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## **Research 3**

# The behavioral approach of religious parties in dealing with their societies in Arab countries

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## Introduction:

The basic rules of political practice and the development of any democratic system of government require a focus on a set of principles and values that are the cornerstone of ensuring justice and equality among all, and promoting the principle of the rule of law and citizenship. These principles are not only limited to individual rights, but also include enshrining the right of society to enjoy spaces of freedom and effective participation in formulating political decisions, which promotes stability and societal development.

Therefore, political parties are considered an integral part of this system, as they play a pivotal role in achieving a balance between different political and social forces through electoral competition and commitment to democratic mechanisms, but the important question here becomes: How can parties maintain their goals and enhance their political visions for the benefit of society as a whole without deviating from the path of justice and equality?

Political action obliges these parties to follow a comprehensive vision that works to achieve the common good by developing positions and policies that are in line with the needs of society and strengthen the legitimacy of the legislative and executive authorities, but the real challenge lies in how these parties can balance between achieving their own interests and preserving the structure of the democratic system in a way that serves everyone without exception.

In this context, fundamental questions arise about the nature of these parties' relationship with the existing political system and their actual contribution to bringing about positive changes within the democratic framework. The parties' approach must be based on a practical and transparent vision that enables them to achieve their political goals while maintaining the continuity of institutional work and supporting public stability. Therefore, the political action strategies of these parties must be characterized by clear directions and flexibility to deal with the changing dynamics of society, and this requires developing highly credible programs that dedicate efforts to achieve national progress around which everyone rallies as a common goal without discrimination or exclusion.

Can political parties with a religious background play a role in achieving and ensuring civil peace, or does their nature complicate matters more than it solves them? A fundamental question relates to the ability of these parties, through their involvement in democratic mechanisms such as legislative elections and other popular processes, to offer real solutions to conflicts related to civil peace. Does this involvement constitute a solid base on which to build efforts to achieve lasting societal stability, or do these parties, relying on religious legitimacy concepts, have difficulty reconciling their theological authority with the democratic mechanisms that are based on?

In other words, a profound debate arises here: To what extent can a religious authority that derives its legitimacy from a divine source be reconciled with popular systems of government based on majority opinion? Can a logical and sustainable balance be achieved between these two inherently contradictory frameworks?

### **Problem of study:**

In their proposals, religious political parties combine the general and comprehensive on the one hand, and the specific and circumstantial on the other. In their general aspects, they seek to form a state based on Islamic legal foundations characterized by a common orientation that deals with issues with a wide flexibility that facilitates their acceptance within social and political contexts, while in their circumstantial positions, they show flexibility and tactics that reflect the nature of the stage and the reality.

When these parties announce their agreement to disengage from the “general” and “circumstantial” propositions, the question arises as to the extent of their ability to actually implement this, especially since such a separation may be considered a major challenge to their intellectual and political structure. Does this announcement stem from a careful strategy aimed at restructuring their approach, or does it reflect an internal disintegration due to real-life pressures? Can the general and the circumstantial be reconciled in a harmonious political formulation without sacrificing the essence of one at the expense of the other?

A central question is raised about the role of parties in this issue. Do they work to escalate tensions and pour more oil on the fire of conflicts to fuel them, thus strengthening divisions? Or, on the contrary, do they seek to calm these differences and address them in peaceful ways, and perhaps even contribute to establishing a fertile ground for understanding and encouraging constructive dialogue between the different parties?

## The relevance of the study:

There is a significant influence on the behavior of religious parties that can be observed as a result of the intertwining of the national and international dimensions, especially during and after the elections, and this influence seems to become more pronounced and more intense in the immediate post-election period, and with regard to the political context of parties with a religious ideological character, the shifts that accompany these political periods between the polls and the aftermath show the importance of studying this equation in depth.

Understanding this behavior is a fundamental basis for analyzing political trajectories, and researchers and analysts should not lose sight of the fact that adopting calls for tolerance may be an effective tool that contributes to enabling such parties to reach power, and with this access, the greater burden becomes on them in how to manage existing crises and work to solve them effectively.

## Objectives of the study:

The plan of this research aims to study the issue in depth, including analyzing all relevant aspects such as challenges and possible solutions. The focus in this study is to provide a comprehensive vision that supports the understanding of the topic and contributes to achieving accurate scientific results that support the following desired goals:

1. This research focuses on the foundations of the Islamic vision of the relationship between religion and politics within the framework of theoretical Islam, based on the religious texts and intellectual interpretations that crystallized this connection. It also reviews the impact of blending political practices with legal rules in the development of Islamic political systems and the extent to which this linkage affected the concepts of justice, governance, and legitimacy throughout history.
2. Monitoring and analyzing the activities of religious parties in Arab societies requires a careful study of the ideology they espouse and the methods they adopt to achieve their goals at the political and social levels. These practices vary from attempts to influence legislation, to exploiting religion for political gains, to building popular bases based on religious identity.
3. A number of preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the data presented, which highlight key points and form the basis for a deeper understanding of the issue under consideration.

## First article

### What political parties are

Scholars and jurists differed in defining the concept of political parties as a result of the different perspectives from which they start to understand the nature and objectives of these parties. In the context of different definitions, some consider political parties “as a social and political organization that includes under its banner a group of individuals who share the same political principles and visions, this organization strives to translate its ideas and principles into concrete reality through institutional and collective action.”(1)

The political party aims to expand its popular base by attracting the largest possible number of citizens to join its ranks. The party also sets its sights on the goal of reaching the ruling authority by participating in elections or cooperating with the ruling authorities, and if this cannot be achieved, the party at least seeks to directly or indirectly influence the decisions and laws issued by the ruling authorities, ensuring the promotion of its political vision and the achievement of its strategic goals, and in this concept the vital role of political parties as a tool to express the aspirations of the people and organize political action to achieve common goals is evident.(2)

Political parties are also defined as “a group of united individuals who seek by various democratic means to reach power with the aim of implementing a specific political program.”(3)

Political parties are also defined in the provisions of the Parties Law as follows: “It is an organized gathering of a group of people who meet based on certain rules and provisions strictly defined in this law, and this group shares specific principles and objectives that it seeks to achieve, so that it works using peaceful democratic political means as a tool to achieve its visions and programs, and these programs are represented in specific issues related to the political, economic and social affairs of the state, with a focus on effective participation in assuming the responsibilities of governance and managing the country's affairs in a transparent and law-abiding manner.”(4)

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(1) The party is defined as “a group of people, groups, or organizations that are in favor of something.” Ibn Manzoor, *Lissan al-Arab*, p. 299.

(2) Dr.. Nabila Abdel Halim, *Political Parties in the Contemporary World*, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1982, p. 82.

(3) Dr.. Suleiman Al-Tamawi, *The Three Powers in Contemporary Arab Constitutions and in Islamic Political Thought*, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 6th edition, 1996, p. 543.

(4) See Article 2 of the Egyptian Political Parties Law No. 40 of 1977.

The Supreme Constitutional Court has defined political parties as “organized groups that work using democratic means with the aim of gaining the trust of voters, in order to participate in assuming the responsibilities of governance and implementing their programs that aim to contribute to the political, social and economic progress of the country.”(5)

We can conclude that political parties, regardless of their different definitions or forms, basically seek in all political systems to reach power, as this goal is considered a fundamental part of the nature of the existence of any political party and a basic principle on which its establishment and continuity are based, and to achieve this goal, parties work to gain the support of citizens and expand their mass base, through multiple means that vary between the organized programs they create and the events and activities they implement for the purpose of awareness and influence.

Moreover, political parties do not stop at recruiting citizens or strengthening their ranks with members, but also extend to their political upbringing, a vital aspect that can be achieved through specific curricula aimed at increasing members' awareness of their political and societal role, promoting a culture of active participation, and enabling them to have a deeper understanding of the political scene.

In addition to these internal efforts, parties attach great importance to influencing the decisions made by the state's political system. By doing so, the party seeks to ensure that these decisions are in line with its strategic goals and vision for the future of the society it serves, thus becoming an effective force that does not only engage in the existing political system but seeks to shape it to serve its aspirations and political agenda.(6)

In order to clearly understand the nature of the role of political parties within the political system, it is necessary to delve into aspects related to the emergence of these parties, both globally and locally.

At the global level, political parties emerged with the development of electoral experiences in many countries of the world, and with the establishment of parliaments, parliamentary blocs were formed, which became the basic nucleus for the emergence of a large number of political parties, and there was remarkable cooperation between these blocs, especially those that are close in terms of ideas and views, and over time, the need for joint action took root, and this realization increased with the growing influence of parliaments in political systems, to the extent that the activity of parliamentary blocs began to go beyond the walls of parliaments in order to influence public opinion, which later led to the establishment of permanent organizational parties seeking to attract members and the passage of time.(7)

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(5) See the court's decision of 5/5/1988.

(6) Dr.. Hussein Jamil, The Emergence of Political Parties, Arabic Encyclopedic House, 1984, pp. 22, 23.

(7) Dr.. Osama al-Ghazali Harb, Political Parties in the Third World, World of Knowledge, 1987, p. 76.

At the national level,(8) political parties emerged as a result of the movements of groups that sought to organize themselves in the face of colonialism and work for liberation from foreign occupation, and this trend generally reflects the political, social, economic and cultural interactions that prevail within society.(9)

Based on this, it is clear that political parties emerged in their first stage as an expression of the needs and requirements of political life, but they did not develop to play an influential role in contributing to development and political participation until after they established their organizations, structures, programs, programs, activities and goals on the foundations of democracy, and this came within a legal and constitutional framework that gives them legitimacy and highlights their importance in the development of the political system.

Political parties have sometimes become the bridge between authority and society, enabling them to play a pivotal role in absorbing citizens' discontent, fears and hopes, translating them into actionable political, economic and social demands, and transforming their aspirations and ideas into practical action programs that express their ambitions.

## Second article

### Religious Parties and Political Parties

#### First: Fiqh al-Quta'a and jihad against infidel regimes:

The intrinsic link between religion and politics makes it forbidden for humans to create fictitious systems or laws, because if they do so, the authority and reference point will go to the Leviathan, and this is what the verse refers to: Don't you look at those who claim to believe in what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed before you, and then seek to refer to the Leviathan, and Islam by its very nature can only find full application through the Islamic system of government, as the invitation in the verse emphasizes: Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and follow no other.(10)

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(10) Dr.. Tharwat Badawi, The Origins of Political Thought and Major Political Theories and Doctrines, Arab Renaissance House, 1976, p. 109.

Any system of government that does not derive its legitimacy and foundation from Islam is considered invalid and unacceptable according to Islamic law, and Muslims are prohibited from accepting it or relying on it, as it has been mentioned that whoever separates from the Islamic community, even by an inch, is as if he has ripped his neck from the bond of Islam, thus establishing his departure from the religion and its principles. It is also reported that whoever removes his hand from legitimate obedience will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection in a state of weakness, without arguments or excuses, and whoever dies without a covenant or pledge of allegiance to a Muslim imam dies as if he was in the way of the first jahiliyya, that is, in a state of religious loss and lack of legitimate fundamentals in his life.(11)

Therefore, a ruling that is not based on clear and explicit sharia evidence cannot be categorized as a ruling of Islam or Islamic jurisprudence in any way. The Salafi art of this jurisprudence is based on a strict approach that reflects an intellectual and spiritual break with regimes and governments that are perceived as “infidels,” adopting a sharp vision centered on takfir and prohibition, which excludes any space for discussion or constructive dialogue and pushes trends that reject the plurality of opinions and ijtihad, believing that Islam prohibits any form of disagreement or intellectual divergence. In this view, there is no place for intellectual freedom for those with different perspectives, and if someone tries to think freely outside this strict framework, he is considered a dissenter and therefore equivalent to declaring a jihad against him in the name of adhering to the principles of religion, which is equivalent to declaring a jihad against him.(12)

These parties represent a force that combines religion and politics, taking the liberation of Palestine, Iraq, and Lebanon as their main goal, while at the same time seeking to establish a state based on Islamic law or the so-called rule of God as seen in Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, and Egypt. On both levels, whether seeking liberation or statehood, these parties have relied on the jurisprudence of qiyada and jihad as a basic approach.(13)

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(11) Ahmed Al-Qassas, *The Foundations of the Renaissance*, published by the Cultural Awareness Association, Dar Al-Umma, 1st edition, 1995, p. 171.

(12) Dr.. Ahmed Adel, *Political Parties and Electoral Systems*, Egyptian General Book Organization, 1992, p. 46.

(13) Dr.. Noman Al-Khatib, *Political Parties and their Role in Contemporary Governance Systems*, Dar Al-Thultaqafa for Publishing and Distribution, 1983, p. 206.

## **Second: The Jurisprudence of Participation and Engagement in the Mechanisms of Western Democracy:**

The same period witnessed a noticeable rise in interest in the jurisprudence of peaceful change and the promotion of democratic participation, with fatwas clearly supporting and defending democracy.(14)

In the Islamic context, Shura occupies a high position as the deepest and most complete model of participation, as it is not just a decision-making mechanism, but reflects the essence of interaction and cooperation between individuals to serve the common good. From this perspective, democracy can be considered an initial facet or an entry point that paves the way for the more comprehensive and integrated nature of participation that is embodied in Shura.(15)

Engaging in political life and accepting participation in it based on recognizing the legitimacy of political pluralism and acknowledging the existence of parties with different visions is a pivotal step towards understanding the road to power, a concept that has come to be known today as the jurisprudence of participation.

The jurisprudence of participation distinguishes between the concept of the state and the concept of authority. The state, from a legal point of view, is considered religious, while authority is civil in nature, whether in governance or administration, and derives its legitimacy from the will of the people. Participation is practiced as a means to reach power, where the deeper and more comprehensive goal is to achieve the establishment of a religious state.(16)

This idea is based on the well-established jurisprudential rule that people know best about the affairs of their world and what their reality requires. In this context, democracy expresses the embodiment of the will and understanding of the people, as it is a means and method of organizing political and social life in a consensual manner, allowing interaction with challenges according to the requirements of the times. From an Islamic perspective, the rule remains with God in its absolute legislative sense, while the management and administration of political affairs is a human affair that belongs to the people, who are directly responsible.

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(14) Fahmi Huwaidi, *Islamic Discourse in a Renewed World*, published by the Abdul Hamid Shoman Cultural Forum, 1998, p. 122.

(15) Dr.. Ragheed Al-Salah, *Political Party Laws: International and Arab Experiences*, Center for Studies and Research in Social Sciences, 2006, p. 198.

(16) Dr.. Sara Dabbaghi, *Political Education and Instilling a Culture of Good Governance*, Madarat Al-Siyasiyya Magazine, Issue 7, 2018, p. 66.

Al-Ansari believes that fundamentalist movements, despite their success in undermining the credibility of a large number of regimes in Arab and Islamic countries, have not been able to provide an inspiring or attractive model that can be emulated, whether in their party organizational practices or in their official authoritarian performance during their assumption of power, and he wonders why the “revolutionary” or “militant” The events in Sudan proved that the differences between these experiences remain limited, as the Islamists there sought to monopolize society, which led to the establishment of an authoritarian regime.(17)

There is a historical rule that expresses a recurring fact in the course of societies and civilizations, namely that power by its very nature tends to absorb or even swallow the ideology that was the main driver of its emergence. At the moment of transition from the stage of advocacy to the stage of empowerment, a profound structural shift in priorities and goals occurs. The stage of advocacy is inherently associated with revolutionary movements that seek to destabilize the existing regime and bring about a radical change in the structure of the state, and is often characterized by strict adherence to ideology, fueled by the values of jihad, sacrifice and absolute belief in the cause.(18)

In this stage, the emerging state begins to consolidate its authority and rearrange its priorities to serve its political and social stability. This period requires the ruling authority to deal with the “different other” and try to integrate it into the new political system, an approach that may require flexibility in applying ideology and a broader partnership with different currents to ensure continuity and legitimacy, in which case power becomes the main driver, and ideology is reformulated to suit the requirements of governance and managing complex state affairs.(19)

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(17) Muhammad Jaber al-Ansari, *Arabs and Politics: Where is the flaw?*, Dar al-Saqi, T2, Beirut, 2002, pp. 43, 44.

(18) Dr.. Ali al-Din Hilal Desouki, *Modern Trends in Political Science*, Supreme Council of Universities, 1999, p. 370.

(19) Muhammad Salim al-Ewa, from the publication *Islam and Democracy*, Abdul Hamid Shoman Cultural Forum, Jordan, 1998, p. 78.

## Third article

### **The repercussions of religious parties on peace in Arab societies**

The selection of the countries considered in this study is based on a specific criterion: the existence of political parties within these countries that are based on religious backgrounds or have a religious orientation. It is noteworthy that these parties, at certain stages of their political career, were allowed to work and activate from outside the circles of official authority and governing institutions, after which they had the political context and the opportunity to move to practice political action from the heart of these institutions and within decision-making centers.

The importance of this choice stems from the main objective of the study, which is to monitor and track the extent to which these parties are able to modify their positions or change their behaviors on specific issues that are closely related to the threat to civil peace and stability, by comparing their policies and practices during the two phases of their existence outside and inside power.

To achieve this analytical goal, the study focuses on a number of countries that have witnessed the emergence of religious parties with great influence in political life, as the study takes the central political models of these parties as a field of analysis and monitoring: Lebanon, due to its sectarian and political complexity; Palestine, given the role of religious movements in resisting the occupation and shaping the political scene; Egypt, as a model for political Islamist movements that went through different stages of rule and opposition; and finally Iraq, where religious parties play a pivotal role in shaping the political map after the major events that the country witnessed.

#### **Lebanon:**

Since its establishment in the 1980s, Hezbollah has focused its activities outside the framework of government institutions, devoting its efforts mainly to fighting Israel and liberating the occupied territories. However, 2005 marked a turning point in its political career when its representatives managed to enter the Lebanese parliament following the parliamentary elections, making it an active player within the formal political system. It is worth noting that this achievement was preceded by other successes in 2004, when the party's candidates succeeded in filling a large number of seats in municipal councils in various regions and villages of Lebanon.

Hezbollah emerged as a political and military force, which enabled it to gain support, especially among Islamic circles, with a special focus on the Shiite community. This support came as a result of its call for the establishment of an Islamic republic in Lebanon, in addition to its commitment to the project of “national Islamic jihad”(20) to liberate the Lebanese territories occupied by Israel. In addition, the party established strategic alliances at the regional level with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria, which strengthened its political positions within the Lebanese map.

During the last decade of the twentieth century, the resistance against the Israeli occupation turned into a practice characterized as “jihadism” with an Islamic jurisprudential reference, to which Hezbollah groups are exclusively committed. This practice differed from other Lebanese parties that fought the military struggle based on national concepts not necessarily related to Islam. This exclusive focus on the concept of jihad was reflected in the party's image and goals, creating an impression among many political analysts in Lebanon and abroad that its activities primarily serve the Shia community without regard for other sects and sects in the country (21).

## **Syria:**

This principle is based on Hezbollah's vision of the Lebanese-Syrian relationship, which he expressed by saying that Lebanon should not engage in confrontation or hostility with Syria, but rather refuses to consider it an enemy. In the context of explaining the relationship between the resistance and the Syrian arena, Nasrallah pointed out that the decisions for the resistance's operations in Lebanon from 1982 until today, and in the future, do not come from Damascus or Tehran, despite pride in close relations with them. Instead, he emphasized that these decisions are made in Beirut, in the south, in every free and honorable Lebanese home that rejects aggression. (22)

He also explained that Hezbollah's relationship with Syria is not just a circumstantial alliance, but a commitment that stems from a national vision that considers Lebanon's interest first and foremost. He added that since 1982, the relationship with Syria has been a clear friendship that Hezbollah is not ashamed of, but believes in and seeks to strengthen, and called on all Lebanese to build strong ties with Syria as this serves Lebanon's national interest(23).

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(20) “Jihad” is an Islamic jurisprudential term that means the need to fight anyone who wants to harm Islam, and jihad is on several levels and types, such as verbal jihad, financial jihad, psychological jihad, etc.

(21) It is worth noting here that the Lebanese Communist Party, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, and the Amal Movement were active participants in the military resistance to the Israeli occupation of the land.

(22) Text of Mr. Nasrallah's speech at the funeral ceremony for the martyrs of the Ghajar confrontation at the Sayyid al-Shuhada Complex, Ruwais, published by Hezbollah's Media Relations Office, 2005.

(23) Ibid.

## Palestine:

Hamas emerged from the womb of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in Egypt in 1928 as one of the oldest organized Islamic movements. Over time, the Muslim Brotherhood focused its efforts in Palestine on social and charitable activities, as it sought to support Palestinian society in light of the challenges imposed by the Israeli occupation. However, with the escalating role of other factions such as Islamic Jihad and the PLO in leading the front lines of resistance against Israel, signs of a clear decline in the role of the Muslim Brotherhood on the political and field levels began to appear, which put them in a position of isolation from the public scene and decision-making.(24)

In light of these major transformations, the Muslim Brotherhood found itself faced with the need to reformulate its presence more directly and effectively in the Palestinian arena, hence the birth of the Islamic Resistance Movement, also known as Hamas, in December 1987. The movement was established in response to these challenges with the aim of participating actively and directly in leading the resistance against the occupation, taking advantage of its Islamic background to present a vision that combines field work and religious work.(25)

In its founding document, Hamas stated that the liberation of the occupied territories can only be achieved through armed struggle based on the concept of Islamic jihad. Based on this approach, Hamas did not recognize the PLO as the main reference point for the resistance or a true representative of the interests of the Palestinian people. It also categorically rejected any form of negotiation with Israel or participation in international initiatives and conferences that seek to reach a peaceful solution to the issue of the occupied territories, and it is notable that Hamas did not present a clear or detailed internal political program, instead, its media campaigns focused mostly on highlighting the issue of the occupied territories.(26)

Hamas took advantage of the PLO's position during the 1990 Gulf crisis to its advantage, as it took a different position from the PLO by supporting Saudi Arabia against the Iraqi regime at the time. This position resulted in Hamas receiving financial support from Saudi Arabia, in addition to assistance from Iran, which contributed by providing some military training to a number of its fighters.(27)

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(24) sulayman altamawi, *alsultat altanfidhiat aleadidat althalathatu, alqayid altanfidhi, bint albahithat alhadithat walsiyasiat alaiqtisadiat walaijtimaia (dirasat muqaranati)*, lubnan, dar alfikr alarabii, ta5, 1996, sa62.

(25) Ramzi Al-Shaer, *Ideology and its Impact on Contemporary Political Systems*, Cairo, Dar Al-Nahda, 1979, p. 104.

(26) Souad El-Sharkawy, *Political Systems in the Contemporary World*, Cairo, Arab Renaissance House, 2nd edition, 1982, p.

(27) Ali al-Din Hilal Desouki, *op. cit.* p. 184.

Hamas witnessed a significant escalation in its military activities against Israelis after the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the Oslo Accord in 1993. This agreement was a turning point that pushed Hamas to deepen its presence in the Palestinian arena, as the movement began to attract a wide public base under slogans that combined the Islamic identity with the national banner it raised, and as a result Hamas entered into political competition with the PLO in an increasingly serious manner, as it sought to consolidate its position as an alternative and influential political force at the popular level.(28)

## **Egypt:**

The Muslim Brotherhood is known for its call to return to the provisions of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah as the basis for governance in Islamic countries, and the group adopts a slogan that expresses its principles: God is our goal, the Prophet is our example, the Quran is our constitution, jihad is our way, and death in the way of God is our highest wish.(29)

The Muslim Brotherhood repeated its attempts to integrate into the political arena by allying with a range of different parties during parliamentary elections, such as the Wafd and Labor parties, and was able to achieve great success in the Egyptian People's Assembly elections held in December 2005, winning 88 seats within the parliament. (30)

The concept of the state has remained one of the main pillars of the political and intellectual struggle between the Muslim Brotherhood and other parties and organizations in Egypt. From this perspective, it is possible to address the axes and issues related to the role of the Muslim Brotherhood and its influence on the conflicts of societal peace, whether those that preceded their participation in governing institutions or those that followed their actual entry into power. This is clearly evident in how they deal with the process of building the state and achieving so-called reform, something that has sparked wide debate about the feasibility of their vision and its suitability for various development and political paths.

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(28) Al-Majali Rakan, Determinants of political development and its obstacles in the Arab world, Al-Riyadh newspaper, Issue 13587, [Http: www.pau.alriyadh.com](http://www.pau.alriyadh.com).

(29) Huda Mitkis, Contemporary Trends in the Study of Political Systems in Third World Countries, Cairo, Cairo University, Faculty of Economics and Political Science, 1st edition, 1999, p. 135.

(30) Mahmoud Mohammed Rabie, Ismail Sabri Mokled, Encyclopedia of Political Science, Kuwait, Kuwait University, Faculty of Commerce, Economics and Political Science, Vol. 1, 1994, pp. 272, 273.

## Iraq:

Religious political parties, especially those with a Shiite character, play a pivotal and influential role in shaping the features of political action in Iraq during the current stage. Among these parties and organizations, a number of prominent forces stand out, most notably the Imam al-Sistani Marja'iyya, which represents an important religious and political weight, and the Sadrist movement led by the controversial cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, in addition to the Dawa Party, one of the oldest Shiite political organizations in Iraq, whose most prominent leaders include the well-known Ibrahim al-Jaafari.(31)

On the other hand, the political map of the Sunni opposition is very different; it is rare to find political actors with a purely religious background among them. Most of the Sunni opponents are former army officers who lost their positions after the major changes in the country, or figures who previously cooperated with the Baathist regime before parting ways with it for various reasons. In addition to these, some influential Sunni tribal leaders in Anbar and Mosul provinces can be mentioned, as well as remnants of traditional Sunni Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islam.(32)

As for the topics and issues related to the effectiveness of these parties and organizations in influencing civil peace conflicts, they can be summarized and focused on the issue of the attitude towards the occupation authority. This particular aspect has become a key driver that reflects political and national identity, not only at the local level, but its influence has extended to form an important axis in regional and international discussions. Hence, the way parties and organizations deal with this issue is an indicator of their ability to promote internal stability or reformulate their relations with various influential forces.(33)

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(31) John Luca, *Moving Toward Democracy in the Arab World*, translated by Ghassan Salameh, *Democracy without Democrats: The Politics of Openness in the Arab-Islamic World*, Beirut, Center for Arab Unity Studies, T1, 1995, pp. 36, 37.

(32) Ali Khalifa al-Kuwari, *The Arab Gulf and Democracy: Towards a Future Vision for Enhancing Democratic Endeavors*, Beirut, Center for Arab Unity Studies, 2002, p. 36.

(33) Huda Mitkis, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

## **Conclusion:**

At the end of this brief study on the role of religious parties in advancing democratic transitions, it can be concluded that these parties played a prominent and influential role in this context, and their political and social activities were not limited to electoral competition, but went beyond it to become more effective and active compared to many other religious parties in the same environments.

These parties were characterized by the establishment of well-established party entities with a clear organizational structure and internal system that governs their course and directs their activities. They also demonstrated a remarkable ability to play pivotal roles in elections, not only through active participation, but also through their exceptional ability to mobilize public opinion and organize the masses to adopt their visions and programs. These parties entered politics with programs known for their relative stability and clarity of their long-term goals, which increased their credibility in the political arena.

In addition, these parties have demonstrated great intellectual and political flexibility in dealing with contemporary issues, especially through their acceptance of the principles of citizenship as a basis for dealing with members of society regardless of other affiliations, and their adoption of the principle of comprehensive equality between citizens in terms of rights and duties. These parties also witnessed a remarkable transformation, gradually abandoning their character as global movements to become local political actors that focused their activities within their countries, which shows their adoption of a practical and pragmatic approach that is consistent with the challenges of the times and the necessities of political and social realities.



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