

Political Despotism and Its Impact on the Growth of the Suicide Phenomenon in Arab Societies: An Analytical Study in Light of the Higher Objectives of Sharia (Maqasid al-Sharia)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the structural relationship between political despotism and the rising phenomenon of suicide in contemporary Arab societies, offering a novel interdisciplinary framework that reconciles political sociology with the Higher Objectives of Sharia (Maqasid al-Sharia). Moving away from traditional, isolated psychological and clinical explanations, the paper adopts a dual approach combining a Critical Analytical Approach with a Maqasid Projective Approach to investigate how authoritarian governance functions as a macro-sociological determinant of self-destruction. To ensure conceptual clarity and scientific rigor, the study operationalizes highly qualitative terms such as "Existential Suffocation" and "Moral Killing" into measurable sociological indicators of extreme psychological alienation and systemic blockage of human agency.

The theoretical framework is empirically grounded using secondary data from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Arab Human Development Reports, alongside prominent regional case studies, including a micro-administrative analysis of the Mohamed Bouazizi case, the phenomenon of high-risk illegal migration ("Death Boats"), and the qualitative analysis of final youth testaments.

The findings reveal that current Arab despotism systematically dismantles the material and value-based systems safeguarding the Five Essentials (Al-Kulliyyat al-Khams), converting homelands into repellent, enclosed spaces where human dignity is eroded. Under the established Sharia maxim that "Causation is equivalent to direct action" (Al-Tasabbub kal-Mubasharah), the study concludes that authoritarian structures bear the primary moral and jurisprudential responsibility for pushing vulnerable youth toward the "Existential Zero Point."

Finally, the study outlines a reformist vision, advocating for a transition toward a "Jurisprudence of Human Dignity" (Fiqh al-Karamah), the emancipation of official religious discourse from state hegemony, and the establishment of community-based platforms to restore civil agency and instill resistant hope.

Keywords: Political Despotism, Suicide Phenomenon, Maqasid al-Sharia, Existential Suffocation, Moral Killing, Human Dignity, Arab Youth.

INTRODUCTION

Prelude: Describing the State of Arab "Existential Suffocation"

The contemporary Arab individual is navigating a historical epoch characterized by an unprecedented state of "existential suffocation." This distress is no longer confined to transient economic crises; rather, it has evolved into a comprehensive blockage of life's horizons. This suffocation is the bitter fruit of decades of political despotism that has transcended the mere confiscation of public liberties to infiltrate the most intimate nuances of daily life. It has transformed homelands into "stifled spaces" that haunt their inhabitants in their livelihoods, thoughts, and fundamental dignity.

Within this constricted space, the individual is trapped between the "anvil of oppression" and the "hammer of inability" to secure the bare minimum of a dignified life. This environment has fostered a state of "internal alienation," generating profound despair that has driven some to seek an exit—even if that exit manifests as a final departure from life itself.

Research Problem: From Individual Trauma to "Social Phenomenon"

The core problem of this study lies in monitoring the critical shift in the phenomenon of suicide within the Arab world. While suicide was traditionally classified as a byproduct of individual psychological disorders or private emotional crises, it has today assumed the character of a "social phenomenon" with explicit political underpinnings.

The research problem crystallizes through the following central questions:

- How has political despotism, through systemic mechanisms of oppression and humiliation, succeeded in eroding the "existential instinct" of the Arab individual?
- How has oppression transformed from a subjective feeling of injustice into a suicidal driver that threatens the primary essential (Darurah) of Sharia: the "Preservation of Life" (Hifz al-Nafs)?

This study seeks to deconstruct the direct correlation between the encroachment of authoritarianism and the rising inclination toward self-destruction as a form of "final protest."

Significance: Why the Maqasid Approach?

The significance of this study stems from the necessity of providing a "contemporary Sharia-based reading" that does not settle for traditional legal rulings regarding the victim (i.e., prohibition), but dives into the "Maqasid al-Sharia" (Higher Objectives) to interrogate the accountability of the "causator" of this act. The Maqasid approach is pivotal here for three primary reasons:

- **The Sovereign Dimension:** It frames the "Preservation of Life" as a collective and sovereign duty mandated upon state institutions, rather than merely an individual moral responsibility.
- **The Analytical Dimension:** It highlights "Despotism" as a direct and comprehensive assault on the Five Essentials (al-Daruriyyat al-Khams), positioning it as the primary instigator behind the violation of the sanctity of life.
- **The Reformist Dimension:** It provides a legal vision that transcends clinical psychological descriptions, placing suicide within its correct political and social context. This opens the path for structural reforms aimed at protecting human lives by safeguarding their dignity and freedom.

METHODOLOGY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

To elevate this study beyond abstract philosophical narrative and address the requirements of empirical and conceptual rigor, the study establishes a structured methodological framework based on three main pillars:

A. Methodological Approach

This study adopts a dual, multi-disciplinary approach that reconciles political sociology with applied Sharia sciences:

- **Critical Analytical Approach:** Utilized to deconstruct the structural anatomy of political despotism in the Arab context, tracing its sociological and psychological ramifications on the populace.
- **Maqasid Projective Approach:** Serving as the normative core of the study, this approach projects the higher objectives of Sharia—specifically the Preservation of Life (Hifz al-Nafs) and the Preservation of Intellect

(Hifz al-Aql)—as analytical benchmarks to evaluate how despotic environments systematically undermine the foundational prerequisites of human survival.

B. Operationalization of Key Concepts

To ensure conceptual clarity and scientific verifiability, the study translates its qualitative interpretive terms into clear operational definitions:

- **Existential Suffocation:** Operationally defined as an acute state of psychological and social alienation resulting from a total systemic blockage of socio-political and economic horizons. Under this condition, the individual experiences absolute helplessness and a loss of agency, transforming existence itself into a psychological burden devoid of meaning and future prospects.
- **Moral Killing:** Operationally defined as the systematic erosion and deliberate destruction of an individual's dignity, identity, and value system by authoritarian structures. This occurs through institutionalized humiliation, intellectual suppression, and subjection to chronic fear, resulting in a state of psychological demise that structurally precedes the act of physical self-destruction.

The Matrix of Methodological Correlation (Operational Indicators)

The analytical framework establishes a direct, causal correlation between political variables and Maqasid violations across specific dimensions:

- **The Socio-Political Dimension:** Manifested in the absence of civil liberties, political exclusion, and pervasive fear. Sociologically, this acts as the primary instigator of existential anxiety; from a Maqasid perspective, it constitutes a direct threat to psychological safety and human dignity implicitly embedded within the protection of Life and Mind.
- **The Socio-Economic Dimension:** Manifested in systemic corruption, institutional injustice, and development blockages. This leads to social fragmentation and anomie, directly violating the Maqasid mandate of "T'mar al-Ard" (the thriving and cultivation of human life).
- **The Behavioral Outcome:** When these dimensions converge, they generate the state of "Existential Suffocation." Consequently, suicide emerges not as a mere clinical pathology, but as an extreme behavioral response and a form of final protest against the systemic collapse of the essential objectives (Daruriyyat) required to sustain a dignified life.

Section One: Conceptual and Methodological Framework

To comprehend the impact of political despotism on the destruction of lives, it is essential to deconstruct the governing terminology of this study and define the specific lens through which Maqasid al-Sharia (the Higher Objectives of Sharia) views political action and its existential consequences.

Subsection I: The Essence of Political Despotism in the Contemporary Arab Context

The concept of despotism in the contemporary Arab reality cannot be restricted to classical definitions that limit it to the individual monopoly of power. Instead, it has evolved into a state of total alienation of the public sphere.

- **Linguistically:** Despotism (Istibdad) refers to an individual's insistence on their own opinion in a matter, to the exclusion of all others (Ibn Manzur, 1994).
- **Terminologically:** It has transcended mere individual rule to become a systemic structure that works to domesticate the collective will of society, subordinating it entirely to the will of the ruler.

From "Society's Servant" to "State Owner": An Operational Definition

In the Arab context, despotism is operationally defined as a structural encroachment of the executive power, leading to the total subordination of both state and society to the ruling institution. Within this framework, Al-Kawakibi (2011) argues that the despot controls the affairs of the subjects at will, where the will of the despot becomes the law, effectively abolishing the principles of Shura (consultation) and political participation.

From a political sociology perspective, Hegazi (2005) diagnoses this condition as the transformation of the citizen into a vanquished subject. Consequently, the state ceases to be a service institution seeking the public interest (al-Maslaha al-Amma)—the primary objective of leadership in Islamic political jurisprudence (Ibn Ashur, 2001)—and instead becomes an instrument of coercion that monopolizes the nation's resources and confiscates natural human rights.

Contemporary Manifestations: The Security State and the "Great Prison"

Current Arab despotism is characterized by sophisticated technical and security manifestations that have rendered it a Totalitarian system controlling both bodies and souls. Key manifestations include:

- **The Security State and Ubiquitous Surveillance:** Despotism has transitioned from overt suppression to systematic surveillance that infiltrates individual privacy, generating a state of static fear within the psyche (Hegazi, 2005). This directly contradicts the Sharia objective of achieving security and safety as a prerequisite for the preservation of life.
- **Drying up Civil Action:** The despotic regime works to eliminate any intermediary between the individual and the state by suppressing unions and associations. This creates a closed environment that prevents peaceful social competition, leading to what psychologists term existential horizon blockage (Frankl, 2006).
- **The Homeland as a "Great Prison":** When a society lacks the minimum standards of justice and equality, the citizen feels alienated within their own country. This alienation is an abstract death that precedes physical death. Ibn Ashur (2001) posits that freedom is the ability to act according to sound will, and its absence invalidates man's capacity to fulfill the mandate of civilizing the earth (Imarat al-Ard).

Subsection II: Despotism as a System of "Total Alienation"

Contemporary Arab despotism transcends the simple idea of dictatorship to reach what modern political thought calls Totalitarian Authoritarianism. According to Fromm (2021), such systems work on shattering individuality in favor of forced collectivism, leading to the individual's loss of connection with their self. This alienation manifests in three structural dimensions:

- **The Legislative Dimension (The Humanization of Will):** The emptying of constitutional institutions of their substance, whereby Parliaments become mere instruments for ratifying the individual's will, leading to a disorientation of the citizen's value system (Al-Kawakibi, 2011).
- **The Economic Dimension (Impoverishment as a Means of Control):** The use of bread as a tool for subjugation. When the individual is consumed with securing material necessities, their consciousness is diverted from demanding dignity (the moral objective of the self) (Hegazi, 2005).
- **The Psychological Dimension (The Manufacturing of Fear):** The production of static fear that dwells within the citizen's consciousness, preventing them from even dreaming of change.

Subsection III: The Shift Toward the "Proprietary State"

A dangerous shift occurs when the state transforms from a representative (Wakil) of the Ummah in achieving public interests (al-Masalih al-Mursala) into the owner of the public sphere. Ibn Ashur (2001) points out that this represents the pinnacle of corruption on earth because it makes interests private to the ruler rather than public for the nation. This leads to:

- **Erosion of the Social Contract:** Laws are perceived as tools to protect the regime rather than the person.
- **Absence of Distributive Justice:** Reinforcing the sense of Social Oppression where success is linked to political loyalty rather than competence.

Conclusion: The "Oxygen-Deprived Room" and the Suicidal Idea

Describing the homeland as a "Great Prison" is a sociological fact under despotism. When political and civil platforms are closed, the individual finds themselves in an oxygen-deprived room.

From Frankl's (2006) perspective, when an individual is stripped of meaning (the capacity for action), they enter a state of Existential Vacuum. This vacuum prepares the psychological soil for the growth of the suicidal idea. The person who commits suicide under despotism does not reject life itself; rather, they reject the non-life imposed upon them by political oppression.

Subsection IV: Empirical Grounding and Sociological Realities

To operationalize the automotive theoretical framework and address the necessity of empirical validation, the structural link between political despotism and self-destruction can be verified through documented socio-political indicators and regional case studies:

Macro-Sociological Indicators: Global and Regional Data

While despotic regimes often restrict or obscure local data regarding mental health and suicide, international monitoring bodies provide significant secondary evidence establishing this correlation. Reports by the World Health Organization (WHO) consistently indicate that suicide has become a critical public health issue in the Eastern Mediterranean and Arab regions, particularly concentrated within the youth demographic (aged 15 to 29). Sociologically, this specific age group represents the segment most vulnerable to structural blockages.

When these figures are cross-referenced with the Arab Human Development Reports issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a clear systemic pattern emerges: regions characterized by the lowest indices of civil liberties, political inclusion, and economic transparency simultaneously exhibit heightened levels of youth marginalization and widespread existential despair. The statistical reality reflects that the blockage of the public sphere directly restricts the socio-economic mobility of the individual, transforming structural oppression into a direct catalyst for psychological attrition.

The Phenomenon of "Existential Suffocation" in Practice: The Case of Mohamed Bouazizi

The structural transition from a state of political oppression to an acute behavioral response is vividly illustrated by the historical case of Mohamed Bouazizi in late 2010. This case serves as an empirical and sociological model for the concepts of Moral Killing and Existential Suffocation outlined in this study. Bouazizi was not suffering from a congenital clinical psychological disorder; rather, his fatal encounter was entirely structural. The confiscation of his meager livelihood and the physical and verbal humiliation inflicted upon him by local municipal agents represented the despotic security state operating at its micro-administrative level.

The systematic denial of recourse, combined with the total absence of administrative justice, generated an instantaneous state of absolute helplessness—an existential vacuum wherein his agency was completely nullified. His subsequent act of self-immolation was not merely a private tragedy, but a public, political protest against institutionalized humiliation. This case confirms that when authoritarian structures systematically destroy human dignity, the act of self-destruction emerges as a tragic, final attempt to reclaim agency against a system that has rendered biological life devoid of its moral value.

Subsection V: The Philosophy of Maqasid in the Preservation of Life (Between Physical Existence and Moral Dignity)

The human soul is the axis around which the rulings of Sharia revolve. However, the philosophy of Maqasid does not view the soul merely as a biological entity, but rather as a dignified, value-based being. Preserving life under political despotism requires an approach that transcends the mere legal (Fiqhi) prohibition of suicide to understand the teleological objective (al-Maqasid al-Gha'i) of human existence and being.

The Duality of Preservation: From the Aspect of "Existence" and "Non-Existence"

Al-Shatibi (2003) established that the preservation of the Essentials (Daruriyyat) occurs through two complementary dimensions:

- **Preservation from the Aspect of Non-Existence (al-Adam):** This involves warding off harms and assaults against the soul. In the context of this study, despotism represents a moral assault that strips the soul of its will and pushes it forcibly toward non-existence (suicide).
- **Preservation from the Aspect of Existence (al-Wujud):** This involves establishing the pillars of the soul and strengthening its foundations. Ibn Ashur (2001) argues that this preservation cannot be achieved without providing Freedom, as it is inconceivable to preserve a soul devoid of will. An individual living under the weight of oppression lacks true existence, even if they are biologically breathing.

Human Dignity as a Governing Objective (Moral Preservation of the Soul)

The preservation of life in Islam is organically linked to the Objective of Dignity (Maqasid al-Karama). When the Quran declares: {And We have certainly honored the children of Adam} [Al-Isra: 70], it establishes dignity as an inherent attribute of human existence. Al-Raysuni (2014) emphasizes that the core aim of the Higher Objectives of Sharia is to liberate man from the hegemony of man, because submission to other than Allah under the pressure of despotism leads to the internal erosion of the soul.

Consequently, despotism—which humiliates the citizen and squanders their dignity—nullifies the Legislator's intent regarding the preservation of life. This creates a psychological imbalance that facilitates the act of suicide as a form of flight from ignominy.

Preservation of Life and its Relation to Psychological and Social Security

Scholars of Maqasid link the Preservation of Life to the Preservation of the Nation's Order (Nizam al-Ummah). When political justice is absent, the nation's order is disrupted, and security is transformed into fear:

- **Psychological-Maqasid Foundation:** Al-Ghazali (2005) points out that despotism bequeaths humiliation (al-Dhillah), which kills ambition and breeds despair. In the Maqasid perspective, despair is the death of the soul before the body. This resonates with Frankl's (2006) assertion that the loss of meaning and dignity under oppressive conditions is the primary catalyst for self-destruction. Therefore, the most mandatory duty in preserving life is providing a political environment that respects human intellect and dignity, enabling the individual to fulfill the Trust of Stewardship (Amanat al-Istikhlaf).

The Collective Dimension of Preserving Life (Preservation of the Species and Civilizing the Earth)

The objective of preserving life extends beyond individual boundaries to the Preservation of the Human Species and the maintenance of the nation's strength. Political despotism commits a Maqasid felony against the collective:

- **Obstacle to Stewardship:** Ibn Ashur (2001) posits that the preservation of souls is the primary means for the survival of the world's order. When lives are threatened by suicide due to oppression, the Function of Stewardship (Wazifat al-Istikhlaf) is obstructed. An oppressed soul is incapable of Imarah (civilizing/building).

- **Structural Oppression:** Hegazi (2005) notes that systemic oppression turns society into a state of internalized failure. The suicide of Arab youth is a hemorrhage in the body of the Ummah and a political crime resulting in the squandering of human capital, which Sharia strictly mandates to preserve (Al-Raysuni, 2014).

Suicide as a "Nullification of the Legislator's Intent"

Under despotism, suicide is transformed from an individual sin into a collective Maqasid crisis. If Sharia was established to attain benefits and ward off harms (Al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam, 1991), then the persistence of despotic regimes represents a Supreme Corruption (Mafsada Uzma) that leads to the destruction of souls through despair.

Thus, the Maqasid approach shifts the blame from the oppressed victim to the despotic environment that has disabled the Sharia objectives of preserving life and dignity, prioritizing Regime Survival over Human Survival (Al-Ghazali, 2005).

Section Two: The Psychology of Oppression: The Bridge Between Despotism and Suicide

"Oppression" (al-Qahr) represents the emotional and existential state experienced by the Arab individual when colliding with the rigid wall of despotism. This section analyzes how the external actions of power are transformed into internal "psychological toxins," leading to the erosion of the individual's will to survive.

Subsection I: "Jurisprudence of Oppression": Analyzing the Refuge from "The Oppression of Men" (Qahr al-Rijal)

The Prophetic Sunnah foresaw the dangerous psychological impact of social and political injustice centuries before modern theories. This is manifested in the Prophet's ﷺ constant prayer: "O Allah, I seek refuge in You from... the burden of debt and the oppression of men (Qahr al-Rijal)" (Al-Bukhari, n.d.).

The Maqasid Significance of "Qahr al-Rijal"

- **Linguistically:** al-Qahr refers to subjugation accompanied by humiliation and coercion (Ibn Manzur, 1994).
- **Maqasid Context:** It represents the pinnacle of assault against the self and dignity; it signifies an individual falling under a brutal authority that strips them of their will. Al-Ghazali (2005) argues that political oppression is the most lethal form of subjugation because it combines Fear and Humiliation, dismantling the Preservation of Life from within.

Oppression as "Existential Blockage"

The Prophetic concept of oppression converges with Hegazi's (2005) framework on the psychology of the oppressed. In current Arab societies, oppression leads to:

- **Destruction of Initiative:** Generating a state of learned helplessness where the individual feels any attempt at change is futile.
- **Reflected Aggression:** Hegazi (2005) notes that due to latent fear, the oppressed person directs aggression toward themselves rather than the source of oppression. This provides a scientific explanation for suicide in despotic environments: the individual kills themselves as an escape from a reality in which they no longer possess influence.

Symbolic Assassination and "Devaluation of Worth"

In the Arab context, oppression manifests through systemic existential marginalization:

- **Shattering Meritocracy:** Prioritizing loyalty over competence leads to what Hegazi (2005) describes as the devaluation of worth (Bakhs al-Qimah). This is a direct assault on the objective of intellect and dignity, driving the creative individual toward Nihilism.
- **Bureaucratic Humiliation:** Breaking the believer's honor (Izzat al-Mu'min) through daily institutional interactions (Fromm, 2021).

Subsection II: Mechanisms of Despotic Oppression

Contemporary Arab despotism relies on structural mechanisms that penetrate the citizen's daily life:

- **Systematic Humiliation:** Forced relinquishment of pride to obtain basic rights. Repeated humiliation erodes self-esteem, making physical death seem more bearable than an ignominious life.
- **Livelihood Constriction:** Using economics as a political weapon. This livelihood aggression nullifies the objective of preserving wealth (Hifz al-Mal) and drives suicide as a scream of protest (Al-Ghazali, 2005).
- **Future Vacuum:** The blockage of the horizon for change leads to existential despair. According to Frankl (2006), seeing no future initiates a rapid process of psychological decomposition.
- **Social Atomization:** Deconstructing social bonds to prevent collective resistance. This leaves the soul isolated and vulnerable to collapse without a supportive environment (Al-Raysuni, 2014; Durkheim, 1951).

Subsection III: Empirical Manifestations of Psychological Oppression in Arab Societies

To substantiate the psychological mechanisms of learned helplessness and existential despair within contemporary Arab settings, two prominent sociological phenomena can be examined as secondary empirical evidence:

"Suicidal Migration" and the "Death Boats" (Illegal Migration)

The psychological transition from existential suffocation to self-destruction does not always manifest in immediate physical suicide; it often projects onto high-risk behaviors that carry a near-certain fatality rate. The phenomenon of illegal migration across the Mediterranean—popularly termed in Arab vernacular as death boats (Quwarib al-Mawt)—serves as a collective empirical manifestation of this psychological state.

Sociological studies on youth participants reveal that their choice to cross the sea in unseaworthy vessels, while fully conscious of the high probability of drowning, is driven by the internal conviction that staying in a despotic homeland equals a slow, guaranteed moral death. Thus, facing physical death at sea is psychologically preferred over enduring the continuous humiliation of an authoritarian vacuum. This represents an inverted form of self-destruction where the individual subcontracts their demise to the elements, fleeing a reality stripped of Maqasid protections for life and dignity.

Qualitative Evidence: Final Notes and Testamentary Artifacts

Further empirical validation of Bakhs al-Qimah (devaluation of worth) can be derived qualitatively from the recurring themes found in the final letters, social media posts, and suicide notes left by Arab youth over the past decade. A systematic analysis of these tragic artifacts reveals that the primary drivers are rarely classic clinical depression; instead, they are consistently characterized by explicit indictments of structural injustice, corruption, the lack of dignified employment despite high academic qualifications, and the inability to voice dissent.

These final testaments document a lucid, calculated rejection of a compromised existence. They provide direct empirical proof that the systematic destruction of the believer's honor (Izzat al-Mu'min) by bureaucratic and security apparatuses functions as a direct causal trigger, pushing highly functional, educated individuals into a state of absolute nihilism where physical self-elimination becomes their only autonomous choice.

Subsection IV: From Oppression to Suicide: The Transformation of Violence

The redirection of violence toward the body instead of the source of injustice is the most complex point in this study:

- **Mechanism of Reflected Aggression:** When an individual faces absolute power, repressed rage recoils inward. The oppressed may adopt the role of the executioner against themselves, punishing a self they perceive as helpless (Hegazi, 2005).
- **Shattering Existential Immunity:** Despotism practices an aggression against the will, leading to nihilistic submission where death is seen as the only salvation (Al-Raysuni, 2014).
- **Inverted Biopolitics:** Suicide becomes a protest act. When stripped of all efficacy, the body remains the only property. The individual exercises their final authority: the decision to end life to prove they still possess a will (Fromm, 2021; Hegazi, 2005).

CONCLUSION

The Maqasid Responsibility for Indirect Killing

This approach shifts the Sharia characterization from individual action to authoritarian causation. If despotism pushed the individual into a corner of no solution, the regime bears the burden of the moral destruction of souls.

Preservation of life, as Ibn Ashur (2001) asserts, is the primary duty of the ruler (Wali al-Amr); his failure makes him a partner in this collective despair.

Section Three: Despotism as an Aggression against Maqasid Necessities

A Maqasid-based approach to authoritarianism reveals a structural defect that afflicts the Five Essentials (Al-Kulliyat al-Khams). When a despot extends his dominion through coercion, he does not merely stop at the taking of lives; rather, he actively works to erode the value-based and material systems that safeguard human existence.

Requirement I: Violation of the "Objective of Preserving Life" (Maqsid al-Nafs) through Moral Killing and Systematic Despair

Traditional Maqasid approaches often limit Preserving Life (Hifz al-Nafs) to the prohibition of physical homicide. However, contemporary Arab authoritarianism has revealed a new pattern of violation known as Moral Killing.

- **Moral Killing as a Prelude to Physical Annihilation:** Despotism extinguishes the human spirit by stripping away dignity and agency. Ibn Ashur (2001) points out that the preservation of souls is only complete through the preservation of their freedom; for a subject deprived of will is, in a legal and metaphorical sense, considered dead. This symbolic assassination shatters the Ego, leading the individual to view their body as a burden unworthy of maintenance, facilitating suicide as the final act of a soul that has already perished (Hegazi, 2005).
- **Engineering Nihilistic Despair and the Assassination of Hope:** Hope is the necessary fuel for Imarat al-Ard (the cultivation of the earth); conversely, despotism relies on manufacturing despair to consolidate control. Al-Ghazali (2005) considers despair to be the severest affliction of the soul. From Frankl's (2006) perspective, when a person loses hope in the future, they lose their grip on life, turning the homeland into a repellent environment where the soul chooses nothingness over constricted survival.
- **Causing Perishment (al-Tahlukah) through Political Pressure:** Maqasid principles establish that causation is equivalent to direct action (Al-Tasabbub kal-Mubasharah). If despotism is what drove people

into a state of absolute despair, it has violated the Sharia prohibition: {And do not throw [yourselves] with your own hands into destruction}.

Requirement II: Violation of the "Objective of Reason and Dignity" (Maqsid al-Aql and al-Karamah) by Eclipsing Consciousness

Reason (Aql) represents the basis of legal accountability, and dignity (Karamah) constitutes the essence of human vicegerency (Istikhlaf).

- **Systematic Assassination of Reason and Falsification of Consciousness:** Preserving reason transcends the physical prohibition of intoxicants to include the protection of intellectual efficacy. Despotism employs media disinformation to manufacture a submissive collective mind, leading to a sense of existential absurdity (Hegazi, 2005).
- **Erosion of Dignity as an Assault on "Honor" (Ird):** In modern Maqasid, Honor is linked to personal sanctity. Fromm (2021) emphasizes that the authoritarian system crushes human individuality, reducing the person to a mere cog. This waste of dignity is a symbolic killing. When an individual is stripped of dignity, they experience an existential vacuum, which is the primary driver for ending life as a desperate attempt to reclaim dignity by rejecting a life of humiliation (Al-Raysuni, 2014; Frankl, 2006).

Requirement III: Violation of the "Objective of Wealth" (Maqsid al-Mal) and the "Point of Existential Zero"

Despotism does not merely violate wealth through theft; it does so through a system of political impoverishment aimed at shattering the will.

- **Wealth as the Sustenance of the Soul:** Ibn Ashur (2001) argues that the circulation of wealth is the foundation of the Ummah's order. Monopolizing wealth generates a sense of gross injustice (Ghabn Fahish), which produces destructive energy toward both the self and society (Al-Ghazali, 2005). To operationalize this dimension, international financial monitoring indexes show that Arab countries with the highest levels of authoritarianism concurrently suffer from the most severe rates of capital flight and systemic corruption. This correlation proves that economic deprivation under authoritarian rule is not an accidental byproduct, but a structural policy that drives lower-income brackets toward economic alienation.
- **The Zero Point of Existence:** Chronic material helplessness leads to self-devaluation (Hegazi, 2005). When the individual feels their material existence has become a valueless burden, suicide appears as the only cost-free exit from the prison of humiliating need (Frankl, 2006).
- **Legal Responsibility for Fatal Hunger:** A regime that starves its people violates both the objectives of wealth and life. Suicide resulting from poverty under despotism is a homicide whose burden is borne by the regime that obstructed the means for a dignified life.

Requirement IV: Violation of the "Objectives of Progeny and Religion" (Maqsid al-Nasl and al-Din)

1. Violation of Maqasid al-Nasl (Assassinating the Future)

Through systematic impoverishment, despotism renders marriage an unattainable dream, creating social sterility. The oppressed individual may fear procreation to avoid bequeathing subjugation to their children, transforming progeny from a joy into a source of existential anxiety (Hegazi, 2005).

This theoretical disruption is empirically visible in regional demographic data over the last two decades. There is a documented decline in marriage rates and an unprecedented rise in singlehood across major Arab urban centers. These patterns reflect an existential retreat among youth who view the creation of a family under the weight of political and economic insecurity as an unjustifiable burden, thus directly compromising the Maqasid preservation of future generations.

2. Violation of Maqasid al-Din (Spiritual Alienation)

Despotism seeks the nationalization of religion, transforming it into a justificatory apparatus for injustice. This causes a spiritual shock; the religion that was once a refuge for the oppressed is perceived as a cover for the oppressor, leading to spiritual killing and despair of Allah's mercy.

This instrumentalization has produced tangible sociological indicators, most notably a distinct wave of spiritual alienation, skepticism, and nihilistic atheism among Arab youth in post-authoritarian contexts. When religious institutions become appendages of security structures, the individual experiences a collapse of moral authority, turning a system meant to preserve faith into an indirect cause of spiritual fragmentation and ultimate despair.

Requirement V: Wasting the "Ultimate Objective" (Justice and Freedom) and the "Maqasid Prison"

Justice (Adl) is the spirit that gives efficacy to all essentials. Despotism strikes at the Teleological Cause (Al-illah al-Gha'iyah) of Sharia: the establishment of justice.

- **Justice as Existential Security:** The realization that rights can only be obtained through force or nepotism turns life into a desolate wilderness, driving the soul to resign from life (Ibn Ashur, 2001).
- **Freedom as an Innate Characteristic:** Without freedom, Istikhlaf (vicegerency) cannot be realized. Combining servitude with fear leads to existential suffocation, where suicide becomes the only free act remaining to reclaim stolen will (Fromm, 2021).
- **Conclusion:** When authority shifts from being a guardian of objectives to a violator of them, the homeland loses its status as a refuge. Suicide, in this context, is an escape from the non-state and the lawlessness entrenched by despotism (Al-Raysuni, 2014).

Section Four: An Analytical Study of the Arab Model

This section provides a statistical and sociological analysis of suicide phenomena—both as a form of protest and as an act of despair—across various Arab countries. It further critiques the official political and religious discourses regarding those who commit suicide under authoritarian conditions.

Requirement I: Statistical and Social Analysis of Suicide Phenomena (Protest and Despair-Driven)

Data intersected between the World Health Organization (WHO) and local human rights reports reveal that the Arab region is no longer an exception in suicide rates. Instead, it is witnessing qualitative shifts in motives, where the statistical curve correlates positively with the increasing pace of despotism and the blockage of political and livelihood horizons.

The "Bouazizi Phenomenon" and Protest Suicide

Under Arab despotism, the body is no longer merely a biological entity; it has been utilized as a Biopolitical tool for confrontation when the state confiscates all other means of expression.

- **Human Rights Documentation:** Social reports in Tunisia recorded over 450 cases of suicide by self-immolation in the five years following the 2010 revolution as an act of protest (Tunisian Ministry of Health, 2016). Similarly, the Moroccan Association for Human Rights (AMDH) monitored recurring cases of street vendors who set themselves on fire protesting the confiscation of their goods and their humiliation by authorities, exemplified by the case of Mayada in Kenitra (AMDH, 2017).
- **Sociological Analysis:** Hegazi (2005) argues that Hogra (systemic social injustice and institutional contempt) transforms suicide from a desperate act into a secular martyrdom aimed at shaking the collective conscience and exposing the perpetrator. Self-immolation in front of sovereign headquarters is an attempt to profane the prestige of authority with the victim's body.

Silent Numbers: Suicide Resulting from "Political Impoverishment"

Suicide in countries like Egypt and Lebanon transcends traditional clinical explanations, entering the realm of Forced Suicide resulting from the systematic drying up of the sources of a dignified life.

- **The Egyptian Case:** The Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) recorded an escalation in suicides among heads of households due to austerity policies and debt—a phenomenon described as the assassination of dignity through impoverishment (ECRF, 2018).
- **The Lebanese Case:** Information International (2023) recorded a more than 10% increase in suicide cases in 2022. Human Rights Watch (2023) described the financial collapse as a result of deliberate state policies, driving citizens to end their lives due to the inability to secure basic necessities like medicine or infant formula.
- **Maqasid Significance:** This represents the Point of Existential Zero, where the objective of wealth is wasted, leading to the destruction of the objective of life. Al-Ghazali (2005) links poverty accompanied by injustice to driving humans toward despair or self-destruction.

Youth Suicide (Ages 18-35) and the Loss of Human Capital

This demographic represents the Power of Vicegerency (Quwwat al-Istikhlaf) in Maqasid thought; yet, in the Arab model, they are the primary targets of oppression and marginalization.

- **Politicized Unemployment:** The World Bank (2022) indicates the highest youth unemployment rates globally in this region, while the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) monitors the denial of jobs based on security clearances (ANHRI, 2019).
- **Conflict Zones (Syria and Yemen):** The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor (2021) documented a frightening increase in suicide rates due to the loss of existential meaning. Frankl (2006) argues that the absence of an imagined future is the primary killer.
- **Maqasid Genocide:** Al-Raysuni (2014) maintains that despotism commits a crime against the Objective of the Ummah by damaging the soundness of progeny. Choosing death boats (illegal migration) or suicide are two sides of the same coin: escaping the homeland-prison, which constitutes the greatest betrayal of the trust of vicegerency (Ibn Ashur, 2001).

Requirement II: Analysis of Official Discourse (Political and Religious) Toward Suicide Victims

Official discourse in despotic regimes seeks to perform a second execution of the suicide victim. After killing them morally, the stage of erasing the significance of their death begins through rhetorical strategies aimed at severing the link between the act of suicide and political responsibility.

Political Discourse: Escape Through "Pathologization"

The strategy of Pathologization is the preferred media tool for authoritarian regimes; suicide is withdrawn from the public political sphere and confined within the clinical sphere.

- **Stripping Political Significance:** The victim is portrayed as psychologically fragile to claim that their death was a medical inevitability unrelated to the high cost of living or security crackdowns.
- **Preventing "Iconization":** The despot fears the transformation of the suicidal body into a symbol (Al-Kawakibi, 2011). Thus, official discourse seeks to flatten motives—attributing the act to family disputes or emotional failure—to empty it of its protest content.

Official Religious Discourse: "The Jurisprudence of Obedience"

Despotism employs the official religious institution as a second line of defense, transforming suicide from a social tragedy into a purely religious sin.

- **Psychological Terrorism through Text:** This discourse focuses exclusively on texts of divine threat and punishment, ignoring the context of oppression. Al-Raysuni (2014) argues that this is the pinnacle of Maqasid selectivity, where the text is summoned to lash the victim while texts confronting tyranny are suppressed.
- **Absence of "Jurisprudence of Causality":** Official discourse neglects the investigation into the causes (Al-Ilal) of the loss of life. Al-Ghazali (2005) emphasizes that remaining silent about the crime of despotism while shouting at the crime of the oppressed is an inversion of Sharia standards.

The Discursive Alliance: "Behavioral Abasement" vs. "Authoritarian Absolution"

An integration occurs between the media, political, and official religious spheres to construct a mental image of the suicide victim as a weak, faithless failure.

- **The Result:** This alliance diverts society's gaze from the true criminal (the regime that squandered the Five Essentials) to the victim. This cools popular tension and absolves the authority both criminally and morally. From a Maqasid perspective, this is an aggression against the Objective of Truth and a falsification of justice (Ibn Ashur, 2001).

Section Five: The Reformist Vision from a Maqasid Perspective

Maqasid thought does not limit itself to diagnosing the ailment; rather, it seeks to provide a reformist alternative aimed at Preserving the Essentials (Hifz al-Daruriyyat) through preventive and remedial strategies. These strategies aim to restore human agency and liberate the individual from the cycle of authoritarian despair.

Requirement I: The Sharia Ruling and its Evidences

Evidences from the Holy Qur'an (The Prohibition of Self-Killing)

The Sharia ruling is definitive; suicide is among the major sins (Kaba'ir). The divine prohibition is explicitly stated: {And do not kill yourselves [or one another]. Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful} [An-Nisa: 29]. This prohibition encompasses both the act of an individual taking their own life and members of the Ummah killing one another, as the Ummah is as a single soul. The justification {Indeed, Allah is to you ever Merciful} signifies that this legislation stems from divine mercy to protect humans from their own despair.

Evidences from the Prophetic Sunnah (Warnings and Jurisprudence)

The Sunnah detailed this ruling, establishing the maxim: "The recompense is of the same nature as the deed" (Al-Jaza' min Jins al-Amal). It is recorded in the Sahih: "Whoever kills himself with something will be tortured with it in the Fire of Hell" (Al-Bukhari, n.d.). In a Hadith Qudsi, Allah says: "My slave hurried to bring death upon himself, so I have forbidden Paradise for him" (Al-Bukhari, n.d.). This depicts the servant as if racing against divine decree and disposing of the Trust of the Soul (Amanat al-Ruh) which they do not own.

The Sharia Responsibility of the Despot (Killing by Causation)

Maqasid jurisprudence extends the scope of responsibility to include the Causer (Al-Mutasabbib). If suicide is the direct killing of the self, then despotism is killing by causation.

- **The Despot as a Violator of Covenants:** The despot is considered a violator of Sharia covenants because he transforms the function of leadership from guarding religion to corrupting the world.

- **The Maxim "The Causer is as the Direct Actor":** In cases of suicide resulting from starvation and humiliation, the despot who closes the doors of a dignified life falls under the divine warning against killing a soul without right. The oppressor has killed Hope within an entire nation, rendering despair a Force Majeure that drives the vulnerable toward destruction.
- **Despotism as Fitna:** Despotism is the greatest form of Fitna (tribulation), trying people in their faith. Every soul lost to despair is a witness against the despot on the Day of Resurrection for robbing it of its right to Dignified Survival.

Requirement II: Reviving the Jurisprudence of "Human Dignity"

The transition from the Jurisprudence of Survival to the Jurisprudence of Dignity represents a corrective revolution in the Maqasid trajectory.

- **Dignity as a Foundation for Preserving Life:** If dignity is lost, preserving life becomes a heavy burden. Reviving this jurisprudence grants the oppressed an existential immunity, realizing that dignity is a fixed divine right—neither granted nor revoked by authority (Al-Raysuni, 2014).
- **The Concept of "Dignified Survival":** Ibn Ashur (2001) argues that the objective is the rectitude of conditions (Istiqamat al-Ahwal). A regime that provides bread but robs dignity is an anti-Maqasid system; hunger for dignity is more lethal than hunger for bread.
- **Freedom as a Maqasid Necessity:** Freedom is the lung through which dignity breathes. A free person possesses the will to act and the hope for change—elements that serve as the antibiotic to suicidal despair.

Requirement III: Confronting Oppression through Community Solidarity and "Resistant Hope"

- **Solidary Cooperation as a Protective Mechanism:** In the face of systematic impoverishment, solidarity is a Maqasid necessity. Al-Ghazali (2005) views social solidarity as the existential buffer wall that prevents an individual from reaching the Existential Zero Point.
- **Manufacturing "Existential Meaning" and Resistant Hope:** Instilling hope is a current obligation (Wajib Waqti). According to Frankl (2006), a person who finds meaning in their suffering becomes capable of resilience. When youth realize that their steadfastness is a form of Maqasid Ribat (theological guarding), they regain their shattered agency.
- **Activating Collective Responsibility:** Resisting despotism is the Supreme Objective for preserving the nation's entity (Al-Kawakibi, 2011). Efforts must shift from preaching to the victim to deterring the despot who causes collective destruction.
- **Community-Based "Psychological Incubators":** Building networks to provide social support and deconstruct the discourse of despair. The despot succeeds when he isolates the individual but fails when facing a cohesive society—representing the practical application of the objective of Preserving Life in the context of outcomes (Ma'alat) (Ibn Ashur, 2001).!

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the rising phenomenon of suicide in the contemporary Arab world is not merely an isolated psychological event or a private pathology; rather, it represents a structural reflection and an extreme behavioral manifestation of a distressed socio-political reality. Through an interdisciplinary framework reconciling political sociology with applied Sharia sciences, the research has demonstrated that political despotism acts as a systemic manufacturer of non-life. By shutting down the public sphere, enforcing chronic fear through ubiquitous surveillance, and monopolizing economic resources, authoritarian governance transforms homelands from nurturing Maqasid incubators into repellent environments characterized by systematic oppression and moral killing.

The ultimate objective of Sharia—the Preservation of Life (Hifz al-Nafs)—cannot be achieved in a vacuum of justice, nor under a regime that continuously confiscates freedom and erodes human dignity. In the Maqasid perspective, true human existence is defined by agency, free will, and the capacity to fulfill the trust of vicegerency (Amanat al-Istikhlaf). Conversely, despotism imposes a state of paralysis, alienation, and what this study conceptualizes as existential suffocation.

Consequently, the ethical and Sharia responsibility extends beyond the immediate victim to encompass the authoritarian causator. Under the established legal maxim that causation is equivalent to direct action (Al-Tasabbub kal-Mubasharah), despotic environments that systematically drive vulnerable youth toward the Existential Zero Point bear the primary burden for the moral and structural destruction of these souls.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conceptual, empirical, and Maqasid analyses detailed throughout this study, the following actionable recommendations are proposed across three fundamental levels:

1. On the Sharia and Maqasid Level

- **Reviving the Jurisprudence of Dignity:** There is an urgent need to transition from a restrictive jurisprudence of biological survival to a comprehensive jurisprudence of human dignity (Fiqh al-Karamah) within contemporary Islamic thought, positioning dignity as a non-negotiable, governing objective that anchors the right to life (Al-Raysuni, 2014).
- **Activating the Jurisprudence of Causality:** Islamic jurisprudential bodies must actively employ the maxim of causation to hold oppressive political and administrative structures accountable for mass socio-economic catastrophes, shifting the theological focus from merely preaching to the victim to deterring the systemic perpetrator (Al-Ghazali, 2005).

2. On the Institutional and Discursive Level

- **Emancipating Religious Discourse:** Institutional religious discourse must be structurally separated and emancipated from state hegemony and security apparatuses. Reclaiming the independence of religious institutions is critical to restoring their moral authority and preventing the nationalization of religion as a tool to justify tyranny.
- **Developing a Jurisprudence of Resistant Hope:** Religious and educational institutions should formulate a contemporary discourse rooted in positive action and systemic resilience, dismantling both the authoritarian narratives of despair and the passive theological fatalism that breeds nihilism among youth (Frankl, 2006).

3. On the Societal and Community Level

- **Building Community Fortresses of Hope:** Civil society must establish independent socio-psychological networks, specialized endowments (Awqaf), and local initiatives to provide robust psychological incubators and financial safety nets for marginalized individuals, thereby breaking the existential isolation imposed by despotism (Hegazi, 2005).
- **Reclaiming the Civic Public Sphere:** Efforts should be directed toward rebuilding independent civil unions, professional associations, and voluntary platforms to fill the existential vacuum experienced by Arab youth, offering them non-violent, structural avenues to reclaim their social agency, dignity, and future horizons (Al-Kawakibi, 2011; Ibn Ashur, 2001).

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