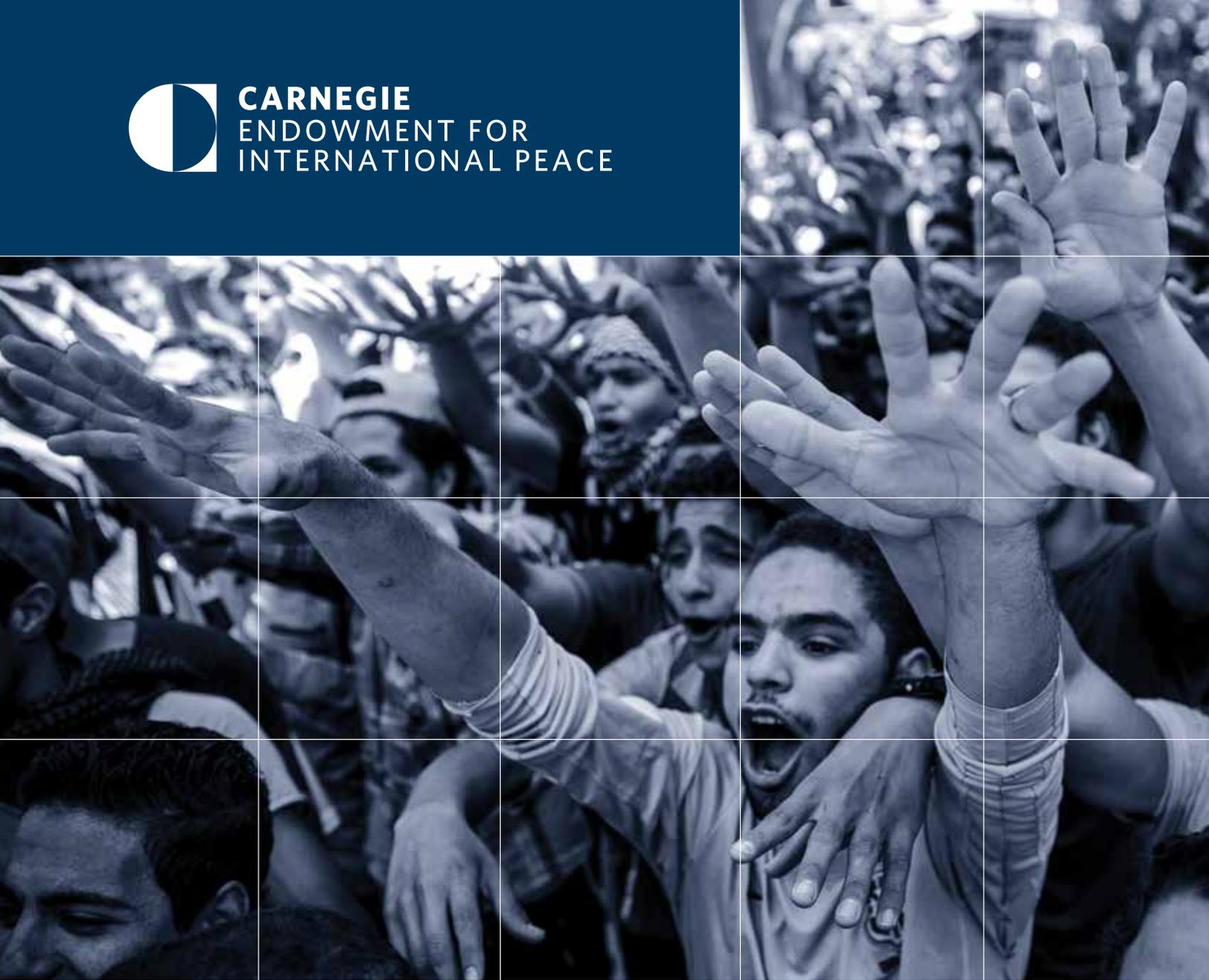




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THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD AND THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN EGYPT

Part 2 of a series on political Islam in Egypt

Ashraf El-Sherif

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About the Author

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Summary

The current turmoil in Egypt—including social strife, polarization, and violence—has cast shadows on the potential for Islamist integration as well as the regime’s ability to achieve political stability. Shifting external and internal dynamics of Islamist organizations indicate five possible scenarios for the future of the Muslim Brotherhood. Its path will have far-reaching implications for political Islam and democratization in Egypt.

Possible Future Scenarios

- The regime remains committed to the goal of eradicating the Brotherhood, even though it lacks the resources to effectively do so. The Brotherhood continues to face a ruthless crackdown by the regime, including arbitrary arrests, frozen assets, and violent confrontations.
- Through ongoing protests that rattle the regime and begin to generate greater popular support, the Brotherhood returns to Egyptian politics in triumph.
- Islamists and the regime negotiate a return to the political formula under former president Hosni Mubarak—limited political inclusion of the Brotherhood within certain regime-determined redlines.
- The Brotherhood splits into two main fragments: moderates who view conventional Brotherhood policy as too confrontational, and hardliners who view current policy as too compromising and also ideologically incorrect.
- The organization recognizes the failures of its current protests and withdraws from political activity, focusing on an internal ideological reinvention.

Implications for Egyptian Society

It is uncertain which of the five scenarios for the Brotherhood’s future will come to pass. The old state and the Brotherhood are currently committed, respectively, to the Brotherhood’s total eradication or its triumphant comeback. The unlikelihood that either of these scenarios will be fulfilled might force the regime and Islamists to be more open to other options, particularly reconciliation. Yet for the near to medium term, reconciliation, fragmentation, and reinvention remain unlikely.

The Brotherhood has proven to be more resilient than initially assumed, leaving political Islam as a force in Egyptian politics for the immediate future. The rise of post-Brotherhood politics would require the end of old-state

authoritarian politics, economic development, and religious reform as well as the establishment of participatory democratic movements, none of which is currently foreseeable.

Current dynamics do not bode well for a future democratic Egypt. Any path for democratic political and social change has not been welcomed by the old state or the Islamists, who remain unwilling to engage with other actors or to foster renewed democratic thinking. This leaves political Islam, like the old state in Egypt, part of the ongoing problem rather than the solution.

Introduction

Is political Islam in Egypt finished? Many analysts began raising this question following the dramatic change of fortune experienced by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt starting in 2013. After the ouster of then president Mohamed Morsi on July 3, the Brotherhood quickly fell from grace, losing not only the presidency but also control of the parliament and the constitution it had promulgated. A bloody regime crackdown followed, reaching its height when the interim government that followed Morsi's administration designated the Brotherhood as a terrorist organization on December 25.

The Brotherhood's course of action throughout these events has been largely reactive and haphazard, lacking both a mission and a coherent strategy. Indeed, the Brotherhood now faces the daunting challenge of introducing the transformations necessary to better address popular demands for an inclusive, pluralist, and egalitarian political space. The Brotherhood has failed at this challenge over the last three years, and it is unclear if the group can succeed going forward. Even if the still-intact Brotherhood does succeed, its ability to maintain unity of purpose and of ranks over the longer term and to attract other Islamists is increasingly questionable.

What happens to Egyptian Islamist organizations like the Brotherhood will undoubtedly depend on structural factors outside of their control, including state policies toward Islamists, the internal cohesion of the regime, and the regional context. Although Islamist organizations face seemingly insurmountable crises, they are far from finished and retain considerable agency. Islamism's future not only depends on external factors but also on how Islamists themselves respond—particularly the degree to which Islamists are willing to engage in a serious process of intellectual and ideological revision.

In some ways, Egypt might be witnessing the creation of a new epoch of political Islam, more ideologically fluid than ever before. The boundaries between centers and peripheries have become blurred, and shifts in the Brotherhood reflect considerable generational differences. Some factions are engaging in serious ideological soul-searching, while many on the right adopt increasingly polarizing, populist, radicalized, and intransigent critiques.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is a useful case study for exploring the shifting external and internal dynamics of Egyptian Islamist organizations. The Brotherhood's current status and future path has implications for Islamists and democratization in Egypt.

The Brotherhood now faces the daunting challenge of introducing the transformations necessary to better address popular demands for an inclusive, pluralist, and egalitarian political space.

The Brotherhood Since Morsi's Ouster

Under Increasing Pressure

The military-backed regime that took power after the ouster of Mohamed Morsi cracked down ruthlessly on the Brotherhood, arresting supporters, leading trials, and dispersing demonstrations and marches with force. On August 14, security personnel forcibly cleared pro-Morsi sit-ins at Rabaa al-Adawiya and al-Nahda Squares in Cairo, resulting in the killing of almost 1,000 people.¹ The events in Rabaa were part of increasingly violent confrontations between Islamists and the regime: confrontations that have left thousands of Islamists and hundreds of security personnel dead, the supreme guide of the Brothers and many supporters sentenced to death by courts, more than 20,000 Islamists in jail, and thousands of Islamist fugitives.

The regime's violence against the Brotherhood following the coup reinforced Islamists' belief that they are fighting an existential battle against the old state in Egypt. As the scale of violence increased significantly, the possibility of Brotherhood acquiescence became increasingly slim.

The Brotherhood's decisionmaking was heavily influenced by ideological factors and short-term reactive calculations, lacking strategic cost-benefit analysis. Coming to power was a sort of "end of history" for the group that made irrelevant its trademark pragmatic flexibility and opportunism. Conceding political defeat, whether through electoral loss, popular rejection, or acknowledging post-coup realities, would admit the end of the Brotherhood project and a return to the old formula of limited inclusion under the old state's guardianship that they faced under the rule of former president Hosni Mubarak.

The Brotherhood's actions were also influenced by operational considerations. In the aftermath of the July 3 coup, the group had hoped to copy the model of the January 2011 uprising. However, this was a serious overestimation of the group's ability to mobilize and its societal reach.

In addition, the Brotherhood believed that de-escalation could be counterproductive based on the precedent of February 1954, what is referred to as the "Abdel-Qader Ouda complex." In 1954, Ouda, then deputy supreme guide for the Brotherhood, prematurely ended the group's protests against the government. Some Brothers believe Ouda missed a historic opportunity to undermine the newly instituted and still-fragile military regime, particularly since the military regime cracked down on the group a few months later. To prevent a similar outcome, the Brotherhood had little option other than escalation, at least in its own thinking.

The unprecedented intensity of confrontations taking place in 2013 and 2014 has shown no prospect of abating anytime soon. Violence perpetrated by jihadist groups in the Sinai Peninsula has escalated since Morsi's ouster. While the Brotherhood has not been directly involved in these attacks, some see its theocratic ideology and Morsi's toleration of radical Islamist groups (in the

hopes of broadening his political base) as proof of the organization's key role in the ongoing violence.

The military regime has utilized such accusations to broaden its crackdown on the Brotherhood. While the designation of the Brotherhood as a terrorist organization—the first time in the organization's long history that it has been formally branded as such—is legally and practically disputed, its political consequences cannot be underestimated. The regime moved to confiscate many of the Brotherhood's economic investments, believing successful control over the organization's finances could paralyze its activities. Though some have been allowed to resume operations, 1,055 religious charities had their assets frozen by the interim government in December 2013 and became subject to ad hoc government management. The regime cracked down on dozens of businesses owned or run by Brotherhood activists.² In August 2014, the organization's political party was banned by court rule.

In addition to controlling the Brotherhood's economic and political bases, the regime has undertaken a campaign to control the organization's religious activities. Al-Azhar, Egypt's premier religious institution, and the Ministry of Religious Endowments, the agency that oversees religious affairs, have dramatically curtailed the public religious space in the country, appointing preachers and dictating the provision of charity by mosques. Themes of the Friday sermons have become strictly standardized by the ministry—a Mubarak-era practice that is now pushed to extremes. Thousands of imams and preachers have been dismissed. Though officials cite the lack of a required license as the reason, many see the dismissals as retaliation for Islamist connections. The ministry's new leadership dissolved the boards of directors for mosques that the ministry had installed under Morsi.

State control over the religious sphere in Egypt is hardly new. But the wide scope of current policies and the regime's goal of eliminating the Brotherhood are significant. Given the shortage of qualified preachers and the existence of hundreds of thousands of unregistered small mosques all over the country, it is yet to be seen if al-Azhar and the ministry can develop the manpower and mechanisms necessary to carry out such a campaign.

External actors have also played significant roles in the regime crackdown. On March 7, 2014, Saudi Arabia included the Brotherhood on its list of terrorist organizations, strangling the group's local support and suppressing potential threats from jihadist fighters in Syria and Iraq. The unwavering support for the Egyptian regime from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates reflects their fear of the Brotherhood's political and ideological ascendancy in the region.

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Organizational Changes in the Brotherhood

As a result of the dramatic events since Morsi's overthrow, the Brotherhood has undergone a series of organizational and ideological changes.³ The regime's ongoing suppression of the group has forced the Brotherhood to decentralize. The arrests of most high-level leaders and activists in the first to third tiers of the group's leadership—including members of the Guidance Bureau (the group's top decisionmaking authority), the Shura Council (the group's parliament), and heads of governorate administrative bureaus—broke hierarchical links in the organization. It gave increasing leverage to lower tiers of leadership on the local level, including junior officials in administrative bureaus who now organize and lead protests along with semiautonomous local networks.⁴ Micro-organization has become the preferred tactic for the time being.

The Brotherhood's structural changes nationally have been replicated at the neighborhood, regional (*mantiqa*), and zone (*shuba*) levels. Hierarchical structures have been replaced by cluster-type structures. For security reasons, the size of the basic local unit in the organization (the *usra*) has been reduced from around seven members to around three. Communication is conducted through creative and safer methods, such as encrypted text messages, social media, and e-mail. Except for activities related to the rearing of Brothers' children conducted in members' homes by the juniors department, *usra* meetings are often held while walking in the streets and at random coffee shops instead of in homes, which are subject to security surveillance and attacks. Demonstrations are discreetly organized to prevent infiltration by security informants, and false dates for the gatherings are posted on social media to mislead security forces monitoring the Brotherhood's Facebook and Twitter accounts.⁵

Women and children related to Brotherhood members have also mobilized. Women, in particular, have engaged in the current "anti-coup struggle" on a larger scale than in the past, challenging many Islamist taboos regarding female activism.⁶ For the first time, the Brotherhood's female members are suffering a significant portion of the regime's crackdown. Women have been sent to jail and subjected to torture and physical abuse.⁷

Whenever possible, the Brotherhood has replaced arrested activists with individuals who are put in charge of organizing demonstrations, communicating instructions and messages, and boosting morale. In response, the regime has started to refine its policies, having recently released some detainees and refocused its energies on Brotherhood cadres directly involved in the organization and student activism. The Brotherhood has continued to replace its activists, but although this adaptation helps the organization survive, the political effectiveness of such a strategy in the long term is questionable.

Assessments of the scale and success of the Brotherhood's transformation differ among local affiliates. Complaints regarding the low caliber of local leaders and their dubious efforts to safeguard protesters against police violence are

plentiful. But the situation is ostensibly better in quality of caliber in many other cases.⁸

In addition to these affiliates, the Brotherhood has founded more informal entities that correspond to existing departments within the formal Brotherhood organization. These entities spread the group's political message, lead protests, and advocate for the restoration of Morsi's presidency. They included the National Alliance to Support Legitimacy (NASL), Anti-Coup Students, Anti-Coup Youth, Anti-Coup Scholars, Anti-Coup University Professors, Anti-Coup Professionals, and the Ulama Scholars Front. The Brotherhood's grass roots have demonstrated remarkable solidarity and perseverance—particularly in areas like Helwan, Kerdasa, Haram, Alf Maskan, Nasr City, and al-Matariyyah in Greater Cairo; Sidi Bishr, al-Raml urban slums, Abu Suleiman, Borg al-Arab, and Agami in Alexandria; many parts of Upper Egypt and the countryside in the north; as well as among students at al-Azhar and Cairo Universities. Fresh young recruits, infuriated by ongoing repression and inspired by the Brotherhood's resistance, have also been joining the cause.

Elections for a provisional guidance bureau, in charge of the day-to-day functioning of the group, were reportedly conducted in secret a few months after the coup. The elected officials partner with the remaining veteran Guidance Bureau members to act as replacements for the imprisoned and exiled bureau members. The Guidance Bureau currently issues general guidelines while local administrative bureaus make practical decisions about implementation, a decentralized mode of operation that the provisional body supports.

In general, decentralization has proven to effectively preserve the proselytizing activities and networks of the Brotherhood and distract the regime from repressive activities, but its efficacy in protests is doubtful. This mode of operation serves to confuse security forces and weaken the impact of the regime's heavy-handed policies. Some analysts argue that the current mode of operation represents a sharp change from the top-down discipline and command-and-control mechanisms that have traditionally characterized the Brotherhood's operations. But the shift has in reality been facilitated by an existing rule of organizational conduct that was adopted by the Brotherhood for security reasons during the Mubarak years. That rule called for centralized decisionmaking and decentralized implementation. The focus on local protests has provided flexibility and resilience.⁹ However, it also limits the Brotherhood's ability to mobilize resources nationwide and maintain cohesion since the group can no longer coordinate across Egypt. In addition, decentralization undermines the organization's ability to exert formidable pressure through concentrated protests in key urban centers.

The Brotherhood's outreach efforts have varied in their success rates. The group's political committees, particularly active between 2011 and 2013, are

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almost nonexistent as of 2014 because they have been rejected by society (or at least wide segments of society). Further, there is a dearth of committed young cadres—many young Islamists have become increasingly cynical about electoral politics. The Brotherhood’s charity committees have diminished financial resources because most of their money goes to support families of detained members. Meanwhile, interest in the educational and religious committees has increased following Morsi’s ouster. Reproducing the ideological and religious character of the movement is of paramount importance to the organization, and religious rearing (*tarbeya*) is central to this process.

Ideological Shifts

These organizational changes have led to ideological shifts as well; most notably, Brotherhood members have returned to relying on traditional doctrine as their source of identity.

Traditionally, the Muslim Brotherhood was a religious group whose supporters were a political tool for the leadership’s designs and mission. Following Mubarak’s overthrow, Brotherhood leaders devoted most of their energy and resources to political activities and charity at the expense of proselytizing activities, which was necessary to win votes. While this strengthened the Brotherhood’s electoral power, it damaged the ideological character of the Brotherhood as an institution.

Developments since Morsi’s overthrow have reversed this trend. The group is falling back on its doctrinal core to reassert its character and stand up to what it sees as an existential threat.

But the next step forward is unclear. Will the Brotherhood revive its historical urge to cultivate society’s sympathy or will it isolate itself from a society it views

as anti-Islamist, submissive, and hopelessly deviant? Will the Brotherhood continue to use social activism to pursue political power or will activism be an end unto itself? The choice will define the Brotherhood’s future course.

The Brotherhood’s ideology effectively solidifies the group’s perseverance on religious bases, but it is less effective at facilitating political initiatives. The organization has been quick to tactically adapt but slower to reformulate its

strategy, and it lags behind when it comes to intellectual and doctrinal revisions. Furthermore, in the protests following Morsi’s ouster, the Brotherhood has not only retained its ideological ambivalence on the major questions of violence and tolerance of the political and religious other, but it has also become more vague, to the point of indefensibility.¹⁰

Yet, the Brotherhood is now in a better position to deflate the charges of religious deviance long mounted by Salafists before and throughout the 2011 uprising. Salafists (particularly the politicized activists, known as *haraki*, and jihadist Salafists) used to downplay the Brotherhood’s politics as religiously

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incorrect and politically compromising on the Islamist cause. Moreover, the Brotherhood believes that the continuous confrontations with the regime, despite being futile so far, sharpen its ideological consciousness and experience to make it fit for the new post-coup conditions. In the words of a Brotherhood activist, “It is a learning process.”¹¹

Finally, the religious component of the Brothers’ activities is important. Many of the Brothers assess protests not in terms of feasibility but rather as a religious duty to combat injustice and what they perceive as the “war against Islam” led by the military regime and its international patrons.¹²

Future Scenarios

There are five likely scenarios for the Muslim Brotherhood in the future:

- 1) total eradication by the new regime,
- 2) triumphant comeback,
- 3) reconciliation with the regime,
- 4) fragmentation into various factions as a part of Islamist fluidity and mobility, and
- 5) reinvention accompanied by a process of deep soul-searching.

Total Eradication

After Morsi’s ouster, signs had indicated that the new regime would have no qualms with the Brotherhood’s inclusion in the road map for the political transition as long as the Brotherhood respected the new rules of the game.¹³ Those rules were clear: the Brotherhood would recognize the legitimacy of the new system, cease protests and demonstrations, stop demanding that Morsi be returned to the presidency, and accept legal punishment for leaders involved in social strife. The Brotherhood would also accept military-imposed redlines on issues related to national security and identity, limit its sectarian activities, and refrain from additional bids for electoral and political domination.

This, in essence, would have subordinated the Brotherhood, making them no more than junior partners to the military in the new political system. Acceptance of these conditions was perceived by the Brotherhood as full political capitulation that would undermine the solidarity of the organization—unjustifiable in the eyes of its religiously mobilized, Islamist grass roots—so it chose to continue resistance. In the face of the Brotherhood’s intransigence, the regime seeks the group’s decapitation and its total destruction if possible.

However, the chances of doing so are slim. The regime’s ability to freeze financial assets is greatly restricted by the sheer size of the Brotherhood’s domestic and regional economic networks, cultivated over decades and able to both relocate quickly and operate in hiding.¹⁴ The state further lacks the

capacity to compensate for the Brotherhood's and other Islamists' charitable operations. The Egyptian state is still in many ways mired in inefficiency and incompetence, which makes it even more difficult to counter an organization that has hundreds of thousands of adherents and bases of support in regions marginalized by the regime.

Furthermore, the destruction of the Brotherhood could hurt the regime, given that it has built much of its legitimacy on an anti-Islamist platform. Moreover, Algeria's recent history—often considered a case in which an Islamist movement was successfully destroyed—may serve as an additional warning. In the 1990s, the Algerian state's conflict with armed Islamists, such as the Islamic Salvation Front militants, relied on the selective inclusion of other more moderate Islamist factions, like the Algerian Muslim Brotherhood. That conflict ended with a political resolution that effectively meant the destruction of Islamists would no longer be a policy option. Later, the regime's poor political and economic performance further encouraged new al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamist groups to blossom.

Some anti-Islamist elites in Egypt still view the regime's strongman President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, elected in June 2014, as the country's Atatürk, the father of modern-day Turkey, who would be capable of purging Egypt of Islamism. These elites often point to former president Gamal Abdel Nasser's efforts to eliminate the Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s. Unfortunately, this narrative has its shortcomings. The state's patronage of vast social-welfare programs and development projects, in addition to its anticolonial successes, indeed gave Nasser free rein to pursue authoritarian, anti-Islamist policies. But

such a strategy is far from replicable today because the state lacks the resources and is retrenching. Furthermore, within a few years after Nasser's death, the Brothers had rebuilt the organization. Aided by Israel's catastrophic defeat of Egypt in 1967, Anwar Sadat's (Nasser's successor's) relative tolerance of the Brotherhood in the 1970s, and a favorable regional context, the Brotherhood and other Islamist groups attracted the support of thousands of young Islamists, who had been raised in the supposedly

secular atmosphere of the Nasser era one decade earlier. The economic hardships and absence of competitive pluralist politics also led to Islamic revivalism in the 1970s and 1980s.

Given the sociopolitical and economic situation in Egypt today, a similar Islamist comeback is not unlikely, though it is a distant possibility given current polarization. While some believe that the old state will establish a democracy after achieving its victory over Islamists, Sisi's regime has proven to be just as authoritarian as its predecessors. The economy will not improve unless key societal actors agree to far-reaching structural reforms that none have been willing to carry out meaningfully thus far. And the current political vacuum is

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unlikely to be filled by fresh ideological alternatives with clear constituencies anytime soon.

The forcible overthrow of Morsi and the continued crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood may be providing the organization the solidarity and increased outside sympathy necessary for its survival.¹⁵

Triumphant Comeback

A second scenario would involve not only the Brotherhood's survival but its triumphant return to Egyptian politics. Such a scenario would be based on multiple assumptions: that Brotherhood protests sufficiently destabilize the regime, popular attitudes shift in favor of the Brotherhood because of the regime's economic and political failures, and the organization has a consistent and powerful strategy moving forward to overcome the clear imbalance of power with the old state. This narrative also has its shortcomings.

The Brotherhood has taken concerted steps toward destabilizing the current regime. It founded the NASL as a Brotherhood-dominated, multipartisan political entity that sought to restore Morsi as the legitimate president by organizing regular demonstrations, facilitating a more revolutionary Egyptian civil society, encouraging criticism of the brutalities and the economic failures of the regime, and influencing international public opinion. The Brotherhood's past mistakes were discussed as mere operational pitfalls, and the language of the NASL's discourse was carefully distanced from Islamism, instead revolving around themes of political justice and democracy. Protests following the coup against Morsi were remarkably large at first in the southern governorates of Fayoum, Beni Suef, Minya, and Asyut—in addition to sympathetic regions in Cairo, Giza, and Alexandria. In practice, the protests eventually returned to Islamist discourse because of the decentralized way the group is organized and the need to attend to Islamist constituencies.

The potential effectiveness of the protests has been undermined by various factors. The NASL has failed to build bridges to key groups in society, such as the working class, professionals, informal economic actors, peasants, and the nonideological middle class. Protests have become largely ineffectual due to the regime's successful media propaganda; the frequently sectarian and Islamist discourse of the protests has not helped attract much-needed sympathy from non-Islamist Egyptians.

At the heart of this failure was the inability of the Brotherhood to situate the group's grievances within a broader political agenda and to use discourse relevant to non-Islamist social segments. The Brotherhood's efforts to destabilize the regime have been increasingly associated with violence, instability, and terrorism, and therefore are seen as equally culpable as the state for Egypt's economic misfortunes. The Brotherhood's overemphasis on the regime's failures without proposing hopeful alternatives may only be increasing people's fears of

the radicalism at protests. People might prefer the status quo to the uncertainties of protests that don't furnish credible and attractive alternatives.

Some Brotherhood members counter that continuous protests are useful in that they obstruct the state of political normalcy and stability that the regime is eager to enforce on society, thereby preserving momentum until conditions ripen for larger protests.¹⁶ They are convinced that mainstream society's confidence in the Brotherhood could return if political freedoms were restored and they were given the chance to speak and move freely.¹⁷

Yet, to date an electoral comeback remains unlikely. If a democratic vote were held in the fall of 2014, the Brotherhood would be able to retain the support of its sizeable rural and urban core constituency (still significant by all accounts), but it would fail to win the plurality it enjoyed in previous elections. It will take a long time to undo the negative perceptions of the Brotherhood prevalent in the mainstream—fed by bloody confrontations, sectarian clashes, terrorism, religious hate, civil strife, and a media witch hunt. Moreover, despite the Brotherhood having hoped otherwise, public discontent with the regime's economic policies has not translated to popular support for the organization. The Brothers like to cite their experience under Nasser to support their claims of an imminent comeback. Admittedly, one can infer that eradicating the Brothers by force does not work. But, this does not mean they can restore their pre-2013 popularity. Things are different. The scale and scope of anti-Brotherhood sentiments due to their failed government experiment must be reckoned with.

A possible alternative to electoral politics would be for the Brotherhood to develop its current protest movement into a populist political movement that raises themes of social justice and addresses the impoverished classes. To achieve such a transformation, redistributive resources and radical methods are necessary, as is evident in the cases of other successful populist Islamist movements, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria, Muqtada al-Sadr's movement in Iraq, and Mujahedin-e Khalq in Iran. The Brotherhood lacks the resources, ideology, and methods.

Brotherhood leaders that are not imprisoned are actively developing strategies for moving forward, but deep inconsistencies among these members' strategies further jeopardize the possibility of a successful Brotherhood comeback. The various strategies fall into two categories: those developed by Brothers in exile and those developed by Brothers still operating in Egypt.

The Brotherhood in Exile

Among Brotherhood activists in exile in Qatar, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere in Europe and the Middle East, there is an increasing dichotomy of viewpoints. Though lines are blurred and people can shift sides, two subgroups can be identified.

One is a confrontational subgroup that insists on maintaining a hostile approach to the regime and on continuing protests under the control of the

Brotherhood until the coup is undone. These members used to exert influence through Al Jazeera, dominate the NASL, and retain considerable power within the provisional guidance bureau. They consider Iranian revolutionary mobilization to be a model. While officially condemning violence, these leaders believe grassroots rage can be unleashed within reason. They believe that steadfastness will eventually force the state's crackdown to end because the effort is mostly carried out by unmotivated conscripts and that the expected deterioration of economic conditions will benefit the Brotherhood. This group still holds out hope for support from external powers.

A second, smaller and less powerful group is increasingly aware of the dangers associated with the first group's brinkmanship. These leaders fear that exploiting the radical discourse among the Islamist youth to enhance their leverage vis-à-vis the state risks losing control over those youth factions. They believe the confrontational leaders in exile are too distant from on-the-ground realities. Furthermore, they feel that pressure from outside powers on their behalf has proven to be mostly talk,¹⁸ and they believe that the first group's targeting of the military institution and betting on internal divisions developing within the military are unwise choices. As a result, they argue that the correct course of action must include recognizing that Morsi's restoration is unrealistic and placing the Brotherhood's current mission within a broader discourse that embraces non-Islamist opposition demands of democracy, civil rule, and political reform in deference to state institutions. Though they have not explicitly said so, some of these activists—under the right conditions—may consider reconciliation with the regime and accept blood money (*deya*) as compensation for the death of Brotherhood members.¹⁹ In return, Brotherhood prisoners would be pardoned and free to resume their proselytizing and social activities. Some elements in the Brotherhood's international organization support this view.²⁰ Recently, there has been talk of a new entity, the Egyptian Revolutionary Council, echoing some of the second group's concerns about the need to broaden the anti-coup base of political support. Over time, it was leaked in some news reports that this new entity might only be replacing the increasingly ineffective NASL.

Internal wrangling between these two groups, reflected in administrative bickering and realignments within the organization's key decisionmaking bodies, persists. The Brotherhood had planned an anti-regime insurrection on October 6, 2013, and January 25, 2014, which raised expectations of an imminent victory. The failures of these plans caused frustration and further divided the two groups. The schism was thrust into the public spotlight when the second group—at the center of a broader league of opposition figures—issued a declaration from Brussels in April 2014. The declaration was controversial in the eyes of many Brotherhood activists because it failed to mention the restoration of Morsi as a key objective and muted the Islamist character of the anti-regime opposition. In response, Brotherhood leaders in Egypt issued two

statements explaining the situation to their confused followers and reasserting their commitment to the “undoing of the coup” and the restoration of Morsi.

The Brotherhood in Egypt

Members at the grass roots in Egypt mostly fall in line with the Brotherhood’s operative leadership in the country, which leans toward the more confrontational stance (though some do prefer the more moderate approach).

Many Brotherhood members in Egypt ignore leaders in exile and wrestle to keep the momentum of action in their own hands. Young Brotherhood members have paid a heavy price for confrontation with the current regime, in some cases facing harsher repression than the incumbent leadership experienced under previous regimes. This has enabled them to acquire greater legitimacy

and hence autonomy over Brotherhood strategies²¹—possibly creating fissures in the traditional Brotherhood system, which relies heavily on obedience and controlled deliberations. While the more militant group of exiled leaders is unaware of how costly and pointless confrontational politics have become on the ground in Egypt, the moderate group is equally inattentive to the vengeful spirit that exists among the Brotherhood’s angry, youthful base.

A more effective approach for moderate Brotherhood activists would be to argue that the confrontational approach adopted by many young Brothers is self-destructive, and new constructive approaches that do not compromise past sacrifices are necessary.²² However, this approach is still only embraced by a minority within the Brotherhood and lacks practicality in many respects.

The Brotherhood’s chances of survival are high, but as a result of these divisions, the possibility of the Brotherhood making a comeback is unlikely. Even if Brotherhood leaders manage to come to terms with the military regime, it is hard to imagine that they would be able to rein in the radicalized and youthful members, regain full control of their organization, and appeal to the wider Islamist audience.

Reconciliation With the Regime

The third scenario would involve a return to the political formula of the Mubarak days, when the limited, de facto political inclusion of the Brotherhood was permitted within certain regime redlines.

This scenario could be a win-win situation for both the old state and the Brotherhood. The old state would be relieved of the burden of maintaining its harsh tactics against the Brotherhood and could achieve desperately needed political and economic stability. It would also allow the regime to circumvent the spread of radical Islamism in Egypt. This would constitute a return to the belief that encouraging a controlled moderate Islamism may help contain the appeal of uncontrollable radical Islamism. This would not necessarily

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require major ideological or organizational changes from the Brotherhood, but it would restore the group's freedom and property, end the spate of anti-Islamist media propaganda, and allow the organization to evade suppression and rejuvenate its activities. In return, the Brotherhood would end its protests and recognize the current regime. Limited Brotherhood political participation would be negotiable as well.

This outcome is possible. The current war of attrition between the regime and the Brotherhood is unsustainable. Whichever side becomes exhausted sooner will acquiesce to the other's terms and agree to reconciliation.

Some movement in that direction has already taken place. Middle-ranking leaders of the Brotherhood, known for their moderation and their willingness to broker a deal, were released in August 2014. The al-Wasat and al-Watan Parties left the NASL in late August and early September, and other pro-Brotherhood groups including the Building and Development Party may follow suit. Careful not to be publicly critical of the Brotherhood, these parties have explained their actions as necessary to broaden the political struggle away from the futile NASL—shifting discourse toward a struggle for democracy instead of the return of Brotherhood rule.²³ Nevertheless, these gestures might signal that reconciliation between the sides could be in the cards and they might open the door for the participation of these ex-Brotherhood partners and perhaps even current Brotherhood members in the next parliamentary elections. Regime and Brotherhood reactions to these parties' steps remain unclear.

Also relevant to prospects of reconciliation, the military in Egypt is still faithful to its ideological pragmatism and manipulation of religious politics. The same state that has cracked down on the Brotherhood has sought the support of other Islamist actors, such as al-Azhar and the Salafist Nour Party, and justified its policies in the name of "true Egyptian Islam." The state's hostility toward organized Islamist groups coexists with an unmistakable religious conservatism—even sectarianism—on questions of identity, state-religion relations, and lawmaking. This religious conservatism is deeply embedded throughout the Egyptian constitutions, laws, military, police, judiciary, and other state institutions. Religion has been traditionally employed by Egyptian regimes to encourage subservience to the state. Al-Azhar scholars, sheikhs, and preachers speak in mosques and in the media to justify the state's policies and actions as totally Islamic, to promote religious morality in society, and to cleanse society of religious heterodoxy and immorality, thereby mobilizing supporters. Sisi's regime is no exception. He is far-reaching when invoking religious rhetoric to legitimize the state's authority in the eyes of the devout population and to strip any religious legitimacy from the Brothers and the Islamists. It is Sisi and his regime that will exclusively speak for, in the words of the state, "true Islamic religion" in the public sphere.

Indeed, the state's conflict with Islamist groups on national security and power-sharing is self-evident. But, this does not mean that the regime is anti-Islamist on a secular basis, and the possibility remains that, if convenient, the

state could manipulate religious and identity politics to further a reconciliation with the Brotherhood.

This scenario, however, is still unlikely to occur in the short term for several reasons.

First, both sides have invested heavily in demonizing the other—making the prospects of reconciliation remote. Brotherhood leaders in particular would have difficulty persuading their grass roots to forgo seeking retribution for those killed by the regime.²⁴ Angry Islamist youth may then be won over by the Islamic State model in Iraq and Syria that involves forgoing electoral democracy and peaceful and inclusive political activism, and instead raising arms in a violent struggle against their own states in the name of the Islamist cause; that is, the exact opposite of reconciliation. For the regime, reconciliation could result in the loss of credibility in the eyes of large swaths of society that had been mobilized by unprecedented anti-Islamist propaganda in addition to the avowedly anti-Islamist segments of the police and judiciary.

Second, to make reconciliation appealing to its members, the Brotherhood could only agree if it were guaranteed a share of the parliament and government. The regime may then question the merits of reconciliation because it would give the Brotherhood a way into the system and open the door for a future challenge to the power structure, as in the case of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP). The AKP managed to outdo the military's guardianship over Turkish politics gradually through an incremental process of participation in electoral and institutional politics that was built over decades of Islamist political participation. The case of the Brothers in Egypt itself alarmed the military because they saw the Brothers using their electoral success after the 2011 uprising to challenge the military's dominance over the old state.

Third, elites on both sides have vested interests in maintaining the status quo. Reconciliation requires the departure from power of key leaders, including Sisi, army generals, as well as the Brotherhood's supreme guide and key leaders of the Guidance Bureau. Such a step is currently inconceivable as leaders on both sides appear irreplaceable on the short run. The post-coup experience has proven that replacing Brotherhood leadership is not easy. It is also hard to imagine the immensely popular and powerful Sisi unseated in the near future, except after a clearly failed government experiment.

And fourth, the regional context is also relevant. If reconciliation proceeded, the regime could lose the economic support of anti-Islamist Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates—support it badly needs. As the Middle East steadily polarizes on issues related to Islamism and a Sunni-Shia confrontation, the potential of reconciliation in Egypt is increasingly tied to the outcomes of these regional politics. On the one hand, the rise of Islamist militants in Libya, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen has strengthened the resolve of the anti-Islamist, Saudi-led camp. On the other hand, the political prowess of militant Islamists may lead to the Brotherhood and its regional backers (mainly Turkey) cooperating with

those groups to enhance their bargaining power vis-à-vis the regime in Egypt and anti-Islamists in the region.

The strength of Islamists in Libya along the border with Egypt and the steadfastness of Hamas in its 2014 confrontation with Israel over Gaza are two examples of the rise of these militants. Sisi's possible military adventurism in Libya to combat radical Islamist threats may further undermine whatever room exists for reconciliation. However, the circumstances in Yemen might resuscitate the Brotherhood there to answer the ascendancy of the Iranian-backed Shia Houthi rebels. In addition, the United States might pressure Saudi Arabia, its partner in the anti-Islamic State coalition, to push forward rapprochement with the Brotherhood, which can work as a moderate Sunni counterweight to the extremist Islamic State. Regional polarization is complicated and its uncertain impacts on the possibilities of reconciliation with the Brothers in Egypt cannot be downplayed.

If conditions change and become more conducive to reconciliation, other factors render remote the possibility of at least a Mubarak-era relationship between the regime and the Brotherhood. The increasingly fluid radicalization that has taken place since the coup among the Brotherhood's grass roots is significant and makes it difficult for the Brotherhood to maintain unity over the long run—particularly since its historical project, cultivated since the 1930s, has been crippled so completely. It will also be hard for the regime, given rampant socioeconomic crises and turbulence, to reproduce the Mubarak-era authoritarianism needed to control a reintegrated Brotherhood.

Reconciliation with the Brotherhood, if it happens, would open a new chapter in the history of state-Brotherhood relations.

Fragmentation Into Various Factions

A fourth scenario would involve the breakup of the Brotherhood into two main fragments: moderates who view conventional Brotherhood policy as too confrontational, and hardliners who view the same policy as too compromising and ideologically incorrect. Each of the two groups would attract Brotherhood members both in Egypt and in exile.

This scenario would be most likely to occur if the regime decided to offer a reward for moderates who agree to the selective inclusion of the Brotherhood in the political system on the regime's terms. Such terms would likely be stricter than those under Mubarak. If moderate Brotherhood members were to accept such a deal, they would likely move closer to embodying post-Islamist conservative democrats who participate in national politics, while the hardliners would move toward embracing an anti-status quo, Syrian-style insurgency.

Moderates

Under such circumstances, a strong new faction within the Brotherhood could emerge, advocating a more moderate political style and recognizing

the impossibility of an Islamist takeover. This faction may focus on economic development, social empowerment, and community service in order to create a strong base in society. Recognizing political realities, this faction may abandon the goal of restoring Morsi to the presidency, pursuing reconciliation on the regime's terms and focusing on good governance instead of identity-based politics. For members of this faction, Islam would provide a values system rather than a legal order or a totalistic system. This faction could capitalize on the social demand for culturally conservative, center-right political actors. It could also help fill an important gap in Egyptian civil society: the lack of institutionalized political entities capable of articulating socioeconomic demands and advocating for specific interests.

The Turkish model has been held up as an example. However, the potential for moderate Brotherhood adherents to follow the same path as their counterparts in Turkey is limited by differences in Islamist bases of support in each country. In Turkey, Sufi, social, religious, and educational movements were the backbone of the broader Islamist movement. These social movements often shifted their support between different Islamist parties as they saw fit. New Islamist parties were therefore able to establish themselves relatively easily.²⁵ In Egypt, however, the strength of the Brotherhood rests in the organization itself. Brotherhood members attempting to build a more moderate faction from scratch would find it difficult to cultivate popular support and constituency among Islamist sympathizers. Events since 2011 have further solidified this trend. Though independent-minded Brotherhood leaders have established their own political parties, these parties have either failed to establish a strong presence or have been later co-opted by the Brotherhood directly.

The practical possibility, then, that a moderate faction will emerge is limited. By 2010, the hardliner faction had already achieved organizational and ideological hegemony in the Brotherhood. The supposedly moderate faction represents only a few individuals lacking real organizational clout. The perceived generational gap—in which older members are more hardline while the younger Brothers are more moderate, bolstering the possibility that a more moderate faction will emerge—has also been overhyped. In reality, differences in viewpoints cut across age groups, and hardliners have supporters of all ages. Moreover, many of these so-called moderates disagree with the hardliners on questions of organization, timing, and pace of operations rather than on ideology.

Had it not been cut short, the Brotherhood's experiment with governance could have indeed led to class-based or interest-based factions within the movement focused on policy viewpoints. But the coup provided the Brotherhood with a new narrative that emphasized the unjust expulsion of the organization from power. Brotherhood members have since banded together, neutralizing the impact of intragroup differences. This process renders moot any potential for revisionist self-critique that would inspire large-scale defections or official policy and leadership changes. As a result, a year after their ouster from power,

Brotherhood leaders have faced no serious internal challenges from these awaited moderates.

Hardliners

Dismayed by the failure of the Brotherhood's time in power, many members of the organization's grass roots, in addition to non-Brotherhood Islamists, have fallen back on puritanical Brotherhood doctrine, including that exemplified by the ideologue Sayyid Qutb. Brotherhood insiders point out that the movement's youth are not particularly ideological and are currently motivated more by a spirit of vengeance. However, the anti-regime revolutionary spirit they embrace leads them toward detachment, narcissism, and holier-than-thou attitudes—all products of Qutbist ideology.

The latest works in Qutbist thought denounce the Brotherhood's approach of political reform from within the system. Qutb, a leading Egyptian Brotherhood theorist who was executed by Nasser's regime in 1966, believed that Islam is a totalistic worldview that can be only wholly adopted or wholly rejected. He argued that Islam could not be integrated with other ideological systems because this would destroy Islam's true essence. Qutb considered the Islamic state to be the carrier of Islamist ideology. His understanding of the state was greatly though implicitly influenced by European ideas, such as German romanticism and Marxist-Leninist notions of vanguard-led revolution and an all-powerful state representing its people's identity and leading them toward realizing this identity. For Qutb, the "unique Quranic generation" was an elite group that had to remain in self-imposed isolation from the rest of society so it could prepare to overthrow the existing un-Islamic system.²⁶ This necessitated secretive, underground political organization and left no room for social contestation, managed pluralism, or political differences.

Brotherhood leaders have renounced exclusionary thought and excommunication (*takfir*) at the ideological level since the late 1960s and politically since 1994.²⁷ The Brotherhood's mission is first and foremost about peaceful political change rather than armed struggle. Many Brotherhood leaders have said that Qutbist teachings are not representative of the group's official line of thought.

However, some key leaders were members of the underground Brothers subgroup founded by Qutb in 1965. In addition, key components of Qutbism such as secrecy, group loyalty, organizational primacy, self-isolation, and identifying Islam with the Brotherhood have remained at the core of Brotherhood ideology. This may explain why some among the Brotherhood's radical grass roots have now returned to a purer and even more militant form of Qutbism. These members believe that it is better to fight back against state repression than to passively accept the regime's attacks, as they did in the face of Nasser's harsh tactics in 1954 and 1965. Qutbism did not call for armed violence, but its core objectives of regime overthrow, state takeover, and defiance of the un-Islamic system placed its adherents on a collision course with a particularly suppressive regime.

Muslim Brotherhood ideology is shaped by factors other than Qutbism as well. The ideology of Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna, according to some interpretations, could be inclined toward violence against the Brotherhood's enemies, who were depicted as foes of the Islamic community. Violence, arguably, can be used in the pursuit of political takeover if peaceful activism has not yielded results—as was the case in 1948 and 1954.

The angry, young members of the Brotherhood are tied to the destiny of the entire group and will likely continue to be influenced by the decisions of its leaders. Nevertheless, some young members could still defect from the Brotherhood and join alternative Islamist activities or depart from politics altogether. The spread of *takfiri* discourse among these young Brotherhood members is unlikely.²⁸ The strains of Qutbism that exist among these youth are more psychologically based than they are a product of deliberate ideological definition. In general, these members stick to the Brotherhood's official principle of peaceful protests—identifying peaceful action as “a statement of truth against an unjust ruler.”²⁹

Islamist youth outside of the Brotherhood are also becoming more radical. That process intensified after the brutal dispersal of Islamist protesters at Rabaa Square, and deeply affected both the Brotherhood youth and young Islamists who are not members of the group. The radical Islamists who are not members of the Brotherhood can roughly be grouped into three main categories: Rabaa Islamists, jihadists and Qutbists, and angry Salafist youth.

1) Rabaa Islamist Youth: This group has become larger and more influential, benefiting from the growth of Islamist populism since the 2011 uprising. While some observers have referred to these individuals as “revolutionary Islamists,” I prefer to call them Rabaa Islamists to emphasize how Rabaa events shaped their outlook. Over the course of the past three years, many of these youth have been active in street protests. They have also shifted their support among different Islamist and revolutionary groups and, as a result, have not created an organized collective-action structure of their own. They have, however, successfully pushed more established Islamist groups to adopt populist policies and rhetoric.

For example, the Brotherhood and Salafists, known respectively for a strict ideological doctrine and a rigorous method of religious reasoning, have shifted their discourse to appeal to these revolutionary Rabaa Islamist youth. Initially, politicized activist (*haraki*) and scholastic Salafists were concerned that those whom they viewed as having inadequate religious backgrounds were the ones shaping Islamist discourse and mobilizing in an unstable political context. The old guard nevertheless adapted to cope with the volatile mood of its audience.

These Rabaa Islamist youth had been mobilized by eclectic discourses that were neither purely Islamist nor secularist but were driven by ambiguous, anti-regime passions and utopian projects that borrowed from the left and the right. Such methodologically undisciplined Islamist rhetoric used hollow religious

references to support popular revolutionary demands and defend the interests of Islamist political entities.

Though these Rabaa Islamist youth do not consider Morsi an Islamist ruler, they certainly consider his rule far more tolerant of Islamists and less hostile to Islam than Sisi's regime; they also believe Morsi's overthrow was part of a U.S.-led attack on Islam. They have become increasingly radicalized since the coup, which they see as having been facilitated by twin ideological and political failures: the Brotherhood's defensive compromise on the Islamist cause in order to appeal to secular society, and the Salafists' religiously sanctioned acquiescence to military power, at the cost of Islamic righteousness and justice. For the Islamist youth, these failures are proof that participation in non-Islamist democratic politics goes nowhere, and that a new polity and society that is totally Islamic must be pursued as the final objective of an Islamist revolutionary political, social, and cultural resurgence.

Instead of reforming the state from within, the goal of the Rabaa Islamists is to dismantle old-state institutions. The conflict is increasingly depicted not in socioeconomic terms, but in exclusively ideological ones, as being between believers and nonbelievers backed by Western and regional powers.³⁰ No middle ground exists, and reconciliation between the Islamists and the state is effectively off the table. Tolerance of the other can be considered only under the umbrella of the awaited Islamist hegemony.

Rabaa Islamist youth view Egyptian patriotism as a fetish that must be replaced with a transnational Islamic revolutionary consciousness. Some of these young Islamists have decided not to accept national forms of identification in symbolic defiance of the unjust Egyptian state (which some Brotherhood youth have also done despite the gesture's *takfiri* connotations).

Furthermore, these young revolutionary Rabaa Islamists do not firmly renounce violence, although peaceful protest activism remains their official strategy. Vocabulary that was once unique to peripheral jihadist movements has recently found a place in the rhetoric of the radicalized Rabaa Islamists.³¹ Many traditional Islamist dictums are falling apart, including those of rigorous ethical rules for conduct.³² Young radical Rabaa Islamists now define peaceful protests to include everything but bullets. The forty-seven-day Islamist commune at Rabaa, with its religious rituals and ideological activities, sharpened the post-coup Islamists' soul-searching and self-conscious solidarity. Yet, it also confirmed the Islamists' self-alienation and isolation from the rest of society.³³ The bloody dispersal of the commune galvanized this amorphous body of Islamist youth in an unprecedented way, giving birth to a new Islamist utopian narrative of injustice, suffering, martyrdom, and heroism in the face of evil.

Many of the Rabaa Islamists question the benefits of Islamist organizations. While they assert the practical necessity of organized collective action, they warn against the exclusionary character of these self-seeking groups, and more importantly, against the partisan identities, internal divisions, and fanaticism

that plague self-interested segments of the Islamist movement. These youth envision a broad Islamist current (what one leader called the “general Islamic stream”) that would serve as a transnational umbrella for different Islamist initiatives and movements.³⁴ New ideology must be both more creative and more religiously oriented. Democratic trappings (such as citizenship, equality, and pluralism) are unimportant. Religious and ideological correctness (Islamic identity and authenticity, the cause of jihad, applying Islamic sharia) should be the exclusive foundation of the new cause.³⁵

Until this is established, however, these youth have no option but to support the Brotherhood while pushing for greater accountability, dynamic underground organization, more agile cadres, and more inspiring and representative leaders. This may push the current Islamist struggle involving defensive peaceful protests (the best that the Brotherhood can achieve in its current shape) to more revolutionary-style demonstrations.

Rabaa Islamists see their professed revolution as a response to the failed secular revolution of January 2011.³⁶ According to the Rabaa Islamists, revolutionary struggle has not succeeded yet because of society’s indifference to the regime’s injustices and anti-Islamist propaganda. The best option for these radical Islamists is a partially violent revolutionary struggle that targets state interests and cadres in policymaking, the army, police, judiciary, business, and media. For now, this discourse is far from reality.

As of fall 2014, the political activities of these young Rabaa Islamists have been limited to ideological propaganda, anti-regime underground efforts, attempts at civil disobedience to paralyze Egypt’s economy and infrastructure, and sporadic violence against regime forces, government apparatuses, and others collaborating with the regime to suppress their protests. Nonetheless, these activities—and potentially more violent actions in the future—remain contentious and controversial. The righteousness of an armed insurgency that could inflict harm on civilians who support the regime is heavily disputed among the Islamists in general. The religious status of regime officials and supporters—and whether they are nonbelievers or hypocrites or just sinners—is also a controversial topic among Islamists.

There is also concern about the political repercussions of more radical action. Raising arms, for example, may cause severe social damage, create divisions among Islamists (similar to Syria), and contribute to hostile societal attitudes. How to develop a friendly social base for local protests has been a hot topic already on the protest agenda.³⁷ Finally, the logistics of violent operations and whether the Islamists can be adequately trained and equipped is another issue of internal contention. These debates explain in part the reluctance of the Brotherhood, and other Islamists, to resort to violence.

The establishment of new Islamist organizations reflecting these revolutionary viewpoints has been reported, but it is difficult to verify their size and composition. The Rabaa youth prioritize an ideologically Islamist base, regardless

of its potentially small size. Such small groups include Afnan Misr,³⁸ the “set fire” movement, the Revolutionary Resistance Brigade, the Molotov Movement, the Execution Movement, and the Helwan Battalions. These small groups have not emphasized the restoration of Morsi to the presidency as a central goal. Their violent activities—mostly low-intensity violence, such as burning police cars and stations—are distinct from Islamist terrorism in the Sinai, where organized groups such as Ansar Beit al-Maqdis share their ideological extremism. As opposed to Ansar Beit al-Maqdis’s exclusionary attitudes and support for armed operations against state security targets, the Rabaa Islamists aim to use revolutionary violence only when convenient to achieve aims of vengeance, dismantling the state institutional structure, and provoking an anti-regime uprising. But it is hard to imagine their limited violent acts generating popular sympathy for their Islamist insurgency as public opinion associates violence with destructive disorder and chaos.

Attempts to organize these Islamists more systematically, through political parties or otherwise, have failed thus far.³⁹ No organizational structures exist to estimate the size of membership. Their online forums and social media pages do not have large numbers of followers.⁴⁰ Their impact on the broader Islamist movement largely stems from their discourse, which is reflected in social media outlets affiliated with more moderate elements of the Brotherhood.⁴¹

2) Jihadists and Qutbists: These individuals believe the Islamist project is a totalistic effort against the status quo that was not meant to be implemented from within the system. Jihadists and Qutbists see democracy as incompatible with Islam and believe that Islamists will always be excluded from a democratic context.

They believe that Islamist leaders made a serious error when they sought to Islamize Egypt through democratic means.⁴² The Brotherhood’s actions to solicit the trust of the regime and broader society are considered to have been too conciliatory. Instead, they championed the cause of jihadist struggle, raising arms against the state and its patrons. Though these individuals represent a minority of Islamists, their ideology is influential in shaping Islamist discourse and has appealed to a wider audience since the coup. Ideologically, they have left the door open to all options, including violent insurgency and *takfiri* tendencies.

3) Angry Salafist Youth: Ideologically, the third group remains firm in its support of Salafism, which refuses Qutbism and *takfiri* thought. Because of Rabaa, however, these youth are sympathetic to the Brotherhood. Their turnout in protests has dwindled over time, and their next move will likely be to abstain from politics altogether or engage in some process of ideological soul-searching to redefine the mission and pillars of Salafism as a method of religious understanding and social change in the current context.

The Brotherhood’s Response

Unlike the Hazimoon group (a loose network of the fans of Sheikh Hazem Abu Ismail, a leading firebrand figure among the Rabaa Islamists), the Ahrar movement (another group that brings together Rabaa Islamists and other

nonideological revolutionary youth), jihadists, and revolutionary Islamists, and despite its recent experience, the Brotherhood still believes in the merits of Islamization through the ballot box. However, until circumstances allow for a reinstatement of electoral democracy, the Brotherhood may join forces with revolutionary Islamists against their common enemy—the old state. The Brothers believe that when conditions are again ripe for Islamist electoral participation, they can return to their traditional participatory methods.

How long the Brotherhood leadership can maintain this fragmented balance is difficult to predict. Brotherhood leaders are confident in their strong organization and their ability to sell their decisions to their members. However, if the group were to reconcile with the regime, it might risk losing its appeal as a model of change in the eyes of other Islamists in Egypt who have lost faith in Islamization through democracy.

As the ideas and confrontational approaches of the Rabaa Islamists have increasingly moved into the mainstream, Brotherhood leaders have recognized the need to distance themselves officially from violence in order to maintain their image of victimhood both domestically and internationally. They also refrain from publicly critiquing the Rabaa youth's seemingly haphazard recourse to violence against the police for fear of losing support at home.

Yet several factors make it difficult to verify whether there is consistent nationwide logistical coordination between the Brotherhood and the Rabaa Islamists in these violent protests, including the decentralized structure of their organizations, fluidity of movement between groups, the need to defer to youth anger, local logistical conditions, and the spontaneous nature of uprisings among the youth. Still, the new provisional guidance bureau has uncompromisingly worked to rein in the violent Brotherhood youth known as safeguard groups that have since ceased to exist.⁴³

Reinvention and Soul-Searching

A final scenario may begin with the Brotherhood recognizing the failures of current protests, leading the organization to withdraw from politics while retaining its membership and to focus on reinvention. This, however, may be incredibly difficult. The Brotherhood's ideological mission has remained stagnant—dominated by the Arab East Brothers ideologues' tracts (in addition to al-Banna's and Qutb's works) that focus on religious goals and building a large organization as a "godly group" with very little attention paid to philosophical and intellectual foundations.⁴⁴ The organization has strictly discouraged attempts to revise this mission. The Brotherhood's official doctrine has remained silent on the religious and political content of the movement's Islamist project. Supporters were invited to participate simply as voters during elections—and to fulfill a religious duty of supporting the Brotherhood's politicians. Civil society and communal self-empowerment are important only so far as they further a Brotherhood takeover of the existing political order.

Reinvention is particularly urgent in light of the rise of extremist organizations such as the Islamic State. Though the Brotherhood can disparage the actions of the Islamic State as either politically inexpedient or religiously wrong,⁴⁵ both groups share roots in the legacy of the contemporary Islamic revival (or *al-sahwa*). Central to the *sahwa* propaganda were the doctrines of the return of an Islamic caliphate and the uncritical adoption of anachronistic Islamic political teaching. The utmost attention was paid to emotional mobilization overlooking the need for critical reading and refinement of the Islamic heritage.⁴⁶

To reinvent itself, the Brotherhood should hibernate politically and focus on social, educational, cultural, media, and religious activities. Religious tools for political purposes may be employed selectively, subtly, and as relevant to modern sensibilities.⁴⁷ The group's political profile should also remain minimal, limited to working in association with existing friendly political actors. The goal should be restoring positive cultural attitudes toward Islamism, which is more feasible in the long run than positioning Brotherhood rule as a gateway to economic and social benefits.

The likelihood of this scenario depends on the tolerance of the political system going forward, the emergence of fresh resources for religious reform, and whether the Brotherhood chooses to endorse such a reinvention. The possibility of an endorsement remains questionable given the accumulated interest in political participation and maintaining the status quo.

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Political Islam and Democracy in Egypt

The role of religion in democracy in the Middle East remains up for debate. Some Islamists reject democracy altogether on theological bases. They believe the democratic principle of rule of the people negates the totality of the divine sovereignty over human life (*hakimiya*). These Islamists include Salafists and jihadists.

Others accept democracy as the timely equivalent of Islamic *shura* (consultation), endorsing the rule of the people within restrictions. The Brotherhood falls into this category, accepting democracy so long as it does not violate Islamic sharia and seeing it as a gateway to the establishment of a future Islamic state. The Brotherhood's discourse on democracy tends to overemphasize procedural democratic aspects while restricting freedoms in the name of Islam, to be authoritatively defined by Islamists.

This poses a dilemma. Including the Brotherhood in democratic politics may then lead to an illiberal electocracy in which the state uses its power to force certain values upon its citizens and undermine certain freedoms, rights, and institutional checks and balances; however, excluding the popular group from politics by force seriously destabilizes and undermines democracy.

The predominance of neoliberalism worldwide in recent decades, and its interpretation of democracy as a mere set of procedures for managing political differences, empty of any progressive participatory socioeconomic content, may suggest a solution: accepting an illiberal form of Islamist-dominated electoral democracy and accepting Islamist identity claims as cultural realities of Muslim societies. As events in Egypt from 2011 through 2013 demonstrate, such an approach fails to address the concerns of populations feeling alienated by Islamism who choose non-Islamist authoritarianism as the lesser of two evils. A conservative political center capable of fusing Islamic traditions with political

A conservative political center capable of fusing Islamic traditions with political modernity is missing in Egypt.

modernity is missing in Egypt. The Brotherhood squandered the post-2011 opportunity to start building this badly needed center. It either didn't prioritize this task or it lacked the ideological capacity and willingness to do so.

The biggest challenge Islamists have faced is the reconceptualization of democracy as an indigenous process rather than a Western import. Instead of pursuing pragmatic adaptation and intellectual debates about a type of

democracy that is considerate of Islamic specificity, democratically inclined Islamists should have invested their energy in situating democratic processes within the vernacular discourse. The Islamists could have retained their long-standing assumptions about the centrality of religious traditions and values, nevertheless embarking on reinterpreting these religious teachings in the direction of liberal or participatory pluralist democracy and eventual separation of the state and religion. An immensely difficult assignment, it requires new political theology and dueling interpretations of religious scriptures—different from political philosopher John Rawls's concept of "overlapping consensus" as the foundation of a culturally pluralist liberal democracy. Rawls argued that what is needed is a nonideological and reasonable conversation that is agreeable to everyone.

However, to bring together Islamists and non-Islamists would require working on the ideology itself through a complicated process of negotiation, democratic bargaining, religious reinterpretations, and reconstruction of the proper place of religion with respect to the normative foundations of the political system. How to create a set of rules and values for a competitive and inclusive democratic order—rules that embody a consensus of all ideological movements in Egypt competing for political office and override their legacies of mistrust—is the forgotten duty of democracy in Egypt. This missing consensus, however, is indispensable given the weight of the Islamists within any demanded pluralist democratic process and the futility of excluding them. Religious institutions as well, such as al-Azhar, are required to play a key role in this religious reform process.⁴⁸

It is hard to imagine in clear terms what a democratic Islamist or post-Islamist movement would look like, particularly as doubts increase about the democratic merits of the Turkish AKP's previously hailed model of Islamic liberalism. It is clear, however, that broader intellectual reforms are required within Islamism on

questions of relations between religion and the state. Concepts such as *hakimiya* and *jahiliya* (depicting contemporary Muslim societies as pre-Islamic) must be abandoned, along with the objective of restoring the Islamic caliphate. Religion should not be invoked in the discourse of democratic Islamist parties. These democratic Islamic movements would retain their appreciation of Islamic values but only as national cultural traditions without state enforcement. Organizational and financial transparency, the severing of ties with outside affiliates, and the separation of proselytizing and politics are necessary as well. In other words, a democratic Islamist movement might resemble a Muslim version of the Christian Democratic parties in Europe—a culturally conservative movement that competes for power within consensual democratic rules. Liberation theology in Latin America might be another model.

Unfortunately, Egypt also lacks moderate Islamist actors who could lead a democratic movement. The al-Wasat Party, for example, has subordinated itself to the Brotherhood over the last three years and has lost its independent, proto-democratic character as a result. The once-promising Strong Egypt Party has so far failed to build an organization with a clear ideology, committed cadres, and a distinctive social constituency, and its avowed centrism in the midst of intense polarization has lost the confidence of both Islamists and non-Islamists.⁴⁹

As for inspiring historical models of democratic Islamism in the Middle East, Islamist parties in Turkey and Tunisia both developed under robust pressure from secular state structures and in competition with strong non-Islamist political movements. Morocco had the advantage of a deeply entrenched monarchy able to define the rules of political and religious pluralism. However, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt has remained unable to carry out the necessary transformations in the face of a perceived existential threat. Even when they were in power, the most progressive piece of reform that the Brothers considered, without great success, was separating politics from proselytizing. The Brotherhood's dogmatic, organizational, and historical legacies were too complicated to let it be content with becoming just another faction within a pluralist democratic polity in Egypt.

Conclusion

The Brotherhood remains an important force in Egypt, but it no longer occupies the same space it did before Morsi's overthrow. More broadly speaking, the dream of establishing an Islamic political and social order will survive in the imagination of many Islamists, but whether Islamism will ever again appeal to wider segments of Egyptian society will be determined by the choices its leaders make. Islamist actors will be forced to transform in a political climate more hostile than the 1970s through the 1990s—when Islamist social outreach was at its zenith.

Developments thus far have not been encouraging on this front. State opposition to Islamists and social rejection of the Islamist project have pushed the Brotherhood and Islamist youth toward further intransigence. And the multiplicity of views that exists has produced more fragmentation than enriched pluralism. Without consistent guiding missions, change within the Islamist movement will not occur linearly; rather, it will entail a series of ups and downs.

Given the existence of state authoritarianism and the political and ideological vacuums in Egypt, the experience with transformation to date does not bode well for a future democratic Egypt or the healthy development of Islamism. Islamists' pursuit of domination after the fall of Mubarak had adverse effects on the uprising's dreams of a new democratic polity in Egypt. But, equally true, the current losses incurred by Islamists being suppressed by the old state also have fatal impacts on these democratic dreams. It is only against the deplored Islamism that the old state in Egypt can justify its dictatorship and sell its approach to a fatigued public while invoking multiple legitimizing discourses, religious ones included.

Despite having been afflicted by stagnation in leadership, organization, and ideology, the Brotherhood has proven to be more resilient than some initially

The Brotherhood, though successful at preserving its organization, has lost its *raison d'être* as a force for change. And even if the urge for violent radical Islamism is contained, the Brothers' political model is still unsustainable.

assumed. Its strong organization and the undeniable commitment of its popular base have proven to be valuable assets. Motivated by its stakes in electoral participation built over decades, the Brotherhood can still reproduce a commitment to electoral democracy among its members, provided that conditions for real democracy exist. But, it currently faces intense Islamist competition.

So far, the Brothers and the bulk of the Islamist mainstream still refrain from violent confrontation with the state either because of their vested interests in participating in the social mainstream or because they lack resources. Yet this position might be unsustainable given the fallout of regional politics and domestic deadlock. Truly, the Egyptian Islamists, and the Brothers at their core, may normally find the Islamic State's extremism appalling. But facing suppression, Islamic State armed radicalism stands out as the only currently successful Islamist model that is triumphing. On the other side, the Brothers and their classic model of reformist Islamization through peaceful political activism was shattered. In this context, jihadist models in Libya, Iraq, and Syria might attract Egyptian Islamists desperate because of their 2013 political debacle. Common ideological roots can facilitate this shift. The Brotherhood, though successful at preserving its organization, has nonetheless lost its *raison d'être* as a force for change. And even if the urge for violent radical Islamism is contained, the Brothers' political model is still unsustainable.

Islamists, in general, will remain a force in Egyptian politics in the immediate future. As of now, which of the five scenarios for the Brotherhood's future will come to pass is uncertain. The old state and the Brotherhood (the key

belligerents in the conflict) are committed, respectively, to the success of the first and second scenarios—either the Brotherhood’s total eradication or its triumphant comeback. But the limitations of these scenarios might force both sides to be more open to other options, particularly reconciliation. Until the two sides agree on this point, the other three scenarios (reconciliation, fragmentation, and reinvention) remain unlikely.

As unrealistic as Islamist dreams of a comeback are, the idea that political Islam is a thing of the past in Egypt represents a similar level of wishful thinking. The rise of post-Brotherhood politics (the emergence of popular democratic Islamic and non-Islamic actors) would require the end of the old-state authoritarian politics, economic development, serious religious reform, and an installment of participatory democratic alternatives. All remain unlikely developments over the short and medium terms.

The current turmoil in Egypt—including social strife, polarization, and violence—has cast shadows on the potential for Islamist integration as well as the regime’s ability to achieve political stability and normalcy. The Islamists and the old state share a common interest in excluding other actors. Islamists pursued a clean takeover of the existing authoritarian order and, when that failed, resistance against the old state. Any path for democratic political and social change—a third way—has not been welcomed by the old state or the Islamists, who remain unwilling to engage with other actors or foster democratic change. This leaves political Islam, like the old state in Egypt, as part of the ongoing problem rather than the solution.

Notes

- 1 According to Human Rights Watch, government forces killed at least 817 people (and more likely over 1,000) during its dispersal of the Rabaa sit-in. See their full report, Human Rights Watch, *All According to Plan: The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt*, 2014, www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/egypt0814web_0.pdf. Figures of regime-inflicted Brotherhood casualties since July 3, 2013, are estimated by the Brotherhood to number 3,248. See <http://wikithawra.wordpress.com/2013/11/12/sisicasualties>. The Brotherhood estimates 41,163 additional individuals have been arrested or detained. See <http://wikithawra.wordpress.com/2014/01/09/sisi-mansour-detainees>. It is hard to verify these figures from independent sources.
- 2 Between October 2013 and July 2014, an ad hoc government committee appropriated the money and businesses of 737 Brotherhood-affiliated personnel, including 66 businesses, several retail and commercial activities, in addition to privately owned schools.
- 3 This information was collected through interviews with several Brotherhood members in Cairo, Giza, and Alexandria between January and March 2014.
- 4 Brotherhood students administer their own affairs free of external oversight by the group's leadership—copying the model of the Strong Egypt Party. Author interview with a Brotherhood student, Cairo, May 14, 2014.
- 5 This information is based on a series of interviews with a group of Brotherhood students during April and May 2014.
- 6 Islamist women, regardless of Brotherhood affiliation, have actively participated in protests and demonstrations. Some of them even violated key Islamist taboos such as writing songs in praise of the anti-coup struggle. Administrative bureaus justify the violation of these taboos by referring to the “necessities of battle.”
- 7 Before 2011, the Brotherhood usually restrained itself from fielding women in elections on a large scale or mobilizing them in demonstrations to protect them from the regime's wrath. This is no longer the case. According to Brotherhood reports, there are about 65 female Brotherhood activists currently incarcerated across Egypt.
- 8 Michael Georgy and Tom Perry, “Special Report: As Brotherhood Retreats, Risks of Extremism Increase,” Reuters, October 28, 2013, www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/28/us-egypt-brotherhood-special-report-idUSBRE99R0DU20131028.
- 9 Author interview with Brotherhood leader, Giza, May 2014.
- 10 For instance, many Brotherhood members consider jihadist violence as understandably reactive, or even admirable in some cases. The Brotherhood officially downplays charges of sectarianism, yet a recurrent Brotherhood practice is to blame the Egyptian Orthodox Christians, or Copts, for participation in the coup and indict them as haters of Islam.
- 11 Author interview with Brotherhood activist, Giza, July 2014.

- 12 Ibid.
- 13 The head of the Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) was invited to attend the official meeting held by the army leaders to discuss the post-Morsi political road map.
- 14 Author interview with anonymous Brotherhood businessman, Cairo, June 2014.
- 15 Many former Brotherhood members who deserted the group in protest after the 2011 uprising returned to the group after the Rabaa massacre to support their former colleagues, friends, and relatives. Author interview with several ex-Brotherhood members, Cairo, March–May, 2014.
- 16 Author interview with an anonymous Brotherhood leader, Cairo, June 2014.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 The International Criminal Court ignored the Brotherhood's charges of crimes against humanity against the Egyptian military. The United States and the European Union also conveyed the message that elections would legitimize the current regime in Egypt. Finally, Qatar, a key patron of the Brothers' anti-coup struggle, kicked out some of the Brotherhood activists who had resided in Doha following the coup. Qatar conveyed that it will decrease its support to the Brothers as part of a political reconciliation with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
- 19 *Deya*, or blood price, can be paid to the family of the murdered person as compensation instead of legal punishment. *Deya* is not part of the Egyptian legal code, but it is respected by Islamists and populations as tradition. Usually *deya* is considered if the victim's family is willing and identifying the culprits is impractical. In the case of Rabaa and similar massacres, it is indeed difficult to identify the exact individuals involved.
- 20 Although Islamist intellectual and the head of the Ennahda Movement in Tunisia (affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood), Rachid al-Ghannouchi, is staunchly opposed to the military coup and its regime in Egypt, he reportedly expressed his displeasure at the Brotherhood's ill-advised politics and failure to read the balance of power. He said that the Brotherhood's failures in Egypt destroyed the potential for all Islamists in the region, echoing viewpoints among Brotherhood branches in Jordan, Yemen, and Europe.
- 21 Author interview with several young Brotherhood members, February–March 2014.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 See the official al-Wasat Party's statement: www.facebook.com/alwasatparty/photos/a.170362426345091.34117.167887129925954/720267474687914/?type=1&theater. Also see statement by Mohamed Mahsoob, the supreme executive bureau member of the al-Wasat Party, www.facebook.com/Mahsoob/posts/924153254266168.
- 24 Apparently, a top regime priority is to protect the military and police officers (its key powerhouse) from any legal punishment for their murderous acts. Human Rights Watch provides some documented evidence on this.
- 25 Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- 26 Sayyid Qutb, "Milestones," www.izharudeen.com/uploads/4/1/2/2/4122615/milestones_www.izharudeen.com.pdf.
- 27 In 1994, the Brotherhood authored a statement titled "Our Vision for Reform" in which the organization declared its commitment to democracy, women's rights, and political pluralism.
- 28 For instance, Brotherhood discourse would denounce the military and police as "unjust" but not as "infidels"—a moniker reserved for the Copts.
- 29 Author interview with several anonymous Brotherhood youth activists, Cairo, June and July 2014.
- 30 Closure of mosques and religious media and restrictions on religious activities confirmed these Islamists' depiction of the conflict as a war against Islam.

- 31 An online document circulated by a group of young Muslim Brotherhood members titled “The First Issue” discussed “Dafi al-Sael” and rules for fighting “al-Taefa al-Momtanea.” This is a well-known term in jihadist literature from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, which justified jihad against ruling regimes that refrain from applying sharia or inflict damage on the lives, freedoms, and property of the pious in Muslim countries. The term was never present in Brotherhood literature.
- 32 For instance, the Islamists led a campaign with the social media hashtag “Elect the Pimp” that insulted General Sisi. Also, Brotherhood-affiliated websites have spread sexually obscene videos, recorded by a pro-Sisi activist in the city of al-Mahalla al-Kubra, as part of an anti-Sisi campaign. This represents a major departure from the Islamist conventions on issues of sexuality and morality.
- 33 Islamist ideological camps, much larger than the ones the Brotherhood organized under Mubarak, were arranged at the Rabaa sit-in. Ramadan coincided with the sit-in, furthering opportunities for religious rituals to be utilized in Brotherhood propaganda.
- 34 “Within such entity, the Brotherhood can do political management, Salafists can do religious scholarship, jihadists will fight for jihad against enemies of Islam, and Tablighis will preach and proselyte. And mutual support shall double their power and guarantee success.” Author interview with an anonymous, radical Islamist, Cairo, March 2014.
- 35 Key ideologues who propagate these propositions include Yehia Refai Soroor, Muhammad Galal al-Qassass, Hossam abo al-Bokhari, Safwat Barakat, Mahmoud Fathi, and others.
- 36 Author interview with an anonymous revolutionary Islamist, Alexandria, May 2014.
- 37 Key to sustaining Islamist violence is to have social support among important social groups in areas of operation. Although many people in their strongholds support protests either out of ideological sympathy or because of some local anti-government legacies, they may turn against such tactics if they become too violent. Author interview with three anonymous radical Islamist activists in two major protest strongholds, Helwan in Cairo, and Haram in Giza, June 2014.
- 38 Afnan Misr declared its responsibility for the terrorist attacks in front of Cairo University on April 2, 2014, among others.
- 39 Hazem Salah Abu Ismail’s political party, al-Raya, could not be officially established because of a lack of organizational resources and political cadres. Other parties that express similar ideas such as al-Fadeela and al-Asala remained marginal and insignificant. Nonpartisan entities such as the Salafist Front, Hazimoon, the General Islamic Coalition, and the Sharia Students have lacked organizational competency.
- 40 For instance, the Facebook page “The Youth of Ahl-Sunnawa al-Jamaa Call” (the youth wing of a prominent Qutbist group based in Alexandria) only had a few hundred members.
- 41 For example, the Facebook hashtag “My most recent intellectual transformations” indicated the radicalization of many Brotherhood supporters and affiliates.
- 42 Such as the disciples of the late Sheikh Refai Soroor.
- 43 These groups were hastily formed by some young Brotherhood members in reaction to police brutality during mass protests in Cairo and Alexandria in August 2013.
- 44 These ideological tracts include the *Soldiers of God* series by the Syrian Brotherhood ideologue Said Hawwa, works such as *The Outcasts of the Dawa* by the Lebanese Brotherhood ideologue Fathy Yakan, *The Haraki Manhaj of the Prophetic Sunna* by Mounir al-Ghodbani, and *The Pillar* by the Iraqi Muhammad Ahmed al-Rashid, in addition to works by Egyptian Brotherhood members such as Moustafa Mashour and Gom’a Amin.
- 45 Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the most prominent Brotherhood-affiliated religious scholar, denounced the Islamic State’s caliphate as religiously incorrect. The Islamic State’s ideology is *takfiri* of other Muslims and Islamists, including the Brothers themselves.

- The Islamic State wrongly massacres innocent people in the name of Islam. It considers participation in democracies to be against Islam. According to al-Qaradawi, this incorrect reading stems from a faulty methodology regarding sharia law.
- 46 This explains the confusion and ambivalence in the Brothers' reactions to the Islamic State's ascendancy in Iraq and Syria. Positions range between full support and admiration of their effectiveness, critical support (questioning some issues but supporting other points), criticism (mainly for practical and political reasons), outright dismissal of the Islamic State as *takfiris* and *Kharajites*.
- 47 For instance, between April and June of 2014, a campaign spread brochures and posters across big cities in Egypt asking people to pray in blessing of the Prophet Muhammad. There was wide speculation regarding the identity of those behind the campaign, and some Brotherhood and Salafist involvement. The regime reacted accordingly and shut down this campaign by force.
- 48 Modernization in the Middle East has been predominantly top-down and state-led, ignoring the need to build a liberal democratic relationship between religion and government (that is, a soft form of political secularism). State, religious, and educational institutions have been the temple guards of such conservatism.
- 49 Ashraf El-Sherif, "The Strong Egypt Party: Progressive/Democratic Post-Islamists or Just Another Islamist Party?" available at <http://media.leidenuniv.nl/legacy/sherif.pdf>.

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