



## **Analysis and Comparison of Social Movements Strategies in Egypt and Tunisia**

**Pourya Arabi**

Farhangian University  
pourya.arabi@outlook.com

**Ali Khoshgoftar**

Farhangian University  
ali.khoshgoftar@outlook.com

**Ali Rabbani farhoudi**

Farhangian University  
labbayk.313@chmail.ir

### **Abstract**

Recent movements in the Middle East which began with the fall of Ben Ali Administration in Tunisia, could be construed as an effective factor in the security of the region. The Muslim Brotherhood movement in Egypt as well as the Ennahda Movement in Tunisia, both won the public vote and the election. But after a while the Muslim Brotherhood was faced with public protests and was dethroned while Ennahda in Tunisia is still in control. Through a descriptive-analytical approach, this study sets out to figure out the reasons behind this issue. Firstly, these movements are identified, and by examining the strategies pertaining to each, the subject is further explicated. In conclusion, the lack of ground for diverse and opposing groups to participate, is suggested to be the cause of trouble for the Muslim Brotherhood, while on the contrary the alert Ennahda could thrive by establishing mechanisms of a democracy civil society.

**Keywords:** Social movements, the Middle East, Muslim Brotherhood, Ennahda.

## **Introduction**

The Movements in the Middle East which began with the fall of Ben Ali in Tunisia, may affect the security of the region (Fouzi, 2010). Egypt and Tunisia as two countries with explicitly secular policies, would prevent mediation and entrance of any form of Islamism into the realm of power. The chief means for administering secularism within these countries was military, which behaved differently with respect to domestic developments in each country.

Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was able to seize power after the 2011 revolution and Mohamed Mursi won the election in June 2012. But after a year of victory for the Muslim Brotherhood, Mursi was dethroned by Egypt's military coup and 683 Members of the Muslim Brotherhood were sentenced to death. And the Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohammed Badie was sentenced to life imprisonment on 7 August 2014.

In the first free elections in Tunisia, Ennahda won 90 seats out of 217 seats in Tunisia's Constituent Assembly to allocate 41% of the vote and continued to stay in power.

Both the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Ennahda in Tunisia, have an expansive history and experience in the field of organization and struggle. Why does Muslim Brotherhood fail, but Ennahda still remains in power and even has a high likelihood for reaching the head of power?

## **Background**

By reference to the works of previous researchers we found that while the two social movements of Muslim Brotherhood and Ennahda have been explored from various perspectives, there has been less concern for the failure of one and success of the other due to high degree of similarity between them, which renders this study novel and distinct.

## **Methodology**

Social movements within Egypt and Tunisia are explored in this study, hence it can be regarded as a descriptive study. Moreover, since the social movements in two distinct countries, as well as the reasons behind the success of one and failure of the other have been examined, such study can be regarded as Exploratory - Analytical. To explicate the events within Egypt and Tunisia, researchers firstly conducted library research reviewing the literature and secondly referred to authorized news archives, for the recency of the issue.

## **The Arab Spring: Islamic Movements**

Despite the importance of Islamic movements and religious reform for Social sciences thinkers and scholar as well as the recency of their emergence, there is not a comprehensive definition for it yet.

Islamic movements are social phenomena which convey concepts such as freedom from tyranny, colonialism and effort in pursuit of human dignity, political, economic, and intellectual independence and playing its Islamic role as "the best nation for the people" the same way as the Qur'an teaches Muslims and finally showing its Islamic identity in all areas of life and its purpose is to return to the pure Islam and retrieving the forgotten religious identity. (Hesari, Noruzi, Manouchehrabadi, 2012)

Islamic movement refers to the organized movement of people which tries to match the intellectual, social and political trends to that of Islam commands. These movements differ in terms of their objectives and functions of organizational structure. Some analysts consider the Islamic movements as the efforts of relatively cohesive groups- which were not willing to accept the cultural dominance of the West- to establish a Islamic state , and practice of Islam in all aspects . Islamic movements are trying to organize their thoughts and their actions so as to be a potent stimulus for change, in addition to being stable. The Islamic movements came into existence, influenced by ostensible factors such as the colonialism of the West, intellectual decline and domestic tyranny, the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate, hasty secularization of Islamic societies, military defeats of Muslims from aliens, failure of rival models such as Arabic nationalism and socialism, and internal degeneration (the crisis of legitimacy, identity crisis, unjust distribution of wealth and corruption and repression).

Some analysts consider the Islamic movements as the main contributing factor for the revolutions in Arabic countries. (Bikdeli, 2011) Islamic movements refer to popular movements against dictatorships which have an Islamic identity and are against dictatorship and imperialism. The Islamic slogans, holding prayers in the squares, the anti-Western rhetoric and their occurrence in countries with a Muslim majority population can be noted as Islamic signs of these movements.

Zolfaghari (2011) in a study on the rereading of political Islam in Tunisia, enumerates the component of the Islamic movements as follows:

- Belief in the distance of the Islamic community with the desired status; this component is realized in the debates concerning the decline of the community.
- Belief in the necessity of returning to the Qur'an and Sunnah as religious principles for living in the modern age;
- Belief in the need to recover the lost national, religious and cultural identity.
- Boasting of the glorious past of Islam.
- Feeling of negligence in performing the Islamic duties.
- Belief in the inadequacy and ineffectiveness of human achievement.
- Belief in the necessity of rereading and reinterpretation of religious texts.
- Belief in the possibility that religion can be used as a solution to generate balance and interaction between tradition and modernity.

On the contrary, some people call the uprisings and the Revolutions of Southwest Asia and the North Africa, the Arab Spring. In many occurrences the Islamic Awakening and the Arab Spring are considered as synonymous. While the Islamic Awakening emphasizes on Islam and does not refer to any particular race or nationality, the Arab Spring refers to the Arabic Ethnicity. Moreover, the Spring Arabic Ideology is not against the West but is anxious to pass from the Eastern Despotism to the Western Democracy.

### **Developments of the Middle East**

On the last days of the 2010, events such as the fall of the regimes in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya as well as other protests occurred in the Middle Eastern countries, changed all the political equations in the region. In this time Middle Eastern countries were coping with economic crisis and decline, for instance in Libya, many protesters were dissatisfied with the public services or the unemployment among the young generation. In many cases, the governments of the Middle East did not manage the ethnic and religious conflicts in an appropriate manner, and this issue has been one of the main factors triggering the domestic unrests in the Middle East and North Africa.

### **Islamic Movements in the Egypt**

One of the most significant Islamic movements which had a significant impact on Egypt and several other Islamic State, was the "Muslim Brotherhood" which was established by Hassan Albana in 1928 in Egypt, and gradually infiltrated into the rest of the Arabic and Islamic countries (Richard, 2008). Following the death of Hassan Albana, the Founder of Muslim Brotherhood, the religious beliefs of this community experienced changes, and the more radical and fundamentalist groups acted more freely in the society, and gradually small and large extremist groups like the Islamic Jihad community were developed in the Egypt.

This movement can be considered as the mother of political movements, since it affected the whole of Egypt and the Arab world. In 1939, the Muslim Brotherhood had turned into a political organization and defined its objectives such as defending the rights of the Arabs, among other objectives (Mohammed, 2006). In December 8, 1948 the Egypt's Ministry of Interior issued decree of the dissolution of the Muslim Brotherhood and many of the members of this group were sent to prison. This occurrence resulted in an increase in the underground activities of Muslim Brotherhood. Hassan al-Banna, the first General Master was assassinated on February 12, 1949, and Hassan al-Hudaybi as the second General Master served as leader of the Brotherhood.

After the 1954 treaty between Egypt and Britain, Hassan al-Hudaybi called Jamal Abdonaser a traitor and attempted to assassinate him. This issue led to the arrest and execution of many of members as



well as leaders of Muslim Brotherhood. On October 6, 1981, Sadat was assassinated by a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood led by Khalid Istanbuli and this the Muslim Brotherhood to suffer many pressures and to continue its activities covertly from then on.

Hosni Mubarak reduced the government pressure on the one hand and tried to fight against those critics who resorted to violence on the other, by taking the path of political freedom and making the parliamentary competition possible for religious critics and opening up the space for press. The Islamic revival movement in the 1970s was a violent one. Islamists in 1980s entered into the mainstream of the society and Hosni Mubarak who was helpless in silencing the Islamic opposition groups, started to fight against the extremists how advocated armed struggle and the moderate groups within the political structure; In addition to the radical groups, he expanded the scope of conflicts to the moderate Islamic movements such as that of Muslim Brotherhood. The free and open political space of the early years of the Mubarak regime, gave the opportunity to the moderate Islamists to develop their institutions and enter into different areas of social and political processes and to expand their networks of hospitals and Kindergartens, clubs, schools, and banks. The institutionalization of the movement continued to the point that in the October 1992, the general public sensed the efficiency of Islamists compared to the government.

The largest economic gap in Egypt was between pro-Mubarak groups specifically the militants of the country and the rest of the population. The Mubarak administration had given a very high degree of freedom to the militants in the economic sphere, such that they played a significant role in areas from the supply of food to the management of economic infrastructures (Dehqani, Firouzabadi, Mohseni,

country	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Egypt	2/74	4/51	11/27	4/87	7/24	9/32	18/32	11/76	11/27

2012).

**Table 1. Inflation Ratio in Egypt**

During the 1980s, scholars such as Muhammad Amara, Tariq Albshry, Adel Hussein, Anwar Mubarak, Khalid Muhammad Khalid, and journalists like Fahmi Hoveida and Adel Hussein converted into Islamism and consequently Islamic Studies became spread. In this period, Muslim Brotherhood managed to attract members of the middle class and lower middle class in bureaucrats, merchants, physicians, engineers, lawyers and journalists and enjoyed aids from Saudi Arabia. Brotherhood finally decides to enter into the political arena by taking part in the election. In 1987, 36 members of the Muslim Brotherhood were elected to parliament. After the September 11 attacks, The Muslim Brotherhood sustained some pressure for supporting the Taliban. In the 2011 Egyptian revolution, Muslim Brotherhood was considered as the strongest and most serious opposition group against Hosni Mubarak administration.

After the ouster of Mubarak Mohamed, Mursi took part in the presidential election held on 17 June 2012 and was elected as the first president of Egypt after the revolution. After the military coup in 2013, Mohamed Mursi was arrested and the Muslim Brotherhood was denied of activity and its property was confiscated. Some Experts and historians on issues concerning political Islamic movements believe that the Muslim Brotherhood always have ruined opportunities despite the fact that it has always had the ability to mobilize millions of Egyptians.

### Islamic Movements in the Tunisia

Ebrahimnia (2012) in a study classifies Tunisian Islamist groups in the form of the following table:

**Table 2. Tunisian Islamist groups**

Row	Name of the Islamic Group	Root	Affiliation	Degree of Collective Action (militancy)	Result
1	Islamic Activism Party	Sunni Students	Affiliated with Egypt and Muslim Brotherhood	Very high	Repressed



2	Alnejat Eslami (Islamic Salvation)	Middle-class youth	Affiliated with the merchant class	Moderate to high	Prisoned in 1970-1980 Renamed
3	Alhezb Eslami (Islamic Party)	Traditional Sunnis	Muslim Brotherhood Movement	Very high	Repressed
4	Jam'iah hefz Al-Quran (Quran Preservation Society)	Quran Reciters	Through a network in mosques	Average	Repressed
5	Islamic usher	Sunni radicals	*	Terroristic	*
6	Islamic Jihad	Sunni Youth	*	Clandestine and Underground, High	*
7	Ennahda movement	Middle-class youth	Affiliated with the merchant class and market traders	Average	Change in discourse from 1990 towards Islamic moderation
8	Islamic Group Wallflowers	Al-Qaeda	Affiliated with Al-Qaeda in Africa	Terroristic	Entity Recognized after Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution

In Tunisia, Ben Ali came to power in 1987 via a bloodless coup and announced "development of democratization process" and "establishment of national reconciliation" as two main goals of his administration.

Tunisia's Islamist Ennahda movement was founded in 1971 by the leadership of Rachid Al-Ghannouchi, with the goals of political freedom of individuals and groups, putting an end to corruption, restoring independence and preventing the spread of Western culture and reclaiming Islamic identity (Borumand Alam, 2010). Rachid Ghannouchi was sentenced to 11 years of prison in 1981, but was released with the rise of Ben Ali in 1987 and in 1992 he was arrested sent to prison for the second time, then he was transferred to Algeria and Sudan and finally was exiled to London, England.

To achieve its goals, Ennahda tries to avoid violence and chaos, and makes use of democratic methods within the framework of the constitution, as well as political and social struggles grounded on democracy.

After the Tunisian revolution (the Jasmine revolution) and the overthrow of Zein Al-Abidin Ben Ali, Ennahda movement succeeded in forming an Islamic government with the majority of the votes.

Unlike Egypt in which the Military had a major role in creating the economical gap, In the Tunisia the Military had a relatively insignificant role, and would welcome controlled reform in Tunisia and opened gates to economic and social reforms. This country has been a typical example of a country with all sorts of economic issues. Tunisia's military budget is lower than other countries' military budget. One proof to this statement can be that in 2006, 4.1 percent Of the GDP of the country was allocated to this budget. Interference of Tunisian Military in the politics of this country was limited to such an extent that they were even not given the right to vote (Dehqani firouzabadi, Mohseni, 2012).

country	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Tunisia	2/72	2/71	3/63	2/02	4/49	3/42	4/49	3/52	4/42

**Table 3. Inflation Ratio in Tunisia**

Ebrahimnia (2012) believes that, political revelations in Tunisia resulted in the reduction in ideological power of the state and totalitarian groups such as fundamentalists. Factors contributing to the intensification of this revelation are as follows:

- 1- Tunisian youth population
- 2- Increase in the number of students
- 3- Emergence of new elites
- 4- Development of communication technology

- 5- Prevalence of virtual social networks (Increase in the Internet users from 1 percent to 36.3 percent from 2000 and 2011); this means 35.3 percent increase over 11 years and the other point is that of user 3,856,984 Internet users, 2,799,260 are a Facebook users. (Kia, Mahmoudi, 2011)
- 6- Women's studies of youth parallel with global processes
- 7- The fall of Ben Ali's dictatorial and Authoritarian government

### Muslim Brotherhood Strategy

Muslim Brotherhood contributed to the fall of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, by its weighty presence in the revolution. After the fall of Hosni Mubarak, the conservative Muslim Brotherhood succeeded in winning the reformist movement. Mohammed Mahdi Akef the general Master of Muslim Brotherhood resigned and leaders like Mohammed Badi`, Mohamed Morsi, Khayratoshater and Sa`dolkatateni emerged.

Mursi's activities after his success in the elections, were contrary to his promises which were the cause of discontent among many Egyptians; the chaotic Egyptian economy, dropping of foreign investment in the country, fighting against other political groups and judiciary systems are some examples of his measures. They were not concerned with the Egyptian government and abused the state power to advance their own goals. Brotherhood failed to understand that winning the elections is not equal to totalitarian authority.

Furthermore, it should be noted that people of different faith and class participated in the revolution in Egypt and acceptance of Muslim Brotherhood as absolute ruler was impossible, unless a space for cooperation and involvement of every one was provided. This fact was contrary to the beliefs of Muslim Brotherhood that supposed the Egyptian Community was ready to accept its absolute power in various aspects. Moreover, Muslim Brotherhood failed to set aside its party affiliations and act as the representative of the Egyptian people in its national decisions, removals and delegations and dialogues of leaders.

**Table 4. Muslim Brotherhood's political thoughts**

Subjects	Muslim Brotherhood's viewpoint
Relationship between religion and politics	Maximum relationship between religion and politics
Legislation	Practicing of Islamic sharia and its Implementation in the Islamic State and believing the legitimacy of human legislation within the area of permissibles.
Preferred type of governance	Islamic ruling with a leader familiar with Islam and aware of requirements of time
The role Ijtihad in politics	Acceptance of the principle of Ijtihad
The role of people in the government	Acceptance of the role of people in determining the Khalifa; acceptance of the parliamentary system
The role of parties in government	Hassan al-Banna, was against party formations, but later mentors acknowledged and gave recognition to parties.
Attitude towards the West and modernity	Selective approach to manifestations of the West
Muslim unity	Belief in the necessity of defending the united Islamic Ummah and avoidance of division, and struggle for the unity of Muslims
The role of women in society	Political and social roles of women other than in high political positions.

Egyptian constitution which was enacted in the time of Mursi through avoiding mutual dialogues, use of force and neglecting consensus of all parties, resulted in a decrease credibility Muslim Brotherhood in addition to abusing Islam in enhancement of their own power and interests. The Muslim Brotherhood party was dependent on the army and the Salafis instead of relying on the people, which led to the questioning of the legitimacy of Mursi.

### The Ennahda Strategy



One of the main points in the thoughts of Rachid Ghannouchi is that he does not see the Islamic state and government as a weapon in the hands of a special class for fighting against another class (Alikhani, Sediqi, 2003).

The rationale behind avoidance of tyranny in the Islamic political system, as stated by Ghannouchi are as follows:

- 1- The legitimacy of the Islamic state is based on execution of the rules of God and that power belongs to God. Citizens are required to evaluate compliance of all policies with doctrines of Islam, and should refrain from submitting to whatever is against doctrines of Islam.
- 2- The legitimacy of the Islamic state is based on true covenant between ruler and the nation and that the ruler can be dismissed by the people.
- 3- Interpretation of Revelation are the duty of Islamic scholars outside domain of Power, and the government is supposed to administer their interpretation as well as the ideas of the people.
- 4- People have the right to monitor the activities of the government without the permission of the government, and publication of newspapers, books and as well as establishment of parties is the right of people and the government has no right to prevent.
- 5- In Islam the government has no role in legislation but is responsible for execution of the law.

Rashed Al-Ghannouchi Believes that in Islam the Government and the State are means but not goals; Secondly, Nation and the Islamic Ideology precedes Power and the Government; Thirdly, no group, class, institution Or Individual is the representative of God, and government is the right of the whole nation. As a result in Tunisia various political and social groups have the right to participate.

### **Conclusion**

Failing to meet the electoral promises, deteriorating economic status, pervasive military intervention in the economy, lack of attention to the ideas of various parties and groups, and no provision for the participation of all political groups, are the main reasons for the defeat of Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

On the other hand, Ennahda managed to earn a relative success in Tunisia by taking into consideration the rights of various political groups and parties to participate in political domains, considering more right for people and banning of political despotism as well as the possibility of dismissal of the ruler by the people.

It seems that nowadays providing the chances for the participation of opposing groups and minorities, as well as the development of a civil society and strengthening of democratic mechanisms are the main factors contributing to the survival of social and political movements.

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