THE EGYPTIAN MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD'S FAILURES

Part 1 of a series on political Islam in Egypt

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Summary

To understand Egypt's current political situation, it is crucial to examine how and why the Muslim Brotherhood—a leading political actor just over a year ago—met its demise so suddenly and forcefully. Though it had to operate in a hostile political environment, the Brotherhood ultimately fell because of its own political, ideological, and organizational failures.

Key Themes

- The organization's inclusion in the political system did not lead to its democratization and moderation, as some observers had predicted it would. Instead, the lack of political consensus in Egyptian society combined with the Brotherhood's unwillingness to undergo a process of ideological and organizational transformation undermined the group's democratic potential.

- The Brotherhood's leadership was made untenable by its inability to placate the powerful old state or win over crucial elites and other political actors.

- Ideological hollowness and opportunism undercut the Brotherhood's claims to a legitimate "Islamic democratic project," and the organization's structural deficits led it to be widely distrusted.

- The Brotherhood's failure to transform electoral victories into sustainable political control effectively eliminated the possibility of Islamist domination. While its fall did not signify the end of political Islam in Egypt, it did mark the end of the utopian idea held by some that "Islam is the solution."

Three Primary Faults

Politically, the Brotherhood misread the situation. It moved toward political domination too quickly, making a series of tactical mistakes in the process. It failed to either appease or successfully confront institutional power bases, and, believing its electoral victory to be an irreversible popular mandate, it was reluctant to make the concessions necessary to avoid alienating crucial secular elites. The Brotherhood waged an unwinnable battle, driven more by ideological zeal and delusions of grandeur than by a realistic assessment of the political environment.

Ideologically, the Brotherhood was shallow and opportunistic. It proved too willing to sacrifice elements of its ideology for short-term political victories. Furthermore, fundamentally antidemocratic components of Brotherhood

dogma and the disconnect between the group's professed ideology and the policy positions it assumed highlighted its incompatibility with modern democratic politics.

Organizationally, the Brotherhood was incapable of adaptation. Its rigid, hierarchical structure prevented it from successfully reacting to rapid societal changes. The Brotherhood's attempts to promote organizational unity, while successful at muting the impact of intragroup differences, contributed to the exodus of fresh talent and ideas. Its organizational introversion and conspiratorial mind-set also undermined its ability to build a broad network of support.

Introduction

With attention in Egypt focused on the current political situation, it is critical to look back and understand how the country arrived where it is today. Crucially, this entails a serious examination of the failures of the Muslim Brotherhood. Just three years ago, in 2011, the Brotherhood looked to be a major political player and inheritor of power after the ouster of former president Hosni Mubarak. Today, however, the group has been pushed aside and largely discredited in the eyes of many Egyptians. What happened?

In the wake of Egypt's 2011 uprising, the Brotherhood faced the challenge of balancing its Islamic principles with popular demands for democracy and socioeconomic reform. The group failed to rise to the occasion and ended up failing both as "conservative democrats" and as Islamists. Its only real success was the preservation of organizational unity, but this came at the cost of perpetuating the movement's lack of a sustainable ideology and political project.

Prior to the Brotherhood's rise to power, many believed that its political inclusion would lead to its democratization and moderation. However, this view appears to have broken on the rocks of reality, and its collapse was the result of a series of the Brotherhood's political, ideological, and organizational failures. The group was also unable to read the real balance of power and the post-Mubarak social and political realities and act accordingly.

Politically, the Brotherhood's bid for domination failed to effectively appease or confront the institutional power bases of the old state, which was the real power holder in the country throughout the post-Mubarak transitional period and even after the election of a Brotherhood-affiliated president, Mohamed Morsi, in 2012. Brotherhood leaders were also unable to appreciate the profound changes in Egyptian society that the 2011 uprising had produced. Ideologically, the Brotherhood failed to develop a nuanced platform that was attentive to political needs and rested on both Islamic legitimacy and democratic correctness. It proved too willing to compromise its already-hollow core ideology for the sake of short-lived tactical political victories. And organizationally, the rigidity of the Brotherhood's structure, which lacked meritocracy, inclusiveness, and transparent decision-making, contributed to the movement's inability to adapt to a rapidly shifting political landscape. These combined failures made the Brotherhood end up seeming to many Egyptians as a vestige of the old system rather than a herald of a forward-looking new Egyptian polity.

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Political Failures

From early 2011 to the middle of 2013, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood failed to lead an inclusive democratic transition, appreciate the full diversity of Egyptian society, and understand the need for a completely reinvented political culture. Brotherhood leaders did not marshal the resources, networks, and knowledge necessary for the implementation of effective reform policies. These failures were the result of a complex relationship with the state and a series of tactical blunders on the part of the organization's leadership.

For the political inclusion of the Brotherhood to lead to the group's democratization, two conditions were necessary. First, post-Mubarak Egypt required a consensus on new rules of the political game. Second, the Brotherhood needed to undergo an ideological and organizational transformation, including by embracing the principles of democracy, pluralism, individual freedoms, citizenship, and equality before the law. Neither of these conditions was fulfilled.

The uncertainties of the post-2011 political sphere are partly to blame for the lack of consensus on new rules of the game. Wrangling between those political actors striving for major institutional changes and those much stronger actors eager to preserve the status quo contributed to a complex political space unamenable to agreement. But the Brotherhood's own political failings cannot be discounted, given the group's dominance over Egypt's post-2011 elected institutions.

The Brotherhood and the State

The Muslim Brotherhood has had a complicated relationship with the modern authoritarian state in Egypt. Historically, the state sidelined the Brotherhood and other Islamist movements, but they nevertheless blossomed in the vacuum created by the state's socioeconomic ineptitude. The death of politics brought about by the state's authoritarianism left only religion as a refuge. The Brotherhood filled the gap left by the state, accumulating considerable social, cultural, and economic capital in the process.

The Brotherhood cherished the idea, deeply embedded in Egyptian politics, that the state—the most modern and potent institution in society—was the principal instrument through which all ideological and political movements could realize their own goals. The conquest of the old state, with its three main features of elitism, authoritarian guardianship, and structural violence, therefore became the Brotherhood's central long-term goal.[1]

The movement deemed control over the old state necessary to enact its broader political vision. Brotherhood leaders believed that all they needed was a process of elite turnover to gain control of the existing state institutions, which they could Islamize once they had consolidated power. They aimed to position themselves in the long run to be able to capitalize on such an opportunity. The thirty years of Mubarak's rule gradually witnessed the full integration of the Brotherhood into Egyptian politics. Over time, the group developed into a

massive political movement that crowded out social alternatives but lacked the flexibility to challenge the status quo.

Moves Toward Domination

Throughout the eighteen days of demonstrations in January and February 2011 that toppled Mubarak, the Brotherhood was careful not to be perceived as taking control of the protest movement in terms of its slogans, discourse, or political demands. Brotherhood leaders were aware that the protests were not dominated by Islamist ideas but rather oriented toward the broad goals of freedom and social justice. They were also aware that other political groups and movements were instrumental in mobilizing demonstrators and writing the narrative of the uprising. As a result, Brotherhood leaders were careful not to alienate other protesters by expressing their Islamist views too overtly.

After Mubarak's fall, a smart strategy would have been for the Brotherhood to restrain its power and moderate its political objectives for the time being. It could have supported an expedited constitution-writing process, endorsing an ad hoc panel to draft the document, with members representing all political and ideological factions and a composition not tied to the outcome of parliamentary elections. In the spring of 2011, the revolution was still fresh, and the institutions of the old state, including the military, police, bureaucracy, and judiciary, were still on the defensive. At that time, a united revolutionary front could arguably have secured better constitutional provisions regarding civil-military relations, checks and balances, political freedoms, and democracy.

The Islamists would not have been satisfied with the limited role for Islamic sharia that the new constitution would likely have embraced. Yet a calculated power-sharing pact could still have secured a place for Islamists in the system without intimidating or alienating secular revolutionary and reformist groups. Such an arrangement could also have allowed the Brotherhood to escape the regime's crackdown that happened two years later.

A workable partnership could have been established allowing the Brotherhood's organizational and popular prowess to support a united front in negotiations with the old state. In terms of the state's democratic character, the final outcome would probably not have been much better than the 2012 or 2014 constitutions—in both cases, the old state emerged as a winner. But at least the process would not have divided the antigovernment demonstrators of early 2011 or polarized society to such an extent. Furthermore, the threat of a Mubarak loyalist assuming the presidency would have been strongly diminished if the Brotherhood had thrown its electoral weight behind a pro-change revolutionary or reformist figure. Even if a Mubarak loyalist such as Ahmed Shafiq had made it to the presidency, he would have had to struggle with an already-ratified, restrictive new constitution, sustained economic challenges, and a political opposition led by both secular parties and Islamists whose reputation had not yet been tarnished.

However, this is not the path the Brotherhood chose to take. Instead, the movement prematurely shifted its political approach after Mubarak's downfall. To the fear and dismay of many in society, the Brotherhood opted to flex its political muscles, excluding and looking down on other political movements. The Islamists in general threw their weight behind an electoral path designed to make them the leading force within elected institutions and therefore assumed the burden of governance in both the parliament and presidency. This made the Brotherhood the sole negotiator with the military and other institutions of the old state. The Brotherhood sought to defer the drafting of a new constitution until after parliamentary elections—a sequence that Brotherhood leaders believed could provide the group with legitimacy as a representative of both the people and the revolution. Accordingly, the referendum of March 19, 2011, on constitutional amendments, which both the Brotherhood and the old state backed, postponed the constitution-writing process until the following year—after the election of a new parliament.

Many factors led to the Brotherhood's shift in political tactics, including the group's nonrevolutionary character, its type of ideology and organization, and its fear of being sidelined by a constitution-writing process dominated by secular liberals and leftist elites. Also significant were the Brotherhood's deluded belief in the power of its massive comparative advantage and encouragement from the old state itself, which preferred to negotiate with conservative and organized actors like the Brothers. This path secured some initial tactical gains, including the appeasement of the Brotherhood's broad Islamist grass roots and the bolstering of the group's foothold in the political system. Yet ultimately, it cost them greater losses.

> **Given the magnitude of past government failures and the Brotherhood's own lack of a genuine political project, voluntarily opting to take full responsibility for the post-Mubarak political system was political suicide.**

The shift was also the result of the Brotherhood leadership underestimating the meaning of the 2011 uprising. The Brotherhood viewed the unrest as a heavenly gift that rewarded the group for its past sacrifices and eradicated all constraints that Mubarak had placed on it. Brotherhood leaders were therefore totally occupied with how to seize this golden opportunity, maximize their political gains, and dominate the post-Mubarak political sphere—regardless of the implications of their approach on the prospects for Egypt's democratic transformation and even their own long-term interests. But given the magnitude of past government failures and the Brotherhood's own lack of a genuine political project, voluntarily opting to take full responsibility for the post-Mubarak political system was political suicide.[2]

Other Islamist Political Models

The Brotherhood in Egypt was particularly fascinated by the Islamist model of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP). Based on this model, the Brotherhood believed

that it could come to power via the ballot box and lead a majoritarian procedural democracy. It also maintained that it could consolidate its power through a series of international arrangements and domestic economic achievements based on a flexible combination of Islamist ideology, conservative culture, and economic liberalism.

However, the Brotherhood failed to successfully replicate the AKP model in Egypt due to its lack of a strategic vision, qualified cadres, and political expertise compared with the AKP.[3] The Brotherhood was unable to spur economic development, failed to build a society-wide center-right coalition to back it in its struggle with the old state, and did not bring about the genuine ideological revision necessary to produce a version of the AKP's "Islamic liberalism." Instead, the Brotherhood reduced itself to being just another conservative political faction, squandering its decades-long historical claim to be a leader in the struggle against "imperialist designs."

Another Islamist model that likely caught the attention of Brotherhood leaders was that of Sudan in the 1980s and 1990s. In that country, Islamists gained power through an alliance with the military. Any attempt to replicate the Sudanese model, however, was unrealistic since the Brotherhood failed to build an effective relationship with the military in Egypt.

Confronting the Old State

Key to the Brotherhood's failed bid for political domination was the group's inability to forge a working relationship with the state institutions in charge of "legitimate violence" and rule making: the military, police, and judiciary. A conflict between the Brotherhood and the old state was most probably unavoidable in the long run given the historical rivalry between them and the incompatibility of their respective interests and worldviews. But such a conflict did not have to happen so quickly. Had the Brotherhood played its cards better, it could have postponed the eventual confrontation. The organization's postrevolutionary shift in relations with the old state, from a failed policy of appeasement to an even more failed policy of confrontation, contributed to the ultimate outcome.

Overall, the Brotherhood's bid for domination misunderstood the balance of power in Egypt. Brotherhood leaders overlooked the fact that the real levers of power still rested in the hands of the old state. The military lay at its core, but the old state also encompassed a number of other institutions, including the police, ministerial bureaucracies, public-sector companies, the judiciary, municipalities, and all these institutions' related patronage networks. Taking on these well-entrenched institutions would be a heavy lift even if all opposition forces acted together, but the Brotherhood's decision to go it alone made the challenge even more difficult.

Throughout the post-Mubarak transitional period, the old state maintained its inherent traditional hostility toward Islamists. The institutional actors of

the old state particularly abhorred the peculiar character of the Brotherhood and its international extensions, which they saw as a parallel state that threatened their interests. The Brotherhood did not fall into line with the old-state actors' worldview and their self-ascribed role as the "guardians of the national interest and identity of the country." Furthermore, the old state presided over a network of players with vested economic interests that were sensitive to the emergence of new power seekers like the Brotherhood.

Regional factors were also significant. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were concerned, not just by the rapid ouster of their ally Mubarak, but also by the increasing prominence in Egyptian politics of the Muslim Brotherhood—a group supported by their regional nemesis Qatar. The potential domino effect of the Brotherhood's ascent in Egypt was threatening to these conservative Gulf regimes, which were already suspicious of their own domestic Brotherhood organizations. Thus, they were determined to throw their political, economic, and media weight behind the anti-Brotherhood camp in Egypt, including the old state and the opposition. The political, economic, and financial support provided by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and to a lesser extent Kuwait to the July 3 military coup that ousted then president Morsi and the caretaker regime it installed was indispensable to its survival.

Nevertheless, between 2011 and 2013, the old state chose to cooperate with Islamists, including the Brotherhood, to neutralize the revolutionary mood in the country and cast all revolutionary forces as unreliable and irresponsible actors. This tactical decision ultimately paid off for the old state. The radical wave of the revolution waned, and the Brotherhood made enemies of the revolutionary youth movements and lost the support of average voters as a result of policy failures.[4] After that, it was much less costly for the old state to confront the self-isolated Brotherhood.

By contrast, the Brotherhood did a poor job of its tactical engagement with the state. Unlike its counterpart in Turkey, the group lacked experience in bureaucratic administration, and the well-entrenched existing bureaucracy defied the Brotherhood's attempts to exert control over it.[5]

Failure to Include Other Revolutionary Factions

The Brotherhood underestimated the level of anger among revolutionary and reformist factions. These groups reacted negatively to the Islamist electoral landslide and the Brotherhood's overt attempt to dominate the process of establishing the foundations of a new political system. The tech-savvy youth movements that were at the heart of the January 2011 uprising despised the Brotherhood's protofascist dream of establishing cultural domination based on "Islamist common sense." Also, secular elites' fundamental opposition to Islamist ideology and their unwillingness to live with the Brotherhood's surprise electoral victory weakened the position of the revolutionary and reformist blocs, which paved the way for the subsequent comeback of the old-state hegemony.

The Brotherhood believed that a strong victory at the polls was enough to stamp its newly acquired dominant political position with popular legitimacy. But this proved to be a serious miscalculation. Liberal, nationalist, and leftist elites might not have had the same electoral clout as the Brotherhood and the Salafists, but that did not mean that they would easily accept the unexpected and unsettling electoral outcome of a Brotherhood takeover of Egypt's parliament, presidency, and constitution-drafting process.

The elites' opposition to the Brotherhood was rooted in the fundamental incompatibility of secular and Islamist worldviews. That made the elites hypersensitive to the threat of an Islamist takeover that they believed would undermine their liberties, economic interests, and way of life and, no less dangerously, split the country and ignite social strife. While these elites could likely have lived with a gradual movement of the Brotherhood into politics, their fears were justified by the group's swift and exclusivist approach, which constituted an imminent threat that the elites refused to accept.

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Despite their lack of strong electoral support, these well-educated, secular elites remained politically relevant since they represented the core of the privileged classes who ran the country. These urban classes refused to accept the idea that they needed to forego their lifestyles and social status and submit to the uncertainties of intolerant, divisive, and hate-based religious politics just because the Islamists received strong electoral support in Upper Egypt and rural parts of the Nile Delta. In a country like Egypt, where relations between religious institutions, the state, and society were historically quite unsteady, commanding electoral victories were not nearly enough to secure political and social legitimacy. Deeper agreements about the place of religion in society had to be forged to assuage concerns and establish Islamist legitimacy in the eyes of non-Islamist Egyptians.

The Brotherhood attempted to rely on patronage to secure support within the traditional bastions of the old state, but such patronage did not help allay the concerns of these other influential secular actors.[6] To make things worse, the far-from-clear relationship between former president Morsi, while he was in power, and the group he belonged to (the Brotherhood), with its secretive, opaque structure and regional extensions, raised fears among already-suspicious non-Islamist observers.

The huge Islamist demonstration in Cairo's Tahrir Square on July 29, 2011, which embraced slogans about Islamic identity and sharia, effectively negated the possible radicalization of street politics in the wake of the January 2011 uprising. Hundreds of thousands of Islamists, including Salafists, Qutbists, and jihadists, poured into Tahrir Square from all over Egypt. Their frightening theocratic discourse raised serious concerns among many Egyptians that radical democratic politics aimed at dismantling the old state could pave the way for a takeover by sectarian, intolerant, and reactionary Islamists. In a sense, the

fantasy that a new radical democratic political culture was easily achievable in Egypt came to an end that day.

The presidential campaign of radical Islamist firebrand Sheikh Hazem Salah Abu Ismail sent shock waves throughout secular circles that feared the rise of an Egyptian version of Iran's Ruhollah Khomeini. The Brotherhood's trademark conservative self-restraint and refined standpoints, which could have soothed fears, were absent in the rhetoric of this radical Islamist cleric and his anti-state revolutionary populism. Rather than the elite-based terrorist activities of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden or jihadist military operations against selected regime targets, Abu Ismail's source of inspiration was the anti-regime protests embraced by the masses that were at the heart of Khomeini's "comprehensive Islamic revolution" in Iran—a phenomenon even more terrifying than al-Qaeda-style terrorism.

Practically speaking, an Egyptian version of Khomeinism had no real chance of success. Even the Brotherhood and Salafist Call, another Islamist group, were unhappy with Abu Ismail's rhetoric and have worked with the old state and the social mainstream to counter it. Still, the presence of such rhetoric served only to strengthen popular support for the old state as the sole line of defense against extremism and disorder.

Tactical Blunders

The Brotherhood failed to react effectively to challenges to its leadership and legitimacy. Increasing social resentment manifested itself over time in the Islamists' sectarian hate speech, threats against freedom and secular lifestyles, and concrete policies in the (albeit short-lived) elected parliament, which failed to address economic crises or improve living conditions and public services. This dwindling social support was evident in the results of the 2012 presidential election, in which the Brotherhood lost some of its traditional strongholds in parts of Alexandria and the Delta, and in persistent labor strikes, informal sector disturbances, and mass protests under Morsi. The near-even result in the second-round presidential contest between Morsi and Shafiq indicated the depth of polarization in society.

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This should have been a wake-up call for the Brotherhood. Reaching out to the opposition, granting concessions to enlarge its ruling coalition, and building a consensual democracy might have been effective political choices for the Brotherhood. These steps might have enabled the movement to stabilize the situation, enhance its standing vis-à-vis the old state, and mitigate the lack of trust that existed. However, despite initial attempts at such a strategy,[7] the Brotherhood, to its own detriment, ultimately chose the exact opposite path, adamantly refusing to make any concessions and alienating not just secular groups but even Islamist allies like the Salafist Nour Party.[8]

The Brotherhood also suffered from political inconsistency and the lack of a long-term strategic vision. Brotherhood leaders—self-styled political tacticians—inconsistently caved to the demands of some political actors, both in rhetoric and in policy, just to maximize short-term tactical gains, regardless of the long-term strategic implications.

As such, the Brotherhood appeared to shift alliances frequently. First, Brotherhood leaders appealed to the conservative middle class, which was hungry for stability, to gain their votes in the March 2011 constitutional referendum and the November 2011 parliamentary elections. Only a few months later, Brotherhood leaders targeted Islamist voters during the first round of the 2012 presidential elections, calling on them to vote for the "Islamist candidate" Morsi. Shortly thereafter, they began courting anti-old-state revolutionary factions to gain revolutionary legitimacy and secure this badly needed constituency in the second round of the 2012 elections against the Mubarakist contender, Shafiq.

While Morsi was in power, the Brotherhood engaged other Islamists (including some of the most outspoken radical Salafists and jihadists) to build a solid base of support with which to counter rising anti-Islamist sentiment. At the same time, however, the group, in its executive and legislative decrees, decisions, and draft legislation, caved to the demands of old-state institutions, such as the military, police, and business elites. When viewed together, the Brotherhood's actions seemed incoherent. Its attempts to appeal to different political factions at different times appeared opportunistic and satisfied no one. Moreover, other factions saw nothing in the Brotherhood's actions except arrogance, self-serving behavior, and ideologically driven bids for exclusive domination. The end result was the alienation of all possible allies and mounting hostility toward the Brotherhood from all corners. In this context, it became easy for the old state to turn against the Brotherhood since it could count on the support of the non-Islamist opposition, Gulf patrons, and, most importantly, wide segments of the population exhausted by three years of instability and deteriorating economic conditions.

Admittedly, many non-Islamist elites would have remained avowedly anti-Islamist and lent their support to the old state regardless of any attempts the Islamists made to build confidence. Nevertheless, it was the Brotherhood's responsibility, given its sheer power, to either lead the Islamists toward the acceptance of ideological concessions or opt for a gradualist approach instead of rapidly seeking political domination. While the first option was not feasible in light of ideological intransigence among Islamists (particularly Salafists), the second would have been possible had Brotherhood leaders not badly misread the situation.

Still, the Brotherhood's poor political performance was not just the result of a tactical mishandling of the sequence of events. More profoundly, it can be traced to the Brotherhood's peculiar type of ideology and organization—both sources of additional failings.

Ideological Failures

The Muslim Brotherhood's demise was not simply a failure of its political party; it represented a failure of the organization's grand ideological project. Ideologically, the Brotherhood failed in four key ways.

First, it proved overly willing to sacrifice ideological principles for short-term political gains. That ensured that the Brotherhood's rise to power would represent not a triumph of its unique brand of Islamism but rather a political ascent resulting from calculated power politics that could easily turn against the Brothers when conditions changed. And that is what actually happened. Second, the Brotherhood's Islamist ideology lacked sophistication and substance, and the organization failed to construct an authentic, nuanced vision for its "Islamic project." Third, the group's claims to Islamic legitimacy were in contrast to specific policy decisions its leaders made, creating a gap between the group's ideology and its performance in a leadership role. Finally, core components of the Brotherhood's ideology were undemocratic, putting the organization at odds with efforts toward a moderate democratic transition in Egypt, a shift of which it purported to be a part.

Power Politics Trumps Ideology

The Brotherhood failed to make its way to power through an ideological triumph or as the outcome of the societal process of Islamization that its leaders promised. In other words, the Brotherhood was unable to fashion itself as an Egyptian version of the Iranian Khomeinists, who founded their own Islamic state by gaining societal hegemony. The Brotherhood also failed to be a Muslim version of European Christian democratic parties.[9] It could have pursued this strategy by situating itself somewhere at the center of the Egyptian ideological political spectrum, as some of its "reformist" leaders hoped it would. This aim of centrism came to naught, as it mixed religious centrism with political centrism.[10]

Instead of achieving a triumph of ideology, the Brotherhood's ascent to power was a product of normal and calculable power politics, including coalition building, political maneuvering, and placating different interests and power centers within society. This entailed a great deal of compromise on ideological and religious principles. The Brotherhood also inflated the political component of its Islamist mission.[11] Political power, instead of societal Islamization based on changing the hearts and minds of the population, became the movement's key objective.

Ideological Hollowness

Compounding the problem of the Brotherhood's willingness to sacrifice its ideology for political gain was the fact that the ideology itself lacked depth. Since its inception in 1928, the Brotherhood had been completely preoccupied with crafting strong reactions to perceived foreign and domestic threats to its

existence and to Muslim identity in general. Building a nuanced and sophisticated ideology that embraced both the Islamic tradition and modernity in a creative way was never on the Brotherhood's agenda.

Broadly speaking, the Brotherhood's overall mission lacked a strong vision, and attempts to revise and clarify it were strictly deterred by the organization. Islamist critiques of Brotherhood ideology were always partial, such as jihadists belittling the feasibility of participatory political activism or Salafists decrying the Brotherhood's lack of a rigorous methodology on religious law.

The Brotherhood's famous charity networks helped it to develop a following but did not promote popular mobilization or awareness.[12] People were not invited to action except as voters on election days. Little attention was paid to the role of civil society and communal self-empowerment except as a supplement to the Brotherhood's real goal of taking over the existing political order. Scarce attention was paid to contextualizing vague ideas about a broader "Islamic project."

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However, in some sense, the lack of a clearly articulated ideology was helpful to the Brotherhood, since it enabled the organization to mobilize and include wide segments of the population that could otherwise have been alienated. However, it also prevented the Brotherhood from providing thoughtful, ideologically rooted answers to the many questions that plagued Egyptian politics. At stake were issues of state-religion relations, society-religion relations, the role of Islamic law and jurisprudence, and the relationship between democracy, pluralism, and development. Answers to these questions were badly needed to build a coalition that embraced a new, post-2011 political culture.

The Brotherhood's ideological hollowness was evident in its dearth of jurisprudential knowledge and scholarly analysis. The organization had developed a great deal since its establishment, but despite its capacity to survive, it lacked the ideological flexibility and creativity to forge its own pathbreaking political model.

Islamist movements in other countries offered much deeper models of adaptation and transformation. Both before and during Tunisia's 2011 uprising, Islamists in that country, led by the Ennahda party, carried out a model for the pursuit of power through peaceful struggle within a democratic context. To a considerable extent, Ennahda embraced the values of liberal democracy and understood the balance of power in society. In Sudan, Islamists were highly pragmatic. They largely ignored Islamist doctrine and focused on action. They remained open to all possible political options, including democratic participation, cooperation with ruling regimes, cooperation with non-Islamist opposition movements, armed insurgency, and ascension to power through military coup. Moroccan Islamists, such as the Justice and Development Party, completely discarded Qutbist puritanical dogma. Instead, they pursued a path of gradual political participation at the municipal and parliamentary levels,

cumulative reforms, and distinctive institution building rivaled only by the Turkish AKP.

The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, by contrast, remained tied to an eclectic combination of the old dogma of its founder Hassan al-Banna and former leading ideologue Sayyid Qutb and an instrumentalist mind-set that limited the organization to superficial adaptation to new circumstances. While some analysts have argued that the Brotherhood's conservative, closed-minded worldview was the result of a process of "ruralization" in which leaders from rural backgrounds influenced the group's ideological development, in reality the Brotherhood's ideological deficiencies were more fundamental.[13]

At the root of these deficiencies was the puritanical dream of an "Islamic state" that would resuscitate the Islamic caliphate and lead members of the Brotherhood toward the realization of their Islamic identity, salvation, and empowerment. In reality, however, the Brotherhood's concept of an Islamic state owes more to modernist ideas of a strong, authoritarian developmental state than to classical Islamic political thought. The concept of the Islamic state as the organizational embodiment of the Islamic order in the Brotherhood's doctrine is actually quite different from the concept of government in Islamic law. Historically, Islamic government was checked by other nonstate actors and enjoyed much less disciplinary and regulatory power over the population than the modern state does.

The Brotherhood understood the concept of Islamic identity in two parallel but contradictory ways: first, as an immobile set of religious attributes and cultural characteristics that the Islamic state needed to guard; and second, as a living set of political, social, economic, and cultural paradigms yet to be realized by the Islamic state. The two understandings were incongruous, but both implied that the Islamic state was the true representative of Islamic identity and therefore had a vital role to play in the defense and designation of that identity.

Ironically, Brotherhood doctrine said very little about the institutions or structures of its Islamic state. In practice, the concept was reduced to signifying a state dominated exclusively by the Brotherhood itself. In this sense, the movement proclaimed a monopoly on the definition of Islamic identity and labeled itself the exclusive representative of Islam, effectively asserting that it was *the* Muslim group rather than simply one group of Muslims among many, despite rhetoric to the contrary.[14] Its members considered the Brotherhood to be the ideal Islamic organization, pure of the filth that infected the rest of society. Particularly under Mubarak, the Brotherhood became a sect that bolstered its cohesion not only through religious doctrine but also by appealing to shared economic interests, social and family ties, and common personal experiences and lifestyles.

Ideology-Performance Gap

There is a considerable gap between the Brotherhood's ideological claim to Islamic authenticity and its actual practices, which adhere to Western secular modernist paradigms of state-centric politics and market-based economic policies. These practices are not compatible with traditional understandings of Islamic sharia. The Brotherhood's election to the Egyptian parliament and presidency exposed this inconsistency in the eyes of the general public and, more importantly, in the eyes of the Islamist power base.

Islamists who hoped for the return of an Islamic caliphate and the institution of Islamic rule saw a purportedly Islamist president advocating the same policies that had been in place for years. These included the accommodation of the interests of domestic institutional power bases; neoliberal economic policies, pursued in consultation with the International Monetary Fund and dependent on rent-based economic activities; and conventional pro-Western foreign policy positions on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Syrian civil war, and Persian Gulf geopolitics. These policies rendered talk about the application of Islamic sharia obsolete. The Islamic character of the Brotherhood regime was effectively reduced to talk of the "religious president" and "religious Brotherhood statesmen" who could establish order on the basis of their personal piety.

> **There is a considerable gap between the Brotherhood's ideological claim to Islamic authenticity and its actual practices, which adhere to Western secular modernist paradigms of state-centric politics and market-based economic policies.**

The Brotherhood's overall ideological hollowness therefore seemed particularly acute when viewed in the context of its policymaking. It was easy for the Brotherhood, while in opposition, to disseminate general principles that could garner public support on religious and cultural bases. But it was far more difficult for the group's leaders to express specific viewpoints on divisive policy issues, including the economy and social welfare. When confronting these issues, it became clear that the Brotherhood could not reconcile its Islamist roots with its behavior in power. Indeed, the political tools employed by the Brotherhood were actually rooted in secularism. Ideology, which remained the Brotherhood's greatest motivator, collapsed when confronted with bureaucratic and economic realities.

This dissonance made it difficult for the Brotherhood to locate itself on the political spectrum. Brotherhood leaders often liked to depict themselves as centrists but always did so in religious terms, locating the Brotherhood in between the literalism and extremism of the Salafists and the secularism of the liberals and leftists. This religious definition of centrism, however, is not the one commonly accepted in the modern political vocabulary. It was therefore hard for the Brotherhood to stake out clear positions on the left-right political spectrum on a host of policy issues.

The inclusion of Islamists within a democratic political system could have limited the negative impacts of this ideological dissonance. Various types of

Islamists could have been differentiated on the basis of socioeconomic and regional interests. A variety of Islamist factions might have emerged, including libertarians, communitarians, neoliberals, and social democrats. The Brotherhood could have halted and reversed decades of domination of its leadership by a small-town mind-set and a semirural conservative worldview. Voices of the Brotherhood's more urban members, especially those who came out of the group's student movement active in the major universities in Egypt, could have gained status within the organization.[15] Ultimately, none of this occurred. But to be fair, the Brotherhood's forced short tenure in power handicapped any such possible development.

Components of Undemocratic Brotherhood Ideology

The Islamist ideology effectively discriminated against women, non-Muslims, and anyone who was not an Islamist. Despite rhetoric to the contrary, it eschewed liberal values of pluralism, tolerance, and respect for individual freedoms in favor of theocratic intolerant notions of communal discipline and authoritative control. While Brotherhood leaders were preoccupied with "Islamic constraints" on freedom and pluralism, they paid little attention to the need for an Islamic argument in favor of these values. In the aftermath of Mubarak's overthrow, the Brotherhood's previous "gray zones" and ambiguous policy positions on questions of human rights, the status of women and minorities, and the rule of law became clearly authoritarian.[16]

> **The Brotherhood pushed for its own interpretation of religious doctrine that did not treat all citizens equally and discriminated against the religious, doctrinal, and sectarian other.**

An intellectual revolution was necessary for the Brotherhood to endorse democracy, pluralism, individual freedoms, and human rights within the confines of its ideological worldview. Any democracy must rest on a notion of civic ethics or a set of principles that structure relations among members of the community on the basis of political equality and mutual respect. Religion, including Islam, can be a major source of these ethics.[17] The Brotherhood, however, pushed for its own interpretation of religious doctrine that did not treat all citizens equally and discriminated against the religious, doctrinal, and sectarian other. Brotherhood leaders did not necessarily advocate violence or engage often in outright hate speech, but the discriminatory tone of their rhetoric was unmistakable.

The Brotherhood's "golden rule," established by early Islamic intellectual Muhammad Rashid Rida and propagated by al-Banna, was that members should forgive one another for what they disagree about and cooperate with one another on issues where they agree.[18] But while the Brotherhood applied this golden rule to Islamic theology, the group sternly dismissed it when it came to politics, particularly in the post-Mubarak era.[19] The Brotherhood's unwillingness or inability to lead a process of major intellectual revision within the Islamist movement left a widespread impression among the Egyptian public

that the state was under threat from a movement that provided no legitimate democratic alternative. The old state manipulated this concern to justify its rule and guarantee the support of non-Islamist elites. Since they believed a process of popular democratization could open the door to Islamist theocracy, these elites preferred to reproduce the authoritarian old state, viewing it as the lesser of two evils.

Organizational Failures

In addition to its political missteps and ideological deficiencies, the Brotherhood's unique structure also contributed to its ultimate downfall. Its hierarchical, sect-like organization led the Brotherhood to prioritize loyalty over competence and unity over diversity, and to employ religion in a polarizing way to win political battles. Favoritism and clientelism dominated an organization already tarnished by the mysteriousness of its internal structure. A zero-sum approach to political conflicts and the overextension of its organizational capacities sapped the Brotherhood of its adaptive flexibility.

Furthermore, the group's elitist hierarchical system of control discouraged grassroots initiatives. The organizational model of the political party that the Brotherhood founded after the 2011 revolution resembled the conservative one employed by Jordanian Islamists.[20] The Brothers also lacked a meritocracy in running the government. Instead of realism and the creative, flexible, smart policies that were badly needed to face the complicated Mubarak legacy, the Brotherhood confined itself to ideological lethargy and organizational rigidity. The movement proved incapable of restructuring its organization to ameliorate problems associated with its lack of internal democracy and transparency.

The Brotherhood's Parallel State

During its time in opposition, the Brotherhood focused on the creation of a parallel state of its own—a strong hierarchical organization that rested on ideological adherence to Islamist principles and a tight network of supporters and sympathizers. The Brotherhood was not content with self-isolation; rather, it sought to expand the reach of its parallel state within society. The Brotherhood's true moment of triumph would be when its parallel state expanded to represent the majority of the country.[21] This parallel state, however, suffered from an inflexible structure and leaders who were intolerant of differences and dismissive of criticism. Brotherhood leaders bluntly invoked religious texts to justify their demands for blind obedience and cast critical voices as religious sinners.[22]

To strengthen its parallel state, the Brotherhood focused on ideological acculturation and religious education, establishing youth camps, learning centers, and a structured pyramidal organization. The group's belief system was standardized through ideological education and religious propaganda. Despite shallow attempts to craft the appearance of internal discussion, the movement

discouraged independent thinking, intellectual diversity, and critical debates. The aim was to create a strong, unified organization ruled by a politicized elite yet with a mass following based primarily on religious and social values.

The larger Islamist project that the Brotherhood advocated had arguably succeeded prior to the 2011 uprising. As far back as the early 2000s, some minor voices within the group started raising the idea that the Brotherhood in its original form had become obsolete as a result of its own success. Since the movement had already managed to Islamize the societal mainstream in Egypt—the original objective of the Sahwa, or Islamic Awakening—these voices believed it was time to dissolve the group and create new, specialized organizations, including political parties.[23] But their calls were unheeded.

Muting Ideological Differences

The Brotherhood faced the real problem of internal socioeconomic diversity. Discrepancies existed between the tastes of the wealthier, more cosmopolitan urban Brotherhood bourgeoisie and the group's much more culturally and socially conservative, lower-middle-class and lower-class grass roots based in rural areas and small towns. Even as rural middle-class activists ascended to the second and third tiers of Brotherhood leadership, the businessmen in the guidance bureau continued to dominate the upper echelons of power within the organization. Yet many of these urban businessmen and professionals retained a conservative religious flair, creating internal friction and more complex cleavages beyond a simple rural-urban divide.

Nevertheless, for a long time, the Brotherhood managed to mute the impact of these internal conflicts using three main tools.

First, the Brotherhood presented an ideology broad enough to accommodate multiple irreconcilable ideas. To this end, any serious intellectual effort to strengthen the Brotherhood's ideological consistency was intentionally avoided. Ideological ambivalence was deliberately employed as the organization focused on vague political causes that ignited grassroots enthusiasm, such as the restoration of the Islamic caliphate, the struggle for Palestine, and the struggle against Western imperialism.

Second, the Brotherhood centralized all decisionmaking and made policies adopted by top elites binding across the entire organization. The responsibility for implementing these policies, however, was placed on the organization's local units. The Brotherhood was thereby able to maintain group unity while ensuring that the organization could still function freely on the local level in a decentralized way, even in the face of regime repression.

Third, Brotherhood leaders used Islamic concepts including sharia, the "interest of Islam," the "interest of the group," and "religiously ordained necessity" to religiously justify all decisions they made. In general, those decisions were made on the basis of the Brotherhood's political interests, and religious

justification was only provided afterward. This process opened the door to significant ideological manipulation.[24]

However, while these tools were successful in limiting intra-organizational conflict, they led many of the Brotherhood's fresh talent, who were unwilling to fall into line with the movement's rigid ideology and structure, to abandon the group. The approach also restricted the organization's ties with Islamic intelligentsia outside the Brotherhood.[25] As a result, self-criticism, including critical reflections on past involvement with violence and terrorism, was absent within the Brotherhood's internal organization.

Even in 1994, when the Brotherhood began speaking out in favor of democracy, pluralism, and human rights, it was the outcome not of deep ideological revision but of pragmatic considerations.[26] Since the Brotherhood sought ideological justifications for its actions only after they were taken, it is not surprising that these justifications were superficial. Overall, the Brotherhood's organizational mechanisms and bylaws were tightly controlled to ensure the survival of the group's parallel state. The movement put off key reforms related to its legalization, transparency, funding, and leadership.[27]

Organizational Introversion

The Brotherhood's indoctrination was aimed at insulating members from the corruption of society. To this end, the group offered members a closed circuit of religious and social services apart from the influences of the rest of society. This structure, however, did not fit with the Brotherhood's other main goal of setting an example for the rest of society to follow. As a result, the organization embraced two conflicting tendencies: one that stressed the dangers of societal corruption and the need to separate oneself from it, and another that attempted to engage society by setting a positive example.

The Brotherhood's political failures led its leaders to believe that societal corruption was more intense than expected. To combat this, they concluded, Brotherhood members needed to develop additional skills through self-improvement. "Individual reform is necessary for social reform" was a core Brotherhood motto—and one that other Islamists embraced as well. The more the group failed to achieve substantive social reform, the more this motto was internalized. By embracing increased introversion, however, the Brotherhood left societal corruption to fester and widened the gap between its movement and the rest of society. The Brotherhood's methods were therefore self-defeating. As long as individual reform remained unfinished, failures remained excusable, and the assumed solution was to perpetuate the same failed policies and strategy.

Other Products of a Problematic Organizational Structure

The Brotherhood's rigid, hierarchical structure led the group to hold on to certain ideas that negatively impacted its political trajectory, particularly after it assumed power. These ideas were fourfold.

First, the organization showed a reductionist understanding of history. Brotherhood leaders selectively read Islamic and modern Egyptian history to serve their ideological project.

Second, the Brotherhood demonstrated a ghetto mentality. Facing regime repression, the Brothers sought refuge in their closed organization. Over time, an opaque society was created that engulfed its members and shaped their lives. More than simply a political party, social association, or religious order, the Brotherhood became a society that supported its members through both vertical religious guidance and horizontal social solidarity, including the provision of *takaful* (Islamic welfare). As a result, the group became inward-oriented and unable to relate to outsiders. This proved to be politically costly for the Brotherhood in power, as it raised suspicions and resentment among many people.

Third, the movement displayed a conspiratorial mind-set. Despite gaining political power, Brotherhood leaders remained paranoid and consistently complained about opposition conspiracies. The Brotherhood's political failures, including Morsi's inability to fulfill his promise to achieve a "renaissance project" within his first hundred days, were blamed on "enemies" such as old regime remnants, a politicized judiciary, the deep state, and a hostile opposition. Such rhetoric about enemies and conspiracies invited calls for street mobilization to face these threats.[28] This proved to be a good recipe for temporary group solidarity, but it seemed strange for a movement that was no longer in opposition. At the same time, the Brotherhood's incompetent political analysts misled its leaders about the size of the opposition, the balance of power with the old state, the policy objectives of the old state, and the Brotherhood's dwindling popularity.[29]

Fourth, the Brotherhood showed a lack of reflection. The group adopted a mind-set that suggested no option of turning back. It consistently believed that the only way out of whatever problem it faced was forward. Instead of critically understanding how and why things went wrong, addressing the roots of previous problems, and embarking on fresh, new paths, the Brotherhood resorted to a policy of escapism. The Brotherhood's usual approach to crises was to raise other, more contentious issues as red herrings. For example, in November 2012, when the Brotherhood faced intense opposition to Morsi's controversial presidential decrees, it diverted attention from them by calling for a popular vote on the newly drafted constitution in December. The move worked in the short run, but it cost the Brotherhood long-term credibility.

Loss of Popular Support

After coming to power, the Brotherhood quickly lost support among the main recipients of its social welfare network: the poor. Several factors help explain this phenomenon. The Brotherhood's relationship with the poor was entirely clientelist and was concerned exclusively with creating an electoral base as opposed to developing a more substantive ideological or political relationship. In 2012, the Brotherhood's charity committee discussed the idea of adding educational aspects to its social support system to introduce welfare recipients to Brotherhood ideology and values. This idea went nowhere, however. In addition, except for the Brotherhood's schools, its social welfare projects were affiliated with local Brotherhood leaders rather than with the wider organization. Much of the Brotherhood's funding went to support political activities after the revolution, at the expense of social welfare programs. Ultimately, the Brotherhood did not care about social empowerment or sustainable development. Rather, it preferred to reproduce poverty as long as it translated into welfare recipients and, by extension, loyal voters.

> **Ultimately, the Brotherhood preferred to reproduce poverty as long as it translated into welfare recipients and, by extension, loyal voters.**

   As a result of its increasingly limited social outreach, the Brotherhood lost its claim as the sole representative of the popular will. The Brotherhood's choice to belittle the opposition as "conspirators" and "Islam haters" reflected an inability to engage with other viewpoints to build a broader support network. The Brotherhood increasingly shifted to the far right, strengthened societal polarization, and pandered exclusively to their Islamist base.[30] At the same time, Brotherhood leaders continuously reminded the public and the old state that they were the only line of defense against the threat of Islamist extremism. These moves led only to intensifying social strife.

Conclusion

A perfect storm of Brotherhood failures precipitated its demise and the emergence of today's political landscape in Egypt. The Brotherhood's inability to placate the institutions of the old state or win over the hearts of the people made its leadership politically untenable.[31] The movement's ideological hollowness and opportunism undermined its claims to a legitimate "Islamic democratic project," while the group's closed, opaque sect-type structure rendered it inaccessible to possible allies and led to distrust among state actors, political movements, and the general population. As a result, the Brotherhood failed to transform its electoral domination into sustainable political hegemony. The Brotherhood's ultimate shift from the failed policy of containment of the old state to the even more failed policy of confrontation with it paved the way for its ouster in July 2013.[32]

But did this series of events signify the end of political Islam in Egypt? Yes and no. Islamist movements will remain key political actors with an ideologically committed constituency and decades of accumulated social capital. This key position will remain strong given the obvious organizational incompetence of the opposition and its lack of political resources. If allowed to participate in elections, Islamists will gain a portion of the vote that will, at a minimum, include its sizable core constituency.[33]

It is also clear that the regionally supported state defiance and societal rejection have stopped the Muslim Brotherhood's pursuit of an Islamic state and political hegemony. The Brotherhood's tenure and overthrow represented the end of the utopian idea that "Islam is the solution." Among Islamists and non-Islamists alike, it became evident that Islamic slogans were irrelevant when it came to the Brotherhood's capacity to deliver substantive policy achievements.

Perhaps more significant than their impact on the fate of Islamism in Egypt, the three years following the 2011 revolution firmly invalidated the idea that Islamist movements, if included in a democratic system, will moderate and democratize. This proved not to be the case for the Muslim Brotherhood, which remained unwilling to undergo necessary ideological and organizational transformations and lacked a favorable political context for democratization. Yet current events in Egypt will likely equally invalidate the idea that it is possible to finish off Islamism by force or establish an Islamist-free political sphere. Ironically, the same coup and subsequent crackdown that dealt a lethal blow to the Brotherhood's dreams of an "Islamist electocracy"[34] has also furnished the movement with a new narrative of victimhood capable of sustaining it in the future.

Notes

1   See Ashraf El-Sherif, "Egypt's Post-Mubarak's Predicament," Carnegie Paper, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/post_mubarak_predicament.pdf.

2   In the months following Mubarak's ouster, the Brotherhood repeatedly confirmed its unwillingness to assume full responsibility over the country since it did not believe it could confront Mubarak's "legacy of failure" alone. Strangely, however, it subsequently assumed this responsibility anyway.

3   The lack of Brotherhood political cadres cannot be attributed just to the regime's decision to sideline the Islamists and exclude them from governmental apparatuses or to the overall death of politics. The Brothers themselves, while investing very much in building a tight and disciplined organization under Mubarak, did not care equally about educating their qualified cadres in the arts of modern government, politics, and economic management. Nor did they provide them with adequate learning and training processes abroad. Of course, the regime's restrictions deterred such steps. But it is equally true that the Brotherhood's vision was limited from the outset. The ideal Brotherhood qualified cadre was the engineer or doctor who could astutely make it to the syndicate board through the provision of services, accumulating popularity and social capital for the group that could win it votes in future parliamentary elections. The Turkish case was a completely different story. AKP leaders and cadres have decades-long experience of political learning through participation in municipal, parliamentary, and executive politics. Turkey's more democratic context furthered this tendency, as a matter of fact.

4   Policy failures under Morsi included fuel shortages, power blackouts, ongoing insecurity, and a high crime rate.

5   See Al Jazeera's interview with Ossama Yaseen, youth minister in Morsi's government and a Brotherhood leader: "Without Borders," Al Jazeera, March 7, 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJy9FyjoFgU.

6   The Brotherhood tried to curry favor with the traditional large families of Upper Egypt to win their votes in addition to the classical payoffs of sectarian voting in Upper Egypt. The 2011 and 2012 election results demonstrate that this strategy was somewhat successful. The Brotherhood also created local networks of its own members in the Delta to mimic traditional village councils, strengthen group solidarity, and win recognition and votes. However, these actions were insufficient to confront deeply entrenched traditional political actors in these regions in the longer run. Moreover, Islamist groups like the Brotherhood, by definition, subverted the family-based societal structures in these traditional regions.

7   Morsi began his presidential term with an administration that represented a relatively wide range of political allies. His decision to sack the prominent Supreme Council of the Armed Forces generals Mohamed Hussein Tantawi and Sami Hafez Anan in August 2012 was accompanied by rhetoric appealing to Egypt's revolutionary

youth. But the Brotherhood's moves toward more exclusive political control soon overshadowed these initial gestures. Key milestones include Morsi's dictatorial presidential decrees in 2012, the two cabinets of Prime Minister Hesham Qandil in 2012 and 2013, the 2012 constitution-writing and voting process, clashes between Brotherhood and opposition supporters in 2012 and 2013, and the 2013 government appointments.

8   The Salafists of the Nour Party, whom secularists would hardly have described as anti-Islamist, were frustrated by what they saw as the purposefully weak representation of their party in Morsi's cabinet and its exclusion from decisionmaking in general. Another issue of concern was the Brotherhood's concerted attempt to dominate the religious public sphere and its proselytizing. The Nour Party saw the Brotherhood's bid for a monopoly over Egyptian Islamism as inconsiderate of the Salafists' contributions to Islamists' political success throughout the transitional period. Furthermore, it believed the Brotherhood's actions threatened the party's existence as an independent Islamist political actor. (This information is based on an author interview with Younes Makhyoun, the head of the Nour Party, in December 2012.) On January 30, 2013, the Nour Party proposed a compromise initiative to reconcile the conflicts between Morsi's government and the opposition, but it was rejected by Brotherhood leaders, who saw it as a betrayal by a supposedly Islamist partner.

9   European Christian democratic parties are somewhere in between liberals, socialists, and conservatives.

10 Author interview with Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, a renowned former member of the Brotherhood's guidance bureau, public activist, and presidential candidate, Cairo, November 2008.

11 Prominent Islamist ideologue Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi found this development alarming and dangerous. See Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, *al-Tafseer al-Seyasi lil-Islam* (The Political Interpretation of Islam) (Cairo: Afaq al-Ghad Press, 2010).

12 Hassan al-Banna pointed to the shortcomings of charity, which might be religiously rewarding but is hardly a route for the social and political change to which Islamists aspire.

13 Hossam Tammam, a researcher of Islamic movements, has written about the "ruralization" of the Brotherhood. Hossam Tammam, *The Brothers and the Pre-Revolution Years* (Cairo: Dar al-Shorouq, 2012.)

14 This reading of the Brotherhood as *the* Muslim group is evident from the writings of Sayyid and Muhammad Qutb, Muhammad Ahmad al-Rashid, Fathy Yakan, Said Hawwa, Mustafa Mashhour, and Munir al-Ghadban. These are key Brotherhood thinkers, and their literature is central to the group's indoctrination program.

15 Hossam Tammam argued that the "ruralization" of the Brotherhood was fully established by the 1990s. However, the role of the small-town and semirural elites in shaping the group's worldview began much earlier than that.

16 As the Brotherhood came to power, this creeping authoritarianism became clear in the less-than-democratic 2012 constitution it drafted, the restrictive draft laws it adopted on social associations, protests, trade unions, and media, the hate speech it directed at the opposition, and its continuation of the repressive policies toward political activists initiated under Mubarak and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces.

17 U.S. philosopher John Rawls, for instance, raised the concept of "overlapping consensus." He suggested that a principled institutional foundation of a multicultural democracy can be sought in a strategic way when the followers of different totalistic normative doctrines in the same community (including religious, moral, cultural, and ideological systems of belief)—which ostensibly advocate incoherent conceptions of justice—conform to specific principles of justice and concur on similar judgments of political correctness and its outcomes in the form of legislations and policies. See John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

18 Historically, this golden rule can be traced back to the thirteenth-century Muslim scholar Ibn Taymiyyah.

19 The Brotherhood's rival, the Salafist Call, claims it does the exact opposite.

20 The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood created a political party, the Islamic Action Front, which was technically separate from the group but depended on its resources and leadership in practice. The party became the political arm of the group. A more progressive model could be found in Morocco, where the Islamist Justice and Development Party disassociated itself on an organizational level from the Islamist group that founded it. Other models existed in Algeria, where the whole Muslim Brotherhood turned into a political party, and in Yemen, where the Brotherhood united with other social and tribal groups to form a big-tent political party.

21 The Brotherhood's organizational divisions were modeled on the Egyptian state structure, including governorates, cities, towns, and villages. In addition, the group's departments were designed as parallel to existing government ministries and segments of civil society, including departments for finance, students, professionals, preaching, youth, women, and politics.

22 Brotherhood leaders invoked religious verses obligating obedience to state leaders to justify their absolute unquestionable power over Brotherhood members. Distinctions between the state and the Brotherhood organization were blurred considerably.

23 Political analyst Abdallah al-Nafisi presented the most articulate arguments in this vein. But the most visible contribution came from Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh.

24 Ibrahim al-Hudaiby, a political activist and former Brotherhood member. Unpublished manuscript.

25 The list is lengthy and cuts across different generations. It includes clerics, such as Muhammad al-Ghazali and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, and political and social activists and academics.

26 The Brotherhood issued a document in 1994 entitled "A Statement for the People." The document explained the Brotherhood's endorsement of pluralism, democracy, and gender equality in a clear and detailed way for the first time in its history.

27 Though the regime's iron fist disappeared after the 2011 uprising, the Brotherhood did not undertake the necessary process of organizational restructuring to achieve better societal representation and more transparent internal decisionmaking processes. Discussion of organizational reform was generally limited to talk of changing the group's bylaws and disregarded the more important need for reform in organizational mentality and administrative structure.

28 As happened on December 1, 2012, when Islamists organized a mass demonstration in front of Cairo University in Giza.

29 In a meeting on June 23, 2013, between the Brotherhood's guidance bureau and other Islamist leaders, including leaders of the Salafist Call, to discuss the upcoming protests expected on June 30, the Brotherhood downplayed the expected scale of the protests. One member of the guidance bureau said, "Under Morsi we have had 25 major opposition demonstrations. This will be the 26th, and nothing will change." Author's interview with a Brotherhood guidance bureau member, July 2013.

30 The mass demonstration in Giza on December 1, 2012, under the banner of "legitimacy and sharia" was just one example. The Brotherhood's media discourse became more intolerant and sectarian over time, and it offered room for extremists, such as Safwat Hegazy, Assem Abdel Maged, and others, to spread hate speech. The climax was the "Support for Syria" conference in Cairo Stadium, where Morsi remained silent as some of his Islamist followers, most notably the Salafist Sheikh Muhammad Abdel Maqsoud, invoked *takfiri* discourse against Morsi's opponents, accusing them of apostasy.

31 The 2012 constitution, which the Brotherhood drafted, granted the military unprecedented privileges, including the lack of any parliamentary oversight of the military budget and the exclusive right of the military-dominated National Defense

Council and National Security Council to make strategic decisions related to war and peace and national security. The Brotherhood also avoided any serious discussion of restructuring the police force or bringing police officers to justice for past crimes.

32   See El-Sherif, "Egypt's Post-Mubarak's Predicament."

33   It is difficult to give an exact figure for this Islamist core constituency, given the different results in the parliamentary elections and the two rounds of presidential elections. However, the number is likely around the 5.8 million voters who cast their ballots for Morsi in the first round of the presidential election, given the depiction of Morsi as the only Islamist candidate in the race. This represents about one-quarter of the electorate in Egypt.

34   For the definition of the term, see El-Sherif, "Egypt's Post-Mubarak's Predicament."

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