institutions. Hasan (2013) argued in his article the important role party agency played in determining success in Indonesia. He argues that despite weak state institutions in the post-Suharto era, Islamist parties like the Justice Party (PK) were unable to effectively participate in Indonesian elections, even ultimately failing to meet parliamentary thresholds. In essence, the failure stemmed from anti-democratic rhetoric employed by the party which did not appeal to Indonesian society. Instead, the party transformed itself, even changing its name to the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), to better appeal to the electorate. Similarly, scholars have identified a precedence of a pluralistic society within Indonesia wherein communal tolerance of one another has largely prevented the successful proliferation of radical Islamist organizations (Hefner, 2000, p. 54; Menchik, 2015, p.156). In effect, this civil precedence developed into an informal institution that regulated behavior in Indonesian politics and have thus created a political environment in which Islamist parties are inclined to adapt to the local socio-political context.

How the Rules Shape the Game: The Effect of Institutions on Political Parties

Structural factors that affect parliamentary elections typically stem from the development of regulatory institutions. Enyedi (2008), for example, claims that the processes of institutionalization lead to a political environment in which electoral events become more predictable (p.300). In essence, his argument supports the idea that well-defined political cleavages lead to the standardization of elections. Similarly, some scholars find that institutionalization can incentivize voters to become more policy-driven. As argued, party systems with more institutional regulation experience more policy driven voters. In these circumstances, ideological mobilization is less effective and policy preferences are emphasized. (Carkoglu, Krouwal & Yildirim, 2018).

This suggests that voters are more affected by policy issues in countries where institutions lead to higher electoral barriers to entry. Similarly, it means that in countries with little to no institutional regulations, voters are more affected by ideological beliefs. In essence, institutional barriers are posited to contribute to weakening ideological voting.

Parties are also subject to the influence of electoral environment. To clarify, parties operate within a political environment that is guided both by formal and informal institutions. Therefore, operating within these institutions indicates that electoral rules and regulations influence, to a degree, the processes of elections. Chhibber and Kollman (2004) argue that the electoral rules implemented in a country not only shape its election processes, but also the composition of parties. Their argument essentially revolves around the interactions between centralization and party formation. In essence, they find that highly centralized electoral systems create an environment that prefers national party labels. Similarly, in countries where there is high decentralization, the electoral system creates an environment that prefers regionalized party labels.

Structural factors ultimately culminate to produce the settings that allow for party institutionalization. Wegner (2011) analyzed hybrid regimes such as Morocco to assess whether or not electoral mobilization could be produced in a context that limited the ability for some parties to pursue popular support. For example, she found that anti-Islamist institutions in Morocco largely prevented the PJD from attaining popular support. The PJD thus became unable to develop alongside other Moroccan parties because of structural impediments implemented to regulate the electoral process. Parties that are affected by institutional restrictions demonstrate the extent at which the rules shape and influence competition.

Why Parties Carry Themselves the Way They Do: The Significance of Agency

Aside from institutional factors, party agency and its self-characterization can also be significant determinants to electoral success. Parties embody the ideological platforms they ascribe to because they attempt to appeal to certain voting blocs. Anthony Downs (1957) explains that parties attempt to maximize their spatial competitiveness by broadening their ideological platform to appeal to more voters. This implies that in countries where religious issues mobilize voters, some parties will adopt a religiously-based ideology. Studies assessing the influence of religious issues on the electoral process have shown cases in which religious voters demonstrate the presence of a distinct religious-bloc (White, Miller, Grødeland, and Oates, 2000). Downs' theory, however, assumes that voting behavior is aligned alongside a left-right ideological spectrum. It does not explain cases in which religious issues mobilize voters despite the presence of both religious-conservatives and religious-liberals and the absence of a distinct religious bloc. This is the observation that Christopher Raymond (2014) made in Romania. Raymond argues that despite the significance of religious issues to Romanian voters, the religious cleavage produces little or no effective voter mobilization because many ideologically-disparate parties assimilate religious issues into their platform (p. 297). What is produced is a minimized effect of religious issues driving the electoral process. This is especially pertinent because it helps explain how high religious issue salience can inadvertently lead to settings wherein Islamist parties are disadvantaged. In effect, issue ownership is diluted, leading to minimized voter mobilization.

Moreover, religion-based parties form in electoral systems that accommodate a distinct and powerful religious bloc. Scholars such as Kalyvas (1998) and Hale (2005) attribute the formation of religion-based parties to their pursuit of this aforementioned religious cleavage. In effect, this suggests that the magnitude of success exhibited by these parties is reliant on the size of the cleavage as well as how faithful the parties are to the ideological roots of religious cleavages.

Particularly, Kalyvas argues that religion-based parties sometimes align themselves, even if temporarily, with broader ideologies, such as conservatism, to expand on their voting base (p. 305). This would suggest that where Islamist parties are successful despite the absence of a religious-bloc, this broadening alignment with conservatism could explain their base of support.

Explaining Party Success in Parliamentary Elections

Electoral success, hence, is based upon a culminating context wherein structural permissiveness allows a party to participate while effective agency promulgates the organization towards the legislature. Academics such as Magaloni (2006) and Scheiner (2006) exemplify this by observations in Mexico and Japan to determine why some parties are able to consolidate power for extended periods of time. For example, Scheiner attributes one-party dominance to the overall failure of competitive opposition in the electoral system. In effect, he identifies that systems that promote clientelism, as exhibited in Japan, benefit the ruling party and in turn allow them to better perform in future elections. Magaloni, however, emphasizes the role of a divided opposition in aiding the success of the hegemonic party. What is thus demonstrated is the ability to dominate parliamentary elections, particularly during periods in which the opposition is divided, mainly by exploiting beneficial state apparatus.

Furthermore, successful Islamist parties rely on their ability to mobilize their voting base. Kurzman and Turkoglu (2015) identify that voter mobilization is integral to electoral outcomes. Mobilizing Islamist voters, however, is less effective and therefore less impactful in electoral systems with rigid institutions regulating the democratic process. The authors especially find a trend in which Islamist parties perform better in parliamentary elections when the institutions are young and undergoing development. Consequently, political cleavages in more developed institutions are more distinctly defined than those in developing democracies. Hence, what is

ultimately argued is that voter mobilization, which is integral to attracting Islamist voters, is less effective in institutionally-developed electoral systems.

Case Selection

The Muslim world is vastly heterogeneous, meaning that Islamic attitudes and values can often become whitewashed by domestic traditions. As such, comparative assessments of Muslim-majority countries are susceptible to dismissing local traditions or assuming they fold into the broader (and more pluralistic) values of Islam. This risk is magnified when assessing Islamist party politics in Muslim-majority countries because Islamism itself takes on many forms across the Muslim world. Therefore, this research could not solely rely on quantitative assessments to explain the dynamics leading to strong Islamist parties. Instead, correlational analyses were accompanied by case studies that attempted to describe the variation between Islamist parties. This was done in order to explore Islamist party politics beyond linear relationships and explore deeper the historical antecedents that either aided or impeded the development and growth of Islamist parties. Furthermore, these observations helped explain the institutionalization of electoral systems in these various cases. By exploring the nuanced qualities of each case, trends began to emerge suggesting similarities favoring the role of agency in predicting the outcome of party performance. The role of agency was emphasized in the descriptive analyses beyond what quantitative observations could imply.

The process that guided case selection sought to juxtapose distinct circumstances that produced disparate outcomes. These countries therefore, comprising of Indonesia, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey, all reflect unique contexts that demonstrate the viability of structure and agency. One key divider is the type of democracy being investigated, including: established Democracies, Transitional Democracies, and Hybrid Regimes. This distinction helps delineate the interactive effect of institutional conduciveness on party performance. In effect, what is being investigated is whether the institutional makeup of these democracies can affect the ease of entry

of Islamist parties. In some cases, like Turkey, an established democracy developed concomitantly with a rigid constitution that barred almost all forms of Islamism. Contrarily, transitional institutions such as those in Indonesia and Tunisia could not filter out the development of electoral-Islamists. Investigations such as these help explain the fundamental role of institutionalization.

The Makeup of the Turkish Political System

As the focus of most academic treatments on electoral Islamism, Turkey represents an established democratic system with a long history of relatively fair elections. The significance of Turkey in this research was its devolution towards authoritarianism as a consequence of its Islamist party, the AKP. Especially pertinent, is how Turkey can help explain the interactive relationship between a traditionally-secular set of institutions and a religiously-inspired party. It is separate from other cases under investigation in that it has the longest democratic precedence as well as having the most rigid constitution. Also, Turkey represents the only case wherein the Islamist party is not only influential but is the dominant actor over executive and legislative processes. In fact, the AKP's hold over power epitomizes a successful political party. They also demonstrate a key display of effective agency. To clarify, the makeup of the ruling coalition in Turkey is composed of the AKP and the ultranationalist MHP. They embody, through their coalition, a nationalist symbiosis.

<i>Party</i>	<i>Seats</i>
AKP	290
CHP	142
HDP	65
MHP	49
IYI	40
SP	2
TIP	2
DP	1
BBP	1

Table 1. Party configuration in the Turkish Parliament, arranged by seats. The governing coalition denoted by emboldened text.

In parliament, wherein majority control requires 300 seats, the AKP leads a minority government with 290 seats. Their supply and confidence stems from a nationalist-driven coalition with parties that mimic the AKP's policy agenda verbatim. In essence, this makeup of the political system conveys a duality between the traditional secular actors (most notable of whom is the CHP) and the nationalist actors.³ This duality bleeds into most of the other cases but is most notably observed in Turkey where secular resistance has, for decades, ossified in opposition to Islamism.

In the executive branch, however, it is beyond apparent that the AKP dominates the processes of the presidency and other forms of executive control. This is the most significant delineation that separates Turkey from other cases. This is because the AKP is the only electoral-Islamist party that controls both legislation and executive control among the cases. The closest example being investigated is Morocco, where the PJD controls parliament and whose members control the head of governance but are limited by the sovereign monarch. Thus, investigating Turkey can reveal the interactions between state institutions and an electorally successful Islamist

³ While the MHP and BBP do not necessarily embody an Islamic character. Their focus on Turkish nationalism reiterates values that are associated with an emphasis on a synthesis between Turkish and Islamic lifestyles.

party. In many ways, the AKP epitomizes optimal party performance whereas other cases will explore how party performance is determined.

Indonesia and Tunisia: Why Transitional Democracies are Significant

Indonesia and Tunisia were selected because their Islamist parties were impacted by the democratization processes that only emerged recently. In Tunisia, the swift popular uprising brought upon rapid political changes that did not immediately deal with the spatial situation of *Ennahda*. Instead, electoral-Islamists were integral in the developments that occurred in the immediate post-Ben Ali regime. Their decisions, in some way, helped ameliorate the institutional barriers and as such received a relative ease of entry to electoral competition. Even today, Tunisia remains a resilient democracy. Party competition in 2014, therefore, resembled a cohesive election despite the presence of internal schisms among some parties.⁴ Instead, examining Tunisia revealed a significant reliance on effective agency by *Ennahda*, the leading Islamist party. In essence, they utilized the salience of Islam fluidly, emphasizing their Islamism when needed and minimizing it when it is not needed (Wolf, 2017). Furthermore, despite achieving electoral success, *Ennahda* is consistently open to ceding political control as a compromise to protect the fragile democratic identity of the post-Ben Ali Tunisia. In effect, *Ennahda* utilizes agency to project this comprising character despite this creating a barrier to success.

In Indonesia, democratization in the late twentieth century led to a fragmented party system that distinguishes Indonesia from other cases. Specifically, Indonesia suffers from a plethora of Islamist ideologues who have each developed a political following. As a result, secular parties have dominated the political field because Islamist parties are fragmented. Moreover, because

⁴ Best exemplified by the development of Machrouu-Tounes as a fragment of Nidaa-Tounes in 2016. This can be attributed to a trend suggesting a divide between secularists in Tunisia.

Islam is an especially salient issue, spatial competition has resulted in a situation wherein Islam is incorporated into all platforms. Exemplifying this is how secular parties are able to recruit Islamic clerics to advocate for their platforms. Furthermore, when Islamic voters are highly mobilized, this interaction between secularists and Islamic clerics becomes more pronounced. In effect, the more salient Islam is to voters, the more likely all parties will incorporate an Islamic theme to their agendas. This dilution of issue ownership could help explain why Indonesia has produced the most disparate outcome for Islamist parties.

In both cases, however, it is demonstrated that transitional democracies produce exceptional circumstances that Islamists can utilize. The disparate differences in Indonesia and Tunisia suggest a key assumption around the nature of agency, implying that it influences performance more than structure does. This is only emboldened by the fact that Indonesia and Tunisia have relatively low barriers to entry, and have not resisted Islamism as fiercely as Turkey.

Morocco: How Monarchy Affect Electoral Islamists

As the only monarchy being examined, Morocco is unique in that it demonstrates how electoral-Islamists are ultimately constrained by structural conduciveness. More than any other case, Morocco demonstrates how structure defines the paradigm of political maneuvering available to political parties. In essence, regardless of whether or not effective agency is employed, any final success enjoyed by parties in systems such as this are restricted by the political power of the sovereign administration. This curious interaction between an operational legislature and a powerful monarch separated Morocco in that the effect of agency is minimized.

The PJD in Morocco, despite their restrictions, enjoyed significant support in electoral competitions. This display of electoral success even with a rigid system that is anything but

structurally conducive suggests a necessary reexamination of the impactful role structure plays in determining success. This study demonstrates that parties in rigid systems can still achieve electoral success when agency is effectively employed. As such, a conclusion that is complemented by the Morocco case is that when high voter mobilization occurs, the effect of barriers to entry and structural rigidity are less pronounced on Islamist parties.

The Absence of other Cases

While many other countries could have been examined, selecting them would have been inappropriate for this study. For example, countries headed by Islamist regimes, such as those found in Iran and Sudan, failed to qualify for selection because those systems are confounded by autocratic regimes who suppress democratization. This is true for monarchies and other autocratic regimes too. However, some democracies, most notable of whom are Malaysia and Pakistan, were not selected primarily because ethnic division bled into electoral competitions. In essence, these ethnic antagonisms confound political cleavages and could have reflected biased results.

The cases selected were utilized to demonstrate the effects of different political moods in determining the electoral outcome of Islamist parties. Their localized contexts attempted to minimize external biases that could confound conclusions. This largely that countries with exceptional contexts were disqualified from the study because comparative assessments would have been skewed. As such, each case study had to be somewhat similar to the other so that the comparisons produced fair and reliable conclusions.

Methodology

This study seeks to understand how structure and agency amalgamate to produce party success. High levels of success are hypothesized to be derived from structurally conducive systems and facilitated by the effective use of party agency. As such, to differentiate between the levels of successful performance, this research posits an operationalization of success that is capable of factoring in the grasp of power parties hold over executive and legislative processes. Successful parties, therefore, are delineated by enjoying positions in parliament, executive cabinets, and other positions in government. Using this conceptualization of success, a 12-point based index was developed to comparatively demonstrate party success in each system under. Here, the index scores range from 0 to 12 wherein a higher score reflects higher magnitudes of success. This operationalization of success was formulated to present a quantitative measure able to juxtapose the cases and demonstrate more concisely the varying outcomes each Islamist party has attained in its respective system.

% of Seats in Legislatures	Points
Highest Amount of Seats	3
Second Highest Amount	2
Third Highest Amount	1
Other Parties	0

Seats in Cabinet	Points
Highest Amount of Ministers	3
Second Highest	2
Third Highest	1
Other	0

In a Government Coalition?	Points
No	0
Yes	1

Is the Leader of the House a member?	Points
No	0
Yes	2

Is the head of Government a Member?	Points
No	0
Yes	3

Table 2. Criteria for the 12-Point Index measuring party performance (12= Absolute Party Success)

The success scores therefore are indicative of the influence a party holds over political processes in its domain. What can be inferred from this, on a hypothetical level, is that parties scoring the maximum 12 points must be able to effectively mobilize voters while minimizing structural barriers to competition. Similarly, parties who score a minimum of 0 would demonstrate an inability to effectively appeal to the electorate or are completely debilitated by institutional barriers. This then means that the score should portray trends that facilitate the hypothesis predicting party success.

Measuring the Impact of Structural Conduciveness

Regulatory institutions have historically limited the democratic participation of electoral Islamists. Wegner (2006) argues that anti-Islamist institutions in Morocco severely impeded the development of the PJD. It was not until the monarchy approved liberalizing some institutions in

2011 that the PJD was able to perform better at electoral competitions (CNN, 2011). Impediments to organizational development can result in unequal competition. Hence, in electoral settings in which there are minimal restrictions on Islamist parties, it is expected that Islamists will be more able to compete effectively against other parties. Similarly, in heavily-regulated settings, Islamists will be more likely to be at a disadvantage. Thus, insofar as institutional regulations influence party development, successful Islamist parties require a relatively receptive electoral settings that allows them to develop abreast of other parties. To determine the ease of entry, the research qualitatively describes the institutional factors that prohibit the development of Islamist parties in countries like Turkey. One example of a regulatory institution minimizing the ease of entry is the straightforward ban of Islamist parties.

Aside from regulatory institutions, other factors such as the degree of political centralization might explain whether or not Islamists are able to compete effectively. Chhibber and Kollman argue that in highly centralized countries, national parties become favorable to regional parties. In essence, their argument suggests that in centralized countries, electoral systems are dominated by national parties, and decentralized countries are dominated by regional parties. Therefore, because Islamists espouse ideological platforms that most resemble national-level issues, Islamists are predicted to perform best in centralized electoral systems. Moreover, it can be hypothesized that Islamist parties are advantaged in centralized systems not dominated by other national parties. One of the methods that is used to give an indication of centralization looks at the number of regional parties in a given system.

Other structural factors that might help identify the conditions necessary for party success include parliamentary fragmentation. The fragmentation of a party system occurs when more parties are able to participate in parliamentary legislation and therefore represent more distinct

cleavages. Compared to a two-party system where voters have two distinct ideological competitors, fragmented systems offer multiple parties that each advocate a specific policy preference. Islamist parties mobilize voters mainly from ideologically-driven platforms. Because fragmented systems exaggerate the effect of policy-preferences, they minimize the influence of shared ideologies. Therefore, in highly fragmented systems, Islamist platforms are predicted to mobilize less voters than they would have in less fragmented systems. Fragmentation in a party system can be operationalized by investigating factors such as the effective party number. Indices provided by some academics can also be utilized to determine the level of fragmentation in a given party system (Gallagher and Mitchell, 2004). This would then be compared with the level of success attributed to parties in those systems to establish a link between fragmentation and the effectiveness of Islamist platforms.

Finally, systems where demographics demonstrate a high level of religious homogeneity might help describe favorable conditions for Islamist parties. Because all of the countries investigated are Muslim-majority, and are often predominantly Muslim, religious homogeneity can convey the homogeneity of Islam in the respective countries. To measure this, the research utilized the religious fractionalization index (RFI) provided by Alesina et al. (2003). This index provides a measure ranging from 0 to 1 where 1 indicates absolute heterogeneity while 0 indicates absolute homogeneity. This measure gathered demographic data in 2003 from the Encyclopedia Britannica's census data on worldwide countries. Despite the data being about 16 years out of date, shifts in the religious makeup of a demography is assumed to take long periods of time. As such, the data is still pertinent to describing the homogeneity in these countries.

Operationalizing Effective Agency

Without effective agency, most Islamist parties will be contained to a minority bloc of religious voters who view Islamic policies as the most salient policy issue. Determining issue salience is complex and requires a multi-dimensional approach. First, one way to operationalize saliency is to objectively assess the appeal of Islam in the case studies. As aforementioned, because the countries under investigation are predominantly Muslim, religion saliency can be as indicative as Islamic saliency. As such, survey data from the World Values Survey exploring the importance of religion in daily lives can be implemented as indicative of issue salience. To clarify, this data asked respondents to rank their prioritization of religion in their daily lives from “Not Important” to “Very Important”. To define saliency, what was implemented into this study was the percentage of people who ranked religion as “Very Important”.

Using the data from 24 Muslim-Majority countries, this study created an ordinal index of saliency reflective of a quartile-based ranking of these results (See appendix A). These values, ranging from 0 to 3, indicate the prevalence of Islam as a salient issue in political campaigns. Theoretically, countries with a high score (typically 3) will be composed of many parties that adapt Islam, in some form, into their campaigns. As such, the salience of Islam can actually be counterproductive to Islamist parties because the issue will become assimilated into most party platforms. This could help explain why Islamist parties in Indonesia fail to perform successfully despite Islam being a very salient policy issue.⁵

⁵ As will be discussed later, Indonesia’s elections are exemplified by contradictory trends wherein secular candidates will employ Islamic-based rhetoric to appeal to religious voters. This trend is more pronounced in periods when religious mobilization is more effective.

In a way, issue saliency defines the paradigm Islamist parties can operate within. To conceptualize this, consider a scenario where a minority of the population ranks religion as very important. In these countries, religious parties whose platforms revolve around religious issues will be unable to attain majorities without significantly revamping their policy agendas. In essence, issue salience can be indicative of the maximum level of support a party can achieve. This can also mean that it provides a measure of the effectiveness of a party's electoral campaign by comparing the vote share to the level of saliency. A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that party agency becomes in itself an instrument to maximize spatial competitiveness, meaning that parties use campaigns designed to consolidate issue ownership.

Parties utilize campaigning and appealing platforms as instruments to maximize mobilization. Factors that impact party performance therefore impede either campaign effectiveness or the appeal of platforms. For Islamist parties, factors such as corruption, Islamist violence, and legislative productivity, can adversely influence mobilization. If effective agency reflects a party's ability to maneuver towards electoral success, then successful Islamist parties will attempt to minimize the perception of corrupt members, and attempt to pass legislation to maximize voter appeal. However, external factors like Islamist violence cannot be controlled by parties, and such violence can alter significantly public perceptions of these parties.

Discussion of the Data

Using the 12-point index for party performance, it was demonstrated that the AKP in Turkey was the most successful Islamist party among the case studies. This is evident by the AKP's presence in parliament and the executive cabinet. Conversely, Indonesia's 4 Islamist parties have, together, performed the worst among the cases. Scoring only 4 out of 12, Indonesia's parties posit a situation that challenges the effect of institutional barriers on party performance.

<i>Party</i>	<i>Performance Score</i>
<i>AKP (Turkey)</i>	12
<i>PJD (Morocco)</i>	10
<i>Ennahda (Tunisia)</i>	6
<i>All (Indonesia)</i>	4

Table 3. Party Performance in the four case studies as measured by a 12-point scale (12 = Most Successful).

These results demonstrate a curious trend that challenges the perception of a homogenous Islamism across the Muslim. Primarily, the outcomes observed above demonstrate how disparately Islamist parties are received in their own systems. In fact, the performance scores further indicate that Islamist parties show a pattern of regular party behavior. However, the results also indicate that in each system except Indonesia, the religious cleavage is owned mainly by one party.

<i>Party</i>	<i>Performance Score</i>
<i>PKB</i>	3
<i>PPP</i>	1
<i>PKS</i>	0
<i>PAN</i>	0

Table 4. Performance Score of Islamist Parties in Indonesia. The score relies on the same 12-point scale used in Table 2.

In Indonesia, only two of the four Islamist parties were able to accrue positions relatively influential over political processes. The National Awakening Party (PKB) takes the lead with 3 points while the United Development Party (PPP) follows with the remaining 1 point. Interestingly, the PKB is synonymous with the Nahdatul Ulama (NU) traditionalist movement in Indonesia, which could help explain why this party outperformed other Islamist parties.⁶ Overshadowed by more popular secular parties, Islamists in Indonesia enjoyed little to no institutional barriers to competition. However, deep fragmentation in the Indonesian system could help explain why this is the only case where multiple Islamist parties exist, and consequently why their performance was inferior to other case studies.

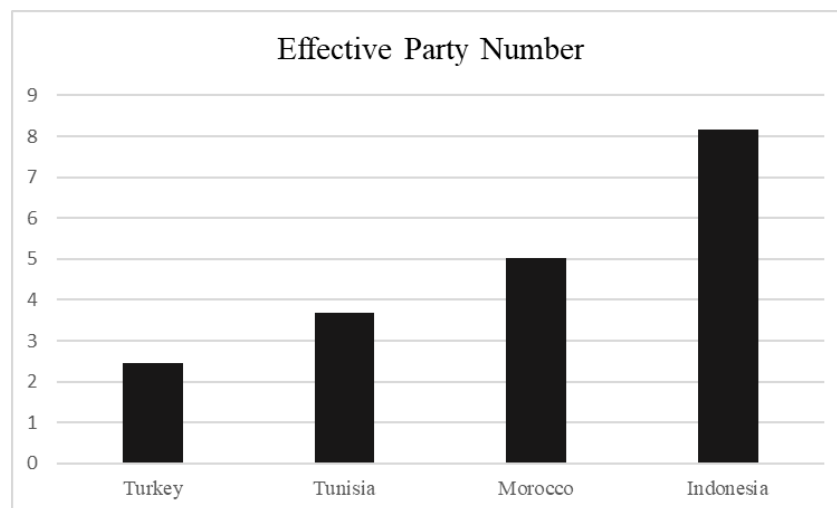


Figure 3. Effective Party Number in Parliament. Higher numbers indicate higher fragmentation in a system.

By comparing the effective party number, fragmentation is discovered to correlate negatively with party success. In fact, Indonesia, whose parties performed the worst, was the most fragmented system while Turkey had the least fragmented system. In essence, this could help

⁶ Nahdatul Ulama is the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia with an estimated membership of over 90 million people.

explain how spatial competitiveness is more likely to net greater benefits to parties in less fragmented systems. As such, the AKP were able to consolidate a much broader audience than parties in Indonesia because the Indonesian system yielded less marginal utility as a result of fragmentation. An exception to this trend is seen in Morocco which suffers from relatively high fragmentation despite the PJD's ability to attain moderate success. As such, other factors may have exaggerated the failure of Islamist parties in Indonesia besides system fragmentation.

<i>Country</i>	<i>Religion Salience</i>
<i>Turkey</i>	1
<i>Morocco</i>	2
<i>Tunisia</i>	3
<i>Indonesia</i>	3

Table 4. Measure of religious salience (where 3 = Most Salient).

Despite fragmentation, the Indonesian system challenges the notion that religion saliency can indicate a large religious democratic cleavage. Instead, the results on religion salience imply the opposite. In cases where religion was less salient, Islamist parties attained electoral successes, and in cases where the issue was more salient, parties tended to perform worse. This could suggest that a high level of saliency makes it so that every party assimilates religious issues into their platforms. This would mimic the situation in Romania as argued by Raymond (2014) wherein the religious cleavage failed to mobilize voters because religious issues were incorporated into most party platforms.

Another variable that demonstrates Indonesia's differences is the religious fractionalization Index. Here, all cases except Indonesia display a level of extreme religious homogeneity (indicated by scores close to 0). This relative heterogeneity of the Indonesian population can indicate that the presence of multiple faiths have either adversely affected the perception of Islamist based parties, or have reduced the size of the Islamist political cleavage, making it harder for Islamists to achieve

significant victories. This index, however, does not describe entirely the situation of Islamic policy preferences in these cases. It only describes the magnitude of a single dominant faith among the demographics. To clarify, religious homogeneity does not indicate a higher salience of Islamic issues, but instead reveals how widespread a certain religion is compared to other beliefs. This is relevant to the study because multiple religions could adversely affect Islamist voter mobilization.

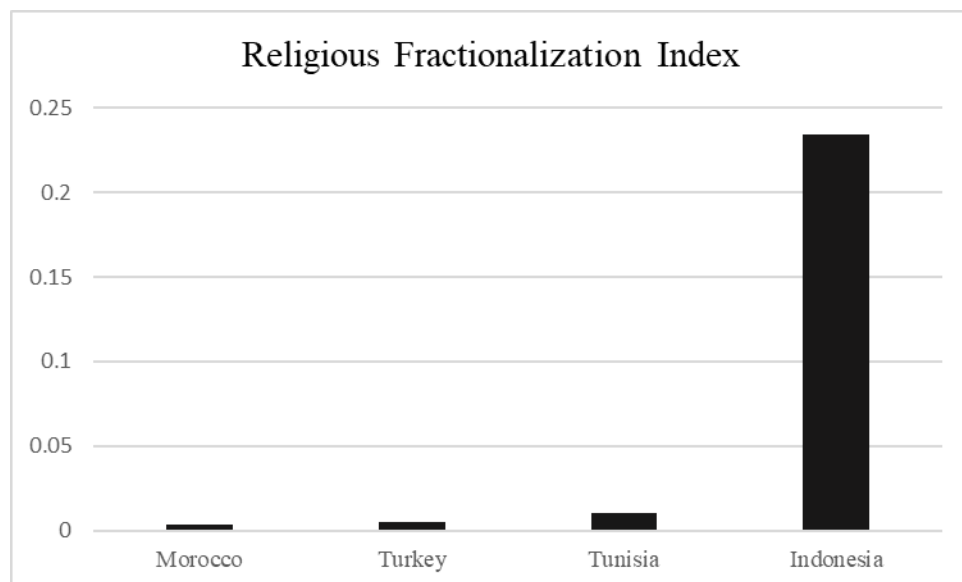


Figure 4. Religious Fractionalization Index measuring religious homogeneity. (0 = Most Homogeneous, 1 = Least Homogenous).

Analysis

The results demonstrated that party success is influenced by variables such as system fragmentation and issue salience. However, these are not the sole predictors of party success. Instead, historical analyses of these separate cases can help explain the antecedents that might have led to specific outcomes. These analyses are designed to help contextualize the systems these parties operate in. Specifically, through these analyses, other variables begin to emerge that are suggested to influence party performance. For example, one of the structural variables that are key to this study is the rigidity of the system. Through these qualitative analyses, it is determined that the precedence of assertive secularism in Turkey and liberal civil society in Indonesia might help explain the disparate outcomes that are resulted.

Furthermore, other trends that interact with party performance are sometimes unique localized factors. Prominent among these are the interactions between separatist movements and the state. Parties like the AKP and PJD utilize separatist movements to mobilize voters, while the lack of separatist movements in more centralized countries like Tunisia mean that *Ennahda* must look elsewhere to maximize voter mobilization. As such, these historical analyses present a nuanced look at the various antecedents that could help explain the causal mechanisms that allow Islamist parties to attain electoral success.

Turkey

In 2013, the Turkish parliament successfully passed a resolution that altered article 35 of the Internal Service act. The article, which had hitherto required the Turkish Armed Forces to prevent external and internal threats to the national security of Turkey, was now redefined to require intervention only when faced with external threats (Anadolu Agency, 2013). Promulgated

by the AKP, this edit to article 35 indicated the new balance of power that rested heavily with the Erdoğan-led Islamists. The article heretofore had enabled the Turkish Armed forces to instigate military coups in the name of protecting the secular values of Turkey. With this ability gone, the AKP had finally consolidated its grasp on Turkish politics only 11 years after its conception.

Headed by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the AKP has consistently dominated policymaking and executive decisions since 2002. While officially pertaining to a “conservative” party label, many experts define AKP as an electorally Islamist party because of their heavy emphasis on Islamic policies (Jenkins, 2008; Polat, 2016). Despite this, Erdoğan utilized the conservative label heavily in the early years of the AKP. This is because politics in Turkey was, until the takeover by the AKP, dominated by a symbiosis of political actors with the military. Political actors in this era were incentivized to propagate secularist policies and suppress the emergence of religious civil society while the military refrained from intervening (Yavuz, 2003, p.245).⁷ Indeed, this relationship reinforced the classical Kemalist ideas of Turkish unity and was theoretically essential to the prosperity of Turkey.⁸ As such, Turkey has, in its republican history, experienced a series of military interventions that all suppressed the emergence of specific political movements. Parties that advocated Kemalism, such as the CHP, have historically facilitated the processes that allowed the military to operate as it did. Most relevant of these interventions was the military suppression of Refah Party (RP) and the arrest of Necmettin Erbakan in 1997. The RP, which had mustered unprecedented support and challenged the republican coalition, had advocated for a hardline

⁷ The military attempted to facilitate other forms of civil society such as women’s associations, trade unions, and other organizations in an effort to dilute the emergence of a primarily Islamic lifestyle. See Yavuz, p. 245

⁸ Kemalism refers to the ideological beliefs and values of the founder of the modern Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The ideological basis to Kemalism emphasizes the national Turkish Identity and absolute secularization.

platform that advanced a Sharia-based agenda. Threatened by this, the military accused RP of being a national threat and swiftly dissolved the organization and arrested Erbakan.

The Özal Period and its Effect on Contemporary Turkish Politics

When Atatürk founded the modern republic of Turkey, his secularization effort propagated strict institutional barriers to all facets of Islamic identity. Religious symbols, education, and practice were heavily regulated and sometimes banned.⁹ Atatürk had instituted during this time a rigid political system that foremost promulgated Turkish nationalism. Hence, this political system was dominated by parties that espoused an ideology synonymous with nationalism. In the first two decades of this republic, the Republican People's Party (CHP) essentially controlled Turkish politics, and continued to do so until they were supplanted by the Democratic Party (DP). The DP then facilitated the resurgence of moderate Islamic values throughout the 1960s until the republican guard intervened and dissolved parliament on the basis of anti-secular threats to the Republic. This cycle that fluctuated between Kemalist and reformist movements typically demonstrated the duality of political thought in Turkey. While there existed a strong momentum for secularism, there was also an almost equally strong weight behind reactionary reformism. The most significant of these movements was led by Turgut Özal, leader of the Motherland Party (ANAP).

Özal and his leadership of ANAP brought to Turkey the first ever effective legislation to ease institutional restrictions on Islamic identity. Concomitant with his policy of economic liberalization, Özal also advocated for a policy agenda that eroded away the consolidated secular hold on politics. These changes, in effect, signaled the emergence of Islamist organizations and

⁹ A famous example of this was the temporary ban on Arabic calls to prayer. In order to promote Turkish nationalism, the republican government passed legislation forcing mosques to perform the same calls in Turkish.

the foundations of modern organized Islamism in Turkey. Indeed, the proliferation of İmam Hatip school systems across Turkey largely occurred under the leadership of ANAP (Yavus, 2003). It did not necessarily imply, however, that ANAP was pro-Islamism, merely that they facilitated the easing of structural impediments that allowed in the long term the emergence of Islamist political parties. Conversely, while ANAP liberalized the economy and facilitated Islamic civil society, the military remained as strict and continued to operate as a regulating body to anti-secular threats. In fact, the military during this time increasingly identified reactionary Islamist movements as security threats to the Turkish republic, and utilized this to suppress the emergence of organized Islamism.

Erdoğan and the Securitization Process

The rapid rise and subsequent implosion of RP was indicative of a rigid institutionalization that was, in its essence, opposed to the emergence of Islamic-based organizations. Prior to founding the AKP, Erdoğan had to maneuver around several institutional barriers that blocked the ease of entry into legislative power. Chief among these barriers was the securitization protocols that have directly impeded the emergence of any significant Islamist party. Securitization was used by the military as a label to threats found in Turkey. While securitization was historically used to brutally suppress Kurdish separatists, a trend of proliferating reactionary Islamist movements in the 1960s influenced a diversion of securitization towards Islamic networks (Yavus, 2003). Hence, it was essential for Erdoğan to avoid being labelled as a security threat. Therein, because of this barrier, lies the fundamental foundation to the characterization of the early AKP platform. Despite this, the AKP managed to consistently secure massive electoral successes from its inception. How, then, is the AKP able to succeed electorally and legislate effectively while operating in a hostile

political system? Because institutionalization in Turkey directly dismantled Islamist parties, party agency was integral not merely to ensure success, but to ensure its survival altogether.

Aware of the hostility towards Islamism, Erdoğan characterized the early AKP as a center-right socially conservative party. In fact, the party minimized its “Islamic” identity and campaigned in 2002 on the issue of the economy. For example, the press conference that declared the formation of the AKP was filled with commemorative banners celebrating Atatürk (Jenkins, 2008). Furthermore, Erdoğan repeatedly emphasized his commitment to democracy and freedom of speech to avoid opposition from the CHP or the republican guard. Instead, because the AKP utilized the opportune timing of the 2001 recession, the AKP successfully managed to cast doubt on the CHP’s efficiency to administer the public sector (Polat, 2016). As a result, the CHP failed to inspire voter confidence and allowed the AKP to gain a massive electoral victory in 2002. Since then, the AKP maneuvered around securitization to avoid the same fate of the RP.

After supplanting the traditional legislative representatives of the Kemalist state, the CHP, the AKP had to ensure that other facets of the republic such as the military and the judicial system would not intervene and halt AKP rule. In order to secure their fate, the AKP had to balance voter approval alongside these opponents. Indeed, while the AKP maintained a conservative label, their supporting base was largely Islamist. These supporters were empirically more likely to have supported pro-Islamist legislation and would have expected the AKP to legislate as such (Jenkins, 2008). Meanwhile, any outwardly Islamist legislation would have likely spelt the end of the AKP and a possible military intervention. Thus, AKP leadership consistently attempted to campaign on reform but maintained a relatively neutral policymaking agenda. In fact, scholars such as Yavuz (2003) identified this pluralistic identity of the AKP as one of its most effective qualities.

Indonesia: Fragmented Islamism

Indonesia, unlike the other cases under investigation in this paper, enjoys a relatively open political environment. To clarify, they practice in their system perhaps the most liberal form of electoral politics relative to other predominantly Muslim democracies. In contrast to the hostile secular ideologues in Turkey, who not only opposed but also suppressed Islamism, political actors in Indonesia propagated an environment of open competition (Tomsa, 2018). Despite this, Indonesia is also unique in that none of its Islamist parties were able to consolidate any significant political power or operational influence. In fact, because Indonesia's proportionally represented parliament has low thresholds, it has exaggerated fragmentation and consequently produced an increasingly diluted party system. As a result of this, and distinct from the other cases, there are four Islamist parties actively participating in Indonesian politics. However, to understand the societal antecedents that facilitated the contemporary configuration of political interactions, one must assess the underlying philosophical significance of *Pancasila*.

The Foundations of Tolerance: *Pancasila* in Indonesian History

The precedence of political pluralism in Indonesia can arguably be attributed to the precedence of philosophical tolerance that is rooted in Indonesian culture. This precedence was officially symbolized by the formal introduction of a state philosophy known as *Pancasila*.¹⁰ Academics concerned with Indonesian politics have generally recognized the significance of this philosophical concept as a manifestation of centuries of multicultural history in Indonesia (Kingsbury, 1998; Ramage, 1995). Officially instated alongside the rise of Sukarno, *Pancasila* was initially used as a tool to appeal to the masses under the guise of multiculturalism and tolerance

¹⁰ Pancasila is derived from the old Javanese words meaning five pillars. This is in reference, evidently, to the five core philosophical rights that must be protected by the Indonesian state.

by the would-be ruler. Regardless, the institutionalization of a coded set of principles directed the path of Indonesian political thought. Through various reiterations, *Pancasila* would continue to feature prominently as a tool that enable autocratic regimes to consolidate their hold on power. Most significant to this study, in fact, is the rhetoric employed by the New Order government during the Suharto era.¹¹ In this instance, the government used *Pancasila* to coerce popular support for the suppression of alternative belief systems such as communism. This was significant, of course, because this rhetoric was employed during the later Cold War years.

Islamic political participation during this era was largely confined to the local sphere wherein religious influencers could, theoretically, disseminate Islamic teachings. The New Order administration, not unlike the Republican bloc in Turkey, attempted to suppress as best as possible the influence of political Islam. However, in 1973, they established the PPP as the first Muslim democratic party. The PPP almost immediately suffered from a lack of popular support. Seen as a structurally incoherent party, the PPP failed to project an appealing platform and mobilize voters.¹² Furthermore, the Suharto administration during this time swiftly identified the rise of political Islam as a threat to national security. Therefore, the PPP's positioning in politics reinforced low electoral success because the party found itself unable to project a structured party platform without intervention by influential political actors.

Transition to Democracy: The National and Subnational Divide

¹¹ The New Order government refers to the Suharto administration that effectively controlled all political domains in Indonesia from 1966-1998. This administration utilized the Pancasila framework to propagate a centralized system of government that suppressed most opposition and reinforced autocracy.

¹² This failure of crafting ideological identities later reemerges during the democratic era in Indonesian politics. Most Islamist parties during this era continue to suffer from incoherent party identities and as such fail to attract electoral victories.

After the fall of the Suharto administration in 1998, Indonesia began its democratization processes. However, the institutional framework that was employed during this period was largely inherited from the New Order administration. For example, despite a pronounced cultural and religious divide across geographical regions, the new administration revived a centralized political domain not unlike the one utilized by Suharto. Moreover, many of the mechanisms that reinforced autocratic rule in Indonesia, such as patronage politics, were also inherited. This meant that the new democratic plane was misrepresentative of subnational demographic segments and facilitated many of the corrupt aspects of the old regime. As a result, political interactions at the individual level became increasingly divorced from official stances. This division emphasized a subnational dissidence from national politics which can be observed in how many local executive actors personify party platforms.

The issue of subnational divisions from national politics have consequently produced a party system where electoral trends are not representative of the structural organization of the system. To clarify, Chhibber and Kollman (2004) argued that party labels are essentially designed to conform to the mainstream institutional structure. This, they argue, is why centralized systems favor national parties while federal systems favor regionalized parties. Conversely, Islamist parties mimic in many ways how national parties behave because they employ in their fundamental platform a political philosophy for the makeup of political rule over the nation. This is doubly so in Indonesia wherein both the PPP and the PKS advocate for an Islamic political structure based on Sharia law.¹³ As such, because Indonesia after democratization was a centralized system, parties like PPP and PKS should have been favorable to attract a wide electoral base. Furthermore,

¹³ Other Islamist parties, like the PKB and PAN, are not included in this discussion because they do not represent a national party platform and instead represent Islamic organizations such as Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, respectively. See Dirk, Tomsa (2018)

because religion is a salient issue not only among voters but also politicians who cite *Pancasila*, these Islamist parties seem to have emerged in a hospitable system that might have led to a consolidation of power similar in magnitude to the AKP in Turkey. However, despite these favorable conditions, the PPP and PKS consistently failed to mobilize enough voters to secure electoral victories. Instead, these parties were limited to government coalitions at best, and minority opposition groups at worst.

This weak performance by Islamist parties in Indonesia can be partly attributed to the aforementioned subnational divide. In fact, regardless of the party structures, Islamism is practiced more widely at the local level than the magnitude of representation it receives in the national arena. Buehler (2013) finds after observations of various provinces in Indonesia that many local executive leaders implement Islamist policies despite being Golkar party members.¹⁴ This disconnect from national party positions is indicative of a system wherein party labels do not inspire issue uniformity. Instead, exhibited observations reveal instances, such as aforementioned, in which labels are utilized almost arbitrarily even if it means conflicting with foundational political principles. In addition, another trend that emphasizes this pattern of politics is the pronounced frequency of party defections at the local level. Dirk (2014) found through his analysis that Indonesian subnational figures were more likely to switch party positions and subsequently change party memberships than observed switches at the national level. This analysis indicates that politicians could be more accountable to voters in the local level than they are at the national level.

Voter Mobilization and the Future of Electoral Islamism

¹⁴ Golkar is the main secular party in Indonesia and in many ways opposes the party platforms and ideologies of PPP and PKS.

These issues that catalyzed party defections and indicated a deep divide between local and national politics are also indicative of a broader problem with the Indonesian party system. Concomitant with a fragmented system configuration, Indonesian politics is marred by party identity issues and incoherent policy positions. This could partially explain why, unlike any other case in this study, four Islamist parties emerge and compete in this system. Altogether, PPP, PKS, PKB, and PAN all ultimately advocate the same cause of implementing an Islamic-based policy agenda. However, these parties compete against each other and are, in fact, part of opposing coalitions.¹⁵ It is not surprising, therefore, that parties in Indonesia are unable to mobilize voters to magnitudes comparable to other party systems.

Succinctly, Islamists in Indonesia suffer foremost from an issue of ineffective agency. Mietzner (2013) attributes the nature of political pluralism in contributing to a limited ability to mobilize voters. In effect, the structural institutions promulgated by pro-*Pancasila* actors catalyzed the fragmentation of Islamist blocs and minimized the influence any one party can attain. Furthermore, because there remains a trend wherein parties exhibit policy openness, voters cannot ideologically side with a specific party mainly due to their own ideological flexibility.

Islamism in the Arab World: The Cases of Tunisia and Morocco

Not unlike Indonesia, party politics in Tunisia were developed alongside democratization. Particularly, the two countries are similar in that they are both young democracies that succeeded autocratic regimes. As the country hosted its first democratic elections, *Ennahda*, an Islamist organization founded almost four decades ago, surged to attain wide electoral success. Like all other cases examined, electoral competition was divided between two main conflicting blocs of

¹⁵ The PPP and PKB are subscribed to the government coalition while the PKS and PAN are allied with the opposition.

Islamists and Secularists. Having emerged as a new democracy, there were little to no institutional barriers preventing Islamists from consolidating power. Despite this, *Ennahda* conceded vital government positions to secular figures in an attempt to demonstrate their willingness to compete fairly in a democracy. This show of bipartisanship separated Tunisia from all of the other cases in that the Islamists here not only displayed compatibility with democracy but actively engaged in preserving it.

While *Ennahda* received 37% of the vote in 2011, by 2014, their support dwindled as secular parties began to cohesively organize and as a result only received 27.8% of the vote. Wolf (2017) describes *Ennahda*'s initial success as being the result of a fragmented opposition. In essence, while Islamists were fragmented in Indonesia, it was the secularists who were unable to unify in the early elections in Tunisia. The fragmentation between secularists revolved around the development of the Tunisian constitution in 2011. After resolving the issues surrounding the constitution, secularists began to assimilate into larger alliances (Stepan, 2018). As this trend changed, *Ennahda* was faced with a tougher competition that may have reduced its influence over Tunisian politics over time.

The electorate's shift towards secular parties like Nidaa Tounes could explain why *Ennahda*'s campaign was tailored to appeal to both religious voters and less-religious conservatives. In an attempt to maximize mobilization, *Ennahda* capitalized on social conservatives by playing down their Islamist qualities (Wolf, 2017, p.133). Therefore, one of the key delineations between Tunisia and Indonesia can be attributed to structural factors. The hyper-fragmentation of the Indonesian system resulted in a multitude of Islamist parties that all spatially competed for various blocs. All the while, secular parties in Indonesia adopted some Islamic positions to appeal to religious voters. As such, the Indonesian system's conduciveness, indicated

by its low thresholds to entry and minimal restrictions on party rhetoric, allowed for the obfuscation of the Islamic political cleavage. In Tunisia, however, *Ennahda* swiftly consolidated, by itself, not only the Islamist political cleavage, but the conservative base as well.

Meanwhile, the Justice and Development Party (PJD) in Morocco has, not unlike the AKP in Turkey, had to maneuver around anti-Islamist institutions propelled by the Monarch. Operating within a hybrid regime meant that the PJD had to balance state resistance with regular electoral competition. Despite this, the party was able to secure multiple electoral victories, suggesting that institutional barriers could only have a limited role in impeding parties. To clarify, while regulatory institutions can prevent parties from competing and effectively stop them from developing, their effectiveness no longer impedes parties once they pass the threshold barring them from participation. In addition, while structural conduciveness could aid electoral success, rigid structural factors might not restrict parties from attaining the same success.

Conclusion & Further Studies

Further studies to explore the development of Islamist parties can draw from exogenous events that influence voter mobilization. There have been no significant studies that measure the effect of violent Islamism on the perception of electoral Islamists, and whether militant attacks can adversely affect voter mobilization. Moreover, while this research posited that Islamists are regular political actors in democratic Muslim-majority nations, there is room to explore the responsiveness of the electorate to the legislative productivity of an Islamist-led government compared to the responsiveness to other governments.

In sum, the cases demonstrate that while structural conduciveness sets the operational domain of competition, effective agency determines the level of success a party enjoys. Moreover, voter mobilization seems to emerge in countries wherein the salience of Islamist issues is not pronounced enough to promulgate most parties to incorporate some sort of Islamic policy. Instead, in these countries with relatively low saliency, Islamist parties can capitalize on conservative bases to maximize their spatial competitiveness.

Islamist parties do not share among them a supranational ideology. While derived from the same parent ideology, these parties have developed to accommodate their localized political moods. Insofar as Islamic-democratic parties share policy agendas, they become products of their system's policy cycle. To clarify, a party develops after each passing electoral period by revamping their agendas and platforms to seek reelection. Over time, Islamist parties that may have shared several views diverge until they are no longer similar. This is best seen in the differences between the AKP, *Ennahda*, and the Islamist parties in Indonesia (who themselves diverge from one another too).

The process of party development is shaped by electoral cycles. Because party behavior is responsive to the electorate, agendas are shaped partly by public opinion. Islamist parties operate within this fundamental paradigm, and as such, become organizations that behave similar to other parties, while attempting to consolidate issue ownership and spatially compete using the Islamic political cleavage. Therefore, this research challenges the notions of international electoral Islamist organizations and instead posits an alternative approach to examining Islamist parties. In effect, these parties do not operate on the basis of a religious motivation, but instead behave like regular parties seeking electoral success. Their emergence in Muslim-majority countries does not indicate the incompatibility of Islam and democracy, but moves past it to suggest that these parties only attempt to mobilize voters on the basis of policy preferences.

Appendix A

Religion Salience	Country	Percentage that Say religion is "Very Important"
3	Qatar	98.9
3	Yemen	95.8
3	Tunisia	95.4
3	Libya	94.9
3	Indonesia	94
3	Egypt	93.8
2	Jordan	93.3
2	Algeria	90.7
2	Pakistan	89.5
2	Morocco	88.9
2	Saudi Arabia	88.7
2	Mali	88.1
1	Kuwait	86.5
1	Malaysia	84.8
1	Iraq	84.7
1	Burkina Faso	82.8
1	Iran	78.2
1	Turkey	68.1
0	Lebanon	52.9
0	Kyrgyzstan	39.3
0	Azerbaijan	35.9
0	Uzbekistan	34.3
0	Bosnia	34
0	Kazakhstan	21.5

Countries are divided into 4 equally distributed quartiles that measure the percentage of people ranking the issue of religion as “Very Important” in their lives (using world values survey data). Case studies marked by red font.

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