

THE PERCEPTION OF MUSLIM DEMOCRACY IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF RACHID GHANNOUCHI

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze Rachid Ghannouchi's perception of Muslim democracy, one of the leading Muslim intellectuals in contemporary time. Following the Arab Spring, the perception of Muslim democracy and the politics of Ghannouchi, i.e., the Ennahda party, is a crucial topic in academia. Ghannouchi intended to argue that Islamic political values are compatible with democratic values, particularly election, pluralism, freedom, etc. Within this aspect he discussed the approach of Shahada, Shura, Ijma, Bay'ah, Ummah, Amar-bil-Maruf and Nahi-anil-Munkar and Hikmah in the Islamic political thought. He considered democracy as the best product of contemporary civilization that Muslim should accept it. Though he criticized Western liberal democracy for its inadequateness of being an ideal regime from different perspectives, it is also better than the autocratic role worldwide, particularly in the Middle East. Along with this theoretical perspective he has a long experience in politics where he faced the autocratic regimes in Tunisia. After the Arab Spring, this experience directed him toward Muslim democracy to ensure political stability. This paper analyzes his perception of democracy from both theoretical and realpolitik perspective. This research argued that Ghannouchi's perception of democracy is based on both the approach of Maqasid as-Sharia and his realpolitik experience.

Keywords: Ghannouchi, Muslim Democracy, Ennahda, Tunisia

RAŞİD GANNUŞİ'NİN SİYASİ DÜŞÜNÇESİNDE MÜSLÜMAN DEMOKRASİ ALGISI

Öz

Bu makale çağdaş zamanında önde gelen Müslüman Aydınlardan biri olan Raşid Gannuşî'nin Müslüman demokrasisi algısını analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Arap Baharı'nın ardından, Müslüman demokrasisi ve Gannuşî'nin yanı sıra Ennahda Parti'nin siyaseti akademik Dünya'da çok önemli bir konu haline gelmiştir. Gannuşî, İslami siyasi değerler demokratik değerlerle özellikle seçim, çoğulculuk, özgürlük vb. uyumlu olduğunu iddia etmiştir. Gannuşî bu bakımda, İslam siyaset düşüncesinde Şehadet, Şura, İcma, Biat, Ümmet, Emri bil maruf ve Nehyi anil münker ve Hikmet yaklaşımlarını tartışmıştır. Demokrasiyi Müslümanların kabul etmesi gereken çağdaş medeniyetin en iyi ürünü olarak görmüştür. Batı liberal

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demokrasisini, farklı açılardan ideal bir rejim olmayışından dolayı eleştirmesine rağmen Orta Doğu başta olmak üzere tüm dünyada otokratik rollardan daha iyi olduğunu düşünmüştür. Bu teorik bakış açısının yanı sıra kendisi Tunus'taki otokratik rejimlerle karşı karşıya kaldığı uzun bir siyaset tecrübesine sahiptir. Bu deneyimler Arap Baharı'ndan sonra onu siyasi istikrarı sağlamak için Müslüman demokrasisine yöneltmiştir. Bu makale demokrasi algısını hem teorik hem de realpolitik açıdan değerlendirmektedir. Bu araştırma Gannuşi'nin Müslüman demokrasi algısının hem Makasidü's-Şeria yaklaşımı hem de realpolitik deneyimine dayandığını savunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gannuşi, Müslüman Demokrasi, Ennahda, Tunus

Introduction

There is an extensive debate regarding the term democracy in the writing of contemporary Islamist Intellectuals. The early Islamists in contemporary time, notably Abul A'la Maududi, rejected the Western democracy where sovereignty belongs to the people, and he argued for Theo-democracy where sovereignty belongs to Allah (Maududi, 1960: 136-139). In practice, Maududi and his political party, Jamaat-e Islami, participated in elections and worked with the democratic system. Egyptian Islamist intellectual Hassan al-Banna followed Maududi in terms of democracy, particularly in participating democratic system though Sayyid Qutb rejected all of the Western terms as apart from *Jahilliyah* (Tamimi, 1997: 64; Rahman, 2020: 51). Along with Qutb, the traditional Islamists, the Salafists, and the extremists also rejected the notion of democracy in Islam (Jawad, 2013). In the post-Qutb era, several Muslim intellectuals intended to find the harmony between democracy and Islam. Malek Bennabi was the first man who argued democracy is in harmony with the Islamic system of Governance (Zoubir, 1998: 109-11). After Bennabi, Hasan al-Turabi, and Yusuf al-Qaradawi also strongly argued for democracy in Islamic political thought (Rahman, 2020A).

Tunisian Islamist scholar and politician Rachid Ghannouchi intended to argue the perception of democracy in Islamic political thought through a systematic way. Azzam Tamimi's masterpiece *Rachid Ghannouchi: A Democrat within Islamism* (2001), is the perfect headline to understand Ghannouchi's intention. Tamimi covered all aspects in general, as Ghannouchi's biography focused his journey toward democracy both intellectually and politically. Apart from many issues, Tamimi's final observation on Ghannouchi is crucial that his position has not been changed in entire life in the question of democracy (Tamimi, 2001: 215). In contemporary time, particularly after the Arab Spring, Ghannouchi's political thought and his experience in politics, i.e., Ennahda party, have become a crucial topic in Academia. Wolf (2013; 2017), Marzo (2019), Göksel (2014), Cavatorta & Merone (2015), and McCarthy (2015) significantly discussed various aspects of Ennahda's politics and transformation of Tunisian democracy after the Arab Spring. Ghannouchi

intended to ensure a power-sharing environment with major political parties and argued this process for all Muslim countries to defeat autocrats and dictators. Following this way, he strongly argued for democracy though he criticized Western democracy's adequateness and referred to as a better system than dictatorship. Ghannouchi further argued that democracy as the best product of contemporary civilization, which has a long past to struggle with authoritarian rule. Along with this, democracy is the best system for ensuring political freedom and people's participation. This research argued that Ghannouchi's perception of democracy might evaluate from two perspectives: firstly, he intended to bring *the Maqasid* approach in theoretical perspective: secondly, from realpolitik perspective, i.e., longtime political experience with dictators that influenced him to the democratic way. This paper is a qualitative form of research based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from Ghannouchi's primary literature, where secondary were collected from secondary literature, articles, second-hand interviews, and other internet-based resources on Ghannouchi's political thought. In data analysis, this research extensively used content analysis. In Academia, content analysis analyzes the text, verbal and visual communication message for understanding the writer and sender's real message. It aims to build a model to describe the phenomenon in an abstract form (Elo and Kynga, 2008: 107). Krippendorff defined the content analysis as "*a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use*" (Krippendorff, 2004: 18). The content analysis of Ghannouchi's writings as primary data and other secondary data used in this paper analyzed Ghannouchi's perception of democracy both from the theoretical and realpolitik perspective.

1. A SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF RACHID GHANNOUCHI

Rachid Ghannouchi (also spelled as Rashid al-Ghannoushi or Rachid al-Ghannouchi) was born in the Tunisian province Gabes in 1941. His father was an Imam, Mufti, and Hafiz in the local area. He memorized the Quran at an early age and completed his primary education from his village. After completed high school education from al-Zaituna, a prominent traditional institution in Tunisia, Ghannouchi understands that his higher education is almost impossible in Tunisia because of the education system. At that time, the medium of higher education was French, and he has graduated from the Arabic medium in high school level. So, he has two options: firstly, starting a job at the primary school level or the second option, going to an Arabic language country for higher education. Firstly, he started his career as a teacher in a Primary School. After two years of this profession, he understood that it is not enough for him and need to do more. Within a short time, he went to Cairo for his higher education. However, he enrolled in the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Cairo but could not continue because of political problems. He moved to Syria and enrolled in the

Department of Philosophy at Damascus University. After graduation, he went to France for his postgraduate studies in philosophy at the Sorbonne. He enrolled for a master's degree in the philosophy of education and registered under Professor Sanders's supervision for a dissertation entitled, *The Quranic Approach to Education*. After completing his degree and returning to Tunisia in 1969, he started his career again as a philosophy teacher in high school (Tamimi, 2001: 33).

Ghannouchi was influenced by the politics, especially by his maternal uncle in his early ages, particularly to the Arabism, which was initiated by President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. But his affection toward Nasserism didn't forward more when he directly observed Egypt. In Syria, he observed the Bath party and often supported the nationalistic approach. His mission transformed into Islamic politics after observing several Islamic movements and groups, particularly in Syria. He got chance to come closer with the intellectual activities of Muslim Brotherhood by a prominent Islamic scholar Professor Adib Salih who was a lecturer of the Shari'a college at the University of Damascus and the publisher of the monthly periodical called *Al-Hadarah al-Islamiyah* (Islamic civilization) which was established by Dr. Mustafa as-Siba'i, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria. Tamimi mentioned that Ghannouchi was so impressed by this prestigious publication and described himself as unmatched by any other Islamic publication he has ever come across (Tamimi, 2001:19). In the last two years of Damascus, he read some writings of Muhammad Iqbal, Maududi, al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, Muhammad Qutb, as-Siba'i, Malik Bennabi, and an-Nadwi. Besides the Muslim Brotherhood, he also gained experience from the Sufi orders, Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami, and the Salafiyah though he didn't join any movement at that time. In the time of Paris, he engaged with Tablig Group (Tamimi, 2001: 24-25).

Within a short time of returning in Tunisia, he intended to observe Tunisia's whole situation and circumstances for implementing his mission toward Islamic politics. In 1970, he organized a small group as *Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiya* (The Islamic Group) as a secret or underground organization because of the authoritarian government's prohibition to organize this kind of organization. In 1981, he established the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) within the chance of government declaration for allowing the formation of a political party. MTI later change by the name of the Ennahdah Party (the Renaissance Party, in the original name; Hizb al-Nahdah) in 1988 because of the government regulation for the prohibition of the establishment of political parties on confessional, ethnic, racial, or regional bases. He has been imprisoned for the times of 1981-84 and 1987-88. In 1989, after the general election under the occupied ruler Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Ennahda had emerged as major opposition and securing 14.5% of the vote as an independent candidate (Esposito and Piscatori, 1991).

However, all the opposition parties' combined total vote showed less than five percent in the official declaration under the law no. 88-32. It was a

big threat to the ruling regime emerging of Ennahda in the popular vote. As a result, the regime announced as illegal because the authority rejected their application for registering as a political party. Many of the party members punished by five years' imprisonment, Ghannouchi traveled into voluntary exiled in London in the same year. He lived there till the fall of autocratic president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali in 2011 as a result of the popular uprising, which has been named as the Arab spring. In the general election in 2011, his party gained majority seats in the parliament and form a coalition government though they resigned after two years and announced early election because of economic crisis and peoples' protest. In the election of 2014, they become major opposition though their participation in government was continued with mutual understanding with minor participation. In the election of 2019, his party again gained the majority seats though it was far from absolute majority, so again a coalition government was inevitable. After the election, he elected as the speaker of parliament and, till now, is serving this vital post.

Besides political life, Ghanouchi has a long intellectual life. His masterpiece *Al-Hurriyat al-'Ammah Fid-Daivlah al-Islamiyyah* (Public freedoms in the Islamic state) is considered one of the most important reference books in contemporary Islamic political thought. Along with this book, he wrote several books as *Laiklik ve Sivil Toplum* (Secularism and civil society), *Al-Dimuqratiyyah wa Huquq Al-Insan fi Al-Islam* (Democracy and Human rights in Islam), *İslami Yöneliş* (Islamic resurgence), *Kur'an ve Yaşam Arasında Kadın* (Women between Quran and practical life), *İslam toplumunda Vatandaşlık hakları* (Citizenship rights in Islamic society), *Secularism in the Arab Maghreb and The participation of Islamist in a Non-Islamic Government*. In intellectual trend, he was influenced by Algerian intellectual Malik Bennabi. In studying post-graduation in France, he met with Malek Bennabi when he traveled to his home through Algeria (Tamimi, 2001, p. 28). Later, He met several times with Bennabi, which influenced him to develop his intellectual and political thought. Along with Bennabi, Ghannouchi was also influenced by the intellectuals of Magrib. In the perspective of Mashriqhi intellectual, he was also influenced by Maududi, Banna, and Khomeini though his thought was different in many topics. He often criticized Sayyid Qutb in his writing. He accepted the thoughts of Turabi, particularly the women participation in politics (Rahman, 2021: 154).

2. THE PERCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY IN THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF GHANNOUCHI

Ghannouchi broadly discussed his perception of democracy in the chapter three of the book "*al-Hurriyat al-'Ammah Fid-Daivlah al-Islamiyyah* (Public freedoms in the Islamic state)". This book seems his masterpiece to understand the political thought though he has written many other books, articles and academic writing. This research studied the Turkish version of

the book, “*İslam Devletine Kamusal Özgürlükler*”. Ghannouchi discussed the aspect of democracy, its positive and negative sides and different aspects of its application in Islamic political thought.

2.1. Feature of Democracy by Ghannouchi

Ghannouchi considered democracy an integral part of political freedom. He started his book by discussing the aspect of freedom and human rights in Islam. Freedom is a fundamental value of Islam and an essential element of Islamic civilization (Ghannouchi, 2015: 41-43). He argued that a man cannot become Muslim without a free mind and thought because a man can only read the *Shahada* when free from any force. He added that freedom in Islam is not an optional element, but an obligatory (Ghannouchi, 2015: 41). He discussed the different aspects of freedom in Islamic thought, where political freedom is an important aspect. He stated that democracy is the best system that ensures citizens' fundamental freedoms and especially political freedom (Ghannouchi, 2015: 95). He quoted from the politicians in favor of democracy, stating that “*democracy is a system of possible less loss*” (Ghannouchi, 2015: 95). Firstly, he stated the positive aspects of democracy in the Western World i.e., liberal democracy, and later, he stated about the inadequacy of Western democracy. He intended to identify the Renaissance as the starting point of the Modern state, which played a significant role in ensuring people's power from the king by establishing pluralism on the relics of autocracy and the separation of powers to prevent centralization despotism.

He identified liberal democracy as people's sovereignty, elections, separation of power, public freedom (freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of trade union), and a multi-party system (Ghannouchi, 2015: 96). In summary, he identified the system brings power to the hand of people. He also included concepts like freedom, equality, representation, pluralism, and competition that became an integral part of democracy from the Second World War. The advanced economy has become the cause of the change of political, social system. He quoted from Malik Bennabi, where he defined democracy as an educational enterprise for the whole nation. It has psychological, ethical, and socio-economic aspects. It is neither a mere process of transferring authority to the people nor a mere declaration that a particular nation has by way of a constitution become sovereign (Ghannouchi, 2015: 96; Tamimi, 2001: 82).

Ghannouchi argued that the democratic system is made up of form and essence (Ghannouchi, 2015: 96). It is “form” because of recognizing the people's sovereignty, which is exercised through a number of “constitutional techniques” that may vary from one system to the other in detail but agree on the principles of equality, election, separation of powers, political pluralism, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly, and the right of the majority to rule and of the minority to oppose. It is “essence” because of acknowledging the dignity of man. Accordingly, man is entitled to earn

several rights that protect his dignity and guarantee his right to participate in the administration of public affairs, while maintaining the ability to pressure and influence the governors, and at the same time enjoying security against repression and despotism (Ghannouchi, 2015: 97). He identified the democratic government by referring some intellectuals as it is the confession of human dignity. This confession guarantees people's participation in the governing of public affairs. In this way, the oppression is going to end. He mentioned Abdullah Nafisi's definition of democracy as a multi-party system of politics and government (Ghannouchi, 2015: 107). He intended to define democracy by combining the socialist block's "People's Democracy" and the capitalist block's "Bourgeois Democracy".

Finally, he argued that democracy is a governance system and a combine of several institutions (Ghannouchi, 2015: 107). He mentioned necessities which fill-up by democracy: (1) it included the representation of majority peoples' representation and government by majority people and this system is only possible by forming a party, participation in election and voting: (2) the elected MPs are functioning for the implementation of the will of the voter (Ghannouchi, 2015: 107). If the government fails to fill-up the people's will, they could impeach the government. In summary, the people work as a check and balance. Ghannouchi stated from the book "*The universality of Islam*" that it is necessary to define democracy as the other things instead of a product of Western Philosophy (Ghannouchi, 2015: 107). He argued that the duties of democracy are working to keep the conflicting groups within a border. So, it is a referee to minimize the conflict and ensuring peace.

In a summary, he intended to consider democracy as a government system that works to ensure the rights and freedom of the people. It is combining of some mechanism as election, parliament, majority role, and pluralism, etc. Within the present context of the World, it is the best system of government where another system is not found, which may become an alternative of this.

2.2. Is there any ideal regime? The inadequacies of Western Democracy

Ghannouchi Ghannouchi intended to explore the ideal democratic regime. Is Western democracy a form of ideal regime? To answer this question, Ghannouchi again mentioned the perception of a democratic regime. He stated that democracy is a system of equal participation of people. He argued that the people's will or rule of the people with participating in all individuals is an impossible factor in the existing democratic system because many people are under age or unqualified for several physical causes. They do not enjoy equal rights, and also there are no fixed measures to determine those who are entitled to such rights.

Ghannouchi mentioned several examples from the Western countries to feature the democracy of those countries. He put the example of ancient

Athens, where the eligible citizens did not exceed 20,000 out of a total population of 320,000, and Slaves, women, and foreigners (aliens) were excluded (Ghannouchi, 2015: 104). He mentioned that only selected people were permitted to vote in England, and till 1929, the Women weren't eligible for voting. French women were allowed to vote in 1945, and Swiss women waited for voting till 1971. In America, the political right of white people and black people is not the same. Mentioning this scenario, he claimed that although theoretically individuals are supposed to have equal voting powers, the overwhelming majority of the population in any Western democratic country are influenced and manipulated by an extremely influential minority of business interests, media tycoons, and pressure groups. This unwanted feature makes democracy as the rule of the people by the people for the people into a dream. Along with this, the aspect of extreme nationalism, i.e. racism often transferred into big problems. The issues of liberal democracies, i.e. freedom or free election sometimes become the issues within national boundaries. Beyond boundaries, these countries often initiate intervention to other countries, particularly in the Muslim countries. On the other hand, they often become the facilitator of the Middle East's autocrat rulers, which apart from the opinion of maximum people. However, democracy, as practiced in the West today, is not the rule of the people, but a "multi-party" governance system exercised by the elite of political leaders, and in which some form of dialogue takes place among the representatives of various pressure and interest groups. This democracy is far from the traditional aspect of Greek democracy. However, there is an environment of participation, power-sharing and free speech. It is also better from the autocratic role of Middle Eastern countries. As Ghannouchi argued, "it is still a thousand times better than despotism that is grinding the masses in some of the Arab countries where the state has been turned into a highly sophisticated machine of repression" (Tamimi, 2001: 88).

2.3. Islamic Perspective of Democracy

Ghannouchi started with rejecting the *Fatwas* on democracy by the authoritarian ruler as the innovation (*Bida'h*) and, more specifically, unlawful (*Haram*) in terms of following (*Taqlid*) the West. He claimed that these autocratic rulers intend to keep their people in the darkness and maintain hypocrisy among them (Ghannouchi, 2015: 110). Ghannouchi claimed that they don't know the wise way (*Hikmah*) which is the lost values of Muslims. He argued that for ensuring justice and *Sha'ria* it is necessary to follow the wisely way (*Hikmah*) (Ghannouchi, 2015: 110). Ghannouchi argued that the aspect of democracy are the practical implementation of the Islamic concept, *Shura* (Ghannouchi, 2015: 195-196; 2013; 2010). In further chapters of his book, he significantly discussed the aspect of *Shura* in Islamic state where he intended to prove the *Shura* is the fundamental principle of Islamic state which is very near to the concept of democracy in Modern meaning. He further argued that legitimacy in Islamic thought depends

on *Ummah* based on *Shura* (Ghannouchi, 2015:111). He stated that democracy is a summary of the thought of reformist thinkers in the last 200 years. He pointed out that democracy is the cause of Western forwardness and the backwardness of Muslims (Ghannouchi, 2015:111).

He intended to compare with the Western perspective of accepting Muslims' innovation. He argued that the West accepted Geometry and Algebra, which was the product of Muslims but the West accepted and transformed it into technology in Modern times. So, it is essential to think as a wisely way (*Hikmah*) to accepted democracy, which is a lost property (value) of Muslims (Ghannouchi, 2015: 111). Ghannouchi argued that the political values of Islam i.e. *Shura*, *Ijma*, *Bay'ah*, *Amar-bil-Marooif and Nahi-anil-Munkar* are the important principle for ensuring justice and peace. He argued that as technology has become the human heritage, democracy also becomes the heritage in terms of cultural aspect and thought.

He further argued that it is possible to develop democratic system with different aspects and thoughts from the West (Ghannouchi, 2015: 112). He put an example from adopting democracy with the concept of secularism, racism, sovereignty, power, and benefit, which are not the obligatory principle of democracy instead of raised among democratic systems. On the other hand, people's sovereignty, equality between the citizens, and the people's rule with the free election are the obligatory principles of democracy. It is necessary to reject the cultures which are not acceptable to Islamic norms and values. Ghannouchi again mentioned the characteristics of democracy and argued that it worked with the values of Christianity and birthed as Christian Democracy, worked with the values of socialist and birthed as socialist democracy, worked with the values of Jewish and birthed of Jewish democracy. So, why not with Islam? Finally, he argued that for all humanity, there is the goodness with democracy. Islam can't disappoint to accept the best product of contemporary civilization but obviously, it rejects the bad side surroundings this concept (Ghannouchi, 2015: 112).

Ghannouchi's perception of democracy is a transformation of Islamist political thought toward Muslim democracy from a traditional perception of democracy, which rejects the Western, i.e. liberal democracy. He discussed more systematically than any other Islamist intellectuals, i.e. Bennabi, Qaradawi, and Turabi, who intended to argue democracy is harmony with Islam. Here, Ghannouchi's perception of democracy is possible to evaluate from two perspectives. Firstly, from the ideological point of view, he intended to bring the *Maqasid* approach of *Shari'a*. In *Usul al-Fiqh* perspective, *Ilm al-Maqasid* is an essential aspect of *Usul* where the object of the task is a crucial matter. For instance, Ash-Shatibi (d. 1388) was the first Muslim theorist who intended to bring the issue of *Maqasid* systematically within his masterpiece, *Al-Muwafaqaat fi Usool al-Sharia*. He defined *Maqasid al-shariah* as "the attainment of good, welfare, advantage, benefits, and warding off evil, injury, loss of the creatures" (Khan & Ghifari, 1992). Ibn Ashur was the Modern pioneer of

the *Maqasid* approach, who also was a Tunisian. According to his *Maqasid* approach, any rule or matter related with *Shari'a* must be taken by its high aim where five basic elements should be focused; Religion or belief (Din), Life (Nafs), Mind (Aql): Offspring (Nasab): Wealth (Mal) (Ibn Ashur, 2006; Maklik and Shukri, 2018).

Secondly, he argued from a realpolitik perspective by observing the authoritarian role worldwide and its aftermath of Islamists' politics, particularly in Egypt, Algeria, and Sudan even in his own country Tunisia that democracy may offer a better solution (Tamimi, 2001: 89). For instance, Ghannouchi put autocracy as a significant aspect, probably in his every writing, talk, and interview. In this aspect, other ways, i.e. extremism, revolutionary or any other form of politics, have been failed due to the authoritarian role. The overall condition will be complex i.e. poor living conditions, increasing terrorism, and oppression over political parties and leaders. So, he thought from a realpolitik perspective that democracy might offer a comparatively better solution. As he argued,

“If by democracy is meant the liberal model of government prevailing in the West, a system under which the people freely choose their representatives and leaders, in which there is an alternation of power and in which civil liberties and human rights are guaranteed, Muslims will find nothing in their religion to prevent them from applying democracy” (Tamimi, 2001: 89-90)

Within these two perspectives, he considers democracy is the best option for Muslims.

3. THE IMPACT OF ARAB SPRING AND ITS AFTERMATH ON GHANNOUCHI'S PERCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY

Arab spring made a significant change in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) politics, significantly, the longtime autocratic rulers as Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, Hosni Mubarak, and Muammar al-Gaddafi were fallen. Following the Arab Spring, significant political change occurred in Morocco. Free and fair election was held in the countries, especially in Egypt and Tunisia, where Islamist parties, namely Freedom and Justice Party (the political wing of Muslim Brotherhood) Egypt and Ennahda in Tunisia have come to power. Both of these two countries initiated a new constitution. However, in Egypt, the Arab spring transformed into Arab summer within one year because of General Sisi's Military Coup. Along with Egypt, the Arab Spring experience in Syria, Yemen, and Libya wasn't good in terms of changes of autocrats.

As stated before, Ennahda won the majority seats in parliament, and Ghannouchi returned to Tunisia after 22 years of exile in London. After the election, Ennahda Party formed a coalition government mainly with liberal secularist parties. In 2012, the coalition government initiated a constitution accepted by majorities MPs as 200 MPs voted in favor of the new constitution, 12 MPs against, and four abstaining among 217 MPs legislative (Arieff and Humud, 2014: 3). This constitution didn't adopt Sharia, but it

was a liberal and democratic constitution maintaining its Muslim identity. As stated in the article 2, and 3 of the constitution to describe its identity;

“Tunisia is a civil state based on citizenship, the will of the people, and the supremacy of law (this article might not be amended). The people are sovereign and the source of authority, which is exercised through the peoples’ representatives and by referendum” (Constitute, 2019: 3).

It ensures the rights and freedoms, as article 6 of the constitution, “freedom of conscience and belief” along with gender equality (article 21), right to life (article 22), human dignity (article 23), right to privacy (article 24), right to fair trial (article 27), freedom of expression and information (art. 31-32), right to academic freedom (article 33), right to strike and trade union (article 36) and other rights as property right, health care right, right of work, right to culture (Constitute, 2019; Arieff and Humud, 2014: 4). Within such liberal nature, it also ensures its Muslim identity, in several places of the constitution repeatedly described this issue. For example, article one of the constitutions stated that the state religion is Islam, along with article six guaranteed that the state is the guardian of the religion and article 74 stated that only Muslims can run for president.

So, this constitution is more open in nature for all groups where the Sharia law hasn’t taken place. Although a group of parliamentarians, even from Ennahda, had called for the inclusion of Sharia, Ghannouchi overruled their opinion. He often stated that "Tunisia is more important than Ennahda," (Lubben, 2016). Following this way, he along with Ennahda tried to adopt a power-sharing culture with establishment more specifically with the secularist block which is continuing till now. He strongly argued for this power-sharing culture for resistance against dictatorship. As stated before, Ghannouchi’s realpolitik inspired him to develop democratic values in terms of the long autocratic role which he and his party faced along with other Islamists movement in all over the world, particularly in the MENA region. Ghannouchi intended to save the Tunisian revolution (Arab Spring) from any lousy situation like Egypt, Syria, Libya, or Yemen. As he stated, “We advise all Islamists in the region to be more open and to work with others and to look for a consensus with others, because without national unity, without national resistance against dictatorship, freedom cannot be achieved” (Middle East Eye, 2016).

For instance, the activities of extreme Salafists was increasing significantly after the Arab Spring. Several terrorist attacks have been placed in Tunisia, mainly attack an arts exhibition in La Marsa in June 2012 (Wolf, 2013). On the other side, Tunisian extreme Salafist participation with ISIS also increased. That was the concerning issue for Ghannouchi and Ennahda’s leadership to develop power-sharing culture. Within this power-sharing process, Ghannouchi intended to forward a more liberal culture in Tunisia to maintain its conservative Muslim culture. In this context, Ennahda tried to compare its policy with the policy of the Justice and Development Party (AK

Party) in Turkey (Wolf, 2013; Göksel, 2014; Bartal, 2020). Ghannouchi himself often stated we are considering the AK Party Model in Turkey for its success. As cited by Göksel from Ghannouchi's interview,

“Taking lessons from Turkey”: “Turkey is a model country for us in terms of democracy. There are very good relations between Turkey and Tunisia, and I hope there will be a proper environment in the future where we could foster those relations” (Göksel, 2014).

As mentioned before, Ghannouchi's power-sharing with the secularist block didn't initiate the Sharia law in the constitution. Here, Ghannouchi probably intended to concern the issue of development or developing public life first within liberal democracy. In addition to this, the values of democracy are necessary to establish in all areas to decline the autocracy or dictatorship (Ghannouchi, 2013). Wolf (2013) stated that Ghannouchi doesn't simply mean the Sharia as the issues of some law of punishment but rather a set of values, justice, brotherhood, liberty, etc. For initiating the traditional aspect of Sharia, i.e. the punishment laws, it is necessary to ensure justice first and people should understand the aspect Islamic norms and values. As stated by Wolf,

“Ghannouchi is against imposing Islamic law on a society in which ‘many people do not understand it’. He insisted that ‘in a democratic state, the parliament has to reflect the society,’ stressing that ‘Ennahda does not want Bourguiba and Ben Ali's top-down approach of imposing their ideology and strategy on the Tunisian people’ (wolf, 2013).

Along with this way, the 10th party conference of Ennahda made a significant change within party policy, devoted to clarify the relation between the party's religious mission (*Da'wah*) and its political mission. As from Ghannouchi deliver his speech toward its transformation in the 10th conference, “we are leaving political Islam to enter into Muslim democracy,” he said. “We are Muslim democrats who no longer call for political Islam” (as cited McCarthy 2018: 1). In an interview with Middle East Eye, Ghannouchi also argued that

“You have to distinguish between a political institution and a religious one. For example, mosques must not be an arena of confrontation between political parties. Mosques have to unify the Muslim community, not to divide it. We have to avoid any political propaganda within mosques. Politics push people to compete, for wealth, power, and this is what we have to avoid” (Middle East Eye, 2016).

Finally, the leaders of Ennahda now intend to clarify their party as a democratic party with an Islamic reference or the party as Muslim democracy. They often highlights their party as the parallel with Christian-Democratic European parties like Germany's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), seemed to be the easiest way to signify Ennahda as a political party bringing together both democratic principles and religious values (Ounissi, 2016: 7).

Ghannouchi is criticized from many sides. Firstly; the mainstream Islamists, particularly the mainstream Islamist parties even the conservatives from his party. Along with this, he extremely criticized from Salafist, i.e. extremist. AbdelSalam (2004) mentioned this group as traditional elite where Wolf (2013) mentioned as “doctrinal wing”. This group criticized Ghannouchi’s initiative toward democracy is totally a Western liberal concern in Islamic political thought. Perhaps the criticism of this group is vital in terms of Islamic political thought where he criticized to follow Western or to be more liberal in every aspect.

Secondly, previous Ben Ali government and Tunisian establishment criticized and intended to establish him as extremist and violent Islamist, particularly in the time of before Arab Spring. However, the criticism of this second group has been eliminated through Ghannouchi’s initiatives of power-sharing with liberalist and secularist. For first group, Ghannouchi intended to clarify the aspect of *Maqasid* approach. In addition to this, it is an aspect of *Hikmah* which already discussed elaborately.

Conclusion

With the above discussion, it is apparent that Ghannouchi intended to argue for a democratic system from all perspectives with maintaining the norms and values of Islam. He argued democracy as the best means of politics and government, i.e., political change with the election, people’s power, freedom, and so on, where all of the other systems collapsed in contemporary time. He further argued democracy as the best product of contemporary civilization, which worked with other ideologies and religions, so Muslims should accept it with maintaining their own culture. He considered democracy a *Hikmatic* way to establish Islamic values and norms, i.e., the Islamic notion of politics. He argued that the Islamic system of politics and the terms, i.e., *Shura*, *Ijma*, *Bay’ah*, *Amar-bil-Marooif*, and *Nahi-anil-Munkar* demand a democratic system of politics in modern meaning which have a long history of struggle with autocratic regime. These autocratic regimes seem a vital aspect of his discussion. He significantly examined the inadequacies of western democracy. However, he considered western democracy is better than the autocratic regimes of the Muslim countries, the Middle East in particular.

Along with this aspect, the Arab spring directed him toward Muslim democracy along with more liberal characteristics. He intended to ensure a power-sharing culture with other political parties, even with the secularist. This is because of his realpolitik experience where many Islamic parties, for instance the Ennahda, faced a long struggle with authoritarian regime. Finally, his perception of Muslim democracy is both from the *Maqasid* approach and the realpolitik approach.

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