The Muslim brotherhood's gamble with the Arab Spring: The re-radicalization of Islamist parties in democratizing governments

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In 2011, the Middle East was swept with revolution and unrest. In a span of weeks, the January 25 Revolution – Egypt’s own online call to the streets and demand President Hosni Mubarak’s exit. avril shout of “freedom” or “quit now”, the shadow organization that supplied and organized these overturned protests began to rise for real change.

A religious organization dedicated to doing fundraising, social service provision, education, and mobilization of Muslim civil society, the Muslim Brotherhood had spent decades attempting to maneuver its way into a position of political power, and the Arab Spring presented itself as the perfect platform to realize their dreams.

Unfortunately, this hoped-for moderation never appeared.

- In a span of a few months, the Muslim Brotherhood went from an illegal group tortured by the new regime to a political party who claim to win the majority of Egyptians’ Parliament and the Egyptian Presidency.
- Many policymakers in the West and many secularists in Egypt hoped that the inclusion of the Muslim Brotherhood into the political system would force them to “moderate” their “radical” ideology. Perhaps with the presence of electoral pressure, economic limitations, and the need for pragmatic day-to-day governance, they would abandon more Islamic politics aimed at institutionalizing Islam’s role in politics and society.
- Unfortunately, this hope for moderation never appeared. What happened?

**Investigation and Codification of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Platforms and Behaviors**

**Amended Coding Guide:**

**A) View Towards Democracy**
- No mention of democracy.
- Secular democracy: Statement of support for democracy and a secular policy.
- Islamist Democracy: Statement of support for democracy with explicit reference to Islamic principles (e.g. shari’a) in agreement with democratic state structures.
- Islamic, Bhutto Democracy: Support for democratic procedures, but not Islamic principles.
- B) Desired Strength of Government’s
- No reference.
- Weak government, no law which goes against the shari’a, or some other statement which acknowledges the shari’a as a guiding framework for legislation.
- Strong government.
- D) Treatment of Minorities
- No mention.
- 1. Full legal equality for minorities.
- 2. Support the equality of minorities, or a “system of inclusion with reference to some Islamic criteria.”
- C) Gender roles.
- No mention.
- 1. Full legal equality for women.
- 2. “We support women’s role in family and society.”
- D) Religious Education
- No mention.
- 1. Secular education.
- 2. Islamic education.

**B) Desired Role in Society**

- 1. Full legal equality for women.
- 2. “We support women’s role in family and society.”
- 3. Gender roles.
- 4. Religious education.

**New Theory Framework and Application: Implications for Future Research**

The lack of recognition of local context has rendered the inclusion-radicalization hypothesis inapplicable in certain situations. What is the answer when the inclusion-radicalization hypothesis cannot be applied? How can the Egyptian experience be explained and qualified?

**Framework for a New Inclusion-Re-Radicalization Hypothesis:**

**Graphical Representation of De-Radicalization and Re-Radicalization:**

**Conclusions**

**Why is this research and framework important?**

- While much work has been done to investigate the behavior of the Brotherhood under semi-authoritarian regimes, there has been a deficiency in the theorization of post-authoritarian environments.
- In under 30 years, Egypt experienced:
  - A revolution
  - The first set of free and fair elections
  - The victory of an Islamist president
  - A counter-revolution
  - The installation of another military junta.

**How and why did this happen?**

- Since the inclusion-radicalization hypothesis is not wholly applicable to cases such as post-Arab Spring Egypt, this new theoretical framework can hopefully be used to predict the behavior of Islamist parties and deep states in the future when regime upheaval and democratization affect other MENA countries that share similar structural and socio-political trends with Egypt.
- By taking into account the interrelated roles of politics and the deep state, better behavioral predictions can be made by state and non-state actors.

**Major Researchers Utilized**

Muhammad Akyol, Omar Abozahra, Nathan Brown, Jason Brownlee, Tank Massoud, Andrew Reynolds, Thanasis Cambanis, Michael Brecher, Brecht De Smeye, Ibrahim El-Hokayem, Ashraf El-Sharif, Hafez Ghani, Hassen Kandil, Quentin Mehm, Maria Tadros, Eric Trager

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