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ALLEN FROMHERZ

POLITICAL PARTIES. Political parties are considered essential tools of democracy. Developments of modern democracies have been paralleled by the emergence of political parties such that modern democracies are “unthinkable save in terms of parties” (Schattschneider, 1942, p. 124). However, parties may and do exist in a wide range of political systems, including semidemocratic or nondemocratic. Essentially, a political party is an association of individuals with a common set of beliefs and political goals, sharing a desire to take control of the government under a specific label. It is “a formal organization whose self-conscious, primary purpose is to place and maintain in public office persons who will control, alone or in coalition, the machinery of government” (La Palombara and Weiner, 1966, p. 3). Thus defined, parties are groups of people. They are organized, with labels. That is, they deliberately act together to achieve common goals. They seek to acquire power by winning political office (Heywood, 2002, p. 248). They provide the voters with a brand name so that they can identify with a general approach to public questions and to make an informed choice with ease.

Political parties emerged with the development of democracy, the extension of popular suffrage and parliamentary power (La Palombara and Weiner, 1966). The growth of parliamentary

power in Europe and in the United States led members of parliament who shared similar views on important issues to organize themselves into groups (called factions). Over time, the parliamentary and electoral groups cooperated to form mass parties to capture support from newly enfranchised voters. Not all political parties were internally created, however. In fact, beginning around 1900, parties were created from outside parliament. For example, trade unions sometimes developed into or helped create socialist political parties; this is how the British Labour Party developed. The nationalist movements, like the Muslim League in Pakistan, that ended colonial regimes were organized to influence colonial policies. Externally, parties may also be formed as a result of social modernization of the country. The modernizing nationalist reform parties in newly independent societies, such as the National Liberation Party of Costa Rica, the Republican Party of Turkey, and the Destourian Socialist Party of Tunisia, were created to absorb the shocks resulting from rapid—modernization, communications, economic development, mass education, and the disruption of traditional social forms and attitudes.

The core function of political parties is to nominate candidates for public office and to try to get them elected. This involves two steps. The first is to nominate winnable candidates for the election. By so doing, parties not merely control the voter’s range of choices but severely limit the number of those eligible for public office. The second step is to mobilize the partisans to vote and to motivate the nonpartisans or “independent voters” to support their candidates. This function distinguishes a political party from other groups. To underscore its importance, Sartori (1976, p. 64) provides the famous “minimal definition” of a party, as “any political group that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through elections, candidates for public office.” Once the elections are

over, parties form and sustain governments in office and determine the legislation and execution of policies. This involves selecting members of the cabinet, appointing qualified men and women with interest and experience in public policy deliberation and formulation of public relations, media, and political strategies. Political parties not in power assume the role of the opposition by overseeing government programs, presenting critiques of policies, and offering themselves as alternative government. Additionally, parties provide a link between people and government. They are the channels of expression communicating the needs and wishes of the citizens to the government and conversely keeping the citizens informed about the decisions made by the government. Parties also perform an interest aggregation function. They bring together a number of different interest groups under the banner of the party and transform a multitude of specific demands into a manageable package of proposals. This is different from the interest articulation function largely performed by the interest groups. Political parties are mechanisms for social integration as they enable citizens to participate effectively in the political process and to feel they have a vested interest in its perpetuation. Finally, in some societies, parties provide a range of non-political benefits including social activities and recognition and status for people and groups.

The political parties functioning in a political system taken together make up a party system. This refers to the interaction of parties with each other and with the overall political system. The distinction between party systems is generally in terms of the number of parties with such categories as single party, two-party, and multiparty systems. The set of relationships is wholly internal in a single party system and is exemplified by, among others, the Communist Party of China, the Communist Party of Cuba, and the Communist Party of Vietnam. The two-party system is

characterized by two parties that share the major part of the electoral vote, and these two major parties alternate in the exercise of power. The United States of America, United Kingdom, and Canada have a dominant two-party system. Frequently in the multiparty system no party is able to obtain the majority of the legislative seats to form the government, often requiring the parties to form coalitions to form a government. The parties in competition vary in size and support base. There are some seventeen to twenty political parties in France, and Spain has up to fifty-five parties. Indonesia has more than thirty political parties.

Political Parties and Islamic Thought.

Political parties, with the exception of monarchies and military dictatorships, form important components of the political system in the Muslim world. Given overwhelming Western dominance, understandably most of the political parties are secular and hence have been subjected to severe criticisms by some Muslim scholars and activists. Emphasizing certain vital Islamic values and principles and yearning for the immediate establishment of a single, united Muslim *ummah*, these scholars refuse to recognize the role of political parties in an Islamic political system. They argue that Muslims are one *ummah* guided by the Qur'ān and the *sunnah*, and that the Qur'ān (3:105; 6:159; 8:46) repeatedly asks Muslims not to be divided among themselves. Political parties are perceived as divisive in nature, detrimental to the welfare of the *ummah*, and hence forbidden in an Islamic polity. They further point out that the Qur'ān disapproves of the formation of alliances specifically in the chapter entitled "The Parties" (al-Ahzab).

The majority of Muslim scholars are, however, of the opinion that political parties are not in conflict with the democratic spirit of the Islamic political system. Islamic scholarship looks with favor on *ikhtilāf*, or disagreement, among the believers

and plurality of views on matters that have not been determined by the Qurʾān and the *sunnah*. Indeed, the Qurʾān enjoins unity of the *ummah*, which implies belief in the unity and sovereignty of Allāh, and to be engaged in continuous worship as prescribed in the Qurʾān and the *sunnah*. The unity of the *ummah* does not imply political unity and disapproval of disagreement. Islam supports political pluralism, which means tolerating and respecting differences, which is a fact of human existence. However, any party or association that defies the teachings of Islam is indeed *ḥizb al-Shayṭān* (the party of the Devil).

Thus, instead of being repugnant to Islam, political parties are helpful in achieving the goals set by Islam. The need of the hour is to institutionalize them after weeding out some minor elements that are in conflict with Islamic principles. The Qurʾān asks the believers to “cooperate in righteousness and piety, and [not to] cooperate in sin and transgression” (5:2). It obligates believers to establish from among themselves a “group calling to the Goodness [*al-khayr*] and enjoining what is good [*al-maʿrūf*] and forbidding what is evil [*al-munkar*]” (4: 104). Ibn Taymīyah (1922–1930, 141) argued that the parties that promote people’s welfare are not merely allowed but are considered in the Qurʾān as “the party of the God [*ḥizb Allah*],” and “they are the successful” (58:19). Muḥammad al-Ghazālī concurred with Ibn Taymīyah and added that any party that aims at destroying the unity of the *ummah* is unlawful and hence forbidden.

Muslim scholars and activists seem to have accepted the legitimacy and desirability of political parties participating in the promotion of good for the Muslim *ummah*. However, the debate shifted to minor issues like the naming of the party and the modalities of taking part in elections. Since the term *ḥizb* used in the Qurʾān carries a negative connotation (as well as positive connotation), early Muslim political leaders shied away from

naming their political parties *ḥizb*. *Ḥizbīyah*, or partisan difference, has been an especially negative condition to be avoided. Leaders opted instead for such terms as *jamāʿah*, *jamʿīyah*, or *ḥarakah*, meaning association, society, and movement, respectively. Thus, the Muslim Brotherhood established in 1928 called itself Jamʿiyatal-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn (the Society of Muslim Brothers). Other examples include the Jamʿat-i-Islāmī of Pakistan (Pakistan Islamic Society); al-Jamʿat al-Islāmīyah of Syria (Syrian Islamic Society); and Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-Islāmīyah (the Islamic Resistance Movement, or Ḥamās), the Palestinian political party that governs Gaza. The early reluctance gradually waned and the word *ḥizb* gained increasing currency. Thus, the Islamic Liberation Party in Jordan is called Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr al-Islāmī. The Pashtun-based Islamic Party in Afghanistan is named E, and in Lebanon there is Ḥizbullāh (the Party of God). The prime ministers elected after the ousting of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, Ibrahim Jaʿfari and Nouri al-Maliki, came from the Shīʿī Islamist party, Ḥizb al-Daʿwah al-Islāmīyah (Party of the Call to Islam). Interestingly, al-Ittījah al-Islami (Mouvement de la Tenedance Islamique) of Tunisia adopted a new name in 1998, Ḥizb al-Nahḍah (Renaissance Party).

The other issue debated among Muslim scholars and activists was the function of political parties. They all agreed that the political parties must perform two tasks as specified in the Qurʾān (3:104; 3:110): to call people to all that is good (i.e., to Islam); and to enjoin virtue (i.e., performing all activities prescribed by Islam) and forbid vice (i.e., restraining corrupt influences that violate the principles of Islam). They also agree that the parties in Islam cannot function as simply electoral devices to get a group of leaders elected. The parties would take part in elections, if necessary, to replace the corrupt leadership with that of the pious and upright. They must, however, act

continuously to provide leadership and initiative in promoting virtue and prohibiting vice. Political parties should not just be an electoral instrument but should take part in a massive socioeconomic revolution along Islamic lines. Islam, as Ayatollah Khomeini pointed out, “is a religion where worship is joined to politics and political activity is a form of worship” (Algar, 1981, p. 275).

The debate whether Islam approves of political parties has somewhat become obsolete. Scholars and leaders have successfully made the transition from debating the issue to creating parties and taking part in elections to wrest power in order to implement the Islamic welfare system with or without calling their endeavors Islamic. Parties of secular and Islamic persuasion operate side by side, occasionally forming alliances to implement their agreed upon policies. Tunisia’s al-Nahḍah party, which won a plurality with 41 percent of the popular vote in 2011, opted to form a new government with two secular parties. Earlier in 2006, Ḥizbullāh formed an alliance with a right-wing Christian party. In Bangladesh, the Jamāʿat-i-Islāmī joined the coalition government with the Bangladesh Nationalist Party under the leadership of the wife of the slain president Ziaur Rahman.

Political Parties in the Muslim World. Political parties in the Muslim world emerged in response to the crises of legitimacy, integration, and participation (La Palombara and Weiner, 1966). The Muslim elites questioned the legitimacy of colonial rule, which did not meet the demand of the majority of people, and hence felt the need to establish a government of their own. However, this required integrating the masses, who were ethnically divided and geographically dispersed with limited or nonexistent communication systems. The masses, additionally, were politically apathetic. The national elites thus faced integration and penetration crises and were forced to respond

to these crises. Most political parties emerged as nationalist movements aimed at ending colonial rule by mobilizing the masses against it. The colonial powers tried to weaken these movements by introducing limited self-government, which taught them the art of bargaining and electioneering. Sometimes, the colonial government assisted the local elites to form parties in order to “divide and rule.” Thus, the Muslim League, which struggled for Pakistan, was created with the support of British officers.

The independence of the colonies did not result in the resolution of the crisis of legitimacy, integration, and participation. This gave rise to various factions within the parties, which eventually metamorphosed into separate parties. In some countries, these parties functioned for a while. In some others, party activity was short-lived. Parties were banned under military regimes. In some countries, only a single party was allowed to operate.

A two-party system characterized by alternation of two major parties in control of government is virtually nonexistent in Muslim-majority states. Instead, there are a few states with no parties at all. In Bahrain and Kuwait, all political parties are illegal, but candidates across the political spectrum compete in elections with the support of political societies that have some similar functions to political parties. Parties are also illegal in Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is a federation of seven emirates. Independent candidates run for posts in parliaments with limited powers in Oman and the UAE. Saudi Arabia does not hold legislative elections, but independent candidates participated in the country’s first municipal elections in 2005.

One reason for the persistence of nonparty politics, according to many scholars, is the existence of populations satisfied with the status quo in these states. In the language of political culture,

the people are apathetic, and hence there is no demand for reforms or political change in these countries. An additional reason that has been suggested is the prevalence of rent-based economies. The ruling elites consolidate their power by distributing oil and gas revenues among the population, thereby preempting any calls for representation that might have followed from the imposition of taxes. Even if this was true in the past, this argument may not hold for long in an era of low prices and increasing unemployment.

Most Muslim-majority states have multiparty systems. Examples of such countries include Bangladesh, Bosnia, Indonesia, Iraq, Maldives, Morocco, Turkey, Yemen, and others. In the legislative elections held in Indonesia on 9 April 2009 for 132 seats of the Regional Representative Council (DPD) and 560 seats of the People's Representative Council (DPR), a total of thirty-eight political parties, including many Islam-based ones, participated. The Islamic parties fared rather poorly in the election. There are about fifteen political parties competing for seats in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. They range from religious-based parties, to those based in regional groups, to ideologically based parties. The Justice and Development Party, a center-right conservative party, has been winning elections since 2002 under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who has been the prime minister of Turkey since 2003.

The extent to which a multiparty system in Muslim-majority countries exists is debatable. Most scholars suggest calling these parties "groups" rather than political parties. These parties are neither sanctioned nor supported by the state. These parties do not consider each other legitimate competitors. Quite often, these parties are created with the announcement of forthcoming elections, and they die immediately if the individual or group sponsoring the party fails to garner enough votes or seats in the parliament. Thus, multiplicity is a

function of low-level institutionalization. The lives of component parties are episodic and their political role is quite marginal. Multiplicity is also a reflection of a body politic characterized by the low level of political tolerance and uncompromising attitude of various partisans.

In some countries, a multiparty system prevails but one party almost always wins the election. Malaysia is one country where several parties exist and elections are held at regular intervals. However, a coalition of political parties known as Barisan Nasional (BN, the National Front), which is registered as a single party, won a two-thirds majority of seats in the national parliament until 2008, when the opposition parties, composed of the Islamic Party of Malaysia, the Chinese-dominated Democratic Action Party, and the centrist People's Justice Party, denied it its customary overwhelming majority. The BN nevertheless rules with a majority in the parliament, making Malaysia a single dominant party system.

Most of the Islamic parties that have participated in national elections have gradually adopted liberal electoral platforms. Before the 1990s, a majority of the Islamic parties campaigned promising implementation of the *Sharī'ah* and the establishment of an Islamic state. In the twenty-first century, these parties promise a welfare state, good governance, the principles of human rights, equality, and the rights of minorities. The Justice and Development Party in Turkey refers to itself as a conservative party and has removed almost every reference to Islam from its electoral platforms (Yavuz, 2009). The Renaissance Movement in Algeria, the Islamic Action Front in Jordan, the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī in Bangladesh, and the Justice and Development Party in Morocco have dropped their support for *Sharī'ah*. Likewise, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Jamā'at-i-Islāmī in Bangladesh, and the Yemeni Congregation for Reform offer secular justifications for democracy. They see no major contradictions between

democratic politics and piety. This is not to deny that these parties are still conservative and occasionally move away from liberalization. Yet the overall trend toward publicly embracing global norms of democracy and human rights is well worth noting. They are considered to be the most dynamic political force across the Arab world. Compared to secular parties, Islamic political parties are better organized. By 2012 more than fifty Islam-based political parties succeeded in mobilizing millions of supporters in a dozen Arab countries. At least three of these parties won the right to form governments in Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco.

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ABDUL RASHID MOTEN

POLITICAL SCIENCE. For Muslim scholars, political science as a distinct discipline is of relatively recent origin. Traditionally, Muslim scholars studied matters pertaining to politics such as the nature and need of the state, qualifications and installations of the chief executive,

functions of ministers, and responsibilities and rights of the rulers and the ruled as part of the *Sharī'ah* (the Islamic legal system) or as *siyāsah shar'īyah*. This is due to the fact that in Islam religion and politics are intertwined, and as such ethics sets the tone for politics, and the rules of political activities are deduced from the ethical norms of Islam. Almost all Muslim scholars dealt with political problems but couched them in religious terms. Some thinkers, however, did directly confront the questions relating to political science and its essential features. For instance, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 950) wrote about the “attainment of happiness” through political life in *Kitāb ārā' ahl al-madīnah al-fāḍilah* (The Book of Opinions of the People of the Ideal City). Abū al-Ḥasan al-Māwardī (d. 1058) blended reasoning derived from the Qur'ān, *sunnah*, and other Islamic sources with political deductions from the period of the Prophet and the first four caliphs in his *al-Aḥkam al-sulṭānīyah* (Ordinances of Government), and Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) wrote about the necessity of a properly constituted authority in *al-Iqtiṣād fī al-ītiqād* (Moderation in Belief). Abū Yūsuf (d. 798) wrote on government and authority in his *Kitāb al-kharāj* (Book on Taxation). 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Khaldūn (d. 1406) explained the necessity of social organization and the rise and fall of civilization in his *Muqaddimah* (Prolegomenon).

Defining Political Science. Political science, according to al-Fārābī, examines the various kinds of actions and behavior that lead to the appointment of virtuous leaders and the formation of virtuous societies. The purpose of politics is to lead man to true happiness (*sa'ādah*) through right modes of conduct—virtue and good deeds. Such modes of conduct are instilled by virtuous leadership, which, in turn, brings about ultimate happiness. The true happiness is to be found in the hereafter. Fārābī's *Fī al-'ilm al-madanī wa 'ilm al-fiqh wa 'ilm al kalām* (On Political Science,