Why Did Islamist Parties Win, and What Does It Mean?

Danish Institute for International Studies
October 30 2012

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The Islamist won the elections in Egypt and Tunisia

**Egyptian Election**

- Freedom and Justice Party: 45%
- Nour Party: 25%
- Wafd Party: 8%
- Egyptian Bloc: 7%
- Other: 15%

**Tunisian Election**

- Ennahda: 41%
- The Initiative: 12%
- CPR: 13%
- Popular Petition: 9%
- ETTAKATOL: 7%
- PDM: 6%
- Other: 2%
Why Islamists Won?
Three Potential Explanations

1. Islam Resonates with Arab, Muslim Voters
2. Islamist Parties provide Social Welfare Services in the Absence of the State
3. Islamist Parties were Better Organized During the Campaign
Although values appear stable over past year:
Preferences for Islamic, democratic and strong state model

Source: Parliamentary survey 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6. Presidential survey 1, 2
In stark contrast, support for Islamist parties grew in the lead-up to the election.

Support for Islamist Parties

Citizens’ view of the Nour Party

Source: Parliamentary survey 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6.
Support for Islamist parties stronger among those in need

Islamists more likely to be poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Car owner</th>
<th>Islamic party voter</th>
<th>Non-islamic party voter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less Educated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illiterate/barely read</th>
<th>Islamic party voter</th>
<th>Non-islamic party voter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High and Upper Highschool</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below High School</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More Rural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Islamic party voter</th>
<th>Non-islamic party voter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td></td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Islamic party voter</th>
<th>Non-islamic party voter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64%</td>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Parliamentary survey 4, 5 & 6.
Islamist parties have superior organizational resources

1. More campaign volunteers
   - Islamic parties: 25,000
   - Non-Islamic parties: 11,900

2. More active members
   - Islamic parties: 100,000
   - Non-Islamic parties: 24,500

3. More full time staff
   - Islamic parties: 75%
   - Non-Islamic parties: 38%

Source: Interview with 7 political parties in Egypt, August – September 2012
Islamist Parties Mobilized both New and Old Voters

**Split of Old and New Voters**

- **Old voters**: 31%
- **New entrants**: 50%
- **Non voters**: 19%

**Old and New Voter Choices**

- **Islamist parties**
  - Old voters: 80%
  - New entrants: 81%
- **Non-islamist parties**
  - Old voters: 20%
  - New entrants: 19%

Source: Presidential survey 1
What Does it Mean?
Implications of Islamists’ Victory

- Immediate Impact: Focus on Women
- Long-Term Implications: The Transition Process
Not An Outcome Driven by Men
Women vote as much for Islamists as men

Source: Parliamentary survey 4, Parliamentary survey 5, Parliamentary survey 6
Men and Women have similar concerns

- Security and stability: 39% (Male), 38% (Female)
- Inflation: 15% (Male), 26% (Female)
- Unemployment: 25% (Male), 18% (Female)
- Poverty and income reduction: 4% (Male), 7% (Female)
- Absence of trust in authority figures: 4% (Male), 3% (Female)
- Other: 12% (Male), 8% (Female)

Source: Parliamentary survey 4, Parliamentary survey 5, Parliamentary survey 6
Men and women have similar views

Agreement on the statement: "Men have priority over women in employment"

Source: Parliamentary survey 3
Long-Term Implications for Transitional Politics?

• Secularists – domestic and abroad – tend to view “Islamist takeover” reflecting deep-seated, values

• Fear of spreading message and power prompts support for *illiberal and anti-democratic* policies

**However,**

• Illiberal policies have potential for inducing preference falsification that strengthens Islamist parties
Moving Forward: Recognize Fluidity and Keep the Playing Field Open

• Need to resist supporting efforts to limit liberal freedoms, discourse

• International actors need to avoid temptation to shore up secularists vs. Islamists
  • Counter-productive
  • Not necessarily more liberal, democratic outcomes

• Respond to the needs of the center

• Need to emphasize iterative processes and seek ways to avoid entrenchment of early winners
  • Roles of local level elections
  • Emphasis on media freedoms, freedom of association, political parties laws, etc.
The transitional process has made participation in elections more attractive to the youth, women and urbanized voters.

1. New entrants are younger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Old Voters</th>
<th>New Entrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-30</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. New entrants are more likely to be female

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Old Voters</th>
<th>New Entrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. New entrants are more urbanized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Old Voters</th>
<th>New Entrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Presidential survey 1