

## **The Study of Divergence Factors in Relationships of Iran Aand Egypt after Arab Uprisings**

Mohammad Taheri, *Ph.D.*

Department of Political Science, Ilam Branch Islamic Azad University Ilam, Iran

Farhad Jamshidian

Department of Political Science, Ilam Branch Islamic Azad University Ilam, Iran

**ABSTRACT**— Iran and Egypt are two important countries in strategic region of the Middle East. These two countries despite having various parameters for convergence (including common religion, locating in a strategic region and the significance of region security for both countries) have diverged in recent years due to reasons. Today the Middle East region has located in a historical turn and most of the countries in this strategic region experience severe security and political problems. Today the Middle East region is conflict arena of two different ideologies with pivotal role of Iran and Egypt countries. A conflict can be considered as a gap in Islam world and the establishment of new partition at least in the Middle East. Therefore, these two countries fight against different approaches to capture influence depth of each other. Iran supports democracy via ballot- box (for example, Iraq country) and bringing people to streets (for example, Bahrain and Yemen countries) and Egypt supports terrorist groups (for example, Iraq and Syria) and Saudi's actions in Yemen and Bahrain developments. In fact, they try to maintain regions that are under their influence or capture the region that is under the influence of opposite side.

**KEYWORDS:** Iran, Egypt, divergence, foreign relations, Arab uprisings, foreign policy

### **Introduction**

What is the most important influential factor on divergence in relationships of Iran and Egypt after Arab uprisings?

Main hypothesis:

Ideological and value look of Iran at region developments and dual approach of Egypt towards these developments have resulted in divergence in relations of Iran and Egypt.

Theoretical framework of research:

Theoretical framework of this research is based on realism theories. Morgenta as one of the main thinkers of classic realism states six principles in this field including:

- 1-The existence of objective rules in policy is stable and originates from human nature.
- 2- Interests are key concept for understanding international policy and define based on power.
- 3- The concept of interests is constant, but the shape and nature of government's power change over time.
- 4- The behavior of governments is not influenced by universal moral principles. However, this behavior might have moral effects.
- 5- There is not a set of acceptable universal moral rules.
- 6- Political arena theoretically separates from other arenas (Ghasemi, 2011, pp 198-199).

It is important to note that from beginning political realism has had three main assumptions in arena of international relations. First, governments are the main unit of action and interaction. Second, governments want to seize power as a goal or as a tool to achieve other goals. Third, governments behave rationally and only pursue their own interests. Therefore, it is rationally comprehensible for others (Hosseinezhad, 2007, p49). Realism believes that international policy is fight for power and since international system is anarchic, so every government should try to gain and increase power for balance of power. Realism wants to gain and increase power. Realism emphasizes objective elements of power and its physical and military dimension. Central age of cold war, arms race of two global superpowers, balance of power between two blocks and borders partitioning based on military power and coercion in Germany, Korea, Vietnam, etc confirm the suggestion of realists and indicate policy game has continued in the framework of realist power (Ibrahimi, 2002, p 152). Tunisia revolution in Iran and Egypt's interpretation before revolution Tunisia differs from after revolution Tunisia. Return to before revolution Tunisia is not possible. Now all colonial governments try to keep former regime, however, president to be another person. Nevertheless, citizen of surrounding cities came to capital and said they stand out until government fire with all of its agents. After escape of president, people divided into two groups. First group stopped the movement and said they cannot continue the way, but second group who are majority want to resist until achieve higher goals. Now there are two problems.

First, the decrease of number and as a result the decrease of people power

Second, the lack of single leader

People imitate Mohammad Albo Azizi in Egypt. A riot began in Egypt that imitates this uprising.

Leaders of countries have found this problem. According to deep impacts of Tunisia on revolutionary changes of Egypt, authorities of this country have always tried to reduce the impacts of this revolution on their country by adopting financial and spiritual aids. On the other hand, one of other concerns of Egyptian authorities was to gain power of Shiite groups in this country. They believe that gain power of Shiite groups in Tunisia can provide the field of their influence on Egypt. On the other hand, Iran believes that recent movement is one hundred percent of people in Tunisia and there is not any similarity between it and typically coups in developing countries. Unlike velvet revolutions of recent years that were designed by US intelligence services in the countries of Middle Asia, so far no foreign body has been behind this movement. In Iran's point of view, 1- revolution of Tunisia overthrew one of the enemies of Islamic revolution and one of the west servants. 2- Concern of region dictators and arrogant leaders indicates that west severely fears from Islamic movement of Tunisia people. 3- Islamic slogans and particularly "Allah Akbar" are the most significant slogan of Tunisia revolutionaries. Yemen revolution in Iran and Egypt's interpretation we should consider several issues at sub- regional level regarding why Egypt entered War. First, over 45 percent of Yemen populations are Zaydi Shiites who are the closest Shiite sect to attitudes of Sunni. The rest of populations are Shafi'i Sunni who are the closest Sunni Sect to attitudes of Shiites. This has resulted in a kind of religious unity between two main sects of Yemen religions so that most Yemen Zaydi and Shafi'i pray in mosques of each other and behind imams of each other. Zaydi Shiites are follower of Zayd Ebn Ali who is son of Imam Hussein. There are significant differences between Zaydi Shiites and Twelve- Imam Shiites (main sect of Shiites in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and Persian Gulf Countries) in terms of belief. Zaydi Shiites believe Imam should be from generation of Hassan and Hussein Imams and has 14 attributes including knowledge, courage, being Fatemi, being Alavi, etc. Unlike Twelve – Imam Shiites, Zaydi Shiites do not accept dissimulation. They believe that fight against cruelty is necessary in every time and under any conditions. Therefore, courage, uprising and knowledge are the most important traits of Imam. In addition, they believe that as Imam appeared with these 14 traits, following him is necessary (site of strategic research center, 2015). On the other hand, with intensification of conflicts and Saudi Arabia declaration of war to Alhvsyh and Yemen army Iran stated that is ready to mediate in this crisis. This issue repeated several time. Yemen government claimed that Iran Meddle in its internal affairs and it's only reason was Iran's insistence on mediation. Entering Saudi Arabia to conflicts, a kind of Arab consensus established against Alhvsyh and Iran's position isolated. In this period even Syria- Iran's strategic allied – supported Saudi Arabia action. Iran could ask for helping from Doha and Damascus to mediate in this crisis and finish conflicts before entering Saudi Arabia to war. This could cause two consequences. First, termination of conflicts before entering Saudi Arabia to war and Second, the lack of establishment of Arab consensus after entering Saudi Arabia (if this mediation rejected on behalf of Yemen government or Saudi Arabia's pressure).

#### **Bahrain revolution in Iran and Egypt's interpretation**

Although Bahrain has not an outstanding situation at region level in terms of geographical area, extent of population and economic components and it is a small country in Persian Gulf, but its particular features and connection with interests and policy of important actors such as US, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Egypt give significant importance to developments and crisis of this country. Features of Bahrain are the presence of 5th sea fleet of US in Bahrain, Security and political relations of two countries, geographical neighborhood of Bahrain with Saudi Arabia and other Arab member countries of Persian Gulf cooperation council (PGCC), political, security and economic relations of Bahrain with Saudi Arabia and interactions of ruling families of these two countries, being Shiite of majority of Bahrain population, geographical neighborhood and Bahrain historical connections with Iran that have made the developments of this country important. These have caused that different actors adopt proportional approaches in face of this crisis according to their interests and goals. Although most of the new regional changes of the Middle East in 2011 are important at regional and international level, but according to this fact that internal actors of Bahrain crisis i.e. government and opposition groups have less power in the field of role- plying than other crises of the Middle East and north of Africa, policies and approaches of external influential actors have more significant role in determining changes trend of this country. In other words, settlement of Bahrain crisis is more dependent on the kind of approaches and actions of actors such as Saudi Arabia, US and Iran than the kind of performance of government and internal groups. Therefore, the approach of external actors in face of Bahrain changes is more influential than other countries. So it is necessary to recognize the approach of regional and international actors in face of crisis.

Victory of Shiites revolution in Iran, come to power of Shiites in Iraq, reinforcement of Shiite resistance groups in Lebanon and alliance of Iran, Syria and Hezbollah practically challenged Arabian conservative front whose leaders were Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Saudi Arabia and Egypt feared that protest changes of Bahrain Shiites to be complementary ring of this chain. We can consider some aspects of ideological and geopolitical completion in regional completions of Iran- Egypt. Allies activation and supporting riot groups are another part of competition between two countries. Iraq is one of the main areas of competition between Iran and Egypt. This kind of competition has extended to other geographical areas such as Syria, Lebanon, Bahrain and Yemen. Power balance is one of the main factors of stability and security. Behavioral pattern of Egypt indicates that it does not want to allow the continuation of Iran regional power development. Therefore, it uses aggressive pattern. Such patterns have media, diplomatic and security nature. Allies activation and supporting riot groups are another part of competition between two countries (Basiri, 2013, pp 17-18).

### **Libya revolution in Iran Egypt's interpretation**

Since 2011, changes have occurred in Arab world that have disrupted regional equations of west and particularly US. Three riot dictators fell down in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya and several other dictators are falling down. West wandering approach for diverting these movements is a notable point. Since revolutionaries slogan in these changes was "Allah Akbar" that was chanting by Iran's people against Pahlavi regime in 1978. They believe that Iran Islamic revolution is proliferating. Another notable point was holding group prayers in streets and squares of city that confirms Islamic aspect of these movements. Chanting anti- imperialism and anti-US slogans and burning the flag of Zionist regime were other sings of wakening of these Muslim people against imperialism. Even in Libya, the name of Alkhazra square changed to Shohada square after fall of Gaddafi. Western countries state that these changes are not anti- Western, but frequent aggregation and protest of revolutionaries in front of US and Israel embassies and some western governments represent anti- Western approach. Egyptian authorities cannot observe the penetration and impact of attitudes of Islamic revolution on Libya changes. They believe that penetration of attitudes of Islamic revolution provides the field for more penetration of Iran in regional changes. Egyptian authorities believe this implies the increase of power and the provision of national interests of Iran and Weakening the regional power of Egypt.

### **Syria revolution in Iran and Egypt's interpretation**

Syria crisis become a focus that Egypt can transform power equations in the direction of formation and establish balance in front of resulting new order from new developments in the Middle East. A role that is played by Egypt in the framework of western-Arabian strategy is to Weaken Syria or remove regional role of Syria. The role of Saudi Arabia is to change regional order and ideological and discourse opposition (Site of Islam Times, 2014).

On the other hand, Wave of revolutions will have a significant impact on Iran regional and strategic position and interests in Arabian countries. The most important of them is to reach these waves to Iran's regional allied i.e. Syria and its president. From the beginning of unrest, Iran's support from Syria was clear. Regarding Iran's support from Syria system, opponents of Iran claim that Iran have behaved unlike it's foreign policy in case of Syria that is fight against tyrants and help the oppressed. In other words, Iran foreign policy in face of Syria problems is unlike Arabian and Bahrain revolutions that support people. Iran supports Bashar Asad regime in Syria. Iran has followed its national and strategic interests in the region instead of paying attention to principles of foreign policy (Nejat & Jaafari Veldani, 2014, p 40). Therefore, Egypt is one of the regional supporters of opponents and particularly front known as Syria free army that is the most important and main opposing association of Bashar Asad and tries to intensity crisis and impose pressure on Asad with the purpose of withdrawal or overthrow. Among the most important Share motivations of Asad opposing regional powers front we can refer to Iran containment policy and preventing increasing power of resistance axis with role- plying of Iran, Syria and Hezbollah. Now all pressures impose to break this linking bridge i.e. Syria. In fact, what is behind the curtain is due to close relations of Syria with Iran and destruction of resistance axis. The purpose of current regime overthrow in Syria is to isolate and restrict regional power of Iran.

### **Iraq unrests in Iran and Egypt's interpretation**

Iraq country and its internal developments and regional behavior have always been the problems of Egypt foreign policy. Democratic state building and cooperation of Kord and Shiite groups in power arena are important changes of Iraq after Saddam. These changes lead to change in political system and regional order that are not accepted by Egypt authorities (Asadi, 2011, p80). Main axis of Egypt approach in face of Iraq changes after Saddam has been the rejection of new realities of this country particularly new structure of power in this country. The change of power structure in Iraq, the decrease of power level of Sunni Arabs and sovereignty of Kord and Shiite groups are indications of this new structure. Egypt has not accepted new realities of Iraq with disintegration of Ba'ath regime and formation of new structure of power. Egypt authorities rejected realities. Arab Summit statements, expression of concern, and disagreement with political trend represent only peaceful opposite face of this country authority. While main axis of activity is to support terrorist actions and Sunni rebels for defeating political trend (Asadi, 2011, p11). The fall of Saddam and formation of new government resulted in eradication of Iraq's dangerous enemy. Therefore, although new government of Iraq is under domination of US, but it is an opportunity for Iran to enhance its power, security and interests. Many opportunities have generated in relations of two countries by formation of new Iraq. One of the most important opportunities is to expand trade and commerce transactions. We can refer to several points regarding the advantages of Iran for expanding economic activities in Iraq. First, geographical cohesion between two countries: Geographical conditions of Iraq are such that it has complete diversity. In addition, it has suitable water, soil and climate. Iran has these characteristics too. Particularly in southern parts i.e. in fertile plains of Mesopotamia and Khuzestan these natural factors better close to each other. The Characteristic of two countries border is such that makes the reinforcement of economic mutual capacities necessary. We can refer to water borders of two countries in Arvand River and borderlands of Shalamcheh, Khosravi and Mehran. In addition, the existence of potential capacities of two countries in the field of railway, reinforcement of port activities and the expansion of landlines are advantages that Iran can use them (Ghanbari, 2011, p 48). Second, cultural and religious similarities are a bridge to increase economic co-operations. Generally, one of the most important factors that have a significant impact on close relations of two countries is cultural and religious similarities. Currently relations of Iran and Iraq Shiites are an example of good relations. This has caused that Iraq Shiites use Iranian goods (Ghanbari, 2011, p 53). Third, having necessary experience, capacity and technology: Iran can use these capacities to meet the needs of Iraq society including forwarding good, food and activity in the field of infrastructure particularly in conditions that European companies have not seriously entered Iraq markets due to several factors that most important of them

is global financial crisis (Ghanbari, 2011, p 55). Fourth, good political relations with Iraq government: Now two countries have relatively desirable relations in political dimension. According to presence of majority of Shiites at top of Iraq government and their inclination to expand economic and trade transactions, these can provide a suitable opportunity for Iraq. In this direction, several cooperation agreements and commerce contracts signed between two countries in Prime Minister Time of Ibrahim Jaafari (Ghanbari, 2011, p56). In the introduction of Iraq national development strategy (NDS), Ba'ath regime has described as the most important factor of Iraq backwardness. Therefore, the purpose of Iraq national development strategy is to return Iraq its real position in the Middle East. In this direction, relations with Iran in different dimensions can approach Iraq to its goals in this field. Without doubt, Iran can play a significant role in growth and economic development of new Iraq according to geographical situation and having economic potential capacities and cultural and religious associations with Iraq. The presence of different folks and identities in Iraq can have an important impact on Iran foreign policy in face of new Iraq. Although cultural interactions of two parties have many positive indicators, but we cannot ignore this fact that there are some, cultural differences which result from Arabic and Persian language and culture, national and regional competitions and different look at international relations. These differences can threaten the relations of two countries.

#### **Islamic awakening uprisings and Iran opportunities**

##### ***A: at internal level***

The similarity of atmosphere in countries of North Africa and southwest of Asia including Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain and Jordan and in smaller scale Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Oman, Kuwait and Morocco provides the field of single slogan among all Arab masses from citizens of all these countries. Some analyzers believe that soon wave of unrests will enclose Iran, but unlike these analyses, we should confirm internal political environment of Iran has very little influenced by events of Arab World.

The lack of permeation of the Middle East recent changes to Iran and failure of western countries in directing these changes towards Iran are significant security achievements for this country.

Iran has provided internal security and order via going through resulting security challenges from revolution permeation due to geopolitical changes of region. Internal political stability of country can pave the way for role- playing of Iran in the establishment of security and regional changes.

##### ***B: at regional level***

Although recent changes of the Middle East have generated changes in axis of resistance and consequently have led to strategy change of some of the influential groups, but we should note that, first the earthquake of recent changes in the Middle East occurred in anti-resistance axis. Unlike resistance axis, this event has not resulted in useful changes. The ruling regime of involved countries including Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen that were allied countries of west and located in anti-resistance axis have seriously changed. Therefore, what can be an opportunity for Iran in recent changes of the Middle East is crisis in countries of anti-resistance axis and gain power of regimes at least in line with public opinions in these countries including in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and utmost gain power of a regime in line with Iran in Bahrain.

#### **Islamic awakening uprisings and Egypt's opportunities**

The most important opportunity of Egypt in changes of Islamic awakening is to provide the field for adopting Shiite-phobia approaches. Common point of Islamic awakening in Islamic countries is to confront the spell of internal tyranny, dependence on foreign policy and economy, cultural humiliation and back to self and cultural nobilities. Islamic revolution presented an alternative political structure to the world as a phenomenon that is based on religious beliefs and new methods of democracy. Now it has become a new managerial pattern for Islamic awakening and resistance in the region. Certainly if values of Islamic revolution like other common movements in Islamic world were based on nationalism, Socialism or liberalism, its beliefs would not attack by words such as terrorism, Shiite crescent, Jihad and fundamentalist. Egypt authorities have always tried to confront the influences of Islamic revolution of Iran by extensive media advertising. On the other hand, although Salafism has expanded in the Middle East and included different countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt and Syria, but such thoughts largely originate from Saudi Arabia and Egypt's policies. As we talk about Salafi Islam at region level, mainly our purpose is an Islam that ideologically and financially supported by Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

#### **Islamic awakening uprisings and Iran's challenges**

The Persian Gulf states believe that a change has occurred in the Middle East region to increase the power of Iran and the role of Shiites. They believe that a Shiite crescent has established from Lebanon to Pakistan and Iran can direct it. They claim that Iran tries to establish a Shiite block in the region and increase its power and use its power against interests of Sunni countries and regional interests of US and Israel. In recent years, concerns and regional competition of Saudi Arabia with Iran have weakened the relations of two countries. These have influenced diplomatic relations between two countries. Saudi Arabia has performed many actions to confront the influence of Iran in the region. It tries to resolve present crises and problems in the region and improve its position. In addition, it tries to decrease the power and influence of Iran via regional and trans-regional alliances and coalitions against Iran. The presence of US in the Middle East region decreases regional competitions and influence development of Iran and increases influence development of Iran's competitors. We can divide resulting security threats from recent changes of the Middle East for Iran into two general classes. First, unknown trend of future event and Second, new competitors that will overshadow the influence and power of Iran during these changes.

### **Islamic awakening uprisings and Egypt's challenges**

Main actor of future changes of the Middle East is Islamic and democratization. The growth of Mild Islamic as the competitor of Salafi Islam and the expansion of liberalist wave in the region will increase concerns for Egypt. In fact, after Arab changes, countries such as Egypt escaped from dictatorial regime, and a kind of mild quasi- democratic Islamism appeared in Egypt and Tunisia that this situation is occurring in some other point. One of the intentions of wave of Arab revolutions is the establishment of a kind of government that is based on democratic thought and targets free election and living condition. We observe its indications have fluctuations at the Middle East region level. On the other hand, Egypt previously defined a special role and position for itself, but according to present conditions in the Middle East region during recent years such a role and power has diminished. The power of Non- Arab countries of region such as Iran and Turkey is increasing. In this regard we can refer to remove Taliban from political scene of Afghanistan and consequently eradication of one of the ideological enemies of Iran in eastern borders of our country, occupation of Iraq and Saddam fall from power and gain power of a government with majority of Shiites in Iraq, victory of Hezbollah and Hamas in internal election of their countries that reinforces the position of Iran in these countries, defeat of Zionist forces against Lebanon's Hezbollah that followed a kind of shame for regime such as Saudi Arabia, reinforcement of strategic relation between Iran and Syria via remove of Saddam, nuclearization of Iran and recently the occurrence of new Arab revolutions in the countries of region that have decreased the power of Saudi Arabia government.

### **Conclusion**

Iran and Egypt relations have influenced by policies of some regional and trans- regional countries. After overthrow of Hosni Mubarak and victory of Mohammad Morsi in presidential election we expected that Ekhvan Almolesin improve its relations with Iran, but interventions of US, Saudi Arabia and Qatar in internal problems of Egypt caused that they restrain from approaching Iran. After overthrow of Ekhvan in Egypt, Saudi Arabia tried to impose its regional policies on new rulers of Egypt. After the establishment of caretaker government in Egypt and introduction of General Alsisi as the only Savior figure of Egypt, Saudi Arabia gave \$ 14 billion financial aid to caretaker government of Egypt. The purpose of Saudi Arabia was to control foreign policy of Egypt via financial aid. Therefore, it seems that we do not observe significant changes in relations of Iran and Egypt by victory of General Alsisi. Since Egypt foreign policy and its relation with Iran are influenced by pressures of US and Saudi Arabia. However, it seems that Alsisi will differently behave with Iran relative to Mubarak periods. In addition, an important part of public opinions in Egypt is gradually inclining towards Iran and new president considers this point. Relations of Iran and Egypt will be influenced by the manner of new relations of Iran with Persian Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Emirates. In other words, if Iran improves its relations with these countries, relations of Iran and Egypt will have ascending trend. Relations of Iran and Egypt are important in the region because both countries have trump cards. Therefore, it is logical to provide large Scale interests of the region and Islam world via interaction with each other. Relations of Iran and Egypt have experienced many fluctuations since the victory of Islamic revolution, but present conditions are more sensitive than ever. In past years the most important challenging problem of IRAN and Egypt in the region was the presence of Hezbollah and victories of this party at internal (the establishment of Lebanon government) and external level (Victory in release of Lebanon Jonoul and 33 days war), now other problems have added to it. Egypt emphasizes two elements of Arab ethnicity and followers of Sunnis religion in its policy in face of Iran, but conditions of region do not prove this mater and position of Iran among Arab and Sunni countries of region represents this reality. This country expected to suppress the opponents who are supporter of Iran with the help of Saudi Arabia and the establishment of changes in Yemen and face change of sovereignty, but Alhvshy movement has become a serious challenge for Saudi Arabia. Egypt tried to prevent gain power of Shiites by posing religious problems after Saddam fall from power in Iraq, but its actions were not effective including the establishment of Sunni and Shiite conflicts or advocacy of the accused such as Tareq Alhashemi, the dispatch of pro- Al- Qaeda forces to this country and trying to tarnish the position of Iran among Iraq nation. In contrast, Iran obtained trump cards by reliance on firm base of authority in Iraq and politicians who lived in Iran during Saddam regime. Iran's actions for solving many political problems of Iraq and giving mental and financial aids caused that change the attitude of Iraq, which was under bad advertising against Iran. Egypt policy in Iraq has always been in line with intensification of unrests and imposing pressure on Nori Almaleki government so that Sunni groups who are partisan of this country gain power, but Egypt has not been successful in this way. Another issue that located Cairo in front of Tehran was military presence of Saudi Arabia forces along Bahrain forces and support from Saudi Arabia actions in Bahrain scene. Since majority of Bahrain population are Shiite, Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia governments have introduced protesters as dependent on Iran.

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