

The Muslim Brotherhood Movement in Jordan and the Clash on Priorities between Internal and External Issues: An Analytical Comparison

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Abstract

This study aimed to understand and examine the political priorities transformation of Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan from the external issues that are centered on the Palestinian issue as a primary goal to the Jordanian internal affair as a new priority for this movement considering it's a Jordanian party that doesn't have the intention of neglecting the Palestinian issue. The study found an existence of a new path within the movement which realized that the idea of struggling and fighting for the sake of Palestine is useless and made the movement lose its gloss or luster in light of a political situation that doesn't point toward any breakthrough in this direction which push toward the aphorism "work with what is possible at the internal level politically and socially" and has seriously contributed to the restoration of group's reform spirit among its members and at the view of Jordanian people. The reasons for this shift are partly attributed to the renewed trends inside the group itself and at the same time attributed to the group's political awareness about the importance of adaptation with the general policy framework of the Jordanian state.

Keywords: Internal and external issues, Muslim Brotherhood, Political function, social function

Introduction

The Muslim Brotherhood movement has occupied most of the political arena in the Jordanian state since its creation and still represent today the largest Jordanian political organized party from right to left and it also represent the largest existing party on the political, social, and union levels and it remains the most influential in the political field of Jordanian society in spite of all the things that that have been revealed about the political attitudes of the movements.

It should be pointed out that Muslim Brotherhood movement of Jordan during the last ten years has gone through great difficulties and hardships in its relationship with the state and has also witnessed an internal conflicts and splits that created a major fundamental rift and the rising of deep and open clashes between what is called "the Falcons party and the Pigeons party". The readers of Muslim Brotherhood history in Jordan find themselves in front of a genuine political movement which has accompanied all the incidents and circumstances that happened on the Jordanian and Arab arena but lately a lot of questions have arose about the relationship of this movement with the political regime in Jordan and also with the opposition movements throughout the country. Its undeniable that the continuous cautious nature has been one of the thing that characterize the relationship between the state and the Muslim Brotherhood movement, especially after the huge expansion of the movement at the public level in the late eighties and beginning of the nineties where this change in the relationship may be attributed to the basic role which the state has desired to create in the change process and seek to cope with the innovation that occurred to the world on the political, cultural, and economical fields which hasn't pleased the movement and contradicted with its basic project.

1. Study objectives

This study attempts to investigate the reasons behind the existence of a new strategy for Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan at the level of political work and the change from considering the Palestinians as a core issue and a start of their movement struggle work toward the adoption of a new policy where its core position will be to have concern about the Jordanian interior political, social, and economical issues in light of the existing national and international variables while the international initiatives seems serious in their intention to liquidate the Palestinian issue and settle the dispute at the regional level in general, and the impact of that on threatening the Jordanian identity and its existence.

2. Study Structural Terms & Framework

Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan consider the first Islamic organization that started under the name "Society of Muslim Brotherhood" and was approved by the Jordanian government to operate as an Islamic movement where the group started under some basic principles like the formation of a new generation that understand their religion and the call for an Islamic order as the foundation for the rebirth of Arab countries. The movement in carrying out its programs and agendas relied on the lectures, seminars, religious celebrations, and Islamic schools to take care of the social issues and problems (Al-Obeidi, 1991).

Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan announced its support of the Jordanian regime for peaceful reform and according to this principle the Islamic work front party was formed in 1992 in order to facilitate this task and support the relationship with the Jordanian public through the charitable activities. Their position showed clearly by supporting and standing behind the Iraqis and Iraqi government in the war against Iran and also showed through their continuous support of the Palestinian resistance. As a result, the movement was characterized by a wide popularity in a way that enabled it to dominate a lot of political positions (Sarah, 1994).

In a modern review we find that after King Abdullah II became a king of Jordan leaders of Hamas Palestinian movement were expelled from Jordan in an attempt to separate them from the Muslim Brotherhood of Jordan where tension started under claim of plots by Hamas in Jordan and after Muslim Brotherhood of Jordan defended Hamas, four of them were arrested for incitement and intrigue. In addition, the treasure house of the movement was pertained to court of justice in away to indicate that the government is no longer consider the Islamic movement as a symbol of moderation and they were no longer a safety valve in facing extremism especially after calling each other infidels (Hatter, 2001).

The experience of Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan was characterized by their political and social practices, their peaceful co-existence within the political regime, their efficiency and compliance with the situations, their preserve speech and principles, and their non-violent behaviors. Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan considered as an extension of the mother Islamic movement in Egypt where the party wasn't initially consider as an opposition type of organization and despite its transformation to the opposition side it still not rooted in the opposing political work and didn't participate in the parliament elections of 1997 but the movement did participate and took part in the different elections after that.

The Brotherhood movement has always combined and aligned between its legitimacy and religious beliefs from one side and the Jordanian political system and situations from the other side and has always been characterized by its relationship with the head of Jordanian political regime and its reaction to the successive Jordanian government, and the different institutions of Jordanian society in order to achieve its two basic goals of stability and continuity in Jordan (Al-Hourani, 1997).

The thing related to regaining the strategy of the movement is the change of its political concerns and priorities in order to remain like it has been before as the most influence and popular party in Jordan maybe attributed to getting bored with the issues of Arab nation and not to abandon them but as a result of the different pressures especially the economic ones which force societies to reconsider their concerns about the external level. These as we believe what the movement in Jordan has been careful about or some of its leaders in order to newly get the opportunity of leading the public street.

History of the movement acknowledged that it hasn't practice armed struggle or violence against the state or political rivals but they refuses settlement and normalization processes with the Zionist regime. At the present time there is no clear existence of movement in the government or its important positions which may be a result of canceling the distinguished features and privileges given to the movement. This situation started after considering the Brotherhood movement as being the greatest opposition in Jordan taking into accounts the external pressures on the regime in order to force the movement to abandon its political work or restrict them. The history of Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan is an experience that has briefly described the party life in Jordan.

Split Crisis in the Movement:

There has been a long history of Muslim Brotherhood movement crisis in Jordan at the internal level within the movement ranks which dated back to the mid-nineties in the past century with the existence of a concealed tendency that call for making the movement as a pure Jordanian party in its political activities but it's not related to the main principles of the movement where these attempts were adopted by a wing called the golden middle.

The political situation within the discussions was headed by the term national agenda and raised warm debates within the ranks of the movement where it appeared to be some accusations to the leaders that they gave priority to the Palestinian question at the expense of national affairs. This dispute was the title of internal disagreement toward the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan for a long period, seemingly as a result of failure by the first rank members of the movement to represent political programs that can be accepted by the Jordanian people far away from big slogans and this led to a deep debate inside the movement about a national program that can take over the Jordanian internal level and ignore the national issues (Al-Jazeera News).

It seems that year 2007 and the things that happened after that year was a decisive history in the political course of Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan where differences between the Pigeons and the Falcons escalated and led to a political event that end up with the dissolution of Shura Council and the election of a new Muslim Brotherhood movement head in 2008 who succeed the observer Salem Al-Falahat. This wasn't common because the head of the movement used to be renewed for two successive terms and it may consider as something natural that political party may undergo these changes but the case here shows the appearance of an open conflict between a wing that calls for political openness and give priority to the internal public work and direct relationships with other political components, and the participation in elections in comparison with a traditional wing that focuses on the Palestinian cause or issue.

Some intellectuals may have believed that the movement is about to collapse especially at the movement principle's level which depend on Islamic religion and consider the movement as a party that overlooked its original components; Jordanian or Palestinian Jordanian. However, it believe that the question is related more to the intellectual and political dimensions rather than to the personal and regional ones and has resulted from a defect that has affected the basic constituents of the movement thoughts and believes and it's an intellectual disputes in the vision of political class.

The disputes between the Muslim Brotherhood movement ranks in Jordan haven't been eased over the past few years. A wide range of variances on the personal, intellectual, and ethnical bases have been brought out which led to the split of distinguished leaders who worked for the formation of a new party known as the Jordanian Initiative for Building (Zamzam) where Zamzam implied that Muslim Brotherhood movement are facing a historical curve full of challenges after the events that occurred in Egypt and warned against the danger of taking reckless measures in a transitional period that characterized by risks which requires the highest degree of wisdom and collective intelligence in order to benefit from what is going on in the surrounding countries and make an agreement about the rules of political game before starting with the party competition process. In spite of the fact that founders of Zamzam Araheel Gharaibeh and Nabil Al-Kufahi confirmed that their initiative doesn't mean a split from the mother movement, yet the case of hidden hostility between the two parties has exploded with the summon of Zamzam leaders to an internal trials (Tariq Al-Nuaimat, 2014).

Founders of the Zamzam initiative said that they sought to disintegrate the duality of regime and Muslim Brotherhood movement which dominated the local and regional political view and establish a third party that could achieve the desired political reform in a country that has witnessed an economic crisis. However, this comprehensive formula of the Zamzam initiative remind us of the Muslim Brotherhood movement formula in presenting itself as a party that move within the economic, political, and social fields in addition to preaching but a lot of people aren't convinced this new initiative will be a political project that is capable of stirring the stagnant waters in the political field especially with the existence of a previous experience that related to the split of a group of Muslim Brotherhood leaders and the establishment of Islamic Middle party in the mid-70s but this step didn't meet a great success and this party wasn't able to form an effective number in the political field or to take anything from the popular stock of Muslim Brotherhood. A lot of researchers agree with the leaders of the movement in believing that political environment in Jordan and the popular mood are some of the factors that don't encourage the growth and development of parties in general which makes the route for "Zamzam Initiative" long in persuading the crowd that it's a new organism with a new implication and content (Jarrar, 2018).

A lot of writers discussed the crisis of splits within the movement where some of them pointed out that crisis is basically internal but others believed that crisis came as a result of external interventions or disruptions while the crisis in its essence may be due to a number of reasons which started with the accusation of several members who belong to the Pigeons' wing that the permanent office elections were forged or rigged.

This accusation was in fact new in its form and implication within the movement of Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan which was followed by the accusation of Pigeon party leadership that opposition were obstinate, refused the reform initiatives, and didn't care about the opposing calls but instead they resorted to defame this opposition and depend on the legitimacy of voting instead of compromise. However, the office said that calls for reform happened outside the framework of the movement and seeks to split from it as in "Zamzam Initiative".

In its analysis the study believes that the reason behind the disagreement related to the programs and work of the movement was when the Pigeon party accused the leaders of the movement about their refusal to work for a national agenda and give the Palestinian question the greatest concern in their program instead of giving their concern to the national and Jordanian issues. It also accused it of working with Hamas movement to dominate the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan but some of the office supporters replied by accusing the Pigeon party that it abandon the support of nation's central question, whereas the truth that these reasons came as symptoms of the crisis and there were deeply rooted reasons.

Political Documents (Paper of 2019):

A deep review of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan clearly indicates that movement after a long period of open and secret political work had possess a great political experience that enable its leadership to read the internal and regional political and social scene which gives it the ability to comply in a way that led it to correct its course and continue as a political factor in the Jordanian scene. The state of pressure, alternation, and conformity between the movement and Jordanian political regime is a proof of long term co-existence of the movement as a political organization in the Jordanian state where the movement know how to exploit this as a supporter for the continuity of its political, social, and economical existence.

In spite of the tension with the political regime the movement continued its existence as the effective regional powers through its long historical background which formed a great impact on the nature of relationship between the regime and Muslim Brotherhood. However, some countries like USA considered the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist movement which put the Jordanian regime in a real critical situation but the tension in the relationship between Jordan and its traditional allies served this relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jordanian regime when the king of Jordan announced that Muslim Brotherhood of Jordan is different and their work is peaceful and legal.

The movement in a considerate situation expressed the fact that Jordan is undergoing a real political crisis and that there is a fierce assault against the movement which requires that all should work and support the leadership especially for its stand with Jerusalem in order to face the projects of "Century Bargain". It seems that the movement seized the golden opportunity by getting the sympathy of the regime and accordingly issued the deep paper or document to show the regime its genuine stand where this document came as a comprehensive and tangible political, economic, and social work program to assess the movement and its work, and also included the major concerns and priorities of the movement's work.

The Islamic movement in a press conference presented a political paper or document that expressed its future political vision where the paper include a lot of basic important principles, such as the belief in the Jordan constitution, the authorization of principles related to freedom, the multiplicity and the state of citizenship, and political participation for the sake of a comprehensive reform. The paper showed its clear stand in regard to extremism and terrorism, and its emphasis on the national security in a state that is governed by law and showed its positive stand in regard to the issues of women, youth, and education. In addition, the paper put emphases on the Palestinian question, issue, and the right of the Palestinian people to resist occupation.

The paper contained four basic levels and started with the national level followed by the Palestinian question and then the Arab and Islamic level, and finally the international level (Islamic Movement, 2019). The movement stated that incentive behind the presentation of this paper is the belief that Islamic religion came to achieve the welfare of people and that Islamic movement wants to express its clear stand in regard to the dangers that face the Jordanian state. The movement also clarified its stand in regard to the existence of Islamic sects and extremist groups in order to unveil the uncertainty about its existence, its work, its relationships, and its stands on the country level, and on the level of its members with a constant emphasis that Jordan national identity, Jordanian people, and its welfares considered central constituents of the movement and it work in a legal framework that govern by the Jordanian constitution with its reference as the Islamic religion (Islamic Movement, 2019). For the first time the movement has presented its vision of political reform according to a clear work program with the existence of direct indications for the economic solutions of national problems and issues of education, youth, and women. The movement also presented its stand in regard to the activation of political life and party work, and its vision of external relationships with its emphasis that the desired reform can't be achieved without encountering corruption, prevalence of laws, institutions independence, popular support that surround the leadership and the support of Jordanian identity existence.

3. Analytical Approach & Study Results

Nowadays no researcher in the political field or any person interested in the political Islam at the Arab world can present an approximation that considers the experience of Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan as similar case to the political Islamic movements of the Arab world. The fact that can be recognized is that this movement even with its sharing of some issues and principles with the remaining movements in the geopolitical surrounding area, it differ in the nature of its political structures and the ingredients of its human components derived from the uterus of society that operate in and basically formulated from a population nature that characterized by tribal structures with a deep culture that has been the exact formation of the movement structure especially at the Shura Council level.

Perhaps the political paper of Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan came after a lot of debate and analysis, and the existence of new events in the internal and external environments and situations of the Jordanian society which in fact required the movement to frankly clarify its stand on the most prominent issues that face the different levels of society in general and at the same time it consider an attempt to gather the internal ranks of the movement through a new casting group which emphasize the fact that Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan is a national party that deeply rooted in the Arab culture which adopts an Islamic identity but in the same time it adopts a medium approach where through it the movement aims to serve Jordan and its issues.

The paper or document is an expression and a recognition that Muslim Brotherhood movement of Jordan has been suffering from a state of political confusion and as a result it needs a logical approach for its political work which is accepted by the public street in regard to the approach of the movement with the state, with its institutions, and with its partners in the political work.

The emphasis on the national identity means that the movement denies its relationship with the eternal side which accused the movement of terrorism by the Arab and global world. It is also connected to the confirmation of the movement that the fields of its work in Jordan and although the Palestinian issue consider high priorities of the movement. The movement emphasizes the fact that it's an Islamic party but at the same time it have an Arabic and Jordanian references and dimensions which indicate that movement is initially governed by the Jordanian issues and its members are Jordanian.

Political innovation is a reality that was seen and recognized by the Islamic movement and the idea this movement wants to clarify is the distinction between the call for Islam through preaching and the political work where the Islamic movement in Jordan represents the most effective political components. This isn't only the belief of Jordanian regime but it's also the belief of all opposing powers in Jordan which considers a powerful agent in encountering the political, social, and economical issues. We should also refer to the fact that Islamic movement has an effective economical depth and activities, and it's also one of the effective general powers in the social affair due to its mixture of the tribal and political combination structures.

In summary, the Muslim Brotherhood paper or document considers a strong indication from the movement that the dialogue with the regime in Jordan and with the other groups, parties, and movements is still widely open and even if a lot of observers think this is a type of weaknesses that Islamic movement has befallen into, there were some other observers who expressed the vitality of the movement and its capabilities to renew itself and accordingly adopt with the events of the internal and external social and political facts in addition to the fact that it's a healthy case that most of the political parties in the modern world have gone through its phases.

The study believes that the movement tried to pay gratitude to the regime and support it as being a real heart that need to continue its existence in light of the difficult Arab circumstances that the movement has experienced and specifically the revolutions, clashes, and changes that happened in Egypt. In conclusion, the paper or document of the Islamic movement considers a civilized and political expression which proves the flexibility of the movement, its ability to understand the situation, and its innovational capabilities.

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